

PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING, held in meeting room 1, The Spetchells Centre at 6:30 pm on Wednesday 29th May 2019

PRESENT

Cllr Tracy Gilmore (Chair), Cllr Chris Cuthbert, Cllr Andy Gill, Cllr Russ Greig, Cllr Bryan Futers, Cllr Glenn Simpson, Cllr Carol Stephenson, Cllr Brenda Grey, Cllr Jennifer McGee, Cllr Gerry Price

Also, in attendance County Cllr Anne Dale; Sarah Eden (Clerk); Jeremy Rushmer, Executive Medical Director, Helen Ray, Chief Operating Officer, Claire Riley, Director of Communication (Northumbria Healthcare Trust); Samantha Spowart (Press)

1920/013 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Angie Scott, Cllr Chris Barrett, Cllr Ignasious Varghese, Cllr Duncan Couchman

Apologies also received from County Cllrs Ken Stow and Gordon Stewart

1920/014 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Gerry Price declared a personal interested in Agenda Item 3, Northumbria Healthcare Trust, for the reason that a family member is employed as a consultant at the hospital. Cllr Price expressed that he wished to disassociate himself from the discussion.

1920/015 Northumbria Healthcare Trust

Cllr Tracy Gilmore welcomed Jeremy Rushmer, Claire Riley and Helen Ray and thanked them very much for agreeing to attend the Council meeting. Cllr Gilmore advised that all Cllrs had the opportunity to put forward questions in advance of the meeting as such she was expecting any additional questions to those received.

Claire Riley was very grateful to the Council for ensuring questions were received in advance as it gave the trust the opportunity to prepare a written response, as tabled which was covered during the meeting. (*presentation included at Appendix A*).

Representatives of the Northumbria Healthcare Trust requested that members encouraged those with concerns or complaints to make contact with the hospital through the appropriate channels; Claire Riley offered to receive concerns directly. It was emphasised that they cannot improve if they are not given the opportunity to investigate when things go wrong.

In response to an additional question regarding the recent readmission audit, Helen Ray advised that of 40 readmissions the main theme was where the package of care set up at home had failed, emphasising that Social Services were under enormous pressure, but accepting that there were also occasions when they simply got it wrong, as they were trying to get people home quickly as that is where they recover best. When things go wrong the Trust looks at why, but sometimes, where there are chronic conditions the natural course is that there will be readmissions.

In response to a further comment that previously, at Hexham, the waiting times never reached four hours. Claire Riley responded that Cramlington is the largest receiving A&E in the North East but despite the pressures performing in the top 10. Jeremy Rushmer added that if you required emergency surgery you would receive a faster response now than you did previously at Hexham; length of stay has been reduced and outcomes improved, but accepted that a non-urgent wait at Cramlington would be longer than previously at Hexham.

Cllr Tracy Gilmore congratulated the Northumbria Healthcare Trust on their performance achievements and thanked those present for attending. *NHS Trust Representatives left the meeting.*

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1920/016 Draft Minutes of the Combined Ordinary Meeting and Planning Contract and Works Committee, held on 17th April 2019

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the minutes as a true record.

1920/017 Draft Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council, including the Planning Contract and Works Committee, held on 8th May 2019

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the minutes as a true record.

1920/018 Clerk's Report

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the Clerk's report, copied below:

Prudhoe East Centre – Survey

Following the council's agreement to instruct an independent building survey we have sought quotations as per the following brief:

The Town Council require the survey to inform them of the likely financial investment and associated necessary works that will be required to the building in order to bring it up to current legislative requirements for use as a Community Building. The building is currently being used as a Youth Centre, it is a former school owned by Northumberland County Council, and was most recently marketed by Bradley Hall

– some preliminary details can be found from this marketing information at

<https://www.rightmove.co.uk/commercial-property-for-sale/property-46202124.html>

The building was built in 1825, has two main buildings, a lean-to garage, a number of outhouses and two yards; the buildings are not listed.

Although the property is not currently being marketed by its owner Northumberland County Council, it has previously been declared by them as surplus to their requirements and there is some feeling locally that the Town Council should take on a community asset transfer of the building to ensure that it is retained in the future for Youth and Community purposes. In order to consider the viability of this option, including the associated capital costs, financial risks and ongoing revenue commitment, the Town Council require a full survey of the building to inform their decision making.

We have received three quotations that will be brought to the June PCW's meeting for members to agree which they wish to proceed with.

The results of the survey will be brought to the July PCW's meeting, along with a report by the Clerk.

Essity Prudhoe Miners Race 2019

The race route has been agreed as previously emailed. The race will start and finish in Eastwoods Park; runners will make their way west down Broomhouse Road to the junction of Castlefields Drive and then downhill to the Mining Coal Tub memorial at the junction to Princess Way. The runners will continue west towards Mickley in keeping with race tradition, passing race sponsors Essity and other factories along the river bank, recognising our industrial heritage. The runners will stay to the left side of the carriageway passing woodland, and Prudhoe Castle, taking in the view of the 'Badger Hill' before going up 'Hammerite Bank' returning the runners to Prudhoe past one of the town's Silent Soldier Silhouette memorials and the back into town running the full length of Prudhoe Front Street passing areas of cultural significance; South Road, Dr Syntax, and Kingdom Hall (previously The Miners Hall) and return the Eastwoods Park to finish on the fields.

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We have liaised with Northumberland County Council and the communications team are very keen to include the event as part of Great Northumberland and Visit Northumberland. Prudhoe Plodders has assigned a Council liaison and they are busy engaging with community groups to have a presence at the event. Further details will be brought to the PCW's in June.

Summer Activities – 42 Days of Summer

The funding opportunity has been released and shared with known providers as well as via social media. The closing date is 31st May 2019; a report will be brought back to the June Ordinary meeting, along with recommendations by a small group of Cllrs.

Town Council Vacancy – Prudhoe Castle & Eltringham

Following the Council declaring a vacancy on 9th May 2019, although not officially notified, we are aware that an election has been called and if contested a poll will take place on 4th July 2019.

Further update given – the cost is likely to be £3,000 but an invoice for the previous election in this ward has not been received yet.

Town Council Website

The new website is planned to 'go live' at the end of May, beginning of June. You have all been emailed a link that shows the work in progress.

New updates since the Annual Meeting of the Council have not been made, this is being postponed until the new website is up and running. Presently, we are only able to upload photos to the current website which is satisfactory for the meeting agenda but not associated papers.

1920/019 County Councillor Reports

County Cllr Anne Dale updated members on matters pertaining to Mickley Ward, namely:

- The fence in the field adjacent to West Mickley Play Area and the A695 is being repaired.
- The installation of fiberoptic broadband has resulted in delays to the 20mph past the school but this is part of the wider Local Transport Plan Programme, going back four years.
- The Mickley Planters are on the way.
- The bus shelter install has been further delayed by the installation of fiberoptic broadband.
- Defib awareness training is being carried out.
- Gateway signs will soon be lifted.

1920/020 Internal Audit

It was AGREED to RECEIVE and APPROVE the Internal Audit Report, following a final year-end audit carried out by Peter Basnett on 29th April; Cllrs noted that there were no matters to be actioned.

1920/021 Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Control

It was AGREED to RECEIVE and APPROVE the Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control, carried out by Cllr Carol Stephenson and Cllr Chris Cuthbert 17th May; Cllrs noted the recommendation that an additional bank signatory is achieved and a new mandate completed. Cllr Tracy Gilmore offered to be added.

1920/022 Annual Governance Statement

a) Councillors AGREED and confirmed to the best of their knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2019, a positive response could be given to the following statements:

1. *We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.*

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2. *We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.*
3. *We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.*
4. *We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
5. *We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.*
6. *We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.*
7. *We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.*
8. *We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.*

It was AGREED that the Chair and the Clerk should sign and verify that the Annual Governance Statement was approved by the Council.

b) It was AGREED to RECEIVE the End of Year Bank Reconciliation

c) It was AGREED to RECEIVE and APPROVE the Accounting Statements for year ending March 2019, and to **APPROVE** their signature and verification by the Clerk/RFO and Chair.

1920/023 Exercise of Public Rights

It was AGREED to APPROVE the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights as 3rd June 2019 – 12th July 2019 and to publish these dates.

1920/024 Accounts

- a) **It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the Monthly Bank Reconciliations statements 10th April 2019 – 9th May 2019
- b) **It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the Statement of Budget and Expenditure from 1st April 2019 – 21st May 2019
- c) **It was AGREED to NOTE** surplus funds available of £6,283 following the finalisation of end of year accounts. The Clerk advised that any proposals for spending would be properly placed on an agenda of the Council.
- d) **It was AGREED to ENDORSE** the payment of accounts paid since last meeting, and to **AUTHORISE** those still to be paid.

It was AGREED that travel costs in relation to official business should be properly placed on a Council agenda in order to agree a policy for this purpose.

1920/025 Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019-2021 Consultation

Prudhoe Town Council **AGREED** the following responses to the consultation:

When asked, are the priorities we've identified appropriate? The **AGREED** response was:

Whilst the Council supports the priorities identified they are concerned about the Draft Northumberland Local Plan requiring only between 10% - 30% affordable homes on all major

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housing developments and past experience shows that this is never 30% and more frequently it is towards the lower limit.

The Council feel that 30% affordable housing should be a minimum requirement on all major housing developments.

When asked, are there any additional client groups that we need to identify? The **AGREED** response was:

The Council agree that all additional client groups have been identified.

When asked, are there any other areas of work you would like to see included? The **AGREED** response was:

Whilst the Council appreciates the effort made to make better use of housing stock with the EDMO and Purchase and Repair Scheme, 5 out of 30 homes could be vastly improved on. In Prudhoe, there are some long-term derelict/not lived in homes where action has not been forthcoming and these would benefit from either of these schemes.

Prudhoe Town Council would like to see included under 'Improving Homes and Communities' an effort by Northumberland County Council to make land under their ownership more available to developers for 100% affordable homes and socially rented homes. This may involve reducing the cost of land and working alongside social housing providers. The Council are particularly keen to see a development of affordable or socially rented homes in land off West Road, Prudhoe; a site identified for such purpose in the SHLLA.

1920/026 Northumberland Pride

It was AGREED to donate £250 towards Northumberland Pride but to advise that any future funding requests must be received via the Grant Aid process.

1920/027 Prudhoe Town Council Young People's Forum

Cllr Gerry Price reported that meetings were in abeyance until September and that whilst a round-robin discussion took place on 15th May with Ashley Brown (Senior Youth Practitioner) and those Cllrs who attended, no consensus of a way forward was resolved. Cllr Price suggested a pre-meeting before the September meeting to look at the aims of the forum, the agenda and the attendees.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should write to Ashley Brown to ask if he could convene a pre-meeting to the September meeting and invite all those involved in youth groups so that everyone can have an input as to the most valuable format for the Forum, and agree a way forward.

1920/028 Funding request to Prudhoe Community Workshop Trust

It was proposed that the Council agree to apply for match funding from Prudhoe Community Workshop Trust towards '42 Days of Summer' youth provision/activities during the summer holidays, for reason that they could benefit twice as many young people if secured.

Proposed: Cllr Brenda Grey Seconded: Cllr Russ Greig

Cllr Jennifer McGee proposed an amendment to remove 'match-funding' and replace with 'the shortfall following the Council using all of its £13,000 budget', in view that the Council was not sure what would be applied for and had committed £13,000 so should spend that before seeking further funding from another. The amendment was not seconded.

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1920/029 Karbon Homes consultation event on the future of The Haven

Cllrs who had attended the event commented that:

- Karbon Homes has indicated that some residents are happy to move but this is not the feeling that has been gained from other sources.
- There is no other suitable alternative accommodation that will allow the elderly residents access onto Front Street as they have now.
- Karbon Homes is promoting affordable homes but socially rented bungalows are also required.
- Karbon Homes has stated that it took 10 months to fill the last vacant bungalow at The Haven.
- The quality of life of the ten residents of The Haven should be priority.
- Karbon Homes assured Cllrs that Haven residents would only be moved if they could be moved to a property in an area they wished to live, even if it took years.
- Affordable 'rent to buy' has been difficult to attain for many Prudhoe residents, recently proven with the Gentoo development at Cottier Grange.
- The questionnaire at the event was loaded to give affirmative answers by way of response.
- Social housing providers appear more commercially sensitive and profit-driven than in previous years.
- Karbon Homes should be encouraged to develop the area of land to the west of Prudhoe West Academy, in advance of knocking down much-needed bungalows.

It was **AGREED** to request the results from the consultation questionnaire.

1920/030 PCP/PTC Quarterly Liaison Meeting

It was **AGREED** to respond to PCP Chair, Mr George Hepburn, that in view that a number of other cross-communication groups have been formed and PTC has a representative on all of these, as well as on the Board of Trustees, that the liaison meetings are a duplication of effort and no longer required.

1920/031 Reports from Outside Bodies**Prudhoe Pathforce**

It was **AGREED** to receive the report of the Annual General Meeting and the General Meeting, held on 18th March 2019. The Clerk advised that Cllr Duncan Couchman would give an update on The Kepwell and the next meeting.

Town Centre Working Group

It was **AGREED** to receive the report of the meeting held on 7th May 2019.

1920/032 Correspondence and Publications

1. **Letter from NCC, Glen Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services** offering a tour of West Sleekburn Material Recycling Facility; first tour at 11am, 2nd tour at 2pm, lasting 2 hours.

It was noted that those Cllrs wishing to attend should inform the Clerk before 12 noon on 31st May.

2. Wise Academies Consultation Document

It was **AGREED** this should be placed on the agenda of the Ordinary Meeting on 26th June 2019 to agree a response.

3. **Barclays Annual Price Plan** letter outlining move to e-Payment automatically on 13th June unless advised otherwise, as this is more cost-effective.

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It was **AGREED** to note the information.

4. Gateway into the Community thank you letter for Grant Aid for the Prudhoe Leisure Group operating from Prudhoe Methodist Church.

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** the letter.

5. Tynedale Hospice at Home Summer Evening Reception and Open Garden, 5th July from 6:30-8:30, The Riding, Acomb invite from Mike Thornicroft to all members. Tickets priced at £15pp or £25 for two.

It was **AGREED** Cllrs should make their own arrangements if they wished to attend.

6. 75th Anniversary of D Day Landings notice of church service on Thursday 6th June at Mary Magdalene Church at 10am and wreath laying on the Glade by the Prudhoe Branch of the Royal British Legion on Saturday 8th June at 10am.

It was **AGREED** to note the information.

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** the following publications:

1. Allotment & Leisure Gardener, Issue 2, 2019
2. Tynedale Hospice at Home 2019 Newslink Spring
3. Clerk and Councils Direct, May 2019