

Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Prudhoe Town Council (including an item relating to the remit of the Planning, Contract and Works Committee) held in Meeting Room 1 of the Spetchells Centre, Front Street, Prudhoe, commencing at 7.00pm on Wednesday 31st July 2019

PRESENT

Cllr Tracy Gilmore (Chair), Cllr Duncan Couchman, Cllr Carol Stephenson, Cllr Gerry Price, Cllr Brenda Grey, Cllr Angie Scott, Cllr Andy Gill, Cllr Chris Cuthbert, Cllr Bryan Futers, Cllr Martin Foster, Cllr Chris Barrett, Cllr Jennifer McGee, Councillor Ignasious Varghase (entered the meeting at 19:05H)

Also, Present: County Councillors Dale, Stow and Stewart; Town Clerk, Administrative Officer and a member of the public (Mr George Hepburn).

OM1920/047 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Russ Grieg, Cllr Glenn Simpson

OM1920/048 Declarations of Interest

None received.

OM 1920/049 Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on June 26th 2019

Following consideration of the previously circulated draft minutes of the Meeting

IT was AGREED that the draft minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 26th June 2019 be agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

OM1920/050 Draft Minutes of the Planning Contract and Works Committee held on 10th July 2019

Following consideration of the previously circulated draft minutes of the Meeting

IT was AGREED that the draft minutes be received.

OM1920/051 Clerks Report

IT was AGREED that the following report of the Clerk be received and endorsed.

Artwork in Bus Shelters

West Northumberland Youth Service has facilitated local young people working with John Craggs on the artwork in the stone shelters; the shelter opposite Castle Road is the first to have been completed and the result is below, it's even more impressive in real life. WNYS have been asked to support the Town Council in publicity for this project.

Waterworld Play Area

The Clerk and Cllr Jennifer McGee met with Geoff Cant (Active Northumberland, Waterworld Manager) and Kate Steel (NCC Strategic Assets) on Monday 29th July to discuss the future of the play area at Waterworld.

As a result of continued damage and a number of outstanding repairs the play area is closed. Active Northumberland has funded maintenance costs in the past but they have no budget for this purpose; costs to repair the play area 'like for like' are in the region of £65k, with 50% of

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these costs attributed to surfacing. Northumberland County Council, via County Cllr Gordon Stewart, indicated that they would be willing to fund repairs if Prudhoe Town Council took over the costs of maintenance.

At the meeting on Monday, all representatives were of the same mind, that a 'like for like' repair would be a wasted opportunity and that if capital funding is available that public consultation should be carried out alongside a procurement process to ensure the right kind of play area is installed. It was acknowledged that this would be a longer process, but that time was no longer the main concern as the summer holiday window has passed.

It is expected that Geoff Cant will contact Northumberland County Council to seek assurance of capital funding for a new play area, as was offered for the repairs and also that they would manage the procurement process. Active Northumberland is very keen to be part of the community engagement.

Following a positive response to the above, the September Ordinary Meeting will seek to agree 'in principle' that Prudhoe Town Council agree to the accept a long-term lease for Waterworld Play Area and the maintenance costs from April 2020, subject to satisfactory heads of terms being agreed. An asset transfer would not be possible due to the fact that the play area is part of a larger site.

At the September Ordinary Meeting the Council will also be asked to agree a capital investment in the play area, increasing the budget available and giving the Town Council a legitimate role in the plans. This is similar to the process carried forward in regards Eastwood Park play area, which the Town Council contributed £30,000 to.

Questions should be raised with the office in advance of the September Ordinary meeting.

Land off Western Avenue/Cranbrook Drive

The planning application received in respect of the above was refused by the Planning Department. Cllrs will recall that the Town Council objected following a number of appeals from near-by residents. The refusal was as per the Town Council's objection, that the land was amenity land.

Prior to the planning application being made the land was considered amenity and was cut by NCC, following the sale of the land to a private individual and the subsequent planning application NCC has not cut the area, as it is considered private land.

Cllrs will note that the area is now overgrown and unsightly and it could certainly not be enjoyed as an amenity. Following refusal of the planning application, NCC has pledged to contact the landowner to request permission to cut the grass, following a number of complaints from residents. This is on-going.

Flood Risk

The Environment Agency has offered, via Cllr Gerry Price, to meet with the Town Council to highlight flood risks and flood mapping with the intention of giving technical information. The

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date suggested is 10th October and agreement to proceed with a meeting will be added to the PCW's agenda.

Town Council Website

98% of the work on the website has been completed; however a few improvements to design have been suggested to make the financial information more user-friendly and dynamic.

Standing Orders

Cllrs Gilmore, Cuthbert, McGee, Price and Barrett met and considered newly communicated Standing Orders. The meeting considered a number of variations to our current standing orders in comparison to those agreed jointly by NALC/SLCC. The September Ordinary meeting will receive the recommendations of the group, for adoption by the Town Council.

Prudhoe in Bloom

All judging visits are complete and the presentation will take place on Saturday 14th September at Prudhoe Parish Hall Coffee morning, as is usual. Standards remain exceptionally high; winners and awards will remain secret until the presentation.

OM1920/052 County Councillor Reports

Given the length of the agenda the Chair asked County Councillors to be succinct in their reports and requested that Town Councillors limited their questions to matters only relating to their own ward in the parish.

County Councillor Ken Stow reported that the resurfacing works at Dukes Court was now complete. He expressed concern about the flooding at the Adam and Eve Public House and advised that Northumberland County Council were looking into what, if anything could be done about the situation but advised that it was believed that a solution would be very expensive because the drains ran underneath the railway lines.

He further advised that he had used some of his Member initiative funding to purchase a trim trail for Prudhoe Castle First School.

County Councillor Anne Dale advised that the fence work at West Mickley was in the schedule of works. Councillor Chris Cuthbert (Mickley Ward Member) raised concern about cars parking outside Mickley Club, right on the junction and facing the wrong way, County Councillor Dale said that she would refer this on to the Police.

County Councillor Gordon Stewart advised that the half price entry scheme into Prudhoe Castle had been well received. He advised that he had used some of his Member Initiative funding to purchase a defibrillator to be sited at the Manors with the assistance of 2 local shop owners. He further advised that two residents from the Haven had recently accepted alternative accommodation.

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OM1920/053 Accounts

a) Monthly Bank Reconciliation

Members gave consideration to the previously circulated bank reconciliation for the period 08/06/2019 – 09/07/2019 following requests for clarification about photocopying charges and memorial stability testing **IT was AGREED to RECEIVE** the monthly bank reconciliation.

b) Statement of Budget and Expenditure

IT was AGREED to RECEIVE the Statement of Budget and Expenditure from 1st April 2019 – 23rd July 2019.

c) Endorsement of accounts paid since last meeting and authorisation of accounts to be paid

IT was AGREED to ENDORSE the payment of accounts paid since the last meeting and to **AUTHORISE** those still to be paid.

County Councillors Dale and Stow left the meeting at 19:23H

OM1920/054 A695 Prudhoe Roundabout

IT was AGREED to receive, note and publicise the previously circulated update from Gateshead MBC regarding the creation of a new roundabout to replace the existing T- junction between the A695 Prudhoe Industrial Link Road and the Stanleyburn Road.

OM1920/055 Prudhoe Youth Project

Following consideration of the previously circulated first quarter report from Children North East, which had not yet been formally received by Prudhoe Youth Project Trustees) **IT was AGREED to RECEIVE** the report.

OM1920/056 Travel Costs in relation to Official Business

Following consideration and discussion of the Town Clerk's previously circulated briefing note in relation to travel expenditure costs in relation to official business **IT was AGREED to**

RECEIVE and NOTE the Town Clerks report, and confirm that in setting next year's budget a separate budget should be included for Town Twinning expenses.

OM1920/057 Electric Car Charging Points

Following consideration of the request put forward by Councillor Gerry Price that the Council agree to explore the cost of installing an eco- charging system (car charging point) within the Town at an agreed location, with due consideration of the "zap map" of car charging points in Northumberland previously circulated by the Town Clerk and with input from County Councillor Gordon Stewart **IT was AGREED** that the Town Clerk would investigate the necessary cost and suitable siting of an electric charging point with advice from Northumberland County Council's Sustainable Transport Officer and report her findings back to a future meeting.

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OM1920/058 Goal Posts for Castledene Play Area

Following consideration of the request put forward by Councillor Martin Foster that the Council agree to install a new set of goals on the grassed area behind Castledene Play Area to improve its amenity to young people playing football **IT was AGREED** that the Town Council proceed to purchase a new set of goals and that the Council's Administrative Officer investigate whether there was grant funding available from the Football Foundation to assist the purchase.

OM1920/059 Proposed South Road Pelican Crossing

Following consideration of the request put forward by Councillor Brenda Grey that the Council agree to write to Northumberland County Council to express concerns regarding the length of time it is taking to progress this agreed safety measure **IT was AGREED** that the Town Clerk write to the relevant Cabinet Member at Northumberland County Council to express the Town Council's concerns over the delay in this project.

OM1920/060 Review of Polling Stations

Consideration was given to the previously circulated notice of Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations from Northumberland County Council's Electoral Registration Officer dated 10th July 2019 **IT was AGREED** that Members consider the proposals and refer any queries that they have to the office, prior to this matter being formally considered by the Council at their September meeting.

OM1920/061 Reports from Outside Bodies

a) Prudhoe Community Partnership

Following consideration of the previously circulated quarterly report of Prudhoe Community partnership **IT was AGREED** to receive the report.

b) Town Twinning

Councillors Barratt gave a verbal report on the visit to Mitry-Mory enjoyed by himself and the Town Mayor explaining to Members that the hospitality that they had received was fantastic, they had met the Mayor from a Counter Part Twin Town in Germany that was also twinned with Mitry-Mory as well as meeting a 108 year old resident of the town who was a keen cyclist and a group of Palestine refugees as the theme for the weekend was women's empowerment. Councillor Barrett concluded that the Town Twinning could be a very positive thing for every resident of Prudhoe.

IT was AGREED to receive the report.

c) East Tynedale Town and Parish Council Forum

Councillor Cuthbert raised the matter of a resolution to the NALC AGM from Bywell Parish Council, the Town Clerk advised that this would be considered by the Council at their September meeting in time for the NALC AGM

OM1920/062 Correspondence and Publications

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IT was AGREED to receive the following report

Correspondence

1. AGE UK Northumberland

Letter received from Northumberland Age UK Community Engagement Officer Angela Clough dated 26th July 2019 – requesting a donation from the Town Council to help them continue their Information and Advice Line and Welfare Benefits Service that is now open Monday to Friday.

Members are also invited to host a fundraising Coffee Morning for the Charity and purchase tickets for their Annual Dinner on 4th October 2019 at the Holiday Inn Seaton Burn at a cost of £55 each to include drinks reception, three course meal and live music.

The letter further outlines the support that the Charity give to elderly people throughout Northumberland including the fact that their volunteers maximised income for their elderly clients within Prudhoe Parish area to the value of £37,494.50 as well as offering their friendship line services to help combat loneliness in the elderly.

Should Members wish to consider making a grant to Age UK Northumberland under s137 Local Government Act 1972 I would suggest that more information on their work specific to Prudhoe is sought and that this is placed on a future agenda for full and proper consideration.

2. News of an Archaeological Dig in Prudhoe

Correspondence has been received advising that an archaeological dig will take place at Cockshott Dene throughout the two working weeks September 9th -20th 2019. The dig has been funded by The Land of Oak and Iron Heritage Lottery Landscape project with the assistance of Northumberland County Council. The dig will be conducted by The Archaeological Practice Ltd and volunteers (who are physically able with stout footwear) are invited to contact the organisers- The activities required of volunteers would include clearance of undergrowth, sorting of and stabilising brickwork, measured plans for those with such skills, making photographic records and teaming!

Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact the Town Clerk for the contact details of the organisers.

3. Love Northumberland Awards 2019

Although we have already publicised the event on our website and social media pages Members are reminded that the closing date for entry submissions is Friday 2nd August at 5pm – Nominations are invited for projects and individuals that are enriching the environment and the lives of the people in Northumberland The LOVE Northumberland Awards aim to mark the achievements of schools community voluntary and other groups that enhance the County's environment and heritage.

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4. Notice of Resurfacing Works on U8280 Adderlane Road West Wylam

Carriageway repairs will commence on Tuesday 6th August 2019 to Friday 6th August 2019. The works will be undertaken by Northumberland County Council – access for residents will be maintained as far as reasonably practicable but some disruption will be inevitable. It is expected that the surfacing works will be carried out between the hours of 9:00H and 16:00H under a Road Closure. There will be no through road on the U8280 and a signposted diversion route will be set up.

5. Correspondence and Leaflet received on 11th July 2019 from Adapt North East.

Adapt North East are a registered charity that operate a Getabout Scheme for people who have difficulty getting around Northumberland and Beyond – The scheme is there for people if they

- Don't drive, because they are too young, have never driven or are no longer able to
- Have no or limited access to a car because it is not affordable or not there during the day
- Have a mobility issue which prevents them from using public transport

Getabout will seek to find the most appropriate way of solving transport problems which could be connecting to existing public/community transport services, shared affordable taxi services or with local lift share or Getabout volunteer drivers. To access a volunteer driver there is a £6 fee which lasts for a 6month period and the cost for your journey is then 50p per mile.

Publications

1. NAMM News June 2019
2. Clerks & Councils Direct July 2019 issue 124
3. The Clerk May 2019

As the following item falls within the remit of the Planning Contract and Works Committee Councillor Jennifer McGee took the Chair.

PCW 1920/035 PRUDHOE EAST CENTRE

Prior to discussion on this item Councillor Jennifer McGee in her capacity as Chair of the Planning Contract and Works Committee commended the Town Clerk on the excellent quality of her previously circulated report, advising Councillors to have due regard to the Conclusion section of the report.

Discussion on the item ensued with Members voicing their concern about the financial implications of the Sanderson Weatherall Pre-Acquisition Survey Report.

In summary the concerns expressed by Members related to the costs of the remedial works required to the building, it was remarked that the East Centre would need to generate income of £54,000 per annum to repay the required loan. Members were very concerned that the revenue generated from the building may not be sufficient to meet the annual loan repayments and that such a loan would have a major impact on the precept, placing an unreasonable burden on all

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ratepayers for a potentially small minority of users of the refurbished East Centre. Further concern was expressed in relation to the ongoing utility costs, maintenance, insurance and cleaning costs for such a large building. Disappointment was expressed at the fact that the various previous and present political administration at Northumberland County Council had let the people of Prudhoe down by allowing the East Building, which would have been a fantastic asset for youth and community use, to fall into such disrepair.

It was Proposed that Prudhoe Town Council take no further action in relation to The East Centre and that no further monies be committed to pursuing the project further.

Proposed Cllr Tracy Gilmore Seconded jointly by Cllr Gerry Price and Bryan Futers.

Prior to proceeding to vote on this item in accordance with Standing Order 10 it was duly proposed and seconded that a named, recorded vote be taken on this matter

The following Councillors voted **IN FAVOUR** of the Substantive motion to take no further action in relation to The East Centre and that no further monies be committed to pursuing the project further.

Cllrs Gilmore; Price; Futers; Barrett; Foster; Gill and Cuthbert

No Councillors voted **AGAINST** the Motion.

The following Councillors **ABSTAINED** from voting on this motion;

Cllrs McGee; Couchman; Stephenson; Scott; Grey and Verghase

The MOTION to take no further action in relation to The East Centre and that no further monies be committed to pursuing the project further was therefore **CARRIED**.

It was further AGREED that the Town Clerk update Northumberland County Council Strategic Estates and West Northumberland Youth Service in relation to the Town Council's decision regarding The East Centre.