

Welcome

Welcome to the Town Council's annual report for 2015-16. It has been with great pleasure that I have been able to serve as Chairman of the Town Council and Town Mayor for the last council year. It has been a year when we were able to feature our town as a start in the Tour of Britain Cycle Race, and Prudhoe put on a terrific show with the huge numbers who turned out to cheer the riders: our shop window displays and floral and flag decorations were very well received by the riders and the visitors. Thank you all for supporting this event.



In addition we have been able to refurbish two of our play areas at Highfield Park and Castle Dene, with contributions from Northumberland County Council members' allowance schemes, in both cases we consulted with local children to get the best results. This is part of an ongoing programme of play area refurbishment by the Town Council.

The Town Council continues to support many local organisations with grant aid and in particular supports the Citizens Advice Bureau sessions in Prudhoe, and the East Centre which provides services for our young people.

Finally my thanks to all the volunteers and organisations in the town which make Prudhoe a great place to live and work.

Councillor Eileen Burt

Mayor / Chairman of Prudhoe Town Council.



Prudhoe welcomes The Tour of Britain

Full details of the work of the Council and events organised by it can be found on our easy to navigate website, www.parish-council.com/prudhoe. Updates are regularly notified on local social media, with direct links to the website.

Play Areas (and a bus shelter)

The Council is delighted to report major investment in improved play provision at Highfield Park and at Castle Dene. At Highfield Park, the toddler and junior play areas received an £80,000 make-over in summer 2015, with the chosen scheme being approved after extensive consultation with pupils at Highfield Middle and Prudhoe West First Schools. The Council succeeded in obtaining a grant of £33,368 from the Housing Developer Fund for the Former Tynedale Area towards this project. The Council gratefully acknowledges the support of County Councillor Eileen Burt, who contributed £7,000 from her NCC Members' Small Schemes Allowance to the finance for the project. The new equipment has already proved extremely popular, with particular enthusiasm shown for the new zip wire in the junior area. Plans are now afoot to improve the pedestrian access to the Park.

Meanwhile, at Castle Dene, a £37,000 scheme initiated by County Councillor Burt led to the complete revitalisation of the sole play area in the north-west of the town. She provided £16,800 for the scheme from her NCC Members' Small Schemes Allowance, while the Council contributed £5,000 to the project, and was successful in obtaining a further £15,000 of Housing Developer funding. With the enthusiastic support of pupils from Prudhoe Castle First School, who had been consulted on the proposals, the play area was re-opened in July 2015 to great acclaim.

A brand-new bus shelter has recently been installed opposite the Glenside in Mickley Square. The Council thanks County Councillor Anne Dale for financing this project from her NCC Members' Small Schemes Allowance.

Keep Britain Tidy

In summer 2015, the Council was approached by Northumberland County Council, to join in what proved to be a successful application to Keep Britain Tidy for the town to participate in the pilot "Bin It For Good" litter reduction scheme, run in association with The Wrigley Company. The aim was to find out whether littering behaviours can be influenced by incentives, in this case the 'carrot' being potentially increased financial support for local good causes. The increase in litter placed in litter bins and the reduction in litter discarded in the town centre were measured over a three-month period. The Council is proud to have been involved in this important national initiative, and congratulates the three local causes – Prudhoe Community Workshop Trust (Prudhoe Youth Charity Shop), Prudhoe Community Allotment, and Prudhoe Youth Club Football Club who are each expected to receive the maximum reward of £300.

Annual Town Meeting

Please come to the Annual Town Meeting on Wednesday 18 May, which takes place at the Spetchells Centre. This public meeting is your opportunity to ask questions of your town councillors. The meeting proper starts at 7.00pm with the Chairman's report of the Council's work over the past 12 months, but the doors will open at 6.15pm, allowing you to come and meet representatives of the voluntary organisations who receive grant aid support from the Council, and learn about the work they do. Refreshments will be available, and we hope to see you there.

Prudhoe Miners' Races

The 2015 SCA Miners' Races, organised by Run Northumberland, took place on Sunday 27 September. The races were given an international dimension with the enthusiastic participation of runners from the Prudhoe's twin town Mitry-Mory, and with Mitry's deputy Mayor, Marianne Margaté, presenting the prizes. 140 runners tackled the 10-kilometre senior race around the town and along the Tyne to the finish at Tyne Riverside. A record was broken as 94 runners from ages 3 to 8 tackled the 1.5 kilometre mini-run at Tyne Riverside, while a more modest number completed the 3-kilometre junior run (9-16 years), following a circuit round the Spetchells chalk heaps.

The Council is grateful to main sponsor SCA for its ongoing support for all the races, Northumberland County Council for its delivery of the road closures for the senior race, Prudhoe Youth Charity Shop for the trophies for the junior events, Active Northumberland for race support facilities, including a first aid station, and John Robson for music and race announcements at both the start and the finish. The Council was delighted to welcome Tynedale Hospice at Home fundraisers to the race. The Council especially thanks the volunteers who provided marshalling and stewarding support - without them the races could not take place.

The Council congratulates St Matthew's RC Primary School on achieving the highest level of pupil participation in the Miners' Races, as a percentage of the school's pupil roll, of all the schools in the Prudhoe Partnership. As a result, the school won the £500 incentive offered by the Council towards the purchase of sports equipment / coaching to benefit pupils at the school.

The 2016 races will take place on Sunday 25 September. Entries may be made using the following link: <http://www.runnation.co.uk/sca-prudhoe-miners-run--junior-run-1039-p.asp>



Prudhoe Miners' Race - the runners tackling the ascent of Beaumont Way

Town Council Allotments

The Prudhoe Gardeners' Association's (PGA) informative web-pages describe the work of the Association at <https://prudhoegardenersassociation.wordpress.com>, as well as providing helpful advice on matters horticultural. The PGA manages the Council's allotments at Redwell, Edgewell, Castle Dene, and Stonyflat Bank on day-to-day basis. The allotment rules have been revised to reflect recent developments in allotment regulation and management nationwide. The annual Town Show, now in its 52nd year, will take place on the weekend of 3/4 September.

The Prudhoe Community Allotment (<https://prudhoecommunityallotment.wordpress.com>), located at Redwell, allows access to gardening in a secure, supportive environment. This nationally-awarded initiative has been driven forward since its inception by the unstinting efforts of its Co-ordinator, Joan Russell. Following Joan's decision to step down and enjoy a well-earned retirement, the Council offers its warm thanks to her for the huge contribution she has made to the success of the Community Allotment in particular and allotment gardening in general.

For availability of Town Council allotments, contact the PGA at the Hut behind the West Wylam Inn on Front Street on Saturday mornings between 10am and 12 noon (January to September) and 10 am to 11am (October – Christmas).



Mr & Mrs Batey's Garden

Winners Mrs Hull and Mr & Mrs Batey with the Town Mayor



Prudhoe in Bloom

The town's own home-grown gardening / horticulture competition produced a strong crop of entries in 2015. The full results are on the Council's website, but the following were especially commended: Mickley First School and St Matthew's RC Primary School, joint winners of the schools' award, and Prudhoe Methodist Church, winners of the churches' award.

The Council commended those businesses brightening up and looking after their premises, and applauded a residential community initiative at Paddock Close. In the residential section, the awards for Best Rear Garden and Best Front Garden went to Mr and Mrs Hull of Maple Grove and Mr and Mrs Batey of Park Lane respectively.

The Council warmly thanks: Tyne Valley Garden Centre, Mickley, for its sponsorship of the schools' and churches' competitions, the external judges - Mrs Vivienne Bolton of Corbridge (residential and churches), and Dean and Vivienne Readman of Hollybush Landscaping (schools), and the members of the Council's 'In Bloom' group chaired by Councillor Nadine McGee.

The Council's efforts in the regional Northumbria in Bloom (NiB) competition were rewarded with considerably improved scores from the competition judges, leading to the award of a Silver Gilt medal. However, the highlights for the town in this year's NiB entry were undoubtedly the much deserved Gold Awards received by both Mr Howdon and Mr & Mrs Batey for their most beautiful (and contrasting) entries in the 'Best Front Garden that can be seen from the road' category. The Council adds its own congratulations to these deserved accolades.

Christmas Lights

27 November 2015 saw the closure of the part of Front Street closest to the Glade for the switching-on of the festive lights. For the first time, the event attractions took place on staging erected on the Glade.



The Minions with John Robson

The theme was the popular family film 'Minions', and the two 'live' blue-and-yellow minions attracted great interest and excitement, especially from younger spectators, as did the tyres painted in the same colours by the East Centre. Even the rain couldn't dampen the Christmas spirit or prevent the crowds being the biggest ever! Mr Disco Man, John Robson, compèred the event, while children from Mickley and Adderlane First Schools sang their hearts out with special renditions of Christmas carols. Santa made a grand entrance on his sleigh along Front Street through the heaving throng of spectators, and he was joined on stage by Kian Musgrove, whose cause has attracted great interest regionally and nationally, and who switched-on the lights.

The list of thank yous grows with the success of the event, but especial mention should be made of the county council officers who managed and policed the road closure, Mickley Garage (suppliers of the tyres for the minions), the volunteers from the Youth Charity Shop, Prudhoe Fire Station, Dragontale Theatre Group, the East Centre, the Co-op, Prudhoe Parents Group and all who helped make the night such a success.

The Council warmly thanks lighting contractor Christmas Plus for mounting the displays.

The 2016 Switch-on will take place on Friday 25 November.

Youth Service & Young Peoples' Forum

The Council's funding for the West Northumberland Youth Service (WNYS) enables the delivery, at the East Centre on Front Street, of weekly in-house sessions for seniors and juniors, coupled with detached work focusing on popular gathering places in the town. The Forum meets on the second Wednesday of every other month, providing a platform for youth debate and involvement in issues of interest and relevance to young people. All young people are welcome to attend and participate in Forum meetings. The Council thanks the East Centre and Carol Quinn in particular for their support in facilitating the Forum's meetings.

Summer Events at Highfield Park 2015

The sixth annual Highfield Fest took place on Sunday 28 June, and featured pole fitness, graffiti art demonstrations and teaching (courtesy of Prudhoe Youth Charity Shop), a 'selfie tent', inflatable fun (including the Demolition Zone kindly sponsored by Thompson's of Prudhoe), football challenges (courtesy of Prudhoe Youth Club Football Club), archery (thanks to First Prudhoe Scouts), face painting, dance displays from both Annesha's School of Dance and local dance troupe Energize, small animals from the zoo at Kirkley Hall (Northumberland College), and crafty fun from Prudhoe Parents' Group. John Robson was Master of Ceremonies, while free wi-fi was kindly provided by Radio Prudhoe. Meanwhile, the live music stage (special thanks to Tony Monnelly of RTH Lubbers) saw sets from established local bands JADE, The Neighbourhood Blues Band, Divine Crown and Lyrical Whisky. The Council warmly thanks all who helped make the event such a success, and particularly the councillors who ensured that the large number of cars arriving and departing the Fest were directed safely and without fuss. The 2016 Fest takes place on Sunday 26 June.

The 2015 Kite Festival took place at Highfield Park on 4 and 5 July. After a quiet Saturday, fine weather drew large, appreciative crowds on the Sunday to enjoy the superb spectacle of kite-flyers performing amazing feats in the Tynedale skies, both solo and in formations. The Council's grateful thanks again



The spectacular Kite Festival

go to John Dobson of Allendale, who organised the kite flyers and their demonstrations, and to the kite flyers who shared their passion for their sport with all who attended. The 2016 Kite Festival takes place on the weekend of 13 & 14 August.

Prudhoe Town Twinning Association

Town-twinning actively seeks new members: if you want to get involved, please contact Derek Gillespie, Chairman of the Association, on 01661 834033. To follow news of developments in Prudhoe's twin-town, Mitry-Mory (in French), please log on to their council website, www.mitry-mory.fr

Remembrance / War Memorial

An application is under consideration by the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle for a faculty (permission) to be granted for the addition to the town's war memorial, at the entrance to St Mary Magdalene Parish Church, of the names of the following: (1) those from the area who fell in World War One, but are for a variety of reasons missing from the memorial (2) those who fell in World War Two (3) those who fell in post-1945 conflicts. If permission is granted, then for the first time all of those known to have made the ultimate sacrifice will be commemorated on the memorial, which was erected in 1922, funded by public subscription.



The Tour passes through Prudhoe

Tour of Britain Cycle Race

On Thursday 10th September, Prudhoe welcomed the race start for the 5th stage of the Aviva 2015 Tour of Britain Cycle Race on its way to Hartside Fell in Cumbria. The crowds, including pupils from several of Prudhoe's schools, that turned out to cheer riders of the calibre of Sir Bradley Wiggins and Mark Cavendish, were rated the most impressive of the 2015 event by event broadcasters and by the tour's organisers. Race partner Northumberland County Council joined in praising the high level of engagement and support for the race displayed by the town as a whole, and the Town Council in particular. In addition to supporting advance publicity for the event to local residents, the Council ensured details of the road closures were made known to residents and local businesses alike.

The town welcomed the Tour in style. The bus shelter opposite Waterworld featured a graphic map, created by artist John Craggs, of the stage which was noticed and commented upon on social media and in Northumberland County Council's own publicity. Bikes which the Town Council helped procure were painted in the county colours of red and yellow by young people at the East Centre, and mounted on the race route through the town. The Town Council added to the 'Northumberland' theme with displays of red and yellow flowers in the planters and hanging baskets on Front Street, thanks to the planting work of contractors Hollybush Landscaping, and also arranged for fabulous bunting across the street (courtesy of Shaun Holliday - Sign Erectors).

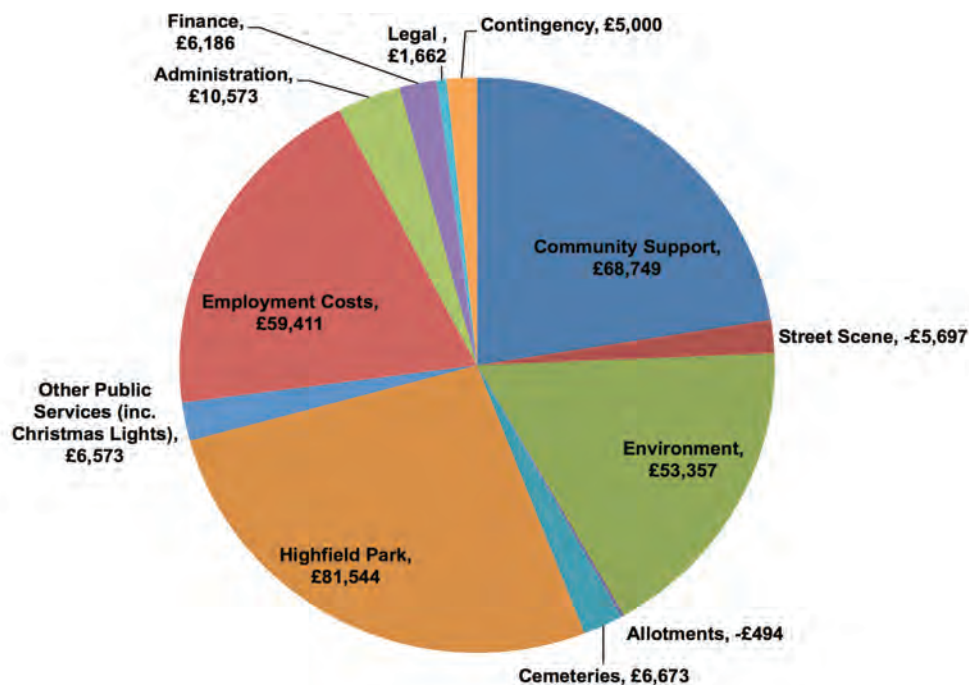
The Council also organised and sponsored a highly successful business shop-front competition. This evoked a strong response, with striking, humorous, colourful windows appearing right up to the day before the race. The worthy competition winner, scooping £500 of holiday vouchers, was Ball's Restaurant, whose display featured HM the Queen taking tea outside the restaurant as the Tour rolled by, while the runner-up was The White Tulip Wedding Company.

Edgewell Cemeteries

Work continues apace to ensure that the town's cemeteries are well-maintained, with particular attention to fence and hedge boundaries, and remain safe for all who work in or visit them.

Following stability testing of all memorials in the Cemeteries, carried out on the Council's behalf in accordance with Ministry of Justice guidelines, all grave / memorial owners are reminded that, if a memorial for which they are responsible has a warning sticker on it, this is a memorial safety / stability issue requiring their immediate attention. They are strongly advised to contact the Council and / or to follow the guidance provided on the Council's website. Failure to do so could lead to further action being taken by the Council, in pursuit of its legal duty of care owed to all who enter the Cemeteries.

The Council's Expenditure for 2015/16



The Council's expenditure in 2015-16 totalled 293,537, which was spent in the proportions shown in the chart above. The significant funding devoted to Highfield Park this year reflects the investment in new play equipment made by the Council as the owner of the Park.

How the Council operates

The town council area is divided into six wards, electing a total of 15 councillors, as shown on this page. The councillors' contact details are shown here, and on the Town Council website. The Council's notice boards, located at the Spetchells Centre, at the Mickley & District Social Club in Mickley Square and at the junction of Castle Road with Castle Close, carry details of Council meeting agendas. The agendas are also published on the website, along with minutes of meetings, details of the Council's annual budget and spending plans, along with information about the services provided by the Council, and the events it organises.

The Council's Annual General Meeting, at which the Mayor / Chairman and Deputy Mayor / Vice Chairman are chosen for the coming year, will take place on Wednesday 25 May – please see the Council's website and / or notice boards for details nearer the time.

The Town Council meets on the last Wednesday of each month, while the Planning, Contract and Works Committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month, except in December and August when special arrangements are made for all Council meetings.

All of these meetings are open to the public.

Please contact the Town Council if you wish to address any of these Council meetings, or take part in the work of 'Prudhoe in Bloom' Sub-Committee.

The Council welcomes Cllr Kevin Graham following his election in spring 2015 as a representative for the Prudhoe West and Halfway ward.

YOUR VIEWS MATTER - please tell us what you think:

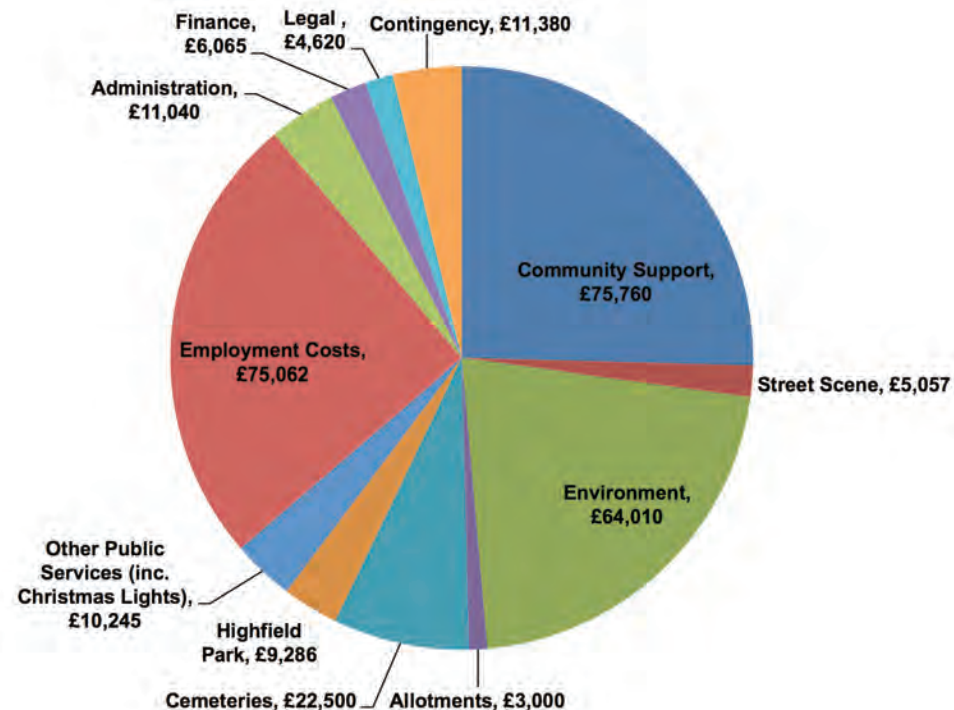
Please send information to, or contact The Town Council at:
Prudhoe Town Council, The Spetchells Centre, 58 Front Street,
Prudhoe, NE42 5AA.

Tel/Fax: (01661) 835487 Email: prudhoetc@hotmail.com
Website: www.parish-council.com/prudhoe

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Photographs: Except where otherwise credited, the photographs in this report were kindly taken and developed by voluntary community photographers Moira & Bill Wooldridge. Many more examples of their work can be found on the Council's website.

The Council's Budget for 2016/17



The Town Council's budget for 2016-17 totals £298,025 of which £295,860 is being raised from local council taxpayers by way of the precept. Northumberland County Council again elected not to pass on the funding, received from central government, compensating for the localisation of council tax benefit. As a result, the burden of the precept is shared between those residential properties where council tax benefit is not paid.

For the year ahead, the Council's plans include a commitment to work closely with the county council on behalf of the community to regenerate Eastwoods Park, and in particular the play areas at the Park. It is anticipated that detailed plans will be brought forward in the course of the year.

In 2016-17, the Council will continue to support the work of voluntary organisations delivering opportunities, services and help to the local community to the tune of around £50,000. Full details of all of the awards can be found on the Council's website. The Council also funds the TV Licence Support Scheme for the benefit of residents entitled to receive the state retirement pension – please contact the Council office for further details.

Your Council

Town Mayor and Chairman of the Council

Cllr Eileen Burt (01661) 834764

Deputy Mayor and Vice-Chairman

Cllr Ernest Dobson (01661) 831117

Castle & Eltringham Ward:

Cllr George McCreedy (01661) 833801

Cllr Nadine McGee (01661) 832759

Cllr Alan Piper (01661) 831260

Castlefields & Low Prudhoe Ward:

Cllr Ernest Dobson (01661) 831117

Cllr Gerry Price (01661) 833382

Prudhoe Hall Ward:

Cllr Bryan Futers (01661) 832348

Cllr Andy Gill (01661) 834921

Cllr Glenn Simpson (01661) 835549

Prudhoe West & Halfway Ward:

Cllr Eileen Burt (01661) 834764

Cllr June Rose (01661) 836039

Cllr Kevin Graham (01661) 610139

Mickley Ward:

Cllr Christine Cuthbert (01661) 844737

West Wylam Ward:

Cllr Duncan Couchman (01661) 832033

Cllr Jennifer McGee (01661) 834653

Cllr Tony Reid (01661) 834000

Executive Officer / Clerk to the Council: Richard Whinney

Town Council Administrator: Sarah Eden