

**Welcome** to the 2017/18 Annual Report of Prudhoe Town Council, in a slightly different format as we are now communicating more frequently with residents via a newsletter, our website and a Facebook Page. We hope you are pleased to hear from us.

We need the views of residents; we want to find out what is important to you and we have recently published an online survey about Prudhoe East Centre, a first for the Town Council. We are also supporting a town survey by Prudhoe Community Partnership; this will be launched at our **Annual Town Meeting on Thursday 17th May** and details can be found overleaf.

We are applying for a 'community asset transfer' of Prudhoe East Centre, which is why we are keen to hear your views on its future. Prudhoe Town Council is committed to maintaining this building for community use and especially as a base for youth work.

In 2017/18 Prudhoe Town Council took the decision to take ownership of the public toilets at the Road Ends (bottom of South Road) as they were under threat of closure. We were delighted that Essity supported the cost of the refurbishment, along with Northumberland County Council, and the toilets are now fit for purpose and more easily maintained. Essity also continues to provide toilets rolls, free of charge.

Prudhoe Town Council has always looked after Highfield Park and we are proud of its reputation as a venue for families, skaters, scooters and BMXers, as well as the annual Family Fun Day 'Highfield Fest', being held this year on Sunday 24th June. We also now manage the play areas at West Mickley, Castle Dene, Orchard Hill and The Copse. The Council's ownership of these plays areas is new, but over time we will engage with residents for their views. It is also our intention to take ownership of the new play area at Eastwood Park; we feel the Town Council is best placed to respond directly to resident needs and to act quickly when maintenance is required.

Prudhoe Town Council has organised several town events during the last 12 months which have attracted more support than ever; Highfield Fest, The Essity Prudhoe Miners Race, Prudhoe in Bloom and finally the Christmas Lights Switch-On. We will continue to arrange and support events in the town as they contribute to a vibrant and active community.

The face of Prudhoe is changing with house building on the hospital site, Low Prudhoe development and a promising small shop development off Front Street. We welcome new businesses coming into Prudhoe and recognise the need to support those loyal and established businesses to ensure they continue and prosper.

Prudhoe Town Council continues to express views on future housing developments, including raising concerns when considered appropriate and we will levy Northumberland County Council to actively consult with residents throughout the new Northumberland Local Plan.

There are concerns in many towns of vandalism, teenage drinking, dog fouling, litter, speeding and parking; Prudhoe is no different. We will continue to engage with the police, county councillors, schools and residents as to how we can help to reduce and eliminate these concerns in Prudhoe.

We have excellent schools in the town and fully support them and the three-tier system and have expressed concern to Northumberland County Council on the proposed two-tier system in the west of the county.

A financial report is included overleaf. Please remember that if you have any questions about how we spend your precept, you can contact the office. This financial year we have managed to keep the precept increase below the rate of inflation at 2%, in 2017/18 the increase was 3%; we believe Prudhoe residents are receiving value for money for the services we provide.

Prudhoe Town Council is a vehicle for residents to express views, we support residents where we can and we want to achieve improvements across all of our services. Please engage with us when you can and help us as we endeavour to promote Prudhoe.

Best wishes

*Councillor Gerry Price* (Chair/Mayor)

## YOUR COUNCILLORS

### Mickley Ward

Cllr Christine Cuthbert Tel: 844737

### Prudhoe Hall Ward

Cllr Andrew Gill Tel: 834921

Cllr Glenn Simpson Tel: 835549

Cllr Carol Stephenson Tel: 598096

### Castlefields & Low Prudhoe Ward

Cllr Gerry Price Tel: 833382

Cllr Ignasious Varghese Tel: 599316

### Prudhoe West & Halfway Ward

Cllr Bryan Futers Tel: 832348

Cllr Tracy Gilmore Tel: 836513

Cllr Yvonne Ritchie Tel: 832451

### Prudhoe Castle & Eltringham Ward

Cllr Duncan Couchman Tel: 832033

Cllr Holly Kelleher Tel: 07852760552

Cllr Graham Robinson Tel: 835110

### West Wylam Ward

Cllr Russ Greig Tel: 831732

Cllr Jennifer McGee Tel: 834653

Cllr Angie Scott Tel: 831348

Budget Headings	2017/18 Spending	2016/17 Spending	Movement
Management & Support	£105,221	£93,506	£11,716
Recreation & Leisure Services	£91,085	£48,601	£42,484
Environmental Services	£58,908	£68,199	-£9,291
Cemeteries	£58,514	£39,674	£18,839
Grants & Subsidies	£61,176	£61,973	-£797
Other services (includes Remembrance, Lychgate War Memorial, Communication)	£11,153	£3,832	£7,321
<b>Total</b>	<b>£386,058</b>	<b>£315,785</b>	<b>£70,273</b>

## Financial Report

Spending in 2017/18 has increased by just over 22% on 2016/17, as would be expected as Prudhoe Town Council takes on more responsibilities for assets and services in the town.

By far the greatest increase in spending is on recreational and leisure services with £30,000 investment in Eastwood Park Play Area (a contribution alongside County Councillor Small Schemes Funding and Northumberland County Council Funding). Additionally, the Town Council solely funded the refurbishment of West Mickley Play Area, costing almost £23,000.

Edgewell Cemetery has also benefitted from a significant investment with a new roadway in the New Cemetery (£17,767) and fencing along the boundary of the Old Cemetery and Highfield Lane (£4,375).

Very soon we will be unveiling the long-awaited, updated, Lychgate War Memorial. The Town Council has had a small budget for this work for a number of years, but at long last, the scheme is due to be realised and both the 2017/18 and 2018/19 budget will reflect this spending.

Prudhoe Gardeners Association manage the town allotments on behalf on the Town Council and we are very grateful; as well as doing a wonderful job they are now making plans and improvements and spending has increased as a result. The allotments now have their own notice boards and boundary hedges and footpaths are being improved. Allotment spending comes from the recreation and leisure services budget and their spending is off-set against the rents paid for plots.

Each year the Town Council receives new and varied applications for grant aid funding. Although spending has reduced marginally in grants & subsidies overall, it is not due to a decrease in the grant aid funding awarded to community groups, this increased by £3,652. The overall figure is significantly lower as in the previous year the Town Council supported the Prudhoe Community Partnership 'Live above a Shop Scheme' with a one-off grant of £5,000, this is now up and running. Prudhoe Town Council continues its commitment the supporting community groups, the TV License Refund Scheme and Youth Provision in the town with a planned budget of £68,620 in 2018/19.

Prudhoe Town Council does not just look to increase spending, we are mindful of taxpayers money and look for 'value for money' at all times. In 2017/18 we spent less on those areas of grass we cut, following a competitive tendering process. We are also pleased to say that feedback on the areas of grass we look after was very good.

Following significant investment in Highfield Park in previous years, the council has simply maintained these play areas, directing spending priorities elsewhere. Likewise, there was an investment in Christmas Lights displays two years ago so spending in 2017/18 was kept under budget.

Whereas bus shelters saw a spike in spending in 2016/17, this has not been the case in 2017/18 but we are investing in two new bus shelters in the town in 2018/19 and there are outstanding repairs, so this looks likely to be an increased cost moving forward.

All Town Council spending is published on the website so please have a look at what your money is being spent on, alternatively, you can contact the office if you have any questions.

## A - Z of Council Services

- A Allotments**
- B Burial Records, Bus Shelters**
- C Cemeteries, Christmas Lights, Community Forum**
- D Democracy**
- E Events**
- F Facebook Page, Floral Bedding**
- G Gateways, Grass cutting, Grant Aid**
- H Hanging Baskets, Headstones, Highfield Park**
- I In Bloom Competition**
- J Judging Gardens**
- K The Kepwell**
- L Litter Bins**
- M Miners Race**
- N Newsletters**
- P Play Areas, Planning Applications, Precept, Public Meetings**
- R Remembrance, Roundabouts**
- S Seats**
- T TV License Refund Scheme**
- V Vision for Prudhoe, Volunteers**
- W War Memorial, Website**
- Y Youth Forum**

### PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

**THURSDAY 17th MAY 2018**

**Tell us your 'Vision for the Town'**

Doors open from 6:30pm

Meeting starts at 7:00pm

THE SPETCHELLS CENTRE

(entrance by side door)

Refreshments available

Our **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

will be held on

**Wednesday 9th May, 7:00pm,**

The Spetchells Centre.

The Chair/Town Mayor is elected  
at this meeting.

### Prudhoe Community Partnership (PCP) Town Survey

PCP aims to make Prudhoe a better place to live and work and is seeking your views about what projects are needed in the town.

**"Have your say" and stand a chance of winning £250 vouchers to shop in Prudhoe!**

Pick up the Town Survey at the Spetchells Centre or at selected shops in town, better still complete the survey on line at

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PrudhoeCommunitySurvey>