



**In sitting down to write this Foreword to our 2018-19 Annual Report** I must begin by saying what an honour and a privilege it has been to serve you as Town Mayor. I really do love Prudhoe, my home town, and I am very proud of our amazing sense of community spirit; we are quite exceptional in this regard and I believe that this is borne out of our mining heritage. Throughout my year of office, I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many fantastic groups and individuals who volunteer and participate in our community – you are all amazing!

As is customary, I would like to use this opportunity to give you a little round up of some of the most memorable events from my year of office, whilst highlighting some of the Town Council's key priorities and new initiatives.

The Town Council were able to install the Scott Westgarth Memorial seat on the Glade in memory of Scott and we sincerely hope that it gives some comfort to his family and friends.

I'm sure that you will agree that our exceptionally long and hot Summer of 2018 was made all the more enjoyable by the outstanding floral displays throughout the parish. We had more planted beds and hanging baskets throughout the Town and Mickley with a lovely purple theme to recognise the work of the Suffragettes. Prudhoe in Bloom was again a huge success with outstanding effort from all entrants – I was thrilled to present a special award to Marion Lewis who selflessly and tirelessly volunteers to collect rubbish in and around Prudhoe.

Highfield Fest and the Annual Town Fair were once again enjoyed by the whole Community and the Town Council funded "42 Days of Summer" was an amazing success, providing new Summer activities for 1500 of our young people. Prudhoe Miners Race took a slightly different route last year and we have some even more exciting changes planned for next year – Essity support and sponsor the race and it would be remiss of me not to thank them for their ongoing shared commitment to see the race grow and develop.

It was great to see the Town Show saved last year, largely down to the efforts of my colleague Councillor Russ Greig and I would urge as many of you as possible to support and participate in this event, which is again a great part of our heritage.

Last year saw the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice and Prudhoe carried on its longstanding tradition of properly honouring our military personnel. The Lychgate War Memorial work was completed for Armed Forces Day, Silent Soldiers were placed at the Town's main entrance gateways, a 100-year commemorative flower bed was planted and our poppy wreaths are still displayed on the Glade. More recently, I was delighted to be present to see 95-year-old Red Brick House resident, veteran Tommy Watson reunited with his war medals, and the Town Council and the local branch of the Royal British Legion were unanimous in their request to invite him to lay a wreath on Remembrance Day this year.

We are lucky to have an effective working relationship with our County Councillors Gordon Stewart, Ken Stow and Anne Dale who regularly update us at Town Council meetings. The Town Council also continue to work in partnership with Prudhoe Community Partnership. The Prudhoe Youth Project was created in 2018, with financial support from the Town Council and detached youth workers will start work in the Town during the Easter Holidays.

Fortunately, Prudhoe does not suffer with as many empty shops as some High Streets. In order to maintain this, the Town Centre Working Group, which includes local traders, has long term visions to ensure that our Front Street remains a lively and vibrant part of our Community.

The Town Council prides itself on a fun filled Christmas Light Switch on and we will continue to grow on our success in this regard, regardless of the weather, which of course we can't plan for! Christmas 2018 saw a very wet switch on, but Amelia and Kian, our little local heroes who are bravely battling with illness, performed the task incredibly well, in spite of the awful weather.

Prudhoe Town Council are a forward thinking, open and transparent Council. We recognise that new technology plays a large part of everyday life and in response to this, as well as using the traditional methods of communicating with our residents, we also use our Facebook page and our website to keep you regularly updated. The Town Council have recently commissioned a new web designer to create a fresh, new, user-friendly website and we are always happy to engage with you.

Full details of all Town Council meetings are published on the Spetchells Centre Notice Board, as well as on our website and Facebook page. Do please come along to our meetings and let us have your views on what we can do to improve our wonderful Town as a place to live, work and visit.

You are especially invited to attend the Annual Town Meeting being held on Thursday 16th May to put forward your views and ask any questions of the Council. This is a less formal meeting than our monthly meetings; we will welcome you with refreshments from 6:30pm and commence the meeting at 7:00pm.

Kindest regards, *Tracy Gilmore* Town Mayor



## YOUR COUNCILLORS

### Mickley Ward

Cllr Christine Cuthbert Tel: 01661 844737

### Prudhoe Hall Ward

Cllr Andrew Gill Tel: 01661 834921

Cllr Glenn Simpson Tel: 01661 835549

Cllr Carol Stephenson Tel: 01661 598096

### Castlefields & Low Prudhoe Ward

Cllr Gerry Price Tel: 01661 833382

Cllr Ignasious Varghese Tel: 01661 599316

### Prudhoe West & Halfway Ward

Cllr Bryan Futers Tel: 01661 832348

Cllr Tracy Gilmore Tel: 01661 836513

Cllr Brenda Grey Tel: 01661 612101

### Prudhoe Castle & Eltringham Ward

Cllr Chris Barrett Tel: 01661 612171

Cllr Duncan Couchman Tel: 01661 832033

Cllr Cassie Taylor Tel: 07709 871060

### West Wylam Ward

Cllr Russ Greig Tel: 01661 831732

Cllr Jennifer McGee Tel: 01661 834653

Cllr Angie Scott Tel: 01661 831348

### Town Council Staff

Sarah Eden - Clerk to the Council

Pauline Cant - Administrative Officer

## THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

will be held on

**WEDNESDAY 8TH MAY 2019**

Meeting starts at 7:00pm

### THE SPETCHELLS CENTRE

The Chair / Town Mayor is elected  
at this meeting

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE  
**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**  
**THURSDAY 16TH MAY 2019**

Open Forum

Doors open from 6:30pm  
Meeting starts at 7:00pm

**THE SPETCHELLS CENTRE**  
Refreshments available



## Grant Aid

In 2018/19 Prudhoe Town Council supported 36 organisations with grant funding of £30,620. Full details of all the grant aid awards given over the years can be found on the Town Council's website.

The Council is pleased to say that its commitment to supporting those community groups working exceptionally hard to promote and protect the quality of life and well-being of those who live in, work in or visit the local area has grown year on year. 2019/20 is no different with a funding total of £32,500 to 35 organisations, 5 of which are new applications.



## HIGHFIELD FEST

### Family Fun Day 2018

Over 500 people attended and enjoyed the summer atmosphere at Highfield Park on Sunday 24th June. Worries about the England fixture clash were bootied off-side by the sunshine and young people and their families stayed to enjoy what was on offer. The Council is very grateful to the community groups who supported the event; Prudhoe Pathforce provided a treasure hunt, Prudhoe Plodders a mini-run and assault course, Prudhoe Motor Project brought along their kit car and Happy Faces a very busy craft stall.

Island Extreme travelled from the Isle of White very early the previous day to put on displays and run a scooter competition. The skills of the young people taking part were very impressive and local rider Josh Newton was able to introduce his Island Extreme team mates.

This year Highfield Fest will be held on Sunday 30th June, from 11am until 5pm. The event is completely free of charge for those visiting (excluding food and drinks) and paid for by Prudhoe Town Council who own and manage Highfield Park.

## 42 DAYS OF SUMMER

Prudhoe Town Council facilitated and funded the provision of activities for young people throughout the summer holidays, in association with 15 youth organisations providing a variety of sport, arts and leisure pursuits. Over 1,500 young people benefitted with many trying something for the first time. The Council was delighted with the feedback from those who took part in the sessions and are enthusiastic about enabling another jam-packed 42 days of summer in 2019.

## Scott Westgarth Memorial Seat

In July the Council installed a commemorative seat on 'The Glade' for local boxer Scott Westgarth. This was at the request of Scott's family, to celebrate and honour his life and the achievements he made in his sport. An unveiling service was held on Sunday 8th July which was attended by many local people and Scott's family and friends.



## Essity Prudhoe Miners Race 2018

The Prudhoe Miners Race was once popular with members of the town's working men's clubs, but it eventually died out after the Second World War, only to be revived in 2012 by the Council to build on the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics and celebrate the town's coal mining heritage.

Since its re-birth, Essity Prudhoe Mill, the town's largest employer, has been a huge supporter of the event; this will continue in 2019 as the run takes on new and exciting challenges, soon to be announced. (Pictured above Simon Edge - Senior Site Manager at Essity, Jack Boaden - 2nd Place, Cllr Tracy Gilmore - Prudhoe Town Mayor.)

## Road Ends Toilets

In June 2018, Prudhoe Town Council took over responsibility for the West Road public conveniences from Northumberland County Council. Prior to the transfer, we worked with the County Council to bring the toilets up to a satisfactory standard; this was achieved with the help of a £5,000 donation from Essity, a global health and hygiene company with a long-established plant at Low Prudhoe. The donation was received in 2017/18 but we continue to receive an on-going supply of toilet paper.

The toilet block is cleaned to a very high standard by local cleaning contractors Purple NE Limited and the Council is pleased to have been able to keep this local service available for residents and visitors alike.

### Photo Credits

Throughout the year photographers Bill and Moira Wooldridge tirelessly create a photographic record of all our events and community engagement; sincere thanks and credit to them both.

## The Lychgate War Memorial, St Mary Magdalene Church

Following the steadfast efforts of members of the Prudhoe & District Local History Society to find missing names from the fallen of WWI and WWII and all subsequent conflicts, our Architect, Mr Peter Ashworth, was able to design a scheme that protected the history of the Lychgate whilst at the same time creating scope for what has become a growing list.

The detailed craftsmanship of Stomping Ground Furniture, who completed the work in time for Armed Forces Day on 30th June, has been much admired. On Sunday 22nd July, Rev. Daniel Freyhan held a special service of thanks and rededication, remembering all those from Prudhoe who died serving their country.

Silent Soldiers were placed around the town in this special year, commemorating 100 years since the end of WWI.



## Prudhoe in Bloom 2018

The best Community Gardening Award was won by Friends of Eastwood Park, for their transformation of the open space at Eastwood Park (photo left).

Mrs Diane Hull, winner of Best Rear Garden and Mrs Shirley Frazer, winner of Best Front Garden and Best Hanging Basket, pictured above with Mayor, Cllr Tracy Gilmore.

The Best School Award was presented to Ferndene (teacher Chris Sneddon pictured left with Dean and Vivienne Readman, Hollybush Nurseries) and the Best Church Award to Prudhoe Methodist Church. Marion Lewis collected a very well-deserved Community Champion Award and Ball's Fish Shop & Tearooms received a Platinum Award in the Business Category.





## Bus Shelters

We continue to be responsible for the provision and maintenance of bus shelters and residents have told us that they appreciate the high quality of cleaning carried out under a quarterly contract with local firm CF Valeting. We respond to requests for additional shelters and have installed a new shelter on West Road (opposite Eltringham) supported by funds from County Councillor Ken Stow's small schemes allowance.

Thanks to the purchase of an additional shelter for Mickley, from County Councillor Anne Dale's small schemes allowance, those travelling east from Mickley Square will shortly have a new shelter also; work began in 2018 but this looks likely to be completed in the next financial year.

2019 will see more investment in bus shelters, and continued maintenance, as a result of resident's requests for seating and a further shelter at the bottom of Beaumont Way, travelling east.



## Allotments

Prudhoe Town allotments are situated at Castle Dene, Stoney Flatts, Edgewell and Redwell in Prudhoe. The allotment sites are provided by Prudhoe Town Council and managed by Prudhoe Gardeners' Association (PGA), who have been very busy this year clearing difficult plots, restoring allotment boundaries and in particular repairing the fence along the piggy bank at Castle Dene. As well as managing the town's allotments the PGA also run the PGA Hut situated behind the West Wylam Inn. The Hut opens on Saturday mornings from 10am until 12 noon (Jan-Sep) with reduced hours in October and November. The Prudhoe Town Show is managed by the PGA and 2018 saw 500 exhibits with everything from handicrafts and calligraphy to fruit and vegetables and home baking, including children's crafts. The 55th Prudhoe Town Show will be held on 7th and 8th September 2019. For further information visit the Prudhoe Gardeners' Association website and Facebook page.



## Litter Bins

Prudhoe Town Council acquired 84 litter/dog bins from Northumberland County Council in 2013/14 when this responsibility was devolved to us and we have since purchased 36. In 2018/19, 13 bins were purchased to replace old and broken bins and we installed 3 new bins in new locations. Additionally, the council agreed a contract with CF Valeting to cleanse all the bins, ready for spring.

All bins installed by the Council are dual purpose and can be used for both litter and dog waste. We also hope to encourage sensible disposal of cigarette litter and have recently worked with local firm CJL Fenwick to install disposal units on top of two litter bins on Front Street; one outside Lotus House and another outside of G & S Electrics. We will evaluate their success and look at rolling this out on all Front Street bins.

Northumberland County Council are responsible for environmental enforcement and members of the public can be charged fixed penalty notices of £80 for litter (including cigarette litter) and £75 for failing to pick up after their dog. The message is clear; where there is a bin use it, if there isn't a bin - take it home!



## Christmas Lights and Switch-On Event

Mickey and Minnie Mouse and the Elf on the shelf joined families to celebrate the turning on of the Christmas lights in Prudhoe. The event warms the hearts of all who attend, which was much needed this year as it was cold and wet. Amelia Marron and Kian Musgrove (pictured above) took the honour of turning on the lights and were congratulated for their bravery in their battles with cancer. Choirs from Adderlane Academy, Mickley First School, Prudhoe Castle First School and Churches Together sang to entertain the crowds and Prudhoe Co-op staff served mulled wine and mince pies, alongside champions of Prudhoe; Caroline and Ian Warburton. No event would be complete without Mister Disco Man; master of ceremonies and supplier of endless tunes, dances, games and sweets! 2019 will see the continued replacement of the small Christmas trees on Front Street, which have certainly passed their best. The Council was delighted that The Spetchells Centre were able to be part of the Christmas lights scheme for the first time and are grateful to Prudhoe Community Partnership for donating money towards the scheme displays.

## Edgewell Cemeteries

The year ahead is going to see a few changes in the cemeteries. Firstly, we have agreed a new service level agreement with Northumberland County Council that will generate visible improvements to maintenance and allow visitors to access the cemetery at times to suit them. Dolan Plant Hire will be on-site in April/May installing a new footpath into the old cemetery across from the New Cemetery car park, as well as repairing the poor boundary fence that runs from the chapel to Edgewell Road. Memorial stability testing is due to commence around the same time so visitors can expect to see warning signs and notices on those memorials that require attention. The Council will be writing out to grave owners over a period of time.

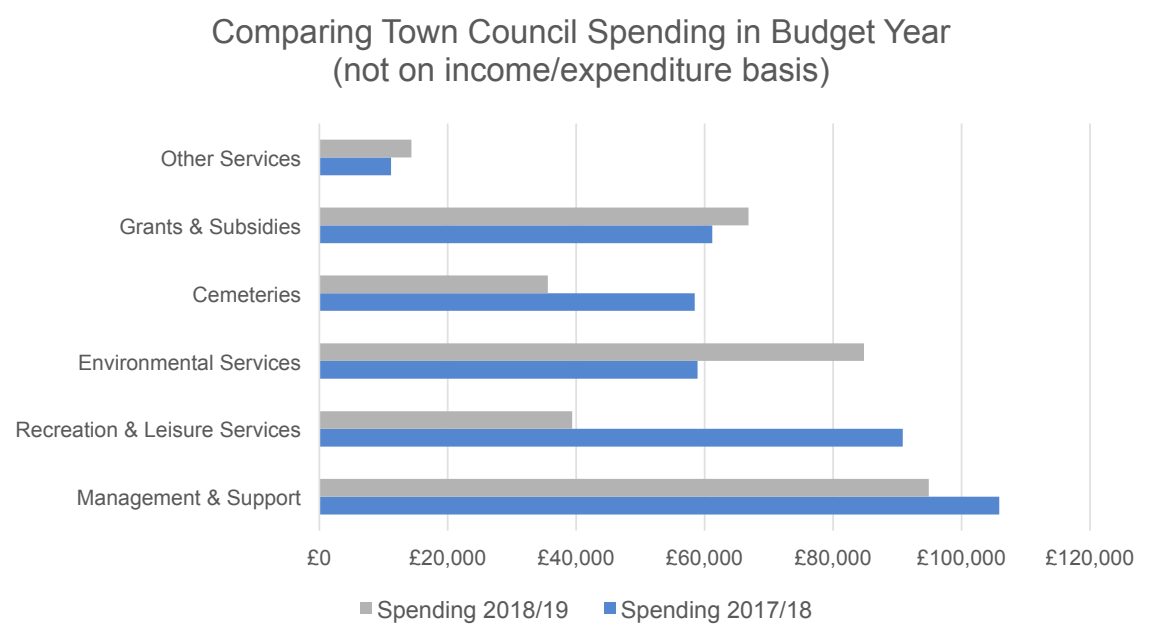
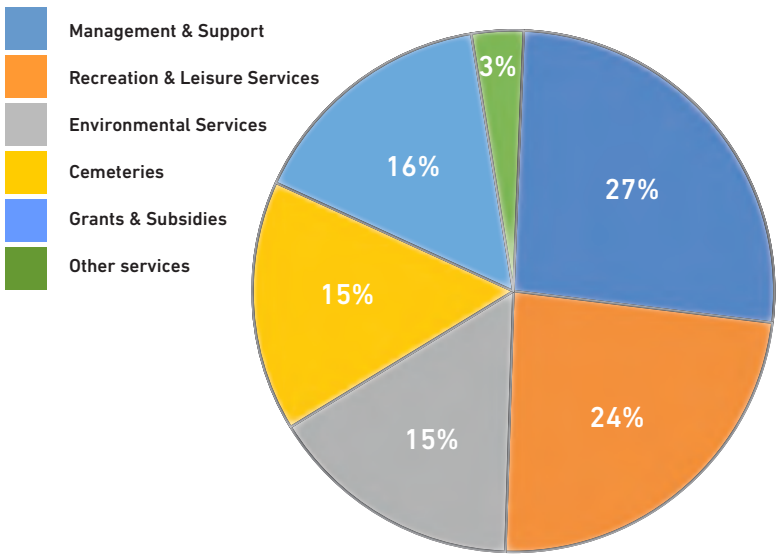
## The Environment

Prudhoe Town Council is very proud of its investment in enhancing the environment and has long since been responsible for our roundabouts and gateways, formal floral bedding, hanging baskets and planters and additional grass-cutting, that would otherwise not be a feature of our town. This year our contractors, Hollybush Nurseries, created the wonderful 100 years commemorative bed to mark the anniversary of the end of the First World war and extended the planters scheme in Mickley, following consultation with residents. Grass-cutting is often a contentious subject but the Council is pleased with the work carried out by contractor KAM Gardening who have kept all areas under control throughout the growing season. The environmental contracts are due to be re-tendered in 2020/21 so you are encouraged to tell us what you think about how your money is being spent.

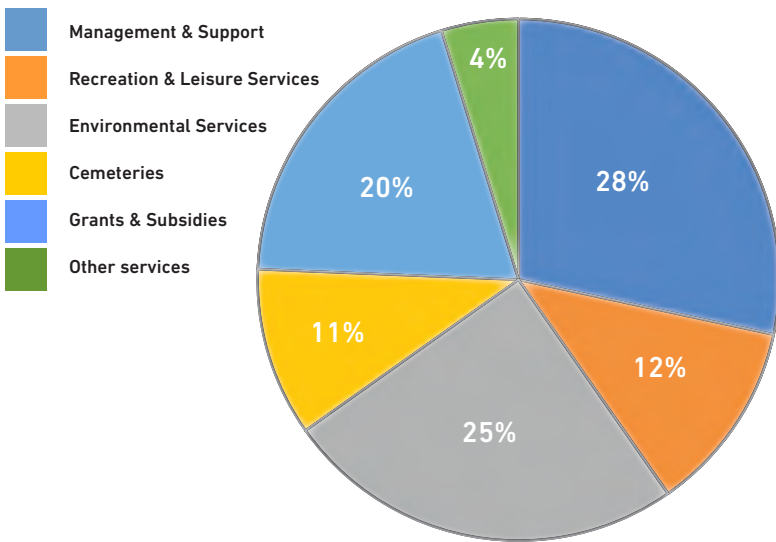


Budget Headings	2018/19 Spending
Management & Support	£94,918
Recreation & Leisure Services	£39,371
Environmental Services	£84,824
Cemeteries	£35,585
Grants & Subsidies	£66,844
Other services	£14,327

Spending 2017/18



Spending 2018/19



## Financial Report

The financial report is calculated on a receipts and payments basis, rather than an income and expenditure basis which is required for our Annual Return to the external auditor. Our Annual Governance and Accountability Return will be available for public inspection from Monday 17th June 2019.

The information detailed focuses on spending as the Town Council is a public service provider. Although we collect fees in relation to the cemetery and we are refunded VAT spent, by the Government, our main budget income is the 'precept'; the tax levied on our behalf by Northumberland County Council on the council-tax payers of Prudhoe. In 2018/19 our precept demand to Northumberland County Council was £339,440. We receive a tax base figure that allows an approximate calculation of the precept levied on the residents of Prudhoe, based on Band D properties (3,291 in 2018/19). Using this information, the Town Council recognises that the average household in Prudhoe is paying £103/year for the services provided by Prudhoe Town Council. This is not to be confused with the main Council Tax element which pays for the services provided by Northumberland County Council, for which we have no responsibility.

The figures for 2018/19 set against 2017/18 show a large decrease in spending towards Recreation and Leisure Services. This is due to higher than usual figures in 2017/18 rather than a reduction in services in 2018/19. In 2017/18 we donated £30,000 funding towards Eastwood Park play area development and £22,800 was spent on a new play area at West Mickley. We have continued to invest in the play areas for which the Town Council is responsible; new signage has been installed as well as minor repairs being carried out. 2019/20 will see the replacement of the much-loved Space Net at Highfield Park; this will be installed after the Easter holidays. Town Council allotments are managed by Prudhoe Gardeners Association, who on our behalf have invested a great deal of time and money repairing boundary fencing and clearing difficult to let allotments.

An area that has seen increased spending on last year is Environmental Services. Prudhoe Town Council is very proud of its investment in the appearance of the town and the work done by our contractors on floral bedding, baskets and planters, gateways and roundabouts, as well as some grass-cutting, which is paid via this budget heading. We have recently taken over the ownership and management of the road-ends toilets which requires an annual investment of approximately £10,000, excluding repairs.

More visible investment in this area is in the repair and maintenance of our assets. Bus shelters, litter bins and public seats are the responsibility of the Town Council and in 2018/19 we were able to repair and repaint all the town seats and replace those litter bins that were past their best, in addition to cleaning all litter bins and bus shelters.

Edgewell Cemeteries cover a large area and the Town Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of them. Spending on cemeteries is significantly lower than last year as a new road was laid in 2017/18 and new fencing erected; this amounted to over £22,000. Taking this into account, it is fair to say that investment has been similar year on year, however, 2019/20 will see a rise when we install a new footpath into the old cemetery and carry out memorial stability testing. All spending on cemetery maintenance and development is off-set against the fees received; in 2018/19 the Town Council levied fees of £29,040 for cemeteries (£31,925 in 2017/18).

Each year the Town Council offers community groups the opportunity to apply for Grant Aid. In 2018/19 this was extended further and we offered any group or organisation the opportunity to apply for funding to allow them to offer free child places for activities and events over the summer holidays. 42 days of summer 'holiday activities' scheme was a great success and the increase in grants and subsidies was very well spent. The budget heading only increased by £5,668 which is attributable to the fact that funding usually applied for by the Youth Service was not requested. The Town Council agreed that it wished to ensure that a similar amount to that which had always been invested (£25,000) was set aside for the youth of the town, although we were unsure at the start of the budget cycle what this would be used for. 2019/20 unveils exciting plans, initiated by Prudhoe Community Partnership, for a charity-based youth service, in addition to the Northumberland County Council youth provision. Prudhoe Town Council has continued its championing of the young people of our town with an investment of £20,000 for the delivery of a detached youth service, as well as approving two councillors on the committee of the newly formed Prudhoe Youth Project.

Prudhoe Town Council operate under strict financial regulations and we seek value for money at all times. We seek written quotes for work over £250 and operate a transparent tendering process.

All spending and budget information is published on our website so please have a look to see what your money is being used for. If you have any questions, please contact the Town Council office.