

## Welcome

Welcome to the Town Council's annual report for 2014-15. For 2015, I am excited to announce that on September 10 the Tour of Britain Cycle Race is coming to Prudhoe! Following on from the visit of the Olympic Games Torch Relay in 2012, this is a great opportunity for the town to show itself at its best, and for us all to enjoy being part of a major international sporting event. This great occasion reinforces the view that Prudhoe is a vibrant community with a lot to offer for all ages and walks of life.

It is also a great pleasure to announce that major developments are expected over the coming months at the town's Castle Dene and Highfield Park play areas: these will be reported on in detail at a later date.

On behalf of the Council, I most warmly thank all those individuals, community organisations, services and enterprises whose time and efforts make such a positive difference to our town.

I also thank those councillors and volunteers who serve on the sub-committees and working groups delivering, among other things, the Council's events and festive lights displays, and the town's 'in Bloom' provision, managing the cemeteries, and supporting work on the town's street scene.

Full details of the work of the Council and events organised by it can be found on our easy to navigate and regularly-updated website, [www.parish-council.com/prudhoe](http://www.parish-council.com/prudhoe).

Councillor Eileen Burt  
Mayor / Chairman of Prudhoe Town Council.

## Annual Town Meeting

Please come to the Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday 19 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.

## Community Support

For 2015-16, the Council has agreed to support the work of voluntary organisations delivering opportunities, services and support to many parts of the local community to the tune of over £50,000. Full details of all of the awards can be found on the Council's website.

# Annual Report 2014/2015



The launch of the New Prudhoe Market including (left to right) Cllr Alan Piper, Cllr Mrs Nadine McGee, Cllr Mrs Jennifer McGee, Cllr Gerry Price, Cllr George McCreedy, Cllr Bryan Futers, Keith Gray (NCC Markets Manager).

Photo: Trevor Woodman

## A Market for Prudhoe

Prudhoe's monthly market takes place in the Glade. A partnership between the Town Council and Northumberland County Council, the market has been running for just over a year, attracting some enterprising traders and - equally importantly - a loyal clientele. There is an extra buzz in the town centre on market day, with a number of Front Street traders reporting significantly increased footfall. The market supports business enterprise and draws custom into the town centre. This Council initiative has dovetailed with the separate venture of Prudhoe Community Partnership, using 'Portas' funding, to produce and distribute a shopping guide to the town centre. This shows that there are over 70 businesses in the town centre alone, providing a comprehensive range of goods and services to the town and surrounding area. The Council is committed to the continued growth and success of the market, working to develop its undoubted potential.

## The Prudhoe Miners' Race

The 2014 SCA Miners' Race, organised by Run Northumberland was run on the morning of Sunday 21 September 2014, with a field of 135 runners completing the same 10-kilometre course as the year before on a dry, sunny autumn day, unaffected by the changes to the finish caused by the ongoing refurbishment of Ovingham Bridge. A record-breaking 65 runners from ages 3 to 8 tackled the 1.5 kilometre mini-run at Tyne Riverside, while a smaller field of 23 completed the 3-kilometre junior run (9-15 years), following a circuit round the Spetchells chalk heaps.

Once again the Council is especially grateful to major local employer and sponsor SCA for generously supporting all the races, and to the Manager at SCA's Prudhoe Mill site, Richard Sutcliffe, for starting the races and presenting the prizes. The Youth Charity Shop was again delighted to supply trophies for the junior events and special thanks are due to the volunteer marshals who provided race support at the start and the finish. Thanks also to Active Northumberland for providing race support facilities, including a first aid station. John Robson provided music and race announcements at the start and (after impressively speedy scene-shifting) the finish - a highly successful improvement to the fabric of the race.

A number of improvements will be in place for the 2015 junior events, coupled with increased engagement with local schools to attract potential competitors.

The 2015 races will take place on Sunday 27 September.

Entries may be made at [www.runnation.co.uk](http://www.runnation.co.uk) choose 2015 Races.

Tel/fax (01661) 835487 email: [prudhoetc@hotmail.com](mailto:prudhoetc@hotmail.com)



## The Glade

In the last year, the Glade has been the focus of sustained efforts to enhance its appeal as a venue for town centre events. Councillor Tony Reid kindly devoted funds from his county councillor's allowance to fund the paving-over of the beds at the front of the square, and (by the time this report is read) the erection of a hand-rail at the asymmetric steps leading towards the Co-op. The Town Council has organised and funded the clearance of the side and rear beds in the Glade, and their planting with a carefully-chosen selection of sturdy and colourful plants, including some annuals, to brighten up this important community open space.

## Street Scene including Dog Fouling

The Council's Street Scene Working Group leads on liaison with the County Council, local business and volunteers to improve the appearance of the town centre. 2014 saw the installation of hanging basket 'trees' in the central / east section of Front Street, while the litter bins in this location were refurbished and painted black.

The Council maintains the town's 92 (soon to be more) litter bins, and funds the purchase and installation of replacement and additional bins.

The Council shares the strong public concern with dog fouling and the dumping of bagged dog waste, and encourages reporting of dog fouling to the County Council using the website: [www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk) and select 'Report Dog Waste'.

The Council urges responsible dog owners to clean up after their pets, and to ensure all dog waste is bagged and disposed of whether in owners' domestic bins or in a public litter bin where this is more convenient. The Council supports the strict enforcement of penalties for dog-fouling in view of the very serious public health implications of this unpleasant and anti-social behaviour.



Chairman Mrs Eileen Burt, Prudhoe Community Arts Project founders Mr & Mrs Warburton and well known collector and contributor to the Art Exhibition, Mr David Walker, enjoying the exhibits at the open night.

## Art Exhibition

Following a determined but ultimately unsuccessful initiative to persuade the National Gallery to allow JMW Turner's masterpiece "Prudhoe Castle" to be displayed locally, the Council organised an exhibition of artworks depicting the town's most historic feature. The first floor of the Spetchells Centre became an art gallery from 4 to 6 December last year, and a steady stream of visitors (including pupils from St Matthew's RC Primary School) came to view the impressive selection of paintings, drawings, photographs, engravings, prints, and posters. Thanks are due to the many contributors who so generously loaned their prized artworks to be shown. The stories behind the ownership and in some cases the creation of the works added a fascinating personal dimension to this special event, and it is hoped that the success of this venture will lead to more such 'art happenings' in the future.

The Council thanks the following for their support in mounting the exhibition: Northumberland County Council (Library Service), English Heritage, The Co-operative (Prudhoe Garage branch), and Prudhoe Community Partnership.



Newly planted sign at the Western Gateway



The first flowers of Spring 2014



## Prudhoe in Bloom

Overall winning front garden in the town, Mrs Ingram, Horsley View, West Wylam

The efforts of the town's first, primary and middle **schools** in the annual Prudhoe in Bloom competition really impressed the judges, Vivienne and Dean Readman of Hollybush Landscaping, who remarked on the improvements made to school gardens since the previous year. Mickley First School and St. Matthew's RC Primary School were joint winners of the schools' trophy. Teachers and pupils at all of the schools deserve to be highly commended for their gardening efforts: all schools received gardening vouchers, most generously donated by Tyne Valley Garden Centre at Mickley. In the **churches** category, where all of the gardens entered are nurtured by volunteers, the overall winner was St. Mary Magdalene Church, with Our Lady & St. Cuthbert's Church as runner-up. SCA Prudhoe Mill, Thompson's of Prudhoe, Plunkett's Tiling Limited and Adderlane Surgery all entered their gardens in the **business** category, and are to be commended for their efforts. Lastly, Mrs Vivienne Bolton, our **residential** gardens judge since the competition re-started in 2005, commented that many of the gardens visited were of an exceptionally high standard. The winner of the Best Front Garden in the town was Mrs Ingram of Horsley View, West Wylam (Prudhoe South), while the winners of the Best Rear Garden were Mr & Mrs Scott of Lime Grove, Castle Dene (Prudhoe North). The awards and prizes were presented by the Mayor at a special ceremony held at the Parish Hall on 13 September. Full details of all of the 2014 competition results, and how to enter the 2015 competition, can be found on the Council website.

The Council warmly thanks the competition judges named above for their support and involvement; and the members of the Council's 'in Bloom' Sub-Committee, Cllr Nadine McGee (Chair), Cllr Jennifer McGee, Peter Nevin, James Dobson, Joan Russell, Moira Wooldridge and Janet Porter.

After a two-year hiatus, the Council has entered the town in the regional Northumbria in Bloom competition for 2015.

## Town Council Allotments

The Prudhoe Gardeners' Association (PGA) informative web-pages detail the work of the Association, please visit their website: [www.prudhoegardenersassociation.wordpress.com](http://www.prudhoegardenersassociation.wordpress.com), as well as providing a wealth of advice on matters horticultural. The PGA manages the Council's allotments at Redwell, Edgewell, Castle Dene, and Stonyflat Bank on a day-to-day basis. The allotment rules are now being revised to reflect recent developments in practice nationwide. The PGA reports a trend towards smaller plots as more families become involved in allotment gardening. Meanwhile, the annual Town Show, 51 years young and a great family event, will take place on 5/6 September.

The Prudhoe Community Allotment (visit their website: [www.prudhoecommunityallotment.wordpress.com](http://www.prudhoecommunityallotment.wordpress.com)), located at Redwell, provides accessible gardening in a secure and supportive environment. This nationally-awarded initiative goes from strength to strength: its latest accolade was a Level 5 – Outstanding - Award for the second year running at the RHS/Northumbria in Bloom "It's Your Neighbourhood" awards in November 2014. For information regarding the Prudhoe Community Allotment, please contact Joan Russell, the Co-ordinator, on 01661 833801.

For availability of Town Council allotments, please contact Paul Muto, the PGA Allotments Secretary / Co-ordinator at [paolomuto@hotmail.com](mailto:paolomuto@hotmail.com), or visit the PGA hut (behind the West Wylam Inn) on Saturday mornings.



## Christmas Lights displays - Switch-on



Stars from hit film 'Frozen' at the switch-on

2014 saw further work to enhance the festive appeal of the town centre with the installation of new displays, including a 'curtain' of lights over the front of the Glade, new wall-mounted 'bell' and 'holly' motifs, red, green and gold spheres, and additional white pea lights in the trees at Oaklands. On the day of the Switch-on, Friday 28th November, the excitement was palpable, and the festivities did not disappoint! The Spetchells Centre Christmas Fair got everything underway, and the Switch-on event led to the

Christmas Lights being 'ignited' at 6:15pm, following a welcome message from the Mayor. Children and parents alike were delighted to welcome Queen Elsa and Olaf, from the hit musical film 'Frozen' to switch on the lights. The children of Mickley First School sang the favourite song from the film 'Let it Go' along with a selection of Christmas carols. By the time the real Santa Claus arrived in his magnificent sleigh, piloted by the Mid-Tyne Lions, everyone was in very high spirits and the switch-on of the lights in Prudhoe provided a spectacular finale to the proceedings.

As if the above was not enough to get everyone into the festive spirit and warm hearts and minds, local champions of the arts, Caroline and Ian Warburton from Dragontale Theatre Company and Prudhoe Community Arts Project served complimentary mulled wine and mince pies, while Prudhoe Parents Group provided Christmas Crafts for the children.

The Council warmly thanks lighting contractor Christmas Plus for mounting the displays and for their support at the switch-on.

## Youth Service & Young Peoples' Forum

The Council's funding for the West Northumberland Youth Service 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. In 2014-15 additional funding from the Council supported work in the town by the Prince's Trust on the Prudhoe Badger (now restored to full health), a £100 enterprise challenge, and support to increase the participation of local young people in the Young People's Forum.

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 most welcome to attend and participate in Forum meetings – they do not have to be nominated by their school.** The Council thanks the East Centre (West Northumberland Youth Service) and Carol Quinn in particular for their support in facilitating the Forum's meetings. Lastly, the East Centre reports that following a continuing successful year of meetings, the Forum was shortlisted for the prestigious Northumberland's Finest Youth Awards.



## 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](http://www.mitry-mory.fr)

## Councillor Mrs Mavis Harris

The Council is sad to announce the recent resignation of Councillor Mrs Mavis Harris from the Council. Cllr Harris represented Prudhoe West & Halfway Ward on the Council and had previously served the Castle Ward. The Council offers warm thanks to Cllr Harris for her work over the past eight years, and wishes her well for the future.



**Kite Festival** Parachuting teddy bears take time-out for tea at the Highfield Park Kite Festival

The 2014 Kite Festival, held at Highfield Park on 12-13 July, saw very little wind on the Saturday but, while the professionals struggled to get their displays to work, the lack of wind didn't stop the children flying the kites they had made themselves; they simply did what children do best and ran with them. Sunday brought much improved conditions (ie, more wind!). The kite flyers' displays were shown to their best advantage in the Tynedale skies, with awesome team and solo multi-kite action for all to enjoy. Appreciative crowds flocked to the park to join in the fun on both days. The much-anticipated 'teddy bear parachute drop' took place on both days and all the bears returned safely to earth having won their parachute 'wings'.

Community attractions included the skate / scooter / BMX competition organised by West Northumberland Youth Service (Saturday), Prudhoe Parents Group (Saturday), Prudhoe Community Choir (Sunday), and of course John Robson, master of PA systems and musical interludes.

The Council's grateful thanks again 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 2015 festival will take place on the weekend of 4/5 July.

## Highfield Fest

Highfield Fest 2014 took place on Sunday 29 June, and proved the biggest and best fun-filled extravaganza yet. The ever-growing roster of attractions included inflatable fun, performances from accomplished local dance troupe Energize, live music from Divine Crown and Lyrical Whisky, face-painting, archery instruction (from the Scouts), and football challenges (presented by Prudhoe Youth Football Club and North Country Leisure (now Active Northumberland). Small animals including a snake (!) were shown by Northumberland College (Kirkley Hall), who also provided nail painting. Prudhoe Army Cadets supported car parking as well as manning their recruitment tent, and Mr Disco Man, John Robson was DJ and Master of Ceremonies. Once again the Fest proved that the town's park is an ideal spot to spend the day. The 2014 event takes place on Sunday 28 June.

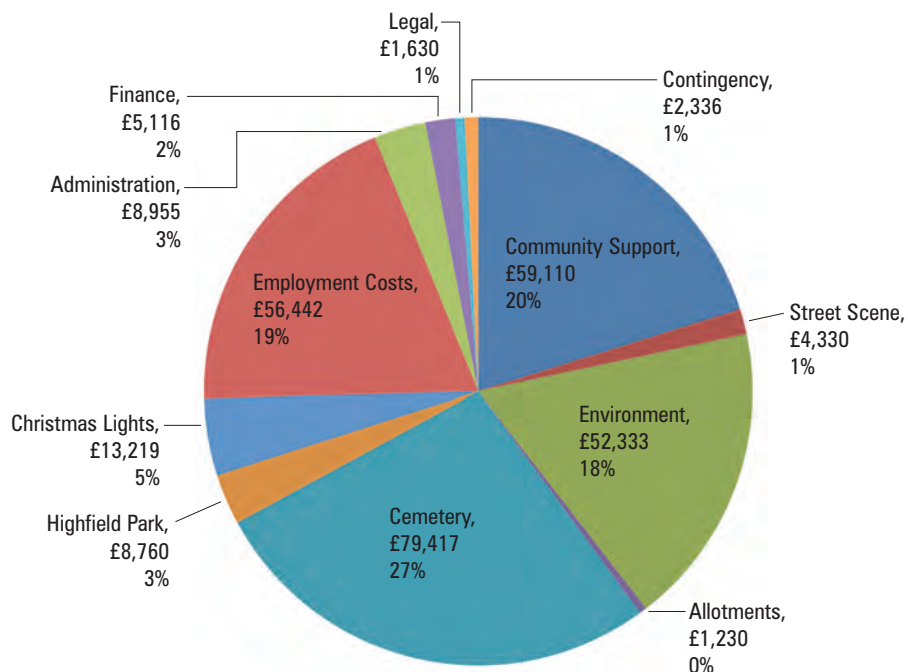
## Edgewell Cemeteries

In 2014, most of the roadways in on the Old Cemetery were resurfaced, with many of the kerbs also replaced, while a clump of fir trees in the centre of the ground was removed, greatly improving the light. Meanwhile there has been further replanting of hedging in the New Cemetery, levelling of the ground at the north-west corner, and - most recently - the creation of a smart new bedding feature opposite the entrance. Next, following vigorous lobbying by this and other local councils over the issue of double-charging for cemeteries, the Council has been successful in obtaining an annual refund from the county council. Thanks are due to Councillors Andy Gill and Ernest Dobson for making the case for the refund on the town's behalf. Lastly following memorial stability testing carried out in respect of all memorials in the Edgewell Cemeteries in 2014, in accordance with Ministry of Justice guidelines, the Council gives public notice as follows:

**If a memorial for which you are responsible has a sticker on it, please contact the Council for further information. 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 visitors, to make the memorial safe.**



## The Council's Budget for 2015/16



The Town Council's budget for 2015-16 totals £324,562 of which £288,793 is raised as a precept from local council taxpayers. Once again, Northumberland County Council declined to pass on the funding received from central government, compensating for the localisation of council tax benefit. Therefore, the burden of the precept is carried only by those properties in respect of which council tax benefit is not paid.

The Council's plans for the year are shown as percentages of the total budget in the pie chart. The increase in the proportion spent on Highfield Park is due to the Council setting aside £40,000 as its share of the investment in the improvement of the play facilities at Highfield Park, while the amount included for Contingency includes provision for anticipated expense in support of the visit of the Tour of Britain Cycle Race, and investment in improved outdoor sports facilities. On the other hand, the significant reduction in the Cemetery budget for this year reflects the completion of recent major works to the fabric of the burial grounds.

For further information, please refer to the budget documents published on the Council's website.

## 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 27 May – please see the Council's website and / or notice boards for details nearer the time.

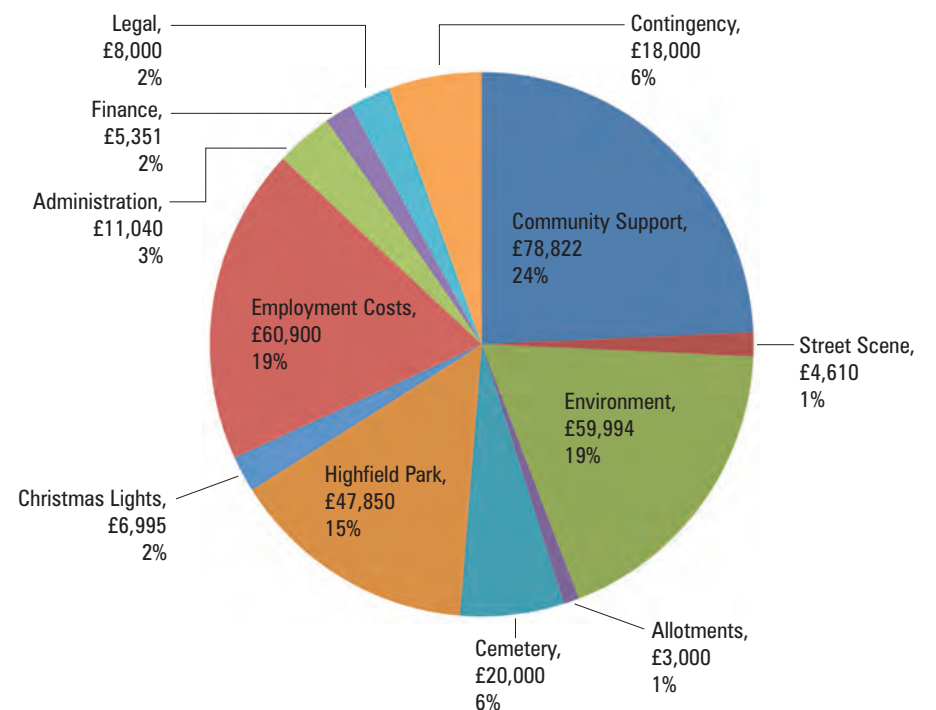
The Town Council meets on the last Wednesday of each month, while the Planning, Contract and Works Committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month, except in December and August when special arrangements are made for all Council meetings.

*All of these meetings are open to the public.*

*Please contact the Town Council if you wish to address any of these Council meetings.*

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

## The Council's Spending for 2014/15



Having budgeted for a total expenditure of £300,792 in 2014-15, the Council's actual spending amounted to a total of £292,878, which was spent in the proportions shown in the pie chart.

*If you have any questions about the financial governance of the Council, its budget, or specific spending, please contact the Council office.*

## 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

Seat vacant

### 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

## 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](mailto:prudhoetc@hotmail.com)

Website: [www.parish-council.com/prudhoe](http://www.parish-council.com/prudhoe)

Published (2015) by Prudhoe Town Council