

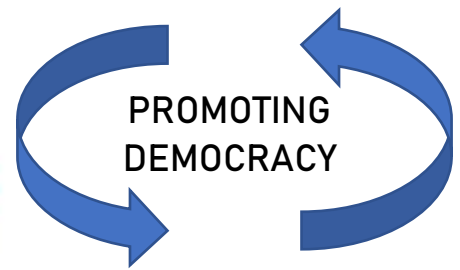


# Prudhoe

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## TOWN COUNCIL

**PROMOTING THE  
DEMOCRATIC PROCESS:  
PRUDHOE TOWN  
COUNCIL BEGINS AND  
ENDS WITH YOU...**



### Prudhoe Town Council begins and ends with YOU...

#### What is a Town Council?

A town council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the town. It is the level of government closest to the community, with Northumberland County Council above it in the hierarchy.

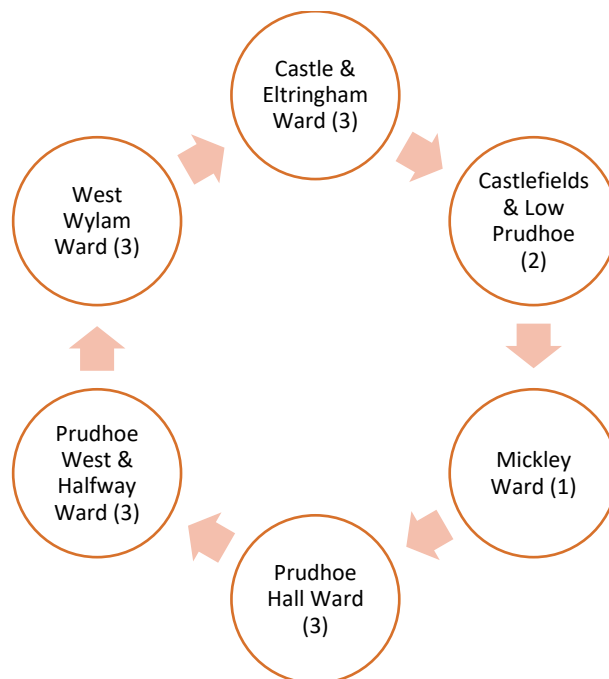
As the authority closest to the people, Prudhoe Town Council is the first-place people will go with concerns or ideas. For this reason, we are a vital part of the community and we want to encourage you to engage with us.

#### Elected Representatives

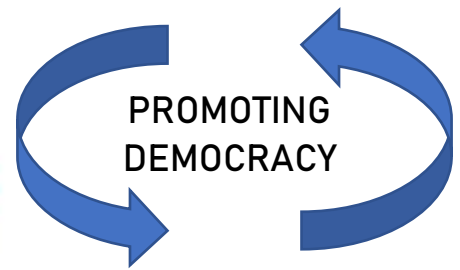
Prudhoe Town Council has 15 elected representatives who serve as Town Councillors; as democratically elected local representatives, they have a unique and privileged position and the potential to make a real difference to people's lives.

Once elected, Town Councillors sit on the council for a maximum of four years (our last election was in May 2017), if Councillors wish to stay in post they can stand for re-election (all seats in Prudhoe will be up for election in May 2021).

Prudhoe Town Council has six wards; the number of Councillors on each is determined by the size of the electorate, illustrated below:



As well as deciding who is elected to serve on Prudhoe Town Council, residents also have the ability to choose who stands. The eligibility criteria for a Town Councillor is set out below. As well as being eligible, a candidate must be proposed and seconded by electors of the ward they wish to represent, as part of the nomination process.



## Eligibility to stand as a Town Councillor

You must be able to answer YES to one of the citizen status questions below:

UK or Commonwealth Citizen

Citizen of Republic of Ireland

Citizen of Member State of EU

You must be able to answer YES to one of the Parish connection questions below:

An elector in the Parish Ward

Owner occupier or owner tenant for the whole of previous 12 months

Worked in the Parish as principle or only place of work during previous 12 months

Lived in or within 3 miles of Parish boundary for the whole of the previous 12 months

You must be nominated by electors in the ward you wish to represent:

A Ward Elector must Propose you

A ward Elector must Second you

## Why become a Town Councillor?

You could be the fresh new talent that Prudhoe Town Council is looking for. Are you ready to help change the face of local government? No other role gives you a chance to make such a huge difference to quality of life for people in your local area.

The diversity of local councils is their strength. Each can make a unique response to the needs of their community with a sensitivity that is more difficult for principal authorities to achieve. The job of Prudhoe Town Council is to represent the interests of the whole community; understanding the needs of different groups in the community (such as young and elderly people) is an important part of a Councillors role.

As a councillor, you have a responsibility to be well-informed, especially about diverse local views. You cannot assume that you represent the interests of all your electors without consulting them.

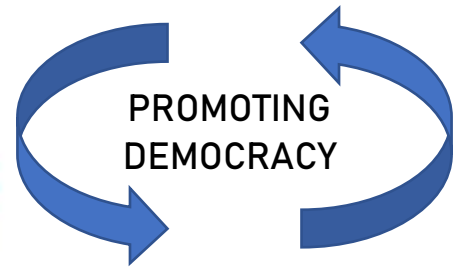
In recognition of the need for a vibrant local democracy, the Localism Act 2011 sought to decentralise administrative power from the state towards localities, empowering communities to enable them to make better responses to community problems, and over the course of the past few years Town and Parish Councils have found themselves taking on many more responsibilities.

Prudhoe Town Council has taken on formal floral bedding, elements of grass-cutting, play areas, public toilets, litter bins and bus shelters and continually seek to be actively involved in the delivery of many other local services. As we move forward, the public and the Councillors who represent them have an opportunity to engage with key stakeholders in a bottom-up approach to devolution with local solutions to local problems, civic participation and an increased legitimacy of the Town Council and its role.



# Prudhoe

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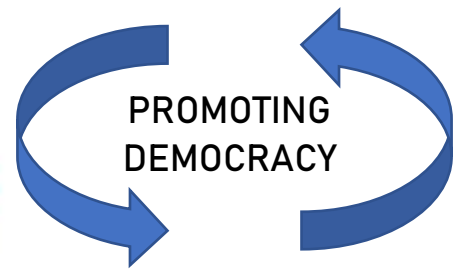


What matters to you in your local area? Is it the state of the local park, the need for more activities for young people, improving services for older people, making the roads safer or ensuring that local businesses can thrive? You may already be involved in local affairs and want to take the next step or you may be looking for a worthwhile and rewarding way to help your local community. Whatever needs changing in your neighbourhood, you could be just the person to change it by becoming a Town Councillor.

You may already have an idea of the type of people who stand as local councillors, but this image could be outdated.







Groups made up of diverse individuals tend to make better informed decisions. It is important that councils have councillors who not only reflect and represent the communities they serve, but also have a broad range of skills and life experience. You don't have to be highly educated or have a profession, skills gained through raising a family, caring for a sick or disabled relative, volunteering or being active in faith or community groups can be just as valuable.

While you don't need any special qualifications to be a councillor, having or being able to develop the following skills, knowledge and attributes will help you in the role:

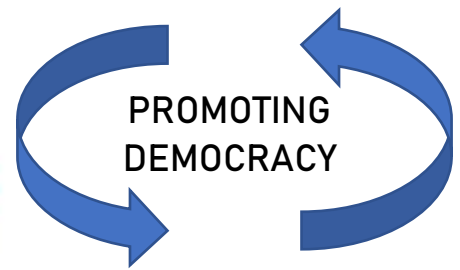
- ✓ **Communication skills**; these include listening and interpersonal skills, public speaking skills, the ability to consider alternative points of view and to negotiate, mediate and resolve conflict.
- ✓ **Problem solving** and analytical skills; this includes being able to get to the bottom of an issue and to think of different ways to resolve it, including considering the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- ✓ **Team working**; being able to work with others in meetings and on committees and being able to complete any tasks that you agree to do on time.
- ✓ **Organisational skills**; being able to plan and manage your time, keep appointments and meet deadlines.
- ✓ **Ability to engage with your local community**; you may have to make yourself available through meetings, the media, the internet, public forums, debates and on the telephone.

Councils are particularly keen to encourage people from under-represented groups to get involved, such as younger people, people from England's many ethnic communities and disabled people; women are also under-represented on local councils.



There are many different reasons why people decide to become a local councillor. They include:

- wishing to make a difference and be involved in shaping the future of the local community.
- being concerned about the local area and wanting to ensure that the community gets the right services.
- wishing to represent the views of local people and ensure that community interests are taken into account.
- wishing to pursue political beliefs.
- wishing to contribute individual business or professional skills.
- concerns about one particular issue.
- as an extension of what you are already doing through a political party, trade union, charity, voluntary group or school governing body.



Whatever the reason, if you have read this far it is certainly time to find out more. The best way to find out what it's like to be a Town Councillor is to talk to someone who's doing it now; come along to a town council meeting, speak to one of our Councillors or contact the Town Clerk.

### **Town Council Powers**

Prudhoe Town Council has a wide range of powers which are essentially related to local matters, such as looking after community buildings, open space, allotments, play areas, street lighting, bus shelters, car parks and much more.

The council also has the power to raise money through taxation - the precept. The precept is the Town Council's share of the Council Tax, which is collected via the billing authority - Northumberland County Council.

Prudhoe Town Council agrees its budget in January for the following financial year and based on the money that is required to carry out the plans for coming year, the precept demand is made; the total amount required is divided by the council tax base; i.e. the number of tax payers in Prudhoe.

Prudhoe Town Council aims to engage with residents on all matters, but it is especially important that we engage with residents on financial matters, especially if there are plans to increase the precept.

### **Other ways to get involved**

All our meetings are open to the public and there is an opportunity at each for members of the public to raise concerns and ask questions. There is also an annual town meeting which all parishioners are invited to attend; this is an open forum meeting and much less formal than our usual monthly committee meetings.

Residents can contact the Council via telephone, email or via social media and can also call into the Council office within the Spetchells Centre. Any formal communication received by the Council will be received at a public meeting for consideration. Residents can bring to the attention of the council anything that concerns them, either directly or through the Clerk. If matters raised are not the responsibility of the council, the Clerk can bring them to the attention of the proper authority.

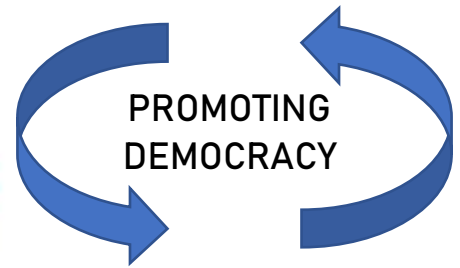
The contact details of all Town Councillors are available on the council website and by contacting the office, as well as being published in the Annual Report; residents can raise issues with Town Councillors which will then be brought before the Council.

We actively seek the views of members of the public via survey, surgery and via our events; we encourage you to engage and to tell us how we can improve local participation.

All meetings are advertised on the council notice boards and via our website and social media pages so you will always know what your Town Council is considering by way of the agenda and associated papers. You will also always know what your Town Council agrees as minutes of meetings are published online and available for public inspection.



**Prudhoe**  
TOWN COUNCIL



### **Use your vote**

In the UK, there are three different ways you can vote.

Most people **vote in person** at a polling station.

However, if you are not able to go to the polling station in person on election day, you can apply to vote **by post** or **by proxy** (where someone votes on your behalf).

How you vote is up to you but please ensure that you do vote for your local representative.

**Your vote**

**is your voice**

Register to vote at:  
**[gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://gov.uk/register-to-vote)**

**YOUR VOTE MATTERS**  
**DON'T LOSE IT**