

**DRAFT MINUTES FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF
PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL**
to be held in Room 1, Spetchells Centre, Front Street, Prudhoe
on TUESDAY 7TH JANUARY 2025 at 5:30PM

Present:

Cllr Chris Cuthbert, Cllr Duncan Couchman (Ex Officio), Cllr Dot Dickinson, Cllr Paddy O'Kelly, Cllr Gerry Price, Cllr Jonathan Wheeler

Shirley Ann Gaut (Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer)

FIN2425/041 Welcome from Chair

Cllr Chris Cuthbert to welcome everyone to the meeting.

FIN2425/042 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Angie Scott, Cllr Chris Barrett (late apologies received)

FIN2425/043 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Dickinson as a trustee of Prudhoe Youth Project, Prudhoe Community Partnership and committee member of Prudhoe Gardeners Association declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6, Draft Budget 2025/26.

Cllr Price as a trustee of Prudhoe Youth Project declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6, Draft Budget 2025/26.

FIN2425/044 Dispensations

None received.

FIN2425/045 Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting, held on 19th November 2024
It was **AGREED** to receive the minutes as a true record.

FIN2425/046 Draft Budget 2025/26

It was **AGREED** to present the amended draft budget and precept demand for the year 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 in order to present and recommended budget to Full Council.

- a) To consider any projects for inclusion in the draft Budget. It was **AGREED** that the proposal from Cllr O'Kelly for an additional Civic event Music by the Riverside be included.
- b) To consider and agree the Town Council Expenditure Budget for 2025/26.
- c) To consider and agree the Budget allocation to General Reserves and Contingency, review sub-headings, and to consider any contingency to be directed elsewhere.
- d) Employment costs for 2025/26, Northumberland County Council to advise.
- e) To consider the 2025/26 precept demand to be submitted to Northumberland County Council.

FIN2425/047 Responsible Financial Officer Report

The Clerk noted that the Prudhoe Gardeners Association had advised they would be sending out rent letters to allotment holders for the current year, 2025. As previously discussed, the Clerk recommended that a £10 per annum increase be proposed to the Prudhoe Gardeners Allotment committee members. This increase reflects the rising operational costs, specifically in relation to utilities (water), skip hire, and waste disposal services. The committee meeting is scheduled for 8th January 2025, at which the recommendation will be presented. It was further noted that a rent review is required.

**DRAFT MINUTES FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF
PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL**
to be held in Room 1, Spetchells Centre, Front Street, Prudhoe
on TUESDAY 7TH JANUARY 2025 at 5:30PM

FIN2425/048 Grant Aid 2025-26

a) *Grant Aid Forms*

It was **AGREED** to receive the Grant Aid application form and guidelines for the financial year 2025-26.

b) *Grant Aid Deadlines*

It was **AGREED** that the provisional opening date of 24th February 2025 and the closing date of 31st March 2025 for Grant Aid applications for the 2025-26 period be recommended to the Full Council for approval.

FIN2425/049 Date of Next Meeting

It was **AGREED** that the date for the next meeting would be held week commencing 7th April 2025.

FIN2425/050 Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was **AGREED** to approve a motion to invoke Standing Order 2d) to exclude the press and public, for the remainder of the meeting, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, permitted under Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, paragraph 3, that they relate to contractor's quotes.

FIN2425/052 Financial Software

It was **AGREED** to defer the decision regarding the adoption of financial software for the management of accounting records and supporting documents for the financial year 2025-26. This decision will be revisited at a later meeting, allowing for further consideration of potential options, evaluation of their suitability, and a comprehensive review of associated costs and implementation requirements.

Meeting ended 6.56pm