

DRAFT MINUTES FOR ORDINARY MEETING OF PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL
held Rooms 1 & 2, The Spetchells Centre, Front Street, Prudhoe
held Thursday 23rd July 2026 at 7.00PM

Present:

Cllr Glenn Simpson (Acting Chair), Cllr Bryan Futers, Cllr Jane Johnson, Cllr Gerry Price and Cllr Holly Waddell.

Stephanie Kirby (Deputy Clerk)

County Cllr Lawrence O'Donnell (Prudhoe North & Wylam)

OM2627/038 Welcome by Chair

In accordance with Standing Order 3(p), as the Chair and Vice Chair had sent apologies, **it was AGREED** that Cllr Glenn Simpson would chair the meeting. The meeting was then opened by Cllr Simpson.

OM2627/039 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Dot Dickinson, Cllr Chris Barrett, Cllr Val Leslie, Cllr Jonathan Wheeler, Cllr Angie Scott (and County Councillor Prudhoe West & Mickley), Cllr Carol Stephenson, Cllr Ignasious Varghese

County Cllr Gordon Stewart (Prudhoe South)

OM2627/040 Declarations of Interest

None received.

OM2627/041 Dispensations

None received.

OM2627/042 Public Participation

One member of the public was present and was invited to speak.

Jane Kysow introduced herself and advised that she was attending the meeting to raise concerns regarding the planning application, and proposed change of use for the West Wylam Inn (Ref: 26/02446/FUL).

Jane highlighted concerns that included:

- Access to Prudhoe Gardeners and maintaining the right of way for residents.
- Loss of community asset, and the wider loss of pubs across Prudhoe – alongside the Syntax, Wor Local and the Falcon.
- Lack of evidence that the pub has been actively marketed for the required length of time before allowing change of use, and that it is financially unviable.
- Oversupply of proposed new use and the impact on existing shops – particularly with the Asda Garage opposite, the One Stop on Front Street and a Nisa in West Wylam.
- Noted that with the recent reduction in business rates for pubs, this may improve the viability of such business, so it is not clear that the long-term future of the pub has been considered.
- Concerns regarding the stone building with ivy on, identified as the garage, but which was possibly the brewhouse for the pub. The heritage of this could be lost, without its historic significance being recognised.
- Biodiversity – the application states that there are no protected species on site, however, there have been observations of tawny owls, and a further ecological assessment is required.

Jane asked the Council to consider the above, and to seek clarification from the applicant and Northumberland County Council on the application, including evidence that the pub has been actively marketed as a pub house in accordance with the Local Plan.

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Cllr Simpson thanked Jane for her comments and advised they would be considered as part of the Council's response to the planning application.

No further items of public participation had been received.

OM2627/043 Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 25th June 2026

It was AGREED to receive the minutes as a true record.

OM2627/044 Draft Minutes of the Finance and Human Resources Committee Meeting held on 15th July 2026

It was AGREED to receive draft minutes and endorse agreed actions which will be presented for agreement as a true record, at the next Finance and Human Resources Committee meeting scheduled 10th September 2026.

OM2627/045 Reports

a) Chair's Report

I have had the pleasure of attending a number of community events across Prudhoe.

Prudhoe Armed Forces Day – 28 June

It was a great honour to attend Prudhoe Armed Forces Day and to make a speech on behalf of Prudhoe Town Council. The event provided an opportunity for the community to come together to recognise and thank our Armed Forces personnel, veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice.

Launch of the Prudhoe Arts Trail

I was delighted to attend the launch of the Prudhoe Arts Trail. One of the highlights was the display of the **Northumberland "Speak Their Name" Memorial Tapestry**, a beautiful and moving celebration of lives remembered. Jayne Walsham from the Northumberland Memory Tapestry Group gave a heartfelt talk about the group's work, which was both inspiring and very moving.

Water Safety Day – 4 July

I attended the Water Safety Day at Prudhoe Riverside, an important community event that combined practical water safety education with hands-on activities for the whole family. As we are aware the event was established in response to a number of tragic drownings on the River Tyne, with the aim of preventing future incidents through education and awareness reiterating that the river can be deceptively dangerous. Events such as this help people enjoy the area safely while learning skills that could one day save a life.

Music by the Riverside – 11 July

The Town Clerk and I attended the Music by the Riverside event which took place in the amphitheatre and featured local performing artists entertaining the community throughout the afternoon and evening. It was a brilliant event with a wonderful atmosphere.

During the event, I also had the pleasure of meeting the visiting youth group from Mitry-Mory together with members of Prudhoe Youth Project (PYP) one of the many items that Jane had organised for them. Many thanks go to Jane for organising this valuable cultural exchange.

b) Clerk's Report

Resignation of Councillor Russ Greig

Councillor Russ Greig has resigned from his position as Ward Councillor for West Wylam.

A Notice of Vacancy has been published and will remain open until **Friday, 7 August 2026**. Following the close of the notice period, the vacancy will either be filled by a by-election, should one be requested in accordance with the relevant legislation, or by co-option if no election is called.

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On behalf of Prudhoe Town Council, thanks have been expressed to Councillor Greig for his commitment, dedication, and service to the residents of the West Wylam Ward during his time in office.

Free Summer Swimming for Children in Prudhoe

Facebook posts have been scheduled for 12 noon each Friday in advance of the sessions, to remind residents of the Free Summer Swimming offer:-

- Sunday 26 July 2026
- Sunday 2 August 2026
- Sunday 9 August 2026
- Sunday 16 August 2026
- Sunday 23 August 2026
- Sunday 30 August 2026

Schools have been asked to share the information with pupils and parents/carers to ensure that eligible participants are aware of the opportunity. Promotion of the programme will continue through additional communication channels to encourage participation and maximise community engagement.

Music by The Riverside – Saturday 11th July 2026

Prudhoe Town Council extends its sincere thanks to Prudhoe Community Partnership and everyone involved in organising and delivering the Music by The Riverside event.

The event was a great success, attracting residents and visitors throughout the day and providing a wonderful opportunity to welcome our delegates from Mitry-Mory. Despite some rainfall during the afternoon, which unfortunately deterred a number of attendees, the weather soon improved, allowing the event to continue as planned. Those who remained were able to enjoy an excellent programme of live music and entertainment in a welcoming community atmosphere.

Prudhoe Town Council was pleased to attend with its branded gazebo, providing an opportunity to raise awareness of the Council's role within the community and engage with residents and visitors. Promotional items, including recycled pens and packets of wildflower seeds, supporting the Council's commitment to both community engagement and environmental sustainability.

Overall, the event was a great success and demonstrated the value of partnership working in delivering enjoyable, inclusive community events. The Town Council is grateful to everyone whose hard work, commitment and support contributed to making the day such an enjoyable and memorable occasion.

Prudhoe Town Council Email Addresses

Email and data migration was successfully carried out on Thursday 16th July 2026, information regarding new councillor addresses will be circulated with further information week commencing 27th July 2026

c) County Cllrs Reports

County Cllr Angie Scott (Prudhoe West & Mickley)

- The new benches have now been installed at West Mickley, providing an improved seating area for residents and visitors.
- A new street light has been installed in Mickley, improving visibility and safety for the local community.

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- Northumberland County Council has confirmed that a visual highways survey is planned for the Highfield area. This survey will help identify any maintenance issues and inform future highway improvement works. This will be done in September when the schools reopen.
- Prudhoe Town Council has now agreed to take ownership of the interactive speed sign on Castle Road. This is a positive step towards improving road safety outside the school and for local residents.
- Many residents continue to raise concerns regarding the condition of roads and footpaths across the ward. The ongoing issue of weeds on pavements and verges is also causing frustration, and these concerns have been reported to the relevant Northumberland County Council departments for action.

County Cllr Lawrence O'Donnell (Prudhoe North & Wylam)

Broomhouse Lane

- Due to slim resources, the Green Spaces Officer responsible for trees has advised that more tree work needed in Broomhouse Lane will not be possible until October.

Cockshott Dene Path

- I have been advised by the Green Spaces Officers to ask Prudhoe Groundforce to help clear the footpath and bridleway. I'm incredibly grateful to them for doing this
- I have contacted the new owner of Tyneview Retail Park to establish what arrangements are currently in place.
- There is a planning condition for McDonalds to arrange their own Litter Management Plan and Strategy.

Bellway Grass cutting

- Grass cutting is now being carried out regularly by the new contractor who has returned to complete a missed section. They are extremely conscientious and I'm confident the good working relationship will continue.

Eastwoods Road/Hagg Bank/Wylam Wood Road petition

- I am setting up a petition to ask Highways to reduce the speed limit along this stretch.
- It requires 50 signatures to be considered by Officers.

Council Tax Support Scheme

- NCC have apologised to the 1488 residents who had their Council Tax Support calculated incorrectly.

686 Service Improvements

- I'm confident an improved, extended draft timetable for the 686 service will soon be available.
- The last bus to Prudhoe is currently at 14.01, an extended service will help support businesses in Prudhoe by improving access from the surrounding villages.

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Events attended

- Prudhoe Armed Forces Day
- Prudhoe Community High School Careers Day
- Water Safety Day
- Music by the Riverside

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County Cllr Lawrence O'Donnell noted further subjects that had arisen since his report was circulated. This included reports of a caravan near Tyne View Retail Park. It was noted that NCC Officers have been to talk to the occupants, who have been referred to the Housing Team and Changing Lives for assistance.

He also met with the digital skills team from the Miners Lamp, who are helping older people in the community with fraud prevention.

It was further noted that there a number of issues he is aware of including the Fuse Centre, the delay in the East Centre and shortfall in funding, as well as the library consultation, that fall outside the Prudhoe North and Wylam Ward.

County Cllr Gordon Stewart (Prudhoe South)

East Centre Planning Application.

Demolition, new build construction with the retention and conversion of a section of the building to create a new community facility, providing a youth centre, community space, associated meeting/ staff spaces, business/ training units, an arts and crafts workshop, community led retail unit and 3no. residential units, along with associated external works and landscaping.

Consultation has ended, awaiting officer's proposal.

Library consultation

This has concluded that officers are working through the responses.

Highfield development -

it appears the developer is pushing ahead with their proposals, against officer advice and many public objections.

Falcon PH. Is expected to reopen for business during early August 2026

Ladbrokes - Lease has finished and the premises is being marketed.

West Wylam Inn - Change of use application has been submitted.

Change of use of public house (Sui Generis) to a Class E(a) convenience store, including a single-storey rear extension, internal alterations, infill side window openings, alterations to front fenestration, installation of new shop front signage and external advertising.

Cottier Grange Entrance

Road safety improvements will be installed this month the main part will be a larger pedestrian refuge with dropped kerbs.

Road resurfacing will take place this summer:-

Moor Grange

Moor Road, in area of the entrance to Durham Riding

Eastwoods Park - Green flag award yet again.

Fuse - See <https://www.hexham-courant.co.uk/news/26271439.former-prudhoe-media-centre-set-become-base-children/>

CAP returns to Prudhoe - <https://www.hexham-courant.co.uk/news/26258641.residents-views-needed-alcohol-concerns-prudhoe/>

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During the summer months there will be many local events, organised by several community groups

Cllr Gerry Price advised that a property near Broomhouse Lane appears to be being used for commercial purposes. It was noted that County Cllr Gordon Stewart is aware of this, and **it was AGREED** to ask for a formal update via email, to be reported back to Full Council.

OM2627/046 Financial Update

It was AGREED to receive reports and raise any questions.

a) *Schedule of Accounts Paid/To be Paid*

It was AGREED to endorse those accounts paid via delegated authority and approve those accounts to be paid since 25th June 2026.

b) *Bank Reconciliation*

It was AGREED to receive the Bank Reconciliation from 10th June – 9th July 2026.

c) *Statement of Budget and Expenditure*

It was AGREED to receive statement to date.

OM2627/047 Mayor's Allowance Policy

It was AGREED to adopt the amended Mayor's Allowance Policy, setting out the arrangements for the payment and administration of the Mayor's Allowance in accordance with the Council's approved budget and governance procedures.

OM2627/048 Maternity Leave/Recruitment

It was AGREED to receive the recommendations of the Finance and Human Resources Committee in respect of maternity cover for the Deputy Clerk.

It was AGREED to accept the recommendations which included:

- The recruitment of a fixed-term Administration Assistant for a period of up to 12 months, working 20 hours per week over four days.
- The advertisement of the vacancy during August 2026 with interviews to be held in early September 2026.
- The appointment of Members to serve on the interview panel – **it was AGREED** to appoint the Clerk, Cllr Holly Waddell and Cllr Dorothy Dickinson as the interview panel.
- The provision of a handover period prior to the commencement of maternity leave, where practicable.

OM2627/049 Fuse Community Cinema

It was AGREED to receive correspondence from Fuse Community Cinema CIC regarding the closure and mothballing of the Fuse Media Centre, and to consider the potential impact on the future of the community cinema and its contribution to Prudhoe, and determine whether the Town Council wishes to make representations to Northumberland County Council in support of retaining the cinema or securing suitable alternative arrangements for its continued operation, equipment storage, and future accommodation (circulated to Councillors 29th June 2026.)

It was noted that the loss of the Fuse Community Cinema would have a negative impact on the local community. **It was AGREED** due to low attendance at the meeting, to re-circulate the email to all councillors and ask for feedback.

OM2627/050 Reports from Outside Bodies

It was AGREED to receive following reports and record any questions for response:-

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OUTSIDE BODY	CURRENT PTC REPRESENTATIVE(S) 2026-2027
Prudhoe Town Twinning Association	Cllr Chris Barrett & Cllr Jane Johnson
Prudhoe Community Partnership (3 rd Tuesday of the month, bi-monthly)	Cllr Dot Dickinson
Northumberland Association of Local Councils County Committee	Cllr Jonathan Wheeler & Cllr Holly Waddell
East Tynedale Local Council's Forum	Cllr Holly Waddell & Cllr Jonathan Wheeler
Essity Community Consultation Forum (lunchtime meetings at the Mill, when permitted)	Cllr Bryan Futers, Cllr Dot Dickinson & Cllr Val Leslie
Prudhoe Pathforce	Cllr Angie Scott & Cllr Carol Stephenson
NCC Town and Parish Council Liaison Working Group	Cllr Holly Waddell
Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership	Cllr Gerry Price & Cllr Holly Waddell
Prudhoe Youth Project (PYP) (previously met monthly on a Monday evening)	Cllr Dot Dickinson & Cllr Gerry Price
Borderlands	Cllr Bryan Futers & Cllr Mike Smith
Tyne Valley Parish Council Active Travel Route	Cllr Chris Barrett & Cllr Jonathan Wheeler
Prudhoe Community Partnership Working Group	Cllr Val Leslie, Cllr Gerry Price, Cllr Mike Smith & Cllr Jonathan Wheeler
Climate Change and Biodiversity	Cllr Russ Greig, Cllr Gerry Price, Cllr Mike Smith, Cllr Carol Stephenson & Cllr Jonathan Wheeler
East Centre Advisory Group	Cllr Dot Dickinson, Cllr Val Leslie & Cllr Carol Stephenson

- a) NALC County Committee meeting 4th July, County Hall/Hybrid – circulated 290626
- b) East Tynedale Community Forum 2 June – circulated 06/07.
- c) Borderlands Prudhoe BTIP Part A Update – circulated 17/07.

Councillor Jane Johnson gave the following report in relation to the Prudhoe Town Twinning Association:

We had a fantastic weekend with our French visitors, who arrived on Friday, 10th July. After collecting them from the airport, we headed straight to Newcastle Quayside to admire the iconic bridges before

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visiting the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art to explore the exhibitions. We then enjoyed lunch together.

Later, we visited Prudhoe Golf Club, where Andrew Gunn provided a few entertaining moments on the putting green! Golf was a completely new sport for our French guests, making it a fun experience for everyone. We then made our way to Miners Lamp for an afternoon of games, sports, and a barbecue. Around 40 members of PYC, Prudhoe Dolphins, and their families joined our French visitors for games of rounders and other activities before finishing the day with a delicious meal. Saturday was another busy and enjoyable day. We spent time exploring Prudhoe before visiting the castle for a look around. From there, we headed to the Riverside for the music event, followed by a break at 2:30 pm for a fun swim at Waterworld. Afterwards, we returned to the Riverside to enjoy pizza while listening to more live music. At 8:30 pm, we went back to Dave and Gillian's to watch the England v Norway match together before heading home for a well-earned night's sleep, ready for the journey home on Sunday morning.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped make the weekend such a success. We would also like to thank Prudhoe Town Council for their valued contribution and support. Your help was greatly appreciated and made the visit a memorable experience for everyone involved.

Cllr Simpson thanked Cllr Johnson for her report, and for her hard work in organising the successful visit.

OM2627/051 Correspondence

It was **AGREED** to receive, and to agree any matters to be added to future agenda:-

- a) West Road Cemetery Bulletin– circulated 22/06, 29/06, 06/07, 14/07.
- b) Prudhoe Arts Festival – circulated 29/06.
- c) NALC Chief Executive Bulletin – circulated 26/06, 09/07.
- d) NALC Events – circulated 29/06.
- e) Grant Aid 26-27 WNF & Impact Report – circulated 29/6.
- f) Crisis and Resilience Fund Workshop – circulated 29/06.
- g) Health Watch Northumberland News & Annual Report – circulated 30/06.
- h) Prudhoe Library Team Feedback to Library Customer Service Redesign – circulated 16/07
- i) Thriving Together newsletter May edition – circulated 17/07.

OM2627/052 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Ordinary meeting will be held on Thursday 24th September 2026.

OM2627/053 Planning Matters

It was noted that the consultation response deadline is 4 August 2026; accordingly, this item has been included on the agenda to enable the Council to consider and agree its response within the required timescale.

a) Planning Applications requiring a response.

To receive and agree a response to the following Planning Applications, received since the Planning, Contract and Works Committee Meeting held 9th July 2026. To view planning applications, please visit the [planning portal](#) and input the reference numbers listed.

Ref: 26/02446/FUL West Wylam Inn Front Street Prudhoe Northumberland NE42 5DQ

Change of use of public house (Sui Generis) to a Class E(a) convenience store, including a single-storey rear extension, internal alterations, infill side window openings, alterations to front fenestration, installation of new shop front signage and external advertising.

It was **AGREED** to object to the application for the following reasons:

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- Biodiversity - the application does not adequately assess the impact on existing local biodiversity and wildlife habitats or ensure existing biodiversity will be protected.
- Loss of Community Asset – The proposal would result in the loss of an important community asset that has social, recreational and wellbeing value. This would leave no pubs in the heart of Prudhoe. There are concerns that it has not been demonstrated that the business cannot operate profitably as a pub under realistic market conditions. There is also lack of evidence that there has been active and continuous marketing for the required period, before considering a change of use.
- Oversupply - The application does not demonstrate a clear need for the proposed change of use or provide evidence that existing provision is insufficient. There is already substantial provision of comparable facilities within the locality, including directly opposite the road via the Asda Express.
- Access and Highway Safety – whilst not an objection, there are concerns regarding access due to the proposed extension and whether the right of way for neighbouring properties will be maintained. It is important any access is maintained, and neighbouring properties are consulted.

Ref: 26/02431/FUL Car Park East Of Blue Bell Mount Pleasant West Mickley Northumberland

Erection of 2no dwellings on the car park area.

It was AGREED to support the application, on the basis of the development of two affordable houses which are needed in the parish.

The following applications were received after the agenda was circulated:

26/02535/FUL Moor View Moor Road Prudhoe Northumberland NE42 5PB

Single storey rear and side extension and internal reconfiguration

It was AGREED to circulate the application and ask councillors to submit any comments individually by the deadline of 11 August 2026, as a Planning, Contract and Works Committee is not due to be held until September.

Ref: 26/02338/FUL 12 Front Street Prudhoe Northumberland NE42 5HN

Subdivide commercial building to create two separate units consisting of ground floor will remain in commercial use, while the first floor will be converted into a self-contained two-bedroom flat (Use Class C3), internal alterations and new entrance door.

It was AGREED to circulate the application and ask councillors to submit any comments individually by the deadline of 13 August 2026, as a Planning, Contract and Works Committee is not due to be held until September.

OM2627/054 Urgent Items

Cllr Simpson read S100B(4) Local Government Act 1972, as amended, which allows for the consideration of items of urgent business at meetings of the Council where, by reason of special circumstances, which shall be specified in the minutes, the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency and cannot be deferred to the next meeting (Ordinary Meeting).

The items that are being presented as urgent are as follows:

Agreed Budget 2026/2027

Members are requested to consider an amendment to the approved 2026/2027 Budget following the identification of an error relating to the allocation of £15,000 for The East Centre.

Members should note that this payment was made on 19 March 2025. As the 2025/2026 Budget had been prepared and approved in advance of the payment being released, the £15,000 allocation

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remained within that year's budget. Subsequently, the same allocation was inadvertently carried forward into the 2026/2027 Budget, despite the payment having already been made.

As the 2026/2027 Budget has now been approved, Members are requested to consider a virement of the £15,000 from the East Centre budget heading to an alternative budget heading within the approved budget, in order to ensure that the budget accurately reflects current commitments and priorities.

It was AGREED to move the £15,000 from the East Centre budget heading into reserves.

OM2627/055 Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was AGREED to approve a motion to invoke Standing Order 3d) 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 quotes.

OM2627/056 Work Place Assessment

It was AGREED to receive and consider the findings and recommendations arising from the workplace assessment, including suggested improvements to the Council offices. **It was AGREED** under delegated authority, (noting Financial Regulation 5.15 and the limit of £2,000.00 per item), to allow the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, to liaise with the Chair and to proceed with the suggested improvements and purchase the following items, that have been highlighted under the workplace assessment:

- An ergonomic office chair
- A fireproof, lockable cabinet for paper cemetery records
- A portable air conditioner unit

OM2627/057 Front Street Planters

Members are asked to consider the future management and maintenance of the Front Street planters. Preliminary works to empty the planters have proved to be a more substantial undertaking than originally anticipated, owing to the significant volume of gravel contained within each planter. In addition, the majority of the planters are secured in position with bolts, which has increased the complexity and time required to carry out the works.

Members are therefore requested to consider the available options and agree an appropriate course of action for the removal, refurbishment, or future maintenance of the planters.

A discussion took place around the option of re-planting the planters or removing them entirely. **It was AGREED** to proceed with the removal of all 28 planters on Front Street, via Northumberland County Council at a cost of £7,480.26 + VAT. It was noted that once timescales have been approved, the removal will be promoted on the Council's website and social media, so that residents are aware of the work.

Meeting ended at 8:30pm.