



**Planning application 20/02352/COU for consideration  
at Tynedale Local Area Council on 13<sup>th</sup> October**

**Your reference: T/131020/100**

**Supportive Statements to be read out at the meeting**

This application seeks permission to refurbish the premises as a youth and community centre. It will be open during the daytime and early evening and used by a variety of community groups and by Prudhoe Youth Project who have submitted a separate statement.

A number of objections claim that young people are rowdy and anti social and should be discouraged from gathering in the town centre. We disagree. We note the Police statement that says there is very little anti social behaviour on Front Street.

Young people already gather on Front Street and we will be offering constructive activity and support. We believe the premises should be in a prominent and central location and that young people should be embraced and honoured.

The County Council has recently supported the Partnership plans to demolish and redevelop the East Centre site into a children and young person hub which means there will not be a base for young people in the centre of town for the next few years.

Other objections say that young people will cause a traffic hazard. We think this is unlikely. Young people are streetwise. We note the Highways have no objection to this application.

The Traders Committee questions our ability to run the centre successfully. The Partnership has eight years experience of running a community building and is in a strong financial position to support this new development.

The Youth Project's plans have been scrutinised by a number of independent charitable trusts, such as the Community Foundation, who have awarded funding for the next three years.

Other objections say that that a youth and community centre will undermine the surrounding shops. We would argue that this understandable fear is ill founded. A smart and well presented premises ( to the same standard as Spetchells Centre) will add to look of Front Street. We suspect overall footfall will be higher than for a retail unit and point out that young people are shoppers too.

Over the last two years, the Partnership has worked with the Town Council, the County Council and local traders to develop a strategy for the future of Front Street. We all agreed that the number of retail outlets was likely to decrease and that the key to retaining a vibrant town centre was to find alternative uses for empty premises. This application is the first step in implementing that strategy and we ask councillors to support it.

**George Hepburn OBE**

**Chair of trustees**

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I am the newly elected chair of the Prudhoe Youth Project (PYP) and wish to support this application.

PYP has done really well since setting up 18 months ago to bring in funding and recruit youth workers. Our senior worker Gemma Nixon has come from Otterburn where she has set up a similar project. We are all ready to go and need a 'home' that young people can call their own, like they have in Corbridge and Hexham.

I am shocked at the amount of objections. Do those who are objecting want no 10 Front Street to remain a white washed empty building particularly over the winter! I don't think it matters where the youth will meet, they will be safer in doors than on the streets.

Social clubs are an important place for young people to go when they're not at school, especially during the summer holidays and the long winter evenings. As a community we should be looking ahead to something to bring together Prudhoe's young children and teenagers especially with COVID 19 where there will be some of the children and other groups feeling very isolated which can only impact on their mental health.

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I am surprised to realise the youth in Prudhoe have nowhere to go as the East has closed its doors and are doing out reach work only. Where can those groups meet and interact with their peers and friends. After school clubs are non existent during this pandemic, we have no mentors or role models for those kids to communicate with in a safe place.

I love living in Prudhoe and have lived in the place all my life. It has grown so much over the years and I would like to think that the future generations will feel the same. It really starts with the kids feeling safe, valued and being a part of great community which we have in Prudhoe. We really need to step up somehow and make a difference and Number 10 Front Street seems a really good place to start.

**Dorothy Dickinson**

**Chair, Prudhoe Youth Project**

**"working to make Prudhoe a better place to live and work "**

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