

Rennington Parish Council & Members of the Public

Notes of Informal Discussion 29th July 2021

The Rennington Parish Council (RPC) meeting due on 29th July did not take place as it was inquorate.

Councillors Dixon, Neilsen (part) and Tremlett & four members of the public stayed from 7.30 pm until 8.50pm for an informal discussion about matters in the parish. The notes below are a brief summary of some issues discussed and are not a report of all matters discussed. They are under headings for ease of reference.

1. Rennington Neighbourhood Development Plan

There was considerable discussion of this now that RPC has been designated as a Neighbourhood area and can proceed to consulting residents, organisations, land owners and businesses (stakeholders) in the parish about the preparation and eventual adoption of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

Why have a Rennington Parish NDP?

Neighbourhood Planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive shared vision for how they want their locality to develop in the future to meet identified local needs and contribute to the well-being of the community.

It allows communities to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like, and what infrastructure should be provided. Also Neighbourhood Development Plans can contain policies for the development and protection of amenities and green spaces.

Northumberland County Council Planning Authority decisions must take account of a Neighbourhood Development Plan when considering planning permissions in the parish area.

Who is on the NDP Working Group?

Preparatory work is being organised by group of parish residents and councillors:

Robert Dixon (Cllr, Rennington resident)

Stephen Baggott (Cllr, Stamford Lea resident)

Laurence Dent (Chair of Rennington Village Hall Cttee, Rennington resident)

Jane Dixon, Co-author of Rennington & Rock Community News, Rennington resident

Guy Appleby - Rock resident

Bob McKittrick – Rock resident

Rosie Ball – Rock resident

Nick Ball – Rock resident

There will be opportunities for new members to join in the future.

How long will the NDP take from start to finish?

A minimum of two years.

Will the lack of an NDP mean the RPC is given less weight when NCC makes planning decisions?

No – the role of RPC as a statutory consultee in respect of planning applications remains unchanged. A Neighbourhood Development Plan gives added weight to parish councils as it's adopted plan holds the same legal status as a higher council local plan.

Cllr Dixon met with the Director of Planning, Rob Murfin, recently and he confirmed that even before the NDP is adopted, the Planning Authority will consider any evolving policies in the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan as soon as the working group has completed the first stage of community consultation.

What is meant by Consultation of residents and stakeholders?

Consultation is key when developing a plan - without clear evidence of effective consultation in the Parish, the draft NDP will not be cleared for submission to NCC by the Independent Examiner. .

A first consultation 'drop-in' meeting is being planned for late September.

An invitation to the 'drop-in' event will be delivered to all parish residences and businesses two weeks before the meeting along with a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be the first of many consultation opportunities that will be a feature of the NDP project. Answers to the questionnaire will be useful to the working group but responses from residents and other stakeholders are not limited to the questionnaire – any additional issues, comments, observations will be considered by the working group.

What happens at the drop in consultation meeting in September?

Rennington Village Hall will be open for 6 hours from 2pm – 8pm (date to be confirmed). Information about neighbourhood planning and the parish, maps, etc will be on display. The key objective for the event is to enable community involvement in the neighbourhood planning project and to engage in dialogue with the working party., The working party will use information gathered at the event and questionnaire answers to begin the task of scoping out key policy ideas and objectives for further detailed consideration. The outcomes from the consultation will be published on the RPC website's NDP page.

Members of the working group, councillors and officers from Northumberland County Council will be present

Do many Parish Councils have NDPs in Northumberland?

Yes, 45 have either 'made plans' or are in the process of developing one. Near to Rennington - Embleton, Lesbury, Alnwick & Denwick, Craster and others have formally made plans.

How will the final version of the NDP be voted on in the Parish?

There will be a referendum on the final plan where every voter in the parish casts their vote. The outcome is decided by a simple majority ie 51% of voters leading to formal adoption by NCC.

2. What happened at the North Northumberland Local Area Council on 22nd July that called in the North Farm development?

Cllr Dixon made written and verbal representations to the meeting on behalf of parishioners, objecting to the applications to vary the planning permission and allow such changes as the colour of the stone, colour of the roof tiles, wall building methods etc. Both of the VARYCO planning applications were however allowed (except for some minor issues) on the casting vote of the Chair of the Council.

3. Parking Outside Rennington Village Hall

A resident brought to the Councillors attention problems of parking on the access roads around the three sides of the village green. It is the resident's view that except for one household, no residents have the right to park on these roads, nor do members of the public. However, there is regular parking, particularly when there are events in the Village Hall, which often obstruct access for residents.

RPC will look into this.

4. Is the Defibrillator working in Rennington Village?

Yes. There are issues with the siting of it (if the Horseshoe Inn is sold); maintenance (RPC pay for the maintenance); possible purchase of a 2nd defibrillator, guardians and training – it will be on the agenda at the next RPC meeting.

5. Can we have more informal discussion meetings like this?

Yes.

6. What does the new Chair and parish council want to achieve?

Cllr Dixon agreed to being nominated as chair if the council would support his priorities. His priorities are:

- 1) A gold standard of governance (ie including transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, participation,)
- 2) Engagement and involvement with members of the community in order to properly be able to represent the views of the electorate.
- 3) Adopting a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the whole parish of Rennington.

Notes by Deb Still 1.8.21