

Rennington Parish Council

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ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Zoom meeting of Annual Rennington Parish Council meeting held on Thursday May 20th, 2021

Present: Cllrs Lalage Bosanquet (LB), Karl Neilson (KN), Alan Tremlett (AT), Jim McQueen (JM); Robert Dixon (RD)

In attendance: Clerk Lesley Long (LL), Incoming Clerk Deb Still (DS), Cllr Wendy Pattison (WP) and 2 members of the public.

- 77/21 Report on the Activities of the Council for the preceding 12 months** – retiring Chair provided a written report for the period 2019 – 2021. The Councillors gave a vote of thanks to the retired Councillors Kevin Burdett (KB) and John Watson (JW) after many years of service. A vote of thanks was also given to Lesley Long the outgoing clerk. **Action: Chair to send letters of thanks.**
- 78/21 Election of Chair** – RESOLVED RD be appointed as Chair. Proposed KN, Seconded LB. AGREED by ALL.
- 79/21 Election of Vice Chair** - RESOLVED KN be appointed as Vice-Chair. Proposed LB, and Seconded AT. AGREED by ALL.
- 80/21 Receipt of Declarations of Acceptance of Office** - the Clerk (DS) received the Declarations of Acceptance of Office from all councillors.
- 81/21 Receipt of Declarations of Interest Forms & Return of Election Expenses Forms**– councillors will send the Declarations of Interest to the Clerk (DS) within 28 days of today and return their election expenses forms to County Hall within 28 days of the date of election where not already done so.
- 82/21 Apologies for Absence** – None
- 83/21 Declarations of Interest** none declared.
- 84/21 Public Participation Time** – two members of the public attended. There were no public questions.
- 85/21 Minutes of the Meetings of Council held on Thursday April 22nd 2021** – the Minutes of the meeting were APPROVED with an amendment to item 73/21 where reference is made to ‘two roads called Church Road in Rennington’ that should read ‘one road called Church Road’.

86/21 Matters Arising from the previous meeting

i) Move to online banking. AT and LB are full signatories and have online banking access. KB and the former clerk have been removed as signatories. JW will be removed as a signatory. DS does not yet have access to online banking, but it is in progress. The outgoing clerk will remain as a signatory with access to online banking until the incoming clerk has been confirmed and will continue to chase Lloyds Bank to progress. A formal complaint has been made by LL to Lloyds Bank via NALC in relation to the poor service and long delays in setting up the online banking system. The RFO/Clerk will continue to set up payments to be made online that will then be confirmed by LB or AT. The current standing orders, risk assessment and financial regulations will be updated to reflect revised online practices and procedures.

Action – Clerk

ii) Update on Rock allotments re planning permission – LB confirmed that they are waiting final confirmation and people have expressed interest in the allotments already. It was noted that the proposed allotments are a Rock Estates initiative and that the matter is not an issue for RPC unless/until it becomes subject to planning application(s).

iii) Update on enquiry from Mr Robertson of Embleton Mill re a request to transfer dwellings in RPC to Embleton PC – LB has spoken to Mr R and suggested that a formal approach be made via Embleton Parish Council in relation to the parish boundary that cuts through the hamlet of Embleton Mill.

iv) The Clerk updated the parish council on the current legal position for remote meetings and the latest advice from NALC. It was AGREED that, subject to lockdown restrictions easing in line with the government's proposed 'roadmap', the council will return to monthly parish council meetings in Rennington Village Hall from June 24th, 2021 and will observe the Covid-19 risk assessment measures put in place by the Village Hall committee.

The Annual Parish Meeting should usually be held between 1 March and 1 June each year. The 2021 Annual Parish Meeting has not yet been called by the Parish Council. Councillors wish to provide an opportunity for parishioners to express their opinions about the work of the council and Covid restrictions have made this difficult at a face-to-face meeting. The Parish Council will hold the meeting as soon as Covid restrictions ease to allow an informal meeting, possibly on the same date as the first Neighbourhood Plan consultation meetings in the summer. Councillors may also invite individuals or organisations from the community to address and inform parishioners on community matters. At least seven clear days' notice must be given of the Annual Parish Meeting although councillors may opt to give longer notice.

The Annual Parish Meeting can be called at any time by 6 registered electors from the Parish (as well as by the Chair or by Two councillors).

Action: The Chair will call the Annual Parish Meeting when Covid restrictions will allow for more community involvement.

v) Public Highway linking Rennington and Rock – naming of C73 – Gordon Dickson, Building Control Manager at NCC has confirmed that the road from Rennington to Rock after the triangle of land is designated as C73 and not Church Road. There are four properties in the village that are anomalous:

- Two houses (Loumar Lodge and Hollyburn) that front onto Church Road but their addresses are expressed as Rennington Village only (with no Church Road in their address)
- Two houses (Heatherfield and Rivendale Cottages) that are on a lane off the C73 but use the address Church Road (rather than Rennington Village)

Action: the Council will write to the four residences to seek their views on the current inconvenience due to the incorrect designation and whether the residents wish the Council to take any action on their behalf – Clerk

vi) 21/00752/FUL Land West of Rennington Village. Proposed conversion of existing residential outbuildings to a single residential unit – additional information has been requested by the case officer and it will return to the council in the future.

87/21 Neighbourhood Plan

JM and RD reported on the activities of the informal working party. The current working group comprises Cllrs JM, RD, AT and Lawrence Dent, Jane Dixon and Stephen Baggott and others will be encouraged to join at a proposed 'drop-in' information/engagement/consultation event.

The proposed 4th June 'drop-in' event was not possible due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. The working party now proposes to hold the event in week commencing 12th July 2021 subject to availability of Rennington Village Hall and COVID-19 rules. Event fliers and consultation questionnaire to be circulated to all parish addresses two weeks in advance. Sarah Brannigan at NCC is providing informal support in planning the event.

JM and RD asked that the Council consider and approve the following:

- to secure NCC registration of Rennington Parish as a neighbourhood planning designated area;
- to formalise the working party under terms of reference to be agreed with the Council;

- to commence application for 'Locality' grant funding (up to £10k) to support the Neighbourhood Planning process;
- to secure short-term spending agreement in connection with the 'drop-in' event - expenditure to be retrospectively claimed back from future grant funds.

All above were AGREED by All. It was proposed by AT, seconded by LB and AGREED by All to allocate £500 for initial costs in connection with the 'drop-in' event.

Action:

Designated Neighbourhood Planning area application - Chair
Working Party 'terms of reference' - Chair and JM
Grant Funding – Clerk and Chair

88/21 Planning Applications and Enforcement

i) Consideration to invitation to the Director of Planning, NCC, Mr Rob Murfin, to a future RPC meeting

AGREED to invite him to attend the July or September meeting for a 30 minute slot before the start of the meeting.

Action: Clerk (with LB and Chair input).

ii) Contaminated land/buried waste at Masons Arms – Liz O'Brien from NCC has replied to say she had tried numerous times to contact All Saints but has had no response.

Action: Clerk to diary to contact NCC again.

iii) Building materials at North Farm Development
 RPC has raised objections as have residents at the materials used. Councillor Pattison has put the variation application on the Virtual Delegation List for review to determine whether it should be heard at Local Area Council/Committee. Currently waiting for the Chair of the Local Area Council to be elected.

Councillors agreed to write to Northumberland Estates with their concerns about issues relating to the North Farm Development. In particular issues around the management of the development and the lack of consideration shown by the developer; changes to materials and planning conditions/permissions.

Action: Chair to write to Northumberland Estates

iv) Sewer in watercourse at Rennington Burn

No substantive reply has been received to our email of 12th April. DS sent a further email on 18th May but this has not yet been acknowledged.

Action: Clerk to contact the Environment Agency.

v) Planning applications received since the agenda was prepared. A Varyco has been submitted for North Farm in connection with landscaping – reference 21/01595/DISCON.

[Discharge of condition 9 \(landscaping\) on approved planning application 19/03479/VARYCO](#)

Action: All Councillors to view application/compare with original planning approval and comment appropriately to Chair and Clerk within 7 days.

89/21 Village Maintenance

i) The grass verge issue has been and is an ongoing problem throughout the North Farm development - the builder uses the C73 as a link between the building site and their site yard causing difficulties with public and local farm transport resulting in frequent use of verge and kerb damage.

Action: Chair to add concerns into letter at 88/21 to Northumberland Estates.

ii) Collapsed Wall on the Lonnen – Northumberland Estates (NE) has not responded to the email of 4th May nor the telephone call of 18th May.

Action: Clerk to email NE.

90/21 Financial Matters

i) The Finance report for 20 May was RECEIVED.

ii) RESOLVED that the following payments be APPROVED for payment. Proposed by LB, seconded by AT:

a) Outgoing Clerk's expenses (receipts supplied)	£ 47.21
b) incoming Clerk's expenses – 1 ream of paper (receipted)	£ 3.50
c) Inv 005 – Sally Roberts Internal Auditor Fee 20-21 Accounts	£100.00
d) Inv 221081 NCC - Fit Litter bin at the Lonnen	£ 50.00
e) PerITus Invoice (TBC) for renewal of Kaspersky AntiVirus	£ 29.99

91/21 AGAR Return & End of Year Accounts (all documents to follow)

a) To consider and agree any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor and approve the appointment of the internal auditor for 2021- 22

The Auditor has not identified any significant weaknesses in financial control during the review. The Auditor noted that the Risk Register is dated 25 June 2020 and that the Risk Assessment must be reviewed annually. Also noted is that the Fixed Asset Register is incomplete and needs to be updated and reviewed annually thereafter. She does not consider the matter poses a significant risk to the council at this stage. Councillors will audit and photograph the parish council assets and the Clerk will ensure the insurance policy schedule reflects the position accurately in future.

Councillors also discussed developing a Memorial Bench policy for benches, tables and other memorials gifted to the Parish by parishioners. Such a policy would cover responsibility for maintenance and insurance. Family members of donated items will to be approached by councillors to discuss.

Sally Roberts APPROVED as Internal Auditor for 2021-22

Action: To complete the Fixed Asset Register (Clerk and Councillors) and update the insurance schedule (Clerk)

Action: To submit reclaims of VAT at least annually. (Clerk)

b) To approve the Annual Governance Statement that there is a sound system of internal controls. APPROVED by All

c) To approve the AGAR Accounting Statement APPROVED by All

d) To receive the Explanation of Variances for the financial year ending 31st March 2021. RECEIVED

e) To approve the Certificate of Exemption - APPROVED by All

To publish required documents on website, send Certificate of Exemption to PKF Littlejohn and post the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights on public noticeboards within the time scale required by the external auditors. Action - Clerk

91/21/c To consider paying for membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks for the new Parish Clerk - £72 pa for the first year (document circulated with agenda)

AGREED – to be reviewed in 12 months.

Action: Clerk to join and keep notes of benefits and use of services over the year.

93/21 Correspondence

i) Request from Resident to reconsider Traffic Calming measures
Various options have been considered before including reducing the speed limit to 40mph on the periphery of the village (previously rejected by NCC). There may be support for reducing the speed limit through the village to 20mph. The Councillors AGREED this should be put forward as part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation event to seek parishioners' views.

Action: add to Neighbourhood Plan consultation issues (Cllr McQueen)

ii) Ultra-Fast Broadband – update from OpenReach – they are still pursuing options for Rennington, as are Incom who are approaching residents directly in the village.

94/21 Consideration of Policies

AGREED to update RPC policies over the coming months. Policies and Procedures to be reviewed and updated are Risk Assessment, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Data Protection, Retention of Documents, Disciplinary Procedure, Complaints and Freedom of Information. Priority will be given to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Other

policies may be added. **Action: Chair and Clerk to bring to meetings for discussion in order of priority.**

95/21 Northumberland Town & Parish Council Charter
Action: all Councillors to read and consider.

96/21 County Councillor – A short verbal report was given by WP following her successful re-election. WP drew attention to a tree planting exercise to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee – 'Treebilee'.

97/21 Other Urgent Business – none.

98/21 Private Session - Co-option of Parish Councillor
The council went into private session (as required for personal data protection) to consider Stephen Baggot's application for co-option as a parish councillor. The appointment was AGREED by All.

Action: The Chair will inform Mr Baggott and the Clerk will send out new parish councillors forms

99/21 Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 24th June 2021 at 7.30pm at Rennington Village Hall.

DRAFT