

RENNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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NOTICE OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Rennington Parish Council Extraordinary General Meeting held at 6.30pm on Thursday 20th January, 2022 at St James' URC, Pottergate, Alnwick, NE66 1JW.

Present: Cllrs Robert Dixon (Chair), Stephen Baggott, Alan Tremlett, Phil Green, Fred Bosanquet.

In attendance: Clerk Deb Still.

21/22 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Karl Nielsen, Lalage Bosanquet.

22/22 Declarations of Interest - None.

23/22 Public Participation Time - There were no members of the public present.

24/22 Property Phase 2, Rennington North Farm

The background to this item is that the pre-planning application submitted by Northumberland Estates regarding the potential for a Phase 2 development for North Farm was rejected in 2021 by the Planning Authority on the basis it was too large for the village, was in the wrong place and interrupted the rural vista of open farmland. In the new draft Northumberland County Council (NCC) Local Plan the plan for smaller villages such as Rock and Rennington will allow for limited development outside designated development areas only in exceptional circumstances. The proposed Phase 2 of the North Farm Development is outside the designated development area identified in the draft local plan.

Northumberland Estates (NE) invited the Parish Council to meet to discuss Phase 2 and three Councillors met with Ms Shona Ferguson, Development Planner for NE on 19th October 2021 with a view to a future discussion with the full Rennington Parish Council (RPC) and within the context of the Rennington Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

At the October meeting, Ms Ferguson stated that in light of the Planning Authority's position, NE have no plans to progress further with the submitted Phase 2 proposal. The NE position would now only change if persuaded by RPC to seek an alternative approach.

The concept of a Phase 2 pre-planning application had been originally proposed in discussion with RPC but it is NOTED that the actual submission was not shown to the Council.

Ms Ferguson shared planning maps during the meeting that had formed part of the 'pre-planning application' that had not been previously shared with RPC. The maps show the proposal to develop a range of 2,3 and 4 bedroom properties in a mix of house types totalling 27 of which 8 are 'affordable'. Woodland and orchard areas are also indicated. The maps also indicated potential NE ambition to extend development over time (the three roadway ends adjacent to field and orchard margins) towards Stamford Lea/Cottages and behind North Farm Phase 1.

RPC opted to discuss this one issue in a full council meeting open to the public given its importance to the parish.

There was wide ranging discussion over the proposal and the approach to adopt. Issues discussed included:

- Disappointment from many parishioners that the Phase 1 development had ended up as something very different to the original plans submitted
- Disappointment that affordable housing properties in the original Phase 1 application had been reduced to nil, citing 'lack of demand' when such housing for younger families, working people and older people seeking to downsize is sought after within the Parish
- The Phase 1 materials and style used has a negative visual impact on the appearance and character of the village and does not sit comfortably in a traditional north Northumberland rural village environment
- That some of the Phase 1 already completed properties appear to be used as second homes/holiday lets rather than by full-time residents
- The area currently enjoys dark skies and lighting for such a development should be low level lighting both in height, intensity and spread – Phase 1 proposes an unsympathetic lighting plan
- The Developer/Contractors did not ensure that the build/construction site in Phase 1 was managed with sensitivity to residents and residents had concerns about health/safety issues
- Whether the Phase 2 development might mirror some of the above problems of the Phase 1 development.

Councillors discussed their preferred options for future development in the Parish. Issues discussed included:

- Land surrounding Rennington village is mostly owned by Northumberland Estates and there is therefore a need to work with NE in a constructive and positive manner while also protecting the traditional village environment and its residents and potential residents
- That there is a need in Rennington for good quality, sympathetically designed properties within the Affordable Home Ownership category (ie homes affordable to those with a household income at or below the median) to ensure the sustainability of the village
- The provision of Affordable Home Ownership would allow a greater diversity of residents to live in the village eg younger people, families and working people to complement the existing predominantly retired population of residents
- How have other PC's succeeded in attracting affordable home ownership – consideration of the Wooler project involving their PC, NCC and a developer
- Consideration of a Principal Residency agreement for new build properties
- That the Neighbourhood Development Plan, subject to government funding, would enable RPC to look at the issues and possible solutions with expert advice.

RESOLVED that the Chair write to Ms Ferguson at Northumberland Estates with a response indicating that the Council does not intend to support a Rennington North Farm Phase 2 as submitted but wishes to further discuss the Council's ambition in addressing the need for Affordable Home Ownership. RESOLVED to also share with them the NDP initial survey results that are also on the RPC website.

RESOLVED that Cllr Tremlett will make enquiries about the recently built Affordable Home Ownership properties in Wooler.

25/22 Other Urgent Business

i) The defibrillator light is still faulty – RESOLVED to approve contracting the local electrician used by the Stephen Carey Fund for defibrillators.

ii) A draft of a letter that will accompany the Emergency Plan/Resilience Plan survey that is going out to parishioners was discussed. The draft survey will be brought to the next RPC business meeting with the draft Emergency Plan.

26/22 Date of Next Meeting – Thursday February 3rd at 6.30pm at the Embleton Room, St James' URC, Pottergate, Alnwick, NE66 1JW

Signature of ChairDate:

DRAFT