

## RENNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Clerk:** Deb Still, 26 Swansfield Park Road, Alnwick, NE66 1AT

**Email:** [renningtonpc@gmail.com](mailto:renningtonpc@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.northumberlandparishes.uk/rennington](http://www.northumberlandparishes.uk/rennington)

### PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Rennington Parish Council meeting held at 7pm on Thursday 14th April, 2022 at Rennington Village Hall.

**Present:** Cllrs Robert Dixon (Chair), Stephen Baggott, Alan Tremlett, Lalage Bosanquet, Karl Nielsen.

**In attendance:** Clerk Deb Still, 2 members of the public.

**72/22 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Phil Green & Fred Bosanquet, County Cllr Wendy Pattison.

**73/22 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**74/22 Public Participation Time**

In accordance with Section 3.5 of the Rennington Parish Council Standing Orders members of the public present may address the Council at this point on the agenda. The Council reserves the right to respond or debate the issue on a later date.

One member of the public addressed the Council emphasising that they did so after discussing the matter in advance of the meeting with the Chair and in a spirit of wanting to be constructive and positive. Their concerns were around good governance, accuracy of minutes and transparency of the Council.

The first issue was the increase of the precept by 69% in one year. Although they could understand some of the arguments for the increase they did not think that the change in direction of the Council had been sufficiently communicated to the community. Also, reading the minutes, the Council appeared to have set the precept before setting the budget.

The second issue raised was about accuracy. In a response to the member of the public, the Chair noted that the Council had agreed at its May 2021 meeting to address three priorities in shaping its agenda – good governance, community engagement and neighbourhood development planning. However, the member of the public could not see this written in the minutes of May 2021. The person looked at another set of minutes of a meeting he attended and was of the view that they were inaccurate about the water treatment plant whereby Northumbria Water should only have been written to if they did not act within a certain time period. The member of the public asked that the Clerk and the Councillors ensure the minutes are accurate.

The member of the public did not consider there has been sufficient challenge to the budget nor to the minutes in the past which does not make for good governance.

The third issue raised was around transparency and they proposed that documents associated with the agenda be made available at Parish Council Meetings in future so that attendees can better understand what is being discussed.

The member of the public also stated that in relation to community engagement the Council should attempt to engage with members of the community other than by the internet. They mentioned that a good example of engagement was the consultation in connection with the Neighbourhood Development Plan. They offered to help with community engagement by writing up reports etc.

Cllr Dixon responded on one issue in relation to the budget to confirm that the draft budget considered by the Council when the precept was set was the same as the final budget considered at the next meeting.

**75/22 Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on Thursday 10th March**  
RESOLVED (proposed by Cllr Baggott and seconded by Cllr Nielsen) that the Minutes be accepted and signed as a correct and true record.

**76/22 Matters Arising from the previous meeting**

**i) Update on culvert silting and roadside drains.**

NCC responded to the letter sent by the Council and NCC has confirmed it will inspect the burn, culverts and gullies every two years at least.

They have not de-silted the Southfield culvert as they are of the view it would have little effect on flow as the section of private land below has raised levels and this would result in the culvert re-silting very quickly, because of the resultant silt trap created at the culvert. In their letter, Northumberland County Council confirmed they are responsible for road drainage, ditches, culverts and retaining walls supporting the highway and bridges on this watercourse, if they have been adopted as has Southfield culvert and its attached structures/masonry. NCC has referred RPC to the Highways Department in relation to the road drainage/ditching systems and it was agreed that the Clerk would raise the highways issues with Barry Knox by email.

Cllr Tremlett noted that following the recent activity by the council in cleaning and clearing in the Village there have clearly been some improvements. It was agreed that Councillors and members of the public would continue to monitor and report issues to the Parish Council who will liaise with NCC in order to ensure the village is well maintained.

**ii) Update on defibrillator at Rock Cricket Club.**

Rock Cricket Club has not yet responded to the letter from the Council.

**77/22 Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities has confirmed that the grant scheme for NDPs has been extended for a 5th year on the same terms. Cllr Baggott and the working group will prepare a draft tender to obtain quotes from independent Planning Consultants and prepare a draft grant application for consideration by the Parish Council.

**78/22 Planning Issues and Enforcement**

**Live Planning Applications**

i) There were no planning applications submitted since the drafting of the agenda.

**Other issues**

**ii) Street Lighting on North Farm**

There have been complaints from Rennington residents including some from residents of the North Farm development itself. NCC has said they understand the level of concern and will be reviewing the whole issue. RPC has written to the NCC about this and will continue to monitor the situation.

**iii) Affordable Housing – Wooler experience**

Cllrs Dixon, Tremlett, Baggott and F Bosanquet met with Tom Johnston (former CEO of Glendale Gateway Trust now working with Community Action Northumberland on developing community housing). Tom Johnston was involved with the Wooler development of 11 affordable to rent homes within a 70 homes development. A further 4 homes were available to eligible buyers at discounted market value. He noted that the key factors in achieving the development (as with other similar developments around the country including one on Holy Island some years ago) was collaboration with partners and stakeholders and commitment from a benevolent landowner prepared to sell land at below market price. Resale price covenants are used to control the resale terms and conditions.

In Wooler, the scheme was put together by the Glendale Gateway Trust, Wooler Parish Council, NCC Planning Authority, Northumberland Advance and Ascent Homes (partly funded by NCC). The development is almost complete, has been very successful and some of the homes are already occupied.

Tom Johnston has confirmed he is happy to provide further advice to RPC in exploring the ambition of bringing affordable housing to Rennington. Cllr L Bosanquet noted that there are 14 affordable homes in Rock. Cllr Baggott commented that there are three significant landowners in the Parish who might be approached in future in this regard.

iv) **Consultation by NCC on the Validation Checklist document** – no comments from the Council on the minimum level of information required by the local planning authority to support a planning application.

79/22

**Training**

The Clerk attended a remote session on Preparing for Audit delivered by Northumberland Association of Local Councils.

80/22

**Rennington Village Hall Report**

**i) Cllr F Bosanquet submitted a written report.**

The Village Hall Committee are exploring whether Incom is a better provider of broadband services than PlusNet. Repairs from Storm Arwen damage have been completed. There is some additional damage from later storms that will also be repaired. The Committee has noted some residents' objections to the Scarecrow Weekend but have pointed out that this successful fundraiser is critical for RVH finances as income from regular user groups does not cover running costs, especially given spiralling gas and electricity bills. Without income from the Covid Grants the RVH finances would be in a more precarious position.

The Committee has proposed a change of bank account from Lloyds to Co-op as a debit card facility is not available with the current Lloyds account which no longer meets the needs of RVH.

The RVH Jubilee picnic lunch is going ahead on 5<sup>th</sup> June 12-2pm to avoid a clash with the Rock Jubilee Cricket Club match and BBQ later the same afternoon.

**ii) Consideration of legal advice from the National Association of Local Councils on the lease between RPC (as Custodian Trustee) and Northumberland Estates for the Village Hall.**

RPC has obtained legal advice from a solicitor from the National Association of Local Councils to confirm various issues around the lease between Rennington Parish Council (as Custodian Trustee) and Northumberland Estates (Landowner) for Rennington Village Hall as run by its Management Committee.

The lease was first entered into in 1984 and RPC takes no part in managing the RVH. The member of RPC on the RVH Managing Committee does not represent the Council but is there in their capacity as Trustee of the Village Hall (with a potential conflict of interest with their position as member of the Council). The Lease has a break clause in 2023 that can be triggered by RVHMC with 12 months' notice.

Although in theory RVHMC fully indemnifies the Custodian Trustee in respect of liabilities to the building, were the insurance not to cover losses, for instance for wear and tear, then RPC would be ultimately liable.

It was AGREED that Cllrs Dixon and Tremlett would meet with members of the RVHMC to share the legal advice and consider future plans.

**81/22 Parish Emergency Plan/Resilience Plan**  
The Working Group met and considered next steps and the interim Emergency/Resilience Plan and the model one drafted by NCC. It was proposed and the Council agreed to adopt the model NCC Resilience Plan. The Council further agreed to delay recruiting any volunteers until their roles are better defined and following further discussions with the NCC Civil Contingencies Team including Nigel Fisher (who is also attending the Annual Parish Meeting as a speaker).

It was noted that one of the clearest outcomes of the survey of parishioners was that 52% of people would use an Emergency Rest Centre (ERC) during an emergency. Rennington Village Hall is registered as an ERC with Northumberland Council but, depending on the emergency, it would not always be able to fulfil the role. The development of the Resilience Plan will seek to identify and consider ways of filling gaps in provision.

**82/22 Purchase of Assets for Parish**  
One quotation received was considered for noticeboards. It was proposed that the Rennington notice board would have only one lockable window (rather than two) and would be below the planning permission size of 1.2m<sup>2</sup>. Cllr L Bosanquet will contact the member of the public at Stamford with a view to siting of a noticeboard at Stamford. The Clerk will write to the Conservation Officer at NCC to confirm whether planning permission will be required for a noticeboard in the former bus shelter at Rock (that belongs to Rock Estates) given that Rock is a conservation area.

**83/22 Communications/Correspondence Received**

- i) An email was received from a parishioner regarding the increase to the Parish Council precept for 2022-23. The person raised the issues in the Public Participation Time at item 74/22.
- ii) It was noted that a 'Thank you' letter was received from a parishioner regarding the Council's response to issues around data protection and the Scarecrow Festival.
- iii) An Enquiry was received from a resident concerning the naming of the C73 as Church Road on online maps. NCC confirmed in emails in March 2022 that their online adopted highways mapping and Network refers to the road as the C73 rather than Church Road. The Council confirmed that they have reported the incorrect naming to Google but has stated that although they can report the issue to online mapping websites, they cannot control how roads are recorded by them. It was agreed to take no further action.

**84/22 Rennington CPAD Defibrillator**  
Free Defibrillator and CPR Awareness, Familiarisation and Training has been arranged for interested parishioners on 23rd May at 18.30 and 26th May at 10am. The sessions will last 2 hours and will be led by Elliot Smith one of the Guardians who is an accredited trainer. Equipment is being loaned by NEAS

and the training will be suitable for anyone over 12 years' old who is reasonably mobile.

**85/22 Annual Parish Meeting**

The meeting will take place on 28th April at 7pm in Rennington Village Hall. Confirmed speakers are Nigel Fisher (Civil Contingencies Officer at NCC); Adam Ferry (Rock Cricket Club); Rev Alison Hardy (Area Dean for the Diocese of Newcastle) and NCC Cllr Wendy Pattison. The Chair of the Rennington Village Hall Management Committee will be present to answer any questions. Details of the meeting are on the Parish Council Website and will be put on the noticeboards and in the Newsletter. It was AGREED that Councillors will also publicise the event by word of mouth.

**86/22 Website**

Noted that the website analytics show steady use with the most popular page being the parish council 'minutes'.

**87/22 RPC Response to NCC Consultation on Local Cycling and Walking**

**Infrastructure Plans** It was AGREED that the Clerk would submit the response by the deadline of 15th April adding to the draft response prepared by Cllr Green to the effect that direct links need to be established between the parish and Alnwick as the main service centre and to Alnmouth Railway Station.

**88/22 Financial Matters**

**i) Financial Report** and update of Lloyds Bank Account balances as at 1.4.22 was NOTED.

Treasurer's Current Account Balance 1st April 2022	<b>£4659.82</b>
Business Bank Instant Reserve Account	<b>£5712.22</b>
of which	
Parish Council Reserves	<b>£3750.63</b>
s.106 monies from NE held on behalf of RV Hall	<b>£1961.59</b>

**ii) To approve current payments:**

It was RESOLVED to approve the following payments:

Hire of RVH for meetings from Oct 21 – March 22 (paid by debit card pursuant to Financial Reg 4.1)	<b>£100.00</b>
Replacement Key for filing cabinet (paid by debit card pursuant to Financial Reg 4.1)	<b>£9.05</b>

Clerk's expenses for training course (preparing for audit) and Mileage RPC meeting 10.3.22 (9miles x .45)	<b>£9.05</b>
--	--------------

**iii) Bank Reconciliation by Councillor**

The Bank Reconciliation by Cllr Green pursuant to Financial Regulation 2.2 was deferred to the next meeting.

**iv) Online Banking** – deferred until the next meeting.

**89/22 County Councillor** – Monthly Report was NOTED.

**90/22 Any Other Urgent Business**  
None.

**91/22 Staffing Matters**  
A motion to exclude the public was AGREED due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed. It was AGREED that the Clerk’s salary would be increased by one incremental step as per the Contract of Employment.

**92/22 Date of Next Meeting** – Annual Parish Meeting Thursday 28th April 2022 at Rennington Village Hall. Ordinary RPC business meeting (and Annual Meeting) on 12th May 2022.

**Future Meeting Dates**

12th May 2022 (and Annual Meeting)

9th June 2022

14th July 2022

8th September 2022

13th October 2022

8th December 2023

12th January 2023

9th February 2023

9th March 2023