

# CommunityTalk

IN RENNINGTON, ROCK & STAMFORD SUMMER 2024

## How the Community Voted

After distributing our second consultation document and questionnaire we've held two public meetings to discuss settlement boundaries, housing sites and the design code. In Rennington 35 attended; 21 in Rock.

At each meeting there were certainly some wide-ranging discussions! And those attending took the opportunity to raise the issues that were of real concern to them. The prospect of more local green spaces also featured highly in the discussions as did the question of planning policies in general.

95 questionnaires had been returned by the 31 May; the full results are available on the parish council website. In summary, of those who expressed an opinion, the outcome is:

### Rennington

70% voted to leave the settlement boundary as currently defined while 30% voted to expand the settlement boundary so as to allow limited development.

### Rock

33% wished to see the settlement boundary drawn around the existing built-up area of Rock. 53% supported the re-introduction of the settlement boundary to include the development site west of the cricket pitch. 14% did not wish to have a settlement boundary defined.

### Stamford

76% supported the proposed development whereas 24% opposed it.

### Design Code

93% supported the Design Code while 7% opposed it.

### Next Steps

Our Neighbourhood Development Plan will reflect the views expressed in this survey and include the production of both Strategic Environmental & Habitat Regulations Assessments. Once completed, our draft plan will be passed to Northumberland County Council for their comments prior to consulting with you again. After that we will submit the Neighbourhood Development Plan to the Independent Examiner and the final stage will be for you to decide: the referendum.

Alan Tremlett

## Scarecrow Festival 24th, 25th & 26th August



This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Village Hall in its present place – the former school building. The old minutes books show us that, for many decades, the work of successive committees has been based upon a “can do” spirit and enormous voluntary effort which has shaped community activity in our small rural parish for generations.

It is thanks to these hard working people across the years, combined with the community support we continue to receive, that the Village Hall remains the well used, highly valued community asset it is today. And that's why the present committee work so hard to continue this tradition on behalf of the whole parish.

We remain heavily dependent upon our annual scarecrow event which raises around 50% of our running costs in a good year. It is vital to our fundraising effort and without which it would be very difficult to cover all necessary costs to keep the hall open. So, in the 25th anniversary year of our annual Scarecrow Weekend, **we really DO NEED YOUR HELP!**

The Village Hall Committee invite as many residents as possible to display a scarecrow either in your garden or around the village and ask you to volunteer in one of many ways to help over the weekend! Please come along to our Volunteer Afternoon Tea on Sunday 21st July at 3pm to find out more, offer to volunteer, and meet one another! **Many thanks.**

## Bird Watch

In Spring pelagic (deep sea) birds return to land to breed. They spend the winter in the North Atlantic and in the Bay of Biscay living an entirely marine life, feeding on small fish and plankton. In late April and May we welcome back Kittiwakes, Fulmars and auks (Puffins, Guillemots and Razorbills). Our five species of breeding Tern return from even further afield. Large numbers converge on the Northumberland coast and set about nestbuilding.

The Farnes and Coquet Island provide many nest sites but others breed on cliffs (at Cullernose point and St Abbs) and on the shore (at the Long Nanny). Many Kittiwakes breed on the coast but they also nest in significant numbers on the Tyne. The Tyne Bridge and the Baltic host the most inland Kittiwake colony in the world.



Guillemots and Razorbills balance their eggs on rocky ledges, Kittiwakes and Fulmars build nests from marine debris, Puffins nest in underground burrows and Terns in shallow depressions in the grass. Once hatched the adults make trips to sea collecting sand eels (small fish) to feed the chicks. Chick mortality is high but by July the survivors will have set off back to sea again for the winter.

Tim Walls

## Rock Cricket Club



The cricket season has started and is now in full swing! Huge thanks to our groundsmen who have worked tirelessly to prepare the many wickets now required at Rock - with men, ladies and children all having playing opportunities.

The Senior Team have had a tough start to the season after promotion to Northumberland and Tyneside Division 4 North - the highest level of cricket played at Rock - but they say challenge is good for you! The Ladies have had a good start to their season and are currently top of the table in Northumberland Division 1 North. Fixture details and results can be found here - <https://rocknorthumberland.play-cricket.com/Matches>

Saturday mornings see a flurry of activity with the U13, U11 and U9 age groups at their coaching sessions. Wonderful to see so many children outdoors, playing sport, learning new skills and having loads of fun with their friends!

All are welcome to our beautiful ground - as players, supporters and spectators. On a sunny Saturday afternoon it's a great place to sit with a cup of tea and cheer on your local team - and there's usually a piece of cake available too!

If you're interested in being a match ball sponsor, please contact Sally Roberts on 07986 115936

## Pétanque Club

After almost two years of fundraising and with construction finally completed on 20 May our new club in the parish has opened for play!

The opening ceremony on Sunday 9 June proved to be a great success. After some very short speeches there were fun games for all those wanting to have a go. Hopefully this will stimulate even greater interest.

Membership costs £25 per year (£40 for couples) and open club sessions will take place on Wednesdays and Sundays between now and end September. Informal play, however, can take place at most times.

Norman Hughes - [norman.hughes52@btinternet.com](mailto:norman.hughes52@btinternet.com)



# Rigg & Furrow

This archaeological pattern of ridges and troughs was created by a system of ploughing dating from the Middle Ages - an open-field system used to separate land into strips managed by different tenants. Today it's a non-designated heritage asset and visible in the field between Rennington House and The Pond as well as the field adjacent to North Farm: both next to early agricultural settlements!

Rigg & Furrow contours were created by regular ploughing with a pair of horses pulling a single furrow plough, ploughing in one direction and then the opposite way - throwing two

furrows together to ensure no grass was left growing. Years of ploughing resulted in ridges and deep furrows. The major advantage was good, low-cost drainage, allowing farmers to grow crops on heavy, clay land that could not otherwise be used to grow arable crops such as oats, barley and wheat. In wet years, the crop growing on top of the ridge was likely to survive. In drier seasons, crops could also grow in the furrow with farmers planting 15 or so varieties of corn. Some would be drought-tolerant; others would thrive under wet conditions. Farmers could hedge their bets - fairly certain of at least some return for their labours!

Its popularity grew because of the 'Corn Laws' (1815 - 1846) which protected farmers from foreign competition by tariffs charged for cheaper imported grain. When repealed, however, much of this land returned to pasture. Today Rigg and Furrow is largely restricted to rural Northern England and Scotland where sheep grazing remains dominant over arable farming and urbanisation. As well as being an historic drainage system - it significantly increases the surface area of grass for grazing sheep and cattle.

*Sally Roberts*



# The Doors are Open



Home insurance providers insist on stringent security measures before paying out on claims. Five lever mortice locks on doors, window locks, alarm systems are all standard. We've become used to locking up when we leave the house and even when we are at home. We need to keep the bad people out. We need to protect ourselves and our property against threat of harm. Interesting then that Ecclesiastical Insurance, the main church provider, advises that Churches be kept unlocked as far as possible: an unlocked church door reduces the risk of serious damage and higher claims. It seems totally counter cultural.

But isn't it the case that our churches should be exactly that? Places that go against the grain. Church buildings should be undefended territory with the doors open to all. We're not trying to create safe space with no risk, but

sacred space into which everyone is invited to explore and enjoy.

It's sad that the perception of the Church is often that it is a closed place, behind locked doors to which most people don't have the key or the password.

I don't think the churches in our communities are like that. We want to offer a welcome to all, we want to be places where the only entry requirement is curiosity and a willingness to step inside and be surprised by what you find: the presence of God, an oasis of peace, and ordinary people with open hearts and minds.

**Come on in - the doors are open – you're welcome.**

*Rev Alison Hardy*  
[revalisonhardy@gmail.com](mailto:revalisonhardy@gmail.com)

# Garden Talk

## Taking cuttings

As gardening becomes increasingly expensive, cuttings can provide a cheaper way of increasing the number and variety of plants you have.

Some plants root well just in water: houseplants (eg tradescantia), flowers (carnations), some garden plants (eg begonias) and shrubs (eg willow).

Take a small cutting just below a node (where leaves come off) with scissors or a sharp knife. Remove the leaves (don't have too many others) and put into clean water. Change the water regularly, wait until roots appear and then pot up.



Softwood cuttings usually taken in spring or early summer can be used for many deciduous perennials (chrysanthemum, penstemon, geraniums) shrubs (fuchsias, honeysuckle, hydrangea) and even some trees. Take a cutting from a non-flowering stem just below a node. If not planting immediately, keep in a plastic bag or wrapped in wet paper. Nip out the tip, dip in hormone rooting powder or liquid, fill a pot with compost mixed with grit/perlite, make a small hole and pop the cutting in. Cover with a cloche or put in a plastic bag to prevent drying out. Cuttings should root in 2-4 weeks.

This isn't intended as a comprehensive guide or "how to do it" - just a suggestion that taking cuttings can be easy and to encourage you to give it a go.

**Good luck**

*Hilary Walls*

# Down on the Farm

Over the winter we've planted more hedges as part of our long term plan - we're now a third of the way through planting 42,000m over the whole farm. Once planted we have to maintain them - keeping them clear of vegetation and, when established, removing their plastic guard.

Farming is so dependent on the weather and we've seen over 600mm of rain in the last 7 months. It's a lot - given our average annual rainfall is 715mm. It's affected the growth of our crops over the winter and delayed sowing more crops this Spring. However with a fantastic effort from our team, we finished sowing at the end of April. We're also now bringing in farm yard manure from local livestock farms. As we don't have livestock on the farm, we swap straw (used for animal bedding) with manure from local farmers, so that the soils can benefit from this very important organic nutrition.

I do like the month of June. Now the weather is finally improving, crops are starting to show their potential for harvest and all our hard work is starting to come together. Roll on harvest!

*Stephen Siddorn Farm Manager*



## Village Hall Stop Press...

From 10 June we're closed for loft repairs and expect to re-open mid July (TBA). With this edition also comes a special insert from the Village Hall Committee.

## Whats On

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 26 June        | 6.30pm 'Art Collector Helen Sutherland at Rock Hall', Ysanne Holt, Rock Church    |
| 17 July        | 6.30 pm 'Outdoor Education at Rock Hall School', Lalage Bosanquet, Rock Church    |
| 21 July        | 3pm Volunteers Afternoon Tea - Scarecrow Festival RVH                             |
| 24 August      | 6.00pm Shakespeare's 'A Comedy of Errors' performed by The Handelbards, Rock Hall |
| 24 - 26 August | Scarecrow Festival  |

### Next Issue

**Autumn 2024; please submit content no later than 3 September 2024**

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