

RENNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Rennington Parish Council meeting held at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 3rd May 2023 at Rennington Village Hall.

Present:

Rennington Parish Council: Cllrs Robert Dixon (Chair), Stephen Baggott (minutes), Lalage Bosanquet (minutes), Andy Sisson, Alan Tremlett, Katie Robertson, Fred Bosanquet (minutes), Phil Green, Peter Purdom

Northumberland County Council Officers: Sarah Brannigan - NCC Neighbourhood Planning Team (Planning Services), Nick Leadbetter - NCC Housing Enabling Officer (Planning Services), Rebecca Fenwick - NCC Housing Delivery Manager (Housing Capital & Maintenance)

Community Action Northumberland: Tom Johnston – Communities CAN Coordinator

In attendance: 39 members of the public.

The meeting opened at 6.30pm.

101/23 Apologies for Absence

Parish Clerk Deb Still. Cllr Alan Tremlett.
County Cllr Wendy Pattison.

102/23 Declarations of Interest Members to inform the Chair of any declarations of interest for matters in connection with this agenda.

No declarations of interest.

103/23 Suspension of Standing Orders

A motion to suspend Standing Orders for the duration of this meeting will be proposed to allow full public participation during the meeting.

Motion to suspend Standing Orders passed.

104/23 Chair's Welcome & Introduction

Cllr Robert Dixon welcomed members of the public to the meeting and introduced the panel.

105/23 Review of NDP public consultation and Housing Needs Assessment Report March 2023 prepared by AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited

Cllr Dixon then:

Highlighted the housing issues identified by consultation and survey carried out in 2021:

- Limiting number of new houses

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- Ageing population
- Need for housing for young families
- Affordability of housing
- Need for 'Affordable Housing/social housing
- Number of second homes/holiday homes.

Explained that the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment was a very detailed examination of housing metrics with comparisons of how these figures compared with the wider local area/county and nationally.

Key finding from AECOM Housing Needs Assessment are:

- High cost of housing
- Majority housing stock privately owned
- High percentage detached or terraced
- High proportion 4 beds often only with two occupants
- Ageing population
- 24% of dwelling are second homes/holiday lets.

106/23 Meeting Parish housing needs - what are our options? (Northumberland County Council Officers and Communities CAN

Sarah Brannigan - NCC Neighbourhood Planning Team (Planning Services)
Explained that there is a nil Northumberland Local Plan housing target for Rennington Parish.

There are 17 outstanding planning consents in the Parish – planning permission granted but development not completed (n.b. 10 of these have been completed since NCC figures were compiled).

Based on the last available census data (2011) Rennington Parish does not qualify for second home restrictions. 2021 census data is expected to be available summer 2023.

Nick Leadbetter - NCC Housing Enabling Officer (Planning Services)
Explained that new development in Rennington, of more than 10 houses, will have to have 25% of the dwelling being 'Affordable Housing'.

Described 'Affordable Housing as:

Social Rent

This tenure is owned by local authorities (what used to be called Council housing) and private registered providers (also known as housing associations). Guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime and are typically the lowest-cost form of housing available.

Households must be eligible on the basis of income and other circumstances, and there are usually waiting lists.

Affordable Rent

This is similar to Social Rent (above). Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but must have a rent of no more than 80% of the local market.

Households must be eligible on the basis of income and other circumstances, and there are usually waiting lists.

Rent to Buy

Rent to Buy is a relatively uncommon tenure. Subsidy allows the occupant to save a portion of their rent to be used to build up a deposit to eventually purchase the home.

Shared Ownership

An affordable home ownership product where a purchaser buys part (generally between 25% and 75%, but can be as little as 10%) of the value of the property. The remaining (un-owned part) is rented from a housing association or local authority.

This generally applies to new build properties, but re-sales occasionally become available.

First Homes

First Homes are an affordable home ownership product introduced in 2021. Discounts on the market price can be set at 30%, 40%, or 50%.

New developments will be required to provide 25% of the Affordable Housing as First Homes.

Questions from members of the audience

Q: Does rent count towards a deposit on the house?

A: No.

Q: Does NCC have plans to build social housing locally?

A: No (RF)

Q: Where does the need for 'Affordable Housing' come from?

A: Came from RPC consultation and survey plus AECOM Housing Needs Assessment (RD)

Q: Could survey information be skewed?

A: Possibly. Neighbourhood Planning, though not mandatory – helps identify issues and allows us to create policies to address those issues if we want to. It's an ongoing process. (RD)

Q: Is there an assessment of facilities eg to encourage young families?

A: Yes. Policies in NP have to be 'joined up' so that they support the overall objectives of the NP.

Q: What would be an affordable price?

A: Discounts needs to be researched. (affordability – property cost in relation to local income)

Q: Who determines specification, size, quality of low cost homes?

A: The local plan has policies in place e.g. Technical Housing Standards - nationally described space standard.

Q: Who can apply for affordable housing?

A: Assessment criteria to determine eligibility (affordability – property cost in relation to local income and special needs)

Q: If houses go on the open market what is to stop them becoming a holiday let?

A: Nothing, any restrictions would only apply to new build after policy was in place.

Rebecca Fenwick – NCC Housing Delivery Manager (Housing Capital & Maintenance)

NCC works with partners (Bernicia & Karbon) to deliver 'Affordable Housing', primarily looking to build on land they already own but if a landowner was able to offer land at a discount they might be able to cooperate with that landowner.

NCC looks to develop areas where they already have houses but would consider developing in areas of market failure.

The delivery of 'Affordable Housing' to support NCC priorities this includes providing for an ageing population by building bungalows and assisted living units.

In building 'Affordable Housing' NCC looking to use modern construction methods to deliver on net zero.

Homes England will give grants of up to £50k per unit.

Tom Johnston – Communities CAN Coordinator.

Community Action Northumberland looking to support local communities in providing small scale development – fewer than 20 units.

These not for profit schemes are set up and run by local people to meet long term housing needs.

Examples of developments are a new site in Stocksfield, Bank in Wooler, High Street shop in Haltwhistle.

107/23 Additional Questions and Answers

Q What is timeline for neighbourhood plan?

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A Draft within a month, consultation complete by autumn, then submit to parish council, aiming for referendum spring 2024 (Cllr Robert Dixon).

Invitation for more volunteers to join working group.

Q: What was the response rate to the neighbourhood plan survey?

A: 20% response (Cllr Robert Dixon).

Q: Would you redo the survey to get a wider response?

A: More consultation opportunities will become available (Cllr Robert Dixon).

Q Will there be a call for sites?

A: A call for sites has been carried out with 3 sites being put forward (Cllr Robert Dixon).

Q Will you be more specific where these sites are?

A More details will be released in due course (Cllr Robert Dixon).

Meeting closed at 8:20 pm

Date of Next Ordinary Business Meeting and Annual General Meeting – 7pm on Thursday 11th May 2023 at Rennington Village Hall.

Future Meeting Dates (all start at 7pm unless stated otherwise)

8th June 2023

13th July 2023

14th September 2023

12th October 2023

9th November 2023

14th December 2023

11th January 2024

8th February 2024

14th March 2024