

CommunityTalk

IN RENNINGTON, ROCK & STAMFORD AUTUMN 2025

Bee Happy - Scarecrows 2025



What more appropriate welcome to Rennington Scarecrow Festival, which has been held annually since 1999, apart from during the Covid lockdown period?

It is extraordinary in many ways:

- It is an old-fashioned family outing, which costs nothing to attend, unless visitors choose to purchase food, items for sale or to participate in various games.
- It appeals to all ages; children are entranced by finding scarecrows and answering questions about them, adults are drawn back year on year. It is common for older participants to say that they have been attending annually for ten or fifteen years.
- In these days when so much entertainment depends on a keyboard or a screen, it requires nothing more than the use of Shanks' Pony, paper and pen.
- It attracts hundreds of visitors to our delightful village, daily, for three days. The money that they choose to spend

is used primarily to support the Village Hall, which is a registered charity and receives no regular public funding. Some of the funds raised go to All Saints Church. This year the funds raised will cover approximately 60% of the expected running costs of the Village Hall for next year.

- It brings in much-needed business to our popular pub at a time when many rural hospitality venues are struggling financially.
- It genuinely seems to result in laughter, happy faces, good humour and visitors leaving in a happier state than when they arrive.

There is no set theme for the scarecrows. Residents and contributors come up with their own ideas, ranging from the traditional, through characters from literature, sport, history, music, film and television. Themes emerge in respect to politics and current affairs which vary from year to year, although the US president has featured fairly regularly in the last few years.

It would be wrong of me not to take the opportunity to say thank you. Putting on an event like this requires extensive planning and organisation. Thanks to all the members of the Village Hall Committee who work hard in the shadows to this end. It also requires participation by a high proportion of the community, working together as a team. Some interact with the visitors, others are in the background but all are equally important. So, to all the: scarecrow makers (including the children of Embleton Primary School), sandwich makers, car parkers, sausage sizzlers, dish washers, cake bakers, lemonade sellers, rubbish collectors, people selling things in the marquee, those working in the tea room and the set up and take down team, a heartfelt thank you also. Finally, thanks to the whole community for the generosity of your contributions and for putting up with the disturbance to your daily life over Scarecrow weekend.

Tim Walls

Bird Watch

As autumn approaches, we are accustomed to the changing birds we see and hear in our gardens and local area. Swallows, Martins, and Warblers disappear on migration to Africa, while we witness skeins of geese overhead returning from their breeding grounds in Greenland and Iceland to overwinter in our milder climate. On the shoreline, terns have left, migrating to the Southern Hemisphere, and are replaced by flocks of waders, ducks, and geese. These changes are predictable as the seasons alter, with birds following a set annual route and staying for predictable periods each year.



Another pattern of bird movement is irruption, where large numbers of birds that don't routinely visit the UK in significant numbers suddenly and unpredictably appear. A notable example is Waxwings, which appear during late autumn. Irruptions most commonly occur due to a food shortage during a particular year, often after a successful breeding season, while migrations respond to food shortages during specific seasons each year.



Waxwings are striking birds with a swept-back crest. They are buff brown underneath and black along the front of their wings. When perched, look for a yellow line along the edge of the wing and just above it, a white patch tipped with scarlet that resembles sealing wax. They arrive in flocks and settle for periods in towns, usually where there are rowan berries, their favourite food. They stay for varying lengths of time before moving on when they have exhausted the food supply. In some years, they never arrive, while in others, they appear in large numbers. Other birds that display irruptive behaviour include Hawfinches and Bramblings.

Tim Walls

Biodiversity



Rennington Parish Council has developed a new Parish Biodiversity plan to document, enhance, and protect biodiversity within the parish. The plan covers planning applications that support site and building design that benefits biodiversity by conserving and integrating existing habitats. It also involves collaborating with other organisations to promote biodiversity. Rock Farms has dedicated 60 hectares to cover plots, including large areas of phacelia that have returned along with thistles and other wildlife-friendly plants.

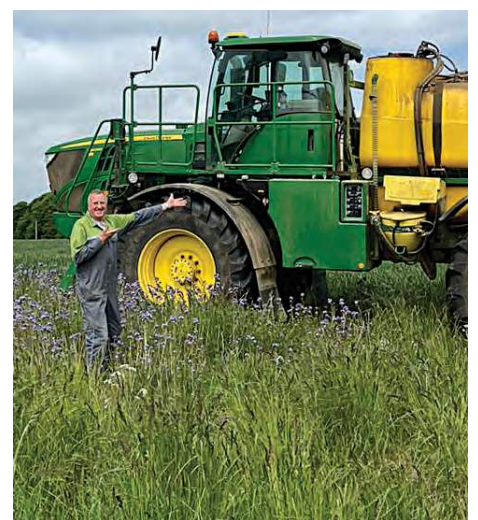
Anyone, regardless of their size, can make a difference. Bulb planting in Rock, Rennington, and Stamford has contributed to the parish's biodiversity by providing early food sources for pollinators like bees and butterflies, and enhancing the health of the green spaces. Around Rock Hall, areas



previously sprayed alongside the garden wall have been sown with poppies to promote bees in those areas. Many people in Rock, Rennington, and Stamford have dedicated time and energy in their gardens to promote habitats for wildlife. We hope that future issues of Community Talk will feature individuals and groups who play a part in enhancing biodiversity within the parish.

George is retiring!

George Stephenson, the longest-serving member of the Rock Farms team, is retiring this October. Leaving school in 1976, George has worked on the farm ever since. His journey began driving a cabless tractor, progressing to various roles, including operating the combine during harvest. Throughout his working life, George has demonstrated unwavering commitment to Rock Farms, making him the third generation of Stephensons to do so, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. On behalf of the entire Rock Estate, we express our gratitude for George's nearly fifty years of service and wish him a well-deserved retirement filled with activities like cycling, golf, and gardening.



One year on...

Gary and Charlotte have been running The Horseshoes Inn for just one year, and it's clear that it's a way of life for them. They see themselves as the custodians of the inn, more than its owners, and they absolutely love it. Their efforts to upgrade and enhance the inn have been well-received by residents, and they've received numerous glowing reviews on TripAdvisor.

Now, they're eagerly awaiting the outcome of their planning application to change the manager's accommodation to four B&B rooms. This change would enhance the inn's offerings to visitors and help ensure its continued success and sustainability, especially in the current financial climate. Any improvements that help businesses thrive, particularly in the hospitality sector, should definitely be encouraged.

Gary and Charlotte aim to give people good reason to visit The Horseshoes Inn, whether it's just for a casual drink and a chat or perhaps a full meal. We'll be closely following their progress as their ideas continue to take shape.



Look after yourself?

Four weeks ago, I fell and broke a bone in my elbow. An accident which could have happened to anyone and which is a painful nuisance. People have been very kind, lots of them telling me to "be careful" and to "look after myself".

I'm very grateful to everyone, but the idea of looking after myself has given me pause for thought. I know what people mean, they mean well and they say it because they care. But it seems to me that looking after oneself may be the root of many of

our problems in community and society in general.

Looking after others is at the heart of the Christian gospel and expresses itself in acts of practical service, as well as in thinking well of others, having a generous attitude, giving people the benefit of the doubt.

Looking after ourselves can make us selfish, not caring about other people's feelings, ignoring or opposing their views. See the world

around us today, with people divided, hatred and fear expressed in violent speech and actions. This is the bitter conclusion of looking after ourselves, tearing us apart instead of bringing us closer together in mutual care, compassion and kindness.

Jesus gets to the very heart of the matter in his most famous teaching. "*Love your neighbour as you love yourself*". How might we make this real in our communities?

Rev Alison



Garden Talk

Starting from scratch...

The most flourishing thing in my August garden has been the weeds. We spend hours pulling them out, pop inside for a cup of tea, and they're back again. Being so close to the fields doesn't help, and we still have vast expanses of bare earth or clay while we wait for something other than the weeds to grow. After a severe case of eyes bigger than garden where we used to live, I'm resisting buying more plants to fill the gaps.



The beetroot and courgettes are also flourishing. Maybe three courgette plants are a tad too many for two people, but their flowers are pretty (and even better in tempura batter and stuffed with herby ricotta). However, emptying out the whole packet of beetroot seeds at random was possibly not the best approach. In my defence, it was cold, and they blend in with the soil. Note to self: be more structured next year and plant in marked lines, or possibly skip on the beetroot altogether. We've donated, cooked, and cooked. Hugh, Jamie, Rick, and even Nigella have all stepped up to the mark; beetroot hummus, Moroccan beetroot salad, fennel roasted beetroot, and so on! Just now, I'm building up some energy to find the kilner jars and attempt some pickling.

Amanda Parshall

Neighbourhood Plan

We're now making progress.

AECOM have produced their Strategic Environmental Assessment, which is supportive. We've already amended the Plan in light of their recommendations.

The County Council's Neighbourhood Planning team has also been helpful and is now producing the Policy Maps for our Neighbourhood Plan. We also have the screening report for the Habitats Regulations

Assessment, which we've been advised will be sufficient for Regulation 14 Consultation.

The Working Party has planned to meet on 22 September. By then, we should hopefully be in a position to start planning the consultation process and preparing the necessary materials. Once everything is ready, the formal process will be undertaken by the Parish Council as the qualifying body.

Start of the Season

Carpet Bowls kicked off the season on Wednesday 10 September, and we're having a third new members' session on Wednesday 24 September at 6:15 pm. If that doesn't work for you, we'd love you to try out carpet bowls on a club night on either 8 or 15 October at 7 pm. These are free taster sessions open to all, so come along and give it a go! No previous experience is required. Carpet Bowls is a fun, traditional

winter pastime that combines skill and luck.

Our club runs each year until the first week in April, meeting once a week on Wednesdays for club nights or friendly matches with other local clubs. The timing of our 'away' matches depends on the other club.

Eric Wealleans 07745 575603

Stop Press...

Want to know what's going on at the Village Hall? To add your name to our mailing list, please email: renningtonvillagehall@gmail.com.

Whats On

20 Sept	7 - 9pm Petanque French Picnic, Rock
24 Sept	6.15pm Carpet Bowls - try it out for free, RVH
25 Sept	6.30pm Beyond Borders: Life & Lessons as Expats in India, Cliff & Sylvia Crosbie, Rock Church
26 Sept	6.30pm Quiz Night, RVH
27 Sept	7pm Mike Davids Band, Rocking Horse Cafe - booking essential
3 October	4 - 8pm Organic & Local Market, free entry, RVH
8 October	7pm Carpet Bowls - try it out for free, RVH
15 October	7pm Carpet Bowls - try it out for free, RVH
31 October	6.30pm Quiz Night, RVH
7 November	4 - 8pm Organic & Local Market, free entry, RVH
28 November	7pm Christmas Bingo, RVH
30 November	11- 4pm All Saints Christmas Fair, RVH

Check for future events at rennington-pc.gov.uk

Next Issue

Winter 25; please submit content no later than 7 November 2025

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