

Slaley Parish Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Slaley Parish Council Held on Monday 11th March 2024 at 5.30 pm in Slaley Commemoration Hall

1. Present

Councillor Ian Stevens, Councillor Stella Douglas, Councillor Debra Taylor and Councillor Lynda Sale.

2. Apologies for Absence

County Councillor Colin Horncastle and Councillor Jon Storey.

3. Public Participation

Mr. R. Thompson (of Slaley Parish).

Mr. Thompson addressed the Council on the state of the roads in the Parish with particular reference to potholes. Councillors advised that this was an issue dear to their hearts and that many residents had also made representations to them about this issue. Following a discussion it was agreed that Councillor Stevens would approach County Councillor John Riddle, Cabinet Member for Improving our Roads and Highways and request the following of him:

- that details be provided regarding the intervention parameters for the filling of potholes
- the amount of compensation Northumberland County Council had paid out to road users following damage caused to their vehicles/machines
- attendance at a Parish Council meeting to share the Council's approach to improving roads and highways within the county

Action – Councillor Stevens to contact County Councillor John Riddle.

4. Short Address by County Councillor Colin Horncastle

None.

5. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Stevens, Douglas and Taylor in relation to minuted item 9 c., 'Emergency Hub Sub-committee'.

6. Minutes of Meeting Held on Monday 12th February 2024

a. Approval of minutes

Councillor Sale proposed the minutes and Councillor Taylor seconded them as a true record of the meeting.

b. Review of actions

The Actions Log was reviewed and appropriately updated – See Appendix A.

 08/04/24

c. Matters arising

- i. Minuted item 9 a., relating to the overgrown hedge at Townhead, B6306 junction needs resolution, having been outstanding since 13/04/23.

Action – Councillor Stevens to speak to the homeowner.

- ii. Minuted item 12 a. relating to the Slaley Housing Needs Survey of 2022. Councillor Stevens advised that a meeting with Imperator Developments had been held of 28/02/24 with himself and Councillors Taylor and Douglas in attendance. Subsequent to that, Imperator Developments had shared the outputs of the survey with the Parish Council a copy of which had been placed on the Councils Google Drive under the title 'Slaley Housing Needs Assessment 2023'.

7. Correspondence of significant note

- a. **From, Northumberland County Council** – email dated 21/02/24 highlighting the need for voters to present photo identification for all forthcoming elections. Posters and electronic media forwarded with that correspondence has been displayed locally and posted on the Parish website. Councillor Stevens will highlight this need in April's Slaley News too. See minuted item 12 b. of these minutes also.
- b. **From, Procut** – email received 18/02/23 advising of a proposed increase in the cost of grass cutting in the Parish. An option that allowed for longer term financial planning (over a two year period) and limits a further increase in 2025 was approved by Councillors via email. Procut were advised accordingly by Councillor Stevens on 29/02/24.

8. Approaches Made to Councillors directly

a. Correspondence

- i. **From, Hiscox Insurance Company Ltd.** – email dated 03/03/24 alerting the Council that their insurance is due for renewal on 01/06/24 with a request that a pre-renewal questionnaire be completed and returned (by 02/04/23) to ensure that the correct premium is quoted.

Action – Councillor Stevens to complete pre-renewal questionnaire.

- ii. From, Mrs. V. Pepys – email dated 26/02/24 suggesting that it might be appropriate for local walking groups to have a contact in the village so that direction could be given in relation to parking. Councillor Stevens forwarded her email to fellow Councillors on 04/03/24 (as well as Commemoration Hall Trustees). Following a discussion Councillors did not feel the 'bandwidth' existed within the Parish Council to progress this issue.

Action – Councillor Stevens to advise Mrs. Pepys of the Council's decision.

 08/04/24

b. Personal

- i. **Townfoot Caravan Park** – Councillor Stevens was approached by a number of Parish residents by both phone and email on 07/03/24 regarding the felling of trees at the Caravan Park. Those same residents had also drawn the Planning Officers attention to this issue. Councillor Stevens was moved to contact the Planning Officer also, believing that the felling of the trees may be outside the granted planning permission.
- ii. **Slaley Show** – At this meeting, the deputy chair of Slaley Show (Mr. R. Thompson) thanked Councillors for their recent financial contribution towards it (see minuted item 12 a. from the Council meeting of 08/01/24).

9. New Items

a. Review of Outstanding Actions for 2023/24 (led by Cllr Stevens)

Review and update of actions log – See Appendix B.

b. Parish Clerk (led by Cllr Stevens)

i. Resignation of Parish Clerk (led by Cllr Stevens)

Recognising the need for a Parish Clerk, Councillors discussed alternatives to the recruitment process that had been used on the previous two occasions. It was agreed that Councillor Douglas would approach an existing Parish Clerk that she knew who might consider the role, but if that proved to be unsuccessful Councillor Stevens would approach neighbouring Parish Councils to see if one of their Clerk's might be interested in the post.

Action – Councillor Douglas to approach neighbouring Parish Clerk.

Action – Councillor Stevens to follow up on the outcome from Councillor Douglas' action.

iii. Remuneration of recent Parish Clerk's (led by Cllr Stevens)

Councillor Stevens advised that since the Council's last meeting he had employed the services of T P Jones (accountants) to progress the paperwork in relation to reimbursing the Council's last two Parish Clerk's, Mrs. C. Loughlin and Mrs. S. Nixon. He added that both had now received payslips, P45s and the monies owed to the. In addition payments had also been made to HMRC. Appendix C captures these financial transactions.

c. Emergency Hub Sub-committee Update (formally 'The Pyramid of Care') (led by Cllr Stevens)

Councillor Stevens led fellow Councillors through the sub-committees latest report, forwarded to all via email on 29/02/24, and attached as Appendix D. After discussion, the following proposals were voted on:

 08/04/24

(Council Vote!)

- that the Parish Council meet the cost of the one off installation fee £94.95 for the wi-fi/phone package
All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.
- that the Parish Council meet half the total cost of the total wi-fi/phone package fee - £215.64
All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.
- that the Parish Council grant the sum of £215.64 to the Hall Trustees without a grant application having to be made
All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.
- that for as long as the Hall remains an emergency hub the Parish Council will meet 50% of the wi-fi/phone package costs (following a value for money review with Hall Trustees each year)
All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

Action – Councillor Stevens to advise the Chair of the Hall Trustees of the outcome of this vote.

d. Community Play Area (led by Cllr Stevens)

The Headteacher at Slaley First School had requested that two pieces of play equipment in the Community Play Area be removed from the school grounds due to inappropriate placement, or on health and safety grounds.

Following discussion there was confusion amongst Councillors as to who owned the equipment. Subsequently this item was not progressed.

Action – Councillor Stevens to contact the Council's former Parish Clerk (Mrs. P. Wilson) to see if she can help establish who owns the equipment.

e. First Aid Course (item proposed by Cllr Douglas to be led by Cllr Stevens)

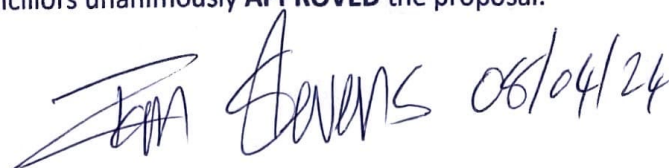
At the Council's February (2024) meeting Councillors present proposed the following:

- that the Parish Council should run one fully subsidised First Aid Course each financial year for Parish residents, (until such time that they felt such training was no longer required) – although those attending would be invited to make a donation to the Council's chosen charity, whilst those living outside the Parish would be asked to pay for their place on the course – with £50 being considered as the going rate at this time.

With Councillor Douglas not at that meeting and being a key actor in relation to this item the proposal was not voted upon. With her present at this meeting a vote was taken.

(Council Vote!)

Councillors unanimously **APPROVED** the proposal.

 Emma Stevens 06/04/24

In terms of the charity referenced in the proposal it was agreed that donations would go to the Great North Air Ambulance Service.

Post meeting note – A first aid course in line with this proposal will be held on 16/04/24.

Action – Councillor Douglas to progress delivery of the next first aid course.

f. *Parish Council Meetings – May 2024 (led by Cllr Stevens)*

Councillor Stevens advised colleagues of the three Parish Council 'related' meetings that would need to take place in May. Those being the:

- Annual Parish Meeting
- The Parish Council Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- The Parish Council's scheduled May Meeting

Councillors agreed that all three meetings should take place on 13/05/24.

Councillor Stevens presented a draft agenda for the AGM and individuals were identified to facilitate its delivery – see Appendix E.

Action – Councillors Taylor, Sale and Stevens.

g. *Annual Risk Assessment (led by Cllr Stevens)*

Councillor Stevens advised that the Parish Council's Risk Assessment would need to be approved by Councillors at their April 2024 meeting. He requested they provide feedback to him on the content (if they had any) by 25/03/24 to allow him to present it at the Parish Council meeting of 08/04/24 approval.

Action – All Councillors.

h. *Asset and Investment Register (led by Cllr Stevens)*

Councillor Stevens requested that all Councillors review the Asset and Investment Register and provide any comments to Councillor Taylor by 25/03/24 in order that it can be signed off at the Parish Council meeting of 08/04/24.

Action – All Councillors.

i. *The Parish Council Gmail account (led by Cllr Stevens)*

Councillor Stevens proposed that correspondence be removed from the Council's inbox seven days following receipt and that he would act as administrator in that respect. Councillors approved this approach.

Action – Councillor Stevens to act as the administrator for the Parish Council's Gmail account.

 08/04/24

10. Planning Applications

- a. **Proposal:** Dormer loft conversion with existing porch upgrade and new window.
Location: Ladycross, Cottage Slaley Hexham Northumberland, NE47 0BY.
Applicant: Ms Beverley Briggs.
Application No.: 23/04320/FUL.
Status: Northumberland County Council **GRANTED** permission on 27/02/24 (notification received via email dated 27/02/24).
- b. **Proposal:** Two storey rear extension, re-build of garage in new location, conversion and link to outbuilding.
Location: Glencroft Lead Road Slaley Northumberland, NE47 0BN.
Applicant: Mr Robert Thompson.
Application: No. 23/03888/FUL.
Status: The window for comment for this application was between 12/02/24 and 26/02/24. This fell outside the Parish Council's meeting cycle so the issue was dealt with via email by the Chairman and fellow Councillors. No objections were raised and the planning team at Northumberland County Council were advised of this on 26/02/24.

Northumberland County Council **GRANTED** permission on 07/03/24 (notification received via email dated 07/03/24).

11. Finances (led by Cllr Taylor)

A brief overview of the Parish Council's finances is shown in Appendix C.

12. Any Other Business/Urgent Matters

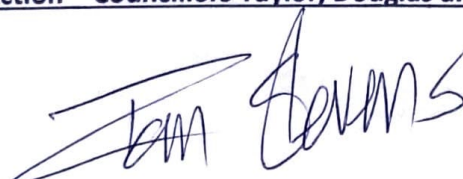
Three items of any other business were discussed:

- a. **Councillor Storey** – Councillor Stevens drew attention to Councillor Storey's email of 04/03/24 stating that he was going to take a 'break' from the Parish Council.

Councillor Sale raised a query at this point regarding when a Councillor's seat became vacant due to non-attendance at meetings.

Post meeting note – Section 8 of the Local Government Act 1972 states, that 'if an elected member fails to attend any meetings of the authority for a period of six months without being subject to any of the special exceptions in the Act, they will cease to be qualified to be a member of the authority'.
- b. **Draft election notice** – Councillor Taylor drew attention to a notice she had prepared for Slaley News relating to the need for photo id to be presented at polling stations in order for individuals to cast a vote at the forthcoming elections of 02/05/24 (and all elections thereafter). Councillors agreed that this should be submitted for printing (Councillor Stevens to progress) and that posters held by Councillors Taylor and Douglas should be distributed as widely as possible across the Parish.

Action – Councillors Taylor, Douglas and Stevens.

 08/04/24

13. Date of Next Meeting
Monday 8th April 2024.

The meeting closed at 19:15

Jan Lewis 08/04/24

ACTIONS LOG FOR SLELEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 12TH FEBRUARY 2024
 (including items/resolutions agreed/approved)

Log Ref.	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due Date	Complete Y/N
1	3	Discuss the state of Coal Road with Glen Harrison. Updated 11/03/24 – CH taken matter up with Member for Highways (advice via email to Councillor Stevens dated 16/02/24).	CH	11/03/24	Y
2	4	Provide feedback on the four points in the Parish Council's email of 27/01/24. Updated 11/03/24 – No update provided.	CH	11/03/24	N
<i>Minuted items 6 c. i and 6 c. ii below, are matters arising from the Parish Council meeting of 08/01/24</i>					
3	6 c. i.	Establish the community's appetite for an annual 'Parish Day'.	IS	11/03/24	N
4	6 c. ii.	Update required to minuted item 12 b. – relating to the water treatment plant in Slaley. Updated 11/03/24 – Councillor Douglas advised that Northumbria Water have cancelled two bookings at the Commemoration Hall in relation to a public consultation event and that they are looking to rebook it at some point in the future.	JS	11/03/24	Y
5	9 a.	Minuted action 8 i., relating to the overgrown hedge at Townhead, from the Parish Council meeting of 13/04/23 remains outstanding – update required. Updated 11/03/24 – Councillor Storey was not at the meeting to provide an update. Councillors felt that this issue had gone on long enough and asked Councillor Stevens to step in resolve it.	JS	11/03/24	N
6	9 b.	Agenda item for March 2024 meeting – 'Resignation of Parish Clerk'.	IS	04/03/24	Y

Jim Stevens 08/04/24

APPENDIX A

Log Ref.	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due Date	Complete Y/N
7	9 e.	Advise the Headteacher of Slayley First School as to the outcome of this minuted item.	IS	19/02/24	Y
8	9 f.	Agenda item for March 2024 meeting -- 'First Aid Course'.	IS	04/03/24	Y
9	11 d.	Publicise the current grant application window.	IS	29/02/24	Y
10	12 a.	Arrange a date for feedback from Emperor Developments re the Slayley Housing Needs Survey of 2023. Updated 11/03/24 – Meeting held on 28/02/24. Councillors Stevens, Taylor and Douglas in attendance. Also see minuted item 6 c. ii. of this meeting.	IS	29/02/24	Y
11	12 c.	Advise Mr. Sanger as to the outcome of this minuted item.	IS	19/02/24	Y
12	12 d.	Progress the nomination for the Kings Garden Party. Updated 11/03/24 – Councillor Storey was not at the meeting to provide an update. Subsequently Councillors chose to close this action because the nomination window for the event is now shut.	JS	19/02/24	CLOSED
13	12 e.	Progress repairs of the Parish Council Notice Board and advise the community of where to find messages in its absence.	IS	11/03/24	Ongoing
14	12 f.	Planning application in relation to Glen Croft to be progressed via correspondence. Updated 11/03/24 – See minuted item 10 b. of this meeting.	IS	26/02/24	Y

Tom Stevens 08/04/24

Outstanding actions from previous Slaley Parish Council meetings – 2023/24

Log Ref.	Mtg. type	Mtg date	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due date
1	SPC	08/01/24	1.2 a.	Appropriate payments to be made to Slaley Show - £750 by financial year end 2023/24 and £500 at the beginning of financial year 2024/25.	DT	12/04/24 First payment made
2	SPC	08/01/24	1.2 b.	Engage with Northumberland County Council's planning team and the Environment Agency to raise concerns of local residents in relation to proposed new works at the water treatment plant. <i>Updated 11/03/24</i> – Action closed. See action from minuted item 6 c. ii. from the Parish Council meeting of 12/02/24. <i>Updated 12/02/24</i> – No progress reported, remains outstanding.	JS	CLOSED

Jan Stevens 08/04/24

APPENDIX B

Log Ref.	Mtg. type	Mtg date	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due date
3	SPC	13/10/23	9 g.	<p>Formally engage with the local history group in to establish their willingness to progress the Asset Register on behalf of the Parish Council.</p> <p>Updated 11/03/24 – Meeting held with DT and SD in attendance with Mrs. P. Wilson and Mr. I Hancock. Agreed actions being progressed by the latter, with a catchup being scheduled for early April.</p> <p>Updated 12/02/24 – Meeting confirmed for 25/02/24 with DT attending on the Parush Councils behalf</p> <p>Updated 08/01/24 – A suggested meeting with the History Group to discuss this issue has had to be rearranged.</p> <p>Updated 11/12/23 – Progress being made. DT continues to pursue the issue.</p> <p>Updated 13/11/23 – Action has been taken but DT needs to encourage the local history group to progress this item further.</p>	DT	On going
4	SPC	11/09/23	7 c.	<p>Discuss Speed Awareness Initiative with Northumbria Police Service regarding the slow pace with which it is progressing in Slaley.</p> <p>Updated 11/03/24 – Remains outstanding from 04/10/23.</p>	CH	N

Jan Stevens 08/04/24

APPENDIX B

Log Ref.	Mtg. type	Mtg date	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due date
5	SPC	09/08/23	6 e.	Raise awareness of Councillors to TTRO's in the Parish. <i>Updated 11/03/24</i> – Councillors agreed to close this action given the robustness of the process DT has in place to monitor it.	DT	CLOSED
6	SPC	13/04/23	8 i.	Overhanging hedge at Townhead at the junction, approach resident to request hedge to be trimmed or offer support in doing so. <i>Updated 11/03/24</i> – This action has been outstanding since <i>April 2023</i> . Councillors present at the meeting of 13/03/24 requested that Councillor Stevens now step in and resolve it. See also minuted item 9 a. from the Parish Council meeting of 12/02/24.	New owner IS from 11/03/24	N

SPC – Monthly Slaley Parish Council meeting

Jan Stevens 08/04/24

Slaley Parish Council Banking Transactions 13th February to 10th March 2024

CURRENT ACCOUNT	
<u>Outgoings</u>	
• Mrs. S. Nixon – Parish Clerk pay	£259.72
• HMRC – tax on Parish Clerk’s pay (Mrs. Nixon)	£64.80
• Northumberland County Council – Play equipment inspections	£439.78
• Hire of Commemoration Hall	£20.00
• Mrs. C. Loughlin – Parish Clerk pay	£883.20
• HMRC – tax on Parish Clerk’s pay (Mrs. Loughlin)	£220.80
Total	£1,888.30
<u>Income</u>	None
ACCOUNT BALANCE (as of 10/03/24) Total	£1,707.15

INSTANT ONLINE INTEREST ACCOUNT	
<u>Income</u>	
• Interest at 1.3% (added 9 th February 2024)	£16.58
<u>Outgoings</u>	
	None
ACCOUNT BALANCE (as of 10/03/24) Total	£15,030.47

Jan Evans 08/04/24

**Parish Council Subcommittee Report relating to
Slaley Commemoration Hall – Emergency Hub**

Dated - 28 February 2024

As per minute item 9 d. at the Parish Council meeting of 13 November 2023, regarding the creation of a subcommittee to progress the Parish Councils involvement with the arrangements to support the 'Emergency Hub', Councillors Taylor, Douglas and Stevens met for the second time on 28 February 2024 to progress outputs from their previous meeting of 4 December 2023 (see minuted item 9 i. of the Parish Council meeting dated 11 December 2023), specifically those relating to telecommunications and in particular the mechanism by which the community would be advised that the Hall was operating as an Emergency Hub.

A recommendation from the subcommittee to achieve this was the installation of a dedicated telephone line/telephone. This would allow a recorded message to be played advising anyone that called whether the Hall was in 'emergency hub mode' or not and facilitate the individual assuming responsibility for managing the Hall, whilst it was open in this mode, to make and receive calls that were pertinent to its running.

Research by Councillor Taylor on behalf of the subcommittee identified that BT, who currently supply the wi-fi package to the Hall (which the Parish Council currently fund in full) could also provide the required telecoms package. Co-terminus with this is the requirement for Hall Trustees to renew that package in April. They have made it clear that they will continue with BT and it would be their intention to approach the Parish Council for financial support through a grant application.

With these factors at play, the subcommittee believe it would be appropriate that when the Hall Trustees renew the wi-fi contract with BT the latter are also requested to add a telephone and an appropriate connection. The cost of this package would be £35.94 per month (£431.28 per year), plus a one off installation fee of £94.95. In view of the fact that Hall Trustees will request a grant, the sub-group are proposing the following (given that as a Parish Council we have already collectively accepted the principle that it is our role to provide the mechanism by which residents are advised when the Hall is open due to an emergency):

- that the Parish Council meet the cost of the one off installation fee (£94.95)
- that the Parish Council meet half the total cost of the total wi-fi/phone package fee (£215.64). This approach is recommended because the renewal fee cannot be split between phone and wi-fi usage - they come as a single package (not like the old days when you could split the two)
- that the Parish Council grant the sum of £215.64 to the Hall Trustees without a grant application having to be made
- for as long as the Hall remains an emergency hub the Parish Council will meet 50% of the wi-fi/phone package costs (following a value for money review with Hall Trustees each year)

 08/04/24

In considering this approach the subcommittee noted the following:

- Hall trustees recognise that with an income stream and a desire for the Hall to be self-funding it would be inappropriate to request that the Parish Council continue to meet the full cost of the wi-fi package there
- as stated the Parish Council currently cover the cost of the wi-fi in the Hall. This year that will be to the order of £400

We will obviously need to agree the proposals above at our forthcoming meeting, but I'm hoping that this update will provide you with the necessary background to facilitate that. I'm also hoping that should you have any major issues with what's being proposed you will raise them with me ahead of the meeting, so that the subcommittee have a chance to consider them on your behalf.

Finally, I must point out that those on the subcommittee are all Trustees of the Hall. Whilst we keep our roles separate, it is nonetheless important those reading this report are aware of that.

Written by: Ian Stevens, Chair of the Emergency Hub Subcommittee

Ian Stevens 08/04/24

Agenda items to be progressed at the Annual General Meeting of Slaley Parish Council

Councillors Stevens, Taylor and Sale to note the documentation they have agreed to review prior to 08/04/24.

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR** (Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed)
2. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR** (Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed)
3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
4. **MEMBERS DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**
5. **AGREEING THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**
6. **ADOPT CODE OF CONDUCT – DT to review**
7. **ADOPT STANDING ORDERS – DT to review**
8. **ADOPT DATA PROTECTION POLICY – DT to review**
9. **ADOPT GRANTS POLICY – DT and LS to review**
10. **ADOPT ADVERTISING POLICY – IS to review**
11. **FULFILLING VOLUNTEER ROLES**
12. **FORMATION OF SUB-COMMITTEES**
13. **TO REVIEW AND APPROVE ANNUAL RISK ASSESSMENT – IS to review**
14. **TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE 'YEARLY PLANNER'**
15. **TO REVIEW BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CONFIRM AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES – DT to review**
16. **TO RECEIVE YEAR END ACCOUNTS – DT to produce**
17. **TO COMPLETE THE ANNUAL RETURN FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2024 AND THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) – DT and IS to review**
18. **TO DETERMINE DATES, TIME AND PLACE OF COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR 2024/245**

 Ian Stevens 08/04/24