

Slaley Parish Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Slaley Parish Council Held on Monday 8th January 2024 at 7.30 pm in Slaley Commemoration Hall

1. Present

Councillor Ian Stevens, Councillor Stella Douglas, Councillor Debra Taylor and Councillor Jon Storey (part, from item 9 b.).

Susanna Nixon – Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

2. Apologies for Absence

County Councillor Colin Horncastle.

3. Public Participation

None.

4. Short Address by County Councillor Colin Horncastle

None.

5. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Douglas in relation to the item regarding Slaley Show – minuted item 12 a. (Any Other Business).

6. Minutes of Meeting Held on Monday 11th December 2023

- a. Approval of minutes
Councillor Douglas proposed the minutes and Councillor Sale seconded them.
- b. Review of actions
The Actions Log was reviewed and appropriately updated.
- c. Matters arising
No matters arising.

7. Correspondence of significant note

- a. **From, Mrs. Loughlin** – emails received (the latest dated 21/12/23) relating to Mrs. Loughlin's service as the Clerk to Slaley Parish Council. See also minuted item 9 c..
- b. **From, Mrs. S Nixon** – email dated 27/12/23 with attached signed contract for the role of Slaley Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer – see also minuted item 9 b..
- c. **From, Mr J. Turnbull** – email dated 21/12/23 highlighting contact with Northumberland County Council (via FixMyStreet) regarding the state of the road through Slaley Village. Receipt of the email followed contact with Councillor Stevens via text. Related actions being progressed by Councillor Stevens. See also minuted item 8 b..

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Action – Councillor Stevens to progress content of email with Northumberland County Council.

- d. **From, Mr. N. Dawson, Countryside and Green Spaces Manager, Northumberland County Council** – email dated 21/12/23 advising of a new traffic restriction to be imposed on Baybridge Road during the first quarter of 2024.
- e. **To, Corporate Finance, Northumberland County Council** – email dated 19/12/23 from Councillor Stevens setting out the Parish Council’s precept requirement for 2024/25.

8. Approaches Made to Councillors directly

a. **Correspondence**

None.

b. **Personal**

Mr J. Turnbull – contacted Councillor Stevens by text regarding the state of the roads through Slaley village. Councillor Stevens responded requesting further details via email. They arrived addressed to slaleycc@gmail.com on 21/12/23 highlighting the contact Mr. Turnbull had had with Northumberland County Council (via FixMyStreet) regarding this issue.

9. New Items

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

Review and update of actions log.

b. **Recruitment of Parish Clerk (led by Cllr Stevens)**

Councillor Stevens reported that the recruitment of a new Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer was now complete and that he was pleased to introduce Mrs. Susanna Nixon to Councillors in that role. Mrs. Nixon was warmly welcomed.

Councillor Stevens went on to explain that Mrs. Nixon’s home address was now legally considered to be the Parish Council’s mailing address. All relevant contact details are set out below:

Mrs. S. Nixon,

Postal address: Lilswood Farm, Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 0HX'

Mobile: 07535 543492

Email address: slaleycc@outlook.com

c. **The Parish Councils interface with its Parish Clerk (led by Cllr Stevens)**

The Parish Council’s relationship with its previous Parish Clerk has been queried – see minuted item 7 a.. This agenda item provided Councillors with an opportunity

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to review that relationship, identify lessons that needed to be learnt and address any emerging issues.

This part of the meeting was **CLOSED** to the public and is not officially minuted. An action arose from it however which will be progressed accordingly.

Action – Councillor Stevens to progress action emerging from this agenda item.

d. **Proposed Parish initiatives (led by Cllr Stevens)**

At the December 2023 meeting of the Parish Council, Councillor Stevens, under minuted item 9 d. submitted a paper relating to activities he thought the Council might consider as opportunities for the community in 2024/25. This agenda item allowed for further discussion about them with a view that it will lead to a Council decision on whether any should be progressed or not.

Councillor Taylor advised that she had worked up a proposal relating to a 'Parish Day'. Councillors were happy to support Councillors Taylor and Stevens forming a sub-committee on their behalf to explore the proposal further.

Action – Councillors Taylor and Stevens to explore the logistics of establishing an annual 'Parish Day'.

In the light of this discussion Councillors concluded that agenda item 9 e., which read, "*Councillors have discussed on a number of occasions how they could best engage with the community they serve. Little has come of those discussions. This agenda item seeks move the issue forward by proposing a sub-committee of the Parish Council be formed to progress the issue to conclusion*", for the time being had been addressed appropriately.

10. Planning Applications

a. **Conversion**

Proposal: Dormer loft conversion with existing porch upgrade and new window details

Location: Ladycross Cottage, Slaley, Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 0BY

Applicant: Ms Beverley Briggs

Application: No. 23/04320/FUL

Status: The window for comment for this application was between 18/12/23 and 08/01/24. 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 29/12/23.

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b. Extension

Proposal: The proposals include a two-storey stone extension to the south creating a study and additional bedroom; two-storey timber-clad extension to the west to form additional living space and a master bedroom suite; and relocation of some existing windows and rooflights and addition of others.

Location: Old Farm, East Woodfoot, Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 0DF

Applicant: Mr. Tom Graham

Application: No. 23/04521/FUL

Status: The window for comment for this application was between 12/12/23 and 02/01/24. 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 29/12/23.

11. Finances (led by Cllr Taylor)

a. Current account outgoings between 3rd December 2023 and 8th January 2024		
• Slaley Commemoration Hall – Wi-Fi contribution		£202.30
• Top Signs Ltd – New Play Area sign		£138.00
• Grants – ADAPT, West Northumberland Food Bank, Tynedale Hospice and the Great North Air Ambulance		£450.00
• Hextol Foundation – printing of Dec/Jan Slaley News		£79.25
• Hire of Commemoration Hall		£32.00
• Transfer to Lloyds Instant Online interest account*		£15,000.00
	Total	£15,901.55
b. Income between 3rd and 31st December 2023		
• Healey Parish Council – website funding		£50.00
	ACCOUNT BALANCE Total	£4,732.00
c. *Instant Online interest account		
This account was opened on 15 th December 2023, in line with Minuted item 9 j. of the Parish Council meeting dated 11/12/23 references. The opening sum was £15,000. There has been no further activity in relation to this account since that date.		£15,000.00

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d. **Financial Overview of Council funds**

Councillor Taylor advised that the Parish Council's funds were in a healthy state and that she was currently working on reclaiming VAT from HMRC to the tune of £550.

From 12th February 2024 Mrs. Nixon will lead on the Council's finances. Councillors thanked Councillor Taylor for taking on this responsibility in the absence of a Responsible Finance Officer over the last few months.

12. Any Other Business/Urgent Matters

- a. **Slaley Show** – Councillor Douglas the incoming Chair of Slaley Show further appraised Councillors of the Shows current 'precarious' financial position – see also minuted item 11 b. of Slaley Parish Council meeting dated 11/12/23.

In order to support the Show a **MOTION** was moved that the Parish Council make a discretionary grant of £750 to it this financial year (2023/24), followed by a £500 discretionary grant at the beginning of the next financial year (2024/25) and thereafter, that on an annual basis from 2025/26 the giving of such grants would be reviewed.

(Council vote!)

A vote on the motion followed, which was approved by all Councillors eligible to take part in it.

Action – Parish Clerk to make the appropriate payments to Slaley Show.

- b. **Water treatment plant** – Councillor Storey advised that local residents near the site of the water treatment plant were concerned about proposed new works there, notionally commencing in March (2024). Councillors agreed that their concerns should be addressed by engaging with Northumberland County Council's planning team and the Environment Agency.

Action – Councillor Storey to 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.

- c. **Speeding vehicles in the village** – An email was received from Guy Opperman MP (dated 03/01/24), highlighting a residents concern about vehicles speeding through the village. Councillor Stevens responded appropriately on 06/01/24.
- d. **North Road, Wooley** – Mr. Morton of the Parish emailed the Council on 04/01/24 about the poor condition of the carriageway between Wooley Grange and West Woodford. Councillor Stevens responded appropriately on 07/01/24 and will now progress the issue with.

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Action – Councillor Stevens to engage with Northumberland County Council regarding the poor condition of the carriageway between Wooley Grange and West Woodford.

- e. **Slaley Forest** - Councillor Storey advised that he had attended a meeting of various groups and authorities regarding the anti-social behaviour of some users of vehicles/motorcycles through the forest. He stated that the group had proposed that a Public Space Protection Order be considered for the forest and adjacent moorland and that this would be put to Northumberland County Council in the coming months.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 12th February 2024

The meeting closed at 21:39

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ACTIONS LOG FOR SLALEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 11TH DECEMBER 2023
(including items/resolutions agreed/approved)

Log Ref.	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due Date	Complete Y/N
1	9 b.	Establish when Mrs. Nixon is able to take up the role of Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.	IS	01/01/24	Y
2	9 c.	Facilitate the payment of the charitable grants agreed in December 2022 to the appropriate charities. Updated 08/01/24 – Notes of thanks received form all organisations in receipt of discretionary grants.	DT	31/12/23	Y
3	9 c.	A Councillor is required to champion the Councils approach to discretionary grants.	ALL	TBC	
4	9 d.	Advise Northumberland County Council of the Parish Councils funding/precept requirements for 2024/25.	IS	26/01/24	Y
5	9 g.	Undertake on-going maintenance of the Parish Council notice board.	IS	Ongoing	Y
6	9 h.	Review the history of grounds maintenance at Parks Side and the relationship between Karbon Homes and the Parish Council in this respect.	DT	08/01/24	Y
7	9 i.	Share the outputs of the 'Resilience Hub' sub-group with the Commemoration Halls Chair of Trustees.	IS	31/12/23	Y
8	11. a.	Respond to Will Wearmouth's enquiry regarding the post van.	IS	31/12/23	Y
9	11. c.	Cheque from Healey Parish Council to be paid into the Councils bank account.	DT	31/12/23	Y


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

Log Ref.	Mtg. type	Mtg date	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due date
1	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 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
2	SPC	13/10/23	12 a. ii.	<p>Assess the most appropriate publicity for the next round of grant applications in early 2024 and action appropriately.</p> <p>Updated 08/01/24 – Poster to be designed to promote the next grant round (SD), entries in Slaley News and Notes to be published (IS).</p>	SD & IS	31/01/24
3	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 08/01/24 – Remains outstanding.</p> <p>Updated 11/12/23 – Remains outstanding.</p> <p>Updated 13/11/23 – Remains outstanding.</p> <p>Updated 04/10/23 – Await feedback from CH.</p>	CH	N

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 J.M. Stevens
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Log Ref.	Mtg. type	Mtg date	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due date
4	SPC	11/09/23	8 c.	Declaration of Interest forms to be updated by Councillors. <i>Updated 08/01/24</i> – Await update from LS. <i>Updated 11/12/23</i> – Documentation received from JS. <i>Updated 04/10/23</i> – Documentation required from JS & LS.	LS	N
5	SPC	09/08/23	6 e.	Raise awareness of Councillors to TTRO's in the Parish.	DT	UFN
6	SPC	12/07/23	8 xi.	Maintain a record of fly tipping across the Parish.	IS	31/01/24
7	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 08/01/24</i> – Remains outstanding <i>Updated 11/12/23</i> – Remains outstanding. Offers of assistance from Councillors made to JS. New estimated completion date 31/01/24. <i>Updated 13/11/23</i> – Remains outstanding from April 2023.	JS	N

SPC – Monthly Slaley Parish Council meeting

ITEMS AGREED/APPROVED AT THE SLALEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 11TH DECEMBER 2023

Log Ref.	Minute Ref.	Item	For	Against
1	9 d.	A motion was carried not to increase the current precept £13,400 in 2024/25. <i>* Motion carried by the Chairmans vote.</i>	2 *	2
2	9 e..	Councillors approved adoption of the revised advertising policy.	5	0
3	9 j.	Councillors approved the transfer of £15,000 of its funds into interest yielding accounts.	5	0


 Pam Davons
 12/02/24