

Slaley Parish Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Slaley Parish Council Held on Monday 12th February 2024 at 7.30 pm in Slaley Commemoration Hall

1. Present

Councillor Ian Stevens, Councillor Lynda Sale, Councillor Debra Taylor and County Councillor Colin Horncastle.

2. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Jon Storey and Councillor Stella Douglas.

3. Public Participation

Mrs. A. Holmes.

Mrs. Holmes wished to raise the issue of the poor state of the road surface along Coal Road (north of Slaley Hall) directly with the Councillors present, a matter she had previously raised back in February 2023 with the County Council and more recently through correspondence with the Parish Council – see also minuted items 7 f. and 8 ii a. Councillor Stevens advised that he had raised the issue with Glen Harrison (Northumberland County Council) and that the Parish Council would continue to press for a resolution to this matter. County Councillor Horncastle also agreed to take the matter forward with Glen Harrison.

Action – County Councillor Horncastle to discuss the road surface and drainage along Coal Road with Glen Harrison.

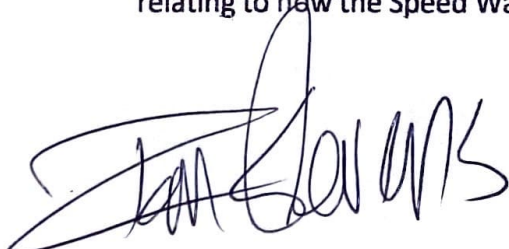
4. Short Address by County Councillor Colin Horncastle

County Councillor Horncastle touched on the following four areas:

- the council budget being agreed for 2024 - 26, with a key takeaway being that there would be no cuts to front line services.
- the circa £27.5m was being allocated to highways.
- the negative publicity the County Council felt was being levelled at them by the press!
- that a member of Slaley Parish was actively spreading disinformation about the Council's activities – Councillors chose not to comment on this issue.

Councillor Stevens thanked County Councillor Horncastle for his presentation but queried why it hadn't included responses to the email the Parish Council had sent him on 27/01/24 concerning four specific issues relating to the Parish, they related to:

- the poor state of the surface on three roads in the Parish (including Coal Road – see also minuted item 3).
- a promised conversation with Kim McGuinness (Police and Crime Commissioner) relating to how the Speed Watch Initiative was being dealt with in the Parish.

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- the planning application 23/02649/VARYCO which relates to the caravan park at Town Foot.
- the blocking of footpath No. 2 at East Woodfoot.

Councillor Stevens handed County Councillor Horncastle a copy of the email and asked that he progress the contents, on behalf of the community.

Action – County Councillor Horncastle to provide feedback on the issues raised in the email dated 27/01/24.

5. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Stevens in relation to the item regarding the Community Play Area –agenda item 9 e..

6. Minutes of Meeting Held on Monday 8th January 2024

a. Approval of minutes

Councillor Sale proposed the minutes and Councillor Taylor seconded them.

b. Review of actions

The Actions Log was reviewed and appropriately updated.

c. Matters arising

- Minuted item 9 d. – Councillor Stevens to contact key actors in the community (including Slaley Hall) to establish if they would support annual 'Parish Day'.


Action – Councillor Stevens.

- Update required to minuted item 12 b..

Action – Councillor Storey.

7. Correspondence of significant note

- To, Glen Harrison, Highways Maintenance (Northumberland County Council (NCC))** – email dated 31/01/24 sent by Cllr Stevens highlighting the email from Mr. R. Thompson (see agenda item 6 b.) and referencing blocked drains in Slaley village. On-going correspondence being dealt with by Cllr Stevens.
- From, Mr. R. Thompson** – a copy of an email sent to County Councillor Colin Horncastle dated 31/01/24 was received at slaleyipc@gmail.com. It related to the 'poor' nature of road sweeping activities in Slaley village that day.
- To, Mrs. D. Elliot (Karbon Homes)** – email dated 31/01/24 sent by Cllr Stevens regarding concerns raised by residents at Park Side regarding telephone cables - see also agenda item 7 ii c..
- To, Highways Improvement Team (NCC)** – emails dated 30 and 14/01/24 sent by Cllr Stevens requesting data relating to vehicles speeds through Slaley Parish - see also agenda item 8 d.. On going correspondence being dealt with by Cllr Stevens.

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- e. **To , Mrs. D. Elliot (Karbon Homes)** – email dated 29/01/24 sent by Cllr Stevens regarding the grass cutting regime at Park Side. On-going correspondence being dealt with by Cllr Stevens.
- f. **To, Glen Harrison** – email dated 25/01/24 sent by Cllr Stevens regarding the surface condition of Coal Road – see also agenda item 7 ii a.. On-going correspondence being dealt with by Cllr Stevens.
- g. **To, County Councillor Colin Horncastle** – email dated 27/01/24 sent by Cllr Stevens, requesting feedback on four particular issues.
- h. **To, Mr. D. Lovatt, Area Countryside Officer (NCC)** – email dated 23/01/24 sent by Cllr Douglas seeking an update regarding a dispute in relation to Footpath No. 2 at East Woodfoot. Related actions being progressed by Cllr Douglas.
- i. **To , Mrs. D. Elliot (Karbon Homes)** – email dated 22/01/24 sent by Cllr Stevens regarding the damaged notice board at Park Side - see also agenda item 7 ii b..
- j. **To, Glen Harrison** – email dated 14/01/24 sent by Cllr Stevens regarding the surface condition of the main road through Slaley and North Road mainly between Wooley Grange and West Woodfoot. Related actions being progressed by Cllr Stevens.

8. Approaches Made to Councillors Directly

i. Correspondence

- a. From, Mrs. S Nixon – email to Cllr Stevens' private email address, dated 29/01/24, handing in her notice as Parish Clerk. Related actions being progressed by Cllr Stevens.

ii. Personal


- a. **Mrs A. Holmes** – approached Cllr Stevens by phone on 24/01/24 regarding the poor state of Coal Road – see also agenda item 6 f..
- b. **Mrs C. Loughlin** – approached Cllr Stevens by phone on 22/01/24 on behalf of Mrs. D. Bell advising that the notice board at Park Side had been damaged in the recent storm - see also agenda item 6 i..
- c. **Mrs. D. Bell** - approached Cllr Stevens on 21/01/24 concerned about the potential for overhead phone lines at Park side to be damaged in the light of recent storms – see also agenda item 6 c..

9. New Items

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

Councillors noted that minuted action 8 i. from their meeting of 13/04/23 remained outstanding and that an update was required from Councillor Storey.

Action – Councillor Storey.

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

This item had been tabled to allow Councillors to discuss the way forward for the Parish Council in the wake of Mrs. Nixon's resignation as Parish Clerk on 29/01/24 (and Mrs. Loughlin's in the summer of 2023). With two Councillors absent from the meeting it was felt such a discussion would be inappropriate without them. This item will now be carried over into the Council's March meeting.

Action – Councillor Stevens.

c. Fly Tipping (led by Cllr Stevens)

At the Parish Council meeting of 12/07/23 fly tipping in the Parish was discussed under minuted item 8 x i., after a number of events had come to the attention of Councillors. An action was placed on Councillor Stevens to maintain a record of any subsequent fly tipping to allow further discussion about the issue at this meeting.

Councillor Stevens advised that only two items of fly tipping had come to his attention since July 2023 and although the refuse bin at Dipton Cut was seen to overflow on occasion the Parish could not be considered as a fly tipping hot spot. Councillors agreed with this conclusion. This issue will next be discussed in August 2024 (as set out in the Council's Yearly Planner).

d. Vehicle Speeds Within the Parish (led by Cllr Stevens)

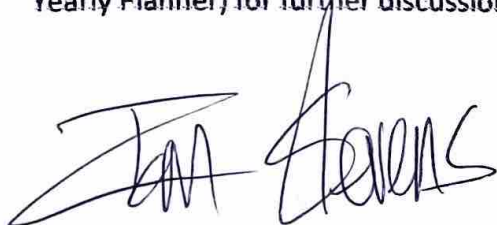
Every six months (February and August) the Parish Council reviews issues relating to the speed of vehicles through the Parish. This agenda item allowed Councillors to discuss recent telemetric data from the County Council relating to traffic speeds in the Parish and identify any emerging actions.

Councillors noted that the telemetric data supplied by the County Council showed most vehicles passing through Slaley village to be travelling at less than 30 mph. This was supported by the data from a Speed Watch deployment on 13/01/24, where of 130 vehicles, only five were recorded as breaking the speed limit.

Councillor Stevens did point out that the data provided by the County Council did not measure the speed of vehicles within the short 20 mph zone in the village. With this in mind he advised that he would undertake his next Speed Watch deployment at a time when the school warning lights were activated.

On the strength of the evidence provided, Councillors believed that the issue of speeding in the village was one of perception and based on that decided to take no further action at this time.

This issue will come back to the Council in August 2024 (as set out in the Council's Yearly Planner) for further discussion.

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e. Community Play Area (led by Cllr Stevens)

The Headteacher at Slaley First School has requested that two pieces of play equipment, purchased by the Parish Council for the Community Play Area be removed from the school grounds due to inappropriate placement, or on health and safety grounds. This agenda item provided Councillors with the opportunity to discuss this request.

With two Councillors absent from the meeting it was felt such a discussion would be inappropriate without them. This item will now be deferred to the Council's March meeting. Councillor Stevens will inform the Headteacher at Slaley First School of this decision.

Action – Councillor Stevens.

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

Councillor Douglas writes "The First Aid Course was very successful this year. I have had requests for another course to be run." There are five potential attendees, four of whom have said they are prepared to pay. Cllr Douglas goes on to say, "I would be in favour of a second course provided most of the costs were covered by the participants".

Following a discussion about a second course, Councillors present proposed that the Parish Council should run one fully subsidised First Aid Course each financial year for Parish residents, (until such time Councillors felt such training was no longer required) – although those attending would be invited to make a donation to a 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. This proposal would allow the next course to be run as early as April 2024.

With two Councillors absent from the meeting those present felt a broader discussion around the proposal would be appropriate at the Council's March meeting.

With the meeting not being quorate the proposal could not be ratified. It will therefore be brought back to the Council's March meeting.

Action – Councillor Stevens.

10. Planning Applications

None.

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11. Finances (led by Cllr Taylor)

a. Current account outgoings - 31st December 2023 to 12th February 2024	
• Hall hire charge – First Aid Course	£84.00
• Hextol Foundation – printing Slaley News	£54.75
• Slaley Show grant	£750.00
• Posters advertising ‘grant window’	£13.50
• Commemoration Hall hire by Parish Council	£20.00
• Parish Council website – Rocketspark	£12.00
• Commemoration Hall Wi-Fi grant (2023/24)	£202.30
Total	£1,136.55
b. Income between 31st December 2023 and 12th February 2024	
	None
ACCOUNT BALANCE Total	£3,595.55

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. The opening sum was £15,000. There has been no further activity in relation to this account since that date.	£15,000.00

d. **Financial Overview of Council funds**

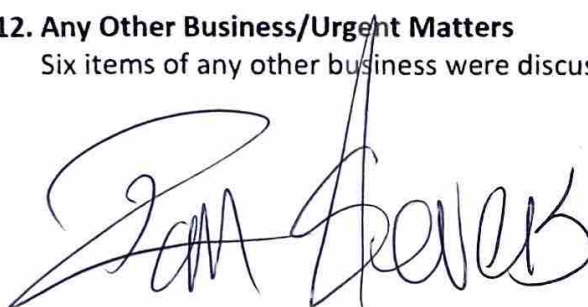
Councillor Taylor confirmed that Council funds remained healthy and that the lack of take up in relation to Parish Council grants at the end of 2023 had contributed significantly to this favourable position. Councillor Taylor added that she was in the process of reclaiming the VAT for the Council.

Councillors expressed a hope that organisations/individuals would come forward to request grants during the current application window. Councillor Stevens agreed to publicise the current window through Slaley News and Notes and ensure posters advertising it were displayed in prominent locations around the Paish.

Action – Councillor Stevens.

12. Any Other Business/Urgent Matters

Six items of any other business were discussed:

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- a. **Housing Needs Survey** – Emperor Developments who had undertaken the Housing Needs Survey in Slaley early in 2023 had approached Councillor Stevens seeking a date to present their findings to Councillors. Councillor Stevens will now identify a suitable date on which this can take place.

Action – Councillor Stevens.

- b. **Dog Poo Bin** – on 07/02/24 residents reported that the dog poo bin at Swangs Lane had gone missing. With the support of the Commemoration Hall Trustees it was replaced on 12/02/24.

- c. **Cycling Prohibition** – Councillor Stevens advised that he had been approached by Mr. Sanger of the Parish, requesting that the no cycling ban in the Community Play Area be reconsidered. Councillors felt that the most appropriate time to consider this request would be during the review of the risk assessment for the Play Area which is due by the end of April this year.

Action – Councillor Stevens to inform Mr. Sanger of the Council's decision.

- d. **Kings Garden Party** – Nominations had been requested for individuals to attend a forthcoming Kings Garden Party. The Parish Council had agreed a potential nomination through correspondence and Councillor Storey had been asked to progress it.

Action – Councillor Storey.

- e. **Slaley Parish Council Notice Board** – Councillor Stevens advised that the Parish Council Notice Board had been badly damaged in the two January storms. He advised that he had taken it in to safe keeping with a view to affecting a repair. He confirmed that the community would be advised of this through Slaley News and Notes and be requested to look for all Parish Council notices and material online via the website - www.slaley.org.uk/.

Action – Councillor Stevens to repair and reinstate the Parish Council Notice Board and advise the community where to look for notices and Council material.

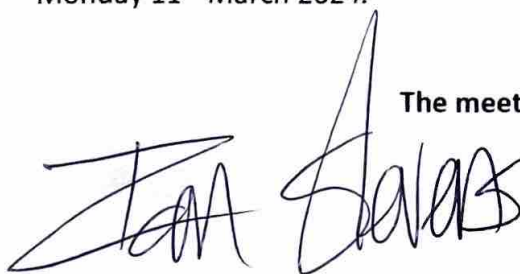
- f. **Planning Application** – Councillor Stevens advised that a planning application received on 12/02/24 in relation to Glen Croft, Lead Road would have to be dealt with via correspondence.

Action – Councillor Stevens.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 11th March 2024.

The meeting closed at 21:00

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ACTIONS LOG FOR SLALEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 8TH JANUARY 2024
 (including items/resolutions agreed/approved)

Log Ref.	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due Date	Complete Y/N
1	9 c.	Progress action relating to contact with former Parish Clerk.	IS	31/01/24	Y
2	9 d.	Explore the logistics of establishing an annual 'Parish Day'.	DT/IS	31/01/24	Y
3	12 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.	SN	31/01/24 & 12/04/24	First payment made
4	12 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 12/02/24</i> – No progress reported, remains outstanding.	JS	19/01/24	N
5	12 d.	Engage with Northumberland County Council regarding the poor condition of the carriageway between Wooley Grange and West Woodford.	IS	26/01/24	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 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
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 12/02/24 – posters now available. IS to distribute and also to continue to publicise grants in Slaley News and Notes.</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>	IS	29/02/24

Ian Brown
 11/03/24


 J. COLLINS
 11/03/24

Log Ref.	Mtg. type	Mtg date	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due date
3	SPC	11/09/23	7 c.	Discuss Speed Awareness Initiative with Northumbria Police Service regarding the slow pace with which it is progressing in Slaley. <i>Updated 12/02/24</i> – remains outstanding <i>Updated 08/01/24</i> – Remains outstanding. <i>Updated 11/12/23</i> – Remains outstanding. <i>Updated 13/11/23</i> – Remains outstanding. <i>Updated 04/10/23</i> – Await feedback from CH.	CH	N
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	Y
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. <i>Updated 12/02/24</i> – Fly tipping discussed at February 2024 meeting	IS	Y

Log Ref.	Mtg. type	Mtg date	Minute Ref.	Action	Owner	Due date
7	SPC	13/04/23	8 i.	<p>Overhanging hedge at Townhead at the junction, approach resident to request hedge to be trimmed or offer support in doing so.</p> <p>Updated 12/02/24 – No progress reported, remains outstanding.</p> <p>Updated 08/01/24 – Remains outstanding</p> <p>Updated 11/12/23 – Remains outstanding. Offers of assistance from Councillors made to JS. New estimated completion date 31/01/24.</p> <p>Updated 13/11/23 – Remains outstanding from April 2023.</p>	JS	N

SPC – Monthly Slaley Parish Council meeting



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ITEMS AGREED/APPROVED AT THE SLALEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 8TH JANUARY 2024

Log Ref.	Minute Ref.	Item	For	Against
1	12 a..	A motion was carried to make a discretionary grant of £750 this financial year (2023/24) to Slaley Show, 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.	4	

Sam Adams
11/03/24