

Slaley Parish Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Slaley Parish Council Held on Monday 13th November 2023 at 7.30 pm in Slaley Commemoration Hall

1. Present

Councillor Ian Stevens, Councillor Stella Douglas, Councillor Debra Taylor, Councillor Jon Storey, Councillor Lynda Sale and County Councillor Colin Horncastle.

2. Apologies for Absence

None.

3. Public Participation

None.

4. Short Address by County Councillor Colin Horncastle

County Councillor Horncastle gave a brief overview of budget issues faced by the County Council. The £30m of savings that needed to be made have now been reduced to £2m. It was hoped that further efficiencies would save that amount. No redundancies are forecast. The projected start date for the food recycling scheme is 2025/26. Councillor Horncastle also stated that considerable investment had been made to upgrade urban parks over the last few months and that two new gully suckers had been purchased.

On a more local basis, the County Councillor has made a grant of £10k to Slaley First School. Councillor Sale asked for more examples of local investment and the County Councillor described developments at the Hexham Middle School site.

5. Declarations of Interest

Agenda item 9f i., (Review of grant applications – Snack and chat) - Councillor Douglas.

6. Minutes of Meeting Held on Wednesday 4th October 2023

a. Approval of minutes

Councillor Storey proposed the minutes and Councillor Sale seconded them.

b. Review of actions

The Actions Log was reviewed and appropriately updated.

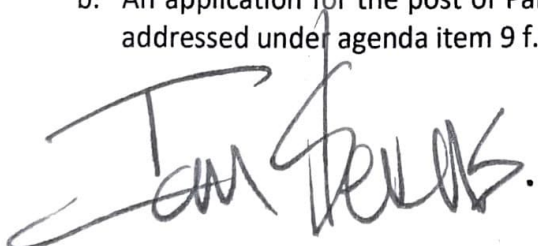
c. Matters arising

No matters arising.

7. Correspondence of significant note

a. Jill Streener – Northumberland County Council Corporate Finance – Correspondence relative to 2024/25 precept setting – addressed under agenda item 9 e..

b. An application for the post of Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer – addressed under agenda item 9 f..

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- c. Planning consultation – 23/03888/FUL Glen Croft Lead Rd Slaley – addressed under agenda item 10 ii..

8. Approaches Made to Councillors

a. Correspondence

- i. **Citizens Advice Northumberland** – invite sent direct to Councillor Stevens to attend the CAN AGM on 8th December 2023 at 12:30 in the Community Hub, Woodhorn Rd, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea (received via email 20/10/23).
Invitation declined due to non-availability of Councillors.
- ii. **Mr. M. Baldwin (Slaley resident)** – query received by Councillor Stevens referencing site works at Town Foot Caravan Park (received via email 18/10/23). Councillor Stevens responded noting that site works were in line with the planning permission granted in July 2023.
- iii. **Ms. N. Foreman** – Councillor Douglas received correspondence relating to the state of the footpath at East Woodfoot in Wooley (received via email 16/10/23). Ms. E. Gray asked about progress (10/11/2023). Councillor Douglas has replied and progressed the issue via FixMyStreet.

b. Personal

- i. **Mr J. Abdeelnor (Slaley resident)** – On 12/11/23, Councillor Stevens was advised that a footpath stile leading on to Slaley Hall golf course was in disrepair.
Action – Councillor Stevens to confirm location of stile and discuss repair with appropriate party.
- ii. **Mr. M. Osborne (Slaley resident)** – On 13/11/23, Councillor Stevens' attention was drawn to rainwater flowing out from manhole covers circa 100m east of Slaley Community Shop. Councillor Stevens progressed the issue via FixMyStreet.
- iii. **Mr. C. Becket (Slaley resident)** – On 13/11/23, Councillor Douglas was approached about Rights of Way in the Parish by Mr. Becket who advised that he would submit a paper about this issue to the Parish Council for inclusion at their next meeting.

9. New Items

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

The Actions Log was reviewed and appropriately updated.

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

Despite very significant publicity there has been only one application for the role of Parish Clerk. The deadline for applications is 17th November 2023. Following that date Councillor Stevens will contact applicants to progress the recruitment process.

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Action – Councillor Stevens to progress the recruitment process for the role of Parish Clerk as per minuted action 9 b. of the Parish Council meeting dated 4th October 2023.

c. **First Aid Training (led by Cllr Douglas)**

First Aid training in previous years has been organised by the Parish Clerk on behalf of the community. In the absence of a Clerk this year, Councillors had decided not to progress this initiative in 2023. Cllr Douglas has requested a review of this position. *Item carried over from the Parish Council meeting of 4th October 2023 (minuted item 9 c.).*

Councillor Douglas stressed the importance of first aid training for many members of the Parish and that she would be willing to coordinate training, which she had provisionally booked for 23rd January 2024. Councillors **AGREED** that the course should take place and after discussion **APPROVED** the proposal that the full cost, for those attending from the Parish, or those with links to it would be met by the Parish Council, whilst others attending but not covered by these groups would be required to pay the appropriate delegate rate.

Action – Councillor Douglas to progress all aspects of the delivery of a first aid training course on 23rd January 2024.

d. **Supporting those in need (Pyramid of Care) (led by Cllr Stevens)**

Following agreement at the Parish Council meeting of 4th October 2023 (minuted item 9 d.), this agenda item allowed Councillors to discharge the action that emerged “to discuss a potential mechanism with which to advise the community that the Commemoration Hall has gone into Resilience Hub’ mode”.

Following an extended discussion Councillors agreed that a small sub-committee be formed, led by Councillor Stevens to explore this issue further.

Action – Councillor Stevens to move this issue on by 27th January 2024.

e. **Setting the Precept for 2024/25 (led by Cllr Stevens)**

At their December 2023 meeting, Councillors will be required to set the Parish Precept for 2024/25. This agenda item allowed a preliminary discussion around the potential funding initiatives/costs Councillors believe it/the community will have in the forthcoming financial year.

Action – All Councillor to consider and cost any funding requirements they wish the Council to consider at their meeting of 13th December 2023 for the forthcoming financial year (2024/25).

f. **Review of October 2023 Grant Applications (led by Cllr Stevens)**

In line with the Parish Councils Grant Policy, and minuted item 12 a. of their October 2023 meeting, Councillors reviewed two grant applications.

Jan Stevens 11/12/23

- i. **Organisation:** Snack and Chat.
Submitted by: Cecelia Bridges.
Supplied documentation: Application form only - unsigned and undated.
Received: Delivered by hand directly to Councillor Stevens on 23/09/23.
Grant value requested: £300

There was a vigorous debate about this application. Councillors agreed that Snack and Chat would be a worthy recipient of a grant. Based on this two Councillors supported it. Two other Councillors were concerned about the quality of the application and upon those grounds, when it came to a vote found themselves unable to support the application. With the voting tied and Councillor Douglas unable to vote, because of her previously declared interest (see minuted item5) the application was declined.

Snack and Chat Grant application DECLINED.

- ii. **Organisation:** Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team.
Submitted by: Stephen Irish.
Supplied documentation: Four documents submitted: Application Form, Bank Statement, Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements and Schedule of Insurance.
Received: Delivered to Councillor Stevens via email on 03/10/23.
Grant value requested: £400

All Councillors supported this application and the funding request was approved by a unanimous vote. Through discussion however the issue of 'marginality' and priority of funding grants was raised. Both issues, Councillors agreed needed to be at the forefront of their minds when considering grant applications.

Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team Grant application APPROVED.

Action – Councillor Stevens to notify those applying for grants of the decisions taken by Councillors in relation to them by 1st December 2023.

Action – Councillor Taylor to progress payment of agreed funds to those organisations successful in their grant applications by 1st February 2024.

Councillor Taylor identified that as well as its Grant Policy the Parish Council also annually gifted small sums to local charities and that it would be appropriate to review this arrangement, the recipient organisations and the amounts they received. It was further discussed that an annual theme that drove funding/donations should be considered and that the community should be consulted in relation to this concept and possible themes.

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Action – Councillor Stevens to add this item to the Parish Council meeting agenda of 13th December 2023.

g. **Feedback on Town and Parish Council Conference 2023** (led by Councillor Taylor)

Item deferred until the Parish Council meeting of 13th December 2023.

Action – Councillor Stevens to add this item to the Parish Council meeting agenda of 13th December 2023.

10. Planning Applications

i. **Tree Preservation Order Application**

Proposal: Tree Preservation Order Application: T1 Sycamore. Crown reduce tree by up to 2.5m over whole crown.

Location: Tree Tops Slaley Hexham Northumberland, NE47 0AA.

Applicant: Mrs. Johnston.

Application No.: 23/03243/FELTPO.

Status: Northumberland County Council PERMIT tree works (received via email 20/10/23).

ii. **Two storey rear extension**

Proposal: Re-submission: Two storey rear extension, re-build of garage in new location, conversion, and link to outbuilding.

Location: Glencroft Lead Road Slaley Northumberland.

Applicant: Mr. Thompson.

Application No.: 23/03888/FUL.

Status: Registered.

This proposal was advised to Councillors outside their meeting cycle. It has been dealt with in correspondence and on 13th November 2023, Councillor Stevens advised Northumberland County Council that Councillors had **NO OBJECTION** to it.

11. Finances (led by Cllr Taylor)

a. **Outgoings between 4th October and 13th November 2023**

• NALC - training course (Cllr Stevens)	£30.00
• Hextol Foundation – printing of October Slaley News	£54.75
• Hextol Foundation – printing of November Slaley News	£54.75
• NCC – Community Play Area Inspections	£476.39
Total	£635.89

b. **Income between 4th October and 13th November 2023**

None.

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c. **Financial Overview of Council funds**

As of 11th November 2023 the balance in the Parish Councils account was £21,747.85. It was noted that spend to date was down on the same period last year – a consequence, in the main, of no Parish Clerk being in post.

12. Any Other Business/Urgent Matters

a. **Advertising issues**

- i. Councillor Douglas drew attention to the proliferation of signage aimed at encouraging motorcyclists to slow down around the Parish. It was established that this was a Northumberland County Council safety campaign that had been running since June 2023 and that no further action was required.
- ii. Councillor Stevens advised that signage had been placed either end of the village advertising a Christmas fair in Hexham. Whilst recognising this was in breach of their advertising policy Councillors could not recall how the matter should be progressed.

Action – Councillor Stevens to review advertising policy and progress removal of signage as appropriate.

b. **Defibrillator**

Via email correspondence, Councillor Storey had advised fellow Councillors that the battery in the defibrillator needed replacing and sought approval to purchase a new one. There had been a limited response to his request prompting Councillor Stevens to bring the matter to this meeting for resolution, at which Councillors **APPROVED** the purchase of a new battery.

Action – Councillor Storey to procure a new defibrillator battery.

c. **Open space assessment**

Northumberland County Council are undertaking an assessment of how much and what type of open space and outdoor recreation facilities people in the county require. An email from them dated 13th November 2023 requested the input of Slaley Parish Council.

Action – Councillor Stevens to complete open space assessment on behalf of the Parish Council.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 11th December 2023.

Meeting closed at 21.15

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