

**Minutes of the Meeting of Slaley Parish Council
Held on Thursday 13th April 2023 at 7.30pm
in Slaley Commemoration Hall**

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and commented that in preparation for the meeting he had been acting as Parish Clerk, Pat Wilson, the previous Clerk having retired on 31st March 2023. He thanked Councillors for bearing with him during that time.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/PRESENT

Present

Councillors, Ian Stevens (Chair), Debra Taylor, Lynda Sale, Stell Douglas and Jon Storey

Absent

County Councillor Colin Horncastle

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

3. SHORT ADDRESS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR COLIN HORNCATSLE

Not present

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13TH MARCH 2023

Amendments were requested to the original minutes of 13th March 2023, by Cllrs. Stevens, Taylor and Storey. With appropriate amendments the minutes were submitted to Councillors for approval

Minutes approved by Cllr. Storey and seconded by Cllr. Sale

ACTION POINT - Cllr. Douglas to place these minutes on the Parish Council website

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM ABOVE MINUTES

i. **Coronation of King Charles III**

(Cllr. Stevens)

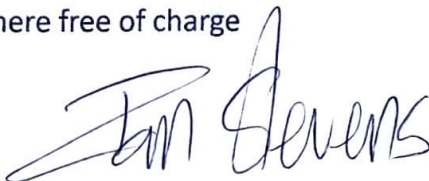
Update on potential village event

Councillors agreed funding for a Coronation event (between £300 and £500) and that voluntary contributions from those attending should be requested, with that money going to charity

ACTION POINT – Chair to contact WI with a view to them providing afternoon tea on Sunday 7th May 2023

ACTION POINT – Cllr. Taylor to contact Chair of Commemoration Hall Trustees to see if the event can be held there free of charge

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ACTION POINT – Cllr. Douglas to remove current bookings from that Sunday afternoon

- ii. **Speed watch initiative** (Cllr. Taylor)
Update on training

No progress to report. The Chair was keen to involve the local MP to move this issue on if no progress was forthcoming by the time of the next Parish Council meeting

- iii. **The use of Parish Council insurance to cover two Community Environmental Group (CEG) events** (Cllr. Taylor)
Feedback on Parish Council insurance cover for the Community Environment Group events

Cllr. Taylor awaits a definitive response from our insurers

- iv. **Parish Council Clerk appointment and contingency arrangements** (Cllr. Stevens)

a. Confirmation of contingency arrangements currently in Place

The Chair confirmed that he, together with Cllrs. Taylor and Douglas had met to consider how the Council best proceed until a new Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer was appointed. To emerge from that meeting was a 'as-is/to-be' modelling matrix with allocated responsibilities. Item 6. iv. b. refers

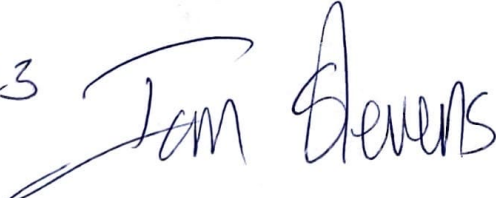
b. Councillors to share their thoughts and provide input to the 'as-is/to-be' document shared with them by Cllr. Stevens on 20th March 2023

Councillors. reviewed and agreed the content of the document (see Appendix A). The Chairman drew particular attention to the:

- need for a grass cutting sub-committee – Cllr. Storey agreed to Chair this
- village defibrillator and requested that Cllr. Storey takes on responsibility for it e.g. progressing any maintenance issues, record keeping etc., rather than the Parish Clerk. Cllr. Storey agreed to this
- **ACTION POINT** – Cllr. Storey to progress defibrillator issues on behalf of the Council

c. update on the appointment of a new Parish Clerk/ Responsible Finance Officer

Three candidates were interviewed by Cllrs. Stevens and Sale on behalf of the Council. Clare Loughlin, a resident of this parish was the preferred candidate and after being offered the role accepted it on 13th April 2023.

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Ms. Loughlin's employment will commence on 19th April 2023, for a probationary period of three months.

Councillors spoke of bringing Ms. Loughlin up to speed as quickly as possible. All agreed to offer what support they could and Cllr. Stevens will mentor her through the first few months. Cllr. Taylor suggested Ms. Loughlin be put in touch with other Parish Clerk's/Responsible Finance Officers for additional support

ACTION POINT – Cllr. Taylor to approach Acomb Parish Council Chair to investigate if their Clerk could help support Ms. Loughlin

ACTION POINT – Cllr. Stevens to investigate what support NALC can offer new Parish Clerk's/RFO's

- v. **Annual risk assessment** (Cllr. Stevens)
Councillors to share their thoughts and provide input to the amended risk assessment shared with them by Cllr. Stevens on 28th March 2023

Following the March Parish Council meeting Cllr. Stevens agreed to review and update the risk register. In doing so he identified 16 items that required input from Councillors at this meeting. After an extended discussion, Cllr. Stevens was happy that he could finalise the risk assessment following the meeting

ACTION POINT – Cllr. Stevens to update risk assessment by 20th April 2023

- vi. **Damage to wheelie bin at Dipton Cut** (Cllr. Stevens)
Update on replacement

The damaged bin has been replaced but it's unknown by whom

ACTION POINT – Cllr. Stevens to remove damaged bin from site

7. CORRESPONDENCE

Various emails and correspondence received direct or distributed. to Councillors since our last meeting. Councillors are asked to raise any matters relating to that correspondence under this item

Cllr. Taylor referenced an email relating to electric charging points

ACTION POINT – Cllr. Taylor to consider how best to bring the information contained in the email to the communities attention

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8. NEW ITEMS

i. Standing Orders and Code of Conduct

(Cllr. Taylor)

- Standing Orders – Cllr. Taylor proposed that Slaley Parish Council adopt the Northumberland Association of Local Councils Model, Standing Orders 2018 (England) – update April 2022. The proposal was made because the Councils current Standing Orders are no longer part of NALC’s template catalogue

Resolution - Approved

- Code of Conduct – Cllr. Taylor sought approval to update the Councils current Code of Conduct document (dated 2012) to the latest recommended Code, the Local Government Association, Model Code of Conduct (2020)

Resolution - Approved

Cllr. Taylor agreed to update both documents and submit them to Councillors prior to 9th May 2023 in order that they may be approved at the Annual Parish Council Meeting on that date

ACTION POINT – Cllr. Taylor to update the Parish Councils Standing Orders and Code of Conduct prior to 9th May 2023

ii.

Overhanging hedge at Townhead at the junction (Cllr. Stevens)

With the B6306

To determine any action that needs to be taken

Councillors agreed that the hedge in question could do with trimming to improve visibility

ACTION POINT – Cllr. Storey to approach the resident of the ‘Currick’ to request that the hedge be trimmed or offer support in doing so

iii.

Actions and preparation for Annual Parish Meeting (Cllr. Stevens)

Discussion around the deliverables relating to the Annual Parish Meeting

Councillors discussed the three traditional meetings that will take place in May relative to Council business, they are the:

- Annual Slaley Parish Council Meeting
- Annual Parish Meeting
- Regular meeting of the Parish Council

An outline agenda for the first two meetings was broadly agreed and the approval for two sub-committees to be put forward at the first given. Their terms of reference will be relative to grass cutting and how the Council manages its business and relationship with the community.

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Councillors recognised that at the Annual Slaley Parish Council Meeting a number of documents and policies relative to its business would need adopting. Cllr. Taylor believed that the following should be reviewed and updated as necessary:

- Standing Orders (see item 8. i. also)
- Code of Conduct (see item 8. i. also)
- GDPR Policy
- Advertising Policy

ACTION POINT - Cllr. Stevens and the Parish Clerk to generate meeting agendas

ACTION POINT - Cllr. Stevens to write the Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting (to include a reference to finances)

ACTION POINT - Cllr. Stevens and the Parish Clerk to generate notice advising the community of the Annual Parish Meeting

ACTION POINT - Cllr. Taylor to update the Councils Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and GDPR Policy to allow adoption on 9th May 2023

ACTION POINT - Cllr. Douglas to update the Councils Advertising Policy to allow adoption on 9th May 2023

9. NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- i. Application No.: 23/00516/FUL
Infill existing dry stone boundary wall to consistent height of 1.9m from 1.5m using natural random stone to match existing.
Wooley House, Wooley

This application was reviewed by Council members who had **NO OBJECTION** to it

10. FINANCE

a. Monies received

- i. Northumberland County Council. Precept (50% of total) £6,700.00

b. Monies passed for payment post 13th March 2023

- i. The Hextol Foundation. Printing of Slaley News £54.75
- ii. Pat Wilson. Annual expenses £337.21
- iii. ProCut. Invoice for grass cutting £840.00
- iv. Cllr Stevens. Invoice for Parish Clerk advert in Hexham Courant £176.40

Total £1,408.36

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Cllr. Taylor advised that the Council had received a VAT rebate of £639.74 on 5th April 2023

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS/URGENT MATTERS

Only items that have come to light since 6th April 2023 (the cut off date for agenda items) will be considered at the Chairman's discretion

- a. Slaley Parish Council Insurance – Cllr. Stevens advised he had completed the Pre Renewal Questionnaire which will be used by the insurers to base their forthcoming renewal quote on. He stated that he had increased the insurance cover on material items by 10.4% (the current rate of inflation)
 - b. Cllr. Stevens shared a thank you card and message addressed to the Council from its outgoing Clerk, Pat Wilson, thanking them for their kindness in relation to her retirement
 - c. Cllr. Storey provided an update on the blocked drains at the Glen Crossroads. It is suspected that Openreach may have contributed to this issue. They will now investigate further
 - d. Cllr. Storey provided an updated on the BOAT's in Slaley Forest. He shared information that a recent police operation had led to three vehicles being seized (as reported on the BBC News website) and that discussions were underway to close the roads in the Forest for up to two years
 - e. Cllr. Storey raised the issue of the public emergency alert that will be sent to all UK smartphones on 23rd April 2023. He stated that some vulnerable individuals may have 'secret' phones which might be compromised by this alert. He asked if the Council should publicise the alert and this particular issue. It was agreed we should
- ACTION POINT** - Cllr. Storey to determine the mechanism for publicising the alert and the issue and progress accordingly
- f. over the weekend of 15th April 2023 the new road signage for the school will be installed. These include speed restriction and keep clear signs
- ACTION POINT** – Councillors are reminded that items brought up under Any Other Business should only be those they are unable to register as agenda items i.e. those that come to light after the agenda has been issued and the meeting itself and then only at the Chairman's discretion

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting of Slaley Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 9th May 2023 in the Commemoration Hall. It will commence after the business of the Annual Parish Council Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting have been conducted. These meetings will begin at 7 p.m.

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