

# Slaley Annual Parish Meeting Reports

May 2011

## General Information

Slaley Parish Council normally meets at 7.30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month in Slaley Commemoration Hall. An agenda is pasted on the Parish Notice Board (corner of Slaley Churchyard) within the statutory notice period. Quarterly updates of the Parish Plan 'Action Plan' keep the recommendations for parish improvements firmly at the forefront of many decisions taken during monthly meetings. A Hexham Courant reporter is invited to Slaley Parish Council meetings and normally Jean Elphick or Catherine Lincoln attends for the Slaley Notes column. The official minutes are posted on the Slaley website after their adoption by the Council.

### **The Councillors after the elections in May 2007 are as follows:**

**Chairman:** Ian C Hancock, Glen Lodge, Slaley, Hexham, NE47 0BN 673502. **Ian joined the Council in April 2005.** Represents Slaley Parish Council on the The 4 Parishes BOATs Joint Committee. Ian is the first member on the Planning Application team for Slaley Parish Council (see agenda item 12, page 372 of December 10<sup>th</sup> 2007 minutes & 7b (Brian Massey), page 379 January 14<sup>th</sup> 2008 minutes). Ian also represents the parish on the Rural Parishes Community Forum.

**Vice Chairman:** Carolyn A Brookes, Heatherden House, Trygill, Slaley, Hexham. NE47 0BY 673032.

**Carolyn joined the Council in October 2005** Represents the south-west area of the parish and also is the second member of the planning application team. Carolyn also represents the parish on the Rural Parishes Community Forum.

Linda Norris, West Cornerfield, Slaley, Hexham. NE47 0BS. 673503. **Linda joined the Council in May 1999.** Linda is the third member of the planning application team.

Ann Robson, Ballandaine, Slaley, Hexham. NE47 0BQ 673900. **Ann joined the Council in May 2003.** .

**Margaret Palmer** (Palm Strothers East Barn, Slaley, NE47 0AR. 673828 **joined in May 2007.** Margaret agreed to be the 2009 PC representative on the Commemoration Hall Management Committee and is the fourth member of the planning application team.

**Sid Davison** 6 South Park, Slaley NE47 0AB. 673681 **joined in May 2007.**

**Clerk:** Patricia Wilson, Lawn House, Slaley, Hexham. NE47 0AS. 673388  
E-mail: [patricia.wilson28@btinternet.com](mailto:patricia.wilson28@btinternet.com)

**County Councillor** Colin W. Horncastle, Highfield Farm, Catton. NE47 9QT 618259  
E-mail: [cwhorncastle@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:cwhorncastle@northumberland.gov.uk)

Northumberland County Council: 0845 600 6400.  
E-mail: [contactcentre@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:contactcentre@northumberland.gov.uk)

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, 2010-11**

It has been a busy year for the Parish Council, whose membership is unchanged since last year. The big cuts in County Council funding have led to new problems of communication with them, particularly due to the shortage and rapid turnover of officers in the posts we most frequently deal with. Moreover, the CC's poorly thought-out plans to hand over services to Parish Councils, and the Government's vague ideas of a "Big Society" have generated a lot of unproductive meetings. Our Parish Councillors and Clerk deserve congratulations for all their extra work. I would also like to thank County Councillor Colin Horncastle for his regular attendance and pithy reports at our meetings, despite his heavy work load. Jean Elphick, for Slaley Notes in the Courant, Slaley Parish News, the Slaley Website, Rebecca Dixon for the Hexham Courant and her successor Rosalind Saul, have kept people informed. The new Slaley Website is now in operation and we would like to thank Michael Elphick for all his work in producing such an attractive and accessible site.

Traffic and Public Transport have been recurring themes in our business this year. With our lamentable public transport system we are nearly all dependent on cars, and no one can have failed to notice the ever increasing number of parked cars on the village street. Parking on the road causes congestion for through traffic, but it is unfortunately unavoidable. Parking on the pavement poses obstacles for pedestrians, baby buggies and invalid vehicles. We have discussed the matter with the police again, but as they point out, there is no real solution short of a village carpark, and at least the parked vehicles slow down traffic down traffic on the village street. We were pleased that the Nightingale school bus responded to our request to park off the street during the day. The reduction in our local bus service, due to the removal of funding by Durham County Council, has been a severe blow and will inevitably lead to more car use and more isolation and inconvenience for those without the use of a car. Despite their claims to the contrary, Northumberland County Council failed to consult anyone locally about the situation, so that the new timetable was arranged before we were even aware of the cuts. We will be pushing hard for proper consultation when the service is reviewed in the Autumn.

The PC has alerted the Highways Department to specific road problems as they have occurred throughout the year and this has resulted in some local welcome remedial work, and in particular some increase in gully and ditch clearing and the provision of winter grit heaps (which were immediately buried under a foot of snow). The village dealt with the winter weather very well, the PC again provided salt for the bin at Parks Side, and we would like to thank all those who helped with emergencies and extensive snow clearing. As usual Margaret and Roy Ward kept the shop open, and newspapers coming, in all weathers and everyone was thrilled and delighted to hear of the award of an MBE to Margaret in the New Year's Honours List, for her and Roy's unstinting work for the community through the post office and shop and in many other ways.

Due to the campaigning of local residents and the parish council made strenuous efforts to obtain changes to the County Council's proposal to add four more of our unsurfaced tracks to the existing long list of Byways Open to All Traffic in the parish. The CC has now recommended to the Inspector that at least one of these (the Blue Gables - West Burnside lane) should not be open to motor vehicles, and they have introduced a range of Traffic Regulation Orders preventing 4x4s using many of the BOATs in Slaley Forest, and restricting motorcycle use to drier periods of the year. However, the PC is very unhappy that the Shield Hall-Pethfoot track is likely to be designated as a public road.

Plans to further develop public use of the school grounds for play and sport have led to very productive discussions between the PC, the school governors and teachers, and the Community

Trust. The project is complicated by the fact that the grounds are primarily for school use, but good progress has been made towards a grant application. The Community Trust, and in particular Catherine Lincoln, are to be thanked for doing most of the spadework for this project.

In the light of the general reduction in public funding, the PC has had to look very closely at its own finances and the formulation of its precept. Ironically, while Council Taxes have been frozen and CC expenditure has been dramatically cut, there is pressure to increase PC spending by delivering services the CC can not afford, and we are receiving increasing requests for donations to local and national causes whose grants from central and local government have been cut. We have introduced a more rigorous and prudent approach to requests for grants for general funding from these groups, and have focussed more on applications for support for specific projects. The increase in our precept for the coming year is largely due to the sum set aside for management of the proposed play facilities in the school grounds. Councillors have not claimed any expenses this year, and the Parish Clerk's pay has been frozen.

Lastly, I would like to thank the members of the public who have taken advantage of our open meeting policy to attend our meetings and give us their views and the benefit of their local knowledge.

Ian Hancock

**Annual Report to Parish Council 2011  
South Tynedale Division  
Councillor Colin Horncastle**

This has been another difficult year for the County Council. Budget cuts of £40m have had to be made with the possibility of another £100m reduction over the next three years is putting a severe strain on frontline services. While some of these budget reductions have been forced upon the County Council from central government, Northumberland County Council is in a worse position than most Authorities because of the huge cost of LGR and the massive deficit it inherited from the old County Council. Every effort is being made to maintain services at the present level but it is inevitable that the high level of services we have enjoyed in the past will be affected. To offset this the County Council is looking to transfer many of the non statutory duties to the Parish councils; parks, play areas, grass cutting, bus shelters, cemeteries, public toilets are all areas being looked at and the County Council is currently having discussions with the Parish councils with regard to transferring the services over from next year. Unfortunately this doesn't come with a reduction in council tax levels for those parishes involved so it will be a decision for the Parish councils themselves to decide what services they want to provide for their parishioners. It will inevitably mean a rise in parish precepts. Fortunately the County Council has committed itself to funding the Allendale library for the next three years.

New County wide policies planning policies (Local Development Framework – L.D.F) are currently being drawn up and as Vice Chair of the working group I am heavily involved in this. This new LDF will come out to all Parish Councils in various stages for consultation. It is early days but many of the policies that Tynedale District Council operated under may change.

Proposed cuts to the highways budget by the ruling Executive over the last two years has been challenged by myself and my colleagues resulting in no significant cuts, however with an ever deteriorating road network much more investment is needed, and that is an obvious priority for me. This year the County Council didn't cut the subsidy to the bus services but unfortunately Durham County Council did which has meant severe disruption to two important services jointly funded by both Councils in the Blanchland and Slaley areas. Every effort is being made to safeguard the

services but a reduction has happened. We are fortunate though that an annual grant from the West Area Committee to A.D.A.P.T has meant that some of the very rural areas have seen an improvement to their public transport situation.

In the Shotley Low Quarter parish a new opencast coal application has been submitted which is very worrying for the people of Whittonstall. An Action Group has been set up and after a survey of the parish was carried out a majority of the residents are against it, consequently I will be campaigning against it. The application is not expected to go before the Planning Committee before the end of the year, or early 2012.

As Chair of the Area Committee I am heavily involved with all County Council business and have regular meetings with N.A.L.C to ensure that Parish Councils have their concerns heard at the highest level. I had hoped that with the new Unitary Authority and the demise of the District Councils that the Area Committees would have an enhanced role in the community, with more powers and devolved budgets to represent the needs of the area. This unfortunately hasn't happened and power is still in the hands of a distant executive. However the future role of the Area Committees is being looked at and with the forthcoming Localities Bill I have high hopes of some improvement in the situation, particularly hopeful that the County Council may be decentralised as it is unfortunately dominated by Councillors from the heavily populated South East who have little understanding of rural problems and issues.

Most of the work that County Councillors undertake is never seen by the public but I can assure you that my colleagues and I are working hard behind the scenes to try and improve the situation and find ways to make things happen. Yes, we face problems, with many more to come but let us never forget what a wonderful part of the Country and County we live.

Colin Horncastle  
01434 618259  
[Colin.Horncastle@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Colin.Horncastle@northumberland.gov.uk)

**Financial Report at March 31st 2011.**

**Income**

Brought forward restricted (Beacon grant)	1700.00
Brought forward Non-restricted	2389.73
Precept half payment	3518.00
Second half of Precept being paid into bank 27/9/10	3517.00
5/7/10 Vat Repayment	0169.99
St. Mary's PCC donation towards Lych gate (BG)	0551.00
Healey PC web space rent	0050.00
Travellers Rest 28 meals @ £12	0336.00
	<b>12,231.72</b>

**Expenditure**

Adapt membership 2 x £10	0020.00
Came & Co Insurance	0284.22
NALC subs	0114.57
A. Evison grass cutting	0768.55
Core Music grant	0050.00
Armel Lych gate (Beacon Grant)	1411.18
VMS Rotation of Speed Sign x 2	0225.63
P Wilson salary	3000.00
BDO Stoy Hayward	0141.00
NCC extra street light at Parks Side (Beacon Grant)	1233.75
Grant – St. Mary's Churchyard	0050.00
Grant – Community Action Northumberland	0020.00
Grant – Air Ambulance	0150.00
NCC Empty litter bin	0324.22
NCC Empty dog bin	0324.22
RR Pickering snow clearance at Parks side	0029.38
Commemoration Hall Hire of Room	0220.50
BOATs expenses	0016.43
Clerks annual expenditure	0306.63
Travellers Rest post Christmas lunch 28@£12	0336.00
Zen internet by Direct Debit web site	0057.46
Webfusion final payment for web hosting	0007.94
	<b><u>9091.68</u></b>
	<b><u>9091.68</u></b>
	<b><u>3,140.04</u></b>

## **The 4 Parishes BOATs Joint Committee Report to the Parish Councils May 2011**

Since our last report in May 2010 the BOATs Committee has held one meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>

The Prohibition of Driving Experimental Order 2010. was discussed and how monitoring was going to be undertaken.

Parish of Hexhamshire U8062, Public Byway No's 78, 79 & 80. Parish of Slaley Public Byways No's 38 & 41 and parish of Blanchland Public Byway No 34Came into operation on October 8<sup>th</sup> 2010 for a period of 18 months.

A Letter to David Brookes asking if someone from Natural England (Karen Purvis) or anyone else is monitoring received a negative reply.

Alleged Byway Open to All Traffic No 15 Parish of Healey (Eopershields).

Correspondence dated 21/10/10 from David Brookes indicated that a report would be considered by the Rights of Way Committee at their meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup> 2010. The Eopershields situation has not been resolved.

Reporting to the Police by members of the public including the Blanchland keeper, Scott Colcleugh. The Police telephone number 03456043043 to report irresponsible behaviour was circulated to landowners.

Blanchland PC Chairman has not received information regarding the reintroduced 'Blanchland Road' BOAT.

A Report from Hexhamshire parish included the fact that there is a fish gate in the Devils Water and the old cobbled ford has been concreted over – this was part of the Shire's historic landscape and should never have been allowed. Hexhamshire PC duly informed the press.

Slaley parish was very involved with its List of Streets – DMMO (No 7) 2010 BOAT Numbers 33,34,36,37. Slaley PC objected to all the green lanes being reclassified as BOATs and used "nuisance" as the prime objection.

AVAG has so far been successful with its Complaint to Europe.

The committee renewed its annual subscription for the Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Alliance and GLEAM.

David Short Chairman  
May 2011.

## **Report to Slaley Parish Council by the Representative on Slaley Commemoration Hall Management Committee. May 2011**

The Management Committee met on the following dates:

March 30<sup>th</sup> 2011 Representative PC Clerk Pat Wilson

February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011 - Representative Councillor Ann Robson

September 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 - Representative Councillor Ann Robson

July 7<sup>th</sup> 2010 Annual General Meeting – Representative Councillor Ann Robson

All members of the Committee signed the ‘Trustee Declaration of Acceptance’.

June 16<sup>th</sup> 2010 approve accounts - Representative Councillor Ann Robson

It was after being a Trustee was explained at the February meeting that all elected members of Slaley Parish Council decided that they could not support the Commemoration Hall. A decision was taken to appoint the PC Clerk to represent the PC on the Management Committee. Since that time copies of the approved February minutes were circulated.

The Caretaker does a weekly check on the Hall grounds and this is recorded in a log book.

The Committee Secretary announced her decision to retire and gave on June 2010, 12 months notice

Slaley continues as a member of the West Northumberland Community Buildings Consortium and Michael Elphick designed and is editor of the Consortium website.

In September 2010 the Committee agreed to pay £109 per annum to NCC to have two litter bins emptied.

The Committee decided to go for the Hallmark Scheme.

Small repairs have been carried out – roof slates, hole caused through enthusiastic karate members, PAT electrical testing, Replacement nappy bin, additional plate rack for dishwasher etc.

It was reported that Slaley Parish Council did not intend to award a grant towards running costs this year. Two members of the Committee attended the December meeting of the Parish Council to ask for an explanation.

The CAN News of December 2010 gave information on New Funding for Community Buildings and the Committee decided to go for improvements to toilet block and storage facilities. To this end a sub committee was formed which met Susi Goncu, NCC Locality Development Officer, at 5 p.m. on Tuesday February 15<sup>th</sup>. Susi provided guidance for a general questionnaire. This questionnaire was subsequently included in the April parish news sheet and on the parish web site. Unfortunately the feed back has been poor.

Former Youth Klub shed rented by Committee at a peppercorn rent: Contents offered to present user groups free of charge.

Pat Wilson. May 2011

## SLALEY COMMUNITY TRUST

### ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2009 - 2010

The Community Trust is now in its seventh year and continues to be an active part of the community.

After the previous year's successful publication of "Slaley, Then and Now", the Trust's activities over the last year have centred around the pub and a play area for the village.

During the latter part of 2010, the Trust worked on proposals for community ownership of the Rose & Crown, with the aim of encouraging a thriving pub in the village. This work included developing a business plan, researching sources of funding and investigating planning and building works required. Although these proposals did not come to fruition, the Trust is pleased to see new tenants in the pub with exciting plans for redeveloping the business.

Starting in July last year, the Trust has been working with the Parish Council and Slaley First School on developing a play and sport area on the school grounds, in order to access funding set aside for Slaley from the Housing Developers Fund. This project is now at the stage of getting the detailed plans drawn up and the final application for funding will shortly be submitted. The aim is for the building work to be completed during the school summer holidays.

In addition the Trust has offered its support to a number of other Slaley organisations:-

1. A small grant to the Methodist Chapel for redecoration.
2. A small grant to the Mother & Toddler Group to ensure it was on a secure financial basis.
3. A contribution to funds for St Mary's Church to facilitate the movement of an ancient gravestone – this is due to be carried out as soon as the specialist contractor is available.
4. Sponsorship of a Junior Leek Club prize, with £10 and a cup for the best single leek from the under-16s. This generated a lot of interest at last year's Leek Show and will continue again this year.
5. Support to the Slaley Show by running a raffle on the day of the show.

The Community Trust put on a production of Beauty and the Beast at Christmas in the Commemoration Hall, which was well attended. Also, thanks to the efforts of Jackie Green, the Trust arranged for the signs at the Townhead end of the village to be replaced free of charge by the County Council.

The Parish Newsletter continues to be distributed monthly, with many thanks to Carolyn Brooks and Joan Galley, and also to the team of volunteers who distribute the newsletters to every household in the parish. Thanks should also go to Northumbria Water for their assistance with printing.

Michael Elphick stood down last year after serving as Chairman for nearly four years, but remains on the committee as a valued member. Margaret Weatherley continues to provide invaluable service as our Treasurer and new members are always welcome to join the Trust.

As Chairman and Secretary, we would like to thank all the hard working members of the Committee for their efforts over the past year, and all who have given their time and skill to support the work of the Trust. We very much hope that this help and support will continue in the years ahead.

Norman Watson and Catherine Lincoln  
(Chairman and Secretary, Slaley Community Trust)  
8 May 2011