

## USEFUL NUMBERS & CONTACTS

Badminton Group	Fran Pugh	673429
Carpet Bowls	Jason & Jeannie Abdelnoor	673651
St Mary's Parish Church	Reverend Helen Savage	676852
Slaley Methodist Church	Reverend David Goodall	603139
St Elizabeth's Catholic Church	Father Jeroen Hoogland	673248
Commemoration Hall	Chairman Ros Doonan Bookings Stella Douglas	673173 673001
Community Trust	Chairman Norman Watson	673914
County Councillor	Colin Horncastle	618259
Craft Group		
Dial -A-Ride	A.D.A.P.T	600599
Film Club	Jean and Michael Elphick	673443
Friends of Slaley School	Andrea Foster	673317
Hexham Hospital	0344 811 8111	
Ladycross Nature Reserve	Joan Jewitt	673245
Leek Club	Malcolm Goodwin	673408
Local History Group	Pat Wilson Ian Hancock	673388 673502
Mobile Hairdresser	Linda Johnston	673196
Northumberland CC	Report faulty Streetlights/Potholes	03456006400
Parish Council	Chairman Anne Livesey Clerk Pat Wilson	673787 673388
Police	For non emergency calls please ring 101	
Post Office Van	Martin Nichol Stocksfield Post Office	01661 842110
Rose & Crown Pub		673996
Slaley Shop		673201
Slaley First School	Head, Mrs Debbie Brett	673220
Slaley Notes in Hexham Courant	Stella Douglas Helen Savage	673001 676852
Slaley Parish Website	<a href="http://www.slaley.org.uk">www.slaley.org.uk</a>	
Slaley Show Society	Chairman, Marge Rastall Secretary	673547
Slaley Red Squirrel Group	Margaret Bates	673461
Travellers Rest Pub	Ian and Darren	673231
Women's Institute	President Margaret Rowell Secretary Hilary Porteus	673589 673637



# SLALEY NEWS

## February 2021



As usual the Government always announces changes to our routine just as I am trying to sign off the current issue of the News. Restrictions to our lives will continue for longer than we had hoped but there is an air of optimism in this issue with plans afoot for meetings and events, some as far away in time as the parish wander in July

Talking of meetings – many are being held on line and are advertised on the Parish website or on Facebook. Being of a certain age I had not participated in “Zoom Meetings” until I plucked up the courage to sign in to a History Club talk on Gravestones by Mark Hatton. I was most surprised how easy it was to access and spent a very enjoyable hour or so sat at the kitchen table. If you are like me give it a try.

Still on the subject of technology - Is there anyone with skills in the operation of Microsoft Office who might be able to tidy up the format of the News for me? Since changing to “Office” there are certain operations that baffle me. Interested? Just give me a call.

Finally thanks to all who responded to our call for upbeat contributions especially the pupils of Slaley School.

### Slaley and Hexhamshire Oil Buying Group

Deadline date for oil in February are orders to me by Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> of February (sooner if possible) for delivery during week commencing Monday 15<sup>th</sup> of February.

Thank you all for your support of this community project.  
Neil Whatmough, [nbwhatmough@btinternet.com](mailto:nbwhatmough@btinternet.com) or by telephone on 01434 676949

There will be no meetings of the W.I. until further notice.



Contributions for March edition by Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February please.

Editors: Jim Bailey 673352 [baileyjim128@gmail.com](mailto:baileyjim128@gmail.com)  
Fiona McKendrick: 673281 [fionamckendrick@googlemail.com](mailto:fionamckendrick@googlemail.com)

## Parish Council Notes

The Parish Council met on-line. There was a great deal of business to attend to with issues such as visitors breaking pandemic guidelines, weather damage to highways and problems accessing acceptable broadband. However, the main discussion revolved around **Tackling Climate Change at Parish Level**, recycling was the key theme.

There was criticism of NCC's recycling programme when compared to other northern regions. Cllrs intend joining the January online environment Forum to discuss this with NCC. C Cllr. Hardcastle pointed out that Northumberland came second in a Friend's of the Earth Climate Friendly Councils. Meanwhile it was reported that Slaley Community Shop and the SH&HC Environment Group are very active in developing a recycling hub. Look on the Parish website to follow developments.

## SH&HC Environment Group

Would you like to join the Slaley, Healey and Hexhamshire Community Environment Group? They meet every six weeks to try to improve the local environment. Trees have already been planted in the village school grounds. The group co-ordinated discussion around recycling (see the Parish website for further information) and moves are afoot to begin a Community Orchard. Five trees will start the project at Parkview, but the group are looking for land which could be planted with fruit trees, perhaps in line with the Environmental Land Management Scheme. For all queries, call Pat on 673388.

## Recycling Tips from SH&HCEG



**Do Recycle batteries at Slaley Community Shop**

## What can go in the Recycling Bin? And what shouldn't.

✓ Plastic bottles, including drinks, shampoo and detergent bottles (please ensure they are washed and squashed (but you can now leave the tops on))



Plastics which aren't bottles for example bags, carrier bags, cling film, plant pots, yoghurt pots, food trays, margarine cartons, bubble wrap

## Recycling at the Community Shop

You will have noticed signs going up in and around Slaley Community Shop indicating opportunities to recycle. There has been a box for used stamps which benefits the Dog's Trust for some time, but now you can recycle used batteries there too. The Shop has developed a link with the Great North Air Ambulance Service to collect used printer cartridges. Whilst many national charities collect and sell used printer cartridges, the Shop management believes that benefitting the GNAAS will chime with villagers and mesh well with the co-operative principals the Shop operates under. There are moves afoot to develop the shop as a focal point for other forms of recycling. As this project develops, keep an eye on the Parish website where updates will be posted.

## Slaley Commemoration Hall

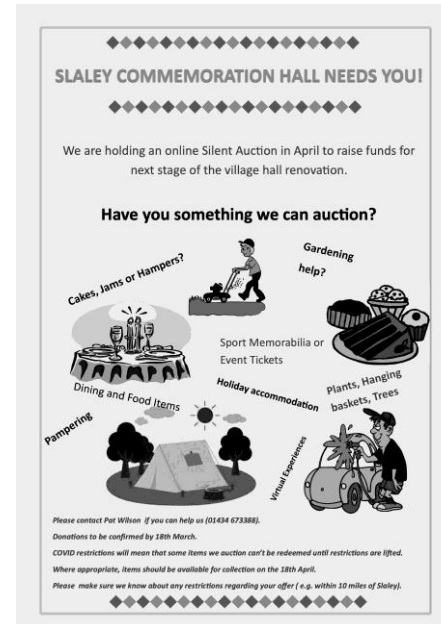
Slaley Commemoration Hall is moving forward with Phase Two funding projects despite lockdown.

**The Great Slaley April Fool's Silent Auction** is in preparation. Can you help? Have you something to be auctioned? Everything you need to know is on the Parish website including an A-Z of things you might want to offer. If you are not on-line, call Pat on 673388. The auction will be 'live' between 1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> April and there are already some very interesting lots – but the more the merrier!

## Stop Press

Good News, we have received another grant of £5,000 from The Juicy Trust towards our stage 2 development at

the hall. This takes the total raised to date to just over £30,000.



## last Freddie Hedgehog report

He is with another carer and on Christmas Eve he weighed 800 gm and will be put back in the wild in the spring.

That's the good news but, unfortunately, for every rescued hedgehog many more can be seen as road kill and do not survive.

## Slaley First School in Lockdown – An Update.

We have had an interesting start to the New Year here at Slaley First School! As instructed by the government, school has remained open to all children of 'Critical Workers' and those deemed to be in a 'vulnerable' position with regards to accessing learning from home. There will have been a surge on the broadband in the village, and indeed nationwide, as many families with more than one child will have been making a bid for internet access and devices!

At this time, pupils past and present are also in our minds. Many of our past pupils are about to face the unknown with regards to their GCSE Examinations and A levels. The Staff wish them all the best during this unsettling time.

On a cheerier note, we are glad to say that school, for our current pupils, has remained as 'normal' as possible. Parents and Governors have sent us positive and encouraging comments which have been greatly appreciated by our hardworking staff. We are all grateful the children can continue to experience a sense of normality at this difficult time and enjoy spending time with their friends which is so important for their emotional wellbeing. However, in order to keep school as safe a place as it can be, we regularly review and update our Risk Assessments, making the appropriate changes to the comprehensive systems put in place before the full reopening in September 2020.

Rest assured, we continue to follow government guidance as we serve the families of our community. From Monday, 25th January, staff will begin self-testing twice a week in order to keep everyone as safe as they possibly can. Over the past three weeks, all staff and children appear to have gained weight! This is, however, due to the entire school community wearing multiple layers as we spend our days teaching and learning in very well ventilated areas, as instructed by the DfE! Brrrrrrrr!!

We consider ourselves to be very fortunate at SFS, as every day we are faced with the smiles of happy children - they are a real tonic in such difficult times.

Best wishes from us all.

### Slaley weather report

Olwen Savage

The vicarage weather station started recording on January 1st, 2021, so I can't give any totals for January yet. But – so far January has been an interesting month! You don't need me to tell you that.

Total precipitation for 24 days is 96.6mm, average 4.2mm. However, 28mm fell in just 2 days courtesy of storm Christoph. At the height of the storm pressure dropped to 947mb.

Unusually for Slaley, winds have been no more than moderate.

The maximum temperature was 8.8°C and the minimum -7.9°C

## Gardening column- Karen Melvin

The snow is just melting as I write this looking down over the old quarried edge of our north facing wild garden. Two paths divide it into three main chunks. The most intricate is the shadiest area north of the house; it started as a moss garden idea but dried up, as it is only on quarry backfill. Now I have clumps of different grasses, ferns and 24 carved river stones, by sculptor friend Gilbert Ward, under the dwarf trees. There are bulbs in the spring and Geranium Alfred Wallace in the summer. I allow the delicate ground cover of Epimedium x youngianum Niveum and Acaena glaucus and Bronzy. The grass, Carex Frosted Curl seeds easily and I use it as an edging.



Surprisingly, dieramas like it in the narrow sunny spot down there amongst wild geraniums and planted grasses. The Witch Hazel, Hamamelis pallida, is already in flower. Witch Hazel is from the old English "wice", meaning bendable, and may have been used as divining rods as hazel twigs were.

### Hamamelis pallida

In the flower border I find hellebores gloomy. Their flowers hang down and I would never have bothered with them. However, I was given a dozen hybrid seedlings and planted them out of the way in the woodland. They are now well established and flower for months some starting from Christmas. They suit semi-shade and their half hidden nature gives mystery to the woodland.

Where daffodils have died out these hellebores *Spring Hellebore & bulbs* thrive in poor soil, although I do mulch every year and don't cut the leaves off as I like their robust form. Brighter coloured varieties which I can't resist have been brought in from garden centres.



Since we cut down a large Scots pine and a Tibetan cherry (leaving some stems shooting up at pollard height) I have room for more plants, a Rhododendron Blue Pool with lovely greyish leaves, tolerant of shade, wind and cold, and a Ginkgo hybrid, with its curious leaves and yellow autumn colour, the only broad leaved conifer. For two years I have been trying to find out the name of a winter scented plant that looks like it should be a rhododendron but has small white tubular flowers. The head gardener at Evenly Wood didn't know what it was. Then last year it appeared in the garden section of a newspaper twice, Eleagnus x ebbingei. The flowers are rather insignificant white jobs, but the scent is like lingering jasmine. I'll see if my memory serves well and they survive the winter, as I ordered two for the north edge of the wild garden.



## Slaley Show AGM

Although the Show is unlikely to go ahead in its usual form, there are matters which need to be formalised, so an AGM is to be held on-line at **7.30pm, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021**. Go to the

Show website for further information and an agenda or email [stellacdouglas@gmail.com](mailto:stellacdouglas@gmail.com) for an invitation to Zoom.

### A View from the Vicarage

Friends keep urging me to write down some of the stories that happen to me in the course of my work. I've hesitated lest I get it in the neck from those who might feature, but I thought it might not harm to tell you a couple of older stories. I was reminded of them now that we stream our services online because I don't seem to get many Facebook or YouTube 'likes.' In fact, on several occasions, I've even added my own like – much to my embarrassment, because I don't quite know how I did it, and I haven't yet learnt how to erase them.

I get a little thrill from such 'likes' because it's well known that preachers are rarely complimented for what we say. Let's not beat about the bush, there's a very good reason for this, but I'm always amazed how, when some folk do comment, it's often to commend me for a point I'd never dream of making in a month of Sundays. People clearly hear what they want to hear; but on the rare occasions that folk have listened to me accurately, the effects can be perilous, and when God seems to listen, even worse.

Many years ago, I preached a sermon in very bad French at the invitation of my friend Jean-Michel, the priest of our local parishes. It was on the theme of 'the first will be last and the last first.' It was also one of those Sundays when we had a baptism. The local custom, formed after generations of having to sit through earnestly numbing homilies, was to arrive for such events only after the preacher had sat down and just in time for communion.

I suggested that one sign of welcome might be to think again about the normal habit in which the most pious Christians shot up first to get their communion. Instead, why not invite today's latecomers to come up first? 'What a great idea!' enthused, Jean-Michel, when I'd finishing speaking. 'We'll do it!'. And so we did. The baptism family were covered in embarrassed confusion, wondering what on earth they'd done wrong, and the pious faithful had no idea when they should make their way sheepishly to the front. Years later, confusion still reigns and communion has become a chaotic free for all – the religious equivalent of King's Cross station before Covid.

On God not listening, Jean-Michel later decided to forgive me and invited me to preach at a civic service to mark the restoration of one of the other churches in the group. The main work had been the re-tiling of its beautiful spire. I think I did a good job, waxed lyrical and theological in equal measure,

and was even complimented by a few folk at the bun fight afterwards – a delightfully French 'vin d'honneur' (right up my street). That night there was a humongous thunder storm. Unfortunately, the new spire was struck and the fine new tiles were neatly divided all the way down the spire from tip to base. Friends pointed out that God may not quite have approved of my honeyed words and was making a point. You may draw your own conclusions.

Anyhow, I'm now much more careful what I say (most of the time), which maybe is why my online offerings seem to send everyone else to sleep.

And why have I chosen to air my dirty linen in public? The editors made a plea to come up with 'a jolly and positive contribution.' Oh well, I tried, though maybe that book of memoirs will have to wait.

*Helen*

### Church Services and News

We continue to stream our weekly Sunday services on Facebook and YouTube. They go live by 9am each Sunday and there's a weekly 'thought for the day' each Wednesday, also usually 'live' by 9am.

To find them please just click on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/moorlandgroup/>

You can listen to them all at any time of your choice and from the comfort of your own sofa!

Coffee after Church takes place by Zoom every Sunday at 11am for an hour – it's a great way to catch up on the local news, and no-one even asks if you've been to church first. If you'd like a link, please ask Helen.

**Our weekly ecumenical study group** on Friday's a from 11am to noon via Zoom have begun again. If you'd like Helen to send you a Zoom invitation, please let her know. Everyone is really welcome.

### Something else to cheer you up: Another Zoom Coffee Morning

We're going to celebrate **Shrove Tuesday (16th February)** with a coffee morning (and even a coffee afternoon). Don't worry, even if Zoom isn't your thing, you can still enjoy a box of delicious home-baked goodies, delivered specially to you. This costs £5 and is sold to help raise money for our local churches in the Moorland Group of parishes (including Slaley and Healey). A similar event just before Christmas was such a success, we couldn't but agree to repeat it!

With no physical services our income has taken a battering. To book your box, please phone or email Olwen Savage (01434 676852) or [olwensavage@gmail.com](mailto:olwensavage@gmail.com)



## And still more cheer ...

**The next (now monthly) Slaley Shop Zoom wine tasting** will take place on Thursday February 25, animated, as ever, by Helen. There'll be two superb wines to try – a red from Chile and one of Helen's favourite dry whites from Alsace. To book your place, please email Helen: helensavage1@gmail.com

I have kept myself very busy in Lockdown looking after my new bouncy puppy Alfie the cockerpool! I have also got a new piano and I'm starting to learn to play!

Freya Foster

My name is Ella and I live on a farm. Lockdown for me has been good and bad. Bad because I miss my friends and family but lets not talk about that lets talk about THE GOOD STUFF.

I am very lucky to live on a farm and it has been great to be able to spend more time outside. Me, my sister and my brother have done lots of cool things, such as going on walks in the forest, playing in the river, having stick races, throwing rocks, feeding calves and also memorising their names! Carrying out experiments we wouldn't normally have time to do, such as who was the strongest - Stretch Armstrong/Barbie or Action Man! I also made lots of funny videos and invented new characters like Netflixio who came to save the day!

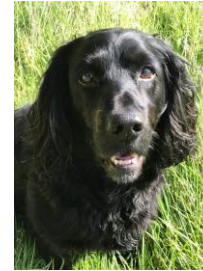
Ella Smith

## **Our New Addition.** By Matilda Osborne

This Christmas, my family had something to keep our minds off the coronavirus. My Mummy had a little girl called Alice on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November. I was really pleased to have a little sister because I already have two brothers. They are great fun but I am pleased to have a girl on my team! It is lovely to have a little sister. Holding her is like cuddling a hot water bottle. Alice has started to do really cute smiles and is making us all smile lots too. She watches us doing our home schooling and I think she probably wonders what we are up to. I bet she will miss us when it is time to go back to school. I am always telling her that she is the best sister in the world and I really think she is.

**Exercise to Music (ETM).** for those over 50. (Sponsored by Age UK) Some interest was expressed in starting online (zoom) sessions while COVID19 restrictions make meeting in the Hall impossible. We have just begun trying this out. There is a group, composed of some of those who used to come to the aerobic session and there is also a session for those with limited mobility. If you feel one of these sessions might suit you, please get in touch to hear a bit more about it. Carol Ferguson 673585

## Lockdown Dog



According to the Sunday newspaper, the price of a puppy – especially the cute ones – has soared during lockdown. Of course there are thousands of deserving dogs in rescue shelters whose price hasn't altered, but it seems dogs are proving their worth as man ( and woman's) best friend. And so to lighten the dark January days - let me introduce you to Charlie – a tail-wagging bringer of good cheer, unremitting optimism and boundless energy.

Charlie is the only resident in our house to love lockdown, and the endless supply of willing humans needing a laptop

break. If you are a regular walker around Slaley you may well have seen him - but he won't have seen you! Nose to the ground, he zig zags his way over the fields and through the forests sniffing out whatever has passed that way ahead of him. Regardless of horizontal rain, icy sleet or howling wind he sets off with the same excitement, doing a few twirls in the garden before we venture into the lane, tail helicoptering in anticipation. He has the best kind of virus – an infectious enthusiasm, no matter how many times we follow the same paths.

Charlie is Scottish. We were not a dog family – but nine years ago we made the trip to Howick after much debate to check out a squeaky litter of five bundles of fur. Charlie was the standout candidate (honestly). Entirely black, melting brown eyes and a tail in overdrive. We were instantly a dog family. We presented his picture to our daughter on her 12th birthday – and from that point on he has been part of the team.

He's been everywhere. Holidays in Devon, on the beautiful beaches of Northumberland where he can run for miles, and even once to the south of France. The Mediterranean heat proved too much – and he leapt into an ornamental fountain in Toulouse impervious to the horror of local people. He loves Christmas – shredding abandoned wrapping paper and wrecking his own Christmas gift – usually before Boxing day – in a frenzy of chewing. An unfortunate stuffed reindeer is probably his quickest work – limbless before the Queen's speech.

Charlie is not the neatest of hounds. Shaggy fur is a magnet for sticks, seeds, mud and just now, snowballs. Every so often Mary near Whitley Chapel administers a makeover – and for a short while he looks sleek and handsome and smells of shampoo. But it doesn't last long – his mission for the next few days is to find something pungent to roll in or a sludgy stream to wade through. Blissfully happy, he returns to his crate to allow his preferred odours to waft around the kitchen while he naps off his exercise.

When he was struck down with an internal abscess a few years ago and we feared the worst, our house was horribly quiet. Charlie returned, in a doggy onesie to protect his stitches, looking truly hangdog, resting his head on a lap, totally perplexed by what had befallen him, and humiliated by the outfit. Normal service resumed surprisingly quickly – the insurance premiums will take a little longer to wear off.

Charlie has changed our lives. He is the best confidant. He has a sixth sense – and knows when to sit still and listen – and even, if need be, to soak up the tears. Were he able to talk, he would know more of our secrets than

anyone else. Now, during lockdown his unquenchable thirst for exercise, his snow-rolling and general bonhomie has been a sparkle in a dark world. He finishes each day on the sofa in front of the fire (despite early stipulations that he would never be allowed on the furniture), legs in the air, gently snoring and twitching as he dreams about the next walk. A dog is for life and not just lockdown – but now more than ever Charlie has cemented his place in our hearts.

Jacqui Hodgson

## FoSS News

FoSS hosted some brilliant events over the festive period. It has been wonderful that we have been able to continue to fundraise and at the same time organise fun events for parents and children even during these difficult times.

The Virtual Christmas Wreath event was a huge success, and we raised an incredible £804.40! Charlotte Douglas very kindly put together fantastic wreath making boxes and gave a brilliant live demonstration on Zoom. We sold an incredible 48 adult wreath boxes and 14 children's ones. It was a really fun and enjoyable evening, and everyone was extremely creative and made beautiful wreaths. Thank you to everyone who helped by contributing generous raffle prizes, buying boxes and raffle tickets, and spreading the word to friends and family.

FoSS were also very pleased that we were able to continue our annual tradition of the Christmas hampers. We sold hamper tickets on our JustGiving site and we put together 10 fabulous hampers! We also organised a fun festive activity for the children. FoSS purchased plants pots for the children to decorate in school. We were very grateful to Trees Please who were extremely generous and donated 50 beautiful Christmas trees, which the children enjoyed planting in their creatively decorated pots. We hope to have a Christmas tree parade in the future and see how the children's trees have grown! We were so pleased as the event managed to raise a fantastic £396.91 for the school!

As always, many thanks for the continued support – it is wonderful to still be able to raise important funds for our school. We wish you all a happy and healthy 2021 and we really hope that we will be able to plan some face-to-face events in the near future!

## Slaley Community Shop Update

For those of you who've made a New Years Resolution to recycle more, we can help. Thanks to the Environmental Group, we now have a box at the Shop for used printer cartridges. It's next to the basket for used batteries. We hope to keep adding more recycling options. The printer cartridges will go to raise funds for the Great North Air Ambulance Service, so you'll be

supporting a great cause as you recycle. Don't forget we also have a Food Bank donation box, another worthwhile local cause we're very happy to support.

With Dry January behind us, Helen Savage is hosting another Zoom wine tasting on Thursday 25 February, with the wines available to purchase at the Shop. This is always a fun evening and we're extremely grateful to Helen for supporting the shop in this way and keeping everyone's spirits up at the same time. See Helen's Vicarage notes for more detail, and email Helen to book your place: [helensavage1@gmail.com](mailto:helensavage1@gmail.com).

Our final accounts for last year are now available. We're delighted to report that our finances are healthy and we made a profit before tax of £10000. Our Members will discuss at the AGM in March how this money should be used. If you would like to become a Member drop us a note at the Shop, or email [shop@slaleyshop.co.uk](mailto:shop@slaleyshop.co.uk).

Finally, with the country in lockdown once again, we've gone back to our "one customer in the shop at a time" rule. Thank you to everyone for wearing masks in the shop, and sticking to our traffic management system, to ensure both customers and volunteers stay safe.



### Rose and Crown lockdown support

Why not let us give you a night off from cooking! Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday 4-30pm until 7pm last order. Pizza's, Stir fry's, Curry's and lots more, check the menu on our Facebook or webpage. Special requests and any dietary

needs supported.

Look forward to cooking for you.

Take care, be safe and hope to see you all soon at your pub.

Contact 01434 673996, leave a message and we'll get back to you.

**The Slaley Parish Wander SUNDAY JULY 11TH 2021** Visit selected gardens in the parish! Start at the Commemoration Hall, Slaley, Hexham NE47 0BQ Gardens open from 11 am – 5.30 pm

**Tickets £10 on the day from the Commemoration Hall Call 01434 673388 / 673173 for more information All proceeds will go to the "£100k for 100 years" Phase Two Appeal for the Hall**