

November 2026

You can now see the newsletter in full colour on the Parish website - at www.slaley.org.uk.

For this month we have the regular reports from the Parish Council, the Community Shop and the WI, while Karen Melvin shares lots of colourful images of autumn bushes and dried flowers:



The Rose & Crown have a new Festive Menu, and we have notices of events from the Local History Group and a report from the Community Shop.

Looking forward to December, plans are underway for a Slaley Community Christmas, and a Christmas Wreath Making Night.

As always we welcome contributions from anyone who has news they would like to share! We would particularly like to hear more from those who are **not** incomers to Slaley, but have a long history of their own in the village. In particular our farmers and their families, and those who have lived here for generations.

We hope you like the new look of the front page (ChatGPT created the banner!)

Contributions for the December & January edition by Tuesday 24th of November or earlier, please!

Send by email to slaleynews@icloud.com, or to michael@elphicks.myzen.co.uk

Parish Council Report

The Parish Council met in October with a very full agenda.

Matters discussed at length included the plans from Northumberland County Council for planning procedures and housebuilding following on from Nicole and Anne attending a County Council meeting in Morpeth. The County Council has been tasked to build a significant number of houses in the next decade by the Government. Land which was submitted over the year has now been assessed and put into different categories for potential development. These can be seen on the County Council's website. The land at the east of the Village has been assessed as a potential development site. The County Council are particularly looking for sites with good transport links such as those near train stations and bus routes.

Planning applications will be dealt with very differently. Any planning applications with nine dwellings or less will receive a default 'yes' and only very large developments will go to the Planning Committee. These changes are aimed at speeding up the planning process which the Parish Council welcomes, although with reservations about the short cuts to planning approval being introduced which leave the Parish Council with no say in planning applications in our Parish.

Road safety was also discussed at length. The junction on the Lead Road leading up to the Forest, and camp site is completely unsuitable for the vehicles it carries. There is insufficient sight up and down the road and there is not enough room to turn for the large vehicles that now use this junction.

A request to reduce the speed limit on North Road (Wooley) to 40mph has been rejected due to the fact that there are 18 houses along the road and the minimum number requires 20 houses. The County Council refused to take into account the Woodfoots in the count. The Parish Council does not understand how the number of houses using the road affects the blind corners and narrow road space.

All these issues, together with the terrible surface of the Village street and a 20mph speed limit through the Village, will be once again discussed with the County Council as we disagree with their assessments.

The Parish Council are establishing a Book Exchange to be sited through the generosity of the Hall, in the Commemoration Hall grounds,

outside. This means that Parishioners can access books and magazines outside shop hours with their successful book offering.

The Parish Council is again looking for more Councillors! If you would like to join us we'd be very happy to chat to you to tell you more. Currently we meet 10 times a year for about an hour or two and it means you can really have a say and impact what goes on in your Parish. You don't need any experience, just an interest in your local area and willingness to attend meetings!

Dark nights are here, please drive safely on our roads.

Slaley, Healey & Minsteracres Local History Group

The Blanchland Letters, by Alison Dunn
Friday 6th November 2026

The story of letters during the Second World War between Peggy Wilkinson a teacher at Blanchland School and her fiancé, Alex Dunn.

The letters are part 'love story' and part 'social account of life in Blanchland during the war years'. Added to that mix is the fact that Peggy came to Blanchland with twelve evacuated children from Stephenson School in Wallsend. How did she and her charges settle into country life at Blanchland leaving family and friends back home?

Alison will be bringing copies of her book £10 and will sign them if that is your wish.



Blanchland Old School seen from the bridge over the River Derwent, a scene Pegggy would know well.

Starting at 3.30 p.m. for cake and coffee
in Slaley Commemoration Hall.
£4 adults, 50p anyone in full time education.
For more information contact Pat Wilson 01434 673388,
email: pat.wilson28@outlook.com

The Commemoration Hall

Hall hire charges have been held since March 2022 with the Affiliated rate established in August that year. However things have changed since then, and the Hall Trustees have decided to increase the rates.

Slaley Commemoration Hall - Hall Hire Rates
Effective from 1st November 2026

Please contact the Booking Clerk if you have any special requirements or require a sole use of the shared kitchen facility. We look forward to welcoming you to Slaley Commemoration Hall.

Our Standard Rates – Non-affiliated:

Main Hall	£19.00 per hour
Community Room	£13.00 per hour
Sole Use of Kitchen	£22.00
(Catering/hot food preparation/cooking)	
Use of the whole building	£27.50 per hour
48-hour rate	£385.00
Election rate	£385.00

Rates for our Partner Organisations - Affiliated *

Main Hall	£13.00 per hour
Community Room	£9.00 per hour
Use of the whole building	£22.00 per hour

* **Partner Organisations:** These are longstanding, regular users of the Hall who provide an annual fund-raising event for Hall funds. The

reason they book the Hall serves to enrich our community life. Organisations who qualify for these rates are solely at the discretion of the Hall Trustees.

During 2025 it was proposed that to enable each partner organisation (those who receive the Affiliated rate) to continue with the reduced hourly rate they be asked to host a fund-raising event for the Hall.

Slaley Community Shop

Much More Than A Shop

WINE@THESHOP

As we turn our thoughts to Christmas, Slaley shop is relaunching its beer and wine collection under the supervision of buyer Louise. Hexhamshire Ales are already proving popular whilst our October wine tasting event is fully booked. We're delighted to offer again this year some perfectly blended mixed wine cases, especially selected with the festive season in mind – perfect for entertaining or to make a great gift.

We've two boxes to choose from priced at £71 and £89 , pick up your order forms in the shop - your boxes will be available for collection @theshop in December. Full tasting notes will be provided.

In order to make room for the new stock we're having a Bin End sale during November with 10% off selected wines.

Thank you to those who were able to attend the Slaley Community Shop Annual General Meeting at the end of September.

The Board was delighted to outline the progress and impact we've had as a shop in the last year and to share the results of our Annual Survey . Here's a taster of some of things we're proud of.



In our survey we sought support for a number of new initiatives we'd like to bring to life in the coming year.

Three quarters of respondents were keen for the shop to take orders for fresh fruit and veg, whilst two thirds like the idea of sandwiches and quiches as a lunchtime offer.

8 out of 10 people would like to see our shop coordinate an annual litter pick for Slaley Village, whilst 7 in 10 were keen for us to consider a walking group.

Customers are also keen for us to introduce further locally sourced and premium products they can't get in their regular supermarket delivery.

None of this is of course possible without the ongoing support of our volunteers and young work experience colleagues who donate their time and experience to the future of your shop.

THANK YOU!

Stay Connected 📍 Open: 8:30am - 12noon, every day

Don't miss out on the latest shop updates, special offers, and community news:

📍 Facebook: @slaleyshop

📍 Instagram: @slaleycommunityshop

Carpet Bowls

Since the last news we shared Slaley had a good home win against the lovely folk from Riding Mill. It was very close at the end but we hung on to win. We played Snods Edge at their new Ebchester venue and came second!!

Club nights continue every Tuesday, except 3 November and 1 December, so if you fancy a fun night of bowls, banter and a cup of tea do please join us at the usual time of 7:30.

Badminton

Badminton has started again on Wednesday mornings at 9.30am in the Commemoration Hall. New players are welcome to join us for exercise and fun.

Contact Fran Pugh on 01434 673429 or fmpugh@btinternet.com

WI report for November 2026

The September Macmillan Coffee morning was a super almost sell-out occasion with the hall brimming with interesting stalls and a delicious number of cakes and pastries on offer. As usual the raffle table had high-quality donations, the cake stall sold out, Christine Milligan's Kitchen Dresser stall drew a lot of interest and the newly introduced preloved clothing stall called 'a couple of quid' was a late addition but showed promise with offers of donations if we decide to add it into next years event. We made £934, a fantastic sum which combined with the MND walk in the Spring means that we have collectively raised just under £3,500 for charity this year. Not bad going, eh?





Our October meeting welcomed Northumbrian pipe player Rob Say with his wife and fiddle player Alison. Rob gave us a detailed description of the pipes he was playing, almost like a bagpipe but not, with so many different techniques and construction. it produces a variety of sounds which match the range of fiddle notes perfectly, making it a perfect pairing. We learned of traditional Border songs and tunes dating back to the 17-1800's and the history of the pipers who rode the boundaries prior to the great hiring and drover fairs in the region. With a quick swap over to a 170-year-old concertina, with fiddle accompaniment, the music was both mournful and earnest and but switched very quickly to jolly dancing notes. Rob runs the Tyneside Fiddle Alliance in Newcastle. Worth looking up on tynesidefiddlealliance.org.uk. A thoroughly enjoyable evening.



We have been hampered a little by storms Austen and Boleo to put up the poppy wall at the time of writing but need to wait for a couple of good weather days; we still have plenty of time before Remembrance Sunday and are currently busying ourselves sewing the last few onto the existing gaps including a batch made by Slaley School pupils who made 'one for us and one for them'. Theirs will be placed on the school wall like last year. So, we have fingers crossed and our gaze firmly fixed on the weather apps!

We are lucky this month to 'capture' artist Charlotte Thompson for our November meeting on the 11th at 7.30pm. It's a busy period for her doing festive painting workshops at all the local Christmas Fairs and at the newly opened Beyond the Byre shop in Hexham. She's bringing each of us a specially prepared coloured ceramic bauble ready to decorate with a variety of gouache and acrylic paints. 'don't wear your best clothes!' she says even though the baubles will be sitting very sturdily in egg cups, 'all paints are washable' she assures. She'll be

bringing some ideas and examples to inspire us as well as her seasonal greetings cards but do google ‘Charlotte Thompson Art’ to give you an idea of what we’ll be doing.



Our usual committee meeting will be at 1.00pm 4th November at The Travellers Rest.

Much of our November will be spent in organising a special Christmas Coffee morning for Friday 4th December. Monies raised will go to supporting the Commemoration Hall, an annual obligational gesture by all groups in the village who regularly use the meeting halls and kitchen. To accommodate smaller groups, we are joining forces with The Slaley Toddler Group and the Snack and Chat team, so whilst refreshments are being served, there will be stalls with pre-loved children’s clothes and

toys, cakes, decorations, wreaths, a raffle, a tombola and The Kitchen Dresser. The morning will run from 10am to 12 noon. Reminder flyers and posters will be dotted around the village. Sandra Innes of the Toddler Group asks that donations of children's clothing and toys are to be delivered in advance of the event, to the shop (to go in the cabin, not the recycling shed!) during shop hours. Thanks to all contributors in advance.

Any Queries? Contact President or Secretary: see contact details on the back page of the newsletter.

Autumn Happenings at The Rose & Crown

There's plenty going on at The Rose & Crown this autumn, so here's a little reminder of what's happening at your village pub!

Early Bird Menu – Great Value Dining!

Don't forget our Early Bird offer, available every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday between 4pm and 5pm. Enjoy **two meals for just £16 –** the perfect excuse to pop in for an early tea!

Halloween Night – Spooky Treats Await!

Join us for some Halloween fun! We'll have spooky cocktails and Halloween specials guaranteed to put a little *boo* into your evening. If you're out and about trick or treating with the little ones, be sure to stop by – we'll have **trick or treat bags for the children**. Come along and see what goes bump in the night!

Psychic Supper – SOLD OUT!

Our Psychic Supper on 10th November is now completely sold out. Thank you to everyone who has booked! If you missed out, don't worry – our next Psychic Supper will be on **8th June**, so save the date and keep an eye out for booking details.

Our Festive Menu Is Here!

It's never too early to start planning your Christmas get-togethers! Our festive menu is now available, running from **23rd November to 24th December.** Whether it's a meal with friends, family or a festive gathering, we'd love to celebrate with you. **Bookings are now open, so get in touch to reserve your table!**

We look forward to seeing plenty of familiar faces, welcoming new ones and enjoying the autumn and festive season together at your local!

From the team at The Rose & Crown, Slaley

THE

ROSE & CROWN

GOOD FOOD ◆ GREAT COMPANY

FESTIVE MENU

Available from Sunday 23rd November
until Wednesday 24th December

STARTERS

CHICKEN LIVER & BRANDY PÂTÉ
Served with Melba Toast and Fig Chutney.

WILD MUSHROOM BRUSCHETTA (VG)

VEGETABLE & LENTIL SOUP (VG)

PRAWN & CRAYFISH COCKTAIL

MAINS

TRADITIONAL ROAST TURKEY
Served with sausage stuffing, pig in blanket, roast potatoes, roast parsnip & mashed potato, brussels sprouts, carrots & mashed swede.

FESTIVE BURGER
4oz patty loaded with crumbed Wensleydale & cranberry cheese, served with festive seasoned fries and a beer battered onion ring.

SQUASH & PINE NUT RISOTTO (VG)
Topped with pesto & crispy rocket.

PAN FRIED, HOT HONEY SALMON
Served with glass noodles, sugar snap peas and peppers.

DESSERTS

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS PLUM PUDDING
Served with brandy sauce.

PROFITEROLES AND CHOCOLATE SAUCE
Filled with fresh cream & served with local pouring cream.

SHERRY TRIFLE CAKE
Served with cream or ice cream.

WHISKY CREAM CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE
Served with cream or ice cream.

SIDES

PIGS IN BLANKETS	£5.00
CAULIFLOWER CHEESE	£4.00
BRAISED RED CABBAGE	£4.00
ROAST POTATOES	£4.00
SAVOY CABBAGE WITH BACON	£4.00
YORKSHIRE PUDDING	£2.00

£30 FOR 2 COURSES

ADD A THIRD COURSE FOR ONLY £4.00

PRE BOOKING AND A DEPOSIT OF £10 PER PERSON REQUIRED



Subject to change based upon availability.

November 2026 gardening column Karen Melvin

In a walk today near the Shire vicarage, I saw a crowd of butterflies and bees on flowering ivy, more than on sedum or buddleia that's usually covered. This year is more like an American autumn, so dry that the leaf colour is bright and crisp. The cherries in our garden have coloured beautifully as have the maples and mountain ash. I usually walk in the woods around now to see where the holly berries are best, in readiness for Christmas. But this year there is such an abundance of berries that the trees must be very stressed, preparing for the worst. This is the first time I saw a significant crop of Cornelian cherries on my C*ornus mas,* a shrub that is grown mainly for leaf and flower colour. I didn't expected all this fruit but found that Cornelian cherries are very tasty, a cross between cherry and apple. I made some jam, having first to squish them and squeeze out all the seeds, quite time consuming as the fruits are small and the seeds big. A new different sweet taste is always a pleasure.

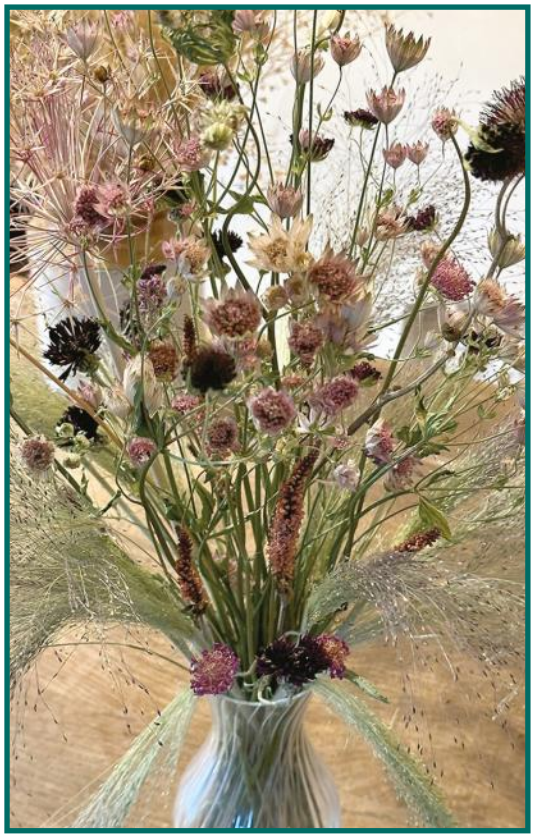


Butterfly Cherry

I have been drying flowers for a friend's wedding in mid October. She wanted cottage garden flowers, quite risky so late in the season. I had a back-up plan of dried annuals, plants that I sowed in the veg garden last year. I tried straw flowers, *nigella Black Pod*, *scabious Black Knight*, purple cornflower, China aster, and a grass *panicum Sprinkles*, all of which grew and were successfully dried. Beautiful larkspur and phlox all came in a summer flush, pretty, but too early for the wedding. The other grasses which sound so good in the catalogue either failed to grow or haven't flowered yet. I kept waiting for the seed heads of one to look

interesting enough to pick, but they never did. The seed, which came from Chilterns Seeds, turned out to be an edible thin star grass, *minutina Erba Stella.* The young leaves and stems are edible, steamed or in a salad. I picked some ready to try but Joe tidied them to the compost. I tried later - tasted like grass.

Dried flower arranging is so much easier than I expected. I was quite worried, as I usually just plonk them a jam jar unlike the magnificent vases I see in church or at the hall. This drying experiment seems closer to my art practice.



Allium Astrantia



Foxtail Barley Scabious

Some flowers keep their structure - rose buds, sea hollies, globe thistles, Hattie's pincushions, and honesty seedheads. I tried oriental poppies but the petals fell off within a few days. Other multi stemmed flowers, geranium and catnip, crinkled but kept sparks of colour and looked good with the airy grasses. I experimented with all sorts of flowers; we could hardly walk through the cottage living room there was so much drying growth dangling from the beams. The floor had a layer of shedding petals and seeds, as I didn't take heed of the danger of flowers not holding together. Next we need to transport these tall things to Scotland!



Eryngium Nigella

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Slaley – Services in November, 2026.

1st All Saints' Day

11.15am Holy Communion

8th Remembrance Sunday

10.50am Parish Worship – start at the War Memorial

15th Second Sunday before Advent

11.15am Holy Communion

5pm Holy Communion at St John the Evangelist Church, Healey

22nd Christ the King

11.15am Parish Worship – Service of the Word

29th Advent Sunday

11.15am Parish Worship – Holy Communion

From the Church Registers

The Funeral of Maureen Bell was on 15th October: Rev'd Diana Johnson officiated.

Christmas Dates for your Diary:

23rd December at 5.30pm Slaley Village Carol Service in the Church

18th December at 6pm Carol Service at St Andrew's Church Bywell (wear warm clothes!)

Christmas Eve:

24th December at 3pm Christingle service in Riding Mill Church

24th December at 6pm Carol Service at St John the Evangelist Church, Healey

Christmas Day:

8.00am Breakfast Communion in the Church Cottage, Riding Mill

11.15 am Family Communion in St Mary the Virgin, Slaley

Surprised?

Has anything surprised you recently? Something you hadn't noticed about yourself, that someone else pointed out? An unexpected event, or visitor?

When I came to Northumberland, it was a surprise for me – a Londoner coming from working in the East of England as I did. More recently, I found myself being surprised by God, as I took on the Parishes of Slaley and Healey as Priest-in-Charge. The plans that I had worked out about how my task here would evolve were unsettled by God's call and God's sense of timing. Through *prayer* and *discernment* and the action of God, I found myself making surprising and unexpected decisions.

Prayer, well, you might expect that of a priest. But discernment? Discernment is a religious-y sort of word, so what does it mean? For me, it means having the time to reflect on who I am before God. That 'who I am' before God is my original vocation. It doesn't fit neatly into the roles, relationships and jobs that we humans have developed, but there can be greater and lesser resonance between that core identity and what we choose to do with our lives.

Discernment can be helped by spending time in prayer, by talking to a soul friend or guide, by asking our friends and family and people in the village about what they see in us of greatest value, and ultimately by trying things out. We don't have to worry about getting it right, for we have a life-time to figure it out, and re-figure it out as our relationships and roles change and develop. But knowing who we are before God, is a task that all Christians are asked to spend time on. It's a form of self-knowledge and self-knowledge is framed in Christianity by the fact that we have been made, and continue to be loved, *by a Maker*. We are not self-made, but given.

We are each a gift.

St Paul prays that every member of the body of Christ takes time to recognise their gifts, develop their gifts, and most significantly share

those gifts, in order to build up the body of Christ (the church), and ultimately the kingdom of God. He writes:

> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.
>
> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given **for the common good.** To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.
>
> **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**

As we live our lives in this lovely place, we have the opportunity to also reflect on *how God might be surprising us*. So, I end with a prayer for all of us.

Pilgrim God
You walk with us
And surprise us.

Never leaving our side, you nudge us,
encouraging us to open our hearts
to your enduring love and invitation.

As we ask your blessing upon us
as we step out in faith
to live and work with our neighbours,
help us to also step out in faith
to embrace the journey
wherever it takes us
and trust in you as our Guide.
Amen

You may want to pray this for yourself – just change 'us' to 'me'!

Rev'd Diana Johnson Ultreïa et Suseia!

Christmas Wreath Making Night

Monday 7th December 7pm
Slaley Commemoration Hall



£20 including basic materials and light refreshments

All proceeds to Charity

Please contact Fiona to book:
fionamckendrick@googlemail.com
07817993767

Slaley Community Christmas – Let's Make It Magical!

Plans are already underway for a **Slaley Community Christmas**, and Santa's helpers have been busy getting things started!

We've put together a draft Christmas calendar featuring the first events planned for the village, giving everyone something festive to look forward to. But that's just the beginning!

More events will be added over the coming weeks, so keep an eye out for updates and posters around the village.

We'd love to make this a real community effort, bringing everyone together to celebrate the festive season. If you're organising an event or have an idea for something you'd like to see included in the calendar, we'd love to hear from you.

To have your event added, please contact Andrew Coney at the Commemoration Hall or Sam Elphick at The Rose & Crown.

Let's make this Christmas in Slaley extra special – the more, the merrier!

Santa's helpers are on the case… watch this space! 🎅

A Slaley Christmas

for the whole Community

16 NOV to 16 DEC

Mission Christmas Gift Drive

Help make Christmas special for disadvantaged children and families.
Drop off gifts at the Rose & Crown.



1 DEC to 19 DEC

Village Christmas Lights Competition

Let's make Slaley sparkle!
Get involved and help light up our village this Christmas.



1 DEC to 19 DEC

Best Dressed Christmas Dog Competition

Show us your festive furry friends!
Prizes to be won.



6 DEC

Christmas Tree Lights Switch On

at the Commemoration Hall, Slaley
Join us for the magical moment as we light up Slaley's Christmas tree.



13 DEC

Christmas Tractor Run

A festive favourite returns to Slaley!
More details to follow.



19 DEC

Christmas Party with Karaoke

Join us for a festive night of great food, drinks and karaoke at the Rose & Crown.



20 DEC

Family Christmas Film

at the Commemoration Hall, Slaley
A festive film, party food and gifts for the children.
More details to follow.



20 DEC

The Big Christmas Quiz

Test your festive knowledge at the Rose & Crown.
More details to follow.



23 DEC 5.30pm

Christmas Carol Service

at St Mary's Church, Slaley.



31 DEC

New Year's Eve Party

Join us at the Rose & Crown to see in the New Year!
Great music, drinks and a fantastic atmosphere.





More information to follow,
more events being added so look out for the posters.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Badminton Group	**Fran Pugh**	**673429**
Carpet Bowls	**Karl Beckett**	**07914 693199**
St Mary's Parish Church	**Rev. Diana Johnson**	**682768**
St Elizabeth's Catholic Church	**Father Emmanuel Kabinga**	**673248**
Commemoration Hall	**Chairman: Andrew Coney**	**07990 041324**
	Bookings: slaleych@gmail.com	
County Councillor	**Colin Horncastle**	**618259**
Dial-A-Ride	**A.D.A.P.T.**	**600599**
Electricity	**Power cut? Call this number**	**105**
Film Club	**Michael Elphick**	**673443**
Friends of Slaley School	**Andrea Foster**	**634865**
Hexham Hospital		**0344 811 8111**
Ladycross Nature Reserve	**Joan Jewitt**	**673245**
Leek Club	**Catherine Lincoln**	**07918 120125**
Local History Group	**Pat Wilson**	**673388**
Mobile Hairdresser	**Linda Johnston**	**673196**
Northumberland CC	**Report faulty Streetlights/ Potholes**	**0345 6006400**
Parish Council	**clerk@slaleyparishcouncil.gov.uk**	
Post Office Van	**Martin Nichol, Stocksfield Post Office**	**01661 842110**
Police	**For non-emergency calls**	**101**
Rose & Crown Pub	**David & Sam**	**673996**
Slaley Community Shop	**Shop enquiries**	**673201**
	Sandra Innes (Chair)	**673845**
Slaley First School	**Head: Mrs. Hayward**	**673220**
Slaley Parish Website	**www.slaley.org.uk**	
Slaley Show	**Vice Chair: Gemma Common**	
	Secretary: secretary.slaleyshow@hotmail.com	
The Travellers Rest	**Lucy & Jed**	**673231**
Women's Institute	**President: Catherine Myers**	**673023**
	Secretary: Vicky Pepys	**07802 572326**