

***Slaley: A Great Place to Live
Our Future in Our Hands***



Key findings from a survey and focus discussions with Slaley residents in preparation for a Parish Plan

**Prepared by the Slaley Parish Plan Group
July 2003**

Funded by the Countryside Agency Vital Villages Programme



Front cover photo

*Mr Robinson and Miss Jewitt
The oldest and youngest bred and born here*

Acknowledgements

The Parish Plan group would like to thank the Countryside Agency and its Vital Villages Programme for funding much of the work needed to bring everyone's views in Slaley together. Thanks also go to the Parish Council for supporting the proposal to conduct research leading to a plan and for helping the Parish Plan group to get organised.

There are too many people who helped with the work to name individually but we want to say a special thank you to two people. They are Clerk to the Parish Council, Pat Wilson and Linda Norris Chair of the Parish Council. Pat has been a tower of strength and provided excellent administrative and organisational skills. Linda got the idea off the ground by hosting and leading public meetings and by giving detailed help to prepare a funding application to the Countryside Agency.

We hope everyone who has been supportive will take part in the next steps which are to work with all the community to decide on and agree a Parish Plan for the future,

The Parish Plan Group:

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“A great place to live. Our future in our hands ”

Executive summary

Introduction

The report presents findings from a survey, eleven focus group discussions and a traffic/speed survey, which were undertaken in late 2002 and early 2003.

Next steps are to develop a firm and agreed Parish Plan for the future with the community. A short plain language summary of the report and the issues have been prepared and are being circulated to every household in the Parish as well as to others who may have an interest. An event is planned for September to which everyone in the community will be invited. People and organisations that can provide answers, ideas, resources and suggestions will also be invited. The event is the community's opportunity to forge its future Plan in response to all the issues raised in the research. The Plan will only be put together after the community has been fully consulted and given its views on what should be in it.

There are five sections in the report and a methodology appendix. Section one describes the background and basic facts. Section two presents the findings on us as a population, the neighbourhoods we live in and what the key problems and issues are for us where we live. Section three presents findings on the wider environment. Section four considers findings and issues on matters that affect the community and economy. Section five summarises the main messages and draws together issues and questions for the community to consider as part of the next steps which are to develop a Parish Plan for the future.

Section One: Background and Basic Facts

All 259 households in Slaley Parish area received a questionnaire and 89% of them completed and returned their questionnaires. The focus discussions involved 131 people. Most of the work to research and prepare a plan was unpaid and was done by volunteers who came to be known as the Parish Plan group. Analysts recruited from outside the community carried out some

analysis work. For reasons of confidentiality the analysts also opened and coded the questionnaires.

The main reasons that stimulated the work leading to the report were lack of safe places for children and young people to play especially following the closure of the First School field to the community in 2002. After two public meetings were held in 2002, a Parish Plan group was formed to look at what could be done and to examine other issues and problems. They successfully applied for a grant to the Countryside Agency to cover costs that would be incurred and had to match this with their volunteer labour.

Section two. About Us and Where We Live

Population and economic characteristics

The report estimates that approximately 640 people live in the four and a half miles that comprises Slaley Parish. 585 of them were in households that responded to the survey and focus discussions. Slaley's population bulges in the middle, 58% of us are aged between 26 and 64 years old. We have a high proportion of children and young people indeed they make up 27% of the population although many of them aged between 18 and their early 20s leave to go to University or college. The national trend towards having higher numbers of older people, particularly people over 80, is not as evident in Slaley although tables in the report show numbers are set to rise.

The majority of Slaley people are 'incomers'. Only approximately 35% have lived here for over 20 years and 13% for more than 41 years. Some people whose families have lived here for generations expressed unease that Slaley could become a dormitory village. There were concerns that a way of life and the values that go with it is being lost. On the other hand it is a very settled and vibrant community. People who move here tend to stay. Everyone pulls together to put on the annual Slaley Show and other community festivals.

There is little unemployment and a surprising level of self-employment and small businesses ownership (72 people in the survey said they are self employed or have small businesses including farming and rural industries). A well attended focus group for small businesses revealed considerable talent and a hidden local economy.

Where we live and the neighbourhoods we live in

13% of households live in rented housing and just over 1% live in tied housing. Most live in owner-occupied housing.

There is remarkable agreement on the things people value. They include the beauty of the countryside around us, neighbours and friends, the facilities we have, the post office, peace and quiet, proximity to Hexham, Corbridge and Newcastle, the sense of continuity and tradition and, the bus service.

Problems affecting us in neighbourhoods where we live are:

Speeding, dog fouling, litter. Local children also face lack of safe crossing areas and dangers caused by parked cars on both sides of the road near school buses.

People get hot under the collar about dog fouling and litter. They were regularly mentioned by people of all ages and locations most affected are in and on the approach to the village. Litter is also found on grass verges where motorists have dumped it.

Speeding occurs everywhere. Key locations are in and on the approach to the village, the road leading up to Slaley Hall, from the village towards Consett and the Lead Road. A traffic and speed survey was carried out in the village. It was found that about one in three vehicles were exceeding the speed limit. The worst times of day and night for speeding were in the early hours of the morning, around 7pm and during 'school run' times. Sadly local police who ran the speed check found that most offenders were locals. Lack of off street parking was a problem in the village.

Local services and facilities

High to good levels of satisfaction were expressed with most facilities and services, particularly the post office which everyone attached great importance to. The churches, the Commemoration Hall, the first school and the two pubs in the Parish were also highly valued. People using the local bus service attached great importance to it especially teenagers and older people. However, the survey and focus discussions identified needs for more services and facilities. They were:

- Play facilities for young children
- Recreation and open areas for teenagers and young people
- Places to play games and sports
- Child care facilities and services including pre-school
- Activities for children and young people in the evenings and holidays
- More services and facilities for visitors/tourists

Younger and older teenagers expressed interest in having youth club sessions. Parents with younger children wanted a play scheme in the summer.

The survey also identified a need for more recycling facilities and post boxes and a public telephone (Woolley and Riding Mill road).

Perfect place to live?

Many people attending focus groups commented that Slaley is or is nearly perfect. The missing ingredient tends to be a focal point for the village or, for young people, somewhere to play and meet one's friends. As a linear village Slaley does not have a natural village centre. The nearest to it is the area near the post office. We are surrounded by countryside but young people commented that there is nowhere to play.

Section Three. The Wider Environment Around Us

General matters

Everyone had positive things to say about the wider environment. The survey showed that knowledge about the countryside, opinions about the upkeep of footpaths, way markers and signs to places of interest is very variable. People working in rural industries, including forestry, commented that there was a level of ignorance about rights of way, how to behave when walking through the countryside and the 'country code'.

In general people want more done to take care of the wider environment. Opinions are divided on the need to improve footpaths and signage with a sizeable minority being unsure.

The benefits of *Slaley Hall* are contested. Some value the good golf and other facilities (if people can afford them) but others are unhappy. Most frequent criticisms involved noise, the effects of additional traffic, light pollution and too frequent firework displays. Fears were expressed about possible plans to increase the number of time-share properties.

Forests

There was interest in protecting the forests. Key problems were given as litter and rubbish dumping, dog fouling, unexpected dangers from husky racing, off road vehicles including motorbikes and visitors' whose dogs are not on leads.

Roads

The survey found that most households think Slaley's roads are in a fair to good condition. A sizeable minority strongly disagree. Specific spots were identified where work needs to be done. They are listed in detail in the report.

Section Four. The Community and Economy

Slaley has several different neighbourhoods, age groups and identities depending on where people live, how long they have been here and interests/ages. A lot of work goes into keeping the community vibrant and many people contribute. There is a good local economy and much more could be done to promote it to visitors and locals.

The survey showed that there is considerable voluntary work ranging from formal volunteer committees to informal work such as the medicine run which brings people who need them essential prescriptions. The survey identified 12 people who would like to do voluntary work on top of the 72 who already do.

We have a plethora of community groups and friendly, kind neighbours. All of these make Slaley a pleasant place to live.

Communication

However, communication is not straightforward. The survey found that people look everywhere for information on what is going on. Many people have computers and access to the Web. The survey

asked people to suggest methods to improve communication. Responses included, fewer and better notice boards, a widely circulated newsletter, a mobile phone mast a website for the community and, broadband access.

Our Parish Council

The survey found that people are generally well informed about the work the Parish Council does and who represents them on the Parish Council.

Low cost housing for rent or sale

The survey found that there is widespread support and interest in having low cost housing for rent or sale in Slaley. 40% of households see a need for housing for rent while 46% see a need for low cost housing for sale. Focus group discussions involving farming families and people in rural industries also referred to the need for such housing partly to encourage young people to stay here and carry on rural/farming work.

Supporting older and disabled people in the community

The survey and focus discussions looked at several elements that would enable older people, disabled people and those caring for others to have better options for living independently in the community. In general the survey found that most of us have excellent access to health care and essential care services but access is not so good for people who do not have access to a car and/or whose mobility or ability to leave the home is restricted. The bus is a great boon but some older people commented that they need help to get to places and transport on its own is not enough.

The key findings were:

- People would like to do more to keep their mobility in older age
- There is a need for services that help people to live independently including advice and information on grants for adaptations, care and support services, domestic and gardening services, help preparing meals, social activities, help to get to social activities and respite care to give carers a break.

Doing more to help others

The survey found there is capacity in the local community to do more to help others. People offered a variety of skills that would make a difference including, cooking for frail older people, help with respite care and shopping, help to organise activities for young children, gardening.

Leisure and learning interests

Finally the survey asked what people were interested in learning or pursuing as leisure activities. The survey identified high levels of interest in local classes. Main barriers for people attending classes elsewhere are lack of childcare and costs. If classes were held in Slaley people said they were interested in many things from learning a language to sports coaching.

Section Five. Conclusions. Main Messages and Issues

The final section draws conclusions and organises the issues arising from the report under seven main messages. These are intended to help focus the community's attention on the next steps.

The main messages are:

- Message 1 Slaley is special but can't stand still
- Message 2 We value the services and facilities we have but need more
- Message 3 There is a need to improve the opportunities for young people and families to live and work here
- Message 4 We want to protect & improve the environment we live in
- Message 5 We want to maintain and strengthen our community and local economy
- Message 6 Improving communications and how we come together
- Message 7 Protecting the wider environment around us.



Introduction

We report here on the main findings from a questionnaire survey sent to all 259 Slaley households and findings from eleven focus discussions held with 131 Slaley people. The report gives important insights into life in and around Slaley. It tells us the really great things that we value, love and want to cherish and highlights problems and issues that we need to deal with and find solutions for.

The survey and focus discussions were done between December 2002 and April 2003. There was a very high survey response rate of 89% and the focus discussions were also well attended. Since there was such a high response rate and a high level of participation in the focus discussions we can be confident that the findings in the report give a fair reflection of people's views and experiences.

The survey and the focus group work were part of a process to help develop a Parish Plan for Slaley. Having a Parish Plan will make it easier to express the community's views and focus attention on key issues that are important to the community. Parish Plans can help inform the Parish Council, Tynedale District Council and the County Council on what should be in local, district and County Community Plans and local structure plans.

Next steps

The next steps in the process are to:

- Produce and circulate a short version of the report in the form of an issues paper for Slaley
- Produce copies of the full report and store them in Portable Document Format (PDF) on CD's which can be

read on most computers including community computers kept in the Commemoration Hall

- Consult on the issues paper with the community and identify the actions the community wants to see pursued in a future Parish Plan. Agree the Plan for the future
- Present the final Parish Plan to the community, the Parish, District and County Councils, the Countryside Agency and other appropriate organisations.

We aim to have the above tasks completed by the autumn of this year. Finally, we hope that the Parish Council will support a proposal to reconvene the Parish Plan group in three years time to update the Parish Plan.

Structure of the report

The report has five sections. There is also a methodology appendix.

Section One describes the background to the report including the reasons why it was decided to develop a Parish Plan, who has been involved and, the research and other work done so far to produce this report in order to inform a Plan.

Section Two looks at who we are and where we live. It first gives facts and figures on Slaley's households showing their composition and length of residence here and some basic characteristics including age, types of employment and how people describe their occupation or economic status. Next, the section describes the neighbourhoods we live in. It identifies key problems where we live and considers what people said about services and local facilities including needs for play areas, leisure activities and facilities, sports and childcare.

Section Three looks at the wider environment and presents views on the aspects we value and enjoy and considers how we use and regard the wider environment and local heritage. The section also considers problems that affect the wider environment, the countryside, rights of way and roads and their upkeep.

Section Four turns to our community and local economy. It presents information on a range of services, needs and opportunities to develop and sustain our community and local economy. Aspects cover voluntary activity, communicating with each other and knowledge of our Parish Council. Also the need for low cost housing for young adults and families, accommodation and services to enable frail older and disabled people to continue to live in Slaley and interest in having local classes for hobbies, education, and leisure. The capacity of the community to volunteer and provide teaching or help to provide services and classes is also considered. Finally the section considers views on improving local facilities and the role of business and tourism in sustaining our local economy.

Section Five draws conclusions, summarises the main messages and draws together key issues and questions for the community to consider as part of the next steps to decide on what should be in the Parish Plan.

Section One Background and Basic Facts



Slaley Millennium Cross

Background

The Parish Area

Slaley Parish Council area covers 4¹/₂ square miles. The Parish includes Slaley village and settlements such as, Colpitts, homes on the Woolley Road, Slaley Hall and Ladycross as well as small hamlets and farms.

Decision to develop a Parish Plan

The decision to develop a Parish Plan was stimulated by the closure of Slaley First School's grounds outside school hours to local children. In the past local children used the school playing field as their playground, football pitch and so on. Feelings ran very high about the closure. A public meeting was called by the Parish Council to hear everyone's views and to consider constructive ways forward. At the meeting it became clear that there was not an easy way to resolve matters. School Governors had been advised by the County Council to close the grounds.

A second public meeting was arranged to see how matters could best be resolved. A County Council speaker who came to address the second meeting referred to the opportunities that Slaley could take advantage of to draw in funds and resources that might help to provide extra facilities, for example, European funds. The best way to access such funds was to produce a village appraisal or Plan setting out the needs of people in the Parish area. Several villages in Northumberland had done this and the County Council was keen to encourage other villages to do the same.

Funding was available from the Countryside Agency Vital Villages Programme, which would help cover the costs. Everyone at the meeting including children and young people were given the opportunity to say what they thought was good about Slaley and what they thought were the main problems. Key problems were lack of safe play areas, lack of recreation and other facilities,

problems caused by speeding traffic, litter and dog fouling. At the end of the meeting it was decided to form a Parish Plan group and to apply for funds to develop a Parish Plan for Slaley.

A few volunteers led by Linda Norris, Chair of the Parish Council, formed a Steering Group for the Parish Plan (later called the Parish Plan group) and made an application. The application had to be supported by the Parish Council and the Steering Group had to estimate how much volunteer time and resources they would each give to match the funds they were asking for. The funding application was successful and the funds were passed to the Parish Council for the Parish Plan group by the Countryside Agency at the end of September 2002. The Parish Plan group has met ever since and will continue to meet until the autumn of 2003. The Parish Plan group reports regularly to the Parish Council on its progress.

What was done and why

It was decided to follow the approach taken by Bywell to develop their Parish Plan. Their approach was very participative and involved focus discussions and a survey as well as several opportunities for everyone in the community to comment on the plan as it developed. A topic guide was developed that would be used in all the Slaley focus discussions. A survey questionnaire was designed that would cover most of the same issues that were in the Bywell Plan but which also included issues that were important for Slaley. It was also decided to go a bit further than the Bywell approach and to include more focus discussions.

Focus groups

Eleven focus groups were subsequently held in Slaley. The focus group discussions were all organised, led and written up by members of the Parish Plan group. The focus groups were a way to capture a cross-section of interests and groups in the local community. The groups were:

- Children of Middle School age
- Church and Chapel users and people connected/interested in them
- Commemoration Hall Committee and Parish Council representatives

- Farmers, heritage, Slaley Hall management, Forestry and rural interests
- First School parents
- Mothers and toddlers
- Older people
- Slaley Show Committee members
- Small businesses
- Young people (over middle school age)
- WI members

Survey Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire was delivered to and collected from all 259 households in the Parish.

Of the 259 households in Slaley Parish Council area 232 or just over 89% replied to the survey questionnaire. The survey replies covered a population of 585 people. If everyone had responded our guesstimate is that this would have involved around 640 people. Thus over 90% of the population were represented.

Overall the response and participation rates (in focus groups) are extremely high.

The analysis work

The questionnaires were opened and computer analysed by a contractor in Hexham employed for the purpose. The focus group reports were collated (and analysed) by Moyra Riseborough. Moyra brought all the information together and wrote drafts of the report with the Group. (For more information on the methodology used in Slaley see the appendix.)

Section Two

About Us: Survey and Focus Group Responses

Identity: an Overview

People tend to identify themselves according to where they live and how long they have lived in Slaley. Taking location first, it was found that people expressed different views on most subjects depending on where they lived in the Parish. For example, people tended to have strong views about speeding and traffic problems if they lived in the village or just outside it but tended to have very little to say about it when living much further away from the village.

People living nearer the boundaries of Slaley, particularly people who were not born here, tended to identify less strongly with Slaley. A few people said they didn't live in Slaley at all although the map and their postcode indicated they are within Slaley parish boundary

Farming families and people who had lived here for fifty years or more 'born and bred here' as one person said, felt this was an intrinsically important part of their identity. People who identified themselves this way tended to have a distinct set of values. These values included a sense of tradition, being part of the landscape, the seasons and the community. Several people said they felt their values were being gradually eroded. There was a genuine sadness amongst some people that the community had changed and there were fears that Slaley could lose all its traditional rural industries, farming and sense of place. A great deal had already gone over a relatively short period.

Households in Slaley

Your Household

Table 2.1 Households and ages

A1 - How many people of the following age groups are in your household

	Nos.	Percentage
Under 5	26	4%
5 to 16	86	15%
17 to 25	44	8%
26 to 45	120	21%
46 to 64	214	37%
65 to 80	74	13%
Over 80	21	4%
Total no. of people	585	100%

Slaley's population bulges in the middle. We have more people aged between 46 to 64 years old than any other age group. We also have a 'healthy' number of children aged up to 16 years old but, the population of young people aged between 17 and 25 years old is relatively, roughly half of the number aged between 5 and 16 years. This is partly explained by the fact that our young people tend to leave to attend University and college away from the local area and most don't return to live here, or at least not until they are older.

There are altogether fewer 'older' people, that is people aged over 65 years old, than middle age people. Nationally the proportion of older people to younger people is increasing to such an extent that the older population now outstrips the number of children being born for the first time. In Slaley we can see that the national trend will affect us. Assuming that most people who are now middle aged will remain in Slaley we can expect that there will be a larger older population in ten years time than we have now.

Length of residence and continuity

Table 2.2 shows that the vast majority of people are 'incomers' to Slaley. Only 35% of people over 16 years have lived here for 21 years or more and most people have lived here for less than 10 years.

However, when we come to look at the life in the village and local events later on it can be seen that people are very well settled. There is a deeply held interest in maintaining traditions and community life. It should also be said that some people are resettling in the area after a period away and a few of these originally came from Slaley or close by.

Table 2.2 Length of residence in Slaley

A2 - How long have each of the people in your household, over 16 years lived in Slaley

Years	Person 1		Person 2		Person 3		Person 4		Person 5	
	Nos.	%tage	Nos.	%tage	Nos.	%tage	Nos.	%tage	Nos.	%tage
Less than 2	24	4.10%	23	3.93%	14	2.39%	4	0.68%	2	0.34%
2 to 10	70	11.97%	66	11.28%	12	2.05%	6	1.03%	0	0.00%
11 to 20	41	7.01%	32	5.47%	12	2.05%	4	0.68%	0	0.00%
21 to 30	33	5.64%	28	4.79%	7	1.20%	1	0.17%	0	0.00%
31 to 40	14	2.39%	15	2.56%	4	0.68%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
41 to 50	10	1.71%	8	1.37%	1	0.17%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
50+	30	5.13%	10	1.71%	2	0.34%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

In some focus discussions there was discussion about the unease traditional and farming families felt about a perceived displacement of traditional ways of life and values caused by more people moving to Slaley from outside.

The flip side to this is that the benefits of having new blood were also discussed. The benefits included economic diversity, new ideas & fresh energy. New blood has been essential to ensure we sustain & improve the facilities required so we can have a vibrant rural community and, in many cases, keeps some traditional events going.

All the same, there were genuine worries that Slaley will become a 'dormitory' or 'satellite' village unless some actions are taken. We look at these worries in more detail later on in the report.

Economic status and characteristics

The chart below describes what most people say their economic status is. Slaley has very little unemployment and there are a relatively high number of people who are self-employed. This is in keeping with modern self-employment trends although it also reflects self-employment in farming and traditional rural industries. Opportunities for employment are heavily dependent on car ownership or access to private transport. Lack of private transport

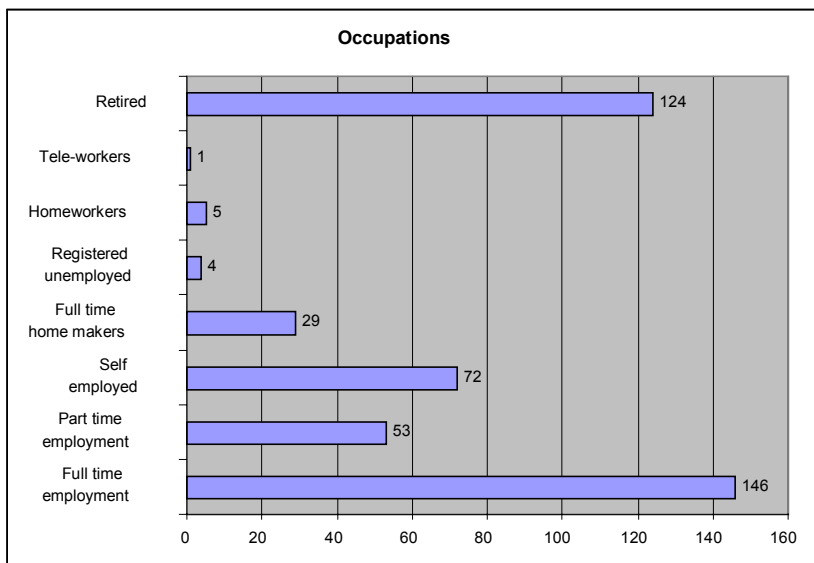
and childcare can seriously undermine people's employment prospects. For example, a young man attending one of the focus discussions explained:

'Some things are just out of the question if you don't have a car and not everyone can afford one'

In addition (and perhaps as well as being in paid work) 39 adults are doing part time further education courses and 4 are studying full time. Several people also commented that they are also full time carers.

Table 2.3 shows the number of people in each occupation for all residents over 16 years old.

Table 2.3 Occupations – People over 16 years old



Business and employment

A surprising number of people are self-employed and/or have small businesses. A focus group held for people in these categories was the first time most people had ever got together as a group of business people. There was a sense that people had information to





share, ideas to pass on and possibly things to trade. Several comments were made in the group that referred to the potential to develop more small businesses and make more contributions to the local economy. A few people said it was quite difficult to recruit staff, particularly seasonal staff.

It was agreed that there were marketing opportunities locally that were not being exploited as fully as they could be. Some people said it would be a good idea to simply list all of the businesses in Slaley and put them in a local directory or on a website if possible.

Where we live and the neighbourhoods we live in

Tenure

In common with almost everywhere else in the country the vast majority of people responding to the survey were owner-occupiers, 86%. 13% responses were from households renting their homes and 1.3% was in tied housing.



Things we value

Focus discussions and the results of the questionnaires found that we all tend to value some key things. They are:



- The beauty of the countryside around us
- Our neighbours and friends
- The facilities, the school and the places of worship we have

- Margaret and Roy at the Post Office and shop
- The peace and clean air
- The sense of being out of the hustle and bustle but within easy reach of Hexham, Corbridge, Newcastle and Consett
- The bus service, particularly teenagers and older people
- Slaley Show and the community celebrations we all enjoy
- Having a safe, clean and pleasant place to live (in general)
- The sense of continuity, family connections, being part of the heritage and landscape.

However, there are also problems that affect us.

Problems affecting us in the neighbourhoods we live in

The three top problems identified in the survey that affect households' immediate neighbourhoods are:

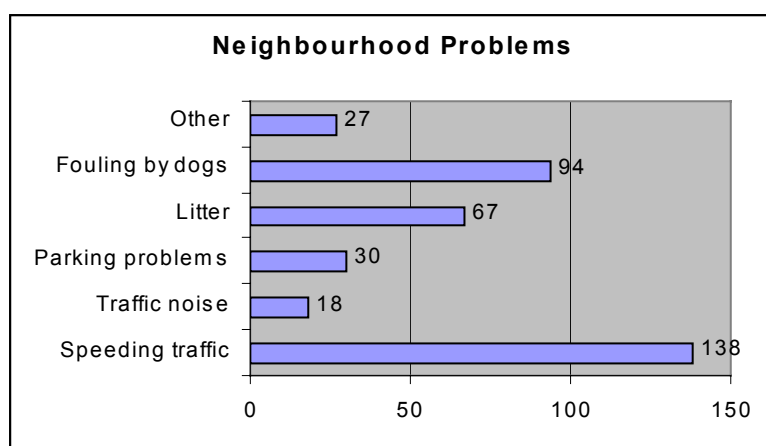
- Speeding
- Dog fouling
- Litter

These problems affect households in and on the approach to the village from any direction more than households anywhere else in the Parish area. In addition key problems affecting local children are:

In addition key problems affecting local children are:

- Lack of safe crossing areas and
- Dangers caused by parked cars and having to cross roads and get around double parked cars to get on school buses.

Table 2.4 Main Problems in Your Neighbourhood



Problem places for speeding

The focus discussions told us why these problems are experienced in some locations but not others. In the Colpitts neighbourhood, for example, speeding traffic is not a problem although people from Colpitts refer to traffic problems elsewhere in the Parish. People also referred to problems caused by heavy traffic going too fast on the Lead Road and the Riding Mill Road. People living at Slaley Hall have no particular problems with traffic in the immediate area where they live but are affected by cars and lorries speeding past the entrance to Slaley Hall.

One lady living on the road leading up to Slaley Hall said:

'It is difficult sometimes to even cross the road or walk safely on the verge where it is very narrow'

Other traffic and speeding black spots identified in focus groups were:

The B6306 Lead Road crossroads at Well View

The road and bridge at Flothers Farm

Blackburn Dean

Shield Hall corner by Lawn House on the Slaley to Hexham road.

Running in parallel with the survey there was a speed check and traffic assessment organised in partnership with the local police. The results of the speed check are shown below.

Results show that approximately one in three cars were exceeding the 30 mph maximum speed limit through the village). Unfortunately although most people slow down when they enter

the village, people tend to speed on the approach and the absence of footpaths and safe crossings means that pedestrians are often taking their lives in their hands.

Table 2.5 Results of speed check

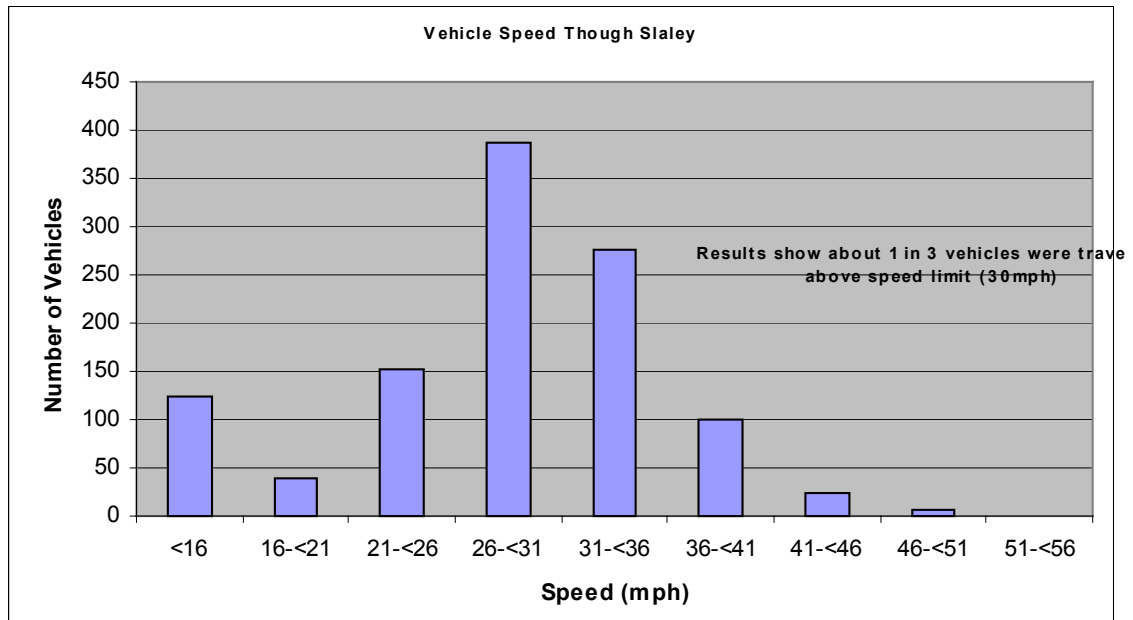


Table 2.6 Vehicle speeds through village by time of day

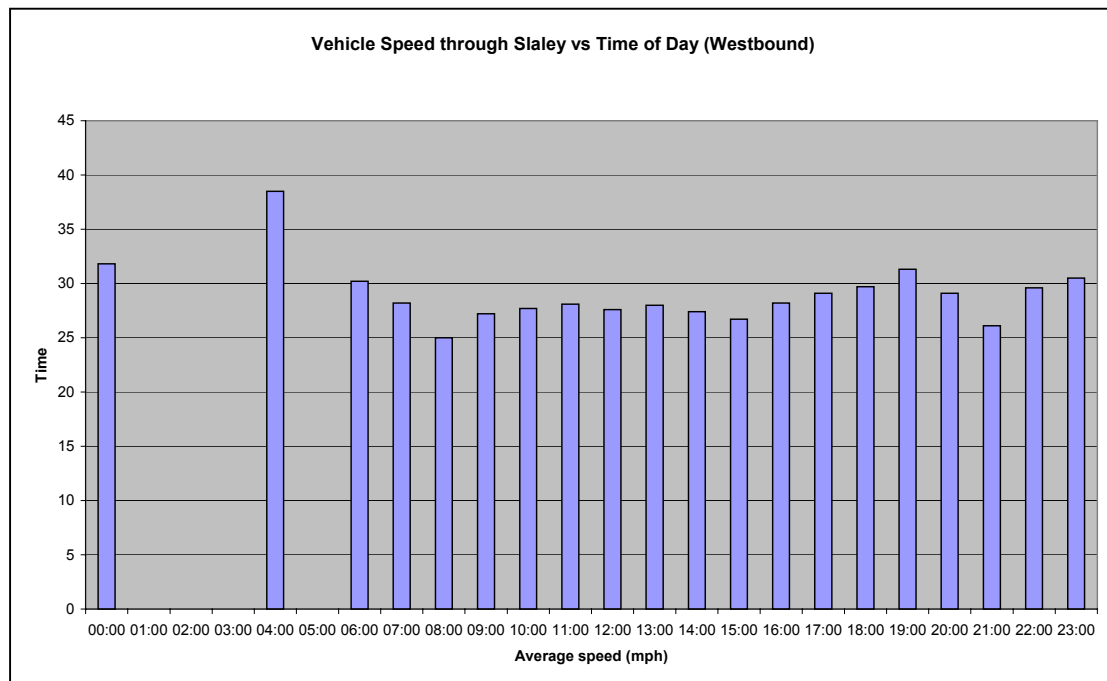


Table 2.6 shows that there are peak times when cars speed.

Where people experience litter and other problems

Dog fouling and litter are predominantly mentioned by households living in and around or near the village and are not referred to as key problems by households in other locations. (Later on we look at litter, dumping and speeding traffic in the context of forest areas and beauty spots.) People mentioned a gradual increase in the amount of litter particularly at weekends and during the summer and after events at the Commemoration Hall (presumably because these are times or occasions when more visitors come to Slaley). 'Fly tipping' and deliberate litter dumping was also mentioned in focus discussions. One resident was outraged and spoke for many when he said:

'I have seen people opening their car windows and dumping the family's rubbish out of the car onto our verges'

A young person also said:

'People should take their litter home but maybe if we had more litter bins and places people could put it, it wouldn't be such a problem'

The focus discussions told us that dog fouling makes people very hot under the collar. Several people who came to focus discussions commented that the problem is made worse by visitors who don't clear up after their dogs. However, there are occasions when the culprits are locals. One person put it this way:

'We all know who it is but we can't do anything about it'.

Compared to the top three problems, problems such as, parking, traffic noise and 'other' were mentioned by fewer households. Comments on the questionnaires gave a little more information. For example, several respondents referred to the fact that a lack of parking led visitors and walkers coming to the area to park outside or near people's homes particularly opposite South Park Road end. Parking and traffic noise near the school were mentioned while some Park Side residents were also unhappy that their cul-de-sac was used by parents driving their children to and from the school to turn their vehicles. A few residents were annoyed that heavy goods vehicle drivers who were not local, tended to park

their cars and other vehicles outside Housing Company houses rather than somewhere else in the village.

People living near and around Slaley Hall raised other problems. They included concerns about Slaley Hall's approach to managing the environment around the Hall. For example, the impact that tree felling was having on wildlife habitats.



The Church of England Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin has some specific problems that need to be tackled. The Church has some of the oldest gravestones in the County and is a beautiful building that is attractive to visitors and locals. The wild flower garden project in the Church

grounds is also an attraction. However, there are safety concerns since some of the gravestones are in danger of toppling over. There is a need to conduct a safety survey and to log the condition of the graveyard so problems can be dealt with.

Many people also mentioned problems associated with the wider environment rather than the neighbourhood they lived in. They are discussed later in section four.

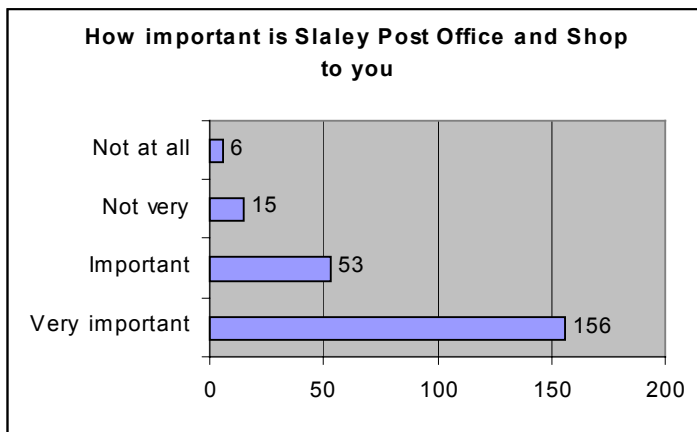
What people think of local services and facilities?

An overview

A number of questions were asked in the survey to assess views on and satisfaction with local services and facilities.

Top marks were given almost unanimously in every focus discussion to the Post Office and shop.

Table 2.7 Views on the importance of the post office & shop



Great value was also placed on having two churches in the village and a third within easy reach at Ministeracres. Focus group discussions noted a sadness that village church attendance is dropping off particularly amongst younger people. Local churches and their congregations offer other services to the local community including spiritual support at times of crises and social support. The integration of our churches and clergy into the community was mentioned frequently as something we should celebrate and make more of.

People attending the village church and chapel focus group said they would like to have even closer connections with people in the community and to play a role in supporting everyone. There is a need to build up connections with younger people to ensure that our churches can have a strong role in the community.

Most people were delighted there are two pubs, the Rose and Crown and the Travellers Rest. Parents in particular value the Travellers Rest because it has a very good play area. Food at both pubs was also praised.

People favoured and supported the Commemoration Hall even if they didn't always visit or use it regularly while the First School was referred to as truly important because it brought young life to the village and made it a real living place.

The survey responses largely reflect similar views.

Table 2.8 How people value village churches and facilities

	Very important	Important	Not very important	No importance
St Mary's Parish Church	52	85	55	31
The Methodist Chapel	31	63	52	66
The Rose & Crown pub	36	77	70	30
Travellers pub	42	77	63	31
Commemoration Hall	90	91	32	15

The bus service

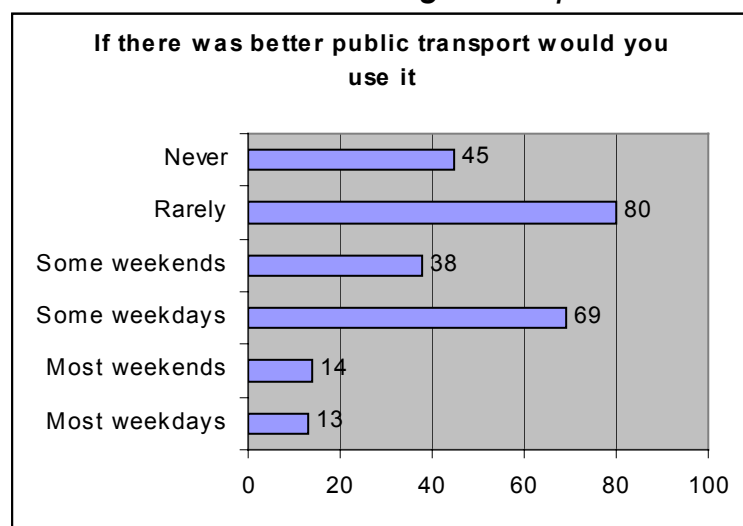
The bus service is strongly supported by people who use it and they want to see it continue. The survey asked households to rate the importance of the bus to people in their home. The responses indicate that younger and older people most value the bus service.

Table 2.9 How people rate the bus service

	Very important	Important	Not very	Not at all
5 - 25 years	28	25	11	20
Over 65 years	15	21	13	17

There is interest amongst all age groups in extending the hours and times the bus service operates if possible.

Table 2.10 Views on using better public transport



Play facilities

The need for better and more play facilities for children and young people was mentioned in a number of focus groups particularly by

children, young people and their parents and grand parents. However, some focus groups were surprisingly anti-play.

There is no doubt regardless of people's opinions that there is a lack of safe and suitable places for children and young people to play in the village. It is not an issue for children living around the Colpitts area and has less affect on children who have access to farmland or large gardens where they can invite a few friends to play. It does affect all young people and older children who would like to get together with a few friends to play a team game of football or volleyball. There simply is no public space large enough that can be used in Slaley.

Young children

In the village there are some facilities such as a specially built adventure play area for young children at the First School and the school field but these facilities are currently unavailable to young children and their parents or to young people who do not need to be supervised by adults, outside school hours. There is also the adventure play area at the Travellers Rest pub. This is greatly valued by local people but it is approximately one mile out of the village, is difficult to reach safely on foot and is intended for pub patrons.

Older children and young people

There is a great difference between the interests and concerns of very young children and their parents and, older children or young people who do not need to be supervised by adults to keep them safe when playing.

Leisure and sports facilities

Slaley has hardly any village leisure and sports facilities. The Commemoration Hall is used for badminton; some keep fit sessions and carpet bowls. However, it is not big enough to hold sports and leisure activities requiring a pitch or large court and cannot accommodate many games and the equipment required.

When asked if there were enough opportunities (rather than facilities) to participate in sports or activities 100 people said yes, 57 said no and 40 were undecided. Obviously opinions on the

extent of opportunity depend on the sport or activity in question and some sports or activities are easier to access to than others.

By any standards interest in sports and leisure and outdoor pursuits is high in Slaley. Table 2.11 shows how many households already participate in different sports or activities in Slaley and how many more would like to if they were provided here. Table 2.12 asks about participation in a range of other outdoor pursuits.

Table 2.11 Participation in sports and activities

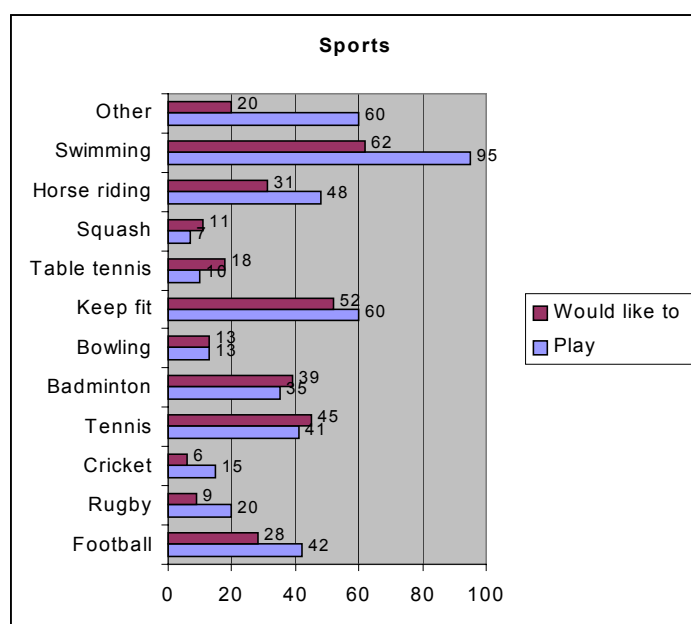
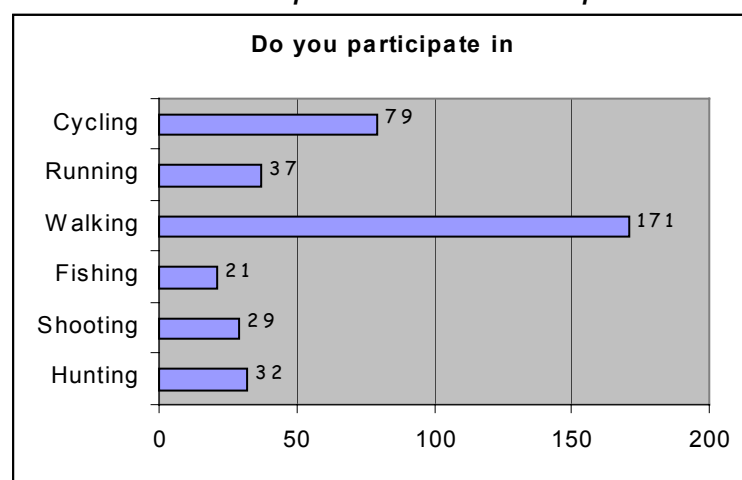


Table 2.12 Participation in outdoor pursuits



Other services and facilities

A number of other services and needs for services were mentioned.

- *Child care*

A key issue raised in the focus group involving mothers and toddlers was the lack of child care in Slaley including lack of pre-school care and nursery facilities, lack of organised child care during holidays, after school and before school in the mornings.

- *Activities for children and young people in the evenings and holidays*

Children of all ages and young people up to 16 years old said they would like some organised activities in the evenings and school holidays based in Slaley. Parents also echoed these views. One young person spoke for many when she said:

There's nothing to do - there's nowhere to meet to see your friends after school

Section seven of the report looks at the suggestions that were made in more detail. They included a play scheme or holiday club for young children, a junior youth club for middle school age children and a senior youth club for young people to go to meet friends and have a game of pool in the company of a responsible youth worker.

- *Not enough facilities for visitors*

In focus group discussions people of all ages commented on the lack of a public toilet in Slaley. Many people said visitors had asked them where the public toilet was and where the tearoom or shop was (particularly when the pub and post office in the village were closed). Some local people said it would be a good idea to have a public toilet and other facilities such as a tearoom.

Some people wanted to encourage visitors and help stimulate local businesses but others wanted to keep the locality to themselves so a tearoom was not something everyone supported. However, the survey showed that on balance the majority want to encourage local businesses and visitors to the area. We return to these matters later on in the report.

- *Recycling, post-boxes and telephone boxes*

The focus discussions highlighted the fact that some people did not know there were paper-recycling facilities at the First School. Others did not know about traders who regularly call such as the fishmonger. In the survey households were asked if there were enough of a range of services.

Table 2.13 shows that the things most people would like to see in Slaley are more recycling facilities including a bottle bank. Comments on the need for more recycling facilities were as follows:

- Paper (16 people) & plastic (5 people)
- Cans (12 people)
- Clothes (3 people), books

Six people commented that the paper recycling facility at the First School was unsuitable and inaccessible out of school hours because the gates are locked.

Responses from people saying there was a need for more post boxes and telephone boxes came largely from households on or near the Woolley and Riding Mill roads.

As can be seen, 31 households are covered by a Neighbourhood Watch scheme (including Farm Watch) but most households are not. Focus discussions suggested that in the past there were more neighbourhood watch schemes but they seem to have fallen into disuse.

Table 2.13 Views on services and recycling

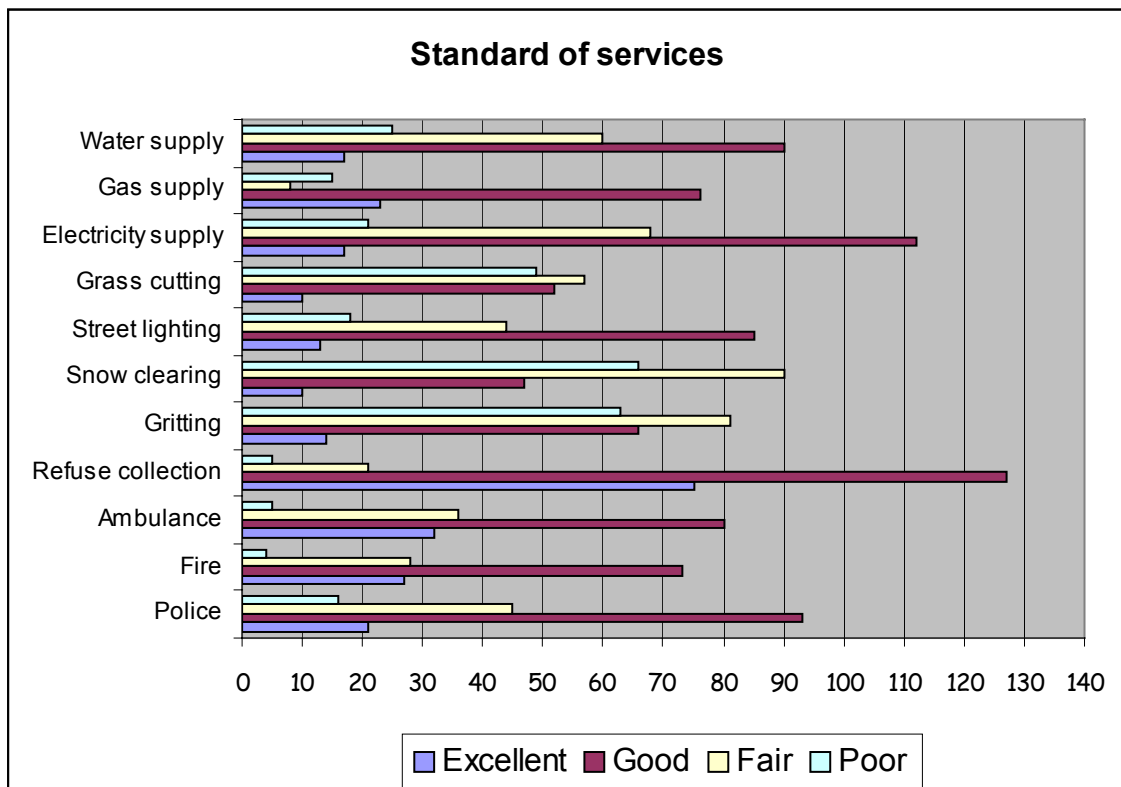
	Yes	No	Not sure
Would you like a bottle bank	124	65	33
Would you like other recycling	75	2	0
Are you covered by Neighbourhood Watch	31	147	47
Would you be will to help start Neighbourhood Watch	32	105	64
Are there enough Post boxes	167	42	19
Are there enough Telephone boxes	153	25	41

Satisfaction with services

In general the responses show that most services are rated either highly or quite good. However, some services get a poor rating including snow clearing in selected areas, for example, the Woolley Road. The electricity supply has been a thorn in the side of the local community for a number of years. Although power interruptions are less common now compared to in 2002, 01 and 00 people are understandably cagey about speaking out too favourably too soon. (It probably is a thing of the past since NEDL upgraded the supply cable to the village in Autumn 2002.)

Generally people were very happy with services such as grass cutting and taking care of verges in the village, people said verges elsewhere were not always cared for e.g. on some roads. However, there was less satisfaction with maintaining and looking after things that had been done, for example, the snowdrops that had been planted at each end of the village.

Table 2.14 Satisfaction with a range of services



The Perfect Place to Live?

When we asked people to identify the ingredients that made a place perfect this is what they said:

It is perfect for me

It's nearly perfect here

We have all the ingredients really

A focal point is all we miss.

The missing ingredient for people living in the village and for people, who come into the village regularly, was a lack of a village centre or focal point. Here geography has had a role to play. Since Slaley is a linear village it doesn't have a natural square or village green that the village has grown around. All of the places above are important but there is no single centre. The nearest that could be found was the post office – it's a location almost all of us visit at some point or another. However, there is nowhere for people to congregate or sit and have a chat naturally outside or around the post office.

A slightly different slant was given to having a focal point in one focus discussion. It was suggested that what was needed was a focal person to champion Slaley or be seen as the official leader – a 'village Mayor'.

In several focus discussions it was suggested that showed wasn't making enough of opportunities to sell local produce, promote local industries and crafts and doing enough to encourage and promote the local economy and, make visitors welcome.

Finally the focus discussions and comments received in the survey show that people of all ages by and large get on well together, respect each other and live alongside each other harmoniously. There were some hints of divisions and instances of intolerance between older people and younger people. Some older people complained about young people playing games or kicking footballs while some younger people seemed to dismiss the views of older people. Although comments were made by relatively few people the fact that they were made is something that should concern us.

Section Three The Wider Environment Around Us



Almost everyone in the community had highly positive things to say about living in such a beautiful area. However, there is a widespread concern that the beauty we have is sometimes threatened by careless and thoughtless behaviour including dumping litter, dog fouling at beauty spots and forest entrances, other rubbish and speeding.

How we use and regard the wider environment

An overview

Some people who attended focus discussions knew of and regularly used forest walks and some footpaths and well-known walks. Those people who were walking enthusiasts had better knowledge of all local walks and had particularly pointed things to say about the state of some footpaths, the need for better signposting and the need to do something about emerging trouble spots such as, the growth of fly tipping at the entrance to some of the forest walks.

Footpaths and rights of way

The survey responses show that 39% think footpaths and rights of way are well maintained and signposted. On the other hand, many people are not sure. 28% think they are not well maintained or signposted.

Table 3.1 Views on maintenance of footpaths

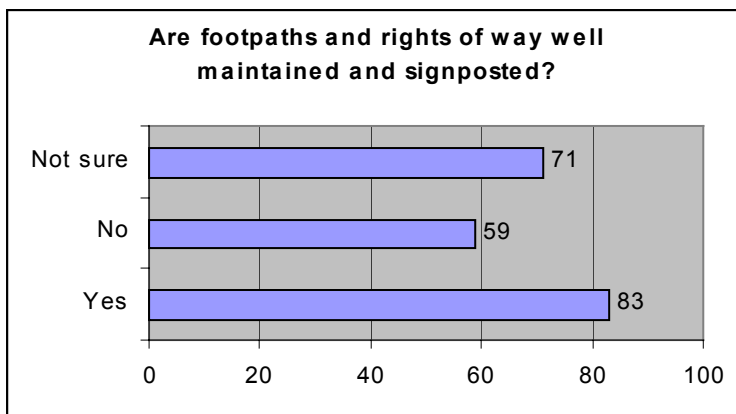
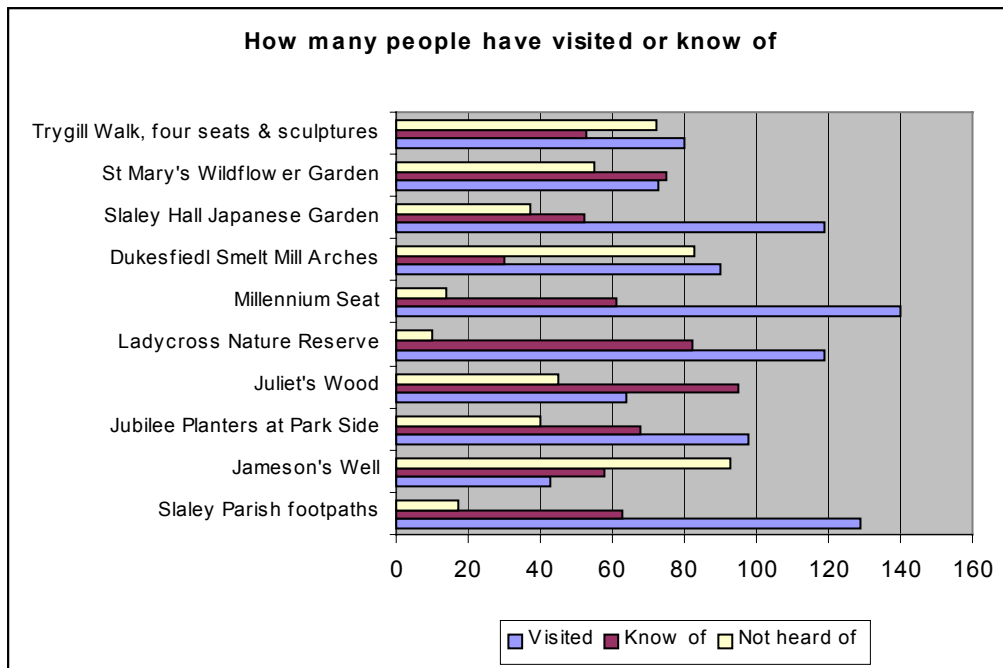


Table 3.2 Knowledge of and familiarity with local places of interest



176 people said they would like to see more signs that told them how to get to places of interest (see table 3.2). As a result, therefore, it seems that although the survey doesn't tell us anything conclusive about the state of maintenance of footpaths and rights of way the fact is that most people don't know where they are and could do with better signage.

Slaley Hall

Opinion is divided on the merits of Slaley Hall. Focus group discussions reflected very different views. Some valued the good golf and facilities. Some of us enjoy the firework displays and the sense that we might meet someone famous because of Slaley Hall. One person said

It's put Slaley on the map

It is generally agreed that Slaley Hall brings business to the local area but the survey indicated that some people think it brings more problems than benefits to people living here. Eight out of the eleven focus group discussions had some negative comments and criticisms. The problems mentioned most regularly in focus discussions and the survey were:

- Adverse impacts on the local environment such as

Light pollution

Noise

Traffic

- Speeding traffic near to and caused by people leaving or going to Slaley Hall (particularly through the village)
- Excessive and too frequent firework displays.

There is also great distrust over possible future housing development at Slaley Hall largely because existing development has turned out to be different to that anticipated by local people.

Forest problems

Various problems were mentioned although it is unclear if these have been taken up with Forestry Enterprise or landowners abutting Forest areas. The main problems were:

- Disturbances caused by husky sled racing in the forest
- Unexpected dangers from unauthorised off road vehicles including motorbikes using forest trail and off road tracks
- Tipping rubbish near and in forest entrances (including a fridge on one occasion)
- Dog fouling near entrances to forests
- Litter in Forest areas
- Problems caused by visitors whose dogs are not on leads.

Looking after the countryside and the environment

These subjects were looked at in most depth in a focus group that included farmers, people involved in rural industries and crafts, people with an interest in local heritage and people involved in managing Slaley Hall and, people representing Forest Enterprise. It was generally agreed in this group that dog fouling was a problem everywhere. Forestry Enterprise has had serious problems at the forest entrance areas and is considering prosecution for fly tipping.

It was agreed by the farming and forestry people who participated in this group (and also by people in the small business group) that it was necessary to have a good balance between looking after the countryside and making sure it was accessible and could be

'worked' by landowners. For example, Ladycross is a working quarry and has to be open for quarrying first. Similarly the forest areas are working forests and tree felling is a regular occurrence.

It was suggested that there was a level of ignorance about matters such as rights of way, how to behave when walking through footpaths and a general lack of knowledge of the country code.

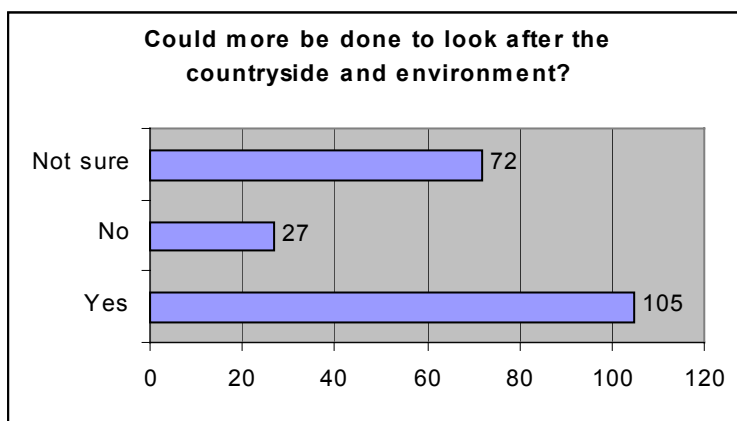
We should also say that many children and adults commented that although we live in a beautiful place we are often not allowed to walk through it or, we are unsure if we are allowed to. One young person spoke for many when she said:

We have all this open land and countryside and there is nowhere for us to play

Looking after the countryside

A survey question aimed to gauge opinion on the need to do more to look after the countryside and the environment.

Table 3.3 Could more be done to look after the countryside?

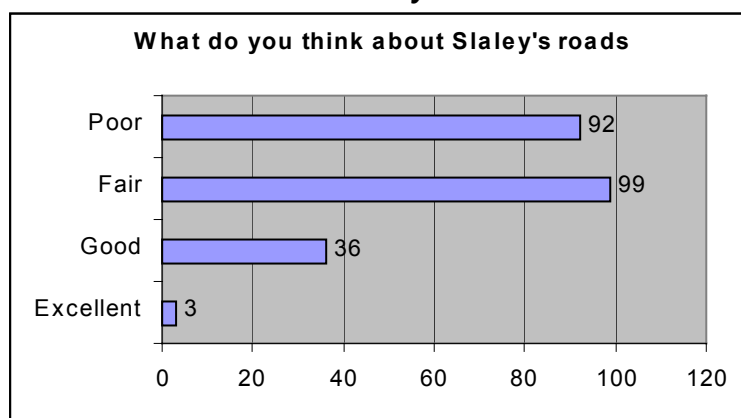


The responses shown in table 3.3 suggest that while the majority think the answer is yes substantial numbers of people are unsure. Taken together with comments in the focus discussions, which suggest that people are concerned and want to discuss possible solutions it seems that a community discussion on this topic would be helpful.

Local roads

The survey found that Slaley's Roads are generally judged to be in a fair to poor condition. However, comments from a sizeable minority of people who think otherwise indicate that there are specific spots where roads need attention.

Table 3.4 Views on Slaley's roads



Specific roads in need of attention

- Wooley Road – pot holes and no sign posts
- Cornesfield Road to Fell Cottages
- Village to and including Glen Road and the crossroads
- Dukesfield Road
- B6306 (Slaley to Minsteracres especially).
- A68 from Durham border – north, white lines and 'cat's eyes' are hardly visible. Also road from Barley Hill to A68 deep ruts both sides and no white lines.
- Slaley – Hexham
- Kellers Road to Consett
- Access to High Clere complex
- Slaley to Blanchland road, has potholes on sides of road from Village
- Slaley to Riding Mill
- Slaley to Hexham at Z-bend near Linnels Wood. Water running across road froze during winter and caused an accident. Drainage needs to be improved
- Ladycross Bank, problems with drainage, edges

Slaley: A Great Place to Live. Our Future in Our Hands

- Road from Rye Hill
- Whole of Village street
- Road from the Glen to Scales Cross
- Access road at the southern perimeter of Slaley Hall
- Espershields Road
- Old Lead Road, very pitted and pot holed.

Focus groups also identified problems such as, collapsing verges, poor drainage and inadequate markings.

Section Four Sustaining Our Community & Economy

An Overview

The Slaley community is made up, as we have seen, of several different neighbourhoods, age groups and identities. Interests, hobbies, friendships and families as well as religious worship and children bring us together in different groupings. Community events, voluntary work and different committee and church roles also bring us together. Key community events in our annual calendar where more of us may be together at one time in one place including Slaley Show, Christmas Carol singing around the village, the First School Fete and the Christmas Fair at the Commemoration Hall. There are, therefore, many opportunities when people can get together although as we all know some people might want to join in and cannot for various reasons. The survey explored various dimensions of what it means to live in a community and asked some key questions about those things that may help us to maintain a good community and a vibrant economy.

Our community

Voluntary work

A lot of voluntary activity goes on in Slaley ranging from grocery deliveries (from the Post Office and shop) and the medicine run organised by a rota of volunteers to help people who have difficulty getting essential prescriptions to, the volunteer committee running the Commemoration Hall. To this we must add the legion of people who give their services as volunteers to run the First School football club, the Computer facility at the Commemoration Hall, the First School Governors, the mother and toddler group, Slaley Show, the Church and Chapel, the Women's Institute and so on. Finally, there are many small regular acts of kindness and neighbourliness that make Slaley a pleasant place to live, for example, keeping an eye on a housebound neighbour.

The responses to the survey showed that people in 72 households do voluntary work while 150 do not. 12 people who don't do voluntary work at the moment would like to do some volunteering. A further 44 might want to but they are unsure.

Table 4.1 Interest in voluntary work

	Yes	No	Not sure
Does anyone do voluntary work	72	151	0
Would anyone be interested in doing voluntary work	12	85	44

A number of suggestions and offers were made by people willing to give their services to the community. These are looked at slightly later on under supporting older and disabled people to stay in the community and, education and leisure classes.

Keeping in touch

How do we communicate what's going on locally?

Various focus group discussions noted that communication about events, problems or activities was not straightforward. For example, some people said they never knew what was going on or where to look. Other people said that was easy – you asked at the Post Office! More seriously it was acknowledged that it was quite hard to keep up to date with issues or social events that were happening in the local community unless people were directly involved in them. The survey tried to tackle this matter by asking households if people in their homes regularly used one of several methods of communication. Table 4.2 shows the results. As can be seen, the Hexham Courant and the Post Office are the top communication routes.

Table 4.2 Methods used to communicate/get informed

Method	Nos.
(Church) Parish newsletter	158
Slaley Notes (in Courant)	189
Notice board outside Church	75
Notice board in Park Side	23
Notices in Post Office window	159

Several focus discussions noted that we have rather too many notice boards and this seems to have created some confusion about where people should look when they want to know what is going on. At least one person said 'we should rationalise them' while another suggested that we only needed one.

- *New technology and communication*

Slaley had a great success recently with the opening of a new computer and Internet facility at the Commemoration Hall. This has provided new options for the community. In addition many individuals and local businesses have home computers and Internet access. To get an idea of how many households could be communicated with through the Internet the survey asked who had Internet access. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 4.3 IT interest in community website

	Yes	No	Not sure
Computer with Internet access	143	83	1
Would you use community website	66	97	57
Would you use IT facilities in Commemoration Hall	42	131	52

The survey questionnaire asked people to give comments and suggestions on ways to improve local communication. The suggestions were:

- Phone mast to be able to get a signal for mobile phones
- A better organised and up to date centrally located notice board rather than having several as we do now scattered about.
- A newsletter that is more widely circulated including on-line
- A website for young people or their own message/notice board so they can have a voice of their own
- Broadband access
- A map of the parish showing local facilities, businesses, rights of way, local heritage, woods and other environmental public spaces

Our Parish Council

What do we know about the Parish Council?

The surveys asked households what they knew about the Parish Council and, if people knew whom the Parish Councillors are. The results suggested that we are generally pretty well informed about what the Parish Council does but not so well informed when it comes to identifying whom the Councillors are.

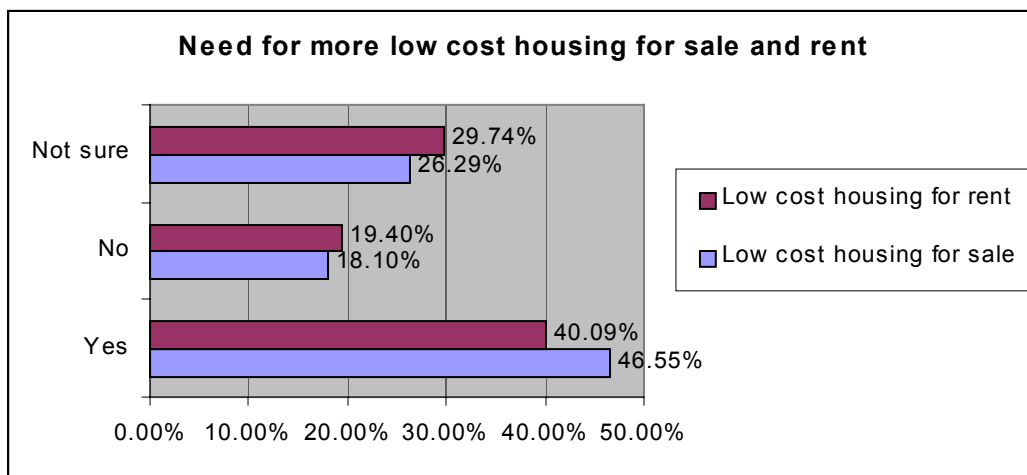
Ensuring a balanced community

Low cost housing

Having access to decent low cost housing was referred to as a key issue by a number of focus groups including the farming, heritage and forestry et al group, and the mother and toddler group. The WI group and the church and chapel group. The need for 'affordable' housing to rent and or buy is particularly important if we are to retain young people in Slaley and people who work in farming and rural industries. Many Council or 'social' rented housing properties have disappeared due to the Right to Buy and they have not been replaced. Lack of land to build on means that it is difficult to find sites. Local farmers are often unable to build on agricultural land even for their sons and daughters. There is a serious problem. Meanwhile house prices continue to rise and rental prices in the private sector are also high.

The survey included a question that asked households their views on the need for low cost housing for sale and rent. The responses shown in table 4.5 below suggest that people believe it is an important issue and 40-47% believe there is a need to ensure low cost housing is available.

Table 4.5 Views on need for low cost housing



Supporting older and disabled people

Having services and accommodation to support older and disabled people and their carers are also hallmarks of a balanced community. The survey and focus discussions revealed a lot about the accommodation and services that are needed.

Access to health services and staying healthy

Having a car and good health gives most of us excellent access to a wide range of health services. However, people who are unable to afford a car are no longer able to drive, have chronic ill health or a disability have more problems getting services. Households were asked in the survey if anyone had difficulty getting access to key health services and if the answer was yes to give the reasons why it was difficult. The single most important reason was travel – trying to get to the GP or the hospital, particularly if it was some distance away and if someone was in poor health or had poor mobility. Two people also said that there was a lack of NHS community services willing to come out to people who were unable to get to Corbridge or Hexham.

Several people commented that they had more difficulty getting around than in the past so transport was a problem but they also needed to be able to take their time and perhaps have someone with them.

Focus discussions indicated that many people would like to do more to keep their mobility and level of health including older people with restricted mobility and health problems.

Need for accommodation for rent/sale with care & support services

Nationally very sheltered housing (also called extra care housing) is growing in popularity. It can provide people with the kind of housing, support and care to enable them to continue to live independently for as long as they wish. However, there are few of these purpose built very sheltered schemes in the Northumberland or Durham area. Some schemes are being developed that are suitable for rural areas and they involve people 'staying put' if possible in their existing housing and bringing in a nucleus of services to the local area so they can live at home but have better care and support. Services can be based at a village hall and service providers work together rather than separately.

The survey asked specific questions to assess people’s views on the need for actual or ‘virtual’ very sheltered services. Households were first asked if they thought there was a need for accommodation for rent or sale with care and support services that would enable frail older and disabled people to stay in the Slaley area. Next, households were asked if they thought there was a need for services such as help with housework, small repairs and care. Finally, they were asked if changes needed to be made to their present home because someone has a long term disability or illness. This was to assess if anyone needed adaptations.

Table 4.6 shows the responses. They indicate a substantial interest in very sheltered type housing and services associated with staying put, such as, help with small repairs, housework and care. Some people certainly need adaptations and possibly advice on adaptations so they can continue to live where they do now. Other suggestions made by people who responded to the above questions were that help would be welcomed with:

- Cooking or preparing meals
- More social activities
- More opportunities to participate in social events and hobbies provided that a lift could be organised
- Some respite care, to give two carers a break preferably locally.

Table 4.6 Interest in very sheltered housing, staying put services and adaptations/changes needed to the home

	Yes	No	Not sure
Need for accommodation for rent or sale, with care and support services	100	15	107
Need for services, such as help with housework, small repairs and care	114	7	101
Changes need to be made because of long term disability or illness	12	210	3

Several focus group discussions also referred to the need for support and domestic help to enable people to continue to live independently as they get older and help disabled people and

those who are caring for others. The kind of support services mentioned were:

- Help with heavy cleaning
- Gardening services.

Helping others

The capacity of the local community to help others

Volunteering activities including helping others are popular in Slaley. Some people who were interested in volunteering offered their services and skills. The services and skills offered were:

- Cooking – perhaps for older frail people – delivering pre-cooked or ready to cook meals
- Help with respite care/shopping
- Help to organise activities or transport for young people
- General tasks, supervisor, transport, gardening
- Public footpath clearance.

Interest in hobbies, education and leisure

A balanced community needs plenty of interests and opportunities to learn new things. The survey asked a series of questions about interest in further education classes, leisure and hobby activities.

Education and hobby classes

Starting with education, the survey asked if there was anyone in the home who would be interested in going to further education classes but could not do this for certain reasons. If the answer was yes they were asked to give the reason. The main reasons in priority order were:

- Lack of childcare
- Cost
- Travel costs
- Lack of other support or help.

Next people were asked if they would like to attend further education or hobby and leisure classes if they were held in Slaley. If yes they were asked to say which subjects interested them.

Interest in local further education, hobby or leisure classes

- Arts & crafts (2 people) e.g. china restoration (2 people), upholstery (3 people), photography, stick dressing
- General handicrafts
- IT (11 people) – computer skills/internet course/desktop publishing
- Keep fit (5 people)/yoga (3 people)/callenetics, Pilates etc.
- Sports (2 people) – specified sports coaching e.g. golf or badminton
- Evening adult badminton
- Languages (3 people), Spanish, French classes (4 people)
- Art (2 people), local history (5 people)
- Literature (1 person) and poetry (1 person)
- Flower arranging, wine appreciation
- Business courses
- Natural history, wildlife
- Ballroom dancing for novices
- Football, tennis (2 people), table tennis
- Dancing, gardening, garden design
- Creative writing
- Singing groups (2 people)
- Biology
- Gymnastics (children)
- Amateur theatre
- Cooking
- Children's clubs e.g. brownies, ballet, etc.

Subjects the community can offer – to help run classes

- Crafts, hobby ceramics
- Computing skills
- Tennis coaching for adults (+ children). Help set up children's tennis practice.
- Help run table tennis
- Computer/book-keeping
- Amateur theatre play preparation and direction.

In addition several people offered to help organise youth activities and youth club activities provided training, and payment in some cases, could be provided.

Improving our facilities

Local children, parents and young people drew attention to the need to improve our local facilities. In contrast to some other villages, such as Blanchland, it is true that Slaley has few facilities. Yet, those we do have add to the quality of life of people in the Parish.

We have some excellent areas such as the First school playing field and the under 5's adventure play area also at the school. Unfortunately, these are not currently available to the whole community. What we can offer is therefore, limited. Clearly there may be a case to consider for adding extra facilities – but in the meantime there is also a case for considering what can be done to improve our existing facilities. At the moment this is primarily the Commemoration Hall. A survey question asked what improvements people thought would make a difference. Table 4.7 shows the key improvements people would like to see being made.

Table 4.7 Views on improvements needed to Commemoration Hall

Improvements to Commemoration Hall	
Redecoration	23
Kitchen improvements	34
More car parking	72
Better sign posting	30
Play area for children	101
Other	11

Business, Tourism and Sustaining the Local Economy

An overview

If communities like Slaley are to survive and avoid sliding any further into being dormitory or satellite locations there are some challenges to get to grips with.



Developing the local economy

In focus group discussions there was a division of opinion between people who have come to Slaley to retire or enjoy a quieter life and those people who are making a living, have traditional roots here and are raising families and, people who are self employed. A minority oppose activities they think may affect their enjoyment of the countryside and things as they are now. However, the vast majority of people responding to the survey welcomed more local businesses particularly more outlets for local produce including food.

Most people replying to the survey also recognised that tourism and visitors are vital to the local economy and contribute to the immediate economy of Slaley significantly. Focus discussions highlighted the fact that people generally realise it is important to encourage visitors to come here even though it can affect our uninterrupted enjoyment of the countryside.

Table 4.8 Views on stimulating the local economy

	Yes	No	Not sure
Would you like to see more local businesses/outlets for local produce	159	19	50
Should more visitors and tourist be encouraged to come	119	52	59

Foot and Mouth seriously affected many local businesses. The impacts were felt and continue to be felt by farmers, hotels, small guesthouses, pubs and bed and breakfast establishments including farm B &Bs and farm cottages let to tourists. It is therefore more important than ever to seriously consider how we encourage visitors to come and feel welcome.

Section Five

Conclusions and Options for the Future

The survey shows that Slaley is a vibrant place with a population that is interested in the environment, cares about the local area and wants to go on caring. It has assets, which must be the envy of many other villages that are not doing so well, such as, the post office, the First School, pubs and the Commemoration Hall. There are some differences of opinion and there are hints that we could all do more to tolerate and respect one another. However, on the whole people do get along and they work together.

Generally we lack services and facilities that could improve people's lives and the key services we are missing would benefit children, their parents and young people and, older people particularly those who are getting frailer and who have health problems.

There are concerns about how we protect and make the best use of the assets we all love, chiefly the countryside and the spaces and places we want to cherish.

We have a great backbone of volunteers and traditional farming families and we all take pleasure in having our own post office and shop, pubs, churches, the First School and the Commemoration Hall. There is a need to make sure these assets are also protected.

There are specific concerns about speeding, safety on the roads, a need for safe places for children to play and other problems that affect us. There are also some issues that need to be aired and discussed in more detail, for example, how we communicate better and how we have better links with Forestry Enterprise and Slaley Hall to discuss concerns and, hopefully, find ways to resolve problems.

Then there are some tensions and intolerances within our community, which need to be talked about and resolved.

Finally there are opportunities for us all. There are some options we can consider for the future, which didn't exist when the work to develop the Parish Plan started out. For example, for children and

young people there are opportunities to work out a solution to using the First School field. There are also opportunities to work with the Queen Elizabeth High School Youth Workers to train youth work volunteers or part time paid workers to provide junior youth club and other youth activities in Slaley. These are only a few of the options we can pursue.

As a community it is up to us to identify options and make them happen and to learn to work and play even better together. To do this we need a plan for the future that aims to hit all the targets, needs and issues identified in the focus discussions and the survey. And, makes us focus on the options and how we make things happen. The main issues proposed as ideas for a *draft* plan, which everyone needs to read and discuss, are set out in the final section, section six. A short and accessible version of the section called Slaley Parish Issues Paper and Towards a Parish Plan has been prepared and will be circulated to every household in Slaley. There will be plenty of opportunities for the whole community to comment on the issues and contribute to developing a Parish Plan over the coming weeks and months. The Plan will only be put together after the community has been fully consulted and given its views on what should be in it.

Section Six

SLALEY PARISH ISSUES: TOWARDS A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

“A great place to live. Our future in our hands ”

Introduction

The title for the report reflects the fact that we live in a great place but its future could be threatened if we do not take action together. Section six summarises the main messages and issues that were identified in the survey and focus discussions and proposes that these are considered in next steps by the community to develop a Plan for the future.

Main messages and issues

- *Message 1* - Slaley is special but can't stand still

The main message from the research is that all of us want to keep the ingredients that make Slaley a special place. At the same time there is a large but by no means universal consensus that we want to maintain and conserve what we have *and* allow room for careful change and possible growth particularly for the local economy, small businesses and farming/rural enterprises.

Issues and questions

Doing nothing and hoping for the best is an option but not a good one. Many people said they didn't want Slaley to slide into being a dormitory village - what should we do about it?

In the absence of any kind of plan for change based on the things the Slaley community largely agrees on – it might get 'done to us'. Do we do a good job conserving what we have? For example, the Church of St Mary the Virgin and the Methodist Chapel are greatly valued but are we doing enough to conserve them? Can we make better use of our facilities such as the Commemoration Hall? Should we be doing more to encourage visitors and should we be promoting our local businesses and enterprises?

The focus discussions and the survey showed that a majority would favour more facilities and services for visitors. The

possibilities include more signs telling people about our places of local interest, places to stay, a map, signs telling people where to buy local produce and perhaps, a toilet and tea room. What do we want to do about these possibilities? How could ideas be progressed?

- *Message 2 - Valuing services and facilities and needing more*

We value the services and facilities that we have and count ourselves fortunate but we need better services and facilities for children, young people and for older people

Unlike some Northumbrian villages Slaley folk are fortunate in having the key ingredients that make up an identifiable village. They are three churches, a village hall, a post office and shop, a first school and two pubs. We also have a strong community spirit, thriving voluntary activity including a mother and toddler group and a backbone of volunteers who help each other. However, our children have nowhere safe to play together in the village, there are no public recreation areas for sports or to have a game of football and our older people and people who are caring for others could do with specific help so they can continue to live here independently. There are no child-care facilities or services for parents who want or need to return to work.

Issues and questions

Adults living outside the village do not feel so strongly about the need for play areas and recreation/sports facilities but young people across the Parish most certainly feel strongly about them. The survey showed that we have a remarkably sporty younger generation and not a few people a bit older who enjoy all kinds of outdoor sports and pursuits. Yet we do not have as much to offer them as our neighbours in Whittonstall or Blanchland. Whittonstall recently opened its school to the community because local children had nowhere to play. We seem to be stymied on this issue in Slaley. What can we do about it?

There is considerable interest in having a youth club especially in the winter months for young teenagers and a place to meet supervised by a youth worker for older teenagers. Our young people have shown and said very clearly what they want. What kind of message does it send if we ignore these interests, needs and wishes? What can be done in the short and long term? As far

as youth club sessions are concerned we have the expertise of the Queen Elizabeth High School Youth Workers to draw on here - the question is what do we want to do about it?

The kinds of specific help older people and those who are caring for others need are services that would enable them to continue living here, such as, help with gardening, decorating, heavy cleaning and help with adapting homes to make them suitable for people to live in as their ability to get around without this help decreases in later life. A lot of help and information is available from various organisations. Some of the needs could be solved by making sure people have the right information and reliable trades people or workers to do jobs and provide services they need. There are possibilities here too for people who are looking for part time work.

Some of the information and advice available could be brought into Slaley. Should we as a community work out the best ways to ensure that people get this help? Should we start up a register of reliable trades people? Should we talk to Social Services and ask if there are better ways to provide services people need locally?

There is considerable interest amongst parents of young children in child care facilities and services. What can we do to stimulate interest and influence provision?

- *Message 3* - Improving the opportunities for young people and families to live and work here

The survey and focus group discussions underlined how expensive it is for young people and young families to buy properties in Slaley and there are few properties to rent. Farming families, people engaged in rural industries and families who have been here for generations are particularly concerned that young people are often unable to afford to live here. There was a majority view in the survey that there is a need for low cost homes for rent or for sale including some specially designed for older people.

Issues and questions

The reality is that land is in short supply. When it does become available it is expensive. While it seems good in principle to build some low cost homes there would be heavy opposition from some people particularly if such homes are not attractive and are not able to be retained to benefit future local people who need them.

However, there are opportunities to influence local plans for the future. Should we take these opportunities? Should we consider what will happen if we do not?

□ *Message 4 - Protecting & improving the environment we live in*

The survey and the focus discussions emphasise that we are generally happy with where we live and that we particularly value the beautiful countryside around us. But there are some problems that affect us. They are:

- Speeding and parking (particularly in the village)
- Litter
- Dog fouling
- Poor quality roads and poor lighting in places

At the same time many people said they would like more recycling facilities locally. The school paper-recycling bin is not well known and is inaccessible out of school hours.

Particular black spots for speeding were identified in the survey and focus discussions. Locations where work was needed to repair roads and collapsing verges were also identified. Similarly the survey and focus discussions identified the spots where litter tends to be dropped and where dog fouling regularly occurs. We now know where all the problems occur.

Issues and questions

What do we want and what can we realistically do about them? Some practical suggestions were made including more signs, placed on the approach to the village advising people to slow down. Sadly the speed check that was organised as part of the work to research Slaley Parish issues showed that most speeding was done by locals. There are personal issues here for all of us – what can we suggest to stop speeding?

The Parish Council has recently obtained a bin which will be placed somewhere in the Parish for dog owners to put dog faeces. Is this enough? What else should we do as a community?

What do we want to do about litter? Provide more bins for litter? Try to organise signs asking people to pick it up? Have regular community litter clean ups?

The Parish Council regularly raises issues to do with roads, pavements and lighting with the local authority. What can we as a community do to ensure that Slaley's roads are kept in good repair – who should we talk to about them?

Turning to recycling, what do we think is realistic? How could we obtain recycling bins and where should they be located?

□ *Message 5 - Maintaining and strengthening our community*
The breadth and variety of voluntary and community activity in Slaley is amazing and people should be proud of all they do. Voluntary activity covers all kinds of informal as well as formal things including the medicine run that brings regular prescriptions to people who need them and volunteers who run key committees.

Slaley is composed mainly of incomers but there is a deep attachment to and willingness to maintain local traditions, participate in voluntary and community activities and maintain community festivals that punctuate our calendars. For example, Slaley Show. Everyone wants these to continue. At the same time there is sadness amongst families that have been here for many years that old values and ways of working and living are dying away.

Issues and questions

The survey showed that some people would like to become volunteers and do not know how to. Also that other kinds of voluntary activities are perhaps needed now that were not needed in the past. Some people would like a much wider variety of community activities, educational and hobby classes, sports training and other activities. What do we do about these offers of help, need for help, interest in classes and activities? How do we take them forward?

There are some tensions around in the community and sadness about a way of life that is being overtaken. What can we do to create more harmony? How can we retain the best of what we have and the traditions that are important? What can we do to positively enhance and promote farming and rural industries? Should we be talking more about what we want for our community?

□ *Message 6 - Communications and meeting together*

The survey and focus discussions identified a bit of a mish mash when it comes to letting people know what is going on. There are several notice boards in Slaley and the Hexham Courant is a popular place to look for information. Most people know that the best place to find out what is going on is by visiting the post office and shop. But some people find it more difficult, perhaps because they find it difficult to get to the post office or because they are at work most of the week.

Many people said they would like to see more opportunities for us to get together as a community simply to pass the time of day. As a linear village Slaley does not lend itself to meeting people casually. We lack a focal point and many people commented on this. Some people would like to have a place near the post office to meet, perhaps to have a coffee with friends and double up as a space for visitors for refreshments.

Issues and questions

As a linear village Slaley does not have a focal point should we be thinking of how one could be created? What should we do to create better communications? Should we rationalise our notice boards? Have fewer of them but make them more informative? Where should notice boards go? What about visitors? What would we like to see and whom should we talk to, to make these things happen?

□ *Message 7 - Protecting the wider environment around us*

The overwhelming message from the survey and focus group discussions is that we all appreciate and value the wider environment and we want to more done to protect it, keep it in good order and used properly. Some people are highly knowledgeable about the wider environment and places of local interest but others have less knowledge. There are also problems and issues arising from irresponsible behaviour.

Issues and questions

Problems and issues associated with dog fouling, litter and rubbish dumping were mentioned in the survey and focus discussions particularly in local forests. Opinions were divided on the benefits of having Slaley Hall citing problems such as extra traffic and light pollution and there are deep concerns about possible plans to

build more time-share properties in Slaley Hall grounds. What would we like to do about these problems and issues? Who should we talk to about them and what do we, as a community want to influence or do for ourselves?

Photographs of Slaley

The wizard behind the camera was Michael Elphick

Slaley: A Great Place to Live. Our Future in Our Hands



Methodology Appendix

Contents:

- A note on the methodology
- A description of the traffic and speed surveys
- The survey questionnaire
- Section containing a script used by the Parish Plan group members to introduce the topics used in the focus discussions, a copy of the Topic Guide used for focus discussions and, a copy of a fact sheet produced about the process the Parish Plan group were involved in which was given to anyone attending a focus group discussion and sent with the Parish Plan questionnaire to all Slaley households.

□ **A Note on the Methodology**

The methodological approach for the research on Slaley Parish involved using quantitative and qualitative research methods. It was also highly participative and involved as many people as possible in the Parish. The research methods that were selected were:

- A self administered survey questionnaire and
- Focus discussions that were led by facilitators using topic guide.

Reasons for the approach

The Parish Plan group wanted to ensure that there were enough opportunities to ask everyone in the Parish for their views and to keep them involved.

The research is only part of the overall development work taken on by the Parish Plan group. The next steps involve consulting with the community on how they want the issues and findings from the research to be shaped into a Plan for the future. Consultation and participation were therefore, extremely important and methods had to be found for these to be strong elements in the research work.

In addition the Parish Plan group wanted to be involved in the work and they had to keep costs down. It was decided that the group would work together to draft the questionnaire and pilot it, and try out the topic guides before inviting people to focus groups.

The questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was based on a questionnaire devised by Bywell for its Parish Plan (also called village appraisal). It was substantially changed to reflect issues that were of interest to Slaley Parish residents.

The topic guide

The topic guide was devised to follow the same themes that the questionnaire could cover but also to encourage people at focus discussions to exchange views and think about issues and problems that affect others as well as themselves.

The samples

It was decided that it was too expensive and too large a job to sample every adult and young person/child in the survey and that the most sensible compromise was to provide a questionnaire for all households in the Parish area.

For focus groups it was decided to simply identify segments of the local population in a very broad way. It was intended to hold only five or six discussion groups but eleven groups were held in the end.

Delivering questionnaires, holding focus groups

The Parish Plan group members each had responsibility for delivering questionnaires (together with re-sealable envelopes) to a number of households and for calling back to ensure that questionnaires were completed. Parish Plan group members also offered to help anyone who needed help to complete the questionnaire or attend a focus group discussion. Names and telephone numbers of all the Parish Plan group members were distributed to everyone in the Parish.

Focus group discussions were run by pairs of Parish Plan group members. They were responsible for inviting people to focus groups, for leading and writing up the discussions and for ensuring that refreshments were available. Childcare and transport had to be provided in several instances and for particular groups. For example, a children's entertainer was needed so that mothers attending the mother and toddler focus group could talk rather than take care of their children.

Parish Plan group members attended a training session to ensure that everyone was confident in leading and facilitating discussions and could record information. A briefing session was also held to ensure that everyone was equipped with all the information and tools they needed. A flip chart, flip chart pads and pens were purchased with the money from the Countryside Agency grant for the focus groups. Although this all sounds a bit formal it has to be said that everyone managed to enjoy themselves as well.

A few points about the process

Fact sheets, letters, posters and other communications were also drafted and prepared by the group. The fact sheet explained what the purpose of the research was and how it was being done. It also

explained who was doing the work and when it was expected to be completed. Names and telephone details of all the group members were given in the fact sheets and letters. In addition details of progress were placed in 'Slaley Notes', a section written regularly for the *Hexham Courant* newspaper by Lesley Woodhouse who is also a member of the Parish Plan group. Various members of the group also decided to circulate notes from their focus discussions to people who attended. Several focus discussions were truly social as well as research occasions, for example the discussion with church and chapel members.

When members of the group delivered the questionnaires and called at people's houses they wore badges with a specially designed Parish Plan logo on them. The badges were designed and produced by Marge Rastall and Lesley Woodward.

Data input, analysis and writing up

Questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes (for the most part, although some people lost their envelopes). Sealed envelopes were important because they ensured that no-one in the Parish Plan group could open questionnaires and read the responses. The sealed envelopes were delivered unopened to a data input worker recruited for this purpose who lived in Hexham and has no connections to Slaley. These steps helped to reassure people responding (which included the Parish Plan group, of course) that their completed questionnaire would be dealt with anonymously and professionally.

The data input work produced raw numbers, lists of comments and other data. The focus groups meanwhile produced pages of notes which were all arranged under headings which corresponded with the headings and questions used in the survey.

The data was then handed on to Moyra Riseborough. Together with her colleague Avis Duncan she analysed the material and turned it into written text, graphs and tables. Several draft reports were written which were circulated around the Parish Plan group. Everyone commented on drafts and contributed to the final report. Peter McKendrick and Nigel Sanger provided invaluable detailed comments and amendments.

The issues report

A central output from the work is the Issues Report. The Issues Report has been prepared by members of the Parish Plan group as an accessible plain language report which brings together the key findings from the long report and research and, identifies the key issues that the community needs to consider in order to make a draft plan for the future. The issues report is about to be circulated.

The Parish Plan group has met often (sometimes every two weeks).

The Parish Plan group

The parish plan group is composed of the following people:

Michael Elphick	Marge Rastall
Kerry Jewitt	Moyra Riseborough
Peter McKendrick	Ian Robson
Julie Milburn	Nigel Sanger
Christine Milligan	Pat Wilson

There has been much to do and everyone has taken on responsibilities. The Parish Plan group has benefited from having a very willing and able group of people. All have talents and expertise aplenty. It has been particularly helpful to have the support of the Parish Council both for backing the grant application and for enabling the group to work under its auspices. Just a few of the benefits included having Pat Wilson the Clerk to the Parish Council as a member. Pat regularly reminded the Parish Plan group about their responsibilities under the terms of the grant from the Countryside Agency, provided greatly valued administrative help, a wealth of local knowledge, advice on how to contact people and minutes, agendas and letters of invitation for meetings.

□ A Description of the Traffic and Speed Surveys

Several members of the Parish Plan group, Julie Milburn, Kerry Jewitt and Nigel Sanger were responsible for organising traffic surveys with the local police and the County Council and for ensuring that the data collected by the police was analysed and turned into tables that could be understood.

During September and October 2002 local police and the County Council were asked for their help to run a speed check and traffic surveys in particular locations in Slaley. Two separate surveys were completed, one by Northumberland County Council and one by Northumberland Police.

As can be seen from the table in the report, the data shows that most people do not speed but a minority are inclined to speed, especially when they think no-one is around. Most people who speed are also locals – we gather from the Countryside Agency that other Parishes report similar findings. What the report does not say is that the speed check also resulted in drivers being issued speed tickets and/or being warned to reduce their speed. The speed check was, therefore, far more than an academic exercise.

Northumberland County Council Survey

A traffic speed survey was carried out by Northumberland County Council (NCC) highways dept. (contact: Mr Bernie Gillis, tel: 01670 534294, e-mail: Bgillis@northumberland.gov.uk).

Speed monitors were placed on the main road through Slaley village (C275) opposite the village hall (NCC Site #: 00002076), Site ref: 3978-55778). Vehicle speeds were recorded in both directions (east & west bound) for a period of 7 days (18/11/02-22/11/02).

Results were reported on an Excel spreadsheet showing the number of vehicles and speeds by hour for each day, along with summary statistics for the week for vehicles travelling in both directions. Copies of results were forwarded to both the Slaley Parish Plan group and Northumberland Police for analysis. Extracts from the results have been used in this report but a copy of the full results is available from the Parish Plan group or they can be viewed on the computers in the Commemoration Hall.

Police Survey

Northumberland police (Contact: Paul Conway, Corbridge Police station, Tel: 01434 673204) carried out a survey in Slaley during August and September 2002.

A series of spot checks were completed over a period of weeks using hand held radar. The survey focussed on times when children travel to and from school (0800-0900 and 1430-1600hrs).

A letter summarising findings was forwarded to Slaley Parish Council.

Results were as follows:

12 Endorsable speed tickets issued (above 35mph), 8 were residents or local traffic.

25 Speed warnings given (30-35mph), 25 were residents or local traffic.

- **Section containing script used by Parish Plan group members to introduce the focus group discussions, a copy of the Topic Guide used to guide focus discussions and, a copy of the fact sheet**

Welcome everyone and thanks for coming. My name is x and I am a member of the Slaley Parish Plan Steering Committee which was formed a few months ago. My colleague working with me is x. We are both volunteers and we live in Slaley.

I want to start off by explaining some of the background

Earlier this year in June a Public Meeting was called by the Parish Council to discuss people's views following the closure of the First School playing field out of school hours. The idea to have a Parish Plan came out of that meeting. During the meeting it was found that people had strong views about amongst other things, the need for more facilities and play areas for children and young people, the need to do something about rubbish and dog fouling. A Parish Plan Steering Committee was then formed and the Parish Council asked for and received a grant from the Countryside Agency to fund the work that would lead to a Parish Plan.

For those of you who are asking what is a Parish Plan and why do we need one?

A Parish Plan is a formal way of bringing everyone's views together. The Parish Plan will contain key information on the things that matter to people living and working here. The Parish Council will use it when they are representing us. It will also help the Parish and District Council to obtain funds for services and

facilities that people need or want. Several other villages such as Bywell now have a Parish Plan and they have used it to plan future services and to work out how they can improve some needed facilities.

Let me tell you about where the discussion group you have been asked to come to fits into all of this

The discussion groups are one of the methods being used to collect information on what people value living here and what they want to see improved. Discussion groups let people say more in detail about their ideas and views than questionnaires do. That's why we wanted to hold some with a good cross section of people. The other methods being used to collect information are a questionnaire, which will be going to every household in the Parish and regular traffic monitoring and walkabouts, which you may have seen. These are being done in co-operation with the police.

OK so that's a bit about the purpose of the discussion group and some explanation about the Parish Plan and what its aim is.

Now you might be wondering why you were asked personally to come to this group

There's no mystery about this. It seemed a good idea to invite people from right across the Parish to come along and talk in more detail about the things that were important to them. We made a list of different groups that would make up a cross section. For example, someone might be described as a young mother or a member of the WI – they might also be both! We made a list of these different groups across the Parish and we invited a few people living in each geographical area in the Parish.

OK does any one have any questions before I go on?

We have a Fact Sheet, which you all should have. This explains more about the work we are doing on the Parish Plan and tells you how we aim to keep you all informed about it. If you have any more questions come and have a chat at the end of the discussion with me or, get in touch with any of the Parish Plan Steering Committee Members whose telephone numbers are on the Fact Sheet.

How we will run the discussion group

The discussion will last for about an hour and a half. I have some broad questions to get you started and my colleague x will write

your answers down. We will check with you from time to time to see if we have got everything down the way you want it. We will also try to make sure that everyone gets the chance to have his or her say. Now just so we can be sure that we will get through all the questions we will ask someone to be in charge of the time. It's their job to make sure we make the best use of the time we have.

Note for group facilitators: You will have to bear in mind the group you are talking to. It's best to say, for example, that you are interested in getting people's views from their experience as say mothers of young children, or, local businesses. So you would start off by saying something like –

In your view as mothers of young children.

Topic One

What are the good things about living/working in Slaley?

(List them all – check back to see if there is anything that has been left out)

What are the less good things?

(List them all – check to see that nothing has been missed out)

Comparing the two lists – do you generally all agree with these – who disagrees and why?

(Note – the number of people who agree or disagree and reasons)

What is your biggest concern or the thing that bugs you most about living/working in Slaley?

(List all of the points made)

What changes or improvements in Slaley would benefit you?

(Changes can be facilities or services/activities. List all suggestions)

OK – turning to something a bit more blue skies – what do you think are the ingredients that make a place good to live and or work in?

(List all the ingredients – prompt people by saying, services, the surroundings, and the roads, the people)

How well does Slaley measure up to your list of ingredients?

(List all comments)

Finally, let's check back through everything and see if anything needs to be added

(Add new points to topics and make a new topic if something is mentioned that has not been thought about before)

The end

Factsheet

This fact sheet tells you about work that is just starting to develop a Parish Plan for Slaley. It also gives you the names and contact details of people on the Steering Committee who are involved in doing the work. There are plenty of opportunities for more volunteers so please get in touch with one of the Steering Committee if you want to get involved.

Why a Parish Plan?

The idea of having a Parish Plan came out of a public meeting, which was held in June this year in Slaley Commemoration Hall. A Parish Plan is a formal statement that brings together in one document all of the issues people and concerns that people in an area have, and sets out proposals to provide better services and facilities. Such a plan is necessary because it will be required to support requests for funding services that are wanted in the Parish, and will help the Parish Council and the District and County Councils to see at a glance what local people want for Slaley.

What's happened since?

Following the public meeting a Parish Plan Steering Committee was formed and the Steering Committee applied through the Parish Council for a grant from the Countryside Commission Vital Villages funds to do the work to develop a Plan. The Parish Council has now obtained the grant and the Parish Plan Steering Committee is starting work on a Parish Plan for Slaley.

The Steering Committee members are all volunteers and they are very happy to talk about what they are doing. Please get in touch with any of them if you want to find out more or you want to get involved as a volunteer. You will find their names and telephone numbers at the end of this fact sheet.

Developing the Parish Plan – what it involves

There are several steps in this.

Step One: Talking to as many people as possible in Slaley Parish to find out what their issues and concerns are and identifying the improvements they would like to see taking place.

Step Two: Prioritising improvements and turning these into actions that can be tackled over a period of time – an Action Plan.

Step Three: Checking back with everyone who gave their views so that the Action Plan correctly reflects ideas and proposals.

Step Four: Presenting the Action Plan to the Parish Council for adoption by them.

Step Five: Circulating a copy of a summary of the Parish Plan to everyone concerned including people living in Slaley, the District Council and County Council.

Talking to people

Talking to people is going to be done in three main ways. They are:

- A questionnaire, which will be sent to all households in the Parish boundaries
- Fairly informal discussions with different groups of people - including discussions with young people that will be led by a detached youth worker from the Queen Elizabeth High School
- Walkabouts and traffic monitoring

What you can expect

You can expect to:

- Be asked for your views
- Be sure that your views will be treated with the greatest respect
- Be kept informed about what is happening
- Have a copy of the summary Parish Plan at the end of the work
- Be able to see the full Parish Plan at the end of the work if you wish

Finding our more – getting involved

If you would like to find out more about the work to develop a Parish Plan or you would like to help with the work please contact one of the Steering Committee members. Their names and contact details are on the next page.

The Parish – Boundaries

A map on the last page of the fact sheet shows the boundaries of Slaley Parish. The Parish Plan involves everyone living within the Parish.

Slaley Parish Plan Steering Committee: Members

Linda Norris, Chair of the Parish Council. Tel 673503
Responsible for gathering views on a sports ground for young people and adults

Pat Wilson, Secretary & Clerk to the Parish Council. Tel 673388
Responsible for collecting views from local farmers, landowners. Also for collecting views on and about the local area and heritage issues.

Keith Robson, also a member of the Parish Council. Tel 673200
Responsible for collecting views from local small businesses, the Commemoration Hall users and Parish Council members

Caroline Barnes, Detached Youth Worker Queen Elizabeth High School Tel 610347
Responsible for collecting the views of young people of High School age. Also for developing activities for young people of Middle and High school age in Slaley.

Michael Elphick. Tel 673443
Responsible for collecting views from WI members. Also for views on new technology and the Slaley bid for computer facilities (through the Parish Council).

Kerry Jewitt. Tel 673160 and Julie Milburn. Tel 673703
Responsible for collecting views from parents of young children for play facilities and for work on monitoring speeding and liaising with the police.

Peter McKendrick. Tel 673281

Responsible for collecting views from the Post Office, Pubs, the Chapel and the Church including people who use/visit these.

Christine Milligan. Tel 673592.

Responsible for collecting views from mothers of young children. Also interest in after school childcare

Marge Rastall, also Chair of Governors, Slaley First School. Tel 673547

Responsible for collecting views from the First School and Slaley Show Committee.

Moyra Riseborough., Chair of the Parish Plan Steering Group. Tel 673486

Responsible for collecting the views of older people

Lesley Woodhouse. Tel 673035

Responsible for collecting the views of children of Middle School age.