



Meet your Council

Sally McLean is the Clerk to Slaugham Parish Council and is employed by the council (under section 112 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972) to provide administrative support for the council's activities. Any other staff, although employed by the council answer to the Clerk who is their manager and is responsible for their performance.

The Clerk is responsible for the day to day running of the Council and the Parish. Duties include taking the minutes of council meetings, advising the members on law, practice and procedure as pertains to Parish Councils and liaising with various agencies and the public. They may also act as the legal representative of the Council in public inquiries and any Court proceedings to advise the council on whether its decisions are lawful and to recommend ways in which decisions can be implemented. To help with this, the Clerk can be asked to research topics of concern to the Council and provide unbiased information to help the Council to make appropriate choices.

The Clerk has a wide range of other responsibilities which are set out in his/her job description.

The Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer and as such has total responsibility for the accounts of the Council. The Clerk will work with the Council's Finance Committee to ensure all aspects of expenditure are allocated accordingly and budgeted for each year with future projects and routine maintenance requirements across the Parish assigned for.

The Council is responsible for all decisions and the Clerk takes instructions from the Council as a body. The Clerk is not answerable to any individual Councillor - not even the Chairman. The Clerk must be independent, objective and professional at all times.

Your Council

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Winter 2011

Slaugham Parish Council

Welcome to the first Slaugham Parish Council Newsletter!

It has been a year of change. We now have a coalition Government with a localism agenda which will mean change for the way we are governed as well as changes to the rights and responsibilities of your Parish Council. As yet it is a bit unclear as to exactly what those changes will entail – the Government has struggled to identify exactly what Localism means for you and me – but clearly your Parish Council will have more responsibilities devolved from local government. Exactly what those responsibilities are is as yet unclear. How we will find the resources to execute those newly devolved responsibilities is also unclear but Councillors are diligently attending seminars and meetings to keep abreast of the latest developments. With those responsibilities will come rights which should enable us to better serve the needs of the community and should bring some decision-making back to a local level.

This is all an evolving situation but what is clear is that your Parish Council will have a greater role to play in issues that will affect you and our community and as such I would urge you all to engage as much as possible in this process; at least by keeping abreast of what your Parish Council is trying to do on your behalf but preferably by an active involvement. It would be great to see a bigger turnout at Parish Council meetings (other than simply those where a controversial issue or a difficult planning application is to be discussed). In other words, I think it is fair to say that we will be looking for greater public involvement in future.

As a Council we are working towards Quality Council status which will allow us better to take advantage of our new devolved powers. Part of this process is a commitment to effectively communicate with our community. As well as producing this quarterly newssheet detailing our activities, it is our intention to revamp our website and make it more user friendly as well as making announcements throughout the Parish. We would like to be able to communicate with as many of you as possible by email and to this end we are considering setting up an email address database.

Finally I would like to end with a comment on the upcoming year. I really believe that the Parish Council is going to have an unprecedented opportunity under this administration to take real power over some key local decision making. This is an opportunity that we would be wrong to miss. It could, if properly used, allow us to make a really positive difference in our community. It will, however, only be effective if you, the public, engage with us and assist us in making the correct decisions on your behalf. Bring us your ideas, concerns and hopes!

Archie Cowan

Slaugham Parish

Slaugham Parish Council covers 4 villages or 'Wards'. Handcross, Pease Pottage, Slaugham and Warninglid.



Handcross

Handcross is the largest of the four villages, and consists of a good mix of properties with many shops and businesses for a rural community. It also has two schools, the Handcross Primary School and Handcross Park School, a private co-educational school, both in the Old Brighton Road. The High Street is flanked by good examples of Victorian properties and is the hub of the village and Parish life.

There are two public houses, The Royal Oak, in Horsham Road and The Red Lion, an old coaching inn, situated at the junction of the High Street and Horsham Road. In addition, there is the Parish Hall in the High Street and the Pavilion on the Recreation Ground, both of which are available for hire.

Pease Pottage

Pease Pottage lies on the southern edge of the Crawley built up area, in the North of the Parish. The village itself has a florist's shop, a pub the Black Swan, a vehicle recycling plant, playing fields, a golf driving range and course.

Pease Pottage is also an old name for pease pudding. It is said that the village name came from serving Pease Pottage to convicts either on their way from London to the South Coast or from East Grinstead to Horsham although it is not clear why convicts would travel along either route.



Slaugham

Slaugham pronounced (slafham) from which the Parish derives its name, is the smallest village and has the Parish Church of St. Mary. There is just the one pub, the Chequers. The village has possibly the only Grade II Listed White Telephone Box. Contained within the village limits is Furnace Pond, named from the days when iron working was carried out. The 'pond' is surrounded by some lovely common land with a variety of trees. There is a very active angling club which uses the pond.



Warninglid

The name Warninglid is believed to originate from two words meaning "Werna's Path". At the centre of the village is a crossroads and there sits the Half Moon public house. The village has won the Best-Kept Village competition three times and is home to Warninglid County Primary School.

Local housing need – a community-based solution?

The lack of affordable housing, particularly in rural areas, is an issue which is constantly in the national news, and our Parish is not immune from those problems. In 2010, Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) completed a Local Housing Needs Report on behalf of the Parish Council, and the results of the survey were presented to the public at two open days in May of this year. (If you missed the exhibition, the survey results can be seen on the Parish Council's website.)

Deciding how to meet the need for affordable homes for people who live and work in our villages poses many questions: Is there a suitable location? What should the mix of housing be? How can we finance any such project? And, importantly, how can we ensure that any houses provided will benefit local people in our community, not just now but in perpetuity?

In finding an answer to the last question, the Parish Council, advised by AiRS, has been exploring the possibility of setting up a Community Land Trust, or CLT. To quote The National CLT Network:

"A CLT is a non-profit, community-based organisation run by volunteers that develops housing or other assets at permanently affordable levels for long-term community benefit"

The benefits of a CLT are that they are locally driven, controlled and accountable, and any income generated must be used for the benefit of the local community. There are specific finance sources available to fund CLT projects. Most of the CLTs established to date have provided small, affordable housing developments, but they are also being used to provide community centres, a pub rescue, a local shop, community farm..... meeting very local needs.

The Parish Council will be holding a public meeting later this year to explain how a CLT might work in our Parish, and to invite residents to become part of a CLT. A successful CLT would have a membership which is representative and inclusive, with a range of skills and knowledge from all four villages within the Parish.

Are you interested in finding out more about how a CLT could benefit your local community? Look out for details of the meeting later this year, or contact the Parish council now to let us know. More information and details of CLTs already up and running in the UK can be found on www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk.



Neighbourhood planning

Neighbourhood planning is a new way for communities to decide the future of the place where they live.

The Government wants to introduce the right to do neighbourhood planning through the Localism Bill which is being debated by Parliament at the moment. The Localism Bill aims to have real influence and hopefully inspire communities to get involved and give the confidence that their views will have real influence.

The Parish Council are working with the District Council to draft a neighbourhood plan for the Parish. As part of this process there will be a public consultation in the New Year.

NEW WEBSITE COMING SOON!

We are in the process of creating a new, easier to access and informative website to better enable residents of the Parish to find the information they are looking for and contact the Council regarding matters that concern them. Minutes from previous Council meetings and other information can be found on the current website:

www.slaughampc.org.uk

Input at Council meetings is also welcome. The Council meet on the last Thursday of every month in the Pavilion, Handcross.