

BLAXHALL COMMONS AND OPEN SPACES CHARITABLE TRUST

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES' MEETING

Saturday 10th February 2024 at 4:00pm

at Vine Cottage

Attendance: Mike Livesey - Trustee and Hon Treasurer
Eve Rossor - Trustee and Hon Secretary
Rosy Thornton - Trustee
Mark Oakley - PC nominated Trustee
Karen Baker - PC nominated Trustee
Andrew Derrick
Miranda Barclay
Joy Shaw - Blaxhall Tree Warden

Apologies: There were no apologies.

1. *Minutes of the meeting of 9th December 2023:*

These were agreed as correct and will be put on the website.

2. *Matters arising:*

There were none not otherwise on the agenda.

3. *Insurance update:*

CK Insurers had been contacted after the last meeting and provided a quote not including employers' liability which was significantly lower than that from NFU. The Trustees had agreed by email communication that the CK offer should be accepted; this had been done and the premium paid.

Rosy reminded the Trustees that any flyers about work parties should warn that these are undertaken at the participants' own risk, as the Trust does not have employers' liability cover.

Action: Eve to ensure that invitations to work parties should include the health and safety information prepared for this purpose, amended to include the relevant warning.

4. *Finance update:*

Mike circulated copies of the financial position for the year to date, with the current balance being £3849.32 with petty cash in addition.

The Trustees identified the regular items of income and expenditure for the Trust in order to produce a budget for the year 2024; it was agreed that Mike would type this up and circulate it to Trustees after the meeting. A budget deficit of £65 was calculated. Donations had been received in 2023 which have covered the shortfall, but it was noted that the Trust will need to fund-raise annually to ensure financial stability.

Action: Mike to circulate a 2024 budget.

5. *New Trustees:*

As agreed at the previous meeting, Eve had contacted individuals at Stone Common to see if they might be interested in being a Trustee. There had been a positive response from each person contacted. The Trustees were delighted with this response, and discussed a suggestion which had been made that a Trustee post might be shared by two people; it was noted that this arrangement was unlikely to be permissible under charity law. It is therefore hoped that all three individuals will become active within the Trust, although only two will formally be appointed as Trustees. As one candidate has financial skills, Mike offered to resign forthwith to provide a second vacancy, but will remain fully involved in future meetings. The other Trustees thanked him very much for all his work as a Trustee and as Hon Treasurer. The new trustees will be formally appointed at the AGM.

Action: Eve to contact those involved and clarify who will formally become Trustees.

6. *Profile raising of BCOST:*

Rosy had drafted a leaflet about BCOST, covering our history, current activities, and an appeal for donations and volunteers for work parties. The leaflet had been formatted by Andrew and Mark is having it printed. It will be delivered to each household in Blaxhall. Miranda kindly suggested using the Ebb and Flow delivery system for distribution, with the aim of catching the March edition.

Action: Mark to send the leaflets to Andrew who will liaise with Miranda about distribution.

Andrew suggested creating an additional short flyer to advertise the AGM. It was agreed his would be distributed with the April Ebb and Flow.

Action: Andrew to produce the flyer and liaise with Miranda about distribution.

7. *AGM arrangements:*

The AGM is scheduled for Saturday 13th April at 2:30 pm in the Village Hall. Joy has arranged for the leaders of the Suffolk Bird Group's barn owl group to give a talk entitled 'Introducing Barn Owl Support Suffolk'. The talk will precede the AGM formalities. A bowl for donations will be provided.

It was noted that the AGM agenda needs to include the appointment of new Trustees.

Actions: Joy to contact the speakers about the provision of audiovisual equipment.
Rosy to produce a first draft of the Annual Report and circulate it for comment.
Eve to put notices of the AGM on the notice boards, and email supporters to inform them of the date and talk.

8. *Jasper's Pightle update:*

Rosy and Eve had cleared the hedging of excess bracken, and had noted several dead saplings, mainly holly. Eve offered to donate saplings left over from her hedging work. These can be used to replace most of the dead saplings.

Karen reported that the plaque in Jasper's memory is now fixed on the bench. Mike had circulated a photo of the plaque to Trustees.

Action: Andrew to put a news item, with the photo, on the website.

9. *Stone Common update:*

It was agreed that work parties are needed to continue the work of removing redundant fencing (especially around Mollie's old poultry enclosure) and to help spread the gorse. Dates were agreed for two work parties: Sunday 25th February at 3:00pm and Saturday 30th March (Easter Saturday) at 1:30pm. The latter date coincides with the Easter Garden and teas at the church; it was anticipated that people might like to drop in at the church after the work party.

The Trustees agreed that Joy would be most welcome to graze sheep on the Stone Common land.

Joy suggested that Laurie Forsyth, the botanist who surveys the churchyard, might be willing to survey the flora at Stone Common.

Action: Joy to contact Laurie Forsyth about a possible botanical survey.

10. *AOB:*

Miranda provided a number of dates of interest for the diary:

- The new priest, Robert Leveritt, is being inducted on 25th March at Benhall church. He has a particular interest in the countryside and nature and may be interested in BCOST's work.
- On 6th April Robert Ashton, a local author, is to place a blue plaque in the Village Hall to commemorate George Ewart Evans, followed by Robert in conversation with Robert Leveritt. The proceedings start at 1:00pm.
- 29th-30th June: Blaxfest. It was agreed that BCOST should have a poster display in the Village Hall and serve teas, as in 2023.
- 10th August: Blaxhall fete. In light of the clash with the Trustees' meeting currently scheduled for that date, it was agreed to move the Trustees' meeting to the following Saturday (17th August).

Rosy suggested an approach might be made to Blaxhall's new District Councillor, Tim Wilson, as Ray Herring had been so helpful when in that post. It was noted that Tim is a Green Party councillor and may therefore have an interest in BCOST's environmental work.

Action: Eve to email Tim Wilson with a copy of the new leaflet and a link to the BCOST website.

Dates of next meetings:

Annual General Meeting: Saturday 13th April, 2:30pm in the Village Hall.

Next ordinary Trustees' meeting: Saturday 8th June, 4:00pm at 2, Ship Cottages.