

BLAXHALL COMMONS and OPEN SPACES CHARITABLE TRUST

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES' MEETING

Saturday 8 June 2024 at 4:00pm

at 2 Ship Cottages, Blaxhall

Attendance: Rosy Thornton – Trustee (chairing)
Karen Baker - PC nominated Trustee
Toby Bushill - Trustee and Hon Treasurer
Michelle Flowers – Trustee
Mark Oakley - PC nominated Trustee
Joy Shaw - Blaxhall Tree Warden
Andrew Derrick (minutes)

Apologies: Eve Rossor, Miranda Barclay

1. *Minutes of the Trustees' meeting of 10 February 2024 and draft minutes of AGM, 13 April 2024*

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

2. *Matters arising*

Tim Wilson, Green district councillor, had expressed interest in the work of the Trust. Agreed that we should send him minutes of our meetings and invite him to join a future Stone Common work party. **Action:** Eve to contact him.

It was noted that Trustee details needed updating on the Charity Commission website. **Action:** Rosy and Eve to liaise and contact CC.

3. *Finance update:*

Toby circulated current figures. Our financial position was healthy, with £4,431.84 in the bank or in cash. The PC donation had not yet been received. Looking at future expenditure, bracken clearing at JP and SC would take place in the autumn. Bruce Kerr to be asked if he is willing to clear SC, and if so whether he would charge. **Action:** Eve to contact Bruce Kerr.

4. *Bid to Suffolk Coast and Heaths Development Fund*

On behalf of BCOST, Toby had put forward a bid for the cost of skip hire at SC (cost about £470). A decision was expected in July. It was agreed that if the grant application was unsuccessful, skip hire might still be paid for out of reserves.

A suggestion was made that BCOST might join forces with RSPB in asking for a review of the AONB (now National Landscape) boundaries, to include the whole of the Great Common and the RSPB scrapes near Langham Bridge. It was suggested that the railway line was a more logical boundary than the B1069.

Action: to place this item on the agenda for next meeting, by which time we should also know the outcome of the funding bid.

5. *Barn owl box*

It was agreed that autumn would now be the best time for installation. In the meantime, and if ready, the box could be displayed at the Blaxhall Festival, which this year was taking British Birds as its theme. **Action:** Eve to liaise with manufacturer.

6. *Jasper's Pigtle update*

Under the Management Plan, gorse thinning is scheduled for this autumn. A work party was arranged for 3pm on **Sunday 1 September**. Joy will look into a possible follow-up weekday work party, under the auspices of her firm's community/voluntary engagement programme. **Action:** Eve to notify our volunteers and supporters two weeks before the WP on 1 September, and liaise with Joy about a possible follow-up.

7. *Stone Common update*

Three work parties had taken place since the last meeting, and much progress had been made in fence clearing etc. A further WP was arranged for 3pm on **Sunday 25 August** (Bank Holiday weekend), by which time a skip may be available. In that event, the Keebles should be invited to load the skip with unwanted possessions currently in the asbestos sheds, which are scheduled for removal under the Management Plan. **Action:** Eve to notify our volunteers and supporters two weeks before the WP, and (if skip available) invite the Keebles to dispose of unwanted material.

A letter had been received from the owners of Cherry Tree Cottage regarding the possible purchase of adjoining allotment land (plots 26 and 27), which they

currently hold under a licence agreement. It was agreed that sale of the land would be not be in the spirit of the Prevost request or BCOST's aims and objects, and hence would be contrary to Charity Commission guidance. The matter of the demarcation of boundaries was also raised, and it was agreed that this should be reviewed in August, before the licence comes up for renewal. **Action:** Rosy and Eve to agree a response to owners of Cherry Tree Cottage.

Joy reported that Miranda Barclay had procured two Suffolk sheep for churchyard grazing, and wondered whether they might graze at SC too. Trustees welcomed this. There were existing structures in which they could shelter. The sheep would have their own moveable pen, so there was no need to retain existing fencing, although perimeter fencing would remain.

8. *Blaxhall Festival and Blaxhall Fete*

The Blaxhall Community Festival will be at the church (not also the Village Hall this year) on the weekend of **29-30 June**. Rosy to create a new poster showing recent developments at SC and one advertising forthcoming work parties. Mark to print an additional 50 copies of the leaflet previously prepared for Ebb and Flow. The Festival starts at 10am on the Saturday, and Eve will need to contact volunteers to help put up the gazebo and display from 9am, and take it down after the festival ends on Sunday afternoon. In line with the theme of British Birds, it was suggested we display the donated barn owl box, which will not yet be installed. Joy to contact BOSS (Barn Owl Support Suffolk) asking if they wish to have a joint display with BCOST. **Action:** Eve to contact volunteers and liaise with Joy about the barn owl box. Rosy to produce new posters for display and send to Mark. Andrew to send previously used posters to Mark. Mark to arrange printing of posters and of leaflets.

The Blaxhall Fete will be on **Saturday 10 August**. Agreed we should request the use of a gazebo from the PC for an outdoor display, weather permitting. Materials for display can be as for the Festival. Again, volunteers will be needed to set up a display on then morning of the Fete and take it down afterwards. **Action:** Eve to contact volunteers for putting up and taking down display.

9. *AOB*

Joy had recently met with Argus Gathorne-Hardy, who had indicated that he could talk about his work with Wild East at the Trust's 2025 AGM. To be discussed more fully at a future meeting.

Next meeting

Saturday 17 August at Vine Cottage.