

BLAXHALL COMMONS and OPEN SPACES CHARITABLE TRUST

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES' MEETING

Saturday 12 October 2024 at 4:00pm

at Vine Cottage

Attendance: Rosy Thornton – Trustee (chairing the meeting)

Karen Baker – PC-nominated Trustee

Michelle Flowers – Trustee

Eve Rossor – Trustee and Hon Secretary

Andrew Derrick

Joy Shaw – Blaxhall Tree Warden

Apologies: Toby Bushill – Trustee and Hon Treasurer

Mark Oakley – PC-nominated Trustee

Mike Livesey

Miranda Barclay

1. *Minutes of the Trustees' meeting of 17 August.*

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

2. *Matters arising not otherwise on agenda:*

Item 2: Eve had not had any response from Lawrence about completion of the barn owl box. Joy to find details of another maker of owl boxes.

Item 5: Eve had contacted Neil Lister about possible AONB extension. A colleague of Neil's who had been involved in AONB boundary setting sent a very helpful reply. Changing boundaries is an expensive and lengthy process, and unlikely to be taken forward.

In the same correspondence it was advised that the most likely source of funding in the area (not restricted to the AONB), will as from January 2025 be the Sizewell C Community Fund. This fund was also discussed at the most recent Parish Council meeting; the fund is for communities affected by the construction of Sizewell C, of which Blaxhall is one. Funding will be available for projects which can be shown to confer a new benefit to the community (i.e. not for routine spending or to meet existing obligations). It was agreed that the clearance of asbestos from the sheds at Stone

Common, along with the cost of clearing the site and purchasing sheep hurdles, would fit the funding criteria and that an application for these purposes might be made to the Sizewell C Community Fund when it comes on stream in 2025.

Action: Eve to find out who East Suffolk Council use for assessing asbestos risk and get a quote for a survey of the asbestos at Stone Common.

3. Finance report:

Toby had sent a report on the current financial situation. The balance as of 30 September 2024 is £4792.36. Wayleave payments (National Grid and UK Power) have been received, alongside a number of donations. To date only two licence fee payments have been made for Stone Common allotments.

Action: Eve to chase up remaining allotment licence fees.

4. Grant application for sheep hurdles:

The application made to the Co-op Local Community Fund for sheep hurdles was unsuccessful. (See above regarding the Sizewell C Community Fund as potential alternative source of funding for this purpose.)

5. Re-appointment of Trustees:

Rosy, Rodney and Eve's terms of office are due to expire on 10 December. Rosy and Eve both expressed a willingness to be re-appointed, but as Rodney has been too unwell for some time to attend or participate in the Trust's meetings and email exchanges, it was agreed that he would not be re-appointed, but he was warmly thanked for all that he has done for the Trust as well as for Blaxhall and its natural environment. Michelle to make a thank you card for all to sign and Eve to send a formal letter.

The vacancy will be advertised on the village noticeboards; it was understood that the Trust Deed states required a 3-month period of advertising for the vacancy.

Action: Eve to put up notices on village noticeboards regarding the trustee vacancy.

6. Litter Pick:

It was noted that the autumn litter pick is scheduled from Saturday 19 to Sunday 27 October inclusive. Equipment will be available by the back door at Vine Cottage.

Actions: Eve to put a notice on the village noticeboards alerting people to the date and stating that the pick is done on behalf of the Parish Council. Rosy to advertise the litter pick on the village Facebook group.

7. Jasper's Pightle update:

It was noted that volunteers from Joy's employers, local accountancy firm Scrutton Bland, had joined trustees to rake bracken on 3 October. Thanks were recorded to the volunteers for their hard work and to Scrutton Bland for this support through their corporate social responsibility programme. It was agreed to explore other corporate social responsibility opportunities as possible sources of future volunteering sessions. The gorse had been inspected, and was noted to be in good condition, with few bushes appearing old or 'leggy'. It was agreed that as gorse regeneration seems not to be an issue this year, there is no need to cut back the bracken at present. However, it was noted that further work is needed to get rid of some remaining areas of fencing and barbed wire towards the north-west corner of the land, as well as maintenance of the new hedge along the road, this work to involve cutting down the bracken on the inside of the hedge and mulching and replacing tree protectors where necessary. A BCOST work party for bracken raking and possible wire-clearing was scheduled for Sunday 10 November, from 2:00pm. It was noted that Neil Lister had asked for suggestions for possible activities for his AONB work parties; Eve had proposed work on hedge maintenance at Jasper's Pightle for this purpose.

Action: Rosy to investigate local firms with corporate social responsibility programmes (including public as well as private sector) to which we might apply for volunteers to join work parties.

8. Stone Common update:

It was noted that Bruce Kerr has had the bracken cut; grateful thanks were recorded for this. It appears that the bracken has been shredded so that there is no need for raking and it can be left on as mulch, as last year.

It was noted that to date two allotment licence agreements have been signed and returned.

It was noted that a 'cake and rake' session at the churchyard is scheduled for Saturday 23 November at 2:00pm. It was agreed to advertise this to the usual list of BCOST work party supporters.

A further work party was scheduled for Saturday 2 November at 2:00pm, to continue clearing fencing and move the wood in preparation for the bonfire that evening.

I was agreed that the bonfire party (Saturday 2 November) will be advertised on the village noticeboards for 6:00pm, with attendees advised to park at the church triangle.

Actions: Eve to write and thank Bruce Kerr for cutting the bracken.

Eve to chase up the outstanding allotment licence agreements. Andrew to create posters for the bonfire party; Eve to put these on noticeboards, and Rosy to post a copy on the village Facebook group. To provide for the bonfire: Karen – firelighters, paper and matches; Rosy – gingerbread and sausage rolls, paper cups; Michelle – mulled wine; Eve – sparklers; Andrew – crisps and soft drinks; Eve to ask whether Trudy would like to provide anything.

9. Dates for 2025 meetings:

The following dates were agreed for trustees' meetings:

Saturday 14 December 2024, 2 Ship Cottages, 4:00pm (already scheduled)

Saturday 15 February 2025 Vine Cottage, 4:00pm

Saturday 12 April 2025 (AGM), Village Hall, 2:30pm

Saturday 14 June 2025, Vine Cottage, 4:00pm (or possibly later?)

Saturday 16 August 2025, Vine Cottage, 4:00pm

Saturday 11 October 2025, Vine Cottage, 4:00 pm

Saturday 13 December 2025, Vine Cottage, 4:00 pm

10. AOB:

There was no other business.

Date of next meeting: Saturday 14 December, 4:00pm at 2, Ship Cottages (apologies from Eve for non-attendance).