

BLAXHALL COMMONS and OPEN SPACES CHARITABLE TRUST

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES' MEETING

Saturday 15 February 2025 at 4:00pm

at 2 Ship Cottages

Attendance: Karen Baker – PC-nominated trustee
Andrew Derrick (minutes)
Michelle Flowers – Trustee
Joy Shaw – Blaxhall Tree Warden
Rosy Thornton – Trustee (chairing)

Apologies: Toby Bushill – Trustee and Hon Treasurer
Eve Rossor – Trustee and Hon Secretary

1. *Minutes of the Trustees' meeting of 15 October 2024*

These were agreed, subject to two corrections, and will be put on the website once corrected.

2. *Matters arising not otherwise on agenda*

Seeking corporate support: Rosy had included a paragraph on this in the upcoming village newsletter. She had also approached various firms of solicitors and accountants, so far without response, and will also approach the County and District Councils. Michelle advised that her work department can offer up to three days' volunteering a year for staff and will make inquiries. **Action:** Rosy to follow up with ESDC and SCC, Michelle with her department.

Mugs and fundraising: Eve had been in touch with her neighbour, the potter Don Hawksley. He hadn't made mugs in years but had given her the name of somebody who was able to put designs on factory-produced items. Suzy Hammond was unable to help with tile designs. Various options were discussed, but it was agreed that mugs or tiles should be inexpensive, while attractive. It would be good to have these ready in time for the 2025 Blaxhall Fete and Blaxhall Festival. Michelle will research options and report back to the April meeting. **Action:** Michelle.

3. *Finance Report*

Toby's finance report for the year ended 31 December 2024 had been circulated. Thanks to the parish council grant and individual donations, the Trust's reserves had increased to just over £4,733 (compared with £4,067 in 2023). Toby was thanked for his report, which would go to the AGM in April. Two comments were made: under income, allotment licences should be

treated separately from wayleaves, and the parish council allocation should be categorized as a grant rather than a donation (i.e. to be regarded as part of anticipated regular income). **Action:** Rosy to contact Toby to address these points.

4. Appointment to vacant trustee post

The required advertisement period for the trustee vacancy had expired. One candidate (Andrew Derrick) had come forward and was duly appointed until 14 December 2028. Rosy will update the Charity Commission. **Action:** Rosy.

5. Asbestos

Eve had been in touch with two asbestos-removal firms, one of which had visited the site (and had met with a hostile reception from one or two allotment holders). No costs had yet been received. It was agreed that Eve should follow up with the two firms, asking for an opinion on the need for asbestos removal and, if removal is needed, asking them to explain why it is necessary (in case this is questioned), as well as the likely cost. It may be necessary to obtain an independent assessment. Joy suggested that David Moyes, who has a licence for grazing his horses, might be offered the land to the south of Prevost's Path once the sheep have left, as this was good management practice and might also facilitate any programme of asbestos removal. **Actions:** Eve to follow up with both asbestos removal firms. Joy to approach David Moyes on grazing.

6. AGM planning

The AGM will be held at 2pm on Saturday 12 April. The village hall had been booked. The Revd. Rob Leverett was suggested as a speaker, relating his travels in Antarctica with the BBC (he had already given this talk at Snape). Karen will ask him. If he is unavailable, a speaker might be sought from the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths National Landscape, or the SWT. Once the speaker is confirmed, a notice and agenda should go on the village noticeboard (Eve), the village Facebook group (Rosy) and (especially if Revd. Rob is confirmed) Ebb and Flow (Eve). Arrangements for refreshments etc. can be made by email/telephone closer to the day. **Actions:** Karen to contact Revd. Rob, Eve and Rosy to promote the event once speaker confirmed.

7. Owl box

No progress had been made with the installation of the owl box. A cherry picker was needed, and Joy knew someone who had one. Rosy will liaise with Laurence Potter (who made the box and will install it) about dates and then contact the cherry picker owner. Joy also reported that she had some blackthorn whips and wondered if they could be used to complete a hedge on an existing line, helping to protect the area around the owl box. The suggestion was welcomed and could be a task for the next working party (see below). Also supported was her suggestion that the nearby shed could be adapted to become a bird hide; this might be the subject of a future grant application or fundraising drive. **Action:** Joy to liaise with Laurence Potter and her contact with cherry picker and agree a date for installation.

7: Jasper's Pightle update

Work parties on 12 and 25 January had seen the completion of vegetation clearance around the roadside hedging. Cut bracken was chopped and laid around the saplings to provide a mulch. More barbed wire had been removed from the north walk, and only a short stretch remained. The barbed wire had been placed in one of the old pig styes, and it would be desirable to get this taken away at some stage, if access can be arranged. No action was needed at present; work parties would resume in the autumn/winter.

8: Stone Common update

A wassail had been held at Stone Common and the playing field on 18 January, with cider-soaked toast hung on fruit trees and cider poured around the roots, accompanied by saucepan banging and wassailing. It was followed by a bonfire with mulled cider and refreshments. It was agreed that this enjoyable event should be repeated in future, relieving the January blues.

Areas of the open grassland are now being grazed by Miranda Barclay's sheep, as part of the process of habitat maintenance. It was reported that the presence of sheep had been welcomed by Stone Common residents.

Joy had some blue tit boxes which needed to go up, and Michelle noted there was still some wire requiring removal. It was agreed to hold a work party at 2pm on Sunday 23 February, when Joy's blackthorn whips might also be planted. **Action:** Eve to notify volunteers.

9. AOB

It was thought that the litter pick should be brought forward to March, before the rubbish is concealed by spring growth. It was agreed that this should take place on Saturday 15 to Sunday 23 March, to include two weekends. **Action:** Eve to obtain materials and notify volunteers.

Date of next meeting: 2pm on Saturday 12 April at Village Hall (AGM).