

BLAXHALL COMMONS and OPEN SPACES CHARITABLE TRUST

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting

Sunday 14 December 2025 at 4.00 pm

Waterloo House

Attendance: Andrew Derrick – Trustee (chairing)
Karen Baker - PC nominated Trustee
Rosy Thornton - Trustee
Eve Rossor - Trustee and Hon Secretary
Toby Bushill - Trustee and Hon Treasurer
Michelle Flowers - Trustee
Joy Shaw - Blaxhall Tree Warden
Darcy Proctor
Sue Bushill

Apologies: Mark Oakley - PC nominated Trustee

1. *Minutes of the meeting of 11 October*

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

2. *Matters Arising*

Eve had not yet talked to Natalie about the Sizewell C Community Fund, but it was noted that Natalie had talked about grant applications at the Allotment AGM.

Action: Eve to speak to Natalie.

3. *Finance*

Toby reported that BCOST funds had increased following the receipt of a £750 grant from East Suffolk Council's Enabling Communities Fund, obtained with the kind help of Tim Wilson, District Councillor.

4. East Suffolk Enabling Communities Fund grant

The Trustees discussed how the £750 should be spent, as the bid had included a picnic table and signage as well as the request for sheep hurdles. It was agreed that the priority was obtaining adequate hurdles. Joy already has ten at Stone Common, so it was agreed to buy a further 40, using donations from the recent bonfire party to cover any shortfall. It was noted that the new hurdles will need to be labelled with oil-based paint.

Actions: Joy to identify a source of appropriate hurdles and email details to Trustees for agreement. Joy then to order the hurdles and liaise with Toby over payment.

5. DEI Policy

Rosy had drafted a short DEI policy, which was considered. The issue of disability access was discussed, as access to both the open area of Stone Common open and Jasper's Pightle are very challenging for those with limited mobility. It was agreed that a flat area by a picnic table at Stone Common would be good, and that a smoother path might be created to reach this from Prevost's Path (using materials appropriate to the setting), perhaps by taking a shallower route across the gradient. (It was however noted that access for wheelchair users will still need to be by car as far as the Stone Common parking area.)

Actions: Rosy to redraft the EDI policy to remove repetition and to add a sentence on the aim of increasing access to the land. Trustees to meet on site at Stone Common prior to the February Trustees' meeting to look at access possibilities.

6. Safeguarding Policy

Rosy had not produced a draft BCOST Safeguarding Policy but brought copies of the SWT safeguarding policy as a possible template for discussion. It was agreed that a designated Safeguarding Officer would be desirable, and as Michelle is fully DBS-checked and safeguarding-trained, she kindly agreed to take on this role. It was agreed that children would not be permitted to join work parties unless accompanied by an adult who took full responsibility for the child; this would leave primarily the issue of adults at risk. It was agreed that it would be good to be able to say that all Trustees had undertaken some form of basic safeguarding training.

Actions: Rosy to draft a short Safeguarding Policy, covering the basic principles, for consideration at the next meeting.

Eve to look up suitable online safeguarding training for Trustees, perhaps through Community Action Suffolk.

7. Stone Common update

It was noted that the bonfire in November had been a great success. Around 30 people had attended and almost £100 raised by way of donations; the event had also been useful in raising the profile of BCOST in the village. It was felt that further attention is needed to clearing the area around the fire in the future and having rakes and containers of water to hand.

The PC had noted that some were unaware of the event, despite notices being placed on both noticeboards and at the pub, and the event being publicised on the village Facebook page. It was agreed that earlier setting of the date next year, to allow publication in the village newsletter, would be desirable.

It was noted that no bracken cutting has happened yet.

It was agreed that a second Wassail evening will be held on Sunday 25 January, starting at the playing field fruit trees at 4:00pm, following a 2:00pm work party at Stone Common to stack the bonfire and prepare the site. Participants will meet at the playing field fruit trees before processing with saucepans and spoons to Stone Common for further tree libation and wassail poems, as well as bonfire, mulled cider and refreshments.

Eve has been offered redstart nesting boxes by Eddie Bathgate of the Suffolk Bird Group. It was agreed to put some up at both Stone Common and Jasper's Pightle. Joy suggested that the small and larger huts on Stone Common could be repaired and possibly made into a hide for wildlife watching.

The next work party at Stone Common will be on 1 January at 2:00pm to work on hedge maintenance.

Issues of allotment boundaries will be discussed at the next Trustees' meeting.

Action: Andrew to produce a poster for the Wassail; Rosy to put copies up on notice boards and in the pub, and to advertise the event on the village Facebook page.

8. Jasper's Pightle update

Work parties will be held on Saturday 27 December 27th at 2:00pm (if good weather) and Sunday 11 January at 2:00pm, working on hedge maintenance.

It was noted that the log fallen across the Pightle's north path has not been cleared.

Action: Michelle volunteered Neil to clear the fallen log.

9. *Dates of meetings 2026*

There was a discussion as to whether meetings might be less frequent. The Trustees agreed to continue two-monthly with the possibility of omitting the August meeting if there is insufficient business.

Meeting dates were agreed as follows:

Saturday 21 February, 4:00pm - plan for the AGM

Saturday 18 April, 2:00pm AGM

Saturday 13 June, 4:00pm - plan festivals

[Saturday 22 August, 4:00pm – provisional]

Saturday 10 October, 4:00pm - plan autumn litter pick, bonfire

Saturday 5 December, 4:00pm

10. *AOB*

Sizewell C Community Fund: it was agreed that this should be discussed at the next Trustees' meeting, including ideas for use of a potential grant (e.g. Stone Common picnic table and improved access) with a view to making an application in the next round.

Date of next meeting: Saturday 21 February at 4:00pm at Toby's, preceded by a site visit at 3:30pm to the allotments and woodland area at Stone Common.