

BLAXHALL COMMONS and OPEN SPACES CHARITABLE TRUST

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting

Saturday 13 June 2026 at 4.00 pm

Vine Cottage

Attendance: Rosy Thornton – Trustee (chairing)
Karen Baker – PC nominated Trustee
Toby Bushill – Trustee and Hon Treasurer
Eve Rossor – Trustee and Hon Secretary
Joy Shaw – Blaxhall Tree Warden
Darcey Proctor

Apologies: Andrew Derrick – Trustee
Michelle Flowers – Trustee

1. *Minutes of meetings*

The Minutes of the AGM of 18 April and of the extraordinary meeting of Trustees on 3 May were agreed as correct and will both be put on the website.

2. *Matters Arising*

There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

3. *Finance Update*

I was reported that the £250 grant from the Parish Council had recently been received, and Toby had thanked the parish clerk. There was otherwise no change in the finances.

4. *Sizewell C Community Fund grant application*

It was provisionally agreed the items to be applied for are:

(i) A bird hide:

Joy suggested that the smaller of the two existing, semi-derelict sheds could be replaced by a bird hide overlooking the rewilding area to the left of Prevost's Path. It might include a small lockable section for storing work party tools and first aid kit. Rosy had identified a company in Norfolk which makes appropriately sized hides. The possibility of finding a local carpenter/builder to construct a similar structure was agreed to be a

desirable, if this could be done at a budget in line with the Norfolk hide cost. It was noted that Michelle has already placed redundant paving slabs by the existing shed as a potential base for the hide.

Action: All to contact possible local people who might be willing to make such a structure.

(ii) A bench:

It was agreed that rather than having a picnic bench with integral table, there should be a bench with a back, and with or without arms, and that the bench should be placed near the area with the bonfire, with a view across the valley. Different designs were discussed. A log bench rather than a slatted bench was generally preferred. Joy suggested that the SWT site at Bradfield Woods might be able to provide a suitable log from clearance, if a local carpenter could be found to make the bench. Means to optimise the preservation of a wooden bench were also considered, including regular application of timber treatment as part of work party activity.

Actions: Eve to contact Bradfield woods to see if a suitable log might be sourced there. Eve to see whether Nelson Potter might be able to make us a bench. All to talk also to other wood workers they know to ascertain possible interest in building a bench.

(iii) Levelling of the track to improve accessibility:

Kerway had visited with Toby and Eve some months ago, and suggested repairing the eroded area at the bottom end of the track (past Shane's house) with a material which would not wash away easily. They had quoted for road planings (recycled tarmac) and also for 'crush and run' (a natural material consisting of crushed stone mixed with finer stone dust and rolled to form a solid but porous surface) at the same cost. The latter was preferred as avoiding toxic run-off into soil or water courses. The plan would be to level the track as far as corner by the car parking area, by skimming the central raised grass strip and filling dips and potholes. There would need to be caution when levelling at the top to avoid any risk of flooding. It was noted that there is also an eroded area of the track passing 3/4 Stone Cottages which could also be skimmed and filled, this work to be included in the bid. Again, care would need to be taken to avoid creating a flooding risk.

Action: Toby to consult with Chris and Roy Keeble about whether they would be happy to have the eroded area by them filled.

(iv) Bat boxes:

Joy reported that there are barbastelle bats in the churchyard – a species which nests in woodland but also hunts out over open ground. It was agreed that the provision of one or more maternity boxes, to be placed on suitably sited trees, could be added to the bid.

It was agreed too put together a draft application, including the above items, to the Sizewell C Community Fund. This draft then to be discussed with the officer designated by the Fund to advise on potential applications prior to their submission. The need was

agreed to consult on the planned application with residents of Stone Common, allotment holders and other local people who might use the access land.

Actions: Toby to put together a draft application. Based on this, Rosy then to draft a flyer to go to all 'affected' households, and on the notice boards, asking for comments. Eve to distribute the flyer once produced.

5. Stone Common allotments and land usage

I was noted that allotment holder and Stone Common residents had been notified of the plans for the track and that there is now a waiting list for allotments. A suggestion that allotments could be shared has not resulted in any offers to do so. Discussions covered unused and underused areas. The Trustees agreed that the rewilding area to the left of Prevost's Path should be maintained as such, with the sheep keeping vegetation under control. Joy and Darcey agreed, however, that Darcey's goats could share the grazing with the sheep but would need their own enclosure.

It was reported that Eve and Rosy as Trustees, and Joy as Tree Warden, are to meet with the Pearces on Monday (15 June) to discuss the management of the considerable number of overgrown trees and blackthorn on their allotments; now that their licence agreement is, from September, to be for cultivation (or keeping poultry/livestock) rather than rewilding as at present, there is a need to let in more light in order to facilitate this. The meeting will also address again the boundary of the Pearces' allotments, which, as they were notified in August last year, must be resolved by 1 September if their allotment licence is to be renewed.

6. Jasper's Pightle update

It was noted that all the wire has now been cleared along the north walk, but that more wire remains along the western boundary of the land (between the north walk and the road). It was also noted that the fallen tree no longer obstructs the pathway, as walkers have circumvented it and created a new path. The hedging is growing well. SWT will cut the bracken when ground nesting is over.

7. AOB

Blaxhall Festival 27/28 June and Blaxhall Fete 25 August: BCOST will provide a display using last year's materials plus an update on the Stone Common plans and the redstart nesting boxes.

Actions: Rosy to produce draft new display materials. Eve and Rosy to put these up for the Festival.

It was reported that Rosy and Eve had completed the annual return to the Charity Commission.

Date of next meeting: Saturday 22 August at 4:00pm at Vine Cottage