

BLAXHALL COMMONS AND OPEN SPACES CHARITABLE TRUST

Minutes of Trustees' meeting

Saturday 5 March 2022, 4pm, 2 Ship Cottages

Attendance

Andrew Derrick
Rosy Thornton
Karen Baker
Mark Oakley
Eve Rossor

1. Apologies: Mike Livesey, Rodney West.
2. Minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the meeting of 29 January 2021 were agreed as correct, and could now be added to the website.
3. Matters arising

Rosy updated trustees on progress with registering the Trust with the Charity Commission. This appears to be required as BCOS income exceeded £5,000 in 2021; however, future income is likely to be considerably less, so it is possible that the Commission will not require registration. Further information (eg contact details, details of involvement with other charities) will be required from trustees.

Actions:

- **Trustees to provide information to Rosy on request**
- **Rosy to continue to progress the application, then circulate it for approval before submission.**

4. Jasper's Pightle update

Karen had contacted Kevin Ross about the unsafe pine tree on the north track. Agreed that he should be asked to quote for making this safe, avoiding blocking the track. He should also be asked if he can carry out a general health check of the trees at JP, following the recent storms.

Karen enquired about provision of a seat at JP. A friend of Eve had indicated willingness to make this. It was agreed that something very simple should be provided, possibly using wood from the pine tree about to be made safe.

Hedge planting along the road: JP is in the parish of Tunstall. In the past Suffolk County Council has funded hedge planting along roads. Eve to ask Blaxhall Tree Warden Joy Shaw about who best to approach. Rosy also to contact Rodney again to see if he and Maggie have any hedging plants.

Next work party: A date was agreed of Sunday 13 March at 2pm for further removal or wire fencing on the north track, along with moving wood to form a 'dead hedge' on that boundary.

Actions:

- Eve to contact Kevin Ross for a quote(s) for making safe the pine and carrying out a general health check
- Eve to contact her friend about making a seat with wood from JP
- Eve to ask Joy Shaw about possible grant sources for hedge planting along the road
- Rosy to ask Rodney about possible availability of hedging plants
- Eve to contact supporters about work party on 13 March.

5. Jasper's Pightle Management Plan

No immediate works required. Ben of SWT to be contacted nearer the time for arranging bracken cutting.

6. Stone Common update

Tree planting: A successful planting of fruit trees, as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, took place at Stone Common and on Blaxhall playing field on 5 March, by twelve Blaxhall (or nearby) children, organised and supported by Suzy and Malcolm Pearce and Joy Shaw. Thanks were due to all.

The SWT report on the commons and spaces in Blaxhall had been circulated after the last meeting and had now been uploaded to the BCOS website.

Eve had sent a letter to all allotment holders about the future of the allotments, but as yet had received no responses; she would write again with a reminder.

Management Plan: This needs to be agreed before September, when allotments fees are due for renewal. It was noted that many people have long histories of involvement with the allotments, and may wish to continue paying the fees even if they are not actively working them. However, the Trust needs to take account of its obligations regarding public access, as well as ensuring the land is managed in accordance with our charitable objects. Requests have recently been made to the Secretary of the Allotments Committee for horse and sheep grazing on the allotments. These questions would need to be addressed in the Management Plan. Rodney West should be asked whether he was able to put together a first draft; if not, other trustees would have a go.

Maggie Grenham and Molly Pictor have bought a lime tree which they would like planted at Stone Common. As limes can be large, it was agreed that it would be best to plant it on the boundary with the asparagus field, continuing the existing line of oaks.

Abandoned cars: Two cars have been left on the common land for two years or more. It was agreed that the Trust should write to the owners requesting that they move the cars. If there is no response, we should take steps to ensure legal removal.

It was agreed that trustees should find a time soon to walk round the allotments with the Secretary of the Allotments Committee to see how the land was currently being used.

Actions:

- **Eve to contact Rodney to see whether he is able to prepare a draft Management Plan, and if so by when**
- **Eve to send a reminder to allotment holders about previous letter**
- **Eve to notify Maggie and Molly of trustees' views on the placement of the lime tree**
- **Eve to write to owners of abandoned cars, requesting their removal**
- **Eve to arrange a trustees' walk around the allotments with allotment secretary.**

7. UK power networks and National Grid

At Stone Common, the pylon will provide an annual wayleave payment of £500 a year in perpetuity, with the next payment being due in September. As an alternative, an easement would provide a one-off capital payment of at least £4,500. Trustees agreed to continue with the wayleave payment.

The annual wayleave payment for the electricity poles and wires at Jasper's Pightle will be £62, backdated two years. Twelve months' notice is required for any change to the agreement. Agreed to accept and sign this agreement, at least for the present, leaving open the possibility in the future of looking into the alternative of the grant of an easement.

Trustees were unclear whether the transfers of the Trust's land, at JP and at Stone Common, is yet all fully registered with Land Registry, including the transfer of the legal titles to the Official Custodian for Charities.

Actions:

- **Rosy to provide Mark with the title numbers**
- **Mark to check the Land Register once provided with the title numbers.**

8. Mill Common house building

At the PC meeting on 2 March, it was reported that the landowner Mr Pugh had yet to make a formal approach about his proposal to build houses on School Hill and on the area previously worked as an allotment by Mark and Mercedes Oakley, and in return to offer the remaining land to the village. Nor had representatives of the PC yet been able to arrange an informal meeting with a planning officer. There was therefore nothing specific to discuss, but BCOS will look carefully at any proposal that comes forward. Trustees noted that since the last application for development on the sites in question, Blaxhall has been defined in the new Local Plan as 'Countryside', with a presumption against new housing except in existing clusters. There was also a policy protecting existing allotment land.

9. AOB

Spring Litter Pick: Week of 3-10 April agreed.

An annual report will be needed for the Annual Parish Meeting and AGM, both in May.

10. Date of next meeting

Sunday 24 April, 4.30pm at Vine Cottage