

# **DRAFT** BLAXHALL COMMONS and OPEN SPACES CHARITABLE TRUST

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 2:00pm**

### **Blaxhall Village Hall**

Attendance: Andrew Derrick (Trustee, Chair)  
Eve Rossor (Trustee and Hon Secretary)  
Mike Livesey (Trustee and Hon Treasurer)  
Rosy Thornton (Trustee)  
Karen Baker (Trustee - Parish Council nominee)  
Mark Oakley (Trustee - Parish Council nominee)  
Rodney West (Trustee)  
Paul Bryant  
Mike Cowling  
Sophie Martin  
Evelyn Parkinson  
Joy Shaw  
Jill Suckling  
Nigel Suckling

1. *Apologies*: Martin Rossor
2. *Minutes*: Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting, held via Zoom on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were approved. They will now be added to the BCOS website.
3. *Matters arising*: There were none not covered in the Annual Report.
4. *Re-appointment of Trustees*: No Trustee was due for reappointment.

The Trustees welcomed anyone interested in becoming a Trustee when there is next a vacancy, or in joining work parties or being involved in administration and strategy.

5. *Annual Report 2021-2022*: Andrew read out the Report, which will be placed on the new website, [www.Blaxhallcommons.com](http://www.Blaxhallcommons.com). The main areas reported were as follows:
  - Stone Common: the ownership of the registered common, allotment land and wooded area was transferred to the Trust.
  - Jasper's Pightle: A 5-year management plan was adopted and can be viewed on the website. Thanks go to volunteers who have raked bracken on the Pightle and cleared fencing along the northern boundary.
  - Tree Planting: BCOS volunteers have supported Joy Shaw the Blaxhall Tree Warden in sourcing funding for, and planting, hedging at Stone Common, and extending the

Community Orchard at the Playing Fields and at Stone Common as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, with Blaxhall children and grandchildren planting the trees.

- Negotiations with the National Grid and UK Power Networks: Rosy has been successful in obtaining wayleave payments for the pylon on Stone Common and posts and wires on Jasper's Pightle.
- Charity Commission registration: The Trust is now registered with the Charity Commission, having achieved an income over £5000 in the year 2021-2022. The Commission required that a new Trust Deed be executed: this is now on the website.

6. *Stone Common Management Plan*: This is currently in development and will be made available when ready, for consultation with allotment holders, Stone Common residents and others. The management plan being developed proposes that all land to the left of the main path going uphill will be reverted back to acid grassland and gorse. (It was noted that a good example of this type of habitat is the first field when approaching Captain's Wood at Sudbourne.) Any allotments in active cultivation will continue as such, and the existing woodland will be retained. There will be considerable work needed to remove redundant fencing to enable easier public access to all areas not in cultivation or being grazed, and to remove rubbish. It was noted that there is asbestos on the site which will need to be professionally inspected and may need to be removed, and that this may involve substantial expenditure for which, as at Jasper's Pightle, funds will need to be raised.

In response to a question by the Blaxhall Allotment Secretary about allotment licence fees, it was confirmed that the fees at Stone Common will remain aligned with those at the Mill Common allotments.

Evelyn Parkinson suggested that the Trust might consider applying to the Basic Payment Scheme for both Jasper's Pightle and Stone Common. The scheme is being phased out by 2027. It was agreed to look into this possibility.

It was reported that the bridleway through the land will be named 'Prevost's Path' in recognition of the Lord of the Manor's generous gift. Suffolk Highways have agreed to recognise the name. Signage will be added.

7. *Hon Treasurer's Report*: The Trust Financial Year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December. During the year Jan-Dec 2021 there was considerable fundraising, with £8665.32 raised in donations, grants and via Just Giving, including £70 in cash. £8021.25 was paid out during the year, primarily for asbestos clearance but also for insurance, bracken clearance and skip hire. On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 the balance stood at £3697.62 with £150 in cash and £30.84 petty cash.

The annual income from the electricity installation wayleaves on Stone Common and Jasper's Pightle, together with allotment licence fees at Stone Common, is expected to cover all anticipated recurrent expenditure going forward.

8. *AOB*: Joy Shaw (Blaxhall Tree Warden) alerted the Trust that this is the time of year for grant applications for hedge and tree planting for next winter. It was advised that because Jasper's Pightle is mainly in Tunstall parish, the Trust should liaise with Kevin Ross, the

Tunstall Tree Warden, regarding fundraising for hedging along the road at the Pightle. Joy will let the Trustees know of potential funding for Stone Common. The Trustees thanked Joy for her hard and effective work during the year and for her contagious enthusiasm.

Joy reported a meeting she had attended, along with some Mill Common residents with Mr Pugh (the owner of the common land there), to discuss the damage to verges and tracks caused by tractors near the Snape Road crossroads. Mr Pugh had given his agreement to tree planting and limited bracken cutting, and local residents had organised work parties to carry out this work.

It was noted that the Blaxhall Festival will be held on 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> June. BCOST have been invited to have a display at the event.

It was noted that the Platinum Jubilee will be celebrated in Blaxhall by the lighting of the Beacon on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, and by a social afternoon at the Playing Field on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June, with activities such as boules, tug-of-war, table tennis and rounders.

Nigel Suckling noted that the Trust has been in existence since 2015, when he was among the founding Trustees. He congratulated BCOST on its positive achievements and raised profile in the village since that time. The Trustees thanked Nigel and Jill Suckling for their hard work as volunteers.

Mike Cowling noted that, following Charity Commission registration, the Trust will in future need to set a formal budget for the year ahead as well as presenting accounts for the year past.

Rodney noted that the Trustees should continue to monitor whether the grant of an easement, producing a one-off capital sum, rather than an annual wayleave may become in the Trust's interest, particularly in light of the expected Sizewell C development which may mean more and bigger pylons. It was noted that, if this decision were taken in future, the Charity Commission may not favour charities retaining unspent large capital sums. Nigel recommended that, if a sizeable capital sum were obtained, the Trustees might identify the money as a ringfenced contingency fund for some broadly specified future purpose.

*Date of next meeting:* To be arranged by email and telephone.