

BLAXHALL COMMONS and OPEN SPACES CHARITABLE TRUST

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES' MEETING

Saturday 29th October 2022 at 4:30pm
at Vine Cottage

Attendance: Karen Baker)
 Andrew Derrick)
 Mike Livesey) Trustees
 Eve Rossor)
 Rosy Thornton)

Joy Shaw (Tree Warden)

Apologies: Mark Oakley

1. *Minutes of the meeting of 17th September 2022:* Agreed.
Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of 2nd October 2022, held to progress Stone Common allotment licences, had also been circulated to the Trustees.
2. *Matters arising:* There were none not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.
3. *Stone Common*

Update on licences: Paul Bryant has completed the process for plot 30. Rodney has paid for plot 29. Eve had raised the possibility of sharing this plot with another licensee when she emailed Rod last month; he did not currently wish to adopt this suggestion. The Keebles have paid for plot 28. A conversation still needs to be had concerning stored possessions in the Nissen hut on David Moyes' plot.

Joy had spoken to David Moyes in relation to plots 21 to 25. Alistair Shaw and a friend have agreed to help move David's camper van from the land. David told Joy that he had previously been told not to block with fencing a public footpath crossing the far side of his five plots, which is why he has not been grazing his horse in that area. The Trustees discussed this and are happy for David to extend the grazing over all the area he pays for, as this does not cross the footpath (as indicated on the highways authority's definitive map). David had also expressed to Joy some concern about what BCOST's ownership of the land would mean for Stone Common. The Trustees agreed they would wish to reassure David that the land is safe from development in the Trust's ownership, and that the management plan sets out its intentions as to how the land will be managed, in compliance with the obligations and purposes of the charity. The Trustees agreed to review the state of the second Nissen hut in the future, in terms of asbestos.

It was reported that Nigella is in the process of clearing the areas which she formerly used for grazing, and that she will assess whether any of her pig shelters may be viable for future use. Joy suggested the possibility of having pigs graze some of Nigella's former grazing land over the summer as part of the management of the acid grassland, since pigs are good clearing agents for bracken. Joy will make enquiries of a local pig farmer.

In relation to plots 1-3, it was reported that Mollie would prefer chickens not to be kept on her former allotments, but remains concerned about letting the area 'go wild'. Joy had spoken to Mollie about the aims of the Trust, and explained that there is a management plan which ensures that the area will be managed as grassland, with the possibility of wild flowers, gorse etc. **Action:** Rosy and Karen to visit Mollie to offer further reassurance about the management of her former allotments.

Chickens: Joy pointed out that whatever decision is made about the possible allocation of space for a chicken consortium, the current bird 'flu situation should delay any start to the keeping of chickens at Stone Common.

Hedge Planting: Joy is getting plugs of saplings at the end of November. It was suggested that the Trust organises work parties around Christmas and the New Year. Dates agreed:

Tuesday 27th December, 2:00pm at Stone Common and

Monday 2nd January, 2:00pm at Stone Common

Actions Eve to email all on the mailing list about these work parties, and leaflet Stone Common.

Bracken Cutting: It was reported that Andrew and Rosy had visited both Stone Common and Jasper's Pightle with Will Newson, who confirmed that he will cut the bracken at Stone Common, and also do the trench digging at the Pightle (see below). Andrew and Rosy had walked over the land with Will to check access points and areas requiring cutting. An approximate estimate of £400 was agreed for cutting the Stone Common bracken. **Actions:** Eve to confirm the quote with Will and check when the work will be done. Eve to organise raking work parties, by email circulation, once the bracken has been cut.

Signage: Eve noted that simple wooden signs are not expensive, and offered to order two for Prevost's Path, and claim for these through petty cash. **Action:** Eve to order signs.

Waiting list for allotments: It was reported that two people have expressed an interest in having an allotment.

4. *Jasper's Pightle*

Bracken cutting: Eve has contacted Ben Calvesbert to check whether he is intending to cut the bracken. Will need to organise bracken raking work parties once it has been cut.

Hedge planting: It was reported that AONB work parties for hedge planting along the road at the Pightle have been scheduled for 13th December 2022 and 21st February 2023. AONB hope to bring 6-10 volunteers, and BCOST also to publicise the dates to our own mailing list. Will Newson will cut the bracken along marked areas of the verge and then dig trenches, to be backfilled with the cut bracken as mulch. Eve, Andrew, Karen and Rosy have marked out the stretches where trenches are required, and also done a litter pick along the area in preparation. **Actions:** Eve to contact Will to firm up dates for the work. Rosy to email Will to explain the markings that have been set out.

Wooden Seat: Andrew reported that he has confirmed with John Finlinson the order of the agreed design, and Rosy, Karen, Eve and Andrew have identified and marked out the space where it will be located (what3words reference: “rare little employers”). Karen will organise a suitable brass plate with inscription to be fixed to the bench.

5. *Insurance for volunteers*

Rosy had looked into this and suggested that, in addition to general public liability, it may be advisable for the Trust to take out employers' liability insurance to cover volunteers joining work parties (although this is not a legal requirement). She also suggested drafting a safety document to be given to volunteers (and/or appended to emails publicising work parties) detailing risks and safety advice. The Trust could also consider a disclaimer at the bottom of any emails about work parties. Eve had emailed the NFU on our insurance position in relation to future work parties and is awaiting a reply. Her enquiry had covered bracken raking and hedge planting, but not litter picking along roadsides, which needs to be added to the query. **Actions:** Eve to email NFU mentioning litter picking work parties. Eve to order some hi-vis tabards for use by volunteers. Eve to liaise with Rosy when she gets a reply from NFU; Rosy then to draft a risk/safety notice for issue to volunteers.

6. *Litter Pick*

It was reported that the autumn litter pick had taken place at the beginning of October with a reasonable result. A photo has been taken for future use as necessary.

7. *Finances*

Mike reported that we hold £4,829.89 in the bank and cash of approximately £200.

8. *AOB*

Meetings: Mark had suggested that we plan these for the year ahead so that those absent do not miss planned dates. It was agreed that meetings should be scheduled every two months, which can be altered if needed, and extraordinary meetings held in between when business necessitates it. The following schedule was agreed (all meetings to be at 4:00pm at Vine Cottage unless otherwise stated):

2022

Saturday 10th December

2023

Sunday 12th February

Saturday 15th April (AGM) Village Hall

Saturday 10th June

Saturday 19th August (NB: village fete on the 12th August)

Saturday 14th October

Saturday 9th December

Bird boxes: Joy suggested that boxes for blue tits might be purchased and placed near the fruit trees at Stone Common. **Action:** Eve to see what is available.

Village activities: The Trustees noted the dates of upcoming village activities:

Village fete - 12th August 2023

Planning meeting for village fete - the Ship, 20th November 2022

Christmas party - 10th December 2022

Coronation celebrations May 2023 (to be arranged)

Openness of meetings: Trustees noted that our Trust Deed states that every effort should be made to make trustees' meetings open to the public. To this end, it was agreed that all minutes should include a line at the end stating that members of the public are welcome to attend. Minutes will be forwarded to Jo Peters (Parish Clerk) once approved rather than placed on the notice boards (due to space constraints on notice boards).

9. *Date of Next Meeting:* Saturday December 10th December, 4:00pm at Vine Cottage.

NOTE: All members of the public are welcome to come to meetings, but please let Eve know if planning to attend, for purposes of seating.