

Minutes of a meeting of
The Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust

2.00pm, Saturday 16th January 2016
The Committee Room, Blaxhall Village Hall

Present: S. Smedley, N. Suckling, J. Hume, E. Rossor

NOTE: Some sections of these minutes may have been redacted in order to remove commercially sensitive information and to protect the privacy of third parties.

1. All Trustees present signed the Trustee Declaration. The Declaration had already been signed by Mark Oakley as the other Trustee.
2. **To elect a chairman for the meeting**
It was agreed that Steve Smedley would be the main point of contact for the Charitable Trust. It was also agreed to only appoint a chair for public meetings.
3. **To elect a secretary for the meeting**
SS agreed to take the minutes of the meeting.
4. **Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Mark Oakley.
5. **Finance**
 - 5.1. SS updated Trustees on the application to open a bank account with The Co-operative Bank. The application had been submitted on the 23rd December but nothing had yet been received back from the bank. He confirmed that SS, NS and ER would be the signatories to the account, with any two of the three being required to authorise expenditure.
 - 5.2. The requirement to appoint a Responsible Financial Officer / Treasurer was discussed. NS agreed to maintain simple income and expenditure accounts for the time being until the income of the Charity increased, but suggested that Sheila Stephenson (The Nook, Mill Common) could be approached to maintain the accounts.

ACTION: NS

It was agreed that JH should approach Community Action Suffolk to introduce the Charity to them and to see if they could suggest someone who could carry take on the role of RFO.

ACTION: JH

6. To review and approve letters to land owners and local community

The need for a website and domain name for the Charity was discussed and agreed. JH agreed to register the domain name **blaxhallcommonstrust.org.uk**, to set up email accounts for the Charity and to ensure they were redirected to the Trustees' existing email accounts as appropriate.

ACTION: JH

JH also agreed to ask Jonathan Cutting (owner of **blaxhall.com**) if he would be available to set up a website for the Charity. He also agreed to investigate opportunities for website hosting with OneSuffolk.

ACTION: JH

It was agreed that the creation of a Facebook page for the Charity would be deferred.

Draft letters produced by SS to (a) every household in the village and (b) every owner of common land in the village were discussed and additions and amendments were agreed. SS to circulate amended versions for approval.

ACTION: SS

It was agreed that SS would produce a draft design for a letterhead, to be approved by Trustees.

ACTION: SS

SS informed the Trustees that Shane Pictor (Greenbanks, Stone Common) had been approached to do the printing and had tendered an estimate of £35. The Trustees agreed that Mr Pictor should print the letters, but that SS would purchase the paper separately. NS offered to donate envelopes. It was agreed the letters should be personalised with handwritten names of addressees. Letters to be printed, addressed and hand-delivered as soon as they have been approved. Copies to be sent to the Clerk to the Parish Council and to District Councillor Ray Herring with a covering letter thanking them for their support.

ACTION: SS, ER

7. Right to Bid: land at Mill Common

The Trustees reviewed the situation with respect to the proposal of Mr David Pugh to dispose of parts of Mill Common, as far as it is currently

known. [REDACTED]

It was agreed that the view of a local surveyor or land agent should be sought for guidance on land value. It was also agreed that ER should investigate what the view of the Open Spaces Society is with respect to the commercial value of common land.

ACTION: ER

A draft letter to be sent to Mr Pugh advising him of the Charity's intention to put in a bid for the land was approved with amendments, to include an invitation to meet with Trustees in early February. To be sent out following final approval.

ACTION: SS

[REDACTED]

ACTION: NS

It was also agreed that a meeting between the Charity and property owners at Mill Common on this particular issue would be beneficial to all parties in order to develop common goals and aims. To be considered after the public meeting of 5th March (see below).

8. Plans for fund raising

The Trustees discussed the Public Works Loan Board, a statutory body that provides loans to public bodies such as parish councils. It was agreed that the Clerk to Blaxhall Parish Council should be approached to investigate what opportunities there might be for Blaxhall Parish Council to make funds available to the Charity via this route.

ACTION: JH, SS

The availability of funds from a number of grant bodies was discussed, including Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Viridor, The Adnams Charity and Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. However, in the short term the Charity would need to attract private donations and loans. Consequently the Charity would need to be ready with a "pitch" to villagers once the asking price for Mr Pugh's Mill Common land is known. It was noted that the initial letter to villagers would include a stated intention to send out a further letter as soon as possible asking for donations. Particular individuals in Blaxhall could be targeted by the Trustees for significant donations. Letters seeking

donations should also be sent to people outside the village who have links with Blaxhall.

9. Any other business

It was agreed that press activity with the East Anglian Daily Times should be deferred until fund raising was underway.

The idea of a patron was suggested. Possible names included members of the family of George Ewart Evans, Philip Hope-Cobbold and Sir Edward Greenwell. To be reconsidered at a later date.

10. Date of next meeting

The Trustees agreed that the next meeting of the Charity should be open to the public and should incorporate a “study day” where aspects of legislation concerning common land could be discussed. This could include input from the Open Spaces Society.

It was agreed that this meeting would be set for the afternoon of Saturday 5th March, in the Village Hall and should be announced in the letter to go out to villagers. A further leaflet would be distributed nearer the time. SS to make booking for meeting and to draft leaflet.

ACTION: SS

In order to provide money for ongoing expenses while the bank account was being set up, donations of £20 each were gratefully received from Nigel Suckling, Eve Rossor and Jeff Hume.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.