

Blaxhall Commons and Open Spaces Trust meeting Saturday March 17th  
2018  
3pm in the Village Hall

22 attendees and 7 apologies

Introduction: Eve welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming despite the weather.

Events of the past year were described

Trustees - Nigel reached the end of his term of office and stood down. Jeff Hume has recently resigned. Rosy Thornton, author academic, runner and Blaxhall enthusiast and Rodney West, local ornithologist, ecologist, environmental expert and authority on Blaxhall's past, have joined the Trust.

Meeting in October 2017 to inform the membership about the Local Plan consultation and ascertain members' views on potential housing locations. A response was sent from the Trust to SCDC following the meeting.

Right to Bid - renewal application completed for the Parish Council

Hedge removal- the Trust did object to the removal of the hedge abutting the Great Common. Representatives have met with Langmead Farms to plan where to plant new hedges and trees.

Litter Picks- carried out in October. The next picks are planned for Sat/Sun April 7/8. Meet at the Youth Hostel car park at 10am

Facebook page set up. With Jeff's departure we are looking for a volunteer to help keep the website up to date.

Meeting to discuss the possibility of developing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP). At the October meeting this had been raised and supported in principle. The Trustees met with the Chair of Bredfield NP to find out what was involved with developing a NP

Neighbourhood Plan - Andrew Derrick, Trustee, gave an outline of the issues.

A Neighbourhood plan must have Parish Council support. The PC needs to appoint a willing team as a subcommittee of the PC. Ideally there should be a councillor on the team. It has to be community lead and demonstrate that the plan and policy are what the community want.

A NP is there to advise the National Policy and Planning Framework(NPPF) and Local Plan. It cannot contradict these but adds another level of detail -for example it can be specific about identity of Green Spaces/vistas/ where to build and can 'list' unlisted buildings and create design standards so that planners have to take note. It can look at eg transport, housing, environment - subjects chosen by the parishioners.

Money- the cost is paid by central government, a grant of £9000 available from what was the Dept for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Recently an extra £6000 was made available for those with technically difficult plans. There is no cost to the

Parish apart from taking up volunteers' time. Much of the involvement of parishioners is by questionnaires, with frequent feedback, and meetings as required to ensure that what is being created is what is wanted by the village.

AECOM provides free technical advice, having a government contract to support Neighbourhood Plans. DCLG approval has to be given for AECOM's help.

The District council provides planning support, and the Plan is scrutinised by an independent consultant identified by DCLG and if deemed satisfactory, goes to a village referendum. It is taken on if 50.1% or more of respondents approve.

Questions and comments:

Why wouldn't you do it?

Answer: It is a lot of work, but would be done by the NP team, not by the PC. The team would be made up of interested individuals. It will not cost the PC anything ie not put up the precept.

What is the governance?

Answer: SCDC appoint a planning officer to work with the team. There is central government scrutiny before being permitted to go to a referendum.

Does it mean that it advises planning decisions?

Answer: There have been exceptional cases, but if adopted by the Local Authority it has similar weight to planning advice in the Local Plan

What is the review period?

Answer: The lifespan is that of the Local Plan and the PC should review it 4 yearly.

Comments-

Village involvement is key, deciding what the priorities are

There are 19 NPs either completed or being worked on in Coastal Suffolk

Green spaces identified in the plan have very considerable protection

Need to demonstrate to the PC that a NP is wanted by a significant number. To be raised at the Annual Parish Meeting, which is held before the PC AGM on May 2nd this year. (The Annual Parish Meeting is the parishioners' meeting where anything can be discussed, and is chaired by the PC- usually the Chair). Suggestion that NPs should be an agenda item on the PC agenda.

Links:

[locality.org.uk/resources](http://locality.org.uk/resources)

[touchingthetide.org.uk](http://touchingthetide.org.uk)

[ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk](http://ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk)