

Blaxhall Commons and Open Spaces Charitable Trust

AGM Sunday April 11th 2021 at 4.30pm via Zoom

In attendance: Andrew Derrick - trustee (chair)
Eve Rossor - trustee (minutes)
Rosy Thornton - trustee
Karen Baker - PC nominated trustee
Mark Oakley- PC Nominated trustee
Nigel Suckling - member
Jill Suckling - member
Joy Shaw - member

1. Apologies: Mike Livesey - trustee (hon. treasurer)
Rodney West - trustee
Maggie Grenham - member
Evelyn and John Parkinson - members
Martin Rossor - member
2. Minutes of meetings of 16 January 2021, and 2020 AGM of 24 October 2020, and of fundraising subcommittee meetings of 23 January 2021 and 20 February 2021 were agreed as correct. Acceptance proposed by Rosy, seconded by Andrew.
3. Matters arising: Newsletter- there has not been a Trust newsletter since the summer of 2020. The intention had been to have a winter or spring newsletter and circulate it with the fundraising leaflet, which cannot happen until the Just Giving page is set up (awaiting HMRC registration before being able to proceed). Mark suggested that the BCOS updates will now be in the parish newsletter, which is funded by the parish council but is a village publication, and that the Trust should be putting forward a report to the annual parish meeting on May 5th. This was agreed. Updates could also be sent to Ebb and Flow, which Shane edits. If the Trust has significant announcements or news, they would merit a separate newsletter.

Facebook - there appears to be three Blaxhall pages, one inactive, another relating to Susie Hammond's work, and a third 'Blaxhall Group' which is closed and has 73 followers. (Reminder: the Trust's website, though pedestrian, is kept up to date: BlaxhallCommonsTrust.org.uk).

Action: Joy to let the Trust know who runs this Facebook page and Rosy to investigate and make contact.

4. Annual report: Nigel complimented the Trust on the content, and suggested that the report could form the basis of the Trust's submission to the annual parish meeting. Nigel proposed that the report should be adopted, seconded by Eve.
5. Hon. Treasurer's report: Mike sent his apologies. The accounts are on the website. The balance as of 31.12 2020 was £2,984.15. By 23 March, there was around £5,659, due to donations and subscriptions. Andrew proposed that the accounts be approved, seconded by Jill.

6. Fundraising Committee report: Rosy led on this item. There have been two subcommittee meetings, in January and February, and members undertook to chase up funding opportunities. Covid-19 has meant that most funding is directed to Covid-related charities. Andrew had obtained £500 from the Scarfe Trust, and Adnams Community fund allocation is awaited. Jill sent Eve a link which had been useful with fundraising for the church, and Nigel to forward details of the Lord Belstead Charitable Trust. Eve, Rosy and Karen have contacted family and friends to get donations in to demonstrate to funders that we are working on fundraising, using Rosy's fundraising leaflet. Future fundraising will need to be more open-ended, to cover expanding demands of eg management plans, insurance. Need to keep donors updated and, if necessary, check that they are happy for their money to be used at the Trust's discretion if there is a surplus after asbestos removal.

Action: Eve to contact Belstead Charitable Trust.

7. Pightle management: Work has been ongoing, and the efforts of the membership greatly valued. Raking of the cut bracken has reached near the 'yellow brick road' end of the Pightle, but is unlikely to be completed. Cutting of the bracken should be repeated before the end of July; Ben of SWT to be contacted. Karen had written a letter to the Trust with suggestions of how we might manage the land. She visited it with a botanist who suggested that heather may be encouraged and trees such as rowan and crab apple be planted. The possibility of creating a pond could be discussed with SWT. Bolt cutters are needed to help remove the pig wire. They noted sorrel and celandine growing. The future of the hut with the curved asbestos roof was raised, with a suggestion that it could be repaired and used for storing items. This would have insurance implications. Jill suggested that it would need to fit in with the Trust's 'vision'. Keeping and restoring the hut would be expensive, and we also have to be aware of public liability - the pit needs to be filled. Rod was leading on the management plan - an update is needed. Joy will contact Maggie about trees and hedging - would need to wait until the autumn/winter.

It was noted how much work Maggie has done as the Tree Warden and that we should help by reporting her good work to the Parish Council.

Action: Joy to feed back to Maggie about planting trees and hedges at the Pightle. Mark to feed back to the PC the Trust's view that Maggie is fulfilling the role of Tree Warden impressively and recommend that she is supported to continue in that role. Rodney to provide an update on Pightle Management Plan.

8. Stone Common: Land at Stone Common - the allotment area as well as common land and open land - has been offered to the Trust by Mr Prevost, with Maggie Grenham acting as his steward. Lawyers are still talking to each other. This acquisition is more complex than the Pightle. When transferred, a public meeting will be arranged to discuss plans.
9. Future budgeting: The big fundraising drive will start around May. With the increased responsibilities of land ownership, the size of reserves needs to be determined. Mark indicated that there is no guidance on this. Our current outgoings are estimated at £500 per annum.

Action –In future payments and BACS transfers to specify whether for subscriptions or a donation. If the latter, need to state whether it is to help generally with the work of the Trust, or with a specific project.

10. Plantlife verge maintenance: Joy raised the issue of verge cutting and its timing. Blaxhall needs to follow guidance of Plantlife - to be raised at the annual parish meeting. An immediate example is alexanders, which need cutting now, before they seed, but avoiding cutting verges when wild flowers blooming and setting seeds. Action- Eve to contact Plantlife and SWT for advice.
11. Litter picking: Litter picks have been carried out in October 2020 and April 2021.
12. AOB: Nil
13. Date of next meeting: Sunday April 25th 4.30 pm, via Zoom.