

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BECCLES FENLAND CHARITY TRUST
ASSETS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 9 MARCH 2020**

Present

Councillors: Mrs C Topping (Chair), Mrs S Bubb, C Wheeler

In Attendance: C Boyne, Secretary

Members of the Public: 0

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Birrell and Robinson.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest or any requests for the granting of dispensations in relation to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the Agenda

There were none.

3. To receive for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Assets & Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 10 February 2020

RESOLVED To receive for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Assets & Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 10 February 2020

4. Matters arising from the minutes

The chair reported that she had spoken to former councillor and mayor, Monty Pitkin, who had a good knowledge of the drainage system around the Common, and she would be arranging a visit to his house and would circulate a date to committee members. He had mentioned that digging French Drains along the edge of the Rugby pitches may help the flooding problem on the pitches. These would be filled with shingle and re-covered with turf.

The walkabout of the trust lands to identify suitable tree planting areas still needed to be arranged.

5. To consider the Climate and Ecological Emergency Iist

This had been reviewed at the town council's Assets & Environment Committee meeting.

6. To receive an update from the Golf Club regarding upcoming works to be carried out on the Golf Course

The chair reported that the Facilities Manager, Councillor Lever and herself had met with Dave Trunks and Pat Gill from Beccles Golf Club. The club was reminded that it required permission to cut back any gorse or trees on the Common. They were planning their annual weed and feed programme for the greens. This would involve spiking, aerating and fertilising the greens, and applying a top dressing of sand and fine sterilised soil. The greens would then be rolled. It was noted that there were plans to squirt Jeyes fluid into the mole

holes. It was agreed that the club should be asked not to use such a harsh chemical and to find a more ecologically friendly alternative.

RESOLVED To receive the update from the Golf Club regarding upcoming works to be carried out on the Golf Course

7. **To receive a regeneration proposal for Beccles Common from Beccles Golf Club**

The chair reported that Pat Gill, Groundsman for Beccles Golf Club and who had been associated with the club for over 30 years, had put forward a proposal to raise the moisture levels on the Common. He had reported that every activity on the Common, including dog walking, playing of golf and cattle grazing had taken nutrients out of the Common and so these needed to be replenished.

He was proposing that an area of the Common was fenced off and split into three areas, and then different treatments would be applied to each area to see what effect this had on grass growth.

It was pointed out that a report was produced by Dr Brennan many years ago regarding the ecology of the Common. This was an old report now and much of the information may be out of date. However, the clerk was asked to circulate a copy of the recommendations from the report.

The chair had consulted Nick Harrison, the trust's contractor for the Common, regarding these proposals. He was concerned that if one of the options was successful, it would be almost impossible to roll this out over the whole of the Common.

It was agreed that advice should be obtained from Suffolk Wildlife Trust or Natural England regarding this regeneration proposal.

RESOLVED To seek advice from Suffolk Wildlife Trust or Natural England regarding the regeneration proposal for Beccles Common from Beccles Golf Club

8. **To consider the condition of the footpath around the Beccles Sports Grounds**

The chair reported that she had met with representatives from the Beccles Sports & Social Club and the Beccles Rugby Club regarding the pathway that runs behind the sports pavilion towards the Avenue. This path currently consisted of wood chippings and became very soggy in the winter. The clubs were proposing to place kerbstones along the edge of the path and put road chippings down to create a better pathway.

Given that the future of all of this land was currently being discussed, it was agreed that this matter should be deferred at this time.

RESOLVED To defer the request from the Beccles Sports & Social Club to improve the path that runs behind the Sports Pavilion building to the Avenue until discussions regarding the future of the sports pitches and pavilion have progressed

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18/5/20

9. To consider the plans from the Beccles Sports and Social Club for alterations to their building

The chair reported that the Beccles Sports and Social Club (BSSC) was looking to extend the seating area in the sports pavilion. This would require moving the kitchen into a new extension that would be created where there was currently a fenced-in compound. The club had been asked to submit some rough plans, but these had not been received.

Again it was agreed that given that the future of all of this land was currently being discussed, this matter should be deferred at this time. Meetings would be arranged with all of the clubs in due course. A plan would also be required.

RESOLVED To defer the request from the Beccles Sports & Social Club to carry out alterations to its building in order to extend the seating area until discussions regarding the future of the sports pitches and pavilion have progressed

10. To consider the annual maintenance works required at Beccles Common

The chair and Councillor Lever had walked around the Common with Countryside Contractor Nick Harrison. It had been very informative. Gorse maintenance and tree pruning had been agreed, including the removal of some silver birch saplings near tee 5 to allow the gorse to thicken. Nick had informed them that the gorse could set itself on fire and the roots often burnt underground for long periods.

The removal of some of the Poplars had been discussed. These had been planted many years ago to provide matchsticks. These trees were not native to the Common. Some had been removed in the past, but the undergrowth and brambles had taken over where they had been removed. It was pointed out that they also acted as a good wind break. It was agreed these would be left for now.

RESOLVED To agree the annual maintenance works required at Beccles Common

11. To review progress on the committee's project list

Restoration of Moorings to the south of the A146 – Some final works were still required to these.

Beccles Quay Vision – A SurveyMonkey survey had been produced for visitors to the Quay. There would need to be a second survey produced for Community Groups etc to complete.

Beccles Quay Play Equipment – This had been a Tesco Bags for Life project. The Feoffees had been approached regarding contributing to the project.

Beccles Common Car Park – Work had commenced on regrading the car park.

BBQ Stands – It was agreed that the date for completion should be amended to July.

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Changing 30 minute parking spaces at Beccles Quay (adj Harbour Master's Office) to disabled spaces – This was now complete and could be removed from the list. Concerns had been expressed by some members of the public as to how canoes etc would now be launched when there were no parking spaces. It was pointed out that trailers usually pulled up right in front of the slipway anyway. This project could now be removed from the list.

Filling of Rabbit Holes on Beccles Common – The date for this should be amended to April 2020.

Regeneration of the trust's green spaces – The Pocket Parks funding application for the Goose Green Gardens Orchard had been declined. An application had been made to East Suffolk Councillor's Enabling Communities Budget.

11. Any Other Business

May Centre Doors – The clerk reported that the May Centre had managed to raise significant funding for the doors leaving a shortfall for the trust to find of approximately £2,500.

It was pointed out that the old tennis courts at the Caxton Football Club off the Avenue were still an eyesore, despite the club's plans to install a 3G Pitch here.

Action Point – Councillor Topping agreed to contact the chair of the Caxton Football Club.

As agreed at the last meeting, Councillor Birrell was currently working on obtaining alternative prices for waste collection at Beccles Quay, which included recycling options.

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