

BOUGHTON FEN COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

24 January 2025 at 6:00pm at All Saints Church, Boughton

Present: Cllr Sue Pogmore (Ctte Chairman), Andrew Faherty, Angela Faherty, Hugh Jenkins, Neil Matthew, Mike Inder (Clerk/RFO).

In Attendance: Stephen Eyles.

- 1/25 **Opening & Apologies for absence:** Cllr Sue Pogmore welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.
- 2/25 **Declarations of interest:** None.
- 3/25 **Minutes of the meeting 27 Sep 24:** Proposed by Andrew, seconded by Neil and accepted as a true reflection.
- 4/25 **Finance:**
- a. **Treasurers Report:** The treasurer provided an update of the accounts. The annual payments and receipts are attached at Annex A.
 - i. **Introduction of bank charges:** Sue reported that Lloyds had changed the account type to a Community Account and along with that they have introduced charges, a monthly £4.25 fee plus transaction charges for cheques issued and some payments into the account. A discussion was held regarding switching to internet banking which would save on transaction costs, Sue proposed initiating internet banking, seconded by Angela and it was agreed for Sue to proceed with the arrangements.
 - b. **Approval of payments:** The following payments were proposed by Sue, seconded Neil and approved.

Fen Payments for Authorisation - October 2024 to January 2025 (presented at meeting 24th January 2025)							
Date	Name	Details	£	VAT	Total	Ref	Cheque Number
18/12/2024	S J Eyles	Materials for DC bench, Path cut 6, Summer	£1,567.00	£0.00	£1,567.00	012, 013 and 014	67
09/01/2025	K C Ecological Ltd	Removal of fallen tree	£90.00	£0.00	£90.00	158422	68
					£1,657.00		

- c. **Reconciliation of Accounts:** The RFO completed the reconciliation.
 - d. **External Audit Fee:** The RFO explained that the increase in RPA payments has resulted in the Council income exceeding the threshold to declare an exemption from the Limited Assurance Review (external audit) during the annual governance and accountability reporting process. As this is an additional expense to the taxpayers then Council proposed that the Fen Ctte should pay for the external audit (c£420) in those years when the Council would otherwise have been able to claim and exemption. Internal Audit remains the responsibility of the PC. Sue proposed that the Council's proposal was agreed, seconded by Neil and it was agreed. The Clerk will invoice the Fen Ctte as appropriate.
- 5/25 **Action Plan:** The action plan was reviewed and is updated at Annex B.
- 6/25 **Worklist:** The Winter 24/25 worklist was reviewed and agreed and is at Annex C.

- 7/25 **Reed Cutting:** Stephen reported that the late summer cut in 3 areas of approx 2,460m² was complete. The late winter cut would be on the Middle Fen (RHS towards Oxborough Rd) when conditions were suitable.
- 8/25 **Golly's Bench:** Sue reported that the bench is now in place and that she was planning for a small dedication event for family and friends.
- 9/25 **Proposal to improve the surface and profile of land adjacent the highway near the bridge for improved access and parking:** Sue reported that Natural England had not responded for about a year on this or other matters raised by email and reaching the representative by phone had not been successful either. It was discussed and decided to accept Stephen's proposal to re-cost the original locally sourced materials, keep records of the materials used and how the project is to be completed and then just to go ahead and provide the information to NE if they ever query it. Highways permission is already in place. This is seen as both a safety improvement and helping to protect the environment and therefore NE should not have any objections based on experience.
- 10/25 **Update of Fallen Trees:** Sue reported that the EA have removed the trees from the river and put the trunks on the bank, they have not arranged for them to be removed and delivered to the owner at the next opportunity as previously reported but the recent priorities they have been involved with would explain the delay. The trunks were not causing any issues, so it was decided to leave it as is for the time being.
- Sue reported that another tree had fallen during Storm Darragh and that was already removed from the river and disposed by a local contractor for £90.
- 11/25 **Boardwalk and flooded paths:** As with item 9 there had been no response from NE. Stephen reported that he could manufacture sections of temporary boarding to place over the worst affected areas that would cost c£45 and for the currently flooded and muddy areas 3 sections would suffice; they could be removed and stored when not needed and would leave no lasting impact, unlike the initial idea of building up the levels. The cost and time to implement would also be less. Neil raised a concern about the liability and risk from installing them and it was discussed at length. After due deliberation consensus was reached that with wire mesh on the surface and careful positioning to minimise any trip hazard and to ensure it was stable, then it was more beneficial to the environment and safer than doing nothing and people avoiding the wet and muddy areas by walking off the paths and treading down the vegetation that should be protected. Prototype photo at Appendix 1.
- 12/25 **Fen Assets Storage and Accessibility:** Hugh reported that the Cricket Club didn't have space to store the DR trimmer currently and offered to store it in his garage in the short for the time being, all agreed.
- 13/25 **Bird boxes:** Sue reported that 37 bird boxes for Marsh Tits, Owls and Kestrels had been manufactured and installed and that there were signs of them being used. Sue proposed a donation towards the materials, Angela proposed £250, seconded by Sue and agreed.

14/25 **Open Forum:** Hugh suggested that with the receipt of the RPA payment that funds could be transferred to the deposit account to gain interest, Angela seconded the proposal, and it was agreed to transfer £10,000.

15/25 **Date of next meeting:** The 25th of Apr 25 was agreed. Meeting Closed at 7.05pm.

Signature: _____

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1



Annex A

Income and Expenditure Account 1st April to 31st March 2025

INCOME

Lloyds Bank interest on Deposit Account - 30th September 2024	£32.24
Lloyds Bank interest on Deposit Account - 31st October 2024	£32.28
Lloyds Bank interest on Deposit Account - 29th November 2024	£30.29
Rural Paymnts Agency CSA 6 (2024) - 6th December 2024	£11,988.15
Lloyds Bank interest on Deposit Account - 31st December 2024	£31.03
	£12,113.99

EXPENDITURE

S J Eyles (000067) Invoice 12 materials for David Bench, Invoice 13 Path cut 6 of 2024 and Invoice 14 Summer	£1,567.00
K C Ecological Surveys Ltd (000068) Removal of fallen tree from Stringsides	£90.00
	£1,657.00

Surplus/**Deficit** of Income over Expenditure

	£10,456.99
Less Deficit highlighted on mid year accounts compiled on 27th September 2024	£1,350.66
	£9,106.33

BFC Income Expenditure as at year end 31st March 2025
presented at meeting 24th January 2025

Balance Sheet 1st April to 31st March 2025

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Current Assets:					
Cash at bank - Lloyds Current Account	£26,285.73	£22,370.64	£12,433.30	£23,336.50	£19,679.01
Cash at bank - Lloyds Deposit Account * ∞	£15,302.50	£10,032.01			
	£41,588.23	£32,402.65	£12,433.30	£23,336.50	£19,679.01
Current Liabilities: K C Ecological Surveys (000068)	£90.00	£10.75	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Net Current Assets	£41,498.23	£32,391.90	£12,433.30	£23,336.50	£19,679.01
Represented by accumulated fund at 31 March 2024				£32,391.90	
Add surplus/ less deficit of income over expenditure				£9,106.33	
				£41,498.23	
*NOTE: £10,000 transferred from Lloyds Current account to a Lloyds Deposit Account on 12th February 2024 as agreed at meeting 26th January 2024					
∞ NOTE: A further £5,000 transferred from Lloyds Current account to Lloyds Deposit account on 14th May 2024 as agreed at meeting 12th April 2024					

BFC Balance Sheet as at year end 31st March 2025
presented at meeting 24th January 2025

BOUGHTON FEN COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN

Ser No	Initial Date	Action	Update	Owner	Target Date for completion	Review/ Completion Date
1	15-Nov-19	To review BPC Policy library and compare with Fen Ctte policies with a view to collating all aspects in a single library. Clerk to send link to BPC library to all.	The Fen policies are due review at the Sep 24 meeting	Clerk	20-Jan-25	
2	15-Nov-19	All to take pre and post work photos and send to SP for filing.	This item will remain to serve as a reminder.	All	On-Going	
18	01-Oct-21	Sign boards to be treated with linseed oil if possible. The board on lower fen has deteriorated very badly in the last couple of months and needs to be repaired – ACF volunteered to take a look at repairing it	In progress - It was agreed to mount them upright on 4 oak posts. ACF reported difficulty contacting the usual supplier but that he would persist.	ACF	Summer 25	
47	02-Jun-23	Stock check and rationalisation of the Fen Ctte equipment on the asset register and to consider storage options.	Ongoing- Hugh to store the DR Trimmer and other small items.	HJ	01-Apr-25	

Work list for Winter 2024/25

Completed items reported at meeting on 24 Jan 25 struck through.

- 1 ~~General Tidy right through walk, particularly on lower fen~~
- 2 ~~Replace rotting planks in main boardwalk; repairs to steps; end of boardwalk on Highland fen is rotting~~
- 3 Clear round both outfalls
- 4 Strim round all seats
- 5 ~~Strim boardwalk~~
- 6 Information signs to be cleaned and repaired as per last year
- 7 ~~Install new seat~~
- 8 ~~Clear up fallen tree, and cut back further (on Lower Fen) – already partially done~~
- 9 ~~Cut back overhanging trees on roadside at Oxborough End of riverbank~~
- 10 ~~Stump near hump in Highland Fen~~
- 11 ~~Late Summer Cut~~
- 12 ~~Reduce Bramble level on Highland Fen as discussed, to be incorporated into late summer cut~~
- 13 Cut and treat scrub in reedbed, and on roadside
- 14 Cut and Treat Sallow along the bank, and anywhere else it can be seen to be encroaching – large patch in Middle Fen near new seat, and fairy ring if accessible.
- 15 Coppice Hazel in Middle Fen with a view to promoting regeneration
- 16 Look into a way to level the verge at the Eastmoor end of riverbank to stop cars getting stuck - still awaiting feedback from NE
- 17 Reed Cutting – Late winter