**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ACTON FIELD TRUST HELD ON TUESDAY 30th July 2024 AT 6.30 P.M.**

**IN THE SMALL COMMITTEE ROOM, ACTON VILLAGE HALL.**

**Present:**

Chair: Christine Johnson, Treasurer: Nick Antill, Secretary: Jenny Antill, Julie Black, John Gibbens and 4 members of the public

1. **Welcome** given by the Chairman
2. **The minutes** of the meeting of Acton Field Trust held on 7th May 2024 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman
3. Apologies. There were no apologies and no declarations of conflict of interest
4. **Footpath clearance and other maintenance items.**

 It was agreed that the offer of the use of the cutting machine owned by the Parish Council should be accepted. Since there are currently sufficient willing volunteers it was not thought necessary to pay a contractor to undertake the work of footpath cutting, although any untrained person will need to undergo training on the machine. Receipts for expenses incurred (for example fuel) should be sent to the Parish Clerk, who will contact two signatories to the bank account to arrange reimbursement. It was agreed to investigate cutting a path across the field in addition to the existing perimeter path. JB to contact Suffolk Wildlife Trust and also George Millins and Nick Miller with a view to arranging a management plan similar to that used at the Wildlife Area.

It was agreed that blackthorn needs to be removed from the site. A prior arrangement for John Doe to undertake the work was delayed owing to bad weather. Graham Round will discuss with him whether he is still able to manage the work.

It was agreed to retain John Doe to carry out hedge cutting work on footpath adjacent to the field and also removal of additional hedge on footpath 9.

It was proposed that the Trust may agree to take over maintenance of footpath 9 which gives access to the field, which is currently maintained by the County Council. This would enable another footpath to be added to the County Council maintenance schedule.

1. **Arrangements for educational signage.** It was agreed that the provision of educational signs was necessary to comply with the purposes of the charity. The inventory of wildlife currently being created by Steve Le Grys and George Millins would be the best source for information to populate these. It was also agreed that signs needed to give information about the ownership of the field and giving the Parish Clerk’s contact details.
2. **Financial Matters.**

**Transfer of money.** Innominate Trust has transferred some £83,600 to AFT, and has retained £10,000 to be transferred once the Charity Commission has removed Innominate Trust from its register of charities.

**Investment**. AFT is in the process of investing £80,000 in a high yielding UK equity fund (CAIF).

**Banking arrangements**. Currently, the signatories to the AFT bank account are NA, CJ, Fiona Mullins and Graham Round. The four remaining members of the committee are to be added, Graham Round to be removed, and Fiona Mullins to be given access only to set up but not to authorise payments. It was agreed to use same process with regard to making payments as used by the Parish Council: that Fiona Mullins would set up payments which then require two signatories to authorise them.

1. **Charity Registration HMRC.** It was noted that online application has been completed. HMRC claims that it should respond within six weeks. Once registration is completed the charity should be tax exempt so there should be no requirement to lodge accounts with them, only with the Charity Commission.
2. **Future form of meetings.** It was agreed that these should be held in the village hall in public, should follow the notice procedures of the Parish Council and should start at 7 p.m. rather than 6.30 p.m.
3. **Public forum.** The following issues were raised by members of the public: flooding of property adjacent to the field, proliferation of ragwort and wayleave issues.

*Agreed: With regard to flooding, landowners concerned will survey the problem, identify the ditches concerned and report back to the Committee for further discussion. JB to raise issue of ragwort with those surveying wildlife. It was explained that the Trust has a wayleave agreement in place and receives a small sum for the infrastructure on the field.*

1. **Date of next meeting: to be arranged**

**The meeting concluded at 7.20.**

**Jennifer Antill**

**August 2024**