



Public meeting – Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2025 – 7pm.

Gaina (Chair) welcome to all, thank you for coming. We have a few changes in faces on the committee. Thanks to Marion and Rachel for their hard work and dedication as directors, they have now stepped down. We now have Clare and Sam as new directors on the committee. Clare and Sam asked if they would like to introduce themselves and say a few words.

Clare - interested in trees, a gardener and very fond of the pits. Clare took part in the talent show to raise funds for the purchase of the pits. Glad to help and keep the lovely place.

Sam – lived in Holton for 10 years. Interested in the pits as a whole and all the different areas. Keen fisherman along with his son.

Gaina asked other directors to remind who they are and what roles they have.

Jamie – Treasurer

Rebecca – Secretary

John – said how nice it is to see where we are now from those first few meetings.

1) Fishing update:

We spoke and discussed last time about the conflicting interests of a fishing club and other users of the site.

The choice was either having fishing taken over by a fishing club or taking the fishing in house. Woodbridge & District Angling Club lease expired at the end of May 2024 and we decided to run the fishing within Holton Pits CIC to keep it smaller and gentler, closer to how it was many years ago.

We have income from fishing of £900 (first 9 months). This is very good, we have new platforms made from recycled composite.

2) Anti-social behaviour:

On Friday a member of the public fishing encountered some teens swimming in the lake. They chatted about how it wasn't safe to swim there – was met with abusive language and later calling over to fisherman lewd remarks. Fisherman gave up at that point. Contacted HPCIC, they got in touch with police (non-urgent) who said they logged it and would send someone out.

There are also occurrences of clothes being left around. After this group on Friday there was a coat floating in the water and all lifebuoys tied together and left floating in the lake. This is a safety issue



not only for the group of swimmers but it also means the lifebuoys wouldn't be ready if they were needed in an emergency.

We have also had other antisocial behaviour – poo bag holders and sign have been cut and ripped down. Antisocial events seems to get worse during school holiday times.

Whittings Garage have kindly said we can use their Wi-fi and electric to have a reliable camera up at Southwold Road car park looking out across the open area. We have had a couple of incidences of fly-tipping on the car park.

Public asked if they had suggestions.

These were to contact the high schools. Get them to talk on how it is unsafe for swimming. It is not a case of us being 'spoil sports'. There are metal and hidden hazards under the water and diseases. Report to police. Get in touch with Community police officer (who also visits local schools and can chat to them as part of their talks).

Member of public said that we all should be vigilant – report to police and at least these incidences can be logged/recorded.

With the swimming there are two issues - safety of the swimmers and the interference with lifebuoys.

Write an article about it in Community News, Halesworth Hoot, other local publications etc.

As it's land purchased by and for the community some people think it is common land not private land. Legally, the land is classed as private land as it is owned by Holton Pits Community Interest Company, so where do we stand in terms of the council getting involved, fines etc. What is the legal process?

Member of public said that we can go down the route of banning people, this then goes down the route of trespass. Another member stated that where they worked previously they were able to take down names and addresses and people got warning letters of antisocial behaviour, this was usually enough to deter people.

Halesworth have just asked for applications for a Ranger – should we ask if this person (if part time at Halesworth) would work at Holton Pits too? In charge of security and could develop community relationship with people. Deter swimming, check tickets on lake etc. If full time at Halesworth we could employ our own different person as a Ranger.



3) Information Boards: these were delivered last week. Two locations – one by the Southwold Road car park end and the other near the circle/cliff face as this board contains more information on the SSSI.

These were paid for by the Community Ownership Fund revenue funding and the Enabling Communities Fund.

4) Member of public asked should there be a sign or safety notice about climbing the cliff, due to the erosion/landslide this is not really safe. Another member of public said that kids have been climbing that for years and years. We spoke about the advice from the Fire Service who said to have as few as signs as possible as there are always certain people who will do something because the sign asks them not too.

5) Groundworks and trees: done over winter - dead and dangerous trees have been removed. We are only removing/cutting trees if they are unsafe. This has been done by a tree surgeon (emergency tree work paid for by the Community Ownership Fund revenue funding).

We have planted hedging along the new industrial fence and Suffolk Tree Wardens asked if we would plant a few Suffolk Black Poplars on site (these are native and numbers of these are getting very low).

There has been a cut through made and the ground levelled and the area made larger for disabled access to one of the large platforms.

6) Finance:

Public liability insurance is around £700 per annum. Holton Parish Council have paid for this current year and last year. Our thanks to them.

Fishing income we hoped around £1000 a year, which we have made £900 in 9 months.

We have standing orders - about 25 people giving £3 a month. Thank you for your continued support.

Most spending from the Community Ownership Fund grant application has been completed. We look for grants to help with funding projects.

Adnams – we have applied and they have donated a £600 grant for benches.

Our spending and accounts for each tax year will be published on our website. We as a Community Interest Company are registered on Companies House and have to run as a business as we are responsible for reporting to Companies House and abiding by their rules.



Sizewell C power station community scheme is open for applications – how do we feel?  
Member of the public – does this area qualify? As a lot of places within Halesworth have been told they are not in the right area as Halesworth is not affected by Sizewell.  
We will investigate further, we may not be in right area.  
Small and large scheme to apply for £25,000 and £250,000.  
After discussion it was generally thought that if funds are available to get them for Holton Pits but only if we can think of a project or something we would really like to do. If not, explore other options of funding.

Sizewell can use our name on campaigns/publicity if we get anything from them.

Storage: we desperately need secure storage for tools and other items. The Millennium Green have two metal storage containers (Heritage Lottery Funded). We need a small metal container – if anyone knows of one or a company we could source one from please let us know. This would be discretely placed and the right colour so as not to be imposing. We could also gain water run off from it's roof which is needed to help water hedging plants etc in times of drought.

Micromanage - we are mindful not to do too much to the site. The point was that people loved it as it had become, rewilded and 'benign neglect'. We just wanted to do work to improve and make safe. We are really there now in terms of jobs and projects – it is a case of maintenance now.

Japanese Knotweed: we inherited a patch of Japanese Knotweed. This is over by the small lake and has been fenced until it has been dealt with. It has been chemically treated twice, and has now re-sprouted. As soon as leaves open (very soon) it will be treated again.  
It gets treated twice in Autumn and also now as leaves unfold.  
It seems to be growing slightly less than last year, so hopefully the tide is turning.

Benches: we have asked for a quote from a local charity who work with adults with learning difficulties. We have asked for four, these will be made out of locally grown and sourced Sweet Chestnut, long lasting with extra long posts at the back so they can be fixed down to prevent theft.

Member of the public asked about the cost of the benches, we have not had the final cost from the supplier. We are awaiting results of our grant applications, which would help pay for the benches.

We advised that our accounts will be published on the website at the end of each tax year.

Merchandise: member of public said he'd like would buy car stickers and other Holton Pits merchandise. Good way of raising funds.

Orchids: Gill (a local resident) had a good walk round with Rebecca to show where all the Orchid sites were. These have become overcome with brambles over the years so we plan to trim a few of



these areas in the hopes that the Orchids will return.

Question from member of the public: Trees and the leftover wood. Is this a fire hazard if it is stacked? Could we have piles of wood near the entrance that say 'free to take'.