

11 June 2015

MALVERN HILLS CONSERVATORS MEETING OF THE BOARD

**Council Chamber, Avenue Road, Malvern
Thursday 15th June 2015, 7:00 pm**

Present: Rev'd C Attwood, Mr D Baldwin, Mr R Bartholomew, Mr R Chamings, Mr M Cordey, Mr S Freeman, Mr S Ginn, Mr A Golightly, Mr R Hall-Jones, Mr D Hawkins, Mr R Madden, Mr R Morton, Mrs C O'Donnell, Mr B Pilcher, Mrs G Rees, Mr C Rouse, Ms H Stace (Chairman), Mr D Street, Mr P Tuthill, Mr P Watson, Mr T Yapp, Mrs S Young.

In attendance: Community and Conservation Officer (CCO), Conservation Officer, Director, Finance and Administration Manager, Secretary to the Board, 1 member of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr R Cousins.

2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Tuthill - matters in relation to Worcestershire County Council and the pension scheme

Mr Rouse - Higher Level Stewardship scheme.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 Ms Stace welcomed Richard Bartholomew.

4.2 Ms Stace read out a card from Linda Churchill thanking everyone for her retirement gift.

4.3 The Bishop of Worcester had written to the Church Commissioners with a suggestion to fill the Board vacancy.

4.4 There was a Chairman's Workshop at 7pm on 23 June to review the first draft of the Business Plan.

4.5 There would be an evening visit to Old Hills (with refreshments afterwards at The Bush). There would also be evening strolls to visit sites that would feature in the Land Management Plan to enable Board members to discuss relevant issues.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING

On the proposal of Ms Stace, seconded by Mrs Rees, it was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the minutes of the meeting of 12 March 2015 be signed as a **TRUE** and **ACCURATE** record.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE BOARD MEETING

The Wyche Innovation Centre together with the Disabled Ramblers Association were still pursuing funding for a tramper for hire from the centre.

7. MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES

7.1 LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2015

7.1.1 Mr Rouse presented the minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2015. The **ACCURACY** of the minutes was **AGREED**.

7.1.2 Matters arising Mr Watson reported that there had been a letter in the Malvern Gazette detailing an incident where riders fell off as a result of their horses being startled by mountain bikers. Mountain bikers needed to get the message to go slowly where they had no clear view of the path in front of them. The CCO had opening up a dialogue with Malvern Cycle Sport and was planning a meeting in July to put over MHC's message on mountain biking. Board members were asked to make sure that if they witnessed incidents (of any sort), on MHC land they reported them to members of staff.

7.1.3 On the proposal of Mr Rouse, seconded by Mr Freeman it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to adopt the minutes and the recommendations contained in them.

7.2 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 APRIL 2015

7.2.1 Rev'd Attwood presented the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2015. The **ACCURACY** of the minutes was **AGREED**.

7.2.2 Matters arising Rev'd Attwood highlighted the issues which had been covered at the meeting and in particular the resolutions to change standing orders. He said that the proposed change to Standing Order 3.4 (maximum term of office for Chairs and Vice-Chairs) was transitional in view of the work of the Charity Commission Working Group. Ms Stace intended to hold a Chairman's Workshop on succession planning, to find the best way on ensuring continuity and that post holders had the right skills. On the proposal of Ms Stace, seconded by Mr Street it was **RESOLVED** (by a majority of 18:2) to amend the proposal contained in Minute 13 to read:

That Standing Order 3.4 be amended to read:

Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen may not hold the same office for more than 5 years in succession.

7.2.3 Subject to the above amendment, on the proposal of Ms Stace, seconded by Rev'd Attwood, it was **RESOLVED** (by a majority of 19:1) to adopt the minutes and the recommendations contained in them.

Rev'd Attwood left the meeting.

7.3 FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 MAY 2015

7.3.1 Mr Street presented the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2015. The Secretary to the Board suggested that for clarity the resolution in minute 13 should be amended to say “To increase the budget for the Working Group *from* £5,000 to £6,000.” Subject to this minor amendment, the **ACCURACY** of the minutes was **AGREED**.

7.3.2 Matters arising Mr Watson had written to the Director to suggest that the legacy referred to in minute 3 could be spent in installing a toilet at North Hill Quarry car park, or for providing notice board that clearly showed the cycling routes on the hills. Mr Hawkins suggested that the money should be used to counter erosion. Mr Tuthill suggested that it might be useful to put a report of the incident between the mountain bikers and the riders up on the notice boards as an illustration of what could happen. The CCO said that this sort of thing would be covered in the interpretation strategy. The Director confirmed that 2 offers had been received for 34 Wyche Road and that the planning application for refurbishment of St Ann’s Well had been lodged.

7.3.3 On the proposal of Mr Watson, seconded by Mr Bartholomew, it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to adopt the minutes and the recommendations contained in them.

8. REBRANDING

This was a matter that touched on the image and perception of MHC and so was a matter for the entire Board. The CCO explained that the Interpretation Strategy would run alongside the Business Plan. It was proposed to invite tenders for rebranding MHC. There was a budget figure of £8 – 10,000 to cover the cost of the rebranding exercise.

Mr Street agreed in principle with the concept of the review, but said that the paper should have been brought to FAR. Rebranding should be linked with a communications plan. He thought the overall strategy, including replacement of all branded items should be considered and costed before going ahead with exercise. Tenders should go to a marketing company, and not to a designer. Mr Pilcher suggested asking students to undertake some aspects of the work. The Director felt the approach needed to be consistent, with a single company working on the whole scheme. Mr Watson pointed out that most non-residents who walk on the hills did not know who MHC were. It was pointed out that the decision at this stage was not to commit to the full cost of rebranding, but just to go out to tender. The tenders would then be brought back to FAR. Mr Madden said that MHC should be clear what they wanted to achieve in the first stage and what the costs were. Mr Chamings asked whether there was any evidence that rebranding would be beneficial. He felt MHC did not have to compete with anyone. The Director said that the first stage was to come up with a “House style” which would differentiate MHC from the Councils and the AONB and make clear that it was a charity. Over a period of time, all the signs, leaflets and vehicles would have to be replaced in any event, and it was sensible to replace them in a clear and

consistent style. MHC was not recognised as a charity and rebranding might be expected to increase donations by 15 – 20%.

Upon the proposal of Mr Hall-Jones, seconded by Mr Cordey it was **RESOLVED** (by a majority of 16:4), to seek tenders to undertake a rebranding exercise and to present options, costings and timescale to F A & R Committee for consideration.

Mr Chamings suggested that MHC might seek some public engagement for example by asking the public to choose the logo.

9. INFORMATION

- 9.1 Malvern Spa Association
- 9.2 AONB Joint Advisory Committee
- 9.3 Wildlife Panel
- 9.4 Recreation Advisory Panel
- 9.5 4Cs

Written reports had been presented. Mr Hawkins raised the issue of a scheme for vehicular access to the Hills for the less able. This had already been discussed and voted upon and the Director suggested that it would be sensible to allow the Wyche Innovation Centre to pursue their scheme and review the matter once they either had their proposed arrangement in operation, or if it proved impossible to take their scheme forward.

10. MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Director reported that travellers had stopped on Newlands Common on 7th June, and that following discussions with one of the Wardens and the Operations Manager, they had left within 24 hours. He highlighted various issues contained in his report. A draft Staff Handbook was being prepared for consideration at the next FA & R meeting. Joules Ltd had carried out a photo shoot for their autumn catalogue and had paid £3,600 for use of the Hills. The police had agreed to hand out the new MHC Mountain Biking Guidelines whilst carrying out their operation to warn the public about thefts from car parks, and theft of mountain bikes. Mappfest was being held on Link Common on 20 and 21 June 2015. The visit to the Brecon Beacons had been a success.

The Conservation Officer had attended the Commons Conference at Aylesbury, which had been very relevant to MHC's operations and he had made some useful contacts. The CCO had undertaken an audit of all the signage on the Hills. This sizeable document was available and members could either request a copy, or come in to the offices to look at it.

Lisa Curtis had settled in very well.

The Director was not aware of any further water quality issues. Worcester Regulatory Services were now putting up their own signs when appropriate.

Mr Watson suggested putting in a post, adjacent to stiles, to provide something to hold on to whilst climbing them.

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11. URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

12. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

There were none.

The meeting closed at 20.52