

**MALVERN HILLS TRUST**  
**Staffing Committee**  
**Manor House, Grange Road, Malvern**  
**Thursday 6 April 2017, 6.30 pm**

Present: Mr D Baldwin, Mr M Davies, Dr P Forster, Mr S Freeman (ex officio), Mr C Penn, Mrs G Rees, Ms H Stace.

In attendance: Chief Executive Officer, Secretary to the Board, Mr A Golightly, Mr C Rouse, Mr P Watson, Mr T Yapp.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Mr Hall Jones, Prof J Raine, Dr S Braim.

**2. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms Stace announced that from 6 April 2017 Malvern Hills Conservators would be known as Malvern Hills Trust. There was also one item of urgent business.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were none.

**4. UPDATE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES**

The CEO went through the paper and highlighted the main points. There had been no notifiable or reported accidents since the last meeting.

He hoped to have a revised H & S policy drafted for consideration at the next Staffing Committee meeting. The toilets and kitchen at Top Shed were almost completed and were operational. There were no welfare facilities available for volunteer work parties. Ms Stace said that the Wildlife Trust had been advised that it should highlight, when publicising the activity, that there were no facilities available. The CEO had arranged for a geologist to visit some of the quarries with him to look at the condition of the rock faces. He was formulating an advisory policy on fires for contractors as a result of the fire brigade having been called to a number of false alarms over the winter. Other priority items were to ensure that the equipment and CoSHH inventories were up to date and to ensure training and competency were appropriately recorded.

Ms Stace raised the issue of recording near misses.

The CEO would report on Health and Safety issues to the Staffing Committee at least every 6 months. Mr Penn asked about addressing slips, trips and falls, and manual handling. Ms Stace said that these were normally picked up through risk assessments. The CEO would double check the consultant's report in relation to manual handling.

Ms Stace thanked the CEO for his work in connection with this item.

**5. LGPS LATE TRANSFER IN OF BENEFITS**

The CEO went through the paper. A request for late transfer in of benefits had been received from one employee, but it was being put to the staffing committee as an "in principle" matter, although the CEO thought there was only a small risk of the issue arising again. Most staff had been in post for a number of years, and new joiners were currently not eligible to join the scheme. The LGPS should calculate the additional benefits accruing from the transfer in so that there was no cost to MHT, but this could not be guaranteed, should there be any unforeseen change in circumstances. The cost of taking independent actuarial advice would

be disproportionate. It was not practical to ascertain whether there were any other staff who might in future seek to make a late transfer in. It was also not established whether the benefits accrued from the payment in would be subject to the “career average” rules should the employee receive a substantial increase in salary. The general feeling was that on the facts available, consent should not be given because it was unclear what the effect on MHT’s liability might be, but it was agreed to see if there was any further information available which would assist in the decision making process, in which case the matter could be referred back. The decision was deferred.

#### **6. AMENDMENT TO STAFF HANDBOOK – ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The CEO went through the paper, which set out an additional section 10.10 to be added to the Staff Handbook. Dr Forster said that research indicated that there was little difference in terms of level of distraction between hands free and hands held devices and RoSPA’s advice was to use neither whilst driving. He felt this should be made clear to staff. It was agreed that a statement to this effect should be added to 10.10.1.

On the proposal of Ms Stace, seconded by Mr Davies, it was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the following wording be added to the end of sections 1.14 and 1.15 on page 9 and sections 2.9 and 2.10 on Page 14 of the Staff Handbook:

“See also Section 10.10 ‘Policy on the use of Electronic Devices when Driving or Operating Machinery””.

And that a new section 10.10 (as amended) be added to the Staff Handbook.

#### **7. FIELD STAFF HOURS**

The CEO went through the paper. He and the Operations Manager had agreed to give the staff member’s request to reduce his hours a six month trial. The other part time member of the Field Staff had been asked, but did not wish to increase his hours to cover.

#### **8. APPRENTICESHIPS**

The CEO went through the paper. Taking on an apprentice might assist with increasing Field Staff capacity and succession planning (as a number of staff were approaching retirement age). The CEO was still exploring the options and would bring the matter back to the next meeting. If the scheme was to be used, the start date would be no earlier than September 2017. He did not see using an apprentice as an alternative to having fully trained full time staff on the Hills, but as a way of bringing on new team members.

#### **9. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Deputy Conservation Officer had handed in her notice. A paper had been sent out by E-mail setting out the next steps towards her replacement. Mark Roberts (who had provided maternity cover) had agreed to come back on a temporary basis whilst the duties of the post holder were reviewed and a recruitment process undertaken. If there were to be major changes to the role, the proposals would be brought back to the Committee. Changes would depend on the requirements of the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme, but these were not yet clear. The CEO understood that under the guidelines, the new schemes could run for up to 10 years where they related to common land.

Mark Roberts’s re-engagement did not constitute continuous employment as there had been a clear break. However, it was agreed by the Committee that he would not be required to work a period of 3 months before resuming contributions to the Peoples’ Pension Scheme.

#### 10. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

On the proposal of Ms Stace, seconded by Dr Forster it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to exclude the public for discussion of item 11 on the agenda on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the exempt or confidential nature of the business to be transacted (staffing matters).

---

<b>Minutes released</b>
-------------------------

#### 11. MATERNITY PAY POLICY

The CEO went through the paper. He confirmed that payment of the enhanced maternity pay for 12 weeks was discretionary. Mrs Rees suggested amending the recommendation from “in the office” to “in post”. It was agreed to accept this amendment, subject to any recommendation from MHT’s HR consultant.

On the recommendation of Mr Baldwin, seconded by Dr Forster it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to change the maternity pay policy and staff handbook to ensure that in order to retain the enhanced maternity pay, a returning employee should be in post and working for 3 months, and not just back off maternity leave for 3 months.

**The meeting closed at 7.40pm**