

MALVERN HILLS TRUST

Staffing Committee

Manor House, Grange Road, Malvern

Thursday 29 March 2018, 7.00 pm

Present: Mr M Davies, Dr P Forster, Mr S Freeman (non-voting), Mr C Penn, Ms S Rouse (non-voting), Ms H Stace (Chair).

In attendance: CEO, Secretary to the Board, Finance and Administration Manager, Dr S Braim, Mr P Watson.

Ms Stace welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Mr D Baldwin, Prof J Raine, Mrs G Rees.

2. Chair's announcements

The Secretary to the Board asked if anyone had volunteered to be the nominated Board member for safeguarding. Ms Stace said that she would offer if no one else would. She would like to undertake some training if available.

3. Declaration of interests

There were none relevant to the agenda.

4. Matters arising from previous meeting

The CEO was looking for providers for mental health first aid training for the wardens. He was awaiting dates for training in the use of defibrillators and auto-injectors.

5. Update on Health and Safety Issues (agenda item 4)

The CEO went through the short paper. There had been no incidents or accidents reported since the last meeting. Staff had put up some warning signs for slippery surfaces at British Camp and the approach to St Ann's Well during the freezing weather as these were two particularly heavily used areas. A fresh inventory was being prepared detailing all substances falling under COSHH. Ms Stace reported that there had been notice in the Rural Hub newsletter about a chemicals amnesty.

6. Update on Deputy Conservation Officer post (agenda item 5)

Following the award of the Countryside Stewardship grant, the Conservation Manager had reviewed the role of the Deputy Conservation Officer (now to be called Conservation Officer). Only a few minor adjustments were required to the existing job description. The post would continue as a three day per week post, dealing mainly with compliance checking in relation to the grant funding. The post had been advertised.

7. Benchmarking exercise (agenda item 6)

The CEO went through the paper. He had approached the Wildlife Trusts to see whether MHT could access their collected salary data and was awaiting a reply. He had also approached HR Department, MHT's human resources consultants, and they had put him in touch with Laura Sidhu. She had experience of carrying out benchmarking exercises and access to external data sets for the voluntary sector/local government. The Committee expressed the following concerns:

- She should look in detail at the role descriptions and responsibilities and not just at the job titles
- Would she also look at qualifications?
- Would the Committee be given information on the roles used for comparison so that they could judge whether they were appropriate? The Committee would need to feel satisfied that she was comparing like with like.
- It might be useful to get private sector data for some of the administrative roles.

It was agreed that more analysis could be sought following receipt of the initial report.

The CEO said the quote (£1,402 of which £572 was for accessing the collected data) was on the basis of providing comparative salary data, providing benefits data from 10 – 15 organisations, preparing a report and attending to make a presentation.

Use of the data from both organisations would be on the basis that MHT's anonymised data would be added to databases. The Committee asked the CEO to ensure that individual personal information could not be identified.

The original budget figure for the benchmarking exercise was £1,000.

The CEO was asked to proceed.

It was agreed to take item 7 on the agenda last.

8. Amendments to Staff Handbook - harassment and bullying

The Chair introduced the paper. The proposal widened the reporting options for staff who felt they were being subjected to bullying or harassment. The Committee commented:

- Should there be training for the nominated Board and staff members and would the grievance process in the Handbook be appropriate for dealing with complaints?
- It was felt that it should be made clearer in the policy that the aim was for there to be a male and female staff member and male and female Board member.
- Subject to the approval of the HR consultant, the wording should be changed in the definition of harassment to state (2nd paragraph last sentence): "...then that conduct ~~will~~ could constitute harassment..."

The Secretary to the Board was asked to amend the policy in accordance with the comments above and subject to that, on the proposal of Dr Forster, seconded by Mr Davies it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Board that they

- i) adopt the amended the Bullying and Harassment policy contained in the Staff Handbook, to widen the reporting options to include the CEO, a staff member of a different gender and 2 nominated Board members.
- ii) Nominate two Board members in consultation with the CEO and the Finance and Administration Manager.

9. Report on CEO's appraisal and recommendation of the Remuneration Committee

The Chair confirmed that the Remuneration Committee would wish to recommend some changes to the process for the CEO's appraisal and those proposals would be made to the next meeting.

10. Items for future meetings

The Chair reminded the committee that they had not thought through their programme for the year. It was agreed that a working group should take an initial look at the outcomes from the benchmarking exercise, comprising the Chair, Dr Forster, Dr Braim and the CEO. Mr Davies suggested looking at how MHT dealt with overtime and time off in lieu.

11. Urgent business

There was none.

12. Improvements to Manor House

The Finance and Administration Manager reported that an architect had prepared some initial drawings with a view to possible re-organisation of the office space. Currently she and the CEO were trying to get an accurate costing of the proposals and needed to discuss the suggestions with the AONB and the other staff. Dr Braim said it was important to consider the justification for the work as far as the public was concerned.

The issue of funding the improvements would be taken back to FAR Committee.

13. Date of next meeting

5 July 2018

14. Staff expenses for attending evening meetings (agenda item 7)

The staff members present were asked to leave the meeting whilst the Committee discussed the paper. The Secretary to the Board then returned to record the outcome of the discussion. The Committee requested that the statement in the paper about the tax position in relation to out of pocket expenses and travel costs should be double checked. The Committee also asked that, when the matter came to the Board, there should be an explanation of what mileage "at the normal rates" meant.

On the proposal of Ms Stace, seconded by Mr Penn it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Board that the policy be adopted.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm