

Malvern Hills Trust  
Land Management Committee  
Manor House, Grange Road, Malvern  
Thursday 6 December 2018 7.00pm

**Present:** Dr S Braim, Mr S Freeman, Mr D Hawkins, Mrs G Rees (Chair), Mr C Rouse, Ms S Rouse (non-voting), Ms H Stace, Mr T Yapp.

**In attendance:** Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Secretary to the Board, Conservation Manager, Community and Conservation Officer (CCO), Mr M Davies, Mr P Watson, Mr M Gardner, 4 members of the public.

**No attendance:** Mr J Michael.

Mrs Rees welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Election of Chair**

Dr Braim took the chair. There was one nomination for Chair and Mrs Rees was elected unopposed. She took the chair.

**2. Election of Vice-Chair**

There was one nomination for Vice-Chair and Dr Braim was elected unopposed.

**3. Apologies for Absence**

Mr D Baldwin, Dr P Forster, Mr A Golightly, Mr R Hall-Jones.

**4. Declarations of Interest**

Mrs Rees declared an interest in the Stowe Lane easement.

Mr Freeman declared an interest in the Lake House easement.

**5. Chairman's Communications**

There were none.

**6. Public Questions**

Questions had been received from 2 members of the public. See Schedule.

**7. Matters Arising from the meeting of 11 October 2018**

Lake House

Mr Freeman left the meeting.

The CEO had arranged to meet the owner of Lake House. A retrospective planning application had been submitted for a change of use of the garage block to a commercial use as a micro-brewery. The planning application contained no details of the likely number of vehicle movements and the CEO had commented to that effect.

Mr Freeman returned to the meeting.

#### Bus shelter Poolbrook Road

Since the last meeting, WCC had confirmed they did not have a sufficiently large budget to install a wooden bus shelter. Some members of the committee felt a shelter of metal construction would be acceptable. Ms Stace pointed out that this was inconsistent with the decision that had already been made. The Conservation Manager suggested that WCC should attempt to secure additional funding in order to discharge their obligations towards the AONB. If WCC were minded to make a further application, the committee would have to consider it.

#### Stowe Lane easement

Mrs Rees confirmed that Colwall Parish Council, of which she was a member, did not have a stance on the application and the committee therefore agreed that Mrs Rees did not have a conflict of interest and might remain in the meeting. The CEO and Mrs Rees had met Mr Longman. His landlord had written to say he would not enter into a maintenance agreement for the access road. The CEO intended to approach the landowner's agent to see if any further progress could be made. It had been confirmed that the owner of Brockbury Hall was also the owner of the cricket ground.

#### Brockhill Road easement resurfacing

Mr Earp had written to say he did not see how an agreement could be reached to maintain the roadway and the application to resurface the road would have to be shelved.

### **8. To consider Land Management budget 2019/20**

The Conservation Manager went through the paper and the budget. Many of the figures remained as for 2018/9 but there was an increase in the budget for contract labour (for extra fencing) and some of the grass cutting would now be covered under the Countryside Stewardship agreement, rather than the General Fund budget. The fixed asset budget had to be increased to cover the cost of replacement of the tractor which had caught fire.

No figure was shown in the Stewardship budget for Basic Payment Scheme. The payments varied from year to year and the Conservation Manager's best guess was that the payment would be in the region of £1-2,000.

In response to a question the Conservation Manager explained that the grazier on the Northern and Central Hills paid a licence fee (referred to as "rent" in the schedule) but no such payment was made in relation to Castlemorton as the grazing was being carried out by those with commoners' rights.

On the proposal of Dr Braim, seconded by Ms Stace, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the budget as drawn and to recommend its approval by the Board.

### **9. Community Woodland Grant and next steps**

The CCO went through the paper and explained the proposed improvements for access, which would be funded by a grant of £40,955 from Malvern Hills District Council. She thanked the Fundraising Working Group and in particular Mr Davies and Ms Rouse for their assistance in securing the grant.

Questions were raised about publicising the opportunity to install memorial benches, flooding and anti-social behaviour. Dr Braim suggested an additional

interpretation Board at the southern end of the woodland. Mrs Rees thanked the CCO for her work on the project.

#### **10. Updates for Land Management Plan**

The Conservation Manager went through the paper which highlighted the changes he had identified to date for inclusion in the Land Management Plan 2021 – 2026. Any additions to the land holding would also have their own sections in the new plan.

Mr Rouse asked if control of rhododendrons and berberis was in the original Land Management Plan, and the Conservation Manager confirmed it was.

On the proposal of Ms Stace, seconded by Mr Yapp, it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the proposed amendments.

#### **11. Donkey Shed**

The CEO reported that a bat survey had been carried out and he was drawing up a specification for the wrought iron work. He hoped shortly to be able to provide plans for circulation to Board members. An interpretation board would be provided, and MHT would look for grant support to help with the cost of the restoration work.

#### **12. Project progress update**

The CEO went through the paper. The CCO confirmed, in response to a question, that no additional signage would be added to the posts marking the mountain bike routes. Ms Stace reported that she was receiving a lot of reports about cycling on the contour path above Jubilee Drive. The CCO said that it was intended to reposition some of the “no cycling” signs and in the spring, to publicise the authorised routes and attempt to deter cyclists from using the other paths. Coppicing at Park Wood was now part of the annual programme and so would be removed from the projects list. A local woodland worker had been contacted to enquire if he would be interested in taking over the coppicing work as the former licensee had left the area.

The CEO also intended to remove the references in the Project Progress list to the grazing licences and the felling which was part of the winter works as they were also part of the annual programme. Dr Braim asked if it was necessary to retain the entry for the felling contracts if these were relevant for monitoring the budget.

#### **13. Graziers’ Report**

Mr Gardner reported a relatively quiet period since the last Board meeting. The cattle on Castlemorton were fenced in at present. One cow had been hit by a car. The Conservation Manager reported that he had had complaints from 2 Welland residents about cows in their gardens. It was their obligation to fence against the common.

#### **14. Conservation Manager’s report**

The tree safety inspection report for 2018 had been received and a number of trees required work, including some trees which needed felling (Including trees at

Peachfield Road junction with Abbey Road and Wyche Road, Guarlford, Hall Green and Ladies Mile). MHT would be writing to various residents about dumping grass cuttings at the base of trees, which was potentially injurious to their health.

The designation of Malvern Common as an SSSI had been confirmed. The winter open habitat restoration works were going well. The grazing on Old Hills had also gone well this year.

The CEO reported a wall next to a footpath at North Malvern was bulging. An engineer's report was being commissioned but he suspected a large quantity of soil would need to be removed from behind the wall prior to its repair.

British Camp toilets were served by a septic tank, but due to inappropriate materials being put into the toilets, drainage was becoming a blocked. Again, he was arranging for an inspection.

He had met with a representative of Herefordshire Council, who had stopped collecting household waste down the Purlieu because of the state of the track. The residents had carried out some works and MHT had agreed to carry out some drainage works to help keep the track clear.

**15. Matters for future consideration**

There was none.

**16. Urgent business**

There was none.

**17. Date of next meeting**

11 April 2019

**The meeting closed at 8.40 pm**

Schedule – Public Questions

The answers shown in italics were given by the CEO

Mr Ian Wells

Please could you provide an update on the status of the grazing contract for the Northern Hills - has it been let, to whom and under what conditions?

*I can confirm that the Northern Hills grazing has been licenced to Mr John Chance. The licence contains over 65 conditions covering all aspects relating to the operation of the grazing, including animal welfare, stock fencing and watering, health and safety, public relations and communications, grazing management, paths, use of vehicles, use of pesticides and chemicals, manure and fertilizer, protection of wildlife and archaeology.*

Dr Graeme Crisp

In the event that the Trust grants the Chance Lane easement, what specific plans does the Trust have for using the associated minimum payment of £2,000,000?

*The Trust cannot have a specific plan for using the payment referred to as the payment will be received (if at all) at some indeterminate time in the future.*

*Capital money received from the grant of easements has to be used for purposes for which capital money can be applied (s7 1995 Act). As stated previously, if any payment were received, it would be paid into the Parliamentary Fund for use in connection with projects which would further the objects of the Trust.*