

Annual Review 2020



Malvern Hills Trust

Registered charity no. 515804

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Chair's introduction

Welcome to our Annual Review for 2019/20. Our aim for this report is to give you some insight into what, why and how we do what we do and about the people involved in the past year. 2020 has been a rather different year and we have tried to avoid this report being dominated by the virus, not least because so much good work has gone on in spite of the pandemic. But we cannot ignore it and have dedicated a page to coronavirus impacts so that the rest of the review can be relatively Covid-19 free.

You will see that our dedicated staff have carried us through a quite stormy year with their usual skill and patience; continuing to deal with both unexpected events and routine tasks with the same positive, unwavering approach and meanwhile keeping us on a sound financial footing. Their hard work and commitment to our conservation and land management goals is a highly valued asset.

In 2019 we welcomed several new Trustees following the four-yearly elections in November. The new board has dealt positively with a number of governance concerns while concluding a public consultation on its wide-ranging ideas for modernising the Malvern Hills acts; making our constitution fit for the 21st century. Most of the proposals were supported by most of the respondents and when coronavirus distractions have receded, we will be looking at options to take the work forward.

Sadly, since Covid-19 restrictions were introduced we have been unable to benefit as usual from the wonderful support of our conservation and administration volunteers, but that frustration will surely pass and later in 2021 we can start again to enjoy our activities on the hills and commons. There will be plenty to do and we are always open and welcoming to new volunteers. Last year was the 20th since our conservation volunteers corps was formed; take a look on page 18 at the sort of work they do for us.

Do read on to learn about those real land management and conservation activities that make our hills and commons such special places. The essence of our work is to conserve and manage a rich landscape for the benefit of today's public and for future generations. We welcome the thoughtful help of the public and the contribution of all our stakeholders in our work caring for your land.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mick Davies', with a stylized, flowing script.

Mick Davies, Chair

CEO's report

Welcome once again to another year's Annual Review. Each year the Trust undertakes a range of key projects across its land, alongside the regular day to day maintenance works.

This last year, as well as making improvements to access paths at Thirds Wood and elsewhere on the western sides of the Hills, works have been undertaken to preserve and repair damage to the embankments of British Camp, our biggest archaeological feature and one of the most popular sites for visitors who travel the Hills. Managing the impact of human traffic on such important and historical features is one of our most challenging areas of caring for this landscape, as we seek both to maintain the open public access whilst also containing the negative impacts of wear and erosion. With the current repairs under close monitoring, we hope it will lead to further repairs being undertaken elsewhere on the Shire Ditch features in the coming years.

Most recently, with the advent of Covid-19 restrictions limiting the range of activities the public can engage in, the Hills and Commons have seen a dramatic increase in public use. For many people it has been a time of re-discovering this treasured landscape and making greater use of the facilities in their local neighbourhood. For others, the hills have been a new discovery, with the open access, expansive views and adventure of exploring fresh ground drawing them back for repeated visits.

Providing information, and in particular signage for all such visitors is an area of work that has continued throughout this last year. This work is essential in guiding visitors both to where and how they can best use the hills they have come to enjoy. This year, as well as seeing the provision of new and updated information boards at some of our car parks, also saw the installation of a new network of signage guiding mountain bike users to the more resilient and wider bridleway routes around the hills.

Alongside these interpretation improvements, the work of our wardens continues. Wardens provide the public with advice and assistance, but are also constantly vigilant against the damaging impacts of inappropriate use of the land. This was especially important this year, both during the long and very wet winter months when verges and commons were particularly vulnerable to damage, and most recently when dealing with the very high numbers of visitors experienced in early 2020.

Elsewhere, alongside the maintenance of the public access on the main Hills, essential work to maintain the surrounding commons and verges continues to be undertaken, with amenity grassland management, hay cutting, scrub clearance and litter picking all being carried out. This work often goes unnoticed by those that use and access these areas, yet it is an important part of the work undertaken each year by the Trust's staff and volunteers in conserving and protecting the landscape and ecology of those areas.



Duncan Bridges, CEO

Trustees and committees during the period

This Annual Review covers the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. Elections were held on the 31st October 2019.

Elected Trustees (up to 31st October 2019)

Priory Ward:	Peter Watson <i>FAR</i>
Chase Ward:	Sarah Stewart <i>FAR</i> (resigned 13th July 2019)
Wells Ward:	Simon Freeman <i>LM</i> (Board chair) (resigned June 2019)
West Ward:	Charles Penn <i>FAR and GC</i>
Dyson Perrins Ward:	David Hawkins <i>LM</i>
Malvern Link Ward:	Richard Bartholomew <i>LM, SC and GC</i>
Pickersleigh Ward:	Peter Forster <i>LM and SC</i>
Colwall Parish:	Helen Stace <i>LM</i> Stephen Braim <i>LM and GC</i>
Guarlford Parish:	David Street <i>FAR</i>
Mathon Parish:	Christopher Rouse <i>LM</i>

Nominated Trustees (up to 31st October 2019)

Malvern Hills District Council:	Roger Hall-Jones <i>LM</i> Chris O'Donnell <i>LM</i> Pamela Cumming Mick Davies <i>FAR and SC</i> (Board Chair from June 2019) John Michael <i>FAR</i> James O'Donnell Sarah Rouse <i>FAR</i> (Board Vice Chair)
Colwall Parish Council:	Gwyneth Rees <i>LM and SC</i>
Mathon Parish Council:	David Baldwin <i>LM and SC</i>
Church Commissioners:	David Bryer <i>LM and GC</i>
Herefordshire Council:	Emma Holton (resigned 30th May 2019)
Worcestershire County Council:	John Raine <i>FAR, SC and GC</i> Lucy Hodgson <i>FAR</i>
Worcestershire County Council on behalf of the following parishes:	
Castlemorton:	Angus Golightly <i>LM</i>
Newland:	Tom Yapp <i>LM</i>
Powick:	Martin Cordey <i>FAR</i>

Elected trustees (from 1st November 2019)

Priory Ward:	John Watts <i>FAR</i>
Chase Ward:	Graeme Crisp <i>LM</i>
Wells Ward:	Richard Fowler <i>LM</i>
West Ward:	Charles Penn <i>FAR and GC</i>
Dyson Perrins Ward:	Trevor Parsons <i>LM</i>
Malvern Link Ward:	Richard Bartholomew <i>LM, SC, CCC and GC</i>
Pickersleigh Ward:	David Core <i>FAR and GC</i>
Colwall Parish:	Helen Stace <i>LM</i> Stephen Braim <i>LM, CCC and GC</i>
Guarlford Parish:	David Fellows <i>FAR</i>
Mathon Parish	Christopher Rouse <i>LM</i>

Nominated Trustees (from 1st November 2019)

Malvern Hills District Council:	Mick Davies <i>FAR, CCC and SC</i> (Board Chair) Mark Dyde <i>LM</i> John Michael <i>FAR</i> Cynthia Palmer <i>LM, GC, CCC and SC</i> Sarah Rouse <i>FAR and CCC</i> (Board Vice Chair)
Colwall Parish Council:	Gwyneth Rees <i>LM, CCC and SC</i>
Mathon Parish Council:	David Baldwin <i>LM and SC</i>
Church Commissioners:	David Bryer <i>LM and GC</i>
Herefordshire Council:	Helen I'Anson <i>LM and SC</i> Tony Johnson
Worcestershire County Council:	John Raine <i>FAR, SC, CCC and GC</i> Lucy Hodgson <i>FAR</i>
Worcestershire County Council on behalf of the following parishes:	
Castlemorton:	Chris Atkins <i>LM</i>
Newland:	Tom Yapp <i>LM</i>
Powick:	Martin Cordey <i>FAR and CCC</i>

Notes:

<i>FAR</i>	sat on Finance, Administration and Resources Committee
<i>LM</i>	sat on Land Management Committee
<i>CCC</i>	sat on Covid Contingency Committee
<i>GC</i>	sat on Governance Committee
<i>SC</i>	sat on Staffing Committee

Staff

Chief Executive Officer:	Duncan Bridges
Secretary to the Board:	Susan Satchell
Conservation Manager:	Jonathan Bills
Operations Manager:	Paul Saunder
Finance and Administration Manager:	Cheryl Gentry
Conservation Officer:	Andy Pearce
Community and Conservation Officer:	Beck Baker
Finance Assistant:	Lisa Curtis
Administrative Assistant:	Cindy Parish
Wardens:	Robin Hill, Richard Vale, Simon Roberts
Field Staff:	George Banner, Martin Cottrell, Nick Cowling, Simon Davies, Duncan Patterson, Neil Tilley



Malvern Hills Trust staff

About us

Malvern Hills Trust was established by an Act of Parliament in 1884 and four subsequent Acts (1909, 1924, 1930 and 1995). It is an unincorporated charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, number 515804. Malvern Hills Trust is the working name of the Malvern Hills Conservators.



Malvern Hills ridge

Malvern Hills Trust was set up to protect the hills and commons under its jurisdiction, in particular to:

- preserve the natural aspect of the hills,
- protect and manage trees, shrubs, turf and other vegetation,
- prevent unlawful digging and quarrying,
- keep the hills open, unenclosed and unbuilt on as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Malvern Hills Trust is also obliged under other legislation to:

- conserve and enhance biodiversity, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Scheduled Monuments on its land.

The Trust owns and manages 3,000 acres of the iconic Malvern Hills landscape from the open hilltops, wooded slopes, to the wide, tree-lined verges and the lowland commons.

In order to meet its purposes and to conserve this special landscape, the Malvern Hills Trust carries out a programme of conservation and access work as guided by the adopted [Land Management Plan](#) 2016-2021.

The Hills and Commons are visited more than 1 million times per year and the Trust keeps the land as open space for the public. We maintain a large network of paths, benches, car parks and information boards to help people enjoy their visit and to help care for the Hills and Commons too.

Our conservation work includes maintaining and restoring a variety of diverse habitats, preserving geological heritage, woodland management, implementing a conservation grazing scheme, archaeological repairs, and much more.

This Annual Review highlights some of the key projects undertaken in the financial year 2019/20.

Working through Covid-19

On the 23rd March 2020, the Government announced a national lockdown in response to the outbreak of Covid-19. This global pandemic has changed our lives and the Trust too has had to adapt to new rules and guidance and to the altered expectations of the public. More than ever, our open spaces have become destinations for exercise, relaxation, adventure and enjoyment and we expect the increase in visitor numbers to continue for many months while travel elsewhere is restricted.

Meanwhile, our work of caring for the Hills and Commons has gone on as described in the remainder of this Review; not quite as normal but still vital to ensure that our land is in good heart long after the virus has been overcome. The short term impacts of Covid-19 have occasionally dominated our work since March but we have tried to maintain a long view, not to lose sight of the conservation goals that contribute to the health and wellbeing of the public who enjoy our land.

Although Covid-19 significantly affected the month of March in the 2019-20 year, we have pulled together here the Covid-19 impacts, some that were transient and short term and others that will be with us for a while.

- Although the landscape remained open for public access the Trust's car parks were closed to the public from 27th March 2020. They reopened on the 13th May 2020,
- The Trust Office was closed to the public during the lockdown periods,
- Projects and non-essential work stopped due to concerns over the loss of car park income,
- Temporary reduction in staff during lockdown due to shielding and furloughing where work was disrupted,
- Volunteer activities halted both for conservation and administrative tasks,
- IT systems reconfigured and home working established for many staff,
- Car park pass sales brought in house with the temporary closure of the local libraries,
- Some season dependant work (eg tree surveys) deferred to next year,
- Contracts and supplies (some urgent) disrupted.
- Trustee meetings were suspended and an emergency Contingency Committee was created in March to deal with urgent decisions pending the re-instatement of meetings using virtual channels.

Staff and Trustees have adapted positively to new ways of working although there are notable disadvantages to the physical separation of team members. Budgeting and planning is a challenging task while the situation remains dynamic and unpredictable but is likely that the effects of the virus will have an impact on the Trust for years to come.

The national restrictions were lifted in May 2020 which led to the reopening of the Trust's car parks. Following this relaxation of restrictions, the Trust faced continued challenges and the full impact of the lockdown and pandemic will be featured in our 2020/21 annual review.

Governance review

This year's work to consolidate and modernise the Trust's governing Acts continued with support and guidance from the Charity Commission.

The Trust undertook a large public consultation process inviting the public and stakeholders to have their say on the proposed changes over a 6-week period from the beginning of September to mid-October 2019. In addition to providing information about the proposals online, two workshops and five 'roadshow' events were held providing opportunities for people to find out all about it and to ask questions of Trust staff and trustees.



Roadshow event at Malvern Theatres

In addition to collating comments from the public events, 467 members of the public expressed their views by completing a questionnaire. The Trust also received written feedback from 10 individuals and organisations who have a specific relationship with the Trust and whose responses could not be accommodated in the more general questionnaire.

The level of response showed a high degree of engagement and a clear majority of respondents agree with all but 2 of the proposals for change that had been put forward by the Trust.

As a result of the high level of interest in the proposals, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport advised that their preferred mechanism for achieving amendments to the five Malvern Hills Acts would be through a private bill to Parliament.

More information about the proposed changes, the public consultation and the [Charity Commission Statement](#) can be found on the Trust's website.

Wardening

With over 3000 acres to patrol the wardens' job is never a dull one. Daily tasks can include litter picking and emptying bins, clearing fly-tipping, clearing paths, repairing signs, checking car parks and advising the public, enforcing byelaws, dealing with illegal camping, clearing fires and BBQs, liaising with utility companies and local residents, to name but a few.

Here is some of their work in numbers:



9 incidents of **people driving or parking** on the commons

10 reported **sheep worrying** incidents including **5** sheep **killed** by dogs



6 incidents of **vandalism** including **broken** benches and **snapping** a young lime sapling



1 reported incident of **metal detecting**



17 incidents of **fly-tipping** including asbestos at Earnslaw Quarry which cost £1,000 to safely remove



Asbestos fly-tipped at Earnslaw Quarry

Right tree, right place

Since 1884 the Trust has been dedicated to conserving the important features and special qualities of the Malvern Hills and Commons landscape which encompasses a variety of habitats including woodlands, grasslands and heath.

Today, the Trust continues to work towards creating a biodiverse and resilient landscape. A huge part of this work is to maintain the wealth of woodlands and open habitats and to restore priority habitats found here.

More than 57 % of the Malvern Hills and Commons are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, primarily for their open grassland, ancient woodland, mire and meadow habitats. Maintaining open areas that provide homes for birds, reptiles and insects, is also essential for the conservation of ancient archaeology and the panoramic views that could be lost through the growth of trees.

Global climate change has emerged as an urgent issue in recent years. Although decarbonising the economy is the key solution, tree planting can be a useful tool too. Amongst the discussions relating to tree planting and woodland creation for the purposes of carbon sequestration, the importance of healthy soils, grasslands and other open habitats can become lost. Grasslands and scrub also lock up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

In response to requests to plant trees on the Malvern Hills and Commons, this year the Trust has provided a tree position statement. It echoes the Forestry Commission in the adage: 'the right tree in the right place'. Just 5 % of England is covered by important open habitats and efforts toward climate change should not destroy these vital wildlife havens, ignoring the remaining 95 % of the country where trees would bring benefit to all.

This position is shared by many other wildlife conservation organisations including the Wildlife Trusts and the Woodland Trust. Read the statement on our website – [Right tree, right place](#).



Hawthorn on North Hill

Restoring rare habitats

Open habitats, including grasslands, meadows, heathland and scrub, are part of the natural Malvern Hills and Commons landscape. Over thousands of years, these open habitats have developed unique plant and animal communities and provide home to rare species including reptiles, butterflies and mosses. Their diversity and value are recognised by the designation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Conserving and restoring these habitats and improving the condition of the SSSIs is a core part of the Trust's work as failing to manage them would see them lost to secondary woodland succession. A diverse range of habitats supports a diverse range of wildlife.

Every year Trust staff, volunteers and contractors undertake work to tackle invasive trees and scrub. Mostly this is done in a small, focused fashion but sometimes larger wins can be made.

One of the larger sites of restoration has taken place near to Gardiner's Quarry where secondary woodland has been reduced to restore the once open hillside. The sites were carefully selected in partnership with Natural England as a priority area for open habitat restoration.

The site will become a mix of grassland with heath, scrub and scattered trees. Ideal for some of the nation's priority species including the tree pipit, stonechat and common lizard. Within just months, the site is rich in sheep's sorrel, the larval hostplant of the small copper butterfly.

Tree and hedgerow planting

Where it is possible, increasing the tree cover for climate, landscape and wildlife benefit is part of the Trust's aims. One such opportunity for planting took place at the new land purchased by the Trust last year called Snookes Croft. More than 100 metres of native hedge was planted by volunteers in what turned out to be the wettest February on record. The planting and restoration of hedgerows is important to provide corridors so wildlife can move through the landscape, as well as providing somewhere for birds to nest and creatures to shelter.



Volunteers tree planting at Snookes Croft, Castlemorton Common

Protecting our ponds

Invasive species can have a disastrous effect on native wildlife and controlling their spread is an important part of caring for the landscape.

New Zealand pygmyweed (*Crassula helmsii*) has been identified in ponds at Castlemorton Common. This non-native aquatic plant can grow into dense mats which smother native pond flora and fauna. It is such a concern that this species is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and as such it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause this species to grow in the wild.

Ponds on Castlemorton Common are home to rare wildlife including great crested newts which are being threatened by the colonisation of this plant.

There is no easy way to control the pygmyweed so MHT are trialling the use of black polythene to exclude light from the pond to kill the plant. The plastic will remain in place for 2-3 years before being carefully removed. This has been agreed with the Environment Agency and Natural England. If successful, this method could be used to improve ponds across the country.

A second non-native invasive species was suspected to be living in Weaver's Pond. Using sweep nets, contractors were able to confirm that no Common Carp were present and were pleased instead to discover a healthy population of swan mussels. Some of the fish (bream, roach, rudd) caught during the survey of the overstocked pond were removed to restore a balance and create a healthier aquatic ecosystem.

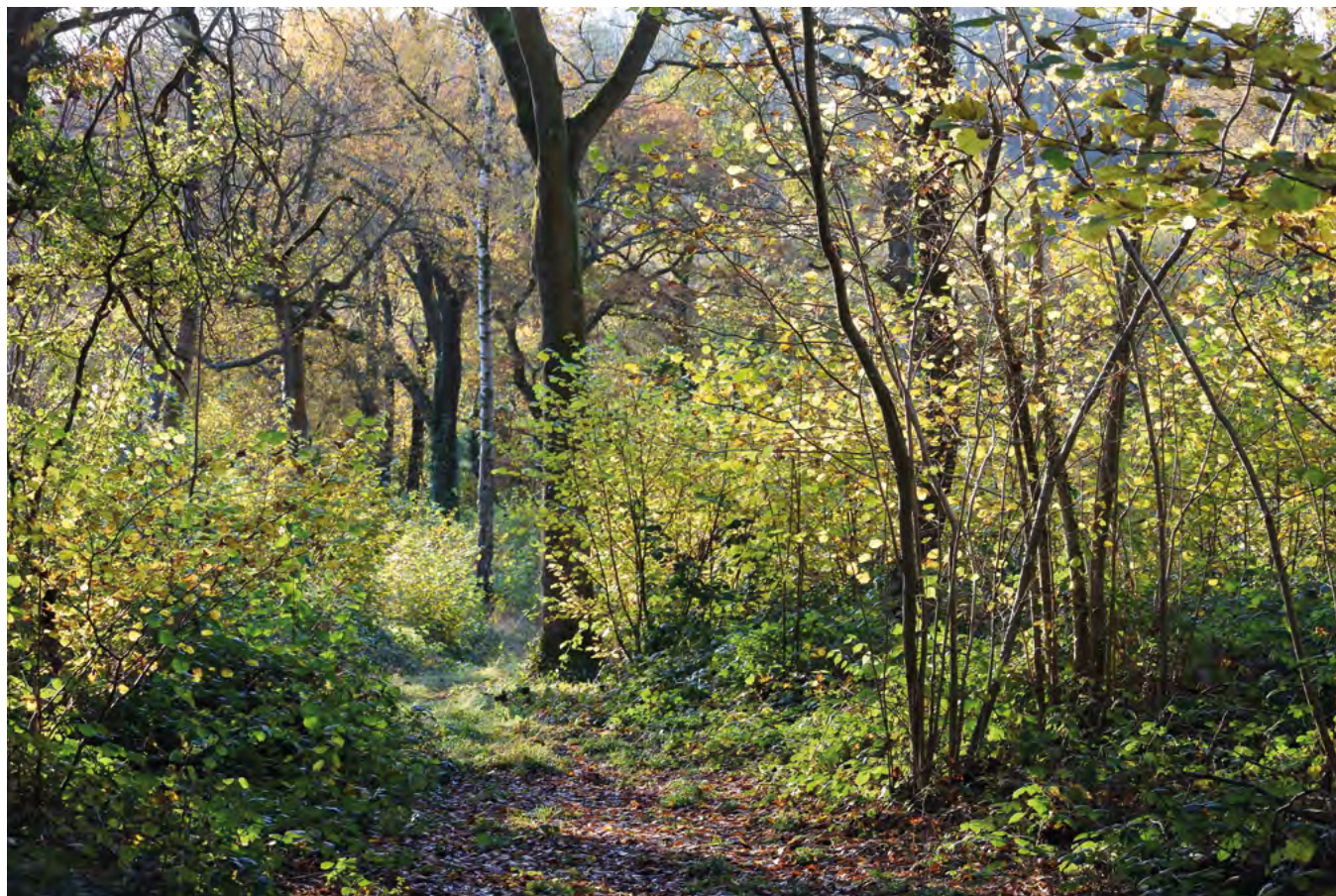
The works to eradicate invasive species from Castlemorton Common ponds has been supported by the Natural Networks Programme, to whom we are grateful.



Pond restoration work and swan mussels, Castlemorton Common

Traditional woodland management

The traditional woodland management of coppicing has continued in 2019/20 through a partnership between the Trust and a local woodsman.



Coppice at Park Wood

Coppicing is the practice of cutting of trees or shrubs at ground level to stimulate new growth. This creates a mosaic of plants of different ages and sizes which is essential for the dormouse, a protected species. By cutting the hazel, light reaches the woodland floor and encourages woodland flowers such as bluebells to grow and also brambles which produce blackberries, an important food source for the dormouse.

Numbers of dormice in the UK are in decline and these creatures are becoming increasingly rare as the ways in which woodlands are managed change. Coppicing as a low impact woodland management technique provides the habitats that the dormice need now and for the future.

Woodsman Phil Hopkinson, is traditionally managing the hazel within Park Wood by cutting it on an 8-year rotation.

Some areas of Park Wood remain as 'non-intervention' and are not actively managed. These denser woodland stands provide a different habitat for bats and rare flora such as the violet helleborine. Rides within the woodland are also kept open to provide sunny and warm areas for butterflies and reptiles.

Altogether for archaeology

As one of the best-preserved hillforts in England, British Camp is designated as a Scheduled Monument in recognition of its national importance and to give it additional protection.

It is a popular spot for visitors and, over time, erosion by feet and bike wheels had resulted in a deep gulley which was damaging the amazing structure of this ancient monument. Water run-off from the top of the hill down the gulley had further increased the depth and the size of the scar, causing serious damage to the distinctive shape of the stepped ramparts of the monument.

To stop further erosion of the distinctive banks and ditches and loss of this 2000-year-old heritage, the Trust carried out delicate repairs to block and stabilise the large scar. The method and materials were carefully selected through detailed discussions with both Natural England and Historic England. Recycled plastic, an inert material that would not contaminate the ancient archaeology, was used to create a structure to hold back material and this was infilled with local stone.

It will take time for the scar to fully heal but once the vegetation has fully returned to the slope it will provide a protective layer reduce future erosion.



Archaeological repairs on British Camp

20th anniversary of Conservation Volunteers

Volunteers continue to play a huge role in the Trust, supporting the organisation both in the office and out on the Hills and Commons.

The first practical volunteer task on the Hills was held in 1999 and in 2019 the Conservation Volunteers celebrated their 20th anniversary. Two dedicated supporters of the Trust who attended that very first task in December 1999 continued to donate their time to care for this landscape for a further 20 years.

Practical tasks this year have included:

- Creation of dams to hold water at Hayslad Bog to provide wet areas for water-loving plants including sphagnum moss,
- Removing brambles and scrub from a sunny bank on Hangman's Hill to restore the open habitat for the nationally scarce Spring Cinquefoil,
- Clearing the rock faces of Dingle Quarry, West Malvern in partnership with Earth Heritage Trust. Vegetation is removed to allow for the study of this locally important geological feature.

For this annual review period, more than 550 days have been donated by volunteers caring for this special landscape. This includes by the conservation volunteers, volunteer wardens and office and archiving volunteers who all support the Trust's work throughout the year.



Conservation Volunteers

Bringing heritage to life

The rich natural and cultural heritage of this landscape can be hidden but is being revealed through new visitor interpretation.

A programme of updating visitor information boards is underway and this year new interpretation at Black Hill has been added to those at British Camp, North Quarry and Tank Quarry car parks.

Bringing heritage to life is important in helping visitors to understand the importance of this landscape, its archaeology, geology, wildlife and the people who've helped shape it. Better understanding of the value of the landscape and what's special can encourage people to care for it. The interpretation at Black Hill features some of the artists, poets and writers who have been inspired by the dramatic beauty of the Hills and Commons.

With maps of the walking and cycling routes in the area, the boards also provide a practical role in helping visitors plan their routes. This is especially helpful for cycling visitors who want to ride the bridleways and permissive paths.

New interpretation featuring historical figures and wildlife will be installed in several other Trust car parks next year.



Interpretation board at Black Hill car park

Car park machine upgrade

The car parks provide much needed income to support the work of the Trust in caring for the Hills and Commons, which includes providing and maintaining visitor infrastructure such as paths.

Visitors come from far and wide and for years have needed to bring with them the correct change for their stay in the car parks. To make it easier to purchase a car park ticket, visitors can now make both card and contactless payments following the installation of new ticket machines.

The meters also provide the opportunity for the Trust to collect data on visitor numbers which will help the Trust in planning future access projects.

For frequent visitors, annual parking passes are available including [discounted passes](#) for precept payers.

Dark Sky Discovery Sites

An often-overlooked part of the landscape is the beauty of the night sky. It's estimated that 80 per cent of the world's population can no longer see the Milky Way – the great band of billions of stars which cuts across the night sky. In parts of the UK, particularly in urban areas, visibility of any stars is reduced to a mere handful, all others shrouded by light pollution.

The Trust has been working with the [Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty partnership](#) to celebrate dark skies and the importance of taking a moment to appreciate this.

Dark Sky Discovery Sites are locations that have been recognised for their low levels of light pollution and a place open to the public to visit to observe the stars.

The Mill Pond, Hollybed Common has been designated as one such site and an event was hosted by the Malvern Hills AONB at the nearby Castlemorton Village Hall. Astronomer, astrophotographer, journalist, presenter and author Will Gater presented some of the constellations to a packed audience followed by a stargazing session.

This location has been added to a national map to allow everyone, whether professional or amateur stargazers, to find places to admire the night sky.

Nature of Malverns

In 2018, the Nature of the Malverns book was published. Filled with stunning photography and brimming with information about the natural landscape.

Brought together by the Malvern Hills AONB, NatureBureau, and a group of dedicated volunteers, local experts and photographers, the publication has been a huge success.

Sales of the book have raised £1,844 for the conservation of the Malvern Hills and Commons to keep this landscape special for future generations. A huge thank you to everyone who purchased the book online and in your local bookstore.



Contributors to the Nature of the Malverns book

Review of the financial year 2019/20

The most recent audited accounts covered the year ended 31st March 2020. The accounts received an unqualified audit report. Significant events (and their financial impact) during that period were:

- The car park meters were upgraded at a total cost of £40,855 (£8,171 of which was spent in 2018/19),
- The Board maintained its policy of updating vehicles, plant and machinery, spending £40,137,
- A legacy of £292,000 was received from the estate of the late Mr Stubbs,
- The Belvedere bus shelter was renovated at a cost of £8,649, funded by part of a legacy from the late Mr Izzard,
- Work on revision of the Trust's governing Acts continued, with legal costs of £2,336 being charged to the designated fund set aside for this project during the year. Total costs of £110,990 had been incurred on this project from its start to 31st March 2020,
- Direct costs of £18,903 were incurred on the public consultation on the Charity Commission scheme, which were charged to the designated fund set up for those costs. Total costs incurred on the consultation from its start to 31st March 2020 were £19,111,
- Sales of the 'Nature in Malvern' book covered the Trust's share of its cost and raised a further £1,844 towards conservation work. The authors of the book will consider how to spend the proceeds to best benefit local wildlife.

Environmental grants

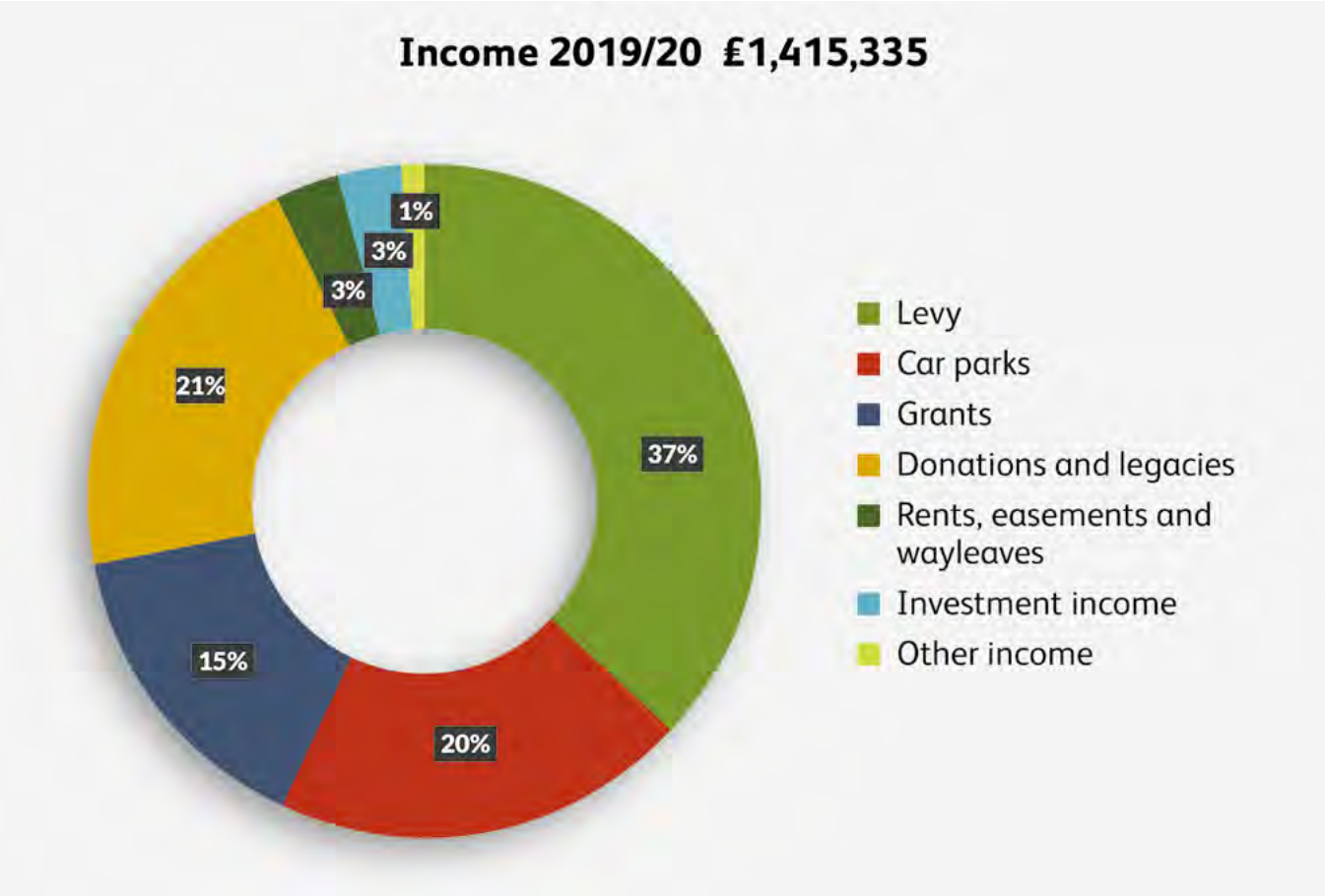
Grants are available to landowners across the country who undertake land management that cares for our landscapes, wildlife and other heritage. For many years, the Trust has joined several Environmental Stewardship schemes which provide financial contributions towards positive land management activities on the Hills and Commons. These schemes are run by the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Until 31st March 2020, significant areas of the charity's land (around 80 %) were under the Defra Higher Level Stewardship scheme and the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme. With the ending of two agreements covering Castlemorton and the Southern Hills on 31st March 2020, the proportion of the Trust's land under the schemes reduced to 40 %. Applications have been made for new Countryside Stewardship schemes for both areas.

The schemes provide funding for certain land management activities including the grazing of grasslands, which is the most effective way to maintain significant parts of the hills and commons. The grazing programme is complemented by management work carried out by staff, contractors and a dedicated team of volunteers.

Principal funding sources

The total income to the Trust for the period 2019/20 was £1,415,355 up from £1,226,396 the previous year. The split of this figure across the seven main income sources is shown below.



Under powers in the Malvern Hills Acts, Malvern Hills Trust charges a levy to Council Tax payers in Malvern Town and the parishes of West Malvern, Malvern Wells, Guarlford, Colwall and Mathon. The average band D levy payable in 2019/20 was £37.02. The total levy received by the charity was £519,250.

Considerable funds were received during this financial year from donations and legacies.

Revenue from car parks is a significant funding source. The total received in 2019/20 was £289,167. Car park takings are used to fund the charity’s work including maintaining the car parks for public use.

The other major funding source are grants received under the Higher Level Stewardship scheme and the new Countryside Stewardship scheme. These provide the funding for conservation works on the hills and commons, in support of the charity’s Land Management Plan 2016-2021 and conservation objectives. The total received during the year was £192,394.

Donations and legacies

Donations and legacies are an important part of our income and help to fund special projects in addition to the ongoing work on the Hills and Commons. The trustees and staff are very grateful for all donations and legacies made to support our work.

Donations and legacies received in 2019/20 totalled £299,020 (£94,513 in the previous year). This included a generous legacy from the late Mr Stubbs.

In late 2018 we launched a legacy campaign, producing a new legacies leaflet which was widely distributed and joining the 'Remember a Charity' organisation. A copy of our [legacy leaflet](#) can be found on the website.

A Fundraising Committee has been set up to investigate opportunities for increasing the charity's income.

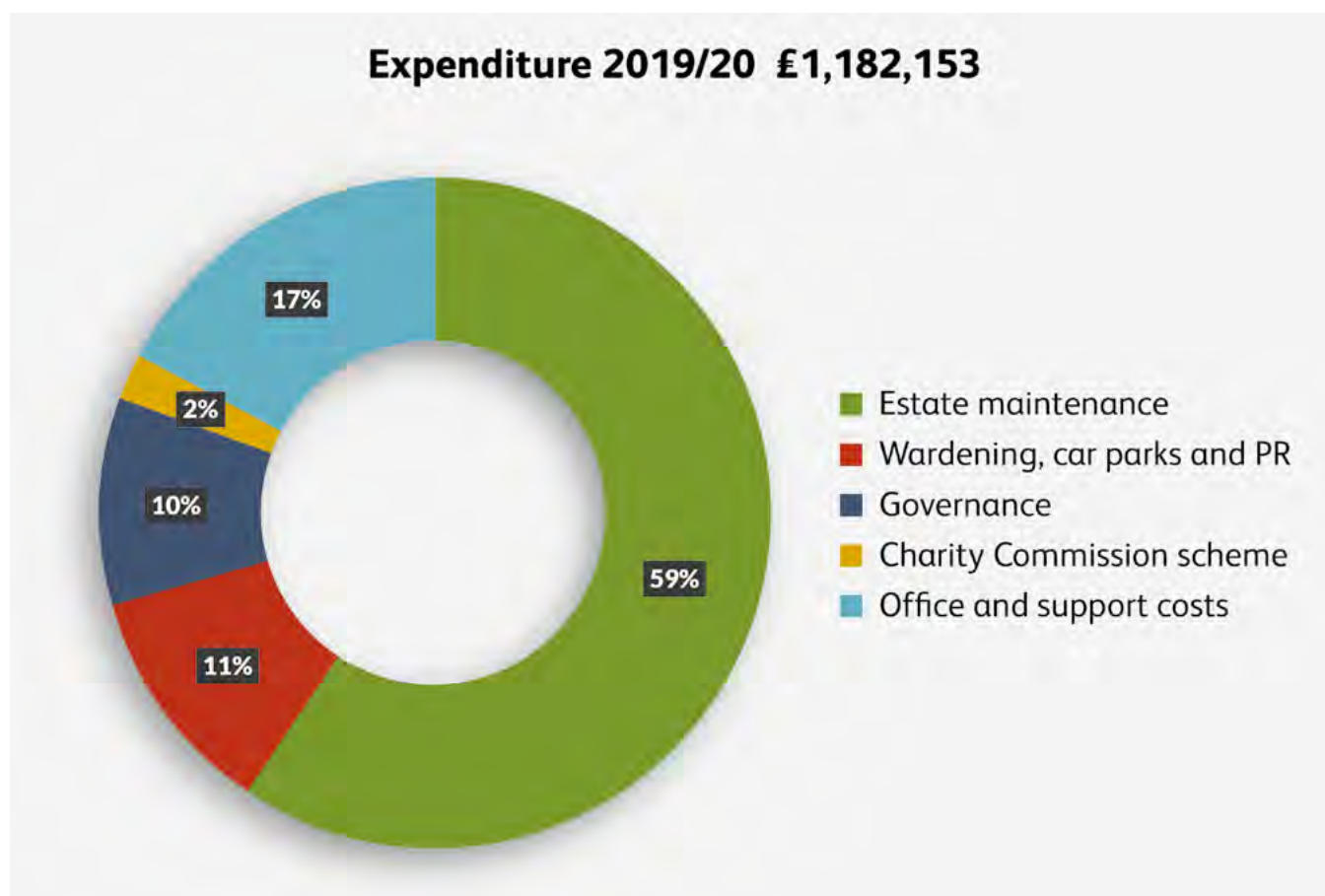
If you would like to support our work, please contact us on info@malvernhills.org.uk or you can donate via our [Just Giving](#) page.



Donkeys and children in Happy Valley

How the charity's money is used

The Trust spent £1,182,153 during the period, down from £1,192,355 in 2018/19. This expenditure is shown on a percentage basis across the five main areas of costs below.



59% of the total expenditure was on Estate maintenance, which includes:

- Salaries of the Field Staff and Conservation team,
- Grazing costs,
- Direct land management costs such as tree work, contractors and equipment hire,
- Depreciation charges on land management equipment purchased by the charity,
- Legal fees relating to land management issues,
- Insurance.

In addition, a further 12% of the total expenditure was spent on wardening services, repair and maintenance of the car parks, visitor information, interpretation and public relations. As a result, a total of 71% was spent in the management and maintenance of the land under the Trust's jurisdiction. Governance costs accounted for 10% of total expenditure, while a further 2% has been spent on the Charity Commission scheme (see Financial Review – significant events on page 20).

Office and support costs accounted for 17% of the year's costs. This included

- IT costs, office equipment and maintenance,
- Office rates and services (power, water, telephones and broadband),
- Printing, postage and stationery,
- Bank charges.

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31st March 2020

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2020	Total funds 2019
	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	297,820	1,200	299,020	94,513
Charitable activities:				
Management of the hills and commons	722,812	4,617	727,429	731,643
Car parks	289,167	0	289,167	269,281
Other trading activities	39,168	3,232	42,400	34,973
Investments:				
Bank deposits	3,145	0	3,145	2,691
Investment portfolio	0	48,172	48,172	55,719
Other	6,002	0	6,002	37,576
Total income	1,358,114	57,221	1,415,335	1,226,396
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	1,102,149	80,004	1,182,153	1,185,930
Other expenditures	0	0	0	6,425
Total expenditures	1,102,149	80,004	1,182,153	1,192,355
Net gains/(losses) on investments	0	(150,702)	(150,702)	65,856
Net income/(expenditure)	255,965	(173,485)	82,480	99,897
<i>Transfers between funds</i>	22,709	(22,709)	0	0
<i>Other recognised gains/(losses)</i>				
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension scheme	12,000	0	12,000	(167,000)
Net movement in funds	290,674	(196,194)	94,480	(67,103)
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward	(1,026,011)	3,091,224	2,065,213	2,132,316
Total funds carried forward	(735,337)	2,895,030	2,159,693	2,065,213

This table is extracted from the audited [Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts](#) for the year ended 31st March 2020, which received an unqualified audit report. Copies of the full report are available to download from our website.

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2020

	2020	2019
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Tangible fixed assets	518,912	533,464
Heritage assets	1,060,261	1,060,261
Investments	1,353,684	1,541,713
Total fixed assets	2,932,857	3,135,438
Current Assets		
Livestock	25,320	25,320
Debtors	182,148	364,641
Short term deposits	965,535	484,856
Cash at bank and in hand	172	200
Total current assets	1,173,175	875,017
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(104,339)	(111,242)
Net Current Assets excluding pension liability	1,068,836	763,775
Net assets	4,001,693	3,899,213
Pension Fund liability	(1,842,000)	(1,834,000)
Net Assets including pension liability	2,159,693	2,065,213
The funds of the charity		
Unrestricted - General Fund	334,668	311,064
Unrestricted - Designated Funds	771,995	496,925
Unrestricted - Pension Fund	(1,842,000)	(1,834,000)
Restricted Funds	2,895,030	3,091,224
Total charity funds	2,159,693	2,065,213

This table is extracted from the audited [Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts](#) for the year ended 31st March 2020, which received an unqualified audit report. Copies of the full report are available to download from our website.



Volunteers at Shire Ditch, Malvern Hills



If you'd like to keep up to date with the work of the Trust, view our [Latest News](#) on our website or [sign up to our e-newsletter](#).

Malvern Hills Trust is the registered working name of the Malvern Hills Conservators. Registered charity number 515804.

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Malvern Hills Trust