



Malvern Hills Trust

**Meeting of the
Land Management Committee**

Thursday 2 December 2021 7.00 pm

**United Reform Church
Malvern Link**

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Thursday 2 December 2021 at 7:00 pm

United Reform Church, Malvern Link

Members: Mr C Atkins, Mr D Baldwin, Dr S Braim, Ms E Chowns, Mr R Fowler, Mrs C Palmer, Dr T Parsons, Mr C Rouse, Ms H Stace, Mr T Yapp.

Agenda

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Election of Chair | Nominations to follow |
| 2. Election of Vice-Chair | Nominations to follow |
| 3. Apologies for Absence | |
| 4. Declarations of Interest | |
| 5. Chairman's Communications | |
| 6. Public Comments | |
| 7. Matters Arising (if any) from previous meetings | |
| 8. Newly secured grants for tree and hedge planting | Paper A |
| 9. To set the Land Management budget for 2022/23 | Paper B |
| 10. Update on Stewardship agreement | Verbal update |
| 11. Project progress update | Paper C |
| 12. Graziers' Report | Verbal update |
| 13. Conservation Manager's report | Verbal update |
| 14. Operation Managers Report | Verbal update |
| 15. Urgent business | |
| 16. Date of next meeting 14 April 2022 | |

If you or anyone in your household/bubble has experienced any Covid symptoms in the last 7 days, please do NOT attend this meeting. Delta variant symptoms for those who have been vaccinated are commonly runny nose, sore throat and headache, and not necessarily a cough, fever or loss of sense of taste or smell.

There are still high numbers of Covid cases and it is clear that notwithstanding vaccination, people can still catch the virus. Each venue is risk assessed by the Trust and is allocated a maximum capacity so that a minimum distance can be maintained between attendees. Once the capacity for the venue has been reached, in order to keep attendees safe, no further people will be admitted. If you attend the meeting you will still be asked to wear a face mask as a courtesy to other attendees.

Out of consideration for others, we ask all attendees to undertake a lateral flow test and not to attend if this shows positive result.

Anyone (other than Staffing Committee members) who wishes to attend must apply in writing to cindy@malvern hills.org.uk (or write to Mrs L Parish at the Trust's office), giving their name, E-mail address and contact number. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Cindy will confirm whether there is a place available.

If you turn up at the meeting without pre-booking you risk not being admitted.

LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Newly secured grants for tree and hedge planting 2021/2022

2 December 2021

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Land Management Plan 2021-26

INTRODUCTION

To help achieve MHT's Vision for 2040, staff look out for opportunities provided by external bodies including grant aid. Typically, grant aid is for one-off projects that make a tangible difference in a relatively short amount of time.

During 2021, staff have applied for two grant schemes and successfully received grant offers. This paper provides detail on the grants secured and the funded works that will be delivered this winter with completion by 1 March 2022.

1 URBAN TREE CHALLENGE FUND

The Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) is one of many current grant schemes from the Government's 'Nature for Climate Fund' to help land managers to plant trees. It is administered by the Forestry Commission.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/urban-tree-challenge-fund>

The UTCf has a focus on planting trees in urban areas, specifically those near to schools, medical centres and the most deprived areas in England, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The UTCf provides 50% funding of standard costs for planting large trees (3-4m) and their establishment costs for 3 years following planting. The funding supports the cost of buying a tree, planting in grass, the cost of basic protection and the labour required to plant it.

The Trust's application included 56 trees to be planted at locations from Madresfield Road southward to Malvern Common (see Map 1) chiefly on verges. Planting here brings benefits to many people. Tree planting will bolster existing tree avenues and establish new or successional tree avenues where suitable. A mixture of species will make our trees more robust against climate change and diseases.

Tree species include: Common Lime, Cherry, Hornbeam, Black Poplar, Wild Service, Small-leaved Lime, Walnut, Rowan and Oak (Walnut is not a native tree, but in light of climate change it is one now recommended as tolerant of warmer climates).¹

Trees will be planted and cared for by a mixture of local volunteers, staff, contractors and, hopefully, pupils from the Chase School.

In addition, the grant also covers the restoring of a small orchard adjacent to Malvern Common by replanting 10 local variety plum trees, including Purple

¹ *Naturalised broadleaf trees – a call for a strategic reappraisal*. British Wildlife. v28.1. 2016.

Pershore and Yellow Egg. Colwall Orchard Group will be running the planting session using it to inspire and educate other local landowners.

Grant secured: £23,500.

Requirement from MHT: staff time in planning and delivery.

This work will help deliver LMP objective 7: Broad-leaved Woodland, and complete Project 33.



Photo: One location for UTCF tree planting, Sherrards Green, Malvern.

2 FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

The Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL) programme has been developed by Defra with the support of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Park staff from across England. Its aim is to 'support nature recovery; mitigate the impacts of climate change; provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage; and support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses'.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers-in-protected-landscapes>

The Trust's application included the planting of 471m of hedges, 9 trees with one pond restoration at The Hacketts and Colwall Lands, both enclosed parcels of land to the west of the Hills (see Map 2). New fencing and gates to protect the hedges are also included.

The planting of new native hedges and in-field trees here will have multiple benefits. Livestock will have improved shelter from extremes of weather, CO₂ sequestration, water runoff will be reduced and landscape character will be enhanced. The hedges will provide habitat and improve ecological connectivity through the landscape for species including Lesser Horseshoe Bats.

Hedges and trees will be planted and cared for by a mixture of local volunteers, contractors and staff. A local contractor will re-excavate the pond.

Grant secured: £11,231.

Requirement from MHT: staff time in planning and delivery. £1200 contribution toward capital costs.

In light of current volatility of fuel and material costs across the UK, it is likely that the planned amounts (grant plus MHT contributions) will not meet current prices. The CEO has agreed to use delegated authority for up to £3,000 to act as a contingency and ensure we deliver these works.

If necessary staff may later request that up to £3,000 is taken from the unrestricted Gift Fund at the next Board meeting to replenish the CEO's delegated fund. Planting hedges would seem to be a suitable use of the Gift Fund.

This FIPL work will deliver LMP Projects 25 and 26 plus help toward Objective 14: Ponds.



Photo: One location for a new hedge, Colwall Lands.

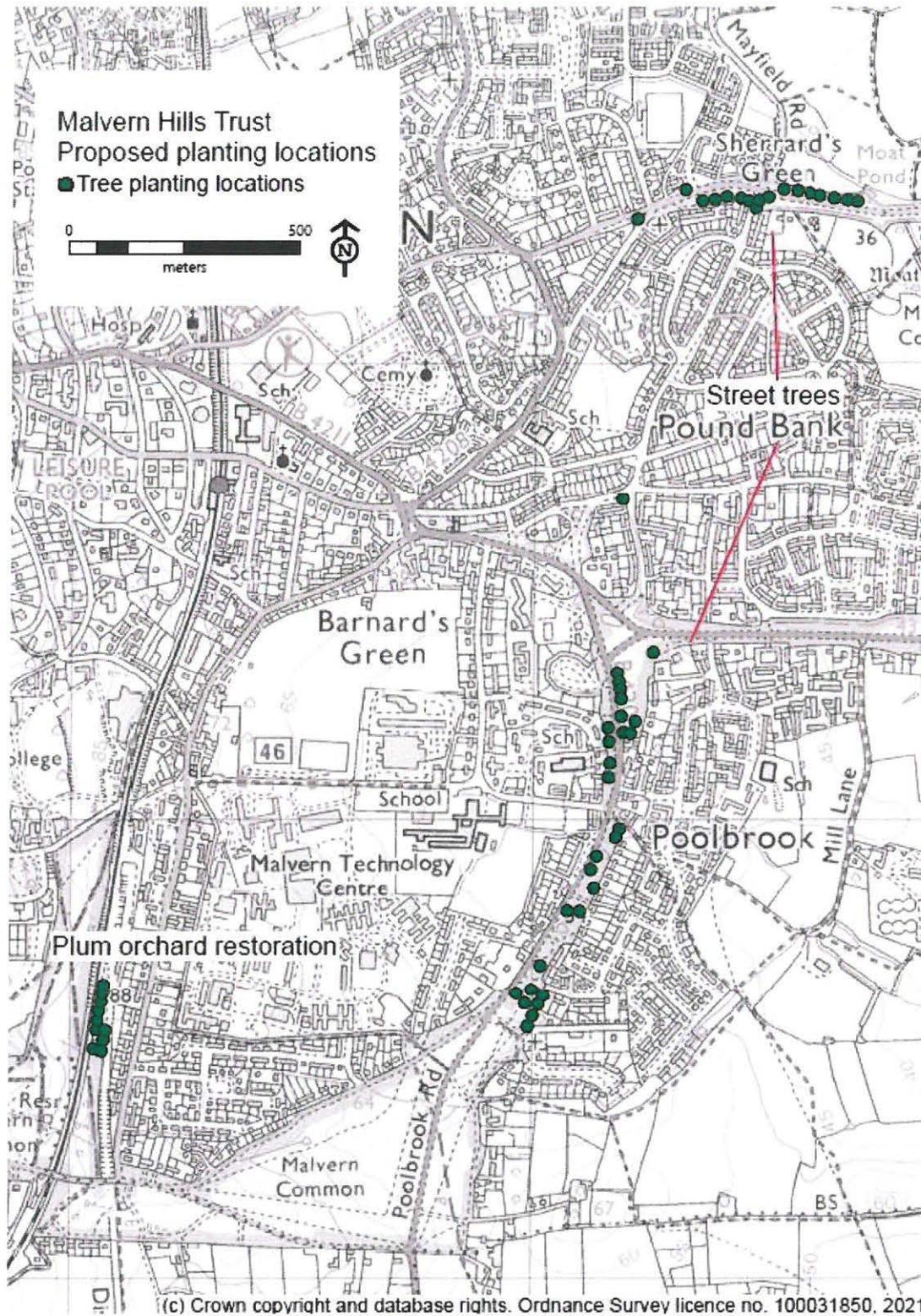
It is proposed to hold a site visit open to all trustees in April to view the newly completed works.

RECOMMENDATION:

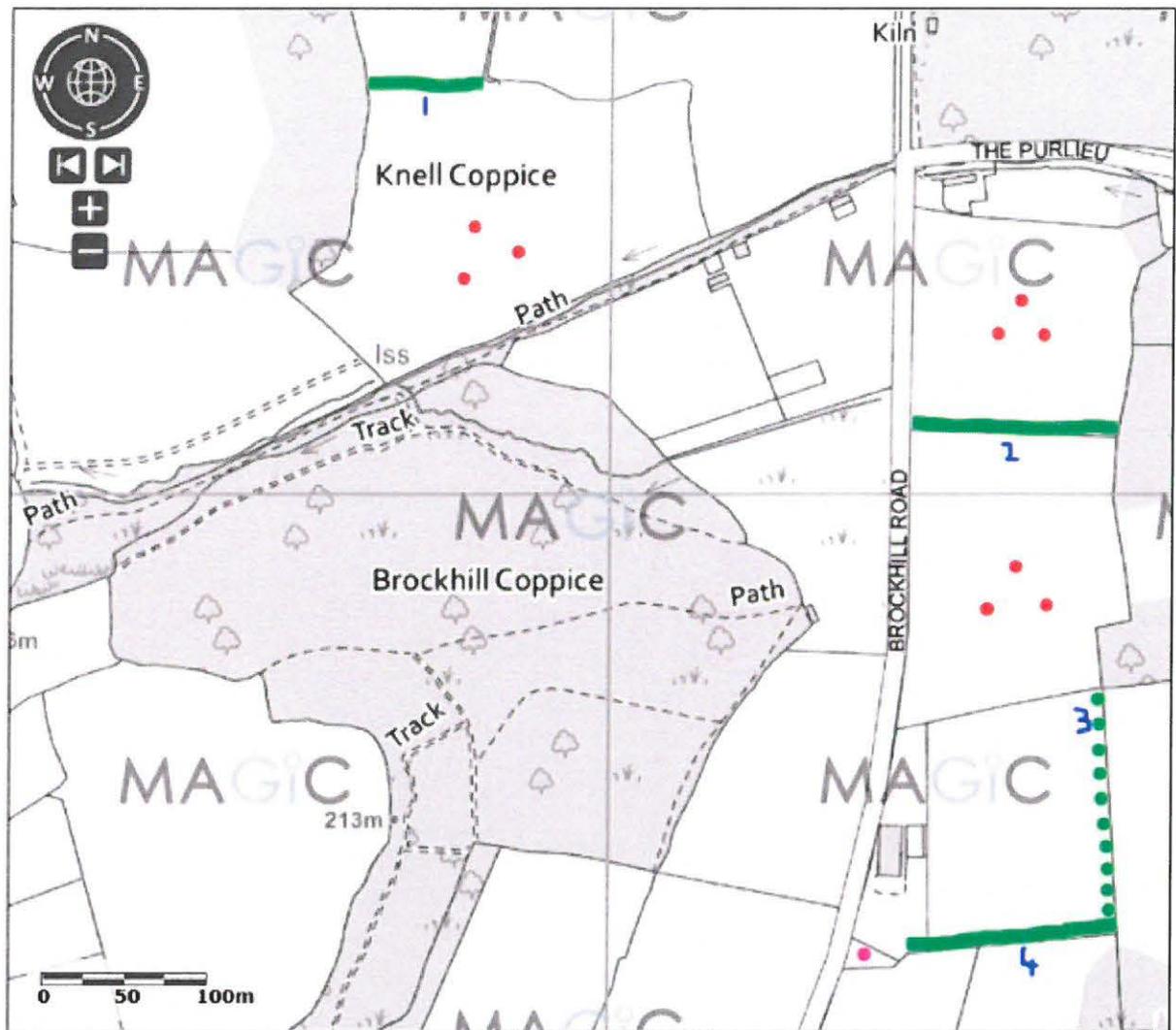
The Committee is asked to note the planting activities and the use of CEO delegated funds of up to £3000.

Jonathan Bills
Conservation Manager
8.11.2021

Map 1: UTCF works



Map 2: FIPL works. New hedges in green, in-field trees in red and pond restoration in purple.



Land Management Committee
Land Management budget 2022/2023
2 December 2020

Background Papers

Land Management Plan 2021-2026

Land Management budget

This paper presents the draft land management budget for the next financial year 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023. It provides budgets relating to the General Fund and the Defra/stewardship funds only.

The General Fund, and to a lesser extent, the Defra/stewardship funds provide finance for the regular, standard items that are ongoing, such as materials and tools for path maintenance. These figures are based on the planned land management work including new items from the LMP.

It is of note that we have experienced another abnormal year in 2021. Covid 19 continues to have a wide range of effects and also Brexit and other factors have resulted in an unpredicted increase in costs of resources chiefly fuel and materials (see Appendix 3). Many quotes received in the latter half of 2021 have been far higher than estimated.

Planning for next year, which could well be abnormal too, is therefore more difficult than usual.

General Fund

Any items that are non-standard, and/or which will vary significantly from previous years are highlighted here:

- 6 months cost for emptying the septic tank at British Camp has been budgeted in case of delays to the installation of the new drainage system.
- Skip hire is being maintained at the higher rate of £6,000 in expectation of continued higher than normal visitor numbers.
- Fuel budget has been increased by 20 % to accommodate national price increases.
- The training budget has been increased again to £10,000 to accommodate several new starters plus an increase in staff (this is shown in staff costs in the general fund budget, to be sent with December FAR papers). Training availability has been curtailed during the Covid 19 pandemic and there is an element of 'catch up' to be done.

- The Materials and Tools budget has been increased by £4000 to accommodate two LMP projects (project numbers 19 and 20).
- Following the Board decision on the paper '*Meeting the increasing costs of tree safety works – recommendations from the Tree Costs Working Group*', the Tree and Woodland Management budget has been increased by £5000 plus inflation giving a figure of £26,000.

Defra/Stewardship Funds

The finance relating to the Defra/stewardship grants is presented in Appendix 2. The following points are of note:

- Castlemorton Common Countryside Stewardship application was made in May. MHT still awaits any feedback or an offer of an agreement from the RPA. Estimated figures are shown in italics.
- The Northern and Central Hills CS is still in dispute with the RPA. It is not known when this will be resolved nor what finances MHT should expect thereafter. Figures shown in this column are based on the undisputed residue only and show a worst-case scenario of no resolution and MHT terminating the agreement in December 2022. However, work is ongoing to avoid this and to resolve the dispute.
- Basic Payment Scheme amounts continue to be reduced year after year as the Government winds down this scheme completely across the country.
- Chase End Hill Higher Level Stewardship agreement was due to end in February 2022. In collaboration with Bromesberrow Estate, we have secured an extension of one year. The figures in this column are therefore based on pro-rata figures for a 'normal' HLS year.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee consider the proposed budget and recommend its approval to the Board.

Jonathan Bills
Conservation Manager
Cheryl Gentry
Finance and Administration Manager
8.11.2021

APPENDIX 1: draft Land Management Budget and Fixed Asset purchase 2022/23

	2022/23 budget		2021/22 budget	
	£	£	£	£
Contract labour				
Tracks and paths	3,000		3,180	
Shire Ditch restoration (LMP 11) N Pink Cottage	1,000		0	
Swinyard Hill infrastructure (LMP 15)	2,000		0	
Ponds & Ditches	3,000		3,180	
Fencing - grazing & safety	3,500		3,200	
Fencing - other (inc LMP 17 Chase End Hill)	3,500		3,200	
Other	1,200		1,060	
Sub-total		17,200		13,820
Drainage works				
Generic drainage works	1,700		1,600	
British Camp loos	2,500		4,120	
		4,200		5,720
Vehicle and equipment expenses				
Diesel and fuel for power tools	10,200		8,500	
Servicing & maintenance	10,600		10,300	
Other	2,300		2,260	
Sub-total		23,100		21,060
Waste management				
Skip hire	6,000		6,000	
Fly tip waste disposal	1,300		0	
Green waste disposal	500		1,160	
Sub-total		7,800		7,160
Hire of plant and equipment				
Other	2,000		1,850	
Sub-total		2,000		1,850
Tree and Woodland management				
Tree safety - contract	17,500		12,360	
Tree safety - ad hoc	7,000		6,580	
Tree work - other	1,500		1,060	
Sub-total		26,000		20,000
Grass cutting				
Colwall Green (CPC)	1,100		1,030	
Old Hills, Bush Lane & Clevelode	800		770	
Hire of Robocut	2,000		1,900	
Sub-total		3,900		3,700

Materials and tools				
Materials and tools	10,000		9,800	
Castlemorton Common parking control (LMP 19)	3,000		0	
Bowling Green Meadow stobs (LMP 20)	1,000		0	
Tools > £500	1,000		1,030	
		15,000		10,830
Protective clothing				
PPE	1,100		1,100	
Uniform	600		600	
Sub-total		1,700		1,700
Field consultancies				
Tree safety consultancy	3,300		3,200	
Other	1,600		1,550	
		4,900		4,750
Evendine Spring				
Water testing	500		510	
		500		510
Conservation volunteers				
Conservation volunteers	1,100		1,100	
		1,100		1,100
Gardening				
Gardening	3,000	3,000	2,800	2,800
Land management plan	0	0		250
		110,400		95,250
Fixed asset purchases				
Chain saws		2,000		
Brush cutters		2,000		
ATV vehicle for Field Staff (Land Rover trade-in £10,000)		20,000		
5 or 8 ton trailer		5,000		
3.5 ton twin axle plant trailer		3,500		
2.7 ton forwarding trailer (timber)		6,000		
		38,500		

APPENDIX 2: DEFRA/stewardship grants draft budget 2022/23

N/C	Northern & Central CS #1	Chase End Hill HLS. MHT + BE (expire Jan 23) #2	Old Hills HLS (expires Feb 23)	C'morton Common CS. MHT+ active parties (estimate) #3	Southern Hills CS. MHT + ECE	Basic Payment Scheme #4	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
4015 - BPS & other grants	0	0	0	0	0	4,240	4,240
4020 - Stewardship annual grants	32,000	3,144	5,176	55,000	17,832	0	113,152
4025 - Stewardship capital grants	0	0	0	5,500	16,732	0	22,232
4310 - Land rentals (OH, Ballards, Hacketts, in-bye)	2,279	0	0	300		0	2,579
4325 - Licences	5,500	0	0	0	750	0	6,250
4420 - Sundry income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4600 - Transfers from other funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total income	39,779	3,144	5,176	60,800	35,314	4,240	148,453
5000 - Contract labour	4,000	500	1,000	5,500	17,267	2,000	30,267
5100 - Graziers	46,800	0	1,382	40,000	15,000	0	103,182
5105 - Transfer to general fund - staff time	0	367	605	0		0	972
5110 - Stewardship schemes direct costs	3,000	2,083	500	5,000	2,219	0	12,802
Total expenditure	53,800	2,950	3,487	50,500	34,486	2,000	147,223
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(14,021)	194	1,689	10,300	828	2,240	1,230
Transfers between funds	10,000	0	(10,000)	0	0	0	0
Reserves brought forward	(16,651)	1,866	28,775	0	9,331	1,778	25,099
Reserves carried forward	(20,672)	2,060	20,464	10,300	10,159	4,018	26,329

NOTES:

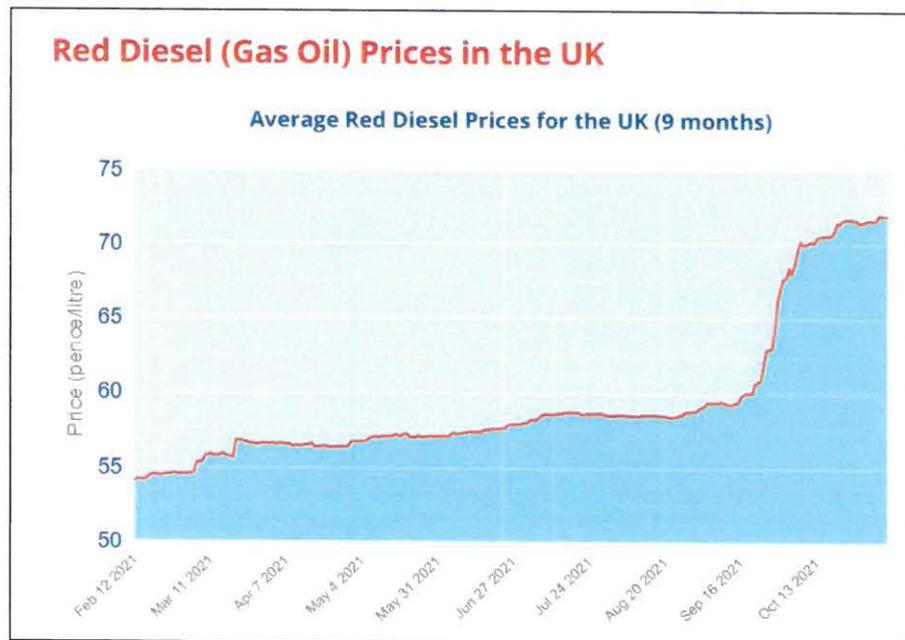
#1 amounts included are worst case, i.e. agreement terminated Dec 22. The deficit balance would need to be funded from the general fund.

#2 HLS agreement due to be extended by 1 year.

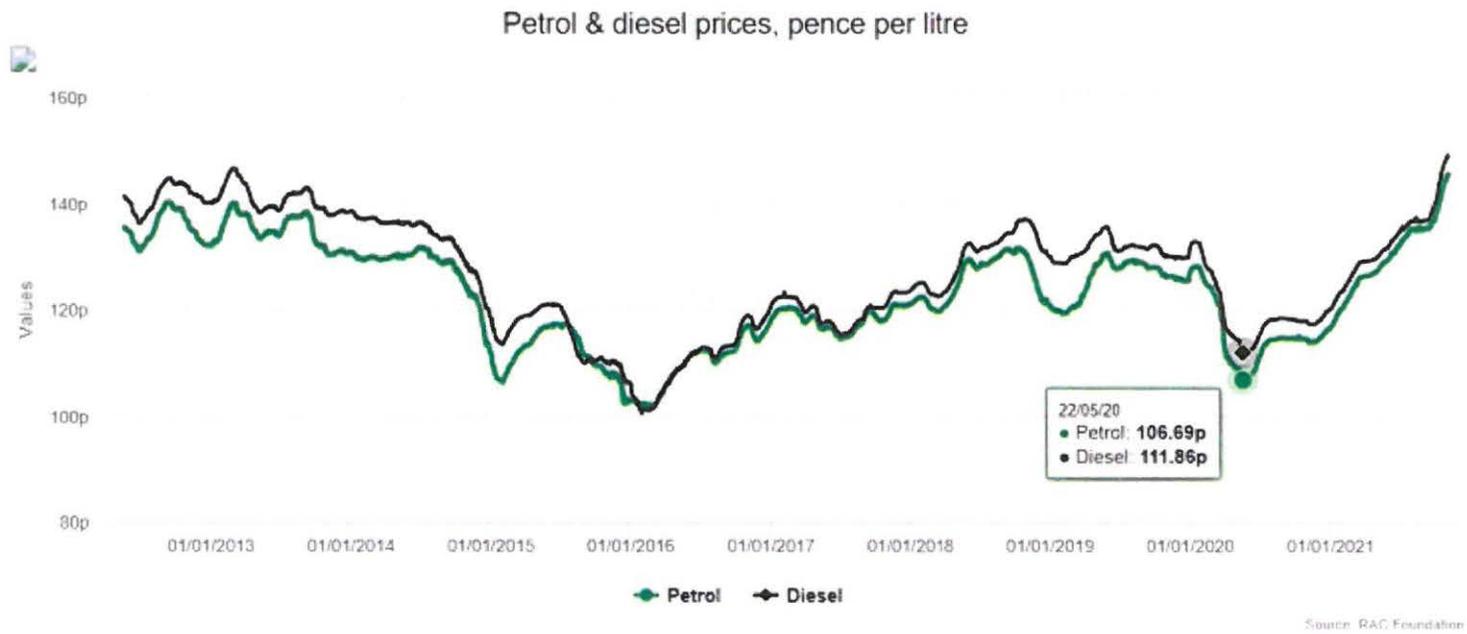
#3 CS application made and awaiting an offer from RPA.

#4 reduced amount as BPS is wound up nationally.

Appendix 3: Increase in price of red and white diesel



(Boiler Juice website 2021)



(RAC website, 2021)

Land Management Committee

Project Progress update

2nd December 2021

Project	Approved Budget <i>Actual Cost</i>	2021/22				Update	Status
		1 st Q	2 nd Q	3 rd Q	4 th Q		
Bridleway Link Common	£2,500	Expected			Expected	Delayed by wet weather & Covid. Now anticipated spring / summer	Part Complete
Improve Access Community Woodland	£4,360 (Gift fund)	Expected	Expected	Expected		Main path works completed August 2020. Additional surface blinding booked for 2 nd / 3 rd week November	Part Complete
Marking Boundaries	£1,250 (General)			Expected	Expected	Volunteer surveys are carried out winter months. Suspended during Covid restrictions. Work restarting Autumn 2021	Delayed
Restore Shire Ditch	£3,000 (General)		Expected	Expected		Awaiting final evaluation of British Camp repair technique as above.	
NVC Survey	£7,000					Project rescheduled for Spring 2022	Carry over to 2022
Invert. Survey	£3,000		Expected			Quotes and work specification in progress	Carry over to 2022
Pond Restore Castlemorton	Gift/grant			Expected	Expected	Fencing & plastic sheeting removed first week of November. Effectiveness being monitored through to spring.	Phase 1 COMPLETE
Hedge laying part 2	Con't of 2020/21 project			Expected	Expected	New works to be undertaken autumn winter. Funding secured.	Ongoing
Manor House development plan	£5,000 (Parl Fund)	Expected	Expected			Revision of costings and plans in progress.	Ongoing
Manor House Works	£50,000 (Parl Fund)			Expected	Expected	2 nd floor improvements made June. Lighting replaced with LED October 2021. Other work to be undertaken dependant on above	Ongoing.
Lower Shed Review	Pt 1 -		Expected	Expected	Expected	Revised specifications under development with architect. Containers for temporary storage required.	Ongoing Carry over to 2022
Donkey Shed Restoration	TBC		Expected	Expected		Retendered. Preferred contractor identified. Work now planned for May/ June 2022. Grant application pending.	Ongoing
BC sewage system	TBC Est £40-50K (Parl Fund)	Track upgraded	Expected		Expected	Access track upgraded May/June. Works expected to start November/December	Ongoing
Implement Building Maint. Sched	£3,000			Expected	Expected	Minor Repairs to St Ann's completed. Top shed interior to have lighting upgrade.	Ongoing
Car Parks - repainting lines	£1,000 (Parl)	Expected		Expected	Expected	Old Hills part done. Contractor booked to complete. British Camp work due 4 th quarter.	Ongoing

Update Interpretation Boards	£15,000 p/a (Gift Fund)	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Blackhill and Gardner's complete and installed. Earnslaw in progress. Beacon road to do.	Part Complete
Update location signage	£7,000	Expected	Expected		Expected	West of England complete. One item outstanding at Swinyard.	Ongoing
Update Car Park signage	£3,000			Completed		West of England, Swinyard car park and Jubilee drive completed.	Ongoing
Replace Access Signs	£2,500		Expected	Expected	Expected	Recommended	Ongoing
Install new location identification signage.	Est £25,000 over two years.					New LMP project	new
Research visitor usage and ways to tackle erosion.	TBC 2 Year					New LMP project	new
Wardens vehicle	£18,000 (General)			Expected		Vehicle on order. Due for delivery early December	Ongoing
New cut and collect machine	£13,000 (£12,500)		Expected			Machine delivered and in use	COMPLETE
Power tools	£4,000			Expected	Expected	Replacement chainsaws/ brush cutters.	

Report date: 11th November 2021