

**Meeting of the Castlemorton Commons
Co-ordinating Committee**

Castlemorton Parish Hall

Wednesday 16 March 2022 8.00pm

Present: Phil Birley, Ann Brennan, Mick Davies (Chair), Matthew Gardner, Peter Hancock, Julie Moore, Andy Sayers, Keith Stevens, Barbara Wilkes, Mike Wilkinson.

In attendance:

From Malvern Hills Trust (MHT): Secretary to the Board, Conservation Manager

4 members of the public

1. Appointment of Chair

Mick Davies was appointed as Chair.

2. Apologies for Absence

Duncan Bridges, David Fellows, Sue Windle.

3. Report of meeting 24 November 2021

The report of the meeting was agreed and signed as such by the Chair.

4. Public Questions

There were none.

5. Matters Arising

Mr Hancock thanked the Trust for dealing with the potholes on Hancock's Lane and reported that the stepping stones at the north eastern corner of the Common seemed to be achieving their purpose.

6. Update on Countryside Stewardship Agreement for Castlemorton Common

The Conservation Manager reported that the agreement was now in place. Funding had been secured for 10 years from 1 January 2022. The grant amounted to around £51,000pa, predominantly for management of the grassland. There was funding for other elements including clearance of geological sites, targeted habitat management for reptiles and for scrub and tree control. It was now a requirement that all active parties had to sign up to the agreement. That Delivery Group would be affiliated to 4 Cs and would report to the meetings. The new agreement required a slight reduction in

livestock numbers. Mr Gardner commented that the focus was on delivery of the requirements, rather than prescribing how they were achieved. Details of the objectives had been set out on an E-mail circulated to members. The Chair congratulated the Delivery Group on their hard work and persistence in securing the agreement.

7. Report from Malvern Hills Trust

There was little to report on Governance Changes. It had been agreed that the Trust would proceed with an application to the Charity Commission for s 74 consent to spend money on a private Bill but because of other commitments little progress had been made.

The Conservation Manager reported on behalf of the CEO:

- Patching of the road surface had been carried out on Hancock's Lane and further quotes were being sought.
- Work had been undertaken to Strawbyn Bridge to reset the side railing. Ms Brennan asked if there was a formal width restriction on the bridge - there was not, but some new reflective bollards had been installed either side.
- Chandler's Cross. Reseeding and corner posts were planned for the grass triangle.

Comments included:

- The junction was a single track junction and was white lined so that the junction could be exited from either side of the triangle. This was a common configuration in the area.
- Mr Flanagan observed that one of the issues was the increase in the number of delivery drivers who were not driving with regard to the road markings. Drivers were persistently driving across the triangle.
- There was a debate about whether the triangle had changed in size and shape and whether the junction was fit for purpose. Checking back through Google Earth records/ any old photos was suggested. If concerns were now being expressed about the design of the junction it was a matter for Highways. The Parish Council could make an approach.
- There had been a series of water leaks along New Road which had added to the problem. This needed to be fixed first.
- The Trust planned to rebuild the bund on the corner by Swinyard Car park to try to prevent parking on the outside of the bend. The work would be carried out in late spring/summer.

Nothing further had been heard about the decommissioning of the reservoir at British Camp.

8. Report from MHT Conservation Manager

Scrub clearance was finished for the year. This had mainly comprised maintenance of areas previously cleared.

Warning signs that lambs were on the common would be put up shortly. The plastic sheeting had been removed from the ponds and the results were being monitored. The bunds which retained the water in the ponds would be replaced. The Trust was involved in a DEFRA trial for the Environmental Land Management Scheme, the follow-on environmental grant scheme. The trial involved land across a wider area extending from Bromsberrow to some of the commons in the direction of Upton on Severn/Pershore. The trial was being run through the Foundation for Common Land who had appointed a new Officer. That person would contact all the stakeholders and research how successfully schemes had worked in the past. DEFRA had set the parameters of the research. One of the factors which put people off joining the previous schemes was increasing levels of “red tape” with associated cost. Mr Davies said any new scheme needed to be practical and achievable.

9. Stock visibility/casualties

Matthew Gardner said he was aware of 3 road traffic incidents involving stock.

10. Reports from CCA

CCA had held their AGM, and some new people were getting involved. It was planned to run the Shindig on 16 July.

11. Reports from other represented bodies

Mr Hancock had some maintenance requests - brambles on the North West side of the other bridge on Hancocks Lane needed cutting back. The parking area close to Welland needed some holes filling. He had found that it was possible to report issues close to the road in that parking area on the Highways reporting web site. He also thought it might be worth trying to improve drainage in and around the car park. The Trust’s byelaws were displayed on a stone at the edge of the car park and part of the structure had fallen away some time ago and had never been removed or repaired.

Mr Birley said the track from the end of New Road to his property/ Ambleside and Midsummer Farm had been regraded but water run off was creating further potholes, and he asked if drainage issues in that area could be considered before further regrading was carried out – particularly the end of the track closest to the tarmac.

Castlemorton Parish Council had formed an environmental sub group to look at climate change related issues. Events were being run and comments on relevant issues were very welcome.

12. Other Information

Mrs Wilkes had put up the toad warning signs.

4. Date of next meeting

An outdoor meeting would be held on Wednesday 20 July 2022 – details to be fixed at a later date.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm