



**Malvern Hills Trust**

**Ordinary Meeting of the  
Land Management Committee**

**Thursday 7 December 2023 7.00 pm**

Castlemorton Parish Hall  
Church Road,  
Castlemorton,  
Malvern WR13 6BE

## Meeting of the Land Management Committee

Castlemorton Parish Hall, Church Road, Castlemorton, Malvern WR13 6BE

Thursday 7 December 2023 at 7:00 pm

**Members:** Mrs M Alexander, Mr D Baldwin, Mr R Bartholomew, Mr P Clayburn, Mr M Driscoll, Mr J Michael, Mrs C Palmer, Mrs F Robinson, Mr C Rouse, Mrs F Victory, Mr M Victory, Prof D Westbury, Mr M Wilkinson.

### Agenda

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Election of Chair                                 | i - ii        |
| 2. Election of Vice-Chair                            | iii -iv       |
| 3. Apologies for Absence                             |               |
| 4. Declarations of Interest                          |               |
| 5. Chair's Communications                            |               |
| 6. Public Comments                                   |               |
| 7. Winter works programme                            | Paper A       |
| 8. To set the Land Management budget for 2022/23     | Paper B       |
| 9. Wardens' report                                   | Verbal update |
| 10. Operation Manager's report                       | Verbal update |
| 11. Grazier's report                                 | Verbal update |
| 12. Conservation Manager's report                    | Verbal update |
| 13. Outdoor visits & meetings 2024                   | Verbal update |
| 14. Urgent business                                  |               |
| 15. Date of next meeting (provisional) 11 April 2024 |               |

**If you or anyone in your household has experienced any Covid symptoms in the last 7 days, please do NOT attend this meeting unless you have a negative lateral flow test result on the day of the meeting. Symptoms are commonly runny nose, sore throat, headache, fatigue and sneezing and not necessarily a cough, fever or loss of sense of taste or smell.**

Seats will be placed socially distanced within the venue - please don't move the chairs closer to others unless you have checked that they are happy for you to do so.



Nomination Form: Chair of Land Management Committee

To be completed by nominator and seconder

We, the undersigned wish to nominate JOHN MICHAEL as Chair of Land Management Committee for the year 2023/24. If the nominee is not elected as Chair, we wish/do not wish\* to nominate him/her\* as Vice-Chair.

	SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME
NOMINATED BY		RICHARD BARTOLOMEU
SECONDED BY		MIKE WILKINSON

TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE

I agree to be nominated for the role of Chair of Land Management Committee. I have read the role description. I understand the responsibilities of the role and have attached a statement in support of my nomination. If I am not elected as Chair, I agree to stand for election as Vice-Chair.

	SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME
NOMINEE		John Michael

TO BE RETURNED BY 12 Noon Friday 24 November 2023

\*Please delete as appropriate



Statement in support of nomination to the role of Chair of Land Management  
Committee

Name: **John Michael**

I've been a trustee since 2015 having put my name forward to serve on the Trust since I was elected as District Councillor for the Kempsey Ward.

I was particularly keen to become a trustee as I grew up in the area and spent many happy hours roaming the hills and this was my way of putting something back for the pleasure the hills have given me.

I am retired from my career in HMRC and apart from my District Council duties my only other commitment is to the Trust.

I've had experience of chairing meetings as I chaired both District Council meetings and those of Northern Area Planning and consider myself suitably able to chair the Land Management Committee. I've also had previously experience of chairing the Commons and Hams Committee when I served on Kempsey Parish Council who had responsibility for managing five areas of common land and two hams adjacent to the river Severn.

Thank you for reading this address and I hope you will support my nomination.

John Michael



**Nomination form: Vice-Chair of Land Management Committee**


To be completed by nominator and seconder

We, the undersigned wish to nominate Mike Wilkinson as Vice-Chair of Land Management Committee for the year 2023/24.

	SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME
NOMINATED BY		RICHARD JACKSON
SECONDED BY		John Michael

**TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE**

I agree to be nominated for the role of Vice-Chair of Land Management Committee. I have read the role description. I understand the responsibilities of the role and have attached a statement in support of my nomination.

	SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME
NOMINEE		MIKE WILKINSON

**TO BE RETURNED BY 12noon Friday 24 November 2023**



## Statement in support of nomination to the role of Vice-Chair of Land Management Committee

**Name: Mike Wilkinson**

Ensuring effective delivery of land management is key to achieving the charitable purposes of the MHT. Understanding and meeting the requirements of the Stewardship schemes is also vital to maintaining an important income stream for the Trust. Providing oversight and strategic input to land management is therefore 'mission critical' for MHT. Although I am a new board member, I think I have a range of relevant experience that would help the Chair and Committee to operate in an effective and businesslike way.

I trained as a botanist/ecologist and have spent most of my working life working in nature and environmental conservation for Natural England, its predecessors, Government Departments and RSPB-Cymru.

Early on I had an interest in practical conservation management first as a volunteer and then as supervisor of a small woodland team. For a few years I kept a small flock of sheep as a hobby – not very successfully but it gave me some understanding of the basics of keeping livestock!

For about 20 years I was responsible for SSSI designation and management mainly in Gloucestershire and I am familiar with a range of lowland habitats and their management. A key skill was building relationships with farmers and land managers to negotiate and agree SSSI conservation. During this time, I was closely involved in schemes to maintain or restore grazing to SSSI grassland commons – which are a particular feature of the Cotswold scarp. I am aware therefore of the complexities of common land management and the need to integrate the needs of graziers, livestock and conservation. I then spent 3 years managing English Nature's Gloucestershire Area Team of 5 staff responsible for line management, team planning and reporting and budgets.

I have experience of working within a range of different organisational models and governance arrangements. Having worked for arms-length government bodies and a charity I know the importance of keeping to clearly defined board and executive roles. I have contributed to, chaired and managed many different types of committees, steering groups, technical and project groups. For example, for 3 years I worked in regional policy and planning roles for English Nature/Natural England in the West Midlands. This included chairing the WM Regional Protected Landscapes Forum and acting as vice-chair of the WM Biodiversity Partnership.

In my last role for RSPB-Cymru I worked on the environmental impacts of marine renewable energy and RSPB's advice to Welsh Government on Wales National and Marine plans and on climate change. I have a strong interest in climate change and the transition to net zero. These will pose future challenges for MHT's land management planning and delivery.

On retirement in 2020 I became a Castlemorton Parish Councillor and contributed to the 4Cs. This year I took on the role of chair. I have also been involved in setting up a Parish Environment Group and recently chaired a meeting taking forward our churchyard conservation project.

I have lived in Castlemorton since 1986 and I am a keen walker and cyclist and a regular user of the Hills and Commons.



## Land Management Committee

**Title:** Winter works schedule 23/24

**Date:** 7.12.2023

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### Background Papers

Land Management Plan 2016-2021

### Winter Works

This paper presents the schedule for this winter's work towards our ongoing programme of open habitat maintenance and restoration, as outlined in the Land Management Plan (LMP).

Coupled with conservation grazing, this work plays a role in safeguarding our important features (habitats, species, archaeology, landscape character, earth heritage) and special qualities (access, views). Many of these features are legally protected. The overall plan of where shall be open and where wooded is given in the LMP and the 2036 vision map from Natural England - both documents are available on the MHT website.



The work will be delivered by a mixture of field staff, contractors, partner organisations and wardens/volunteers.

These works are partly addressing the loss of open habitats that occurred during the 90s (i.e. restoration) but also tackling scrub that is new and constantly arising, even in grazed areas, as part of ongoing maintenance.

These works can bring sudden change to the landscape and may attract public comment. Where this is likely we proactively publicise and explain the works together with contact details for further information.

These works are often done in partnership with other bodies or volunteers, such as Butterfly Conservation West Midlands.

This document covers the exact sites and related details for this winter's work only.

MHC fund the majority of works (through General Fund and Stewardship). Butterfly Conservation are putting in £4000 for scrub works around North Hill and several organisations give their time towards these works as volunteers.

The format of this paper follows that of previous years giving both data and maps.

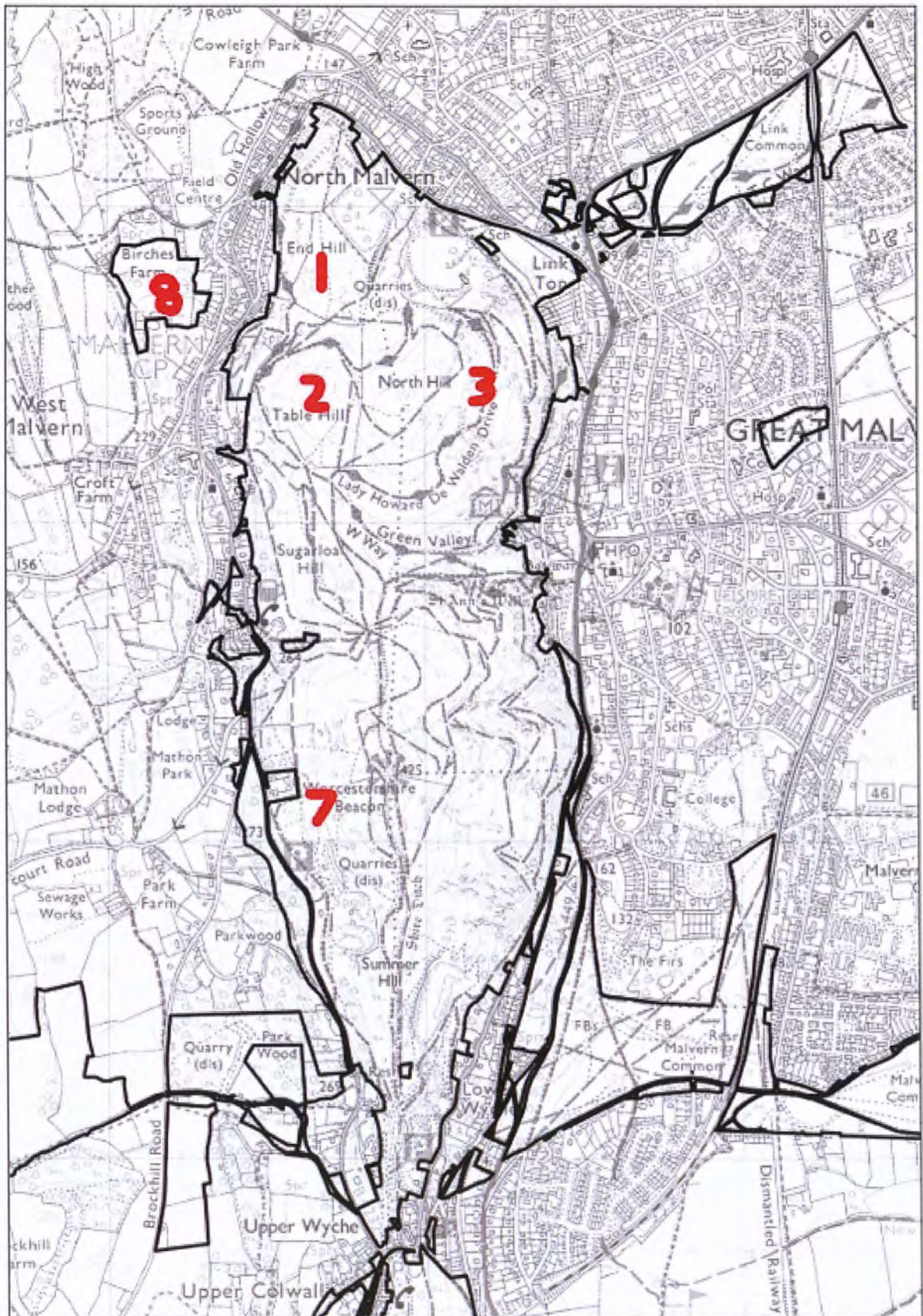
**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the committee note the schedule of works.



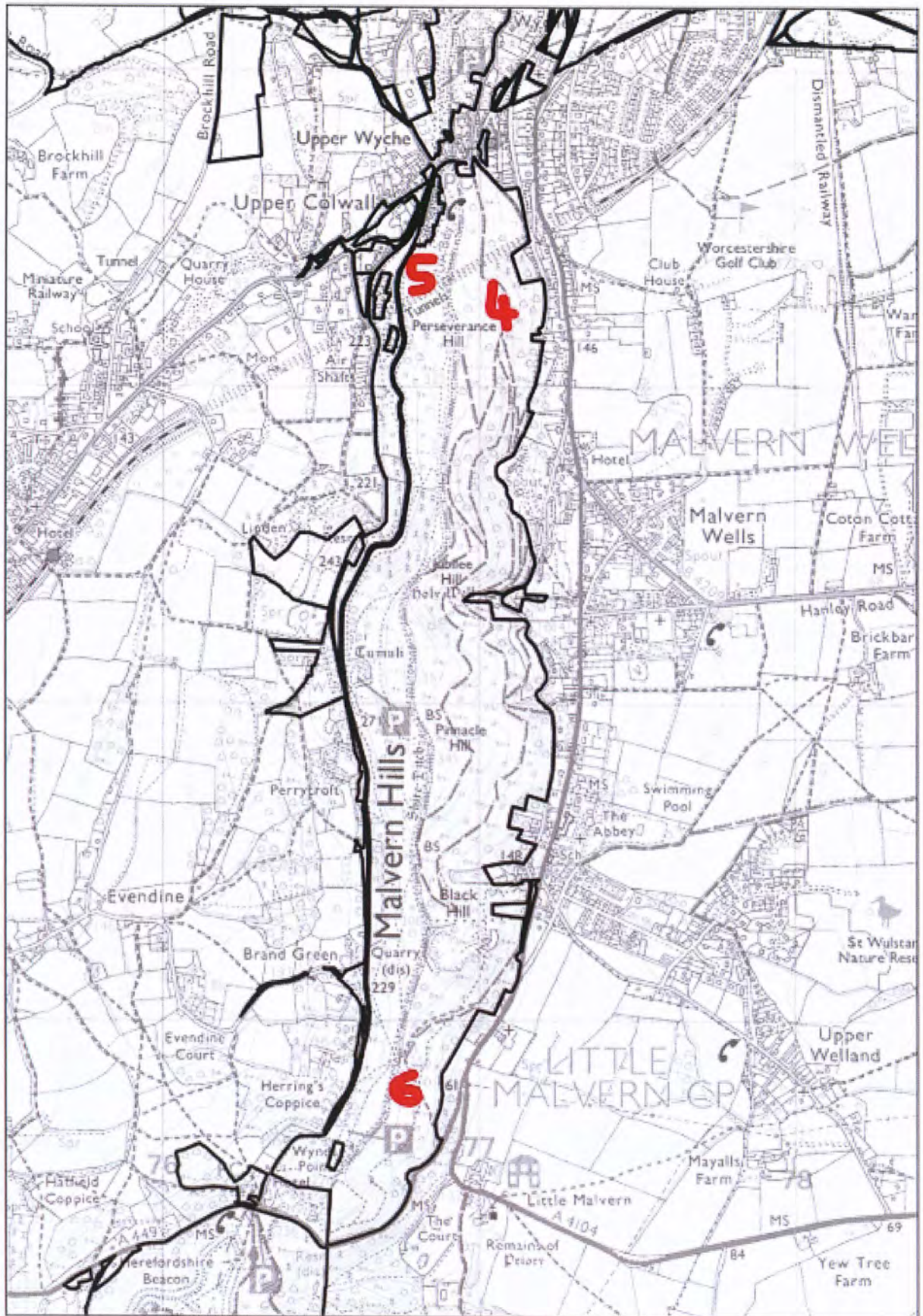
No	location	Area ~ha	Task (priority 1=high)	grant funded ?	who	Done?
	<b>NORTHERN &amp; CENTRAL HILLS</b>					
1	End hill	0.2	Fell broom from hill top. 2	n	fs	
2	Table hill	1.4	Flail gorse from hill top. 1	n	fs	
3	North hill east	1.1	Flail robocut scrub from butterfly areas. 1	y	Cont (BC)	
4	Pinnacle Hill east	0.7	Fell trees spreading toward the ridge. Treat stumps. 2	n	fs	
5	Perseverance Hill west	0.1	Thin the larger trees especially sycamore. 3	n	fs	
6	Black Hill east	0.2	Tree thinning and scrub reduction. 1	y B4B	Vols + cont	
7	Worcs Beacon west	0.2	Thin woodland to produce wood- mosaic (SSSI). 2	n	fs	
8	Old Hollow land	0.2	Reducing scrub from grassland parcel. 1	n	Fs + vols	





Northern Hills

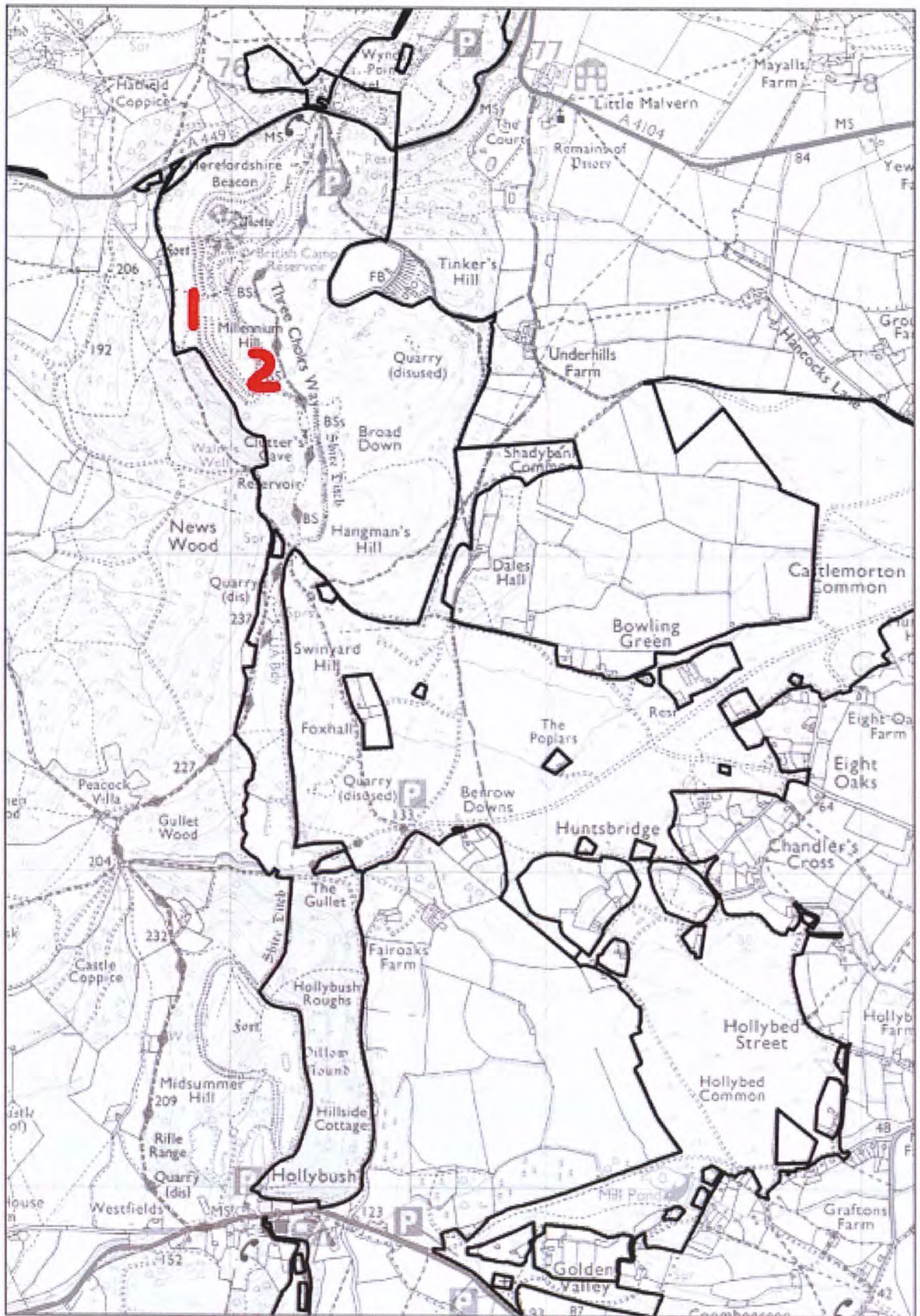




Central Hills

No.	Location	Area ha	task	Hls/CS funded?	Who	Done?
	<b>SOUTHERN HILLS (with Eastnor Estate)</b>					
1	British Camp hillfort west	0.1	Remove scrub that's spreading up the outer ramparts. 2	n	Vols FS	
2	British Camp hillfort	0.1	Fell trees/scrub on south-eastern tip (uphill of contour path). 1	n	FS	
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

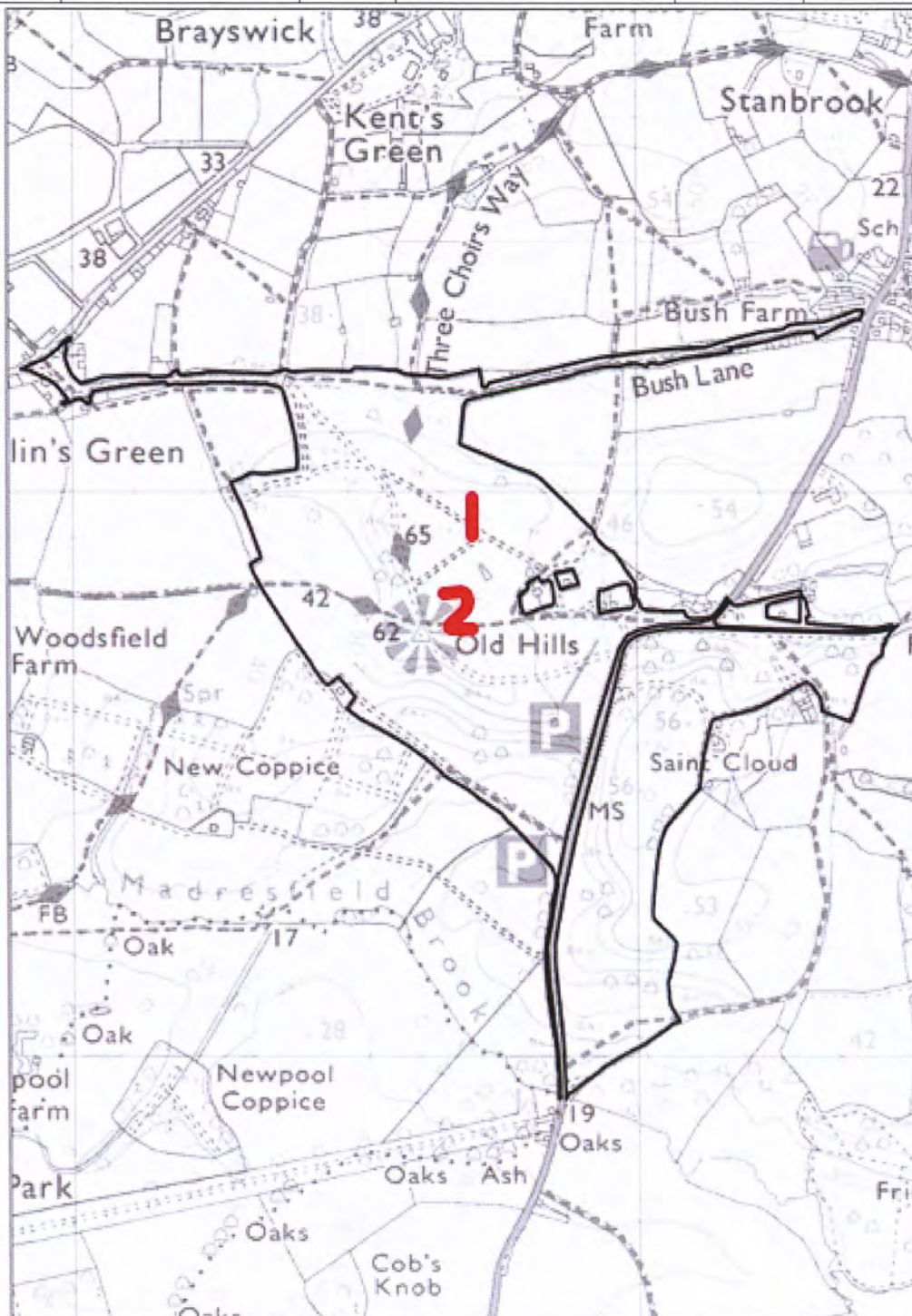




Southern Hills

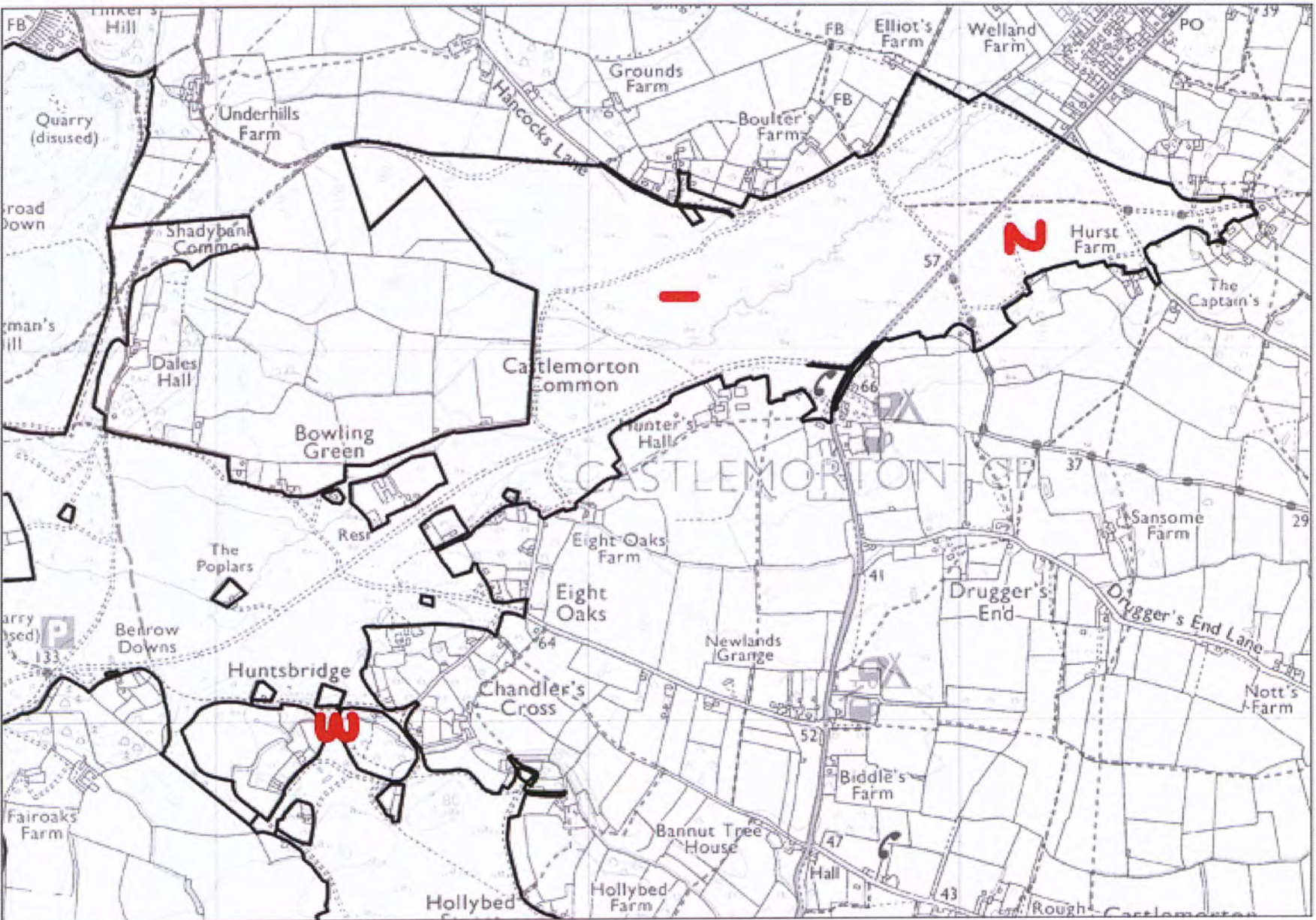


No.	Location	Area ha	task	Hls/CS funded?	Who	Done?
	<b>OLD HILLS</b>					
1	Old Hills north	0.1	Clearing small trees and scrub. 2	n	Vols	✓
2	Old Hill central	0.1	Clearing small trees and scrub. 2	n	Vols	





No.	Location	Area ha	Task	Hls/CS funded?	Who	Done?
	<b>CASTLEMORTON COMMON</b>					
1	multiple	0.4	Reducing scrub patches especially those joining together. 2	n	Fs/cont	
2	Hurst bank	0.1	Scrub removal on this open grassland area. 3	n	Vols	
3	Hollybed pedestrian bridge	0.1	Clearing around this bridge and adjacent paths. 2	n	fs	
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						



Castlemorton Common



Land Management Committee  
**Land Management budget 2024/25**  
7 December 2023

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**Background Papers**

Land Management Plan 2021-2026  
Business Plan 2022-2027

**Land Management budget**

This paper presents the draft land management budget for the next financial year 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025. It provides budgets relating to the General Fund and the Defra/Stewardship Funds.

The General Fund, and to a lesser extent, the Defra/Stewardship Funds provide finance for the regular, standard activities that are ongoing, such as materials and tools for path maintenance plus some contribution toward any 'special' projects. These figures are based on the planned land management work from the Land Management Plan (LMP).

Most items have been increased only by inflation at the time of writing - a figure of 5%. The budget figures are presented in Appendices 1 and 2.

**General Fund**

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

- Contract labour has been increased to £16,300. This is for repair works to the Shire Ditch / British Camp.
- Tracks and paths budget has been returned to a more normal figure of £6440 following its increase for repair of tracks on Worcestershire Beacon in 23/24.
- Fuel prices remain high partly linked to economic instability relating to the two ongoing wars abroad. It seems prudent to increase the fuel budget in response to £17,150. Vehicle servicing and the cost of parts have both also risen recently.
- The protective clothing code budget has been increased to £3250. This budget has been overspent in recent years, but it is essential to ensure the field staff have clothing fit-for-purpose.

- The tree safety survey budget has been increased to £4300. This is in response to an increase in our demand for trees to be independently checked and also an increase in the arboriculturalist's fees after an 8 year period of a fixed price.
- In the Fixed Assets, the field staff pickup truck was due to be replaced as per the vehicle replacement policy last year but was in reasonable condition and so kept on. This also gave time to look into whether an ATV could replace it, however the field staff have opted not to pursue that. The pickup now needs replacing.
- The Business Plan highlighted the need to purchase several implements to enable MHT to properly repair badly damaged ground. This is what the harrows are for.

### **Defra/Stewardship Funds**

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

- The Northern and Central Hills licence fee and management payment are due for review in December. The figures provided are based on the current figure.
- Old Hills Higher Level Stewardship agreement has been extended by five years to February 2027. The related grazing licence has been extended and expanded. The payment for the licensee grazier has been increased accordingly to £2700.
- Basic Payment Scheme amounts continue to be reduced year after year as the Government winds down this scheme completely across the country. 2024 is the final year of the scheme. We await further details on the Government's replacement scheme 'Sustainable Farming Incentive'.
- Basic Payment Scheme has built up a significant sum over the years and now too much is being kept. £12,000 has been assigned to a conservation work project in the new financial year.
- Castlemorton Common Countryside Stewardship (CS) is not shown on this budget as it now uses a separate bank account for the group that have



signed up to the CS agreement. This is a requirement of the CS scheme for group agreements.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

Jonathan Bills  
Conservation Manager  
14.11.2023

APPENDIX 1: draft Land Management Budget and Fixed Asset purchase 2024/25

<b>Malvern Hills Trust</b>				
<b>Budget figures 2024/25 - detail on Land Management draft 2</b>				
	<b>2024 /25 budget</b>		<b>2023 /24 budget</b>	
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Contract labour</b>				
Ponds & Ditches	3,500		3,300	
Fencing - grazing & safety	4,000		3,850	
Fencing - other	520		500	
British Camp repairs	1,000		0	
Other	7,280		7,000	
Sub-total		16,300		14,650
<b>Tracks and paths</b>	6,440	6,440		10,600
<b>Drainage works</b>				
Generic drainage works	1,950		1,870	
British Camp loos	550		540	
		2,500		2,410
<b>Vehicle and equipment expenses</b>				
Diesel and fuel for power tools	13,750		12,500	
Servicing & maintenance	14,500		11,660	
Other	2,650		2,530	
Sub-total		30,900		26,690
<b>Waste management</b>				
Skip hire	6,850		6,600	
Fly tip waste disposal	1,560		1,500	
Green waste disposal	590		550	
Sub-total		9,000		8,650
<b>Hire of plant and equipment</b>				
Other	2,300		2,200	
Sub-total		2,300		2,200



<b>Tree and Woodland management</b>				
Tree safety - contract	20,000		19,250	
Tree safety - ad hoc	8,000		7,700	
Tree work - other	1,750		1,650	
<b>Sub-total</b>		29,750		28,600
<b>Grass cutting</b>				
Colwall Green (CPC)	1,260		1,210	
Old Hills, Bush Lane & Clevelode	915		880	
Hire of Robocut	3,145		3,025	
<b>Sub-total</b>		5,320		5,115
<b>Materials and tools</b>				
Materials and tools	11,440		11,000	
Tools > £500	1,150		1,100	
		12,590		12,100
<b>Protective clothing</b>				
PPE	2,500		1,210	
Uniform	750		660	
<b>Sub-total</b>		3,250		1,870
<b>Field consultancies</b>				
Tree safety consultancy	4,300		3,630	
Other	1,830		1,760	
		6,130		5,390
<b>Evendine Spring</b>				
Water testing	580		550	
		580		550
<b>Conservation volunteers</b>				
Conservation volunteers	1,150		1,100	
		1,150		1,100
<b>Gardening</b>				
Gardening	3,800	3,800	3,300	3,300
Land misc	520	520	500	500
		<b>130,531</b>		<b>123,725</b>

**Land Management fixed assets to come from the General Fund:**

Chainsaws	2,000
Brushcutters	2,000
FS vehicle – replacement pickup	25,000
6 foot harrow	1,000
Backbox for tractor	1,000
Small flail replacement	5,000
Large side arm flail replacement	23,500
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£59,500</b>



APPENDIX 2: DEFRA/stewardship grants draft budget 2024/25

<b>Malvern Hills Trust</b>								
<b>Stewardship budget 2024/25</b>								
	CS North & Central	CS Southern Hills	HLS Chase End	HLS Old Hills	Grazing reserve	Basic Payment Scheme	Total	CS Castlemor ton
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
4015 - Other grants	0	0	0	0	0	1,500	1,500	0
4020 - Stewardship annual grants	76,000	18,567	3,144	3,549	0	0	101,260	51,750
4025 - Stewardship capital grants*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4310 - Land rentals	2,217	0	0	0	0	0	2,217	0
4325 - Licences	5,500	750	0	0	0	0	6,250	0
<b>Total income</b>	<b>83,717</b>	<b>19,317</b>	<b>3,144</b>	<b>3,549</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>111,227</b>	<b>51,750</b>
5000 - Contract labour	4,000	2,000	750	550	0	12,000	19,300	0
5035 - Treework	0	0	0	10,000	0	0	10,000	0
5100 - Graziers	62,400	15,000	0	2,700	0	0	80,100	46,056
5110 - Stewardship schemes direct costs	3,000	2,219	2,083	250	1,500	0	9,052	5,667
8015 - Depreciation - land management equipment					1,667		1,667	
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>69,400</b>	<b>19,219</b>	<b>2,833</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>3,167</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>120,119</b>	<b>51,723</b>
Surplus/(deficit) for the period before transfers	14,317	98	311	(9,951)	(3,167)	(10,500)	(8,892)	27
4600 - Transfers from other funds	0	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	2,000	0
5105 - Transfer to general fund - stewardship staff time	0	0	(367)	(605)	0	0	(972)	0
8100 - Transfers to other funds	0	0	0	0	(2,000)	0	(2,000)	0
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the period after transfers</b>	<b>14,317</b>	<b>1,098</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>(10,556)</b>	<b>(5,167)</b>	<b>(10,500)</b>	<b>(9,864)</b>	<b>27</b>
Reserves brought forward	138,158	19,089	2,367	21,130	58,059	24,571	263,374	1,060
Reserves carried forward	152,475	20,187	3,311	10,574	52,892	14,071	253,510	1,087