

Malvern Hills Trust

Staffing Committee

Lyttelton Well, Malvern WR14 2AY

Thursday 4 January 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present: Mr D Baldwin, Mr D Core (non-voting), Mrs C Palmer, Prof J Raine, Mrs F Victory, Mrs S Wren.

In attendance: Interim CEO, Secretary to the Board, Outgoing Secretary to the Board, Mr P Clayburn, Mr D Fellows, Mr C Rouse, Mrs M Turner.

Mr Penn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Election of Chair

Mr Penn was elected unopposed.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

Mrs Wren was elected unopposed.

3. Apologies for absence

Mr R Bartholomew

4. Chair's announcements

The Interim CEO asked that all Secretary to the Board business now be directed to the Incoming Secretary to the Board. The Outgoing Secretary to the Board was continuing to provide support and advice. Mr Penn thanked the Outgoing Secretary to the Board for all her work for the Committee since its inception following the Governance Review.

5. Declaration of interests

There were none.

6. Public Comments

There were none.

7. Health and Safety Update

The Committee received a paper prepared by the former CEO. Trustees were pleased to learn that there had been no reported accidents since the last report and only three in the last 12 months. There was some concern however that staff might not be reporting near misses. It was noted that it was difficult to get people to do so and that it was important to persuade them that reporting near misses was a *good* thing to do. The Interim CEO observed that in case of an incident, the Health & Safety Executive often used the presence (or absence) of 'near miss' reports to test the operation of the organisation's health & safety systems. It was noted that the accident and near miss numbers were low considering the Trust's area of work.

Mr Baldwin recommended that the Trust pursue the alternative route of Safety Observations, which he explained were a proactive approach to health and safety, with staff being encouraged to report *potential* incidents.

8. Review of Equality & Diversity Policy

The Committee received the policy, last reviewed in 2021. It was noted that the HR Advisor had confirmed that it remained fit for purpose. However, Mrs Wren suggested that the policy should be extended to incorporate inclusion, which she explained was about the standards of behaviour expected and about the values of the organisation. She added that it would be best practice to add inclusion to the policy and that it would not involve a major rewrite. The Interim CEO endorsed this view. Mrs Wren offered to work with the Interim CEO to rework the policy for approval by the HR Advisor and review at the next meeting. This approach was approved.

9. Training update

Mrs Wren asked about health and safety training. The Interim CEO explained that the Trust had a contracted health and safety external advisor, who specialised in outdoor organisations and trusts, and could deliver training as required. It was noted that the wardens had said at the last Land Management Committee meeting that they would very much welcome a 'dealing with difficult people' course aimed at people in their area of work, as opposed to office-based staff. The Interim CEO confirmed that the health and safety external advisor would be able to deliver this training and suggested that it be arranged once the new CEO was in post.

10. Items for future meetings

It was noted that a review of the Staff Handbook was in progress. Any significant changes to this would be referred to Staffing Committee prior to Board approval.

11. Urgent Business

There was none.

12. Date of next meeting

Thursday 22 February 2024 at 7 pm, or sooner if required.

13. Confidential business

On the proposal of Mr Penn seconded by Mrs Wren it was RESOLVED unanimously to exclude the public for discussion of items 14 and 15 on the agenda on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the exempt or confidential nature of the business to be transacted (staffing matters).

The meeting closed at 8.25pm