

Malvern Hills Trust

Special Meeting of Staffing Committee

Welland Parish Hall, Marlbank Road, Malvern WR14 6NE

Tuesday 27 February 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present: Mr C Penn (Chair), Mr D Baldwin, Mr R Bartholomew, 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, Conservation Manager, Community & Conservation Officer, Finance & Administration Manager, Mr R Berry, Mr R Fowler, Mrs F Robinson, Mr C Rouse, Mrs M Turner.

Mr Penn welcomed Mrs Nicky Gutteridge, the new Finance & Administration Manager, to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

There were none.

2. Chair's announcements

There were none.

3. Declaration of interests

There were none.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2024

These had been approved by email, following the change of procedure approved at Board on 18 January 2024. There were no matters arising.

6. Health and Safety Update

The Committee received a paper prepared by the Interim CEO, itemising health & safety incidents, accidents, near misses, and staff training since the last meeting. The Interim CEO reminded the Committee that there had been a discussion at the last meeting of the need for staff to be encouraged to report near misses, so that appropriate action could be taken to prevent accidents. There were three near misses included in this report. The first two were incidental and there was nothing the Trust could have done about them. However, the third near miss around bin emptying had raised serious concerns about safety and hygiene, and the Interim CEO had recommended that the new CEO be asked to review provisions for bin emptying including hygiene issues and to investigate the cost versus time saving to staff of contracting out this activity. Since this was an operational recommendation, it was not thought appropriate or necessary for the Committee to pass a resolution, but members confirmed their support for the recommendation.

7. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

The 2021 version of the Equality & Diversity Policy had been reviewed at the last meeting. In discussion it had been agreed that it should be redrafted to incorporate Inclusion (i.e. creating an environment that respects and welcomes everyone). Mrs Wren had worked on the revised version with the Interim CEO. Mrs Wren confirmed that the policy had not required any major rewriting and that the new version had been checked for legal compliance by the Trust's HR provider. She recommended that the Policy be reviewed annually in future, since legislation was changing on a regular basis.

Three amendments were recommended:

- Addition of the missing word 'to' in the second line of point 2.5
- Amendment of the start of point 2.6 to: Any *substantive/significant* form of discrimination [...].
- Amendment of the third sentence of point 3.4 to: It lets all employees feel safe *and welcome* to [...].

On the proposal of Mrs Palmer, seconded by Mrs Victory, it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to recommend to Board that the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy be adopted, subject to the amendments agreed in this meeting.

8. Updates to the Staff Handbook

The Committee received proposed updates to the Staff Handbook, which had been recommended by HRDept. The Interim CEO explained that HRDept would notify the Trust whenever changes were required due to legislation. The recommended changes were around EDI, transgender, non-Christian holidays, and a comprehensive update of family friendly policies.

Two further updates were included, namely an update of Section 9.4 to include a half hour lunch break when the office would be closed to visitors, and the insertion of a new section 9.5 to allow the Trust to identify and deal with persistent and vexatious queries, using the same procedures as applied to abusive, persistent, and vexatious complaints.

On the proposal of Professor Raine, seconded by Mr Bartholomew, it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the updates to the Staff Handbook and to recommend that the Board approve the revised Handbook.

9. Training Update

Dealing with Difficult People training had been arranged for staff on Wednesday 28 February at 3.30 pm. The course was online, and Trustees were welcome to attend.

10. Items for future meetings

The Interim CEO reported that there was to be a meeting of senior managers regarding health & safety procedures on 28 February, which would potentially lead to the development of a new Health and Safety Manual.

11. Urgent Business

There was none.

12. Date of next meeting

Thursday 21 March 2024 at 7 pm, jointly with Governance Committee.

13. Confidential business

The meeting proceeded to the confidential section. There were no members of the public present, and therefore no resolution was required.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm