



Our Ref: BBPR2020.03.13CharityCommissionStatement

PRESS RELEASE: Charity Commission issues statement on Scheme to update Malvern Hills Acts

After a long delay the Trust has received a response from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport regarding the Charity Commission Scheme. It was announced at the Board meeting on the 12th March that DCMS felt that the preferred option for updating the Malvern Hills Acts was by a Private Bill.

Over the coming months the Trust will be taking steps to investigate and cost the options available to it before deciding on how to proceed.

A statement from the Charity Commission can be found below:

“The Commission met with Malvern Hills Conservators (MHC) in late 2016 in relation to changes the charity were considering making to improve their governance arrangements and modernise the charity. These changes related to the five acts of parliament that govern the charity, which have been in operation since 1884.

At the time, and with the agreement of the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) the Commission advised the charity to apply for a parliamentary scheme, to become effective via an Order by the Secretary of State for DCMS. MHC complied with this advice, preparing all relevant material for the scheme and, as advised, undertaking a public consultation, which took place between 2 September 2019 and 13 October 2019.

The amount of public interest the consultation generated was significant, particularly from precept payers of the charity, many of whom expressed concern about the proposed changes. It’s therefore been agreed by DCMS and the Commission, that these changes to the charity’s governing documents would now be best handled via a private bill, allowing greater scope for public scrutiny and debate than under a parliamentary scheme procedure. The charity has only recently been informed about the change in advice.

We understand this delay may be frustrating for people at the charity and others invested in the process, who want to see this issue resolved as quickly and as efficiently as possible. However, the significant amount of work undertaken by the charity in preparing for a parliamentary scheme will be relevant for preparing a private bill.

This charity manages a hugely significant and well-loved open space for the UK so it’s important to ensure that changes are made in the right way. The Commission and DCMS will therefore be supporting the charity as needed, as they pursue the next steps of this process.

*Charity Commission for England and Wales
11 March 2020”*

Further information about the Charity Commission Scheme, the proposals put forward by the Trust and the results of the public consultation can be found here:
www.malvern hills.org.uk/public-consultation

END

Notes for editors

- 1) Contact Duncan Bridges (CEO) on 01684 892002 for images or more information.

- 2) The **Malvern Hills Trust** is the new working name for the Malvern Hills Conservators who own and manage over 1,200 hectares (3,000 acres) of land on the Hills and Commons of Malvern. The organisation was established under the Malvern Hills Act 1884 and are now a registered charity (no. 515804). There have been four subsequent Acts in 1909, 1924, 1930 and 1995. The Malvern Hills Acts were set up to protect the rights of Commoners and the public and to prevent encroachment on the Malvern Hills, lands and commons. Under these and other relevant Acts the Malvern Hills Trust shall manage the Hills to:
 - Preserve the natural aspect
 - Protect and manage trees, shrubs, turf and other vegetation
 - Prevent unlawful digging and quarrying
 - Keep the Hills open, unenclosed and unbuilt on as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public
 - Conserve and enhance biodiversity, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Scheduled Ancient Monuments on its land.

Find out more about our work and what we do at www.malvern hills.org.uk

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