

Malvern Hills Trust
Covid-19 Contingency Committee
By telephone/video conference call
Meeting 29 May 2020 4.00pm

Present: Mr R Bartholomew (arrived during item 5), Dr S Braim, Mr M Cordey, Mrs C Palmer, Prof J Raine, Mrs G Rees, Ms S Rouse (Chair)

In attendance: CEO, Finance and Administration Manager, Secretary to the Board, Conservation Manager

Ms Rouse took the chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Mr M Davies.

2. Declarations of interest

There were none.

3. Chair's announcements

There had been no comments sent in for the committee. Ms Rouse had been lobbying Herefordshire Council on behalf of the Trust to try to get them to re-open the toilets. They had agreed to re-open the disabled toilet.

4. To approve the minutes of the last meeting

On the proposal of Mrs Rees, seconded by Prof Raine, it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2020.

5. CEO's report and summary of actions taken in the last week

The CEO reported that the Hills and commons were the busiest the wardens had ever seen. There had been a number of problems. There had been huge amounts of litter around the Hills with bins constantly overflowing. The Field Staff had spent 6 man/days emptying bins during the week. Volunteer wardens had re-started work. Initially they had been asked not to collect litter as the Trust was short of PPE. However this was now in stock and the CEO had asked them to help with litter collection from next week.

Gullet Quarry was taking up massive amounts of warden time:

Sunday 24th Group of 20 inside fenced area. Police attended to remove.

Monday 25th Mid-afternoon, wardens spoke to and removed a group of 6 inside the fenced area.

Evening – Police responded to a report of a large group (up to 300) inside quarry fence. Multiple barbeques and antisocial behaviour. The Fire Brigade attended to put out fires but had to await police support in face of abusive and challenging behaviour from group. Police removed all from Quarry.

Wednesday 27th

2 large family groups inside fenced area. Refused to leave when approached by wardens. Police attended to remove them.

Thursday 28th Group of 45 inside fenced area including 6 reported as swimming. All removed with police help between 3.00pm and 5.00pm

Friday 29th Large Family group inside fence.

(Mr Bartholomew joined the meeting)

Ms Rouse said that a multi-agency meeting had been set up for next week to try to decide how to tackle the problems.

The CEO confirmed that the wardens were visiting the site every morning to check the warning notices were in place and the fence intact, and again most afternoons. If people were inside the fence they were asked to leave and if they refused the police were called. There was substance abuse taking place (mainly nitrous oxide).

The CEO was meeting contractors on site to see what could be done to make the fencing more difficult to cross. He was trying to deal with the issues in the short term, but the long term position needed to be considered once the immediate crisis was over.

Mrs Rees expressed the Committee's concerns about the wardens' safety. The Conservation Manager explained that the nitrous oxide canisters were not unduly hazardous to handle and the wardens had adequate PPE.

6. Financial update (including car park pass sales)

The Finance Administration Manager had circulated the cash flow statement. The first instalment of the levy from MHDC (£242,000) was due on Monday. She was confident that the Trust would meet its May budget (£27,000) for meter sales. Pass sales to date were 876 over the past 2 weeks. The E-mail application option had been very popular. Staff were managing to process applications on the day of receipt. She would make the next Job Retention Scheme claim next week. Ms Rouse passed on the Committees thanks to the staff.

7. Any other matters for discussion

The Secretary to the Board said that the staff were of the view that the trial Starleaf meeting had gone well. Another trial would take place on 3 June, focusing on the staff arrangements for running the meetings. She would be writing to the Board members who had not agreed to have their image used on Social Media. This would be a consequence of their attendance at meetings which were being streamed. The Finance and Administration Manager said that she had checked with the Trust's HR consultant about the position of staff who could not work from home if they were asked to self-isolate under the track and trace system. She was advised only to pay SSP and not the contractual rate for sick pay. She would be advising staff of this and also that they could take annual leave instead if they

wished. This created a two tier system as office staff could work from home, whereas wardens and field staff did not have this option. She had been told that it was an option to withdraw the company sick pay scheme but she did not feel this was appropriate.

8. Urgent communications

The problems at Gullet Quarry.

9. Date of next meeting

Next meeting 5 June 2020 at 4.00pm (by telephone conference).

The meeting closed at 16.40pm

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Minutes Released

10. Update on staff and furlough scheme

Two staff were shielding (on furlough). One person was signed off sick but was due to return next week. Robin Hill was retiring on 6 June. There had been 73 applications for the warden's post to date.