

Malvern Hills Trust
Covid-19 Contingency Committee
By telephone/video conference call
Meeting 05 June 2020 4.00pm

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

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

Mr Davies welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Conservation Manager.

2. **Declarations of interest**

There were none.

3. **Chair's announcements**

There were none.

4. **To approve the minutes of the last meeting**

On the proposal of Ms Rouse, seconded by Mr Cordey, it was **RESOLVED** (with one abstention) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2020.

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

The CEO said that the bank holiday weekend had been very busy with concentrations of visitors at Swinyards and West of England car parks. It had been challenging for the wardens. Some of the regular conservation volunteers and volunteer wardens had been helping with litter collection and were now making an impact on the high volumes of rubbish being left on Trust land. The change in the weather midweek had helped and Wednesday and Thursday saw the number of vehicles parking in the car parks 75 % down on the previous week.

There was a fire on Tuesday evening just above West of England car park. It was reported and dealt with quickly and only 50 – 100 square meters of hillside had been burned.

The CEO and Community and Conservation Officer had met with representatives of the Fire Service, Police and MHDC on Thursday to look at the problems at Gullet Quarry. There was a list of possible actions which could be taken to try to reduce the number of incursions into the Quarry area. Some could be carried out in the short term but others would take longer as they would require consent from Natural England and/or planning permission. The site was an SSSI.

Planned tree safety work had been stopped by lockdown. The contractors were now able to recommence work and the CEO would be considering when and how the work would be undertaken.

The utility companies had also resumed work.

One toilet at British Camp had been re-opened by Herefordshire Council and MHDC had re-opened the toilets in Malvern town.

In answer to questions, the CEO confirmed that numbers at Gullet Quarry had not been as high as the previous week but there had been groups of up to 30 – 40, with the police having to attend. The groups were being organised through social media. Some people had visited the Quarry even after the change in the weather. Committee members observed that, from the evidence of substance abuse which was being collected from the area, some of the people attending were there for a social gathering rather than the attraction of swimming.

Prof Raine asked about “No fires no barbeques” signage in West of England car park. The CEO thought some signs may have been removed although they were replaced regularly by the wardens.

The CEO confirmed that, with increased visitor numbers, there had been more problems with drones. He asked trustees to ring the office if they saw byelaw breaches – the wardens would attend if they could.

The CEO would outline options for Gullet Quarry in a document for Board members. He hoped to be able to speak to Natural England to get a preliminary response as soon as possible. The Secretary to the Board suggested RoSPA should be contacted to review any actions under consideration.

6. Financial update (including car park pass sales)

The Finance and Administration Manager reported that 488 passes had been sold this week (348 applications by E mail paid by BACS, 67 by post, 73 by phone). The total sent out to date since sales resumed was 1397. There had been a lot of positive feedback about the ease of the process and the speed with which the applications had been turned round. The 2019/20 residents’ passes had now expired and wardens would be putting notes on vehicles showing expired passes to remind the owners that the passes needed to be renewed. May car park meter sales were £32,029 net of VAT. That figure was £5,000 more than the May budget.

She had submitted the Job Retention Scheme claim for May (£4,279). The cash flow report had been circulated. Given that income streams had been restored, the committee **AGREED** that cash flow reporting on a monthly basis could be resumed.

The Trust had now appointed a company to act as Data Protection Officer and they would be carrying out an initial review (probably week commencing 15 June).

7. Any other matters for discussion

There were none.

8. Urgent communications

There were none.

9. Date of next meeting

Given there was a Board meeting on 11 June, a meeting would be called if and when required. If a meeting was required on 12 June, it would be at 4.30pm.

The meeting closed at 5.00pm

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Minutes Released

10. Update on staff and furlough scheme

Two staff were shielding (on furlough). The CEO would check whether their shielding periods had been extended, and investigate what needed to be done to allow them to return to work safely.

Robin Hill was retiring on 6 June. The CEO thanked the Board members who had contributed to his retirement gift.

The temporary staff member's contract had been extended to 3 July.

It was suggested that, given the popularity of the E-mail application process for car park passes, it should be continued next year. The Trust should consider more generally whether public behaviour might have changed following the pandemic and not necessarily revert automatically to previous ways of working.