

Malvern Hills Trust
Land Management Committee
Welland Parish Hall
Thursday 05 December 2019 7.00pm

Present: Mr C Atkins, Mr D Baldwin (arrived during item 5), Dr S Braim, Dr G Crisp, Mr M Davies (non-voting), Mr M Dyde, Mr R Fowler, Mrs C Palmer, Dr T Parsons, Mrs G Rees (Chair), Mr C Rouse, Ms S Rouse (non-voting), Ms H Stace, Mr T Yapp.

In attendance: Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Conservation Manager, Secretary to the Board, Mr M Gardner, 12 members of the public.

Mrs Rees welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Election of Chair

Dr Braim took the Chair and informed the meeting that there had been one nomination for Chair and Mrs Rees was appointed unopposed.

2. Election of Vice Chair

Mrs Rees took the Chair. Mr Atkins asked a question: Trustees had been told at the last Board meeting that a number of trustees had not signed the Code of Conduct and he wondered if it would be possible to know who those trustees were? Dr Braim said that he had signed the Code, and Mr Fowler said that he had not. The Secretary to the Board said that there were 2¹ other committee members who had not signed the Code.

Ms Stace said she would like to see this issue taken up by the Governance Committee.

The two candidates for Vice-Chair were Mr Fowler and Dr Braim and they briefly addressed the meeting on their background and experience.

On a show of hands, Dr Braim was elected as Vice Chair.

Mrs Rees hoped that the committee would be able to call on Mr Fowler's experience and support.

3. Apologies for Absence

Mr Bartholomew, Dr Bryer.

4. Declarations of Interest

Mr Atkins declared an interest – he had commoners' rights on Castlemorton Common and managed livestock on Chase End Hill. Mr Rouse said he had rights to graze stock on North Hill and the centre. Mrs Rees said that as long as item 11 was only a report from the CEO, there was no need at this stage for declarations of interest in relation to South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP).

5. Chairman's Communications

¹ This was incorrect – there were 3 other committee members who had not signed the Code.

- 7 January 2020 6pm Easement training United Reform Church, Malvern Link.
- 13 January CCS workshop, Open Spaces, Upper Interfields.
- 29 January 2020 Land Management walk (all welcome) venue to be advised.
- The Conservation Manager would discuss the issue of National Park status for the Malvern Hills, which had been raised by some candidates for the General Election.

Mr Baldwin arrived.

6. Public Comments

There were none.

7. Matters Arising from the meeting of 10 October 2019

The CEO reported that the bus shelter at Poolbrook Road had been installed. The Conservation Manager said that a paper on the issue of third parties mowing land under MHT jurisdiction would be prepared for a future meeting.

8. To consider the Land Management budget 2020/21

The Conservation Manager went through the paper. He pointed out that staff costs were not a part of this budget. He confirmed that hay making and coppicing were now covered under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (Northern and Central Hills).

The CEO clarified that grant funding would be required in due course for the “Securing the Common” project.

On the proposal of [REDACTED], seconded by Mr Rouse it was **RESOLVED** with one abstention to approve the budget and recommend its approval by the Board.

9. Project Progress Update

The CEO went through the paper. A number of projects had been held up because of the wet ground conditions. Since the report was written the work to Old Hills car park had been completed.

10. Lower Shed

The Shed required replacement or refurbishment in order for it to be used to its full potential. The matter would be discussed at the Finance Administration and Resources Committee meeting.

11. SWDP

The CEO briefed the Committee on the submissions which would be sent on behalf of the Trust, in response to the current consultation. There were a number of sites around Malvern (both residential and employment sites) and one in Welland, which had a potential impact on the Trust’s land. There were no details in the SWDP consultation document about access to any of the sites, nor how they would be developed and no proposer of any of the sites had approached the Trust. Natural England would also be making submissions where sites were within the

SSSI Impact Risk Zones. Any increase in population would be likely to lead to additional pressure on all notified features (SSSI and Ancient Monuments). The CEO also understood that the AONB team would be putting in a response.

12. Graziers' report

Mrs Rees introduced Mr Gardner. He reported that sheep worrying was a continuing problem on the northern Hills. The CCO had had a meeting with the Rural Crime Officer and they were hoping to run a public awareness campaign. He was not aware of any road traffic incidents since the last meeting. There was now an additional grazier on Castlemorton Common.

13. Conservation Manager's Report

- The winter work scrub clearance programme was in progress.
- Money was available for "capital works" as part of the current Countryside Stewardship agreement. All of this work had to be completed within the first 2 years of the Scheme, so the Trust's work programme had been re-organised to ensure the capital works were carried out by Christmas.
- The footpath south from Gardiner's car park had been widened.
- The fencing had been completed on the recently purchased land and the water infrastructure installed, ready for connection by Severn Trent Water.
- All of the current graziers had accepted the proposed interim arrangement to bridge the period before the start of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme for Castlemorton Common.
- The Conservation Manager was working on two new Countryside Stewardship applications.
- Tree safety work would be carried out mainly in January and February.
- Trees were being sourced for planting on the newly acquired land.

14. Urgent business

The Conservation Manager referred to the headline in the Malvern Gazette which stated that the Malvern Hills could become a National Park. This was on the basis of one political party's proposal, MHT was neutral on whether it was desirable or not and the Park Authority would not be responsible for management of the Hills. The Authority would be involved in strategic planning, advice, provision of grant funding etc.

15. Date of next meeting

9 April 2020

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm