

Malvern Hills Trust
Covid-19 Contingency Committee
By telephone/video conference call
Meeting 03 July 2020 4.00pm

Present: Mr R Bartholomew, Dr S Braim, Mr M Cordey, Mr M Davies (Chair), Mrs C Palmer, Prof J Raine (arrived during item 6), Mrs G Rees, Ms S Rouse

In attendance: CEO, Conservation Manager, Secretary to the Board

Mr Davies welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Finance and Administration 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 Mr Cordey, seconded by Mrs Palmer, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2020.

5. **Matters arising**

There were none.

6. **CEO's report**

The CEO said that the Hills had been very busy during the hot weather, which had pushed the Trust's resources to their limit. There had been multiple warden call outs in the evenings, and the wardens had been working with the police and fire brigade. Since the weather broke, it had been quieter but still been busier than normal for the time of year.

The outstanding tree safety work would start shortly.

In response to a question, the CEO said anti climb paint had been applied at Gullet Quarry and extra fencing had been installed. Further work would be done next week to make the access points less easy to use and he had obtained information about the use of dye from Derbyshire County Council. The Environment Agency had not yet agreed this option.

The CEO had obtained a quote for further fencing to the top of the ramp. He hoped this could be installed within 2 – 3 weeks and the cost would be in the region of £4,000. This fence would be of a height which would mean it did not require planning permission. The Quarry had been quieter since the weather broke but small numbers of people were continuing to access the area.

There had also been instances of anti-social behaviour, again concentrated in Castlemorton. This culminated in someone crashing a car through a resident's fence. There was a limit to what the wardens could do and in particular they had no power to regulate activity on a public highway. The police had been called but they did not always have the capacity to respond. The CEO was considering whether any action could be taken to reduce reckless driving on MHT land. Mr Davies said the work of the staff in dealing with the extraordinary activity was appreciated.

7. Office re-opening

The CEO went through the paper. The office would open for a limited number of hours from Tuesday – Friday from next week, supported until the end of July by a temporary employee working for 12 hours a week. Two of the office volunteers were also returning to help. The arrangements would be monitored and any problems identified. 3,562 passes had been sold this year, 2,513 since the office re-opened. Pass sales had dropped off in the last few weeks and fewer passes than expected had been sold. In recent years the annual total for pass sales of all types had been around 6,000. It was not clear how pass sales would play out once shielding ended.

The Secretary to the Board added that it was very much hoped that most pass sales and queries would continue to be dealt with by phone or E-mail.

8. Finance and Administration Manager's report

The CEO went through the report. The audit clearance meeting had been held on 1 July and there had been a clean audit. The management accounts to the end of May showed a loss of income for the year to date compared with budget, but car park takings for June had been double the budgeted figure. Limits on expenditure should remain in place because of the difficulty of predicting what would happen over the summer as lockdown was lifted. The cost of waste disposal was higher than budgeted.

9. Urgent communications

The Secretary to the Board would confirm to trustees that the office would be re-opening and circulate a letter from the Charity Commission.

10. Date of next meeting

There was a Board meeting on 6 August. A Committee meeting could be called if needed.

The meeting closed at 5.15pm

CONFIDENTIAL

Minutes Released

11. Update on recruitment of warden and temporary warden

The Conservation Manager reported that there had been 227 applications and the warden post had been offered to and accepted by Tracy Sutton. She would start work with the Trust in August. A temporary warden had also been appointed for up to 3 months, to start on 13 July.

It was suggested that any suitable local candidates might be asked if they would be interested in carrying out voluntary wardening duties.

12. Any other staff matters and furlough scheme

There were 2 staff members still on the Furlough Scheme. One had had a letter confirming he should continue to shield until 1 August. The other had not been given any explicit end date for shielding.

One of the field staff was currently working as a warden, and would continue to do so for a further week. The Conservation Officer was also continuing to cover warden duties.