

Malvern Hills Trust

Staffing Committee

By video/telephone conference and live stream

Thursday 1 April 2021, 7.00 pm

Present: Mr D Baldwin, Mr R Bartholomew, Mr M Davies, Mrs H I'Anson, Mrs C Palmer (Chair), Prof Raine, Mrs G Rees.

In attendance: CEO, Finance and Administration Manager, Secretary to the Board, Dr G Crisp, Mr R Fowler, Mr C Rouse

1. Apologies for absence

There were none

2. Chair's announcements

- A second session of training on trustees' responsibilities as employers would be held on 28 April.
- Training on Equality and Diversity would be held on 5 May.

3. Declaration of interests

There were none.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Matters arising from previous meeting not otherwise on agenda

The CEO confirmed that the two pieces of vibrating equipment which were not calibrated had been booked in for testing. George Banner had been appointed to the post of Estate Supervisor, and the field staff post left vacant would be advertised. Second interviews for the new warden post would be carried out in the following week. The Operations Manager had given notice that he wished to retire at the end of June so that post too would be advertised shortly.

The CEO had not yet reviewed the job descriptions, save the ones which were being revised in the course of the recruitment process.

6. Update on Health and Safety Issues

The CEO went through his written report. Covid precautions in the workplace were being updated weekly in accordance with the changing Government guidance. Mr Fowler thought the system for reporting "near misses" was not working, that the CEO should be reporting what actions were being taken in relation to health and safety and that the Health and Safety Policy should be updated.

7. Staff at confidential meetings policy

The policy had been revised following a suggestion made at the January Board meeting, and a further draft had been circulated to committee members.

On the proposal of Mrs Rees, seconded by Mr Davies it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to recommend to the Board that the revised policy be approved.

8. **Revision of Bullying and Harassment Policy**

The Secretary to the Board said that it was planned to revise this policy. The Trust's HR advisor had sent through a draft, which was far more detailed than the current policy, and she and the Finance and Administration Manager needed to review it.

9. **Revision of Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious Complainants Policy**

It had been identified that this policy needed to be reviewed. This agenda item would need to be carried forward to the next meeting.

10. **Volunteers**

The paper was for information only. There was no shortage of people volunteering their time to help the Trust but it was difficult to take up these offers at the moment because of Covid.

11. **Amendment to and application of the Equality and Diversity Policy**

A suggestion had been made at the last Board meeting to include a reference in the policy to obligations in relation to the public sector equality duty. The Secretary to the Board confirmed that this legislation did apply to the Trust because it performed some public functions, and a proposed amendment had been circulated.

On the proposal of Mr Bartholomew, seconded by Mrs I'Anson it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to recommend to the Board that the revised policy be approved.

12. **Committee work plan for 2021**

As set out above, review of:

- Remaining job descriptions
- Health and Safety policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious Complainants Policy

Several other points were raised:

- When the Health and Safety Policy was reviewed, it would be a good opportunity to look at the management responsibility for individual elements. It was suggested that safety observations were easier for people to comply with than reporting "near misses." It was a good time to look at training needs with new people coming into post.
- Was it appropriate to consider carrying out a staff survey? The CEO said that annual appraisals were carried out but there was no anonymised reporting. It was pointed out that should staff not feel able to speak to the CEO there were 2 trustees appointed to hear any staff concerns.
- In the context of equality and diversity, it would be worth trying to engage with user groups with protected characteristics to understand their

experience? The CEO said that the Trust had some data from visitor surveys and was expecting the results of further survey work carried out over the winter. When that data became available it might provide some information on user groups.

- It would be helpful to have some sort of reporting system so that trustees could understand how the staff were feeling. Board members had not had the same direct interaction with staff over the last year because of Covid.

13. Urgent Business

There was none.

14. Date of next meeting

1 July 2021.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm