

LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Manor House, Malvern

Thursday 24th November 2011 4.00 pm.

Present: Mr D Baldwin, Mr R Chamings, Mr C Cheeseman, Mr R Cousins, Mr D Hawkins, Mr T Musgrove (ex-officio), Mr B Pilcher (ex-officio), Mr J Plant, Mrs G Rees, Mr C Rouse, Mrs H Stace, Mr J Tretheway, Mr T Yapp

In Attendance: Director, Conservation Officer, Administrative Officer, Deputy Conservation Officer, Mr R Roberts and Mr P Watson.

1. Apologies for absence

Mr D Hawkins was unable to attend the site visit but was present at the meeting.

2. Election of Chairman for ensuing year

Mr D Baldwin proposed Mr C Rouse which was seconded by Mr R Chamings.

Mrs G Rees proposed Mrs H Stace which was seconded by Mr J Tretheway.

After a secret paper ballot Mrs H Stace was duly **ELECTED** Chairman for the year ending 31st October 2012 by 7 votes to 6. Mrs H Stace formally thanked Mr C Rouse for his Chairmanship for the previous two years.

3. Election of Vice Chairman for the ensuing year

Mr R Chamings proposed Mr C Rouse which was seconded by Mr J Plant. Mr C Rouse was duly **ELECTED** Vice Chairman for the year ending 31st October 2012.

4. Declarations of Interest

Mrs H Stace declared a potential personal interest in the Cider Mill.

Mr B Pilcher declared a non-prejudicial interest in the South Worcestershire Development Plan.

Mr C Rouse declared a personal interest in the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.

5. Chairman's Communications

None

6. Matters arising from the meetings of 6th October and 20th October 2011

6.1 4.4 Performance Monitor & Management of Grazing Contracts. The Conservation Officer confirmed that letters had been sent to the graziers and interview dates have been set.

6.2 4.6 Tarmac Path, Walwyn Bend, Upper Colwall. The Conservation Officer stated that a local groundwork specialist has been contacted to provide a quote for small maintenance improvements.

6.3 7. QR Codes. The Conservation Officer confirmed that the agreement is waiting to be signed and that once signed it will be circulated to all members.

6.4 10. Quarry Fencing. The Conservation Officer stated that arrangements are being made for a blacksmith to undertake the wrought iron fencing.

Public Questions

None.

7. Dates and times of 2012 meetings

On the proposal of Mr B Pilcher, seconded by Mr J Tretheway the dates and times were **ADOPTED.**

8. The Hacketts building and letting of the land

The Conservation Officer presented a paper and photographs of the building and surrounding area. A discussion ensued. The Conservation Office confirmed that the total costs for the Victorian cowshed renovation (option 2) were a maximum of £14,500 and for the materials and erection of a new agricultural building were £24,416 which includes a guarantee to meet British Standard 5502 for Class 2 steel framed buildings.

A discussion ensued regarding the legality of erecting an agricultural building and the potential cost of legal fees versus the potential need for legal advice. It was **AGREED** that Mr T Musgrove would help the Conservation Officer to prepare a series of questions that will need to be answered before proceeding further with Option 3. Concerns were also raised that planning permission may be refused. It was **AGREED** that a site visit will be incorporated with the Induction outing on the 21st December 2011.

On the proposal of Mrs H Stace, seconded by Mr R Chamings, that the Conservation Officer's recommendation be split into two separate recommendations and that members vote first on agreeing Option 2 and that Option 3 be deferred. The Conservation Officer will then work together with the planners and AONB as regards the design and aesthetics of the building, and that the Conservation Officer will then bring back any recommendations from the AONB and take into account the summary document and questions prepared by Mr T Musgrove before members vote on Option 3 at the next meeting of the Land Management Committee. This was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

As to the recommendation for the letting of the land, the Conservation Officer explained that under Section 6 of the Malvern Hills Act 1995, it states that any land that is let that is not common land requires the consent of the Secretary of State (DEFRA) but that a license that grants a right to do something does not. However, legal advice should still be sought. It should also be made clear that the tenant is responsible for water to the site.

The Conservation Officer invited members to come to the office to view the major Land management contracts with third parties. The Conservation Officer stressed that it was

important that Trustees had knowledge of the most significant contracts and that this is something that is checked in the annual audit.

On the proposal of Mrs G Rees, seconded by Mr J Plant, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to accept the Officer's recommendation regarding the letting of the land.

9. Mill Pond Report – Consultants Stillwaters

A site visit to the Mill Pond had occurred prior to the meeting.

The Conservation Officer advised members that an email had been received that offered slightly different advice to the circulated recommendation. In light of this information the Conservation Officer altered the recommendation to state that MHC will ask Stillwater Associates to produce a bill of quantities and specification of works with drawings and provide a quote, and also ask for an additional quote for Stillwater Associates to project-manage the technical parts of the implementation of that work and that MHC carry out the recommendations of professional consultants.

Mr B Pilcher proposed the acceptance the Officer's amended recommendations.

The Conservation officer confirmed that this work would be funded by the Capital account.

Mr R Chamings suggested an amendment to add fencing to both ends of the dam to exclude cattle but not sheep or visitors. A further amendment was suggested to cap funding for the project at £60,000. Mr Pilcher proposed the two amendments should be included in the original proposal. The was seconded by Mrs G Rees and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED**.

10. Land Management Budget 2012 / 2013

The Conservation Officer presented the budgets for 2012 to 2013 and the following observations were made:

- Savings have been made in Contract Labour partly due to the Stewardship Scheme that paid for scrub clearance.
- Vehicle and equipment expenses had almost doubled due to soaring fuel prices.
- Hire of plant and equipment rises with inflation.
- MHC had invested in tree and woodland management to reduce the amount needed for emergency works.
- Grass cutting has been taken in-house.
- Field consultancies. Investment was made in training volunteers to conduct wildlife surveys and now nearly all wildlife monitoring is conducted by volunteers apart from tree safety surveys.
- Gardeners cut the grass and maintain bedding plants for the office grounds as part of Malvern in Bloom and the memorial at Barnard Green and gardens at St Ann's Well.

On the proposal of Mr J Tretheway, seconded by Mr D Baldwin it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to approve the budgets.

11. Response to the South Worcestershire Development Plan

Mrs H Stace stated that a draft response paper had been taken to the Special Land Management meeting of 10th November 2011, and had been discussed at the Board meeting of the same evening. Members made a few amendments to the draft response paper and these were incorporated into the paper before it was lodged on the 18th November with the Malvern Hills District Council. Wording of the document was amended to state that proposed cycle paths should not go across common and that the development site at Upper Welland fell outside the SWDP an amendment was included to state that MHC does not have any objection to the proposed development within the SWDP but any further development would raise concerns. Amendments were made to strengthen the comments about the development site at Newland as this is a high-visibility site with environmental assets. It was also stated that a clear zone should separate the development site at Newland.

The Director informed members that the AONB will meet to discuss their response and that they have been granted a late response deadline for their comments.

12. Mowing Schedule

The Deputy Conservation Officer presented a paper and distributed some maps showing the areas that are mowed. Most grass is cut by MHC staff. Some areas are deliberately left to grow to encourage wildlife to the area. It was explained that there are 3 categories which determine how often an area is cut. The Deputy Conservation Office will email the maps to all members.

On the proposal of Mr B Pilcher, seconded by Mr D Baldwin the Officer's recommendation was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED**.

Mr D Baldwin thanked the Field Staff for doing an excellent job, which was echoed by other members.

13. Cider Mill at Hollybed Common, Golden Valley

Mrs H Stace declared a non-prejudicial interest as a member of Colwall Orchard Group.

A site visit to the Cider Mill had occurred prior to the meeting.

The Deputy Conservation Officer presented a paper and stated that as this issue was discussed over 6 months ago, it could be re-visited. Three quotes have been received from Crispin Hack to restore the mill to various levels. Option 1 was to restore to working condition. Option 2 was to repair and reinstate oak planks in the centre. Option 3 was to repair the present materials. Mr D Hawkins suggested the use of granite. The Deputy Conservation Officer confirmed that other providers could be approached for an alternative quote. A discussion ensued as to how to

protect the mill from deterioration and damage by stock. The issue of interpretation was also raised as was who would benefit from the restoration of the mill. Health and Safety concerns were also raised.

Mr D Hawkins suggested granite setts be used.

Mr T Yapp proposed that the wheel be placed flat on top of the trough with the spindle in the centre which was seconded by Mr R Chamings.

Mr J Tretheway amended the proposal to include an information board be erected and interested bodies notified which was seconded by Mr J Plant.

Mr B Pilcher amended the proposal so that the wheel be placed inside the trough but immobilised to conform to Health and Safety standards which was seconded by Mr R Chamings.

Members voted on the amendment to place the wheel inside the trough but immobilised. The amendment was **CARRIED** by 8 votes for to 3 against with 1 abstention.

Members voted on the amendment to erect an information board. The amendment was **CARRIED** by 7 votes for to 4 against with 1 abstention.

On a proposal by Mr D Hawkins, seconded by Mr B Pilcher, that alternative materials such as granite be looked at for the central section. After a discussion the proposal was amended with the consent of Mr D Hawkins and Mr B Pilcher, so that the base will be cleaned of brick, the stone shall be restored and cracks repaired to allow for the option for further restoration to a greater degree if so desired at some point in the future.

This was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED**.

The Committee **AGREED** that funding for the restoration would come from the Gift Fund and that this item will go to the next Administration and Resources Committee.

14. Golden Jubilee Commemorative tree planting

Mr J Tretheway stated that the Woodland Trust is planting numerous trees to commemorate the Queen's jubilee and asked if the MHC had a site that would be suitable for planting trees. Suggested sites were the orchard at the cider mill, Jubilee Drive, Thetford Meadow and the replacement of the veteran trees. It was **AGREED** that the Conservation Officer would explore various sites and that the item be brought back to Committee at the next meeting.

15. Information

None.

16. Scrub Presentation

The Conservation Officer gave a presentation on Scrub Clearance.

Mr D Baldwin thanked the Conservation Officer and the Deputy Conservation Officer for their papers, which was echoed by the Chairman and other members.

The meeting closed at 5.50pm.