

# **MALVERN HILLS CONSERVATORS MEETING OF THE BOARD**

**Priory Lodge Hall, Avenue Road, Malvern**

**Thursday 8 September 2011 immediately after the reconvened Annual General Meeting**

Present: Mr R Chamings, Mrs J Kelly, Mr M Morgan, Mr T Musgrove, Mr A Myatt, Mrs B Nielsen, Mr B Pilcher, Mr J Plant, Mrs G Rees, Mr R Roberts, Mr C Rouse, Dr B Smith, Mr C Smith (Chairman), Mrs H Stace, Mr D Watkins, Mr P Watson, Mr P Watts (Vice Chairman), Mr W Watts, Mr B Wilcock.

In attendance: Director Administrative Officers (2), Conservation Officer, Deputy Conservation Officer, Financial Consultant and approximately 16 members of the public.

As requested by the Land Management Committee the meeting started with a presentation by Dr Emma Philpott on QR Codes (Quick Response) codes. These are three centimetre square, two dimensional bar codes providing information on the area by downloading from a free app using a smart phone. Dr Philpott had applied for grant aid from the AONB to set up 10 sites around the Malvern Hills. There would be no cost implications for the Board as Dr Philpott intended to pay for maintenance costs by advertising local businesses and relevant advertisers such as books about the Malvern Hills, etc. If funding was given and the Board agreed, it would take about two weeks for each QR code to be set up. The Chairman on behalf of members thanked Dr Philpott for her presentation.

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

S Adeney, Mr D Baldwin, Mr M Cordey, Mr R Hall-Jones, Mr M Soley and Mr P Tuthill.

## **2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

It was with great pleasure the Chairman introduced two new members of staff, Fiona Macklin and Jennifer Grantham. Fiona had taken up her post as Administrative Officer on the 5<sup>th</sup> September and Jennifer had taken up her post as Deputy Conservation Officer on the 15<sup>th</sup> August.

## **3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The following were questions asked by Mr John Redman on behalf of Save the St Ann's Well Group and the Chairman response:

**QUESTION 1** A customer of the café has told me that she was informed by Board member P Watson "that these legal actions are being funded by monies negotiated in the transfer of lands from the construction of the Malvern Retail Park. They are not coming from the levy that is collected by the Malvern Hills District Council on behalf of the Malvern Hills Conservators". She was also told "negotiations and mediation have been rejected by Mr Redman". As suggested by Mr Wilcock I contacted Mr Watson to ask if he could explain these false statements but have so far received no reply. Could he assure me that he will contact Dr Cardone and correct these points?

**QUESTION 2** A Myatt claimed at a public meeting that I was "in no small way responsible" for the debacle over St Anns. Again as suggested by Mr Wilcock I have written to Mr Myatt (twice) to ask him to explain what he meant by this but as yet he has not been courteous enough to reply. Can the Board assure me that they will not

allow Board members to make totally unsubstantiated accusations over my conduct in future?

QUESTION 3 In a report prepared by Mr Myatt and Brian Smith they appear to have misled the Board making false claims and ignored the Landlord and Tenant Act. They claimed that notice was served because “they had tried and failed over a long period to get what they judged to be adequate standards of service in the café”. This is totally false and further it falls well outside the Landlord and Tenant Act. If there were perceived inadequacies in the service provided, that they felt I needed to rectify, why this was not mentioned in the Director’s report on the 5 February 2009 or any other time. In fact in his report the Director said “during the last four years the relationship with the tenant has been good and in the main he has been co-operative”. Would they care to take this opportunity to correct this?

**ANSWERS TO 1, 2 AND 3**

**In a democratic country members of the public are free to ask questions of organisations like ours but also members of the Board have a freedom of speech and in receiving questions they can choose whether to reply. It is not the Chairman’s nor the Board’s job to be involved in this.**

QUESTION 4 The issue over opening times at the café has been raised repeatedly over the course of the last two years. Can the Chairman remind the Board that formerly the opening times set down in the lease were much longer but were reduced and agreed in 2006 at a meeting with B Wilcock among others?

**ANSWER Members had a copy of the lease and would have been aware of the opening times.**

QUESTION 5 Will the Chairman please remind the Board that the claims by Ian Rowat that the café remains closed on weekends during the winter and that the café is open for my own convenience rather than the visitors is totally false as shown by my PAYE statements and till receipts?

**ANSWER It is obvious that if the café is open then it serves the visitor.**

QUESTION 6 At the aborted AGM having been told by a chartered accountant and supported by a former auditor that the books could not be signed off as they would be in breach of the law Mr Wilcock said “it may trouble an accountant I can’t see why it should trouble us at all”. Do the Board still have confidence in the chair of the Admin & Resources Committee having been shown his total disregard for the law or a startling degree of ignorance for matters that he oversees?

**ANSWER We receive qualified advice in preparing the accounts and they are professionally audited.**

QUESTION 7 The first meeting of the Inquiry committee was held a week ago in secret. That was a breach of the Local Government Act 1972 which requires committee and sub-Committee meetings to be held in public. This requirement had been pointed out to the Chairman and other members before the meeting took place. How do you justify such a flagrant breach of the law?

**ANSWER** This was an informal gathering of the members appointed to serve on the Inquiry Committee to establish terms of reference and is perfectly in order.

**QUESTION 8** In round figures we calculate that the costs of the litigation, spread over four financial years come to about £120,000 i.e. about £50,000 on the MHCs own legal and other consultants, £30,000 reimbursing my costs and about £40,000 worth of Mr Rowat and other staff costs; that estimate is calibrated from the information provided by Mr Pilcher and Mr Rowat in the context of answering public questions. Can you confirm that this is about the right total figure when you take account of the time spent by staff?

**ANSWER** The officers are there to carry out the instructions of the Board and therefore would be employed to carry out all their duties whatever was required.

**QUESTION 9** When will the Chairman provide replies to the 12 questions asked at the November 2010 Board meeting? He deferred answering them until the litigation had finished and so a reply is now overdue.

**ANSWER** You will get a written reply to the questions posed in due course.

#### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Mr C Smith declared a personal interest as a member of the Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee as a nominee of Worcestershire County Council.

#### **5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

It was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** on the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mr Roberts, that the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on the 14 July 2011 should be **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true and correct record.

#### **6. MATTERS ARISING**

##### **6.1 13. St Ann's Well Costs.**

The Financial Consultant advised that the total legal and professional fees were £75,365.52. This was **NOTED**.

#### **7. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **7.1 LAND MANAGEMENT**

Mr Rouse presented the report of the meeting held on the 4 August 2011 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr Chamings. Members were reminded of an additional paper prepared by the Conservation Officer that had previously been circulated regarding QR Codes.

#### **LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Manor House Malvern**

**Thursday 4 August 2011 4pm**

Present:- Mrs S Adeney, Mr D Baldwin (Vice Chairman), Mr R Chamings, Mr C Cheeseman, Mr T Musgrove, Mr B Pilcher, Mr J Plant, Mrs G Rees, Mr C Rouse (Chairman), Mr C Smith, Mr P Watts, Mr W Watts.

In attendance:- Director, Conservation Officer, Administrative Officer, Mr R Roberts and 5 members of the public.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Mrs J Kelly, Mrs H Stace.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

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

**3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS.** None.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2011.**

4.1 5. Path from Blackhill Car Park to British Camp. An estimate had been received for widening of the path of £1,000.00. This was **NOTED**.

4.2 6. Swinyard Car Park. The Director advised that work had been programmed to place sleepers in the car park. This was **NOTED**.

**5. QR CODES.** The Conservation Officer introduced Dr Emma Philpott who gave a presentation on QR (Quick Response) Codes. These two dimensional bar codes measuring approximately three centimetres square and easily attached to existing structures provided information on the surrounding area by downloading from a free app using a smart phone. Once on the website it could connect to other websites, such as Wikipedia. Dr Phillips had trialled one code at Park Wood. She was hoping to obtain the Board's permission to site 10 codes on the Hills. The total costs for setting this up would be £1260.00 for which she hoped to obtain funding from the AONB. The key benefits of the codes were:-

- Small and unobtrusive
- Location specific
- Unlimited data
- Information can be quickly and easily updated at little cost
- Appeals to the younger generation.

Dr Phillips was investigating the possibility of obtaining advertising for ongoing maintenance and replacement of codes and would therefore require no financial input from the Board. In order to make this a viable venture, Dr Phillips was looking for an agreement from the Board for three years.

Dr Phillips was thanked for her presentation and on the proposal of Mr C Smith, seconded by Mr P Watts, it was **AGREED** with one abstention to invite Dr Phillips to make a presentation to the next meeting of the Board.

**6. AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT AT HOLLYBED COMMON.** The Director advised that a request had been received from Mrs Wilkes of Upper Orchard Cottage, Hollybed Street, Castlemorton for permission to apply for an easement across the common for agricultural vehicles to access her land. The field was used for sheep as it enabled them to have direct access onto the common where they graze. A steep bank leading down to a stream prevented gaining vehicular access to the field from Mrs Wilkes' other land. Members were shown photographs of the area.

The Chairman suspended Standing Orders to permit Mrs Wilkes and her neighbour Mr Dawe to make representations.

Mrs Wilkes stated that she was under the impression that there was an easement as this was an old cart track. She stated that vehicles would only be used occasionally for unloading hay two/three times a year and backing a vehicle in the gateway to load sheep. She pointed out that there was a gap in the boundary so that sheep could freely graze the common.

Mr Dawe then asked members to refuse this unnecessary vehicle access over common land. He stated that he was a previous occupier of Upper Orchard Cottage until 1961 and farmed the land. At no time during that time did he seek or need an easement across the common land as it was not necessary. The property had adequate access to all parcels of land from the existing entrance to Upper Orchard Cottage and this would be possible again if the present occupier moved soil from the septic tank area. He pointed out the flora and fauna on this area of common, the illegal parking and driving of vehicles that causes annoyance and disturbance to his family.

On making a proposal to defer a decision until the next meeting of the Committee in order to make a site visit, Mr C Smith advised that as a body the Board could not concern itself with neighbourly disputes. This was seconded by Mr P Watts, and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

**7. EASEMENT TO 56 OLD WYCHE ROAD, MALVERN.** In presenting her report the Administrative Officer reminded members that in August 2010 the Committee had decided that on a purely without prejudice basis this was a case that would be considered on its merits when full details of the application were known. A completed application form, together with planning permission had been received and it was recommended that permission was granted for an over-ground easement, subject to the following conditions:-

- a) That the charge for the grant was settled by valuation.
- b) That a formal Deed of Grant confirming the easement was completed within six months of the date of the decision letter.
- c) That the applicant, through his solicitor, undertakes to be responsible for MHC's valuation and legal fees regardless of whether the matter proceeds.

The recommendation was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

**8. ROSE FARM LAND, GUARLFORD ROAD, MALVERN.** Through the Board's Valuer developers had asked for some indication as to whether members wished to discuss the development of the Rose Farm land as access into the land was across land owned by the Board.

On the proposal of Mr Smith, seconded by Mr Chamings, it was **CARRIED** with one abstention that the Board continued with its policy of not granting access for the development of this land in view of its detrimental effect on the natural aspect of MHC land.

**9. 18A PEACHFIELD ROAD, MALVERN – EXTENDED USE OF EASEMENT.** Agents acting for the owners of 18a Peachfield Road had provided a plan that had been circulated to members showing a proposed development of six apartments and indicating that should local authority planning permission be granted the access across the common would be unaltered. This was noted.

On the proposal of Mr C Smith, seconded by Mr P Watts, it was **AGREED** by 9 votes with 2 abstentions that on a without prejudice basis this was a case that the Board would be prepared to consider on its merits when full details of the planning consent were known.

#### **10. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT OF GRAZING CONTRACTS.**

In presenting his report the Conservation Officer advised that the last grazing contract had been signed. Currently under the Higher Level Stewardship, Natural England monitor the Scheme and every 2/3 months a meeting takes place following which a claim is submitted and Natural England make a payment if the conditions have been fulfilled. Each grazier has entered into a contract with MHC and if Natural England has a problem MHC would go back to the graziers. To obtain a consultant's independent assessment of how the Scheme is managed, the Conservation Officer recommended that members agree to carry out the assessment and that a similar assessment should be considered by the Committee after another three years of the Scheme had been completed. The costs of this could be covered by the Stewardship Grant money received to cover the cost of administering the Scheme. The likely fees for the project would be approximately £2,925.00, plus VAT and expenses. In answer to questions the Conservation Officer advised that:-

- The consultant employed would have an in depth knowledge of the Hills and Commons
- That there were elements within the Scheme regarding access provision
- There was provision for new graziers to enter the Scheme if they had showed commitment by grazing for three years
- MHC were owners of the sheep managed by the graziers on the Northern and Southern Hills as they were hefted to the land. The agreements also included the leasing of some equipment in the Board's ownership that would be subject to an outgoing valuation at the end of the contract.
- Natural England pay 100% of payments annually for the grazing payments to MHC. MHC pass on 90% of this to graziers leaving 10% that can be used to fund the assessment.

At the request of the Chairman, it was agreed that the Higher Level Stewardship quarterly account should be considered by the Land Management Committee as well as the Administration & Resources.

On the proposal of Mr Chamings, seconded by Mr Smith, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to adopt the Conservation Officer's recommendation that an assessment be carried out and that a similar assessment should be considered by the Committee after another three years of the Scheme had been completed.

**11. MILL POND DAM.** In his report the Director advised that a new leak on the dam retaining wall had been noticed by the Conservation Officer on the 8 July this year. The last leak in 2007 was some ten metres away from the current leak. At that time a report was commissioned, a copy of which had been previously circulated. The suggestion in the report that grouting be injected into the wall to stop up the gaps was carried out. Because of the seriousness of the current situation the Chairman of the Committee, local Conservator, John Plant, the Director and Conservation Officer met a representative of the Environment Agency who was able to suggest a firm that would be able to advise on the problem. He also advised of new legislation to be placed before Parliament in 18 months time that would require a full inspection for ensuring that the retaining features could cope with a flood every 100 years and a disaster every 1000 years. Following the meeting a further meeting was arranged with an engineer from, Stillwater Associates, who recommended a detailed

assessment of the condition of the Mill Pond and a copy of their letter setting out the suggested works for a total cost of £2,965.00, plus VAT, was circulated to members.

On the proposal of Mr Baldwin, seconded by Mr Smith, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to carry out the recommendation proposed by the engineer and pay the fee requested.

**12. TARMAC PATH, WALWYN BEND, UPPER COLWALL.** Mrs Rees, on behalf of parishioners of Colwall, had asked if MHC would provide a narrow stretch of land to be used to extend the footpath on the sharp inside bend of the B4218 near the Chase Road junction to enable pedestrians to cross the highway safely further down the hill where there was improved visibility. Colwall Parish Council had already contacted Herefordshire Council regarding the problem and an assessment of the area was awaited. It would not involve MHC in any costs. Members were shown photographs of the area involved and were advised that the Conservators had power to make footpaths under Section 4(c) of the 1930 Malvern Hills Act and that Herefordshire Council should be asked to submit a specification for approval. It was pointed out that there was possibly another solution to the problem by improving a track-way south of the Church of the Good Shepherd.

On the proposal of Mr C Smith, seconded by Mr Baldwin, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to explore extending the footway with Herefordshire Highways and to ask the Parish Council to investigate other options to improve a track already on MHC land.

**13. GIFT FUND WISH LIST.** Members were reminded that the Committee had been asked to draw up a wish list of projects that could be financed from the Gift Fund. It was suggested this fund could be used to improve seats, paths and ponds.

#### **14. INFORMATION.**

14.1 Wildlife Panel. This was noted with appreciation for the work carried out by the Panel.

14.2 Plume of Feathers, Castlemorton. The Director reported that the public house had applied for an extension to their licence to hold music events. He had commented on this application pointing out that cars already used the Common as an overspill car park and that this practice was contrary to the Board's Byelaws.

The meeting closed at 6.12pm.

#### Arising

7.1.1 5. QR Codes. The Conservation Officer presented his report that had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting with a recommendation that members agree that the QR code project went ahead and this agreement was confirmed in an exchange of letters with either party having the opportunity to cease the arrangement on three months' notice and the Board having the ability to veto any advertising considered inappropriate to the Board's aims. During discussion members felt that they required more time to consider and further research to be carried out before reaching a decision and in particular wished to know the amount of staff time required to keep the information up to date.

*It was therefore **PROPOSED** by Mr Wilcock, **SECONDED** by Mr Chamings, that the matter be referred back to the Land Management Committee. This was **CARRIED** by 11 votes to 7.*

7.1.2 11. Mill Pond Dam. The Director advised that the hydrological survey had been carried out but the survey of the dam had been delayed as the contractor did not have sufficient detailed plans. Enquiries were being made on sourcing these. Mr Plant advised that he was monitoring the leak in the dam wall on a regular basis. This was **NOTED**.

The report was **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

## 7.2 **ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES**

Mr Wilcock presented the report of the meeting held on the 25 August 2011 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr Watson and **CARRIED**.

### **ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Manor House Malvern

Thursday 25 August 2011 7pm

Present:- Mr M Cordey, Mr R Hall-Jones, Mr A Myatt, Mrs B Nielsen, Mr R Roberts (Vice Chairman), Dr B Smith, Mr C Smith, Mr P Tuthill, Mr D Watkins, Mr P Watson, Mr P Watts, Mr B A Wilcock (Chairman).

In attendance:- Administrative Officer, Financial Consultant, Financial Assistant, Mr T Musgrove, Mr C Rouse and 4 members of the public.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Mr R Stockton and Director.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Mr M Cordey declared an interest in item 8 as an employee of Lloyds Bank Ltd

**3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS.** None.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 9 JUNE 2011.**

4.1 8. Enquiry into St Ann's Well Matter. The Chairman advised that as it was not appropriate in these circumstances for a member of staff to advise the Committee on the law he had agreed with the Director that it was imperative to have professional guidance and therefore Mr Kevin Douglas would be employed as a consultant at £30.00 per hour. The Administrative Officer would be in attendance at the meetings to take the Minutes.

As the Inquiry Committee would not be in a position to report its findings to the last meeting of the current Board, Mr Hall-Jones suggested that a Special Meeting of the Board be called for this purpose.

**5. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR THE 3 MONTHS ENDED 30 JUNE 2011. NOTED.**

**6. TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2011.**

The Financial Consultant presented the revised Accounts and in her report stated that they now included the provision for legal fees paid on behalf of Mr Redman in July 2011 totalling £28,509. The total legal and professional fees included in the 2010/11 accounts relating to the St Ann's Well dispute was now £58,862 and by

virtue of its size and on advice from the auditor, this item had been treated as an exceptional item in the Accounts.

This was noted and on the proposal of Mr Hall-Jones, seconded by Mr Smith, it was **AGREED** to recommend to the Board their adoption.

**7. PENSION SCHEME.** The Financial Consultant presented a report explaining the Board's position within the Worcestershire County Council Pension Scheme following the Actuarial valuation 2010. The 2010 valuation showed that the scheme as a whole had a deficit of £613 million. The Actuary had proposed a deficit recovery plan to eradicate the deficit over a 19 year period which involved employers paying additional contributions phased in over the next six years. This would mean an increase to the Board of over £30,000 over the next six years. The Board was currently part of a group within the Scheme and the deficit for the group was £877,000. Following enquiries the Actuary had advised that it would be possible for the Board to separate from the group. Should this be done, FRS17 accounting rules would need to be followed, with the deficit calculated by the Actuary being shown on the balance sheet each year. The figures for FRS17 disclosure had been requested but this information has not yet been received.

In the circumstances the Director had recommended that members defer making a decision until the information from the Actuary was received. On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mr C Smith, this recommendation was **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**8. BANK DEPOSIT REVIEW.** Mr Cordey left the meeting whilst this matter was discussed.

The Financial Consultant's report was noted and it was **AGREED** that the Board remained with Lloyds TSB for the time being and that within the next 12 months the Board reviewed its investment policy specifically to consider investing the funds with three separate Banks.

**9. PARKING CHARGES REVIEW.** Members received the Director's report recommending that the parking charges remained the same for 2012/13. On the proposal of Dr Smith, seconded by Mr C Smith this was **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**10. WORKING GROUP TO REGULARLY MEET THE LESSEE OF ST ANN'S WELL.** Members were reminded that at the May meeting of the Board it was agreed that once the lease of St Ann's Well had been signed the Committee would consider forming a working group to regularly meet the tenant. This was noted and it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to recommend to the new Board to appoint a St Ann's Well Working Group to meet with Mr Redman every six months and report to the Administration & Resources Committee.

**11. ANNUAL REVIEW OF LAND ACQUISITION FINANCIAL LIMIT.** It was **AGREED** to recommend to the Board that the financial limit for land acquisition delegated to the Urgent Business Sub-Committee under Standing Order 11.1.1 remained at £40,000.00.

**12. GIFT FUND USES.** The Administrative Officer reminded members that during discussion on the Management Accounts at the last meeting it was decided to outline a policy for use of the Gift Fund and to request ideas from the Land

Management Committee. The Land Management Committee had suggested that the fund be used for the refurbishment/replacement of benches, maintenance of paths and the clearing of ponds. These suggestions were **ENDORSED** by members.

### **13. INFORMATION.** None.

The meeting closed at 7.58pm

#### Arising

7.2.1 4.1 Enquiry into St Ann's Well Matter. The Chairman of the Board advised that he had felt it necessary for the members of the Inquiry Committee to receive proper advice before holding their first meeting and therefore supported the Director's actions. He advised that although £30.00 per hour had been quoted for Mr Douglas's time he had in fact given his advice free of charge.

Members then considered the statement from the Inquiry Committee that recognised the need for an independent and timely Inquiry into the matter taking into account the views of all parties involved. It was agreed that issues of conflict would be difficult to resolve for members elected to the Committee given their previous roles as members of the Board. The members of the Committee therefore suggested:

- i. Leaving the commencement of the Inquiry until after the appointment of the new Board in November 2011; or
- ii. By appointing independent members to the Inquiry including representation external to the Board.

During discussion members were reminded that at the Board Meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011 the Board had voted against employing Mr Douglas as secretary and adviser to the Committee in view of the cost involved.

*Following discussion it was **PROPOSED** by Mr Morgan, **SECONDED** by Dr Smith, that the Committee appointed by the Board to look into the matter of St Ann's Well met within the next two weeks to formally move that the Committee received advice and after be allowed to make a presentation to the Board about the composition. This was **CARRIED** by 17 votes with 2 abstentions.*

## **8. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

8.1 Malvern Spa Association. Mr Roberts reported that the Association, as part of the 'Malvern in Bloom' competition, had dressed two Wells and staged a display in Christchurch. The judging had taken place on the 21<sup>st</sup> July and results were to be announced on the 15<sup>th</sup> September.

There had been a disappointment regarding the re-siting of Jacob's Fountain in the Malvern Theatres building. The proposed new position was no longer available due to the realignment of the Café entrance but there was another possible site that the Association had in mind.

The proposed Wilson's Memorial would now be renamed the 'Water Cure Memorial'. It would be sited on the original site but smaller than the original proposal, i.e. about 3ft tall stone block with two flat sides explaining its historical importance. It was still hoped to complete this year.

The MSA was also in the process of devising a new 'Malvern Water Trail'.

8.2 Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee. There had been no meeting of the Committee since the last Board meeting and therefore nothing to report.

## 9. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

## 10. INFORMATION

10.1 Management Report. The Director presented his report which was **NOTED**.

**BOARD MEETING  
MANAGEMENT REPORT  
DATE: 8 SEPTEMBER 2011**

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**FOR INFORMATION**

DIRECTOR

- Met with owners of Kettle Sings and Chase Inn to discuss signs on the common
- Meeting at County Hall concerning the future of the Outdoor Centre
- Carrying out staff annual appraisals

CONSERVATION OFFICER

- Sourced Desks (£10) and Chairs (£5) for new members of staff from MHDC.
- 4 meetings with graziers – Checking on fence moving and looking at impacts of grazing on ecology.
- 4 meetings with residents about requests for work to trees near their properties or nearby road junctions.
- Meeting with the Environment Agency about the Mill Pond Dam.
- 3 site meetings with contractors to get quotes/estimates for work.
- Met with MHDC Tree and Landscape Officer to look at proposed tree safety work in the protected Conservation Area.
- Interviews and appointment of Deputy Conservation Officer.
- Wildlife panel meeting on Chase End to look at the impact of the Bromesberrow Estate grazing.
- Attended evening stroll on the Northern Hills to look at the grazing project and other issues on the high hills.
- Met with amateur geologists about some minor clearance work on some quarries that appear to show more volcanic activity on the Malvern Hills than had been previously thought.
- Ran a Tree identification Course for the MHC volunteers at the Old Hills.
- Met woodland worker at Park Wood to look at next year's work and to assess the progress of the re-growth in previous year's coppice coups.
- Meeting with the Earth Heritage Trust about notice boards that are being placed in selected quarries around the Hills.
- Meeting with the Chairman of the Land Management Committee to look at areas of grass cutting in West Malvern.
- Meeting with a work placement student who is starting on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sept for one weeks work experience.
- 8 site visits with the Operations Manager to plan and schedule work on and around the Hills.
- Appraisal with the Director.
- Meeting with the Financial Consultant and Financial Assistant about forward budgeting for the stewardship scheme.
- Half a day spent with "Midlands Today" film crew making 2.5 minute film for the local news.
- Meeting with the Gazette and photograph on the Hills for a story on Jenny Grantham – the new DCO.

### FIELD STAFF

- Mowing and strimming commons
- Bracken rolling Hollybed Common, Castlemorton Common and Chase End
- Took down three Lime trees at Barnards Green that were diseased
- Renewed the fence on the northern edge of North Quarry
- Removed travellers from Castlemorton
- Replanted reed bed at the Mill Pond
- Replaced plank seats at the Mill Pond
- Ragwort pulling Townsend Way and other areas

### CONTRACTORS

- Contractor, Lawrence Goodchap, widened and levelled path from British Camp to Blackhill
- Prosser Haulage cleaned out pool at Hall Green

### WARDENS

- Byelaw breaches:

Signs on common	9
Camp Fires	3
Camping	6
Camper Vans	4
Quad bikes	2
Cars for sale on MHC land	2
Travellers	1
Fly tipping	3
Burnt out Car	1
Loud music disturbance	2
Cyclists (not on bridleways)	6
Unauthorised parking	2
Model air plane& remote control car	2
Rubbish bins on Link Common	1
Sheep worrying incident	1
Fishing infringements at the Mill Pond and Hollybed pond	2
- Led guided walk around British Camp for Western Motorhome show.
- Completed conservation list for Fridays in September and October

### VOLUNTEERS

- **Conservation Day activities:**
  - Litter picking at Wood Street area of Guarlford
  - Reduced bracken and bramble encroaching on wildflowers and archaeological features at Midsummer Hill
  - Pulling up silver birch saplings to maintain flower rich grassland on Worcestershire Beacon
  - Clearing vegetation from around newly planted trees at Old Hills
  - Clearing vegetation within the overgrown pond at Hollybed Common
  - Scrub clearance at Hayslad Bog

- **Administrative Assistance** given in the office by 2 volunteers who regularly work one half-day a week each.

#### ADMINISTRATION

- The Board's seal was attached to a Deed of Grant confirming vehicular access to 130a Longridge Road, Malvern.
- 6 Planning applications looked at.
- John Lawsons Circus will be on the Link Common from the 5-8 July 2012.
- The Board's seal was attached to a Deed of Surrender with Mr J Bevan ending his Farm Business Tenancy Agreement for the land and buildings at The Hacketts, Mathon.

The Chairman moved that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest as the nature of the information to be conveyed to members was exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as it related to a possible purchase of land.