

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

13 July 2006 – 7 p.m.

The Committee Room, Council House, Malvern

Present:- Mrs. S. Adeney, Mr. M. Cordey, Mr. R. Hall-Jones, Mr. A. Macmillan, Mr. D. Masters, Mr. J. Mills, Mr. A. Myatt, Mr. A. J. Phillips, Mrs. P. Raven, Mr. R. Roberts, Mr. C. Rouse, Mr. P. Rumney, Dr. B. Smith (Chairman), Mr. R. Stockton, Mrs. S. Thetford, Mr. R. Thomas, Mr. J. Tretheway, Mr. J. Webb, Mr. B. Wilcock, Mr. R. Witcomb.

In attendance:- The Director, Administrative Officer, Mrs. C. Gentry (Financial Consultant).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mr. M. Angell, Mr. B. Pilcher, Mr. J. Plant, Mr. S. Try, Mr. W. Watts, Mrs. J. Wildin and Conservation Officer.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS. None.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS.

3.1 Mr. R. Dawe. Mr. Dawe asked why the Gullet Quarry recreation area was always in a litter ridden state and whether this was because MHC had put up warning signs and obstructed the road to it illegally.

In reply the Chairman stated that unfortunately during spells of hot weather the Gullet area still experienced high numbers of people who see it as an area for parties and barbecues and although the Wardens patrol the area daily and pick up bags full of rubbish, it cannot be eliminated. For a trial period a wheelie bin had been padlocked to the gate of Gullet Cottage in an effort to further reduce this problem. The road was not obstructed illegally, the Highway Authority at the request of residents of Castlemorton Common would be putting a Road Traffic Order in place on the 24 July. This had been done in an effort to encourage quiet, family recreation in the area. Signs warning of the danger of swimming in the lake had been put up on the advice of the Health & Safety Executive following a fatality.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES. On the proposal of Mr. Wilcock, seconded by Mr. Roberts, it was **AGREED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 11 May 2006 should be **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true and correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING.

6.1 6.1 Highway work at Hall Green. Mr. Masters reiterated his view that there was a ditch on the common prior to kerbing work being carried out by the Highway Authority. Furthermore there were weeds growing in the disturbed ground. He felt that the Highway Authority should be asked to reinstate the area to its previous condition. This was **NOTED** and the Director agreed to contact Highways to deal with the weeds.

6.2 6.2 Reclaiming the Views from the Hill above Malvern. The Director reported that together with Mr. Simon Smith of MHDC he had met with the consultants and had been encouraged with their work so far. The completed report would give a broad outline of the plan, plus costings. This was **NOTED**.

6.3 7.2 Annual Study Tour. The Chairman reported on a very successful day. It had been interesting to learn of plans to rejuvenate the spa town of Buxton and to tour the surrounding beautiful countryside of the Peak District National Park with one of the Park Rangers. The

exchange of management practises to try and alleviate mutual problems in managing an area with high visitor pressure had been extremely useful.

6.4 7.2.3 Three Counties Show. The Chairman on behalf of members complimented Mr. Roberts on a most successful stand at the Show. This was seconded by Mr. Tretheway.

6.5 7.2.4 Malvern in Bloom. Mr. Masters drew attention to a dead and a dying tree on the common at Guarlford Road along the judging route. This was **NOTED**.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

7.1 LAND MANAGEMENT. Mrs. Thetford presented the following report of the meeting held on the 1 June 2006 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr. Witcomb.

REPORT OF LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 1 June 2006 Manor House, Malvern 2 p.m.

Present:- Mr. A. J. Phillips, Mr. B. J. M. Pilcher, Dr. B. G. Smith, Mrs. S. Thetford (Chairman), Mr. J. A. Tretheway, Mr. R. G. Witcomb.

In attendance:- The Director, Conservation Officer, Administrative Officer, Mr. R. Roberts.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mr. C. Rouse, Mr. J. Webb.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS. None.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 30 MARCH 2006.

4.1 5.3 Wyche Cutting Public Conveniences. The Director had advised the Estates Department of Herefordshire Council of the Board's decision and urged them to begin preparations for drafting the Agreement. This was **NOTED**.

5. USE OF MACHINERY ALONGSIDE GRAZING IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE HILLS. The Conservation Officer presented his report that had been prepared to answer queries as to why it was necessary to use mechanical clearing on areas where stock were grazing. The report had been illustrated with photographs showing evidence of the improvement of the grassland using this combined method. This was **NOTED** and at the end of the meeting members made a site visit to the area south of the Wyche Cutting where the photographs had been taken.

6. GRASS SEED HARVESTING ON THE HILLS AND COMMONS AND USE OF NON-NATIVE SEED ON MALVERN HILLS CONSERVATORS' LAND. In presenting his report the Conservation Officer advised of an amendment as the cost of local, native wildflower and grass seed was £50 per Kg that would make the cost to the Conservators £2,500 per annum. This was noted.

Following consideration the Conservation Officer's recommendations were **AGREED** as follows:-

- To allow TGS Wildflowers to harvest grass and wildflower seed in limited areas in return for grass and wildflower seed taken from the Hills.
- That as a policy, only grass and wildflower seed harvested on the Malvern Hills and Commons was used to floristically enhance the Malvern Hills Conservators' land.
- That as a policy, where appropriate, only grass and wildflower seed harvested on the Malvern Hills and Commons was used to reinstate the Malvern Hills Conservators' land.

7. ENHANCEMENT OF MALVERN. The Director advised that in composing the report he had included the aspirations of four Conservators who had asked for various flora to be planted on Conservators' land. In considering the report members took into account the management

implications of the various plantings as well as the introduction of native species into areas where these had not grown before.

It was **RECOMMENDED**:-

- (a) That there was no planting on the main Commons, including the area by The Firs on Malvern Common.
- (b) There should be an extension of the planting at Oxford Place and Hornyold Road on the Link Common where the public had already introduced other species.
- (c) That Kendalls Common adjacent to North Malvern Road should be left as it is at present.
- (d) That a hedge was planted at Townsend Way. The Director would bring a report to the next meeting recommending the location and species of the proposed hedge.
- (e) The Conservation Volunteers would be approached to assess their interest in making a wildflower meadow on the western side of Townsend Way. If they did show an interest, members would make a site visit.
- (f) Several rhododendron bushes would be planted adjacent to the A449 south of Rose Bank Gardens.

8. REPORT OF TRIPARTITE MEETING. NOTED.

9. REPORT OF WILDLIFE PANEL MEETING. The Conservation Officer reported that by kind invitation of Mr. Rouse Panel members had visited Croft Farm, West Malvern to see, in particular the wildflower meadow and lime kilns. Everyone there had made favourable comments about the grassland. This was **NOTED**.

10. INFORMATION.

10.1 Parking area adjacent to The Lake House, Peachfield Road. In view of the popularity of this area for parking and the damage to the surface in wet weather, the Director advised that he would be bringing his recommendation to alleviate the problem to the next meeting of the Committee. This was **NOTED**.

10.2 Severn Trent Water – Works at Malvern Common. Notification had been received from Severn Trent regretting the damage caused and advising of the sequence of events to complete the works on the Common adjacent to Thirlstane Road by the 31 July 2006. Severn Trent had also posted a notice at the site. This was **NOTED**.

10.3 Link Common – Fairground Site. The Director advised that he was confident that the Common would recover quickly from the damage caused to the surface by the exceptionally wet conditions during the first few days the fair was on the ground. He had strengthened the conditions attached to the permission that the Operations Manager should be contacted before any equipment was placed on site. This was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to ask the Administration & Resources Committee to consider whether it was appropriate to increase the bond which at present was £300.00.

Arising.

7.1.1 Wyche Cutting Public Conveniences. In answer to a query as to why the sum of £70,000 for the refurbishment of the public conveniences had been quoted in a public document, Mr. Wilcock advised that this was a 'ball park' estimate to aid consideration of the matter and had been based on the cost of refurbishing the British Camp toilets which was public knowledge. This was **NOTED**.

7.1.2 Use of Machinery alongside Grazing in the Management of the Hills. Mr. Witcomb reported that Butterfly Conservation had advised that grazing was the best form of management for the High Brown Fritillary. This was **NOTED**.

7.1.3 Grass Seed Harvesting on the Hills and Commons. Mr. Masters queried what would happen to harvestable grass after the seed has been taken. The Director agreed to enquire of the Conservation Officer who has now written to Mr. Masters advising that the grass seed harvesting process should allow for normal haymaking to take place afterwards. The areas selected for grass seed harvesting, as outlined in the report to the Land Management

Committee, were currently managed by either hay meadow management or through grazing. Therefore there will be no need to dispose of any of the grass after the harvesting.

The report was **CARRIED**.

7.2 ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES. Mr. Wilcock presented the following report of the meeting held on the 22 June 2006 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr. Hall-Jones. Mr. Wilcock advised that the item taken in committee could now be made public.

ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 22 June 2006 at 7 p.m.

Present:- Mr. M. K. Cordey, Mr. R. F. Hall-Jones, Mr. A. Myatt, Mr. P. Rumney, Dr. B. G. Smith, Mr. J. A. Tretheway, Mr. B. A. Wilcock (Chairman).

In attendance:- The Director, Administrative Officer, Financial Consultant, Financial Assistant, Mr. R. Roberts, Mrs. S. Thetford.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mr. M. Angell, Mr. A. K. C. Macmillan.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS. None.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 26 APRIL 2006.

4.1 7. Land Registry. The Administrative Officer reported that all the land owned by the Conservators had now been registered. A meeting of the Working Party would take place at 9.15 a.m. on the 27 July 2006 to consider those areas of land under the jurisdiction of Conservators but to which they did not have title. This was **NOTED**.

4.2 9.1 Bursary Placement. It was **NOTED** that the placement had been awarded to Bernadette Noake. Bernadette would be starting on the 27 June and would be doing one month's intensive field identification skills training in Hereford before returning on the 24 July for the rest of the nine month placement.

5. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2006. NOTED.

6. TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2006. In presenting the Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year to 31 March 2006 the Financial Consultant drew attention to the increased information and changes in format from the previous year which had been necessary under the new Statement of Recommended Practice issued by the Charity Commission. Following completion of the audit a letter had been received from the Auditor stating that they anticipated being able to give an unqualified report at the Annual Meeting of Council Taxpayers on the 13 July. This was **NOTED**.

Subject to the deletion of the last sentence of item 14 on page 15, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to recommend to the Board that the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2006 be adopted. The Committee Chairman and the Financial Consultant signed the Auditor's letter of confirmation.

7. FORWARD STRATEGY – PRÉCIS OF RESPONSES. The Director's report was **NOTED** and on the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Tretheway, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to request, taking into account the feedback from the consultation process, that the Chairman of the Board in consultation with the Director, prepare a final draft for discussion at a subsequent working party meeting of the Board prior to submission to the September Board Meeting for adoption. (Please find attached revised results of questionnaire taking into account those received since the preparation of the Agenda). The press would be advised that the first round of the consultation process was complete but anyone who would still like to comment should do so in writing or e-mailing the office.

The Director drew attention to the comment from Malvern Town Council that there was no mention of the urban commons. He stated that the management of these areas was covered in the Management Plan.

The Director also reported that in order to facilitate informed discussion on the topics mentioned in the draft Strategy he had commissioned a risk assessment on the train and a plan with costings of opening up the views. This was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that such information should form an appendix to the final draft.

8. STANDING ORDERS. The explanation of the policy for dealing with land acquisition matters was **NOTED**.

9. INFORMATION.

9.1 Trustee Training. It was **NOTED** that Mr. Roberts attended a one-day course at Hereford entitled 'Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees' at a cost of £75.

9.2 Old Hills Car Park. The Director advised that he had not yet received a reply from Suretrac following the letter requesting them to take up the surface and remove it from site free of charge and to reimburse the £5,000 charge for laying an inadequate surface. Upon enquiry he had been told that the matter had been passed to their legal advisers. This was noted and it was **AGREED** to authorise the Director to appoint Arthur Amos Associates to draw up a plan of action designed to provide an all-weather car park and that the costs for this work should be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

9.3 Staff Matter. Josh Loader had been appointed as a temporary member of the Field Staff over the summer months and would be taking up the position on the 3 July 2006. This was **NOTED**.

10. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS. It was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to recommend to the Board that Little & Company were retained as Auditors until the next review in 2011 or unless there were unforeseen circumstances in the meantime.

Arising.

7.2.1 9.2 Old Hills Car Park. In answer to the concern expressed by Mr. Masters at the length of time taken to remedy the situation, the Director advised that it had taken time as the Board had instructed him to explore the possibility of obtaining recompense from the companies involved. He hoped, however, that by the next meeting of the Committee he would have the consultants' report. This was **NOTED**.

The report was **CARRIED**.

7.3 ACCESS & INFORMATION. Mr. Roberts presented the following report of the meeting held on the 29 June 2006 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr. Thomas. In presenting the report Mr. Roberts advised that arrangements had been made for the Conservators' Dinner to be held on the 10 November 2006 at Priors Croft and David Judge had been invited to be the guest speaker. Mr. Roberts also thanked individually all those who had helped with the stand at the Three Counties Show.

REPORT OF THE ACCESS AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 29 June 2006 Manor House, Malvern, 2 p.m.

Present:- Mr. J. R. Mills, Mr. R. Roberts (Chairman), Dr. B. Smith, Mr. R. Thomas, Mr. W. Watts.

In attendance:- Administrative Officer, Conservation Officer (for site visit), Mrs. S. Thetford, 4 members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Prof. J. Raine, Mr. J. Tretheway, Mrs. J. Wildin.

2. SITE VISIT TO BAKEHOUSE FARM, CASTLEMORTON COMMON. The Chairman adjourned the meeting for members to make a site visit.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None.

4. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS.

4.1 Charity Fair. Community Action had suggested two possible dates for this year's Charity Fair of the 23 September and 22 October. It was **AGREED** that the 23 September would be the preferred date.

4.2 Barnards Green House. Mrs. Nicholls of Barnards Green House had expressed the wish to donate a 20 year old Acer to the Conservators to be placed on the Common adjacent to her property. Whilst thanking Mrs. Nicholls for her kind gesture, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that in view of the impracticalities of moving a tree of this size and the maintenance issues involved, members felt that they could not accept this gift.

4.3 Conservators' Dinner. The Chairman advised that he had provisionally arranged for a dinner to be held on Friday 10 November and had invited David Judge to be guest speaker. Further details would be circulated in due course. This was **NOTED**.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 20 APRIL 2006.

5.1 Biodiversity Training. It was **NOTED** that Steven Bloomfield of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust would be giving a presentation at the next meeting of the Committee on the 31 August.

6. THREE COUNTIES SHOW. The Chairman presented his report as follows:-

The report of 2005 was very upbeat and after such a excellent result one is always concerned about managing to at least equal it in the following years. There was no need to have worried, 2006 seems to have got the formula absolutely correct. That combined with the excellent weather and the enthusiastic responses from some of the many users of our hills, it all came together. For the first year we showed four of our own sheep, 2 ewes with a lamb each, these proved a great draw as always. They were very well trained and behaved impeccably. One slight disappointment was that we were no longer next to a food tent, as we were last year, a burden that was born quite stoically. This year we had both a new style tent that is much larger than previous years, covering a full 6M x 6M rather than the old 6M X 4.7M, also new display boards, replacing the old heavy, & now rather tatty, boards. This gave us much more useable space, we followed our trend of keeping the stand as open and uncluttered as possible. There were fewer tables than previously, all the leaflets being displayed in two new leaflet racks on the outside of two sides of the tent. Apart from the sheep two old favourites, the Toposcope and the 3D map, both proved to be very good conversation starters. For the first time for several years we did not have the toy sheep draw, there did not seem to be one solid, attractive enough, cause that we felt would draw sufficient interest for passers-by to donate money for. We did sell several Hill Forts Books as well as some Birds of the Malvern Hills books.

Following our tradition we flew both the Union Jack and the MHC Flag on two front corners of the tent, one each side of the large MHC Banner. This year we also had an additional, smaller (8ft), banner made to fit the front of the Gazebo. We felt this was needed to help put over the message of who we are and what we do.



The small organizing sub-committee which consisted of myself (Ray Roberts), Richard Thomas & ex. Conservator Dudley Brook, met several times over the months prior to the show. The theme we decided on for this years show was "Recreation on the Hills", tying it in with the Forward Plan. To get the message across many different groups of recreational hill users became involved. Our thanks for their co-operation goes to, in no particular order, Simon Yates - Worcester Divers, Lynden & Lester Hartmann - MADO (Malvern and District Orienteering), Suzanne August and Anne Miller who gave a live display spinning "Malvern Hills Sheep Wool" all through Saturday, Liam Killeen the mountain Bike Gold Medallist sent us some display photographs and a message, Botanist Keith Barnett helped with botanical photographs, Anna Jordan - Butterfly Conservation display, Bryan Hindle - Malvern Hang Gliding Club, Nick Neve - Malvern Model Aircraft Club, Phil Ascough - Malvern Outdoor Centre, David Armitage - Malvern Hills AONB, Rose Garrard - Malvern Spa Association, Friends of the Malvern Hills

Walking Group, Artist Ted Fahey painted the view in oils during the three days of the show, Conservator Richard Witcomb supplied pictures of Birds also loaning us his display of birdboxes & nests and, finally, our very own Volunteer Wardens of whom Malcolm Brown, David Cheale, Alan Greatwood & Trevor Wilson all helped man the stand on a rota for the full three days. All of this was made to go smoothly as a result of the excellent behind the scenes work by Paul Saunder our Operations Manager and his team of field staff. They brought in all the heavy/bulky display material, erected the Gazebo, put up the banners etc., planted the "birdbox tree" and brought in and looked after the welfare of the sheep. Ian Rowat the Director (who was also available via his mobile phone throughout the show), Val Moore our Administrative Officer & Rob Havard the Conservation Officer all spent time on the stand talking to visitors, as did Paul Saunder, Matt Gardner & Dan Lovatt. To man the stand over the course of the 3 days we had the support of 10 Conservators (13 in 2005), 3 Office Staff, 3 Field Staff and 4 Volunteer Wardens. Also helping on the stand during the show we had: 2 Spinners, 1 Artist, 2 members of Butterfly Conservation Office & an AONB officer. Fortunately selling was very low down our list of priorities this year, our takings for the three days was only £22 (4x "Hill Forts" & 4x "Birds of the Malverns" books). Two extra items of display material were purchased for this years show, a leaflet rack and a banner, they will also be useful for other events for some time into the future. In spite of this extra expenditure we finished £13.42 under budget. The general consensus seems to be that we had a very successful show and we feel that we have now got the display format just about right. The number of visitors who passed through the stand this year was an all time record of 1,907. Our previous best was 1,200 in the year 2003. Local visitors to the stand gave a general indication of satisfaction with the Conservators work on the hills, there were very few complaints, all were minor and dealt with amicably with notes taken for action when it was felt necessary.

I personally am delighted with the result of this years show and look forward to trying to at least equal it again next year. Plans are already in mind for the theme and the format. Once again a very big thank-you to everybody involved, I do hope I have not missed out anybody, if I have please let me know and accept my apologies in advance.

Dr. Smith on behalf of members thanked the Chairman for the report and for the time and effort he had put in behind the scenes in organizing the event.

7. 34 LONGRIDGE ROAD, MALVERN – EASEMENT APPLICATION. On the proposal of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Mills, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that permission was granted for the existing easement to No. 34 be used for the new property to be constructed within the boundary. This would be subject to the usual conditions, i.e. a professional valuation of the increased use and for any additional underground services required and the owner entering into a Deed of Grant.

8. BAKEHOUSE FARM BARN, CASTLEMORTON. It was noted that the Committee had been asked to consider two routes, the existing route jointly used by the farmhouse and a new route to the rear of the building. On the proposal of Dr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Watts, it was **AGREED** that permission be given for the use of the existing access to Bakehouse Farm and that reconsideration be given for the alternative easement when precise details of the planning permission were known. Permission for both accesses would be conditional upon the applicants entering into a Deed of Grant and a professional valuation of the facility and for any additional underground services required.

9. INTERFACE WITH THE AONB PARTNERSHIP. Members agreed in principle the necessity to reinforce the Conservators' role within the larger AONB. With regard to the recommendations made in the Director's report it was **AGREED** adopt item 1, i.e. that the Committee encouraged the Director and Chairman of the Board to open a dialogue with the AONB Partnership with a view to signing a formal bilateral agreement along the lines outlined in the report.

With regard to recommendation 2, it was **AGREED** that the actions listed should be considered with the Forward Strategy with perhaps a sub-committee being formed to look into implementing the actions listed where this was practicable with the resources available.

10. CHASE INN, UPPER COLWALL – ADVERTISING SIGN. The Director's report was noted and the Chairman suspended standing orders to permit the owner of Chase Inn to speak. After consideration it was **AGREED** that the owner should approach the Highway Authority for an official brown sign to be erected on highway land and the Conservators would send a letter of support to Herefordshire Council.

11. CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS & ENVIRONMENT ACT 2005 WORKING PARTY. The report of the meeting of the working party was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** on the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Mills, to adopt the recommendation:-

- (a) To hold in abeyance any decision to consult with other Authorities with regard to becoming a Secondary Authority under the Act; and
- (b) Using existing powers in the Malvern Hills Conservators' Byelaws to hold a campaign in the summer at British Camp, Gardiners, North Malvern and Beacon Road car parks encouraging the public to clear up after their dogs.

12. LOGO. As part of raising awareness of the Malvern Hills Conservators nationally, members considered three designs using the existing logo but incorporating the full name of the organisation. Members felt that 'B' should be used in some circumstances but **AGREED** that subject to the agreement of the AONB, the design used for the new banner (as illustrated in the Three Counties Show report above) should be adopted.

13. HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND UPDATE – CLOCK TOWER, NORTH MALVERN. The Chairman reported that the three month contract for work on the Clock Tower was due to start on the 3 July. There was an HLF budget meeting on the 6 July to obtain final agreement. This was **NOTED**.

14. INFORMATION. None.

The meeting closed at 4.45 p.m.

Arising.

7.3.1 9. Interface with the AONB Partnership. In answer to a question from Mr. Macmillan, Dr. Smith advised that AONBs were a partnership of various bodies. They do not own any land or have executive authority, but do try and co-ordinate and over-view the management of the AONB through the AONB Management Plan. This was **NOTED**.

7.3.2 11. Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 Working Party. The Director advised that the signs had been made to be used during the campaign at the main car parks encouraging the public to clear up after their dogs. This was **NOTED**.

The report was **CARRIED**.

8. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES.

8.1 Malvern Spa Association. Mr. Roberts reported that members of the Association had paid tribute to Mr. John Ford who had died recently for his drive, foresight and dedication which had made the work now being carried out on the water features possible. With regard to the work to features under the Heritage Project, he reported that work had commenced at the Clock Tower and final details were being completed on the restoration of the well buildings at the Holy Well. Notification had been received of increased funding for the water features that would now make it possible to look at work to less well known features. This was **NOTED**.

8.2 Great Malvern Town Centre Partnership. Mr. Roberts reported that at the meeting held on the 23 June items discussed had been the Main Street Project, Food and Drink Festival for September, restoration of the Library grounds and the restoration of Rose Bank Gardens as a focal point for the Town and the Hills. This was **NOTED**.

8.3 Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee. Dr. Smith reported on the last meeting of the JAC held on the 19 May 2006 when Mr. Ted Roberts of Forest of Dean District Council had been re-elected Chairman and himself as Vice-Chairman. There were presentations by Nick Evans from the Centre for Rural Research at Worcester University, Tom Vaughan from Worcestershire County Council Archaeology Service on the Shire Ditch Survey and Dr.

Smith had given a presentation on the Conservators' Forward Strategy. There had also been reports on the Sustainability Development Fund, Malvern Hills AONB Partnership Monitoring and Action Plan 2006/07 and undergrounding low voltage electricity cables. The JAC Study Tour this year would be to Eastnor Castle.

9. URGENT BUSINESS. The Chairman presented the following report of the Urgent Business Sub-Committee meeting held on the 4 July 2006 and advised that the 0.46 acres of land at Hollybush had been sold at auction for £10,500 with an uplift to the vendor if planning permission was obtained. This was **NOTED**.

URGENT BUSINESS SUB-COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 4 July 2006 Manor House, Malvern 4 p.m.

Present:- Mr. J. Plant, Mr. R. G. Roberts, Dr. B. G. Smith (Chairman), Mrs. S. Thetford, Mr. J. A. Tretheway, Mr. B. A. Wilcock, Mr. R. Witcomb.

In attendance:- The Director and Administrative Officer.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mr. R. Thomas.

2. LAND AT HOLLYBUSH. The Sub-Committee met to consider the acquisition of 0.45 acres of amenity woodland adjacent to MHC land at Hollybush (see plan overleaf). The land was to be auctioned on the 12 July 2006 with a guide price of between £5,000 - £15,000.

A valuation of the land had been received from Anthony Champion of Humberts in accordance with Section 36 of the Charities Act 1993 who recommended that a limit of £9,000 should be set on the bid price. This was taking into account the policy of MHC to acquire where possible the freehold interest in adjacent hill land and from an operational point of view to complete the ownership on the north side of the A438 would aid the construction of a cattle grid in this area. Mr. Champion also took into account recent sales of amenity woodland by the same agent which was equivalent to over £30,000 per acre. Whilst he appreciated that it would be beneficial for the Conservators to purchase this land, he could not support a valuation at this level, but would accept that there was a premium value attached to the land above basic woodland value and that premium had been built into his valuation figure. This was noted.

Members noted that this was a steep piece of wooded land with a brick and lime mortar retaining wall adjoining the A438 which appeared to require complete renovation. Also growing on the land was a quantity of Japanese knotweed that would need to be treated. In view of the costs to MHC before the land could be open to public access and the ongoing maintenance to comply with Health & Safety legislation, it was proposed by Mrs. Thetford, seconded by Mr. Tretheway, that either a bid of up to £4,000.00 should be made or else arrangements made subsequently to buy by private treaty at a price up to this maximum level. This was **CARRIED** by five votes.

10. INFORMATION.

10.1 Management Report. In presenting his report the Director advised that sheep numbers were currently 183 ewes, 207 lambs, 30 yearling ewes and 4 rams. In answer to a question, the Director advised that following the Board decision, any surplus lambs would be sold to a local abattoir. The report was **NOTED**.

MANAGEMENT REPORT

DATE: 13 JULY 2006

DIRECTOR

- Supported Elgar Walking Festival and continuing support for Malverns Experience Week in August
- Presentation to Powick Parish Council on Forward Strategy

- Support for Malvern's application for 'Malvern in Bloom'
- Gave two talks to Evesham High School
- Member of organising committee for Countryside Management Association conference in Worcester in September
- Attended AONB National Conference
- Joined front line staff in obtaining clearance under the Criminal Disclosure procedure

CONSERVATION OFFICER

- Attended 2 moth trapping sessions at British Camp reservoir
- Organised and attended Worcestershire Recorders site visit
- Attended meetings with Castlemorton Common Association re HLF Castlemorton Plan
- Organised and attended biological recording event held on the Hills
- Submitted final planning application to Herefordshire Council for barn at Colwall Lands
- Set up Voluntary Site Warden Scheme with the Wardens
- Attended with Operations Manager Bracken Management Conference at Exmoor
- Attended with Wardens Grayling Butterfly training day on the Hills provided by Butterfly Conservation

FIELD STAFF

- Mowing and strimming of commons and roadside verges
- Path repair following uprooted tree above Foley Terrace
- Moved cattle from Beacon Road to Tank Valley
- Early morning sheep gathering for shearing and routine maintenance on 23 June
- Bracken rolling at various locations
- Attended Three Counties Show and helped with erection and clearing up of stand
- Had several tractors on demonstration to replace Carraro

WARDENS

- Attended Worcestershire Wardens meeting
- Attended Voluntary Site Wardens meeting
- Two Conservation days held at Sherrards Green and Swinyard Hill
- Strimmed all car parks
- Met two people interested in volunteering
- Sustainable Development Fund application finalised
- Meeting with Architect re Public Conveniences at British Camp
- Contacted web site advertising mountain bike routes
- Guided walk with Braunton School, Devon
- Completed Beacon newsletter
- Replaced 2 lifebuoy ropes at Gullet
- Byelaw incidents:-

Mini Motorbikes	1
Abandoned/burnt out vehicles	3
Remote control cars	1
Flytipping	8
Unauthorised stones and firewood on common	1
Off road driving	3
Campers	11
Unauthorised parking	15
Small fires for barbecues too numerous to list	
Cars for sale on common	3
Unauthorised fishing	3
Encroachments	2
Air rifle used at Castlemorton	1
Unauthorised signs	2
Mountain bikers not on bridleways	3
Unauthorised skips	2
Vandalism	1

CONTRACTORS

- Original section of Wyche Road Shed rewired.

STAFF

- Josh Loader commenced work with Field Staff as summer placement.

TRAINING

- 7 Members of staff (Field Staff and Wardens) attended Land Rover training at Eastnor
- Matt Gardner attended Conservation Grazing Project in Netherlands
- Conservation Officer attended a recruitment and selection training day with ACAS

ADMINISTRATION

- ❖ Looked at 16 Local Authority Planning Applications and comments made on 1.
- ❖ Met with Land Registry officer to complete registration of Conservators' land to which title could be proved.
- ❖ Met Tony Skelsey (Voluntary Surveyor) on 3 occasions to check boundary issues
- ❖ The Board's seal was attached to a Deed of Grant confirming overground and underground easement to St. Petrocks, Lower Dingle, West Malvern

The meeting closed at 8.09 p.m.