

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

13 September 2007 7 pm

The Committee Room, Council House, Malvern

Present:- Mrs S Adeney, Mr A Macmillan, Mr D Masters, Mr A Phillips, Mr B Pilcher, Mr J Plant, Mr R Roberts, Mr C Rouse, Dr B Smith, Ms H Stace, Mr R Stockton, Mrs S Thetford, Mr R Thomas, Mr J Tretheway (Chairman), Mr J Webb, Mr B Wilcock.

In attendance:- The Director, Administrative Officer, Conservation Officer.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mr M Cordey, Mr R Hall-Jones, Mr A Myatt, Mrs P Raven, Mrs J Wildin.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

2.1 Richard Witcomb. A letter had been received from Mrs P Witcomb saying how much she and the family appreciated the Board's decision to dedicate the Malvern Hills Breeding Bird Book to her late husband.

2.2 Malvern in Bloom. Mr Tretheway reported that Malvern had been successful in obtaining a Gold Award from the Heart of England. The Board's work on the Hills and Commons generally were noted by the judges to be of the highest order and particularly the distant views project. On behalf of members he would be writing a congratulatory letter to the Chairman of Malvern Town Council. This was **NOTED**.

2.3 Board Members. As this was the last meeting of the current Board Mr Tretheway gave his thanks for their service over the last four years and best wishes to those members who would not be serving after the 31 October.

2.4 Notice of Urgent Business. Mr Masters had tabled a motion which the Chairman agreed to consider under item 9 (Urgent Business).

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS. None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. Ms Helen Stace declared that there was no conflict of interest concerning her employment with Natural England. Ms Stace stressed that she was on the Board as the appointed member for Colwall Parish Council and that she had nothing to do with the Malvern Hills in her work. This was **NOTED**.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES. It was **AGREED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 12 July 2007 should be **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true and correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING.

6.1 10.1 Management Plan. The Conservation Officer reported that the Management Plan was now ready for collection. This was **NOTED**.

6.2 10.2 Water Leak Wells Road, Malvern. A letter had been received from Severn Trent Water Limited expressing regret at the Board's dissatisfaction with their service and advising that as there might still be a leak a further investigation would be taking place at the end of August. This was **NOTED**.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

7.1 LAND MANAGEMENT. Mrs. Thetford presented the following report of the meeting held on the 2 August 2007 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr Thomas. In

presenting her report Mrs Thetford drew attention to the good illustrated presentations received by the Committee and the production of the new Management Plan. She wished to record her thanks to the Director for the splendid job he had done over the last four years in leading his team and his loyalty and dedication to the Board. This was seconded by Mr. Thomas and **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday 2 August 2007 Manor House Malvern 2 p.m.

Present:- Mrs S Adeney, Mr B J M Pilcher, Mr J Plant, Mr R Roberts, Mr C Rouse, Mrs S Thetford (Chairman), Mr R Thomas, Mr J A Tretheway.

In attendance:- Administrative Officer, Conservation Officer, Ian Butler (Lemur Trainee), two members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mr A J Phillips, Mr J Webb.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. Mr Pilcher declared an interest in item10.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS. None.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 7 JUNE 2007.

4.1 4. Presentation on a possible Community Event during 2009. The Director advised that he had heard nothing further from the representatives of Artpoint and in the circumstances he suggested that at a future date further ideas were considered to celebrate this milestone in the Board's history. This was **NOTED**.

4.2 5.1 Tank Quarry. The Conservation Officer advised that to date he had not received quotations from the contractors invited to tender for the fencing work. This was **NOTED**.

4.3 5.2 Water Features. The Director advised that contracts for restoration works at the water features would soon be let by the Heritage Lottery Project. It was a condition when receiving grants from Heritage Lottery that its input into the work was recognised. In the circumstances he circulated to members the suggested wording that would be placed on grey slate to be fixed to the stone wall around the feature. Whilst members wished the wording to be kept to a minimum they felt that the plaque should state that the work was *supported* by Heritage Lottery and include the date of restoration. It was **AGREED** that taking into account members' wishes, the Director would agree the exact design and wording with the Heritage Lottery Project Officer.

4.4 9. Middle Car Park at Gardiners Quarry. It was **AGREED** that contrary to the decision at the last meeting, a metal rather than a wooden barrier would be erected at the site.

5. PRESENTATION ON CHANGES IN THE TREE LINE ON THE MALVERN HILLS. The Conservation Officer gave an illustrated presentation on the significant benefits to the flora and fauna on the Hills following the introduction of the current management regime begun in 2001. Of particular note were the sightings this year of the High Brown Fritillary butterfly, the increase in breeding birds, such as the skylark and the exposure of the ant hills with the resultant increase in the plants that grow on them. Members expressed their appreciation to the Conservation Officer for the presentation which gave a clear demonstration of what was being achieved. In the circumstances consideration would be given to circulating it to a wider audience.

6. OLD HILLS – LANDSCAPING CAR PARK. On the proposal of Mr Tretheway, seconded by Mr Roberts, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to accept the recommendation that gorse was planted by the Field Staff in the autumn/winter period to landscape the car park and to prevent cars from accessing the common.

7. REPORT OF MEETING OF THE CASTLEMORTON COMMON CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (4CS). This was **NOTED**.

8. HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP. In presenting his report the Conservation Officer stated that whilst recognising the achievements of the grazing project, members needed to be aware of their commitment when signing up to the Higher Level Stewardship. He drew attention to the areas of the project that needed to be progressed and improved to obtain the best environmental results in order to meet the government's conservation targets for SSSIs and to justify the additional funding. It was hoped that the scheme would begin in November. This was **NOTED**.

9. ACCESS TO THE COCKSHOOT, CASTLEMORTON. On the proposal of Mr Plant, seconded by Mr Roberts, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to give permission for the surfacing of the track to the barn, subject to the surface being compliant with the policy guidelines for overground easements and that the applicant enters into a Deed of Grant.

10. CONSULTATION WITH RECREATION BODIES ON GRAZING SCHEME ON THE HILLS. The Conservation Officer advised members of the intention to consult and work with as many user groups as possible in order to take their views into account when planning and implementing the future management under the grazing project and to find solutions to conflicting problems. This was **NOTED**.

11. INFORMATION.

11.1 Weekend of 20/22 July 2007. The Director reported that the excessive rainfall and its aftermath had caused a number of incidents on the Board's land. These had included the loss of several mature trees due to water-logging, a small land slip off Old Wyche Road which had necessitated evacuating the occupants of a property below in Westminster Road and several reports from residents of water coming off the Hills and flooding their properties. To deal with these problems the Director had employed the services of a Structural Engineer. A full report of the damage caused and the cost to the Board would be prepared for the next meeting of the Administration & Resources Committee. He did however draw attention to the work of the Operations Manager and Field Staff not only in clearing a fallen tree in Wyche Road over the storm weekend but in clearing watercourses and drains prior to the storms which had limited the damage caused. This was **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 3.10 p.m.

Arising.

7.1.1 4.2 Tank Quarry. The Conservation Officer reported that a fencing contractor had been appointed and the work should be completed by the end of the year. This was **NOTED**.

7.1.2 4.3 Water Features. The Director reported that he had advised the Heritage Lottery Project Officer of the Committee's wishes with regard to the design, size and wording of the plaques. This was **NOTED**.

The report was **CARRIED**.

7.2 ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES. Mr Wilcock presented the following report of the meeting held on the 23 August 2007 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr Roberts.

ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES COMMITTEE 23 August 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:- Mr M K Cordey, Mr A K C Macmillan, Mr R Roberts, Mr P Rumney, Mrs H Stace, Mr J A Tretheway, Mr B A Wilcock (Chairman).

In attendance:- Director, Administrative Officer, Financial Consultant, Financial Assistant, Mrs S Thetford.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mr A Myatt, Mr R F Hall-Jones.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS. The Chairman welcomed Mrs Helen Stace to the Committee in place of Mr John Mills.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21 JUNE 2007.

4.1 9. Parking for People with Disabilities. The Director advised that the Board decision to exempt blue badge holders from paying car parking charges had been implemented. This was **NOTED**.

5. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR THE 3 MONTHS ENDED 30 JUNE 2007. In presenting her report the Financial Consultant advised that the expenditure of £1,350 for the hire of the bracken bruiser was chargeable to Countryside Stewardship and would appear under that heading in the accounts for the next quarter. The accounts were **NOTED**.

6. REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD OF THE MALVERN HILLS CONSERVATORS. Members were advised that the Board had agreed in 1996 to look into representation on the Board and since that time several working parties had been set up to try and reach a consensus with the various parishes concerned. Although these had lapsed there was still interest from some levy-paying parishes to bring about changes to make representation more equitable to the present day. To provide the Board with facts on the mechanisms available to them should they decide in the future to change the constitution, it was recommended that officers be given authority to spend up to £300.00 for advice from Parliamentary Agents as to the procedure required to use a Statutory Instrument to bring about changes and the approximate costs. On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mr Macmillan, the recommendation was **CARRIED** with two abstentions and one vote against.

7. MALVERN HILLS CONSERVATORS' ELECTION – 25 OCTOBER 2007. NOTED.

8. INFORMATION.

8.1 Land Registry. The Administrative Officer reported that as part of consolidating the whole of the land under the Conservators' jurisdiction, the Board had been successful in obtaining Possessory Title to an area of land to the rear of Bowling Green Farm, Castlemorton. Although this had been managed by the Conservators since the 1960s it had not been possible to prove Title by production of Deeds, only by proving long user. Possessory Title could be upgraded into Absolute Title once a period of 12 years had passed. This was **NOTED**.

On the proposal of the Chairman it was **AGREED** that the remainder of the meeting should be taken in committee as the matters to be discussed were confidential.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

The report was **CARRIED**.

8. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES.

8.1 Malvern Spa Association. Mr Roberts reported that:-

- The MSA had played a very successful part in the Malvern in Bloom competition by organising the dressing of six wells and congratulated Malvern Town Council in again being awarded a Gold Award.
- The structural work at the Clock Tower had been completed and the ornamental gates would be hung shortly. The site would be tidied and re-seeded and an information board installed early in 2008. The project costs came in just under budget at approximately £73,000. 00. An official opening ceremony was to be planned.
- Contractor, Guy Sterry, had been employed to carry out work on the seven springs and spouts on MHC land, i.e. Hayslad, Lower Wyche, Willow Spring, Weavers Well, Barnards Green Fountain, Eilerslie and Westminster Bank and work was expected to take two months.
- Events planned for the coming months were: 22 September a visit to Witley Court, 20 October a Town Centre Walk by Dudley Brook and 22 November a talk by David Barrie entitled 'Water in our Diet & By steam to Shan-gri-la'.

In answer to a query, the Director advised that at least two weeks before work on the Hayslad Spring a sign would be erected by the Heritage Lottery Project Officer with directions to another spring to collect water.

In answer to a query regarding the Beauchamp Spout, Mr Roberts stated that as far as he knew nobody had claimed ownership.

This was **NOTED**.

8.2 Great Malvern Town Centre Partnership. Mr Roberts reported on a meeting held on the 24 August primarily to receive a presentation from Malvern High Street UK which included an idea for making Church Street a “shared space” (a completely pedestrianized-type surface with little or no street furniture but with normal vehicular access) which had been successfully introduced in both British and overseas towns and cities. This was **NOTED**.

8.3 Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee. Dr Smith reported that the next meeting of the JAC would be held on the 21 September. This was **NOTED**.

9. URGENT BUSINESS – Taken in committee.

10. MOTION FROM MR R ROBERTS FOR REINSTATEMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE. Mr Roberts proposed that the Board’s former Public Relations Committee be reinstated with effect from November 2007 and that Standing Order 10.1 be amended accordingly. This was seconded by Mr Pilcher. In presenting his motion Mr Roberts drew attention to the background information he had prepared and stated that although this current Board appeared to have more interest in Land Management and Administration & Resources, the Public Relations Committee had been popular with previous Boards. He reminded members that the decision to disband the Access & Information Committee (previously Public Relations) was for an experimental period of 12 months bringing the Board up to the elections in 2007. He felt that the reinstatement of the Public Relations Committee would give the new members more incentive to become involved in smaller committees and that there was still much work to be done in continuing to promote the work of the Board. Dr Smith supported the proposal in principle in view of the Board’s two objectives of conserving the Hills on the one hand and making them open for the public. As these two were often in conflict and to ensure balance of debate it was important to have representation of the recreational interests. However, he felt that the new committee could only be effective if it had its own officer with specialist skills and training as was the case with land management. He therefore supported the motion if its objective was to find some way of getting an effective Visitor Services Manager who would not necessarily have to be hosted by the Board and that the committee had a limited life on the proviso that if it did not get a dedicated officer it would be disbanded. A full discussion then ensued following which Mr Macmillan proposed an amendment to Mr Roberts’ proposal in view of the imminent change in membership of the Board, that the Board give consideration to the possibility of setting up a Public Relations Committee in six months time. This was seconded by Mr Masters and carried by 8 votes to 7 with two abstentions.

11. INFORMATION.

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

MANAGEMENT REPORT

DATE: 13 SEPTEMBER 2007

DIRECTOR

- Meet with St Richard's Hospice to discuss next year's sponsored walk
- Prepare new Information Board for British Camp
- Prepare draft leaflet on Malvern Hills.
- Visit 3 Counties to discuss the overspill of motorhomes on the common. Agree a course of action for next year.
- Visit Dam wall with engineer
- Start staff Appraisals
- Visit Meadow Road with developers
- Meet with Worcestershire County Council to agree a protocol on signing right of way on MHC land.
- Deal with the aftermath of the flood and potential concerns of foot and mouth.

CONSERVATION OFFICER

- Meeting with Herefordshire Archaeological team
- Meeting with MHDC landscape officer
- Meetings with 3 Contractors for safety fence at Tank Quarry.
- Attended Bird ID training for volunteers
- Malvern Hills wildlife recorders day
- Several visits for track repairs following flood damage
- Hosted Grassland Habitat Action plan meeting for Worcestershire
- Attended 2 day Commons Seminar with Chairman and Land management Chairman.

FIELD STAFF

- Bracken rolling at various areas
- Cleared fallen trees at various areas
- Helped move cattle on middle section of the Hills
- Repaired the track where water had washed channels on Malvern Common and various other hill paths
- Ditch clearing at various locations
- Mowing and strimming all areas

Sheep Numbers at 28.8.07

Ewes	140
Lambs	138
Last year's lambs	50
Rams	6

WARDENS

- Met with CB Surveys to discuss replacement telegraph poles at various locations around the Hills.
- Attended Voluntary Wardens event with six Volunteers, organised Droitwich Canal Trust for Worcestershire Wardens.
- Radio Interview (Wyvern) at Gullet regarding quarry safety.
- Led guided walk for Western Motor Home Show (in own time).
- Birdwatching and batwatching training events organised for volunteers
- 6 monthly meeting of Voluntary Site Wardens
- Conservation volunteer groups -
 - pulling thistles at Lodge Field
 - bracken clearance at Swinyard Flush
 - thistle pulling at Old Hollow land
 - bracken clearance at Ballards Land
- Attended Worcestershire Wardens meeting
- Bi-monthly meeting of the Voluntary Wardens
- Beacon newsletter - August edition
- New signs for car parks by meters, as disabled drivers need not pay.
- New A frame signs indicating direction of other car parks- used on busy weekends

▪ Byelaw Incidents:	
Camping	15
Travellers	3 (Rhydd 01/08/07, Newland 15/08/07, Malvern Common 25/08/07)
Unauthorised signs removed	6
Unauthorised skips	4
Burnt out vehicles	1 (Mini digger Hollybush Roughs)
Vehicles on Conservators Land with no tax	1
Unauthorised parking	6
Driving on common	1
Car for sale on common	1
Bonfires	5
Mountain bikers not on bridleways	12
Sheep worrying	3
Reports of air rifles	1
Flytipping	4
Car theft at car parks	2
Boundary issues	3
Utilities	5
Vandalism	1

TRAINING

Wardens, Nicky Quinn and Richard Vale attended Bat Training Day organised by the Conservation Officer and half a day with Butterfly Conservation on Grayling training.

ADMINISTRATION

- 11 Planning applications looked at, comments made on 2
- The Board's seal was attached to a Deed of Grant confirming access to Bakehouse Farm, Castlemorton and an Option Agreement for access over the same track to serve a barn conversion.

Arising.

11.1.1 Dam Wall at the Mill Pond. In answer to a query, the Director advised that the immediate work recommended in the specialist report had been carried out to the earth bank and the outflow was being monitored regularly. The next step was to place a contract for its permanent repair. This was **NOTED**.

11.1.2 Removal of grass from Malvern Common. In answer to a question the Conservation Officer advised that as a one-off this year until the storage facility was in place some areas of Malvern Common would be flailed. This was **NOTED**.

11.1.3 Sheep Numbers. The Conservation Officer reported that several sheep had been lost due to worrying and in one case the owner had been contacted and had reimbursed the Board's costs. This was **NOTED**.

On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mr Wilcock, it was **AGREED** that the remainder of the meeting should be taken in committee as the matters to be discussed were confidential.

The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.