

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

**9 July 2009 immediately after the Annual General Meeting of Council Tax**

**Payers**

**Priory Lodge Hall Avenue Road Malvern**

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Present:- Mrs S Adeney, Mr R Chamings, Mr C Cheeseman, Mr R Hall-Jones, Mrs J Kelly, Mr A Myatt, Mr B Pilcher, Mr R Roberts (Chairman), Mr J Smith, Mr R Stockton, Mrs S Thetford, Mr R Thomas, Mr P Tuthill, Mr D Watkins, Mr P Watson, Mr B Wilcock

In attendance:- Director, Administrative Officer, Conservation Officer, Financial Consultant, Mr S Dudfield of Little & Company (Auditors).

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Mr M Cordey, Dr T Hunt, Mr A Phillips, Mr C Rouse, Dr B Smith, Mr C Smith, Mr M Soley.

**2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.** The Chairman drew members' attention to his report on the exhibition at the Three Counties Show. He thanked all those who had helped with the organisation and manning of the stand which had broken all records with 2480 people visiting over the three days.

**3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS.** None.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** None.

**5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES.** It was **AGREED** on the proposal of Mr Wilcock, seconded by Mr Hall-Jones, that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 14 May 2009 should be **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true and correct record.

## **6. MATTERS ARISING.**

6.1 7.2.1 Byelaw Offence. The Director reported that although the case had been listed on the 3 July there had not been enough time left for the witnesses to give their evidence because of delays in other cases. It has therefore been provisionally listed for a full day on the 18 September at Hereford Crown Court. This was **NOTED**.

## **7. COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

7.1 LAND MANAGEMENT. Mrs Thetford presented the report of the meeting held on the 4 June 2009 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr Pilcher.

### **LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Thursday 4 June 2009 4 pm Manor House Malvern**

Present:- Mrs S Adeney, Mr R J Chamings, Dr T R Hunt (Vice Chairman), Mrs J M Kelly, Mr B J M Pilcher, Mr R G Roberts, Mr C A Rouse, Mrs S Thetford (Chairman), Mr R Thomas.

In attendance:- Director, Administrative Officer, Conservation Officer, Mr P Watson.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Mr C Cheeseman, Mr A Phillips, Mr C Smith, Mrs H Stace, Mr W Watts.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** None.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS.** It was with deep regret the Chairman reported the death of Vice Chairman of the Committee, Mr Jeremy Webb.

**4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN.** On the proposal of Mr Chamings, seconded by Mr Roberts, Dr Hunt was **UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED** Vice Chairman for the period to 31 October 2009.

**5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 2 APRIL 2009.**

5.1 4. Request for barriers at Blackhill Car Park. To be taken in committee.

5.2 7. Track to Marlbrook Farm, Castlemorton. Consent had been obtained from Natural England to use road planings to surface the track. The owners of Marlbrook Farm had been advised. This was **NOTED**.

**6. EARTH HERITAGE TRUST – HERITAGE LOTTERY GRANT FOR CHAMPIONS PROJECT.** The Chairman introduced Eve Miles from Earth Heritage Trust who was available to answer members' questions. The Director presented his report explaining the Heritage Lottery funded project involving four quarries on MHC land at Tank Quarry, Westminster Bank, Dingle and Gardiners. He drew members' attention to the Memorandum of Understanding which had been drawn up to protect MHC's interests and asked members for their agreement to this being signed on their behalf. Heritage Lottery had agreed that existing volunteers and MHC staff could be involved. Mrs Miles said that she would be happy to train the Wardens in identifying rocks and potential rock falls and other training of their choice and looked forward to working with MHC. She also hoped to recruit from local schools, organisations and groups. In answer to a question, Mrs Miles said that the purpose was to enhance the geology and not strip the vegetation and it was important for health and safety reasons not to encourage access at the base of the quarries.

*On the proposal of Mr Roberts, seconded by Mr Pilcher, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to accept the recommendation to sign up to the Memorandum of Understanding.*

**7. PRESENTATION ON SCRUB MANAGEMENT OVER THE WINTER PERIOD.** The Conservation Officer gave members a photographic presentation on the work carried out over the 2008/09 winter period.

**8. CYCLE ROUTES ACROSS MHC LAND.** The Director presented his report advising members of the work to be carried out by Worcestershire County Council's Sustainable Transport Department on bridleways at Link Common and Townsend Way to encourage cycling. This was **NOTED**.

**9. WILDLIFE AND GRASS CUTTING ON LINK COMMON.** The Conservation Officer presented his report that included photographs of areas of the Common that he recommended the opinion of local people and Councils was sought on increasing the wildflowers and changing the mowing regime.

*On the proposal of Mrs Adeney, seconded by Mr Pilcher, it was **AGREED** that the opinion of local people and Councils was sought on increasing the wildflowers and changing the mowing regime on Link Common by trialing some areas and inviting comments.*

Common Land adjacent to the Clock Tower, North Malvern. It was **AGREED** on a vote of 5 to 4 to recommend to the Board to accept the Civic Society's offer to plant wildflower bulbs in drifts surrounding the Clock Tower.

**10. PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS OF MHC LAND.** Following discussion at the May Board meeting the Conservation Officer had prepared a report suggesting that as part of the publicity for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations to:-

- use the extensive collection of old postcards and photographs and either existing fixed point photography or through newly commissioned photographs to publicise changes to the Hills over the years; and
- obtain up to date aerial photographs to compare with those taken between 1939-45.

The report also reminded members that the Director had contacted the Gazette to celebrate the anniversary by having a pullout supplement as previously discussed.

*It was **AGREED** by 8 votes to 1 to support the insert in the Gazette and a budget of the cost of the publication to be taken from the Gift Fund in line with the recommendations of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary working party.*

*It was **FURTHER AGREED** to seek funding from Natural England for an aerial photography flyover in 2009.*

**11. BRANDING.** The Director stated that he had prepared the report to ensure that, in the increasing competitive world, that the Malvern Hills Conservators were identified with managing the Hills and Commons. To this end it was necessary to have uniform branding that was instantly recognizable. Members were circulated with a mock-up of the suggested format for interpretation panels. This was noted and it was **AGREED** on the proposal of Mr Roberts, seconded by Mr Thomas to:-

- 1) Raise awareness in the media and in MHC publications of the preferred title of *Hills Conservators* after first referring to Malvern Hills Conservators;
- 2) Agree the recommendation on partnership acknowledgement;
- 3) Agree the recommendation on guidance for signs.

With regard to highway signs, the Director advised that he was trying to encourage the Highway Authorities to use a more sensitive approach to reduce the impact of signs on MHC land.

**12. POND CREATION ON MHC LAND.** In his report the Conservation Officer advised of The Million Pond Project recently launched to create over 500,000 ponds in the UK to get the total in the country back to the 1 million a few decades ago. He therefore recommended that officers approach the project to fund pond creation on MHC land using the Pond Study commissioned by MHC in 2000 as a basis. Members felt that rather than creating new ponds they would prefer that old ones were renovated and the Conservation Officer agreed to make enquiries to ascertain whether the funding could be used for this purpose.

### **13. INFORMATION.**

13.1 Report of meeting of the 4Cs (Castlemorton Common Co-ordinating Committee).  
**NOTED.**

13.2 Fishing platform at Clevelode. The Director reported that he had recently been called out to the site because a fisherman had placed pallets for use as a platform and had dug out the bank. In view of the fact that this area was regularly used for fishing to encourage responsible fishing he had contacted the Environment Agency to make enquiries regarding a recommended platform. This had been forthcoming and he had taken the fisherman concerned to see a platform recommended by the Environment Agency in situ. He therefore asked whether members would agree to the construction of proper steps and a platform that could be used by 2/3 fishermen. Members **AGREED** to the suggestion and the Director would ask the Administration & Resources Committee to finance the purchase of the platform from the Gift Fund.

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

### Arising.

7.1.1 5.1 Barriers at Blackhill Car Park. The barriers were now in place.

The report was **CARRIED**.

7.2 ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES. Mr Wilcock presented the report of the meeting held on the 11 June 2009 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr Watson and **CARRIED**.

**ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday 11 June 2009 7pm Manor House Malvern**

Present:- Mr M K Cordey, Mr R Roberts, Dr B G Smith, Mr R Thomas, Mr P J Watson, Mr B A Wilcock (Chairman).

In attendance:- The Director, Administrative Officer, Conservation Officer, Financial Assistant, Financial Consultant, Mr C Rouse, Mrs S Thetford.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Mr R F Hall-Jones, Mr M Morgan, Mr A Myatt, Mr J Smith, Mr P Tuthill, Mr D Watkins, Mr P Watts.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** None.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS.** The Chairman advised that he had agreed to include an additional report in committee regarding capital expenditure.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 9 APRIL 2009.**

4.1 4.2 Byelaw Offence. The appeal against the conviction had been listed on a day during the fortnight following Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> June. **NOTED**.

4.2 6. Gift Fund Projects. The Director advised that he had been so far unable to find a firm with the technology to prevent condensation on the toposcope plate. However in the meantime the Operations Manager had cleaned it which had reduced the problem and he would continue to search for a permanent solution. **NOTED**.

4.3 10. Waste Storage Facility. The Director reported that the construction of the facility was almost completed. **NOTED**.

**5. PRESENTATION BY THE CONSERVATION OFFICER ON SCRUB CLEARANCE CARRIED OUT DURING THE WINTER PERIOD.** The Conservation Officer gave a photographic presentation showing the scrub clearance work carried out during the winter period.

**6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING 31 MARCH 2009.**  
**NOTED.**

**7. TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2009.** The Financial Consultant presented the Annual Report and Accounts. Following consideration, it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Dr Smith, to recommend to the Board that these be adopted. This was **AGREED**.

With regard to the future plans section, the Director advised that he would be presenting a report recommending ways of attracting more legacies and donations to the next meeting of the Committee.

**8. PLANS FOR NEW ENTRANCE AND RECEPTION AREA AT MANOR HOUSE.** As agreed at the last meeting, members were circulated with architect's drawings of the proposed porch and ramp. The Chairman introduced Mr Ian Guest, who had carried out the work and had agreed to answer members' questions. Following a full discussion it was **AGREED** on the proposal of Mr Roberts, seconded by Mr Cordey and **CARRIED** with one vote against that the Board should continue with its plans to improve the reception area and Mr Guest would amend the drawings taking into accounts members comments as follows:-

- Look at reasonable adjustments to improve existing arrangements for access;

- With regard to the interior, members preferred Option 2 which would retain a lockable door into the existing reception area.

**9. CYCLING TO WORK SCHEME.** On the proposal of Dr Smith, seconded by Mr Roberts, it was **AGREED** that the scheme should be offered to all employees.

#### **10. INFORMATION.**

10.1 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. A display of maps of the area through the ages, prepared for MHC by Worcestershire County Council's Records Office, would be at Malvern Theatre for four days commencing the 6<sup>th</sup> July and at Malvern Library for two weeks from the 20<sup>th</sup> July. The display would also be at Priory Lodge Hall for the Annual Meeting of Council Tax Payers on the 9<sup>th</sup> July to tie in with the presentation by Honorary Archivist, Valerie Goodbury entitled "Mapping the Malvern Hills, 125<sup>th</sup> Years of the Malvern Hills Conservators"

#### **11. & 12. Taken in committee.**

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 8.37 pm.

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

8.1 Malvern Spa Association. Mr Roberts reported on the Association's recent AGM when the committee had been returned en block. The meeting had ended with a presentation by the Director on semi-natural water features. Mr Roberts also listed the programme of events planned for the year. This was **NOTED**.

8.2 Great Malvern Town Centre Partnership. Mr Roberts advised that the partnership had wound up which was **NOTED**.

8.3 Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee. In the absence of Dr Smith no report was given.

#### **9. URGENT BUSINESS.** None.

#### **10. INFORMATION.**

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

#### **MANAGEMENT REPORT**

**DATE: 9 JULY 2009**

##### CHAIRMAN

- Attended 'Walkers are Welcome' launch
- Attended official opening of the Geopark Way at Tank Quarry
- Attended Malvern Spa Association AGM
- Had a stand at Poolbrook Fun Day
- Met Harriett Baldwin (Conservative Parliamentary candidate for West Worcestershire)

##### DIRECTOR

- Meeting with parish and Herefordshire Council to discuss junction of Mathon Road/ Brockhill Road.
- Discussed concrete platform on Village Green next to the new bridge at Colwall.
- Discussed filming with 'One Show' on British Camp about Elgar
- Talked to Hastings House Residents and to Masonic Ladies Group
- Attended 'Walkers are Welcome' event
- Led three walks for Walking Festival
- Hosted a visit to the Malvern Hills by Burnham Beeches and Buckinghamshire CC
- Assisted work with AONB on highways design guidelines
- Attended Campaign for the Protection of Rural England AGM

- Attended AGM of Malvern Spa Association - invited to make a presentation

#### CONSERVATION OFFICER

- Attended and led walk for the Country Land and Business Association AGM
- Hosted a visit by the Royal Forestry Society
- Meeting with the new agents for Little Malvern Estates
- 2 x meetings with Natural England
- Meeting with Birtsmorton Parish Council, Landowner, and Natural England
- 3 x meetings with graziers
- 2 x site visits with Voluntary Site Wardens
- Attended stand at Three Counties Show

#### FIELD STAFF

- Continued grass mowing all areas
- Strimming hill paths
- Bracken rolling Malvern Common and West Malvern
- Placed new picnic tables at Tank Quarry
- Gathered sheep for shearing
- Installed barriers at Blackhill
- Removed travellers from Poolbrook and Rhydd Road, Guarlford

#### Sheep numbers at 1 July 2009

Ewes	169
Lambs	166
Rams	3

#### WARDENS

- Two new Volunteer Wardens interviewed and induction started
- Liaison with Earth Heritage Trust over clearance work for the volunteer group
- Conservation Volunteers – pulling thistles at Old Hollow
  - cutting bracken at British Camp reservoir
  - clearing vegetation from an area of Heath Spotted orchids
  - litter picking at Sherrards Green
  - cutting bracken at Swinyard flush
- Work party at Dales Hall Bog with Rotary Club
- Byelaw offences:
 

Camping	5
Parking on common	1
Camp fires on Hills	10
Camp fires Gullet	2
Unauthorised building materials	1
Camper Vans	4
BBQ/Small fires	Too numerous to list
Vandalism	7
Motor bikes	2
Unauthorised signs	15
Unauthorised skip	1
Driving on Common	2
Travellers	2
Mountain bikers not on bridleways	14
Unauthorised fishing	5
Campers	26
Unauthorised parking	19
Utilities	1
Travellers	2
Cars for sale	2
Vehicle break-ins	1

#### TRAINING

Richard Vale attended 'Rights of Way' course.

#### CONTRACTORS

Walsh Construction Limited repaired bollards at Gullet Quarry and installed bollards in British Camp car park

#### STAFF

Work experience student shadowed staff for one week.

#### ADMINISTRATION

- 6 Planning applications looked at, comments made on 1.
- Small strip of land at West Malvern registered that had been omitted during initial registration.

The meeting closed at 8.32 pm.