

MALVERN HILLS CONSERVATORS

MEETING OF THE BOARD

10 September 2009 7 pm

The Elgar Room, The Council House, Malvern

Present:- Mrs S Adeney, Mr R Chamings, Mr C Cheeseman, Mr M Cordey, Mr R F Hall-Jones, Dr T Hunt, Mr M Morgan, Mr A Myatt, Mrs B Nielsen, Mr B Pilcher, Mr J Plant, Mr R Roberts (Chairman), Mr C Rouse, Dr B Smith, Mr C Smith, Mr J Smith, Mrs S Thetford, Mr P Tuthill, Mr D Watkins, Mr P Watson, Mr P Watts, Mr B Wilcock.

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mrs J Kelly, Mr A J Phillips, Mrs H Stace, Mr R Stockton, Mr W Watts.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

2.1 Mrs Beverley Nielsen. The Chairman welcomed Mrs Beverley Nielsen who was attending her first meeting as Worcestershire County Council representative.

2.2 Mr Richard Thomas. It was with regret the Chairman reported the resignation of the Vice Chairman, Richard Thomas, due to his increasing business commitments. The Chairman on behalf of the Board had written to Mr Thomas thanking him for the work he had done over the last six years and wishing him well for the future.

2.3 Website. The Chairman reported that various reports commissioned by the Conservators over the last thirty years had now been added to the website and were available to download.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS. Mr R Tilley asked, "Should not Worcestershire County Council reinstate the levy in Castlemorton, Newland and Powick and the Working Party established to seek a solution to the problems surrounding the levy and representation be reformed as a matter of urgency?"

In reply the Chairman gave members a resume of the history of these two matters that would be included on the Agenda for discussion at the next meeting of the Administration & Resources Committee.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES. On the proposal of Mr Wilcock, seconded by Mr Plant, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 9 July 2009 should be **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true and correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING.

6.1 6.1 Byelaw Offence. The Director reported that the Court Case had once again been deferred and the new date was February 2010. The Board's solicitor had written to the Court expressing concern at the long delay in hearing the Appeal. This was **NOTED**.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

7.1 LAND MANAGEMENT. Mrs Thetford presented the report of the meeting held on the 6 August 2009 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Dr Hunt.

LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Thursday 6 August 2009 4 pm Manor House Malvern

Present:- Mrs S Adeney, Mr R J Chamings, Mr C Cheeseman, Dr T R Hunt (Vice Chairman), Mrs J M Kelly, Mr A Phillips, Mr R G Roberts, Mr C A Rouse, Mr C T Smith, Mrs H Stace, Mrs S Thetford (Chairman), Mr W Watts.

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mr Brian Pilcher, Mr J Plant, Mr R Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS. The Chairman noted that there was an item to be taken in Committee at the end of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 2 APRIL 2009.

4.1 8. Cycle routes across MHC Land. The Conservation Officer reported that the cycle way at Townsend way was almost complete and that the work on Malvern Link Common would be starting after the 16th August.

4.2 9. Wildlife and grass cutting on Link Common. Mr C Smith reported that there had been several supportive comments about the uncut areas on the Link Common.

4.3 12. Pond creation on MHC land. The Conservation Officer reported that the Million Pond Project was more interested in creating new ponds and so restoration of existing ponds was not an option for the funding.

4.4 13.2 Fishing platform at Clevelode. The Director advised that the platform was due to be built soon. In response to a question from Mr. Chamings, the Director informed the committee that the cost of the platform would be in the region of £4,900.00 and that he hoped that the Environment Agency would contribute towards the project.

5. THINNING PLANTED WOODLANDS ON JUBILEE DRIVE. The Conservation Officer presented his report outlining the proposal to thin the two planted woodlands along Jubilee Drive that had been planted in 1977.

*On the proposal of Mr Smith, seconded by Mr Roberts, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to accept the recommendation to thin the tree plantations using local contractors.*

6. LIME TREE AVENUES ON LINK COMMON. The Conservation Officer outlined his report about the lime trees. It was agreed to see the trees on site after the meeting. A discussion took place on the Link Common and it was generally felt that the Board should try to reinstate the longstanding agreement that Highways remove any dangerous trees from the roadside and not replant as the Conservators had already replanted, behind the original avenue.

7. ANALYSIS OF BYELAW OFFENCES. The Conservation Officer presented the report detailing the byelaw offences seen by the Wardens over the last 6 months. This was **NOTED**.

8. MALVERN GAZETTE INSERT. The Director presented his report on the contents of the agreed insert for the 125th anniversary of the Malvern Hills Conservators. In response to some questions the Director informed the Committee that the cost of the insert would depend on the amount of advertising the newspaper could get to support the scheme. It was also important that the advertising in the supplement was appropriate to the image of the Board. A general discussion took place where items for consideration were put forward:

- Information on the importance of prior warning for Sponsored walks.
- A history of the Hill-forts by Pamela Hurle.
- Information on Volunteering with the Conservators – Board members are volunteers.
- A day in the life of a board member.

- Recreation on the hills.

9. INFORMATION.

9.1 Higher Level Stewardship Scheme – progress on the Northern and Central Hills. The Conservation Officer reported that since the agreements had been put in place with the graziers there had been a positive impact on the delivery of the grazing. The graziers were happier to comply with requests and ensure a good service to visitors.

9.2 Higher Level Stewardship Scheme – progress on the Southern Hills. The Conservation Officer reported that due to Birtsmorton Court pulling out of the agreement a new application had been sent to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on the 10th June. The RPA stated that the application would take 3-6 weeks.

9.3 Review of Tree Safety procedure. The Conservation Officer reported that staff had reviewed the tree safety procedure and after consulting with an Arboriculture expert it was considered adequate. In addition to current measures the responsibility for checking higher risk areas would be included in the job descriptions of the Wardens and the Operations Manager, with their agreement.

The meeting closed at 6.05 pm

Arising.

7.1.1 6. Lime Tree Avenues on Link Common. In answer to a question, the Conservation Officer advised that he had contacted the officer concerned and was awaiting a reply. This was **NOTED**.

7.1.2 8. Malvern Gazette Insert. The Director advised that the Advertising Manager at the Malvern Gazette was having problems obtaining advertising for the insert to make it a viable proposition. This was **NOTED**.

7.1.3 Higher Level Stewardship Scheme – progress on the Southern Hills. The Conservation Officer reported that there had been a delay because of a discrepancy with the maps. A new set was in the course of completion and once these had been received by DEFRA it should be only a matter of weeks before the result of the application was known. This was **NOTED**.

The report, including the item taken in committee was **CARRIED**.

7.2 ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES. Mr Wilcock presented the report of the meeting held on the 20 August 2009 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr Morgan.

ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Thursday 20 August 2009 7 pm Manor House Malvern Hills Conservators

Present:- Mr R F Hall-Jones, Mr M Morgan, Mr A Myatt, Mr R G Roberts, Mr R Stockton, Mr P Tuthill, Mr P J Watson, Mr B A Wilcock (Chairman).

In attendance:- The Director, Administrative Officer, Financial Assistant, Financial Consultant, Mr C Rouse, Mrs S Thetford, Mrs Clare Dolan (Consultant).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mr M Cordey, Dr B Smith, Mr R Thomas, Mr P Watts.

In answer to a question, the Administrative Officer advised that the Vice Chairman had attended 2 out of a possible 5 meetings of the Committee since his appointment in December 2008.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS. None.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 11 JUNE 2009.

4.1 4.1 Byelaw Offence. The Director advised that the hearing of the case had again been changed and would now take place at Worcester on the 28 August 2009.

4.2 10.1 125th Anniversary. Mr Watson expressed his disappointment that it had not been possible to place the Treasure Hunt he had prepared as part of the celebrations on the website.

*It was **AGREED** to make further enquiries to try and achieve this.*

5. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR THE THREE MONTHS TO 30 JUNE 2009. NOTED.

6. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES. The Director presented his report that was noted.

*It was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** on the proposal of Mr Morgan, seconded by Mr Roberts, to adopt the recommendations as follows:-*

- (a) Raise awareness of our charitable status*
- (b) Produce a leaflet and have a modest campaign to encourage legacies*
- (c) Prepare web pages inviting on-line donations*
- (d) Discussions continue with the Friends of the Malvern Hills with a view to having closer ties with the group.*

7. BUDGET PLANNING 2010/11. NOTED.

8. REVIEW OF PARKING CHARGES. The Director presented his report recommending an increase in parking charges from the 1 April 2010.

*Following discussion it was proposed by Mr Myatt, seconded by Mr Morgan, and **AGREED** with one vote against to recommend to the Board that the parking charges from the 1 April 2010 should be as follows:-*

<i>Daily charge</i>	<i>£3.00</i>
<i>Annual Pass</i>	<i>£30.00</i>
<i>Coaches</i>	<i>£15.00</i>
<i>Concessionary Pass to be unchanged at £2.00</i>	

*With regard to the penalty charges for non-payment, it was **AGREED** to obtain advice with a view to increasing the charge from the 1 April 2010 to £50.00, reduced to £25.00 if payment was made within 7 days. Currently the charge is £40.00 and £20.00 if paid within 7 days.*

9. PLANS FOR RECEPTION AREA AT MANOR HOUSE. The amended plans were circulated to members.

*It was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** on the proposal of Mr Tuthill, seconded by Mr Stockton, to recommend to the Board that the plans should be submitted for local authority planning permission. The Committee would consider the matter again when tenders for the work had been received.*

10. INFORMATION.

10.1 Land Registry. The Administrative Officer reported that possessory title had been obtained on an area of land immediately adjacent to Blackhill House, Jubilee Drive. This was **NOTED**.

10.2 Fishing platform at Clevelode. The Director circulated photographs of the completed platform that had been financed from the Gift Fund.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Arising.

7.2.1 1. Apologies for Absence. For clarity members were advised that this referred to the attendance record of the Vice Chairman of the Administration & Resources Committee and not of the Board.

7.2.2 9. Plans for the Reception Area at Manor House. The Director reported that the architect would be applying for planning permission shortly. This was **NOTED**.

7.2.3 13. Toposcope. The Chairman advised that this matter was no longer confidential as the quotation for the new plate had now been accepted. He updated members on progress. It was hoped that the work would be completed in a few weeks. This was **NOTED**.

The report, apart from items 11, 12 and 14 taken in committee, was **CARRIED**.

8. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES.

8.1 Malvern Spa Association. The Chairman reported that following the completion of the Heritage Lottery restoration work the Association was now looking for further funding for other projects. This included obtaining accurate records of the water flow in relation to rainfall, testing the purity of the water and comparing the results against Dr Wall's original results and looking into the restoration of other minor water features. Activities taking place included a Severn river boat trip, walk from Beacon Road to St Ann's Well, the Annual Dinner at the Wellington Inn with chief guest Lord Sandys on the 24 September, and Lord Sandys will also officially open the Lord Sandys Spout on the 19 October. On the 30 October there will be a Halloween Storytelling Evening at the Dell House, Malvern Wells.

8.2 Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee. Dr Smith advised that the next meeting of the JAC would be held on Friday, 18 September 2009.

9. REPORT OF THE URGENT BUSINESS SUB-COMMITTEE. The Chairman presented the report of the meeting held on the 13 August 2009 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Dr Hunt.

MEETING of the **URGENT BUSINESS SUB-COMMITTEE** held at manor House on Thursday, 13 August 2009 at 2 pm

Present:- Dr T Hunt, Mr R G Roberts (Chairman), Mr J Smith, Mrs S Thetford.

In attendance:- The Director and Administrative Officer, Mrs Rosie Murray and Mr Bernie Smith (MHDC Senior Planners), Gary Williams (Head of Planning Services, MHDC).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mr R Thomas.

2. THE EFFECTS OF THE SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY ON MALVERN HILLS CONSERVATORS' LAND. Mr Williams began by pointing out that any views expressed at the meeting were those of officers following the consultation process and the publication of the Preferred Options paper. He explained that the Malvern hills Conservators' land was affected only for access into the sites and in order for MHDC to demonstrate that the sites were deliverable it was important to obtain the views of Conservators in principle at this stage. Detailed negotiations for acquisition of land and access into the sites in the future would be between developers and landowners. It was pointed out, however, that Councils did have the power to compulsorily purchase land.

The three sites involved were at Newland, land to the east of Mayfield Road and the QinetiQ site at Poolbrook. Members were then shown the notional site area plans for the three potential strategic allocation areas and members expressed regret that the Transportation Study details were not available at this stage:-

(a) NEWLAND. Members looked at a possible access to the site which could take around 800 dwellings, together with employment land, off the existing traffic island on the A449 at Malvern Link. Should the current spur to the rear of Countrywide Store be used it might only be necessary to incorporate a small area of Hills Conservators' land for the splay but could include associated junction alterations and traffic lights.

The view of members was that they would be prepared to negotiate with developers over this but they did have concerns over the proliferation of street furniture.

(b) LAND TO THE EAST OF MAYFIELD ROAD. The plans produced showed development areas to the north and south of Sherrards Green Road which would take 500 dwellings, together with employment land. It was felt that development should be restricted to the north of Sherrards Green Road for around 300 dwellings with a possible access off Townsend Way.

Members were not totally against access off Townsend Way, but were against any changes to Sherrards Green.

(c) QINETIQ SITE. It was noted that the plans showed the development area which would take 200 dwellings to the south of the Qinetiq site in addition to redevelopment of QinetiQ's premises and additional employment development, with access onto Longridge Road.

Members stated that they could not give any steer on this without precise proposals for traffic management in this area as they were against losing the integrity of the Common which would lead to urbanisation.

The meeting closed at 3.32 pm.

Arising.

9.1 2. The effects of the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy on Malvern Hills Conservators' land. Members were advised that the MHDC staff in attendance at the meeting had been seconded to work on the Strategy in partnership with Worcester and Wychavon Planning Authorities and were speaking on behalf of the partnership and that application had been made for a 12 month extension on the Strategy plan. Mr Hall-Jones expressed the hope that if the plans were accepted the Board would negotiate to obtain buffer land as happened in the mid-1990s with the Townsend Way development. Mr J Smith advised members that the Sub-Committee's views had been passed on to QinetiQ. This was **NOTED**.

10. URGENT BUSINESS. None.

Mr P Watts left the meeting.

11. INFORMATION.

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

MANAGEMENT REPORT

DATE: 10 SEPTEMBER 2009

CHAIRMAN

Attended the Chairman of the Town Council's Charity Summer Concert in Priory Park on Bank Holiday Monday in aid of Guide Dogs for the Blind

DIRECTOR

- Met with Ringway (contractor for Worcestershire County Council) to discuss highways maintenance on MHC land
- Carried out staff annual reviews
- Attended Parks and Countryside Task Force set up by Worcestershire County Council
- Met with Councillor Steve Brown to explain issues surrounding MHC and the Chase Ward
- Attended meeting and elected Chairman of AONB Officers' Steering Group

CONSERVATION OFFICER

- 2 meetings with Natural England
- 3 meetings with Network Rail representative about reinstatement at Colwall

- Meeting with local residents from Fruitlands re dog fouling
- Hosted Wildlife Recorders Day for Herefordshire and Worcestershire Recorders Groups
- Hosted visit from Cleeve Common Conservation Officer
- 3 meetings with tree contractors
- 3 meetings with neighbouring property owners about trees

FIELD STAFF

- Continued grass cutting
- Strimming hill paths
- Mowing paths on Malvern Common and Old Hills
- Erected new safety fence along the top of Earnslaw Quarry
- Ragwort pulling at Townsend Way and Castlemorton Common
- Bracken rolling various areas
- Sheep numbers at 4 September 2009

Ewes	167
Lambs	46
Rams	3

CONTRACTORS

- Laurence Goodchap completed Waste Disposal Unit
- Phillip Hughes Contractors completed constructed of fishing platform at Clevelode

WARDENS

- 5 Conservation Days held
- Extra session with Volunteers ragwort pulling on Townsend Way
- Organised two courses for the Volunteers, i.e. Tree Identification by the Conservation Officer and Wildlife Identification by the Director
- Attended Worcestershire Wardens Partnership meeting
- Completed induction of two new Voluntary Site Wardens
- Met with a group of Beaver Scouts who undertook litter clearing on the Hills
- Byelaw incidents:

Camping (Including camper vans)	52
Fires (camp)	8
Vandalism	3
Signs on common	9
Overnight Parking	10
Cars for sale	4
Fly Tipping	2
Mini Motorbikes	2
Vehicles on common (7 day notice issued)	2
Travellers	1
Building materials on common	2
Mountain bikers on footpaths	6
Dirty water (sewage) on common	1
Abandoned Vehicle	1
Mountain bikers not on bridleways	24

TRAINING

Don Lovatt attended basic tree climbing course as part of his training to enable him to use a chain saw for tree work

ADMINISTRATION

- ❖ 11 Planning Applications looked at.
- ❖ Arranged Annual Picnic.

Arising.

11.1.1 Football Pitch, Malvern Common. In answer to a question, the Conservation Officer advised members of the initiative carried out by himself and the Wardens during the summer

to try and prevent dog fouling of the football pitch that was used regularly for recreation by young children. Suggestions were made of ways of diverting dog walkers from the area which would be considered.

11.1.2 Sheep Numbers. In response to a query regarding sheep numbers, the Conservation Officer advised that he would clarify numbers at the next meeting of the Land Management Committee.

12. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD. On the proposal of Mr Wilcock, seconded by Mr Hall-Jones, Mr Roberts was **RE-ELECTED CHAIRMAN** for the year from 1 November 2009.

13. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD. On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mrs Nielsen, Mr Clive Smith was **ELECTED VICE CHAIRMAN** for the year from 1 November 2009.

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 8.30 pm.