

LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday 4 February 2010 4 pm Manor House Malvern

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

In attendance:- Director, Conservation Officer, Administrative Officer and one member of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Mrs J Kelly.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

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

Mr C Smith and Mr Cheeseman declared a non-prejudicial interest in Item 9.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS. None.

4. MATTERS ARISING. None.

5. CHASE END. The Conservation Officer presented his report reminding members of the joint ownership and management with Bromesberrow Estate of Chase End Hill. The whole area extended to approximately sixty acres. He advised that as the cattle grids, funded through the Heritage Lottery project, had now been installed in that area the Estate had turned 36 cattle out in December 2009. Initially this had caused problems with neighbouring property owners but this had been overcome as the property owners had constructed adequate fencing against the Common. It was planned to place a reduced number of cattle and approximately thirty sheep later in the year when the wildflowers had gone over. Aided by the grazing livestock the Conservators would continue to carry out scrub clearance.

*This was **NOTED**.*

6. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AT THE MILL POND. The Conservation Officer showed members an artistic impression of the proposals for improvements at the Mill Pond to protect the banks from erosion by fishermen and wildfowl. This would include the planting of reeds and the construction of four fishing platforms. It was estimated that up to 24 fishermen could be fishing in the pond when conditions were good.

The Conservation Officer recommended that the proposals in the artistic impressions were carried out as long as broad support from the local people and recreational users of the pond were in agreement.

*It was **AGREED** by 7 votes to 4 with one abstention to support the recommendation, subject to the addition that if the platforms were installed, fishing was limited to those platforms.*

7. TELEPHONE BOXES ON MHC LAND. The Director's report was noted.

*On the proposal of Mr C Smith, seconded by Mr Roberts, it was **AGREED** by 8 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions to **ADOPT** the recommendations as follows:-*

(a) That an approach was made to BT, with a copy to MHDC and Colwall Parish Council, to keep the red pay phones for emergency use, recognising the role that the pay phone has for users of the Malvern Hills in emergencies

(b) Notify BT of those boxes on MHC land and advise that should any be removed MHC would want to be contacted to ensure that the reinstatement work had been completed satisfactorily.

8. SMALL ISLAND OF LAND AT JUNCTION OF WALWYN ROAD/BROCKHILL ROAD/MATHON ROAD, COLWALL.

In presenting her report the Administrative Officer advised that research had been carried out regarding the status of this small area of land as a result of planning applications for development at the Downs School. This had established that the area was registered as Village Green and had been managed by MHC, along with the main area of Village Green, since 1884. However unlike the main area, this island of land was not shown on the map deposited with the 1884 Act, nor Colwall Tithe map. Legal advice was therefore that MHC has no responsibility for its maintenance or protection. It was recommended, however, that MHC continued to manage the land.

In view of the considerable development at the Downs School, the Highway Authority had imposed a one-way system around the island for a trial period of six months. Colwall Parish Council had objected and as the grassed island was being encroached upon, it was recommended that MHC supported the Parish Council in its objections.

*On the proposal of Mr C Smith, seconded by Mr Roberts, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that MHC should continue to manage this small area of land and a letter should be sent to the Parish Council giving the Conservators' support and also clarifying the landholding position.*

9. AONB POTENTIAL FUNDING. The Director presented his report setting out possible projects for funding through the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership as follows:-

(a) Cider Mill at Castlemorton. It was felt impractical to carry out major renovation to the cider mill and it was therefore **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to carry out minimum restoration to keep the structure safe.

(b) Path study and demonstration section. Whilst members were in agreement with staff visiting other upland areas to see work carried out on footpath repair with a view to formulating a footpath management plan, it was felt beneficial for members to be included. On a vote of six in favour with four abstentions, it was **AGREED** that the Director would arrange for an Annual Study Day to look at footpath erosion*.

*Note: Clent Hills

It was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to apply for grant aid to carry out works on a 300m section of the path above Happy Valley to act as demonstration and template for future work.

(c) Training. On the proposal of Mr Roberts, seconded by Mrs Stace, it was **AGREED** by a vote of eight in favour and two abstentions, to seek grant aid towards training volunteers and other groups in bat identification and handling and conservation of Black Poplars.

10. IMPACT OF SNOW ON OPERATIONS. In presenting the report the Director advised that enquiries of other authorities had revealed that they did not clear snow from car parks. He had also sought advice from the Board's insurers that confirmed that if the snow was cleared to a reasonable standard, a public liability claim would be unlikely.

*The report was **NOTED**.*

11. INFORMATION.

11.1 Dog Campaign 2010. **NOTED.** The Director advised that the shepherd was doing a radio interview urging the public to be responsible dog owners and to keep their dogs under control near stock. There had been a spate of sheep worrying recently which was particularly distressing at this time of year with ewes in lamb.

11.2 Fun Fairs on Malvern Link Common. The usual fun fairs would be held on Malvern Link Common from 24th May/6th June and 10th/15th August 2010, subject to the usual conditions.

11.3 Planning Application for 3 Wind Turbines at Brockeridge, Twyning. On the proposal of Mrs Thetford, seconded by Mr Plant, it was **AGREED** to express concern at the planning application for the construction of three wind turbines at Brockeridge Common, Twyning as these would be visual intrusion as viewed from the southern Hills.

The meeting closed at 5.31 pm.