

## **LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Manor House, Grange Road, Malvern**

**Thursday 1 December 2016, 4:00 pm**

Present: Mr D Baldwin, Dr P Forster, Mr A Golightly, Mr R Hall-Jones (left after item 10), Mr D Hawkins, Mrs G Rees, Mr C Rouse (Chair) and Mr T Yapp.

In attendance: Director, Conservation Officer, Deputy Conservation Officer, Operations Manager, Secretary to the Board, Mr M Gardner, Mr J Taylor (Chair 4Cs), Mr P Watson

Mr Rouse welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

The Director took the chair for this item. There was only one nomination and Mr Rouse was elected unopposed.

### **2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

There was only one nomination and Mr Golightly was elected unopposed.

### **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Dr S Braim, Mrs P Cumming, Mr S Freeman, & Ms H Stace.

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr Rouse declared an interest in matters relating to the HLS scheme.

### **5. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

There were none.

### **6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 13 OCTOBER 2016**

Mr Yapp said that on Snowdon, mountain bikes were restricted to using the trail at certain times only. He wondered if that might be considered by MHC. The Conservation Officer confirmed that Brackenburn Limited had selected the best areas for collection of bracken this year, but the contractors only had one day on each site. He felt that the exercise had gone well and he hoped that they might be able to collect from additional areas in future.

### **7. TIME, PLACE AND DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Dr Forster asked if the meetings could be moved to a later time as this touched on the issue of diversity, and precluded working people from attending. The Governance Committee would review this at the next meeting.

The Chair asked to deal with the paper on ash dieback next.

## **8. ASH DIEBACK (agenda item 9)**

The Deputy Conservation Officer went through the paper. No trees with ash dieback had been recorded on MHC land as yet. The main issue for MHC would be the possibility of trees dying or failing near to paths, car parks and public roads. Forestry Commission advice at present was to take no action other than monitoring. Suspected cases of ash dieback must be reported to the Forestry Commission. In the event of the disease spreading to trees on MHC land (and in the absence of service of a Plant Health Notice requiring action) trees would have to be monitored and pruned or felled where they posed a hazard.

The Director recommended increasing the tree work budget by £3,000 in the coming year to create a designated fund for management of diseased trees. The Committee **NOTED** the report and the recommendations contained in it.

## **9. TO CONSIDER LAND MANAGEMENT BUDGET 2017/8 (agenda item 8)**

Mr Rouse left the meeting as he had an interest in the HLS scheme and Mr Golightly took the Chair. The Director went through the paper. He pointed out that the work on Thirds Wood would be carried out over a number of years and that the designated fund of £30,000 was a best estimate. There remained a number of unknown factors which could affect the overall cost.

Income from the HLS scheme would be affected in 2017/8 as the agreement for the Northern and Central Hills would come to an end during the year. The balance of the expenditure for that area would need to be taken from HLS scheme reserves. The reserve had been set up to allow the grazing scheme to continue for at least a year following the end of the agreement. The Conservation Officer was in the process of applying for funding under the replacement scheme (Countryside Stewardship). The new scheme would have a start date of 1 January 2018. The future of the scheme was uncertain as a result of the vote to leave the EU and the Conservation Officer understood that funding under the new scheme would be less than under the current scheme.

On the proposal of Mr Hall-Jones, seconded by Mr Baldwin, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Land Management budget as drafted subject to the addition of £3,000 in the Tree and Woodland Management section to create a fund for management of diseased trees.

Mr Rouse returned to the meeting.

## **10. PROJECT UPDATE**

A summary had been circulated and the Director gave an update of developments since the paper was drafted. Work was about to start on the easier access path at Earnslaw Quarry. Work on clearing bench views had been started (by a team of volunteers). Work was being undertaken to try to close off some of the unauthorised mountain bike routes. Resurfacing work at Gardner's Quarry was on hold, awaiting developments in

relation to the easement for Montana. The Director had also identified that repair work was required at Hancocks Lane and he would be seeking authorization for expenditure in the region of £1,000 from FA & R Committee. Mr Hall-Jones and Mr Watson left the meeting.

## **11. GRAZIER'S REPORT**

Two of Mr Gardner's cattle had been hit by motor vehicles since the last meeting. He raised the question of whether free ranging cattle were needed at Castlemorton or whether they should be permanently contained. When they were contained for a period of time, drivers were then taken by surprise when they were allowed to range freely again. He did not think the extra road signs had made any difference. Only one of the incidents had been reported to the police. The Director confirmed that it had been requested, at the 4C's meeting, that graziers reported all traffic accidents to MHC so evidence could be provided to back up any discussions with Worcestershire Highways

## **12. CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT**

The tree safety survey had been completed. Resulting work should be completed by the end of February. Tree and scrub clearance work was underway. Contractors were refurbishing the easier access trail at Earnslaw. The wardens, field staff and volunteers were making good progress on the exceptional items identified on the Land Management Plan for 2016/7. It was planned to reprint the Good Neighbours' leaflet as one of the first actions following the rebrand, as the current one was out of date. This leaflet should help avoid misunderstandings when people move to the area. Mrs Rees said that the leaflet could be included in the packs prepared for new residents in Colwall. The Director hoped to arrange to distribute the leaflets to all relevant residents. The Conservation Officer reported that Severn Trent wanted to carry out some work to the reservoir off Beacon Road, and would be drilling trial holes in early 2017.

## **13.4CS**

There had been discussions on road accidents involving stock, speeding on the Common, parking by Swinyards car park, scrub clearance and the Good Neighbours' leaflet. One of the other items raised was the 4Cs web site and V8 Media (MHC's web site managers) had now found where the 4Cs web site was hosted and were trying to access it. The Conservation Officer was considering whether small bollards could be installed to prevent driving or parking on the common, in particular by Swinyard's car park and on Malvern Common near Lake House.

The Director had tried to arrange a meeting with the owner of Lake House as it was clear that the eastern entrance was being used for purposes other than agricultural. He had written to say that the use was in contravention of the byelaws.

#### **14. MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

Mr Rouse asked about carrying out a review of the tree policy. The Secretary to the Board pointed out that this was not one of the policies identified as most urgent for review at the October meeting.

#### **15. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none

**The meeting closed at 5.35pm.**