

LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Manor House, Grange Road, Malvern
Thursday 13 October 2016, 4:00 pm**

Present: Mr D Baldwin, Ms C Bovey, Dr S Braim, Mrs P Cumming, Dr P Forster, Mr S Freeman, Mr A Golightly, Mr Hawkins, Mr J Michael (left after item 7), Mrs G Rees, Mr C Rouse (Chairman) and Mr T Yapp.

In attendance: Director, Conservation Officer, Deputy Conservation Officer, Community and Conservation Officer (CCO), Operations Manager, Secretary to the Board, Mr M Gardner, Mr J Taylor (Chairman 4Cs),

Mr Rouse welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Mr R Hall-Jones & Ms Stace.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Forthcoming Visits:

Outdoor meeting 24 November 2016 2pm Swinyard Car Park (to look at scrub clearance and work carried out by Brackenburn Ltd on Hollybed Common).

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETINGS OF 14 JULY 2016

Mrs Rees asked if there had been a response from Bill Wiggins MP. The Director confirmed that he had received a reply to his letter. He hoped that Mr Wiggin would visit, which would give MHC an opportunity to stress the importance of continued Government support of environmental scheme funding.

5. WINTER SCRUB WORK PRESENTATION

The Conservation Officer gave a presentation detailing which areas were being targeted for scrub and tree work over the winter, in accordance with the Land Management Plan. Mr Freeman asked if the work to be carried out in the vicinity of St Ann's Well was part of the winter scrub work programme, and the Director confirmed that it was not. Mr Golightly thought the clearance in the Hancocks Lane area could have been more severe and that the grazing animals were increasing the fertility on the areas that were grazed.

6. PERMISSIVE CYCLING ROUTES

The Community and Conservation Officer (CCO) went through the paper, which detailed 2 proposed cycle routes, which would provide mountain bikers with routes southwards from the end of the bridleways in the Black Hill area. Use of these routes would relieve pressure on more sensitive areas which were being damaged. The routes would be waymarked. It was planned to produce a card for visitors showing the bridleways and permissive routes, and a map and guide. It was suggested that this information should be integrated into apps/platforms which mountain bikers use. Dr Braim asked that paths currently used should be signed “No cycling” and that the cycling path surfaces should be monitored regularly. The CCO said that Malvern Cycle Sport had offered to help with some path maintenance.

7. PROJECT WORK PROGRESS SUMMARY

The Director went through the paper. He highlighted the work that was not on schedule. Work on the car park surface at Lower Gardner’s Quarry car park was on hold until it was clear whether the proposed new vehicular access to Montana would go ahead. As the quotes for repair work to the car parks was more than the budget, the three top priority repairs would be carried out in 2016/17. (Cockshot Road, West of England and Old Hills) and similarly line re-painting would be phased. Staff had refreshed some of the lines in worst condition.

Ms Bovey suggested contacting Charles Porter, the operations manager at Malvern Town Council, to suggest a source for goal posts.

8. REPORT ON WORK PROGRAMME

In addition to regular items, scrub clearance had been carried out at Castlemorton, the second bracken roll had been completed. The tree safety survey had been started. Work over the winter would be dominated by tree and scrub clearance, path repairs and fencing.

9. CONSERVATION OFFICER’S REPORT

Mr Unwin, MHC’s forestry consultant, had marked the trees for felling at Third’s Wood. They amounted to less than 5% of the trees. Simon Roberts and a volunteer had been out to check whether any of the marked trees were likely to be used by protected species. It was agreed that members of the committee would visit the site individually and give their feedback by the end of October. The next phase would be to apply for a felling licence and following that the work would be discussed with potential contractors. Only minor work would be carried out this financial year.

Brackenburn Ltd (who produce “logs” of compressed bracken for woodburners) had cut and removed bracken from Hollybed and Upper Malvern Commons on a trial basis. Brackenburn’s contractors chose the areas which they wanted to work. Mr

Golightly asked why they had been selective, and felt MHC should ask for feedback. The Conservation Officer and Director confirmed that there had been feedback, and the chief reasons for selection were the terrain and the percentage of other vegetation in the bracken. As the contractors were working for Brackenburn and not MHC, they would be looking to maximize what they could collect from their time on site. The Director hoped that they would return and perhaps expand the areas worked.

Mark Roberts had carried out work to identify what herbicides were available for use by MHC. Mr Golightly requested a copy. Volunteers had been recruited to carry out work on mapping and access. A paper on ash dieback would be prepared for the next meeting. Bat survey work in Park Wood had been successful and 7 species were identified during 2 short visits, including some rare bats. 14 of the 17 bat species in the UK had been identified on MHC land.

10. GRAZIER'S REPORT

Mr Gardner said that cutting of scrub on Castlemorton Common to improve visibility from the road had been well received. There had been incidents with dogs at Ragged Stone (loss of stock), and on Central Hills (disturbance). Mr Golightly reported there had also been disturbance of stock on Hollybed Common. The Director reported that work on securing the common was on hold until an extension of MHC's powers to fence could be secured.

11. POLICY REVIEW

The Chair and Vice Chair had reviewed the list of policies which came under the scope of the Land Management Committee with staff and picked 6 which were most urgent for review, with another 5 to follow up. The selected policies were set out in the papers for the Governance Committee meeting on 18 October 2016. It was intended to bring a policy (or two) to meetings in 2017 for review.

12. MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

There were none.

13. URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

The meeting closed at 5.30pm.