

## **LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Manor House, Grange Road, Malvern**

**Thursday 21 January 2016, 4:00 pm**

Present: Mr D Baldwin, Dr S Braim, Mrs P Cumming, Dr P Forster, Mr S Freeman, Mr A Golightly, Mr R Hall-Jones, Mr D Hawkins, Mr J Michael, Mrs G Rees, Mr C Rouse (Chairman), Ms H Stace.

In attendance: Acting Director, Conservation Officer, Deputy Conservation Officer, Community and Conservation Officer (CCO), Operations Manager, Mr M Gardner (Grazier), Ms H Robinson (Taking Minutes), Mr C Penn.

Mr Rouse welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Acting Director took the Chair.

She confirmed that there had been one nomination for Chairman, Mr Rouse, who was elected unopposed.

### **2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

There was one nomination for Vice-Chairman, Mr Golightly, who was elected unopposed.

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

Mr Rouse took the Chair.

Apologies had been received from Mr Yapp and Mrs O'Donnell.

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

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

### **5. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

i) The Acting Director confirmed that the new warden had been appointed – Simon Roberts – who would start work on 12 February.

ii) The Chairman asked for visits to be arranged for Board members to sites mentioned in the Land Management Plan. It was agreed that Land Management Committee members should be encouraged to attend. Mr Golightly suggested that it would be helpful if Katey Stephen could attend on one of the visits.

iii) The Chairman had some footage of the Hills taken by a drone, which would be shown after the meeting. Mr Freeman suggested that this might be a very useful management tool.

### **6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 8 OCTOBER 2015**

The Acting Director confirmed that the work at the Hacketts had been completed. The Chairman asked the Conservation Officer to send a "Thank You" letter to the builder, who had done a very good job. The building was originally erected in 1899. It was agreed that the consultation on the future of grazing on Castlemorton Common would be discussed at a future meeting

It was agreed to take agenda item 14 next.

On the proposal of Mr Hall-Jones, seconded by Mrs Rees it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to exclude the public for discussion of item 14 on the agenda on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the exempt or confidential nature of the business to be transacted (commercially sensitive matter).

---

**CONFIDENTIAL**

MINUTES RELEASED

#### **7. OLD HILLS CATTLE GRAZING (Agenda item 14)**

The Deputy Conservation Officer went through Paper B. The grazing trial had gone well and she proposed that the arrangements for grazing on Old Hills (which were fully funded under the HLS scheme) be continued until 2023, on the terms set out in the paper. The licence for the grazier would contain break clauses to enable MHC to terminate the licence before 2023 if they wished.

On the proposal of Mr Baldwin, seconded by Dr Braim, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Committee recommended that the Board adopt the grazing proposal set out in the paper.

The meeting was reopened to the public.

#### **8. TIME, PLACE AND DATE FOR FUTURE MEETING (Agenda item 7)**

It was agreed to continue to hold the Land Management Committee meetings at 4pm. There would be an additional meeting on Monday 22 February 216.

#### **9. LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN (Agenda item 8)**

The Conservation Officer went through Paper A. Part III of the Land Management Plan was out for public consultation until the 31st January and the Conservation Officer had held a workshop for Board members to go through Part III in detail on 13<sup>th</sup> January.

Once the content was approved, the Conservation Officer would produce an executive summary for Board members (The Land Management Plan being a working document intended to act as a detailed guide for staff and volunteers) and a short summary for members of the public.

It was not a legal requirement for MHC to produce a Land Management Plan but it was good practice. The Plan would be reviewed annually and be continually updated. The Conservation Officer would report back to the Land Management Committee on progress throughout the year.

At this meeting, the Committee needed to consider the content and the general direction of the Plan. The Finance, Administration & Resources (FA & R) Committee would look at the financial implications of the Plan at their meeting on 11 February. This Committee would consider the plan again on 22 February and if appropriate, recommend adoption of the Plan by the Board. The Conservation Officer intended to present any changes to the current draft Plan in a table, to accompany the March Board papers, although it was agreed that he could adopt whatever method he felt would be most helpful, to communicate any amendments. Mr Golightly asked to see the response from Natural England. The Conservation Officer confirmed that all comments had been retained and were be available to Board members.

The Chairman felt there should be a visit to Thirds Wood to ensure all Board members were fully informed, as its management might be a matter of particular public interest. The Conservation Officer confirmed that a Forestry Consultant had been instructed and once his views on how best to manage the site had been obtained, the matter would be brought back to the Land Management Committee.

The Conservation Officer offered to provide members with a copy of the PowerPoint presentation from the briefing or to run through it with individual Board members.

On the proposal of Ms Stace, seconded by Mr Hall-Jones, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the FA & R Committee should be asked to consider the draft Land Management Plan.

## **10. POLICY REVIEW (Agenda item 9)**

The Governance Committee had asked that other Committees schedule a review of the policies that fell within their remit. The review should prioritise older or particularly important policies. Once the policies had been scheduled for review, the relevant Officer would revise the policy and it would come back to the Committee for discussion and approval. Ms Stace reminded the Committee that the Easement Policy needed updating to include the option of proposing an alternative route that would be less damaging to MHC land.

It was agreed that the Acting Director, the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Ms Stace, should look through the list of policies and prioritise them for review.

## **11. GRAZIER'S REPORT (Agenda item 10)**

Mr Gardner said that the cattle on Castlemorton Common were currently free range and he planned to leave them unenclosed until March 2016, depending on the weather. There had been a couple of road traffic incidents. He felt that the suggestions contained in the Footprint report might prove effective to reduce the

conflict between stock and vehicles. The question of more effective signage was discussed. The Conservation Officer had been in touch with Worcestershire Highways to see if this could be improved. It was agreed that some temporary “DIY” signs should be considered and Mr Freeman suggested putting on some political pressure through the County Councillor. (Tom Wells)

Mr Gardner confirmed one of Mr Weaver’s sheep had been attacked by dogs.

## **12. CONSERVATION OFFICER’S REPORT (Agenda item 11)**

There had been a major rock fall at West of England Quarry. A temporary barrier had been erected straight away and the Operations Manager was organizing a permanent fence and gate, with signage. On 23 December, a car had been driven along the bridle way from the Wyche Cutting to the Cottage in the Wood. On Christmas Eve, the Operations Manager and his team had helped to recovery vehicle. There were proposals to try to secure Coombe Green Common for livestock. There was a planned consultation for local residents to ascertain their views (arranged by Sue Windle). The Conservation Officer confirmed that and Nigel Dawes, the owner, supported the proposal.

The Operations Manager and field staff had also had to deal with damage caused by a fallen tree at British Camp car park. Mr Braim asked whether the current system of inspection was adequate.

## **13. MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION (Agenda item 12)**

Land Management Plan would be further considered by the Committee on 22 February 2016.

**The meeting closed at 5.20pm.**