

Malvern Hills Trust  
Land Management Committee  
Manor House, Grange Road, Malvern  
Thursday 11 July 2019 7.00pm

**Present:** Dr S Braim, Mr M Davies, Mr A Golightly, Mr D Hawkins, Mrs G Rees (Chair), Mr C Rouse, Mr T Yapp.

**In attendance:** Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Secretary to the Board, Conservation Manager (arrived during item 12), Mr M Gardner, Mr J Chance, Mr P Watson, members of the public.

**No attendance:** Mr J Michael, Mrs C O'Donnell.

Mrs Rees welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Mr D Baldwin, Dr P Forster, Mr S Freeman, Mr R Hall-Jones, Mrs H Stace.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**3. Chairman's Communications**

The Stroll would take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019.

**4. Public Questions**

There were none.

**5. Matters Arising from the meeting of 11 April 2019**

Worcestershire County Council had notified MHT that they had given the wrong dimensions for the base of the proposed bus shelter on Malvern Common. It needed to be 300mm bigger than originally requested. This was a minor change and the committee had no comments.

The CEO had received a letter from Mr Lloyd's agent in relation to the request to surface the easement at Stowe Lane. The Board had decided that the track could only be tarmaced if the owner agreed to enter into a written agreement for its future maintenance. The letter stated that Mr Lloyd did not intend to become solely liable for future maintenance although he would make a contribution to the cost of the resurfacing. He would be prepared to enter into an agreement with the other users but wanted the estate to have total control over the maintenance of the road. The other users would be asked to agree their proportion of the cost of further maintenance. The Trust would not be making a contribution. The CEO said that the Trust would want to make sure the track would not be widened and that the surfacing material would not be changed without agreement, and he would reply to that effect.

Nothing further had been heard about the Brockhill Road resurfacing proposals.

**6. Easement application Jubilee Drive**

The CEO said that an easement application had been received for Fernleigh, Jubilee Drive. There was a history to the application which the CEO was investigating before the application came to the committee.

**7. Review of the parts of the Risk Management Strategy relevant to this committee (item 9 on the agenda)**

The CEO went through the items.

The CEO was asked whether graziers were involved in plans for manging fires on the Hills.

**8. Graziers' Report (agenda item 13)**

Mr Gardner reported a relatively quiet period. There had been more grass and water available than in 2018.

Mr Chance said that the central Hills had been relatively quiet, but there had been 2 instances of dogs attacking sheep on the northern Hills. Mountain bikers had knocked down his electric fencing around the time of the Easter school holidays.

One of the graziers on the common had also had sheep attacked by dogs. The CEO reported that one of Mr Shale's lambs had been run over this morning. Mr Gardner said that cutting down the vegetation adjacent to the roads helped motorists to see stock moving towards the carriageway.

Mrs Rees thanked Mr Chance and Mr Gardner for attending.

**9. Project progress update (item 10 on the agenda)**

The CEO went through the paper. He made several additional points:

- The proposed pond restoration work on Castlemorton Common. It was hoped to kill the *crassula helmsii* in the two ponds below Swinyards car park by covering the ponds in black plastic to exclude light for a number of months.
- It was intended to remove non-native carp from the pond by Mount Pleasant. This work was still in the early stages of planning.
- A bat had been found in the Donkey Shed, and it was now intended to add a bat box and a small loft for bats into the roof. The planning application had been lodged.
- The repairs to the Belvedere Shelter were due to start on 12 August.
- The work on the Shire Ditch would be delayed until the effectiveness of the restoration works carried out at British Camp could be assessed.

Mr Hawkins asked if it was possible to create a disabled parking space for the community woodland. Mr Davies asked if a disabled space could be allocated in the Morrisons' car park, close to the pelican crossing.

In response to a question, the CEO confirmed that there was no sewer anywhere near British Camp into which the outflow from the toilets could be connected. The best option appeared to be a self-contained digester.

**10. Report of working group on the easement process** (agenda item 12)

The working group had had its first meeting and it was hoped to prepare a paper for the committee in due course.

**11. Urgent business** (agenda item 16)

There was none.

**12. Revision of tree safety policy** (agenda item 8)

The CEO went through the paper.

Dr Braim queried whether high risk areas should be inspected more frequently than every three years. The CEO confirmed that there were interim inspections in the high risk areas by staff, particularly after weather events, and Dr Braim suggested this should be included in the document.

On the proposal of Mr Rouse, seconded by Dr Braim, it was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the committee recommended that the policy (as amended) be adopted by the Board.

**13. Land Management Plan annual progress report 18/19** (agenda item 7)

The Conservation Manager went through the paper. He had made 2 additional observations in relation to section 005 (Special Qualities). There had been additional plastic bollards installed on the Herefordshire side of the Hills, and a tall black and white pole with a CCTV camera had been installed near Beacon Road reservoir, detracting from the special qualities of the areas concerned.

Section 007: The Conservation Manager had been pleased to receive some old maps recording water infrastructure on the Hills.

The CEO reported that the AONB had held a meeting for local landowners to discuss deer and boar management and he anticipated a follow up event in due course.

**14. Mowing limits** (agenda item 11)

The Conservation Manager invited a discussion on mowing limits around third party properties. The byelaws stated that people were not allowed to damage the turf or the vegetation. Some residents carried out mowing around their properties over varying areas. There were instances where there were good reasons, for example line of sight where a vehicular access emerged onto a road. He felt it would be helpful for the Board to agree some guidelines to assist the wardens in dealing with this issue, for example to set a limit of 1.5 or 2m next to a boundary or easement.

There were exceptions such as in the SSSIs, where additional considerations applied. These exceptions would have to be looked at on a case by case

basis. There was also an issue about frequency of cutting. A sight line did not need to be cut every week.

It was generally agreed that it would be beneficial to have some guidelines in place. A draft would be prepared for consideration at the next meeting with a view to starting to use them next spring.

Mr Watkins asked about creating a situation where a claim for adverse possession could be made. The Secretary to the Board said that the Trust needed to write to the residents who were mowing Trust land and this could be done in association with bringing in the guidelines.

Mr Golightly pointed out that someone had recently topped some of the Trust's land along Golden Valley.

**15. Conservation Manager's report** (agenda item 14)

The Conservation Manager reported on the work which had recently been carried out by the field staff. The new fields at Castlemorton had been licenced to Mr Shale for use during the lambing period and for making hay. New fencing was about to be put up and an application had been made to Severn Trent for a water connection. The Conservation Manager had been working on proposals to cover the gap between the end of the HLS Scheme in May 2020 and the start of any new Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CS). He believed the management requirements for the land under CS would be very similar, but the payments might be slightly reduced (possibly 90% of the current levels).

There was a great deal of uncertainty about the future of environmental Schemes. Natural England had recommended making the application. The Conservation Manager was considering what might need to be done if no Scheme was available.

**16. Matters for future consideration** (agenda item 15)

There were none.

**17. Date of next meeting**

10 October 2019

**The meeting closed at 9.25 pm**