

**TITLE:** A summary of the LMP consultation and its results.

**DATE:** 13.10.2020

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### **BACKGROUND**

To inform the writing of the forthcoming Land Management Plan (LMP) 2021-2026, a public/stakeholder consultation was held in summer 2020.

This paper and the accompanying spreadsheet provide a summary of the consultation and of the responses received.

### **CONSULTATION**

The consultation focused on the current LMP document, the land management activities that have been delivered over the last 5 years and what stakeholders might see as a priority for the next 5-year plan.

A copy of the consultation document is provided in Appendix 1.

The consultation period opened on 14 July and closed on 7 September 2020, a duration of 8 weeks.

An invite to take part was issued to: Historic England, Natural England, AONB team, all local councils, wildlife panel members, the recreation advisory panel members, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Local Access Fora, graziers, Castlemorton Common Association (CCA), the Wildlife Trusts, the Earth Heritage Trust (EHT) and the public. A general invitation was posted on social media, the website, at MHT offices and local noticeboards, in the Malvern Gazette (online and hard copy) and at several local venues.

Responses were invited to be made via email or, if necessary, by paper.

### **RESULTS**

38 responses were received (36 by email and 2 as a letter) including responses from Historic England, CCA, Natural England, EHT, and the AONB team.

Two responses were received from trustees – these will be incorporated into later discussions rather than this public/stakeholder analysis.

The responses have been summarised and presented on an Excel spreadsheet on the Trustee pages of the MHT website.

## CONSERVATION MANAGER'S INTERPRETATION

Given the number of visitors the Hills receive, the advertising done and the period the consultation was open for, the total number of responses seems low. Having said that, 2020 has been an abnormal year with many people and organisations having 'bigger things to worry about'. I had conversations with several people including panel members who took the view of 'everything's ok so I'm not going to fill in the form'. The statutory agencies that we deal with frequently have all responded which is great.

Answers to question 1 found that, in general, it appears that most respondees (81 %) think that MHT are doing a good job overall i.e. working towards the right objectives, undertaking the correct type of management using suitable methods. Many responses raise issues that appear later on too.

The majority of respondees (76 %) felt that the LMP document was comprehensive, readable and explained the works undertaken (question 2). This is an excellent result and good grounds to continue using the same format.

To improve the LMP document (question 3), several responders suggested that a summary for the public would be appreciated by those who found the document too long. Replies also asked for better, clearer maps, and greater reference to the wider setting of the Hills and Commons and how management will respond in the future to a changing world with increased visitor numbers and climate change as oft-mentioned topics throughout the consultation.

In terms of the work that has taken place in the last 5 years for access (question 4), the majority of people were satisfied (77 %). Issues that were raised frequently included the increase in use by mountain bikers and the subsequent danger and damage that this activity can cause (critical references to mountain biking were made many times throughout the consultation's questions but often originating from the same few submissions). Tree felling was another topic that appeared in many of the consultation sections. It appeared to be a divisive topic as always, with voices both in favour and against further tree felling. The success of the cycling/walking leaflets was also contested.

Other comments raised singularly included; the limited access to Gullet Quarry; that not enough work has been done in general; and that the access improvements to Community Woodland are 'wonderful'.

Similar comments on tree felling and mountain biking were made in the responses to question 5, presumably to highlight the damage to conservation features. Here praise for MHT's work and support for earth heritage and archaeology were good to receive.

81 % of respondees felt that MHT had focussed on the correct topics over the last 5 years (question 6), but several mentions were made that not enough resource had been spent on tree/scrub removal nor controlling damaging/dangerous mountain biking. The energy put into maintaining and improving the condition of heritage assets is recognised by Historic England here.

## **PAPER ?**

Question 7 invited suggestions as to the focus for the next 5 years. Of course tackling tree/scrub removal, better signage and controlling mountain biking were the most popular responses. Other responses included better access for the less-abled, more contribution to local housing development matters and a range of other singular requests for specific actions.

Question 8 did not reveal any new topics or suggestions from stakeholders, but it did result in several compliments for the organisation which are most welcome.

The results of the consultation will be discussed at the LMP workshop on 5 November by MHT staff and trustees.

**Jonathan Bills**  
**Conservation Manager**  
Date: 13.10.2020

Appendix 1: Consultation document:

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## **Land Management Plan consultation – have your say**

In 2015 the Malvern Hills Trust (then Conservators) widely consulted on a new Land Management Plan that covered the 5-year period; April 2016-March 2021.

This plan is coming to an end soon and work is underway on an updated plan for April 2021-March 2026.

To help inform this work, Malvern Hills Trust (MHT) would welcome your help and specifically your thoughts on:

1. The Land Management Plan document
2. The land management that has been delivered since April 2016
3. Possible improvements for the next 5-year period

To help you, please find below a summary of the existing Land Management Plan (LMP) and what has been achieved. Following this, is a short consultation questionnaire.

### **Our Land Management Plan**

The Land Management Plan (LMP) is a document written to guide the land management work of the Malvern Hills Trust (MHT).

It details the framework in which MHT's work sits, describes the land we care for, evaluates what's important, identifies objectives and programmes the work necessary to achieve those objectives.

It should therefore provide a transparent link between theory and legislation, and the practical tasks undertaken on the ground.

It is a working document intended for those managing MHT land, but it is also made publicly available

[www.malvernhills.org.uk/looking-after/land-management-plan/](http://www.malvernhills.org.uk/looking-after/land-management-plan/)



## Key achievements of the LMP 2016-2021

The Trust's work focusses on its legal duties relating to public access and conservation of the landscape. Particular achievements since 2016 include:

### Public access

- Upheld 1200 hectares (3000 acres) open to the public and maintained an array of access infrastructure (steps, benches, signs, car parks etc).
- Created and waymarked several permissive routes for cyclists to improve the cycling network. Produced a 'cycling and walking guide' to ensure everyone knows where to go.
- Improved access for families and less-able visitors by upgrading sections of path (>2km) to make them more buggy and tramper-friendly.

### Landscape, natural and cultural heritage

- Maintained a fantastic range of 14 priority habitats including ponds, lowland mixed woodlands and species-rich pastures through a range of land management, such as livestock grazing and coppicing.
- Gained nationally important 'Sites of Special Scientific Interest' status for our hay meadow on Malvern Common.
- Increased the number of geological sites in good condition from 9 to 16 helping scientists and students study part of Earth's history.
- Restored 10 ha of secondary woodland to open habitats creating views, revealing archaeology and supporting rare wildlife.
- Repaired damage to the archaeology of British Camp – one of the finest hillforts in the country.
- Increased land under our care by 11 hectares including some strategic in-bye land purchases that will aid the management of key sites including Castlemorton Common.

## Share your thoughts

Our current land management plan can be found on our website. Please share your thoughts with us by completing the below questionnaire.

Completed questionnaires should be emailed to: [jonathan@malvern hills.org.uk](mailto:jonathan@malvern hills.org.uk) before the **15<sup>th</sup> August**.



If you have any questions regarding your submission, please get in touch.

Please do not provide representations on the MHT constitution, easement process, the precept nor any other item unrelated to land management. These should be emailed separately to [info@malvern hills.org.uk](mailto:info@malvern hills.org.uk)

Thank you in advance for your help in what is a complex, iterative process.

## PAPER ?

### Malvern Hills Trust – Land Management Plan consultation. Summer 2020.

Your name, contact details and, if applicable, organisation:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Q1 Overall do you think MHT have done a good job of delivering public access and conservation of the landscape since April 2016?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Q2 Is the LMP document satisfactory? Has it provided a comprehensive, readable text that explains why and how MHT undertakes practical work?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Q3 How could the LMP document be improved?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Q4 Has the work that's been done delivered satisfactorily on MHT's duties relating to public access?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

## PAPER ?

Q5 Has the work that's been done improved the state of Hills & Commons heritage features (archaeology, wildlife, geology, landscape)?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Q6 Have the topics/areas that quoted in the particular achievements above seen improvement and were they the correct ones?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Q7 What topics/areas should receive new or continued special effort in the next 5 years and how?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Any other comments on MHT land management?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Thank you for your contribution!