

Malvern Hills Trust

Ordinary Meeting of the Board
Council Chamber, Avenue Road, Malvern
Thursday 10 March 2022 7pm

Present: Mr C Atkins, Dr S Braim, Dr E Chowns, Mr P Clayburn, Mr D Core, Mr M Davies (Chair), Mr R Fowler, Mrs L Hodgson, Mrs H I'Anson, Mr J Michael, Mrs C Palmer, Dr T Parsons, Mr C Penn, Prof J Raine.

In attendance: CEO, Secretary to the Board, Conservation Manager, 2 members of the public.

Please note – reporting items set out on the agenda which were not for decision were dealt with at an online workshop (“the Workshop”) on Monday 7 March 2022 which was streamed for members of the public. This action was taken because of the continuing high numbers of Covid-19 cases in order to shorten the face-to-face meeting.

Mr Davies welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Mr D Baldwin, Mr R Bartholomew, Mr D Fellows, Mr C Rouse, Mrs H Stace, Mr D Watkins, Mr T Yapp.

2. Chair's announcements

- No candidates had come forward for the by-election in Chase Ward. The process would be re started by notice of election to be published on 17 March.
- Submissions on principle 7 of the Governance Toolkit should be sent in as soon as possible.
- The public sector pay settlement for 2021/22 had been announced.

3. Declarations of interest

Mr Rouse – he had rights of common over Trust land

Mr Davies declared an interest as he was District Councillor for one of the areas (Little Malvern) affected by the changes to Ward boundaries proposed by the Boundary Commission. Prof Raine confirmed that he was similarly affected.

Mrs Hodgson and Dr Chowns declared an interest in the matter of the cleaning and maintenance of the toilets at Wyche Cutting and British Camp as they were members of Herefordshire Council.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. To confirm the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 20 January 2022

On the proposal of Prof Raine, seconded by Mrs Palmer it was **RESOLVED** (with four abstentions) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022.

The CEO confirmed that he had received a letter from the Ledbury Hunt and that letter and his response had been circulated to Board members. Trust staff had

attended on 3 occasions over the winter in response to reports of trail hunting on or near Trust land. On one occasion the Hunt had crossed Trust land along a right of way, and on another had cut across the open common. Less staff time had been spent on monitoring in the past months but the Trust remained vigilant.

6. Any issues arising from the Brewin Dolphin Investment report

Mr Burrows had reported at the Workshop. There were no matters arising.

7. Appointment of trustee to Recreation Advisory Panel

Prof Raine offered to join the committee.

8. Appointment to Governance Committee

Mr Penn had been nominated to join the Committee and was willing to stand. On the proposal of Mr Michael, seconded by Mr Core it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to appoint Prof Raine to the Recreation Advisory Panel and Mr Penn to the Governance Committee.

9. To approve the Business Plan 2022 - 2027

The CEO thanked everyone for their comments and input. He asked the Board to approve the plan in the knowledge that, in the current volatile economic times, the plan would need regular review. Mr Davies thanked the CEO for all his work on the plan. On the proposal of Mr Davies, seconded by Mr Core it was **RESOLVED** (with Mr Parsons voting against approval and one abstention) to approve the Business Plan 2022 – 2027 as presented. The Board noted the additional action points for monitoring and reviewing the financial forecast as the plan progressed.

10. Countryside Stewardship Agreement for Castlemorton

The Conservation Manager had summarised the arrangements under the agreement in a paper. Mr Davies thanked him for all the hard work which had gone into securing the agreement and the funding for the future management of the common.

11. Queen's Jubilee

The options had been set out in the paper and explored in the workshop. There was a brief discussion about the best material to use for a commemorative plaque. On the proposal of Mrs Palmer, seconded by Mrs Hodgson it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve expenditure of up to £3750 from the Gift Fund to undertake the planting of a copse, provision of benches and installation of a new plaque to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

12. Boundary commission

The Boundary Commission were engaging in a public consultation about changes proposed to Malvern Hills District Council Ward boundaries. A summary of how these changes might affect the Trust had been set out in the paper. The CEO proposed to send in a response to the consultation (which he would check with the Trust's solicitors prior to submission). It was not clear whether a Statutory

Instrument would be needed to adapt the Acts if the Commission proceeded with its proposals. The Board **NOTED** the position.

13. Information

These items had been discussed at the workshop.

13.1 Management accounts to 31 January 2022

The CEO confirmed that because of increasing fuel costs, he now anticipated there would be an overrun of around £1,500 on fuel costs as set out in the 2021/22 budget.

Trust staff were paid in accordance with the Local Government Payscale and there had been a retrospective pay award for 2021/22 that would result in an additional cost of £8,600. However, the budget for 2021/22 had included an allowance for an increment, so salaries would remain within budget. The pay increase would impact the budget forecast for 2022/23, which had been drawn up in January on the basis there had been no pay increase for 2021/22.

On the proposal of Mr Core, seconded by Prof Raine it was **RESOLVED** unanimously:

- a) To transfer £68,000 from the General Fund to the Ash Dieback designated fund at 31st March 2022, to cover the estimated year 2 costs of Ash Dieback.
- b) To transfer £5,000 from the General Fund to the Election Expenses fund at 31st March 2022.

13.2 Update on Risk Management Schedule

13.3 Conservation Manager's Report

13.4 H & S update

There were no updates to the written report.

13.5 GDPR breaches

13.6 Malvern Spa Association

13.7 AONB Joint Advisory Committee

13.8 Wildlife Panel

There had been a meeting the previous evening. All of the experts had given their report on the last 12 months. Two outdoor visits were planned for later in the year.

13.9 Recreation Advisory Panel

13.10 Management Report

14. Urgent business

There was none.

15. Date of next meeting

12 May 2022

16. Confidential

On the proposal of Mr Davies, seconded by Mr Michael it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to exclude the public for discussion of items 17,18 & 19 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 (HR and commercially sensitive matters).

The meeting closed at 08. 35pm