

11 May 2023

## Malvern Hills Trust

Ordinary Meeting of the Board

Council Chamber, Avenue Road, WR14 3AF

Thursday 11 May 2023 7pm

**Present:** Mr C Atkins, Mr D Baldwin, Mr R Bartholomew, Dr S Braim, Mr D Core, Mr M Davies (Chair), Mr D Fellows, Mr R Fowler, Mrs L Hodgson, Mr J Michael, Mrs C Palmer, Dr T Parsons, Mr C Penn, Mr C Rouse, Ms H Stace, Mrs M Turner, Mr D Watkins, Dr D Westbury

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

Mr Davies welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 1. Apologies for absence

Mrs M Alexander, Mr P Clayburn, Mrs H I'Anson, Prof J Raine.

### 2. Chair's announcements

- There would be some changes to the order in which the agenda items were taken
- Welcome to returning trustee Michelle Alexander

### 3. Declarations of interest

Mr Rouse –rights of common over Trust land.

### 4. Public Comments

There were none.

### 5. To approve the Minutes of the Board meetings held on 9 and 23 March 2023

The Vice Chair had suggested an amendment to the draft minutes, details of which had been circulated. On the proposal of Mr Davies, seconded by Mr Bartholomew it was **RESOLVED** (with 3 abstentions) to approve the minutes of the meeting of 9 March 2023 as amended.

On the proposal of Mr Davies, seconded by Mr Core it was **RESOLVED** (with 2 abstentions) to approve the minutes of the meeting of 23 March 2023.

### 6. Matters arising from the previous Board meeting not otherwise on the agenda

In the absence of a Finance and Administration Manager, on the proposal of Mr Core, seconded by Ms Stace it was **RESOLVED** unanimously that until further notice, the CEO should be responsible with the Chair of Finance Administration and Resources Committee for the movement of funds as resolved in item 10 of the meeting 9 March 2023.

**7. To appoint Michelle Alexander to Land Management Committee**

On the proposal of Mr Davies, seconded by Mr Fellows it was **RESOLVED** (with 1 abstention) to appoint Michelle Alexander to the Land Management Committee.

**8. Health and Safety update**

The CEO went through the paper. He confirmed that whole body vibration levels included levels experienced whilst driving a tractor, and consequently the Trust was reviewing the duration of use for certain items of equipment. The CEO was not aware of any cases in the past where Trust employees had suffered injury caused by vibration. The CEO said that new employees were asked if they had any relevant pre-existing conditions.

The CEO had omitted near misses from the report and would update trustees.

Dr Parsons said that he had had two accidents on the Hills and the CEO asked for written details to be provided.

**9. Plans for audit, approval of accounts and Annual Report** (agenda items 10 & 17)

The CEO reported that a new Finance and Administration Manager had been recruited. She would be starting work on 30 May 2023. Ms Gentry had been assisting with the preparation of a first draft of the year end accounts. The Auditors were due to be on site week commencing 14 August.

Trustees congratulated the CEO on the success of the recruitment process and thanked Ms Gentry for coming back to help.

It was planned to hold a Finance Administration and Resources Committee meeting in September with a meeting to approve the accounts in October.

**10. Governance Committee** (agenda item 11)

10.1 On the proposal of Mr Atkins, seconded by Ms Stace it was **RESOLVED** (with 1 abstention) by the committee members present to confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2023.

10.2 . Updates and questions

There were no updates

10.3 Adoption of the minutes and recommendations

On the proposal of Mr Atkins, seconded by Mr Core it was **RESOLVED** (with 1 abstention) to adopt the minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on 20 April 2023.

**11. Information** (agenda item 12)

11.1 Expenditure under delegated authority

None to date.

11.2 GDPR breaches

There had been none.

11.3 AONB Joint Advisory Committee

There had been a meeting and Mr Atkins would circulate the minutes when available.

#### 11.4 Wildlife Panel

A report had been circulated. In response to a question, the Conservation Manager said that he did not believe surveys were being carried out at present on dormice numbers in Park Wood (no licenced volunteer).

#### 11.5 Recreation Advisory Panel

A report had been circulated.

#### 11.6 Malvern Spa Association

The Well Dressing had gone well (despite the weather).

#### 11.7 Conservation Manager's Report

All 6 claims for DEFRA grants had been completed. Unfortunately there were mistakes in one of the claim forms which had been supplied by DEFRA and they had been notified.

Another FIPL grant application had been made for fencing, a bridge, bowser and gates for the new land off Evendine Lane.

A contractor had been selected to put up the additional agricultural building at Colwall Lands, work to start in mid-July.

The tree safety work had been completed. The Conservation Manager said that there had not been a significant increase this year in trees badly effected by Ash Dieback. Every year some ash trees were being removed for safety reasons. The Trust had spent around £45,000 on ash trees this winter. He would assess how successful the treatment of the sycamore trees near Thirds Wood had been.

The start of mowing had been delayed due to wet ground conditions. The Field Staff had started installing a number of hand gates to improve access across the estate.

Ms Stace reported that she had noted masses of upright chickweed and spring ephemerals. It was magnificent to see the Hills looking so good and the management regime was clearly a success. The land on the Purlieu and Colwall Coppice were also looking stunning.

#### 11.8 Management Report

The report had been circulated. The CEO said that there had been a delay with the printing of the interpretation panel for the Donkey Shed, so an event to celebrate the completion of the work had been postponed.

### 12. **Urgent Business** (agenda item 13)

There was none.

### 13. **Date of next meeting**

13 July 2023.

### 14. **Confidential business** (agenda item 15)

On the proposal of Mr Core, seconded by Mr Bartholomew it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to exclude the public for discussion of items 9 and 16 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 (legal privilege and commercial sensitivity).

**The meeting closed at 9.20pm**