Ordinary Meeting of the Board

Thursday 10 September 2026

Reserved agenda: 6.30 pm
Open agenda: 7.30 pm

Hampton Suite
Colwall Park Hotel
Colwall
Malvern, WR13 6QG

Malvern Hills Trust
Ordinary Meeting of the Board
Hampton Suite, Colwall Park Hotel, Colwall, Malvern WR13 6QG
Thursday 10 September 2026

Reserved agenda – 6.30 pm

CONFIDENTIAL

1. Matters arising from the confidential section of the previous Board meeting not otherwise on the agenda
2. Resolutions recommended to Board from confidential sections of committee meetings.
3. Notifiable Incident — Confidential **Paper A** page 11
4. Land and Property matters (verbal)
5. CEO appraisal (deferred from last meeting) — Confidential **Paper B** page 12

Members of the public will be admitted following the reserved agenda

Open agenda – 7.30 pm

Introduction

6. Apologies for absence
7. Chair's Announcements
8. Declarations of Interest
9. Public Comments

Confirmation of Previous Board Meeting

10. To confirm the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 9 July 2026
    Pages 4-16
    Confidential pages 3-8
11. Matters arising from the previous Board meeting not otherwise on the agenda

Items for Decision

12. Trustee Mediation Proposal — Paper C Pages 17-18
13. Tractor purchase — Paper D Pages 19-21
14. Urgent Business

Other Committee Business for Decision

15. **Land Management Committee**
    - 15.1. Committee to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2026
    - 15.2. Board to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2026
      Pages 22-25
      Confidential pages 9-10
    - 15.3. Chair of Committee - updates and questions

16. **Governance Committee**
    - 16.1. Committee to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2026
    - 16.2. Board to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2026

Pages 26-31

16.3. Vice-Chair of Committee – updates and questions

16.4. Resolutions (not otherwise on the agenda)

- **To approve proposed changes to the Governance Handbook, as received on 16 July 2026;** **Paper E** Pages 32-34
- **To add a new provision to the Governance Handbook to specify that when an amendment to a resolution is proposed, a vote on the amendment will be taken before the substantive resolution. If necessary, the Chair will adjourn the meeting to allow for the amended resolution to be prepared in writing;**
- **To approve the revised Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedure, as amended in the meeting;** Pages 35-44
- **To approve the revised Complaints Policy and Procedure.**

<u>**Items for Information**</u>

17. Management Accounts to 30 June 2026 Pages 45-52
18. Benchmark report on Key Performance indicators (deferred from last meeting) **Paper F** Pages 53-54
19. Land Management Plan Consultation responses summary **Paper G** Pages 55-79
20. Governance Updates
    - 20.1. Malvern Hills Bill **Paper H** Page 80
    - 20.2. Guarlford and Madresfield **Paper I** Pages 81-82
    - 20.3. Unitary Authority **Paper J** Pages 83-85
21. Land and Property updates
    - 21.1. Bin review (verbal)
22. Trustee Exchange Feedback (verbal - deferred from last meeting)
23. Red flags on the Risk Register (verbal)
    - 23.1. Risk Management Workshop
24. Date of next meeting

    Thursday 10 November at 7 pm at Colwall Park Hotel – **Annual Meeting**

Malvern Hills Trust

Ordinary Meeting of the Board
Colwall Park Hotel, Colwall, Malvern, WR13 6QG
Thursday 9 July 2026 at 7 pm

Present: John Michael (Chair), Simon Baggaley, David Baldwin, Paul Bennett, Robert Berry, Jenny Burford, David Core, Allan Cottam, Mark Driscoll, David Edwards, David Fellows, Richard Fowler, David Mead, Andrew Myatt, Cynthia Palmer, John Raine, David Reynolds, Felicity Robinson, Chris Rouse, John Stock, Frances Victory, Malcolm Victory.

In attendance: CEO, Secretary to the Board, Finance and Administration Manager, Land and Property Manager, Governance Change Officer, 17 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

Richard Bartholomew, Lucy Hodgson, Chris McSweeny, Peter Rogers.

2. Chair's announcements

2.1 The Chair welcomed David Edwards, newly appointed to the Board as Worcestershire County Council nominee on behalf of Castlemorton Parish.
2.2 The Chair welcomed Mark Small to the Ranger Team.
2.3 The Chair announced that there would be a Special Board meeting, provisionally on Thursday 27 August, to discuss the progress of the Malvern Hills Bill and review the budget for preparation and promotion. Trustees were urged to advise the Secretary to the Board of their availability as a matter of priority.
2.4 The Chair invited trustees to see the new robot mower in action on Link Common between 10 am and noon on Wednesday 5 August. Trustees had previously expressed a wish to see its safe operation.
2.5 The Trust was happy to support Malvern Town Council in its upcoming 'In Bloom' judging visits in July and August and wished them success in the regional and national competition.

3. Declarations of interest

Robert Berry said that he had worked extensively with Clyde and Co and might have received hospitality from them (agenda item 21).

The Chair confirmed that there were two items on the agenda where councillors were conflicted. District councillors and David Fellows, Guarlford parish councillor, were conflicted on agenda item 10, Guarlford and Madresfield Community Review, and county councillors were conflicted on confidential agenda item 22.2, Foley Terrace. All trustees concerned had been advised of the relevant conflict prior to the meeting.

4. Public Comments

Public comments were received from David Smallwood, Malcolm McCrae, Katharine Harris and Catherine Swire (read by Sasha Munn); these are attached at Schedule 1, together with the Trust's responses.

Malcolm McCrae said that he had been asked to read a comment from another member of the public. However, this had not been received by the Trust and so was not allowed by the Chair.

5. **Confirmation of Previous Board Meeting**
   Andrew Myatt asked to speak and commented as follows:

   I remain concerned that the Trust minutes exhibit a consistent pattern of bias and produce a skewed record. The Trust's explanation and positions are generally given a fuller record than the challenges made to them. The use of the word 'assert' is applied to positions they don't agree and 'confirm' used when they do. Therefore I do not believe the minutes are a true record.

   The Chair thanked Mr Myatt for his comment, but said he completely disagreed with it. The CEO said there was no evidence for the allegation and that it was opinion only; Mr Myatt said he would provide evidence. Richard Fowler said that he would also provide evidence of inaccuracies in the minutes.

   On the proposal of Malcolm Victory, seconded by John Raine, it was RESOLVED, with 12 in favour, eight against and one abstention, to approve the minutes of the Ordinary Board meeting held on 14 May 2026. Andrew Myatt asked to have his vote against recorded, for the reason given above.

6. **Matters arising from the previous meeting**
   Minute 8 – Investment advice review
   A trustee had previously raised concerns around managed and tracker funds returns. They had been asked to put their concerns in writing but had not done so. Consequently the query had not been progressed.

   Minute 9.3 – Designated and restricted funds
   The SttB referred to a trustee question to the FAM concerning the contract labour line in the accounts. The FAM had responded by email with an answer to the trustee on 26 May.

7. **Committee appointment**
   This item was deferred, pending trustee completion of the skills audit.

8. **Communications and Reputation Management**
   The Board received a paper from the CEO on communications and updates made on various projects: Bill communications; the new website; the Land Management Plan consultation, and; incident-related communications. She reported that a paper had gone to the FAR Committee meeting, but there had not been time for the committee to discuss it and so she had updated it for this meeting. She had been delighted to attend one of the recent Land Management Plan 'meet and greet' events and had found the qualitative feedback from the public very interesting. There had been requests for further events of this kind, which the Trust would certainly provide. The

Trust was monitoring metrics devised by Alder UK to demonstrate progress in communications, as requested by FAR Committee.

Comments were invited from trustees.

- The Chair of Land Management Committee expressed her appreciation for the work that was going into communications, especially around the Land Management Plan.
- A trustee pointed out that communications was a two-way process. Their view was that the Trust chose to hear some things and not others, ignoring any criticism.
- A trustee acknowledged the improvements to communications and social media posts, including the Trust replying to posts from members of the public.
- There was some discussion on the clean up after the fire at Happy Valley and a trustee asked whether as part of the Land Management Plan trees were being cut down on Trust land. This was not directly related to communications and the CEO offered to respond separately to the trustee.

8.1 **Trustee Relations**

The Chair invited Simon Baggaley and Andrew Myatt, who were leading on establishing a trustee mediation process, to address the meeting. Simon Baggaley reported that he had carried out research into how conflict between trustees might be resolved and had proposed a workshop, facilitated by an experienced mediator, whose credentials were tabled for trustees' information. Mr Baggaley had previously worked with Andrew Willmott, before the latter's resignation from the Board, and he was now liaising with Andrew Myatt. He confirmed that all correspondence was being shared with Mr Myatt and that Mr Myatt had proposed terms of reference for the mediation.

Andrew Myatt acknowledged the excellent collaboration between himself and Simon Baggaley, saying that he supported mediation in the best interests of the Hills. He considered that it was necessary for both parties to have what he termed 'equality of arms' and that to achieve this, work on the Malvern Hills Bill must be suspended and both sides would need full access to information and access to independent professional advice. A trustee objected that Mr Myatt was talking about mediation but laying down terms before it had even started. Mr Myatt reiterated that the main stage could only commence with this agreement, suggesting that mediation would involve substantive agreement to the Bill amendments and changes to it, in exchange for significantly reducing the risks that the Bill would fail at the next stage.

The Chair recorded his thanks to Simon Baggaley and Andrew Myatt for their work to date.

A trustee deemed conflicted on the Private Bill asked why the Chair had written to eight trustees to suggest informal meetings with him, when trustees were already working on trying to set up mediation. Andrew Myatt had responded to decline on behalf of all of them. The Chair insisted that his aim had not been to hinder the mediation process, but to assist it, and he had responded accordingly to Mr Myatt.

9. Management Accounts to the end of May 2026

The Board received the accounts for April and May 2026, together with explanatory notes from the FAM. She reminded the meeting that the opening position as at 1 April 2026 was still subject to audit confirmation. The audit was proceeding on schedule; all the planning and field work was complete and going well. The accounts should be finalised in time for the FAR Committee meeting on 24 September. Included with the accounts would be the Trustees' Annual Report; this would be drafted by officers, but it was important for trustees themselves to review the draft and make any comments.

The accounts were in the standard format with supporting notes. The FAM drew the meeting's attention to the following.

9.1 **General Fund**

- The FAM reminded the meeting that the levy income was now split evenly over 12 months. The levy represented 41% of income as at the end of May 2026. The report also showed the average percentage over the last seven years.
- Grant income was also now spread month by month so that results appeared more even.
- Income on car parking tickets was notably down over the first two months.

At this point, a trustee raised a point of order, suggesting that it was unnecessary for the FAM to go through her report, because trustees would all have read it. The FAM said she usually identified the main points to the meeting but need not if this was not required. The trustee suggested that she highlight three points on restricted funds and three on designated. The Chair asked her to continue giving her report as normal.

- Legal costs were currently under-budget, but the FAM did not expect that position to continue.

9.2 **Designated and restricted funds**

- The FAM referred to the Board's decision in May to revise the Other Costs budget for the Private Bill and confirmed that the agreed change had been reflected in these accounts. The Charity Commission had now given its approval to the s74 request for the Promotion and Preparation budget to be increased by £31,500; this approval had been received at the end of June, which was too late for it to be incorporated into this report.

- The Trust had purchased a new John Deere tractor at the end of May and it was proposed to pay for this from the unrestricted gift fund.

- Following discussions at the last meeting about appropriate use of the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF), the FAM had, as promised, had further discussions with the Conservation Manager. The Trust had waited before transferring applicable staff costs in case there were any unexpected costs for completion of the works; officers were satisfied that these costs could now be transferred. A trustee expressed concern about this and did not believe the case had been made.

9.3 **Resolutions**

- **On the proposal of Andrew Myatt, seconded by John Stock, it was RESOLVED, with 19 in favour and three abstentions, to use the Unrestricted Gift Fund for the purchase of the John Deere tractor at the cost of £65,400.**
- **On the proposal of Malcolm Victory, seconded by Allan Cottam, it was RESOLVED, with 12 in favour and nine against, to release the UTCF balance to General Fund, since the conditions on the grant had been met.** Robert Berry asked for his vote against to be recorded, on the basis that he was concerned the Trust would not meet all the grant requirements if the balance were released to General Fund.

10. Guarlford and Madresfield Community Governance Review

Prior to this meeting, the SttB had advised all those who were Malvern Hills District Councillors, or a Guarlford Parish Councillor , that they had a conflict of loyalty on this item. This meant that they might remain in the meeting and contribute to the discussion but not vote.

The Vice-Chair took the chair for this item since the Chair was conflicted. Some trustees did **not** accept that there was a conflict of loyalty. A vote was therefore required.

On the proposal of David Core, seconded by John Stock, it was RESOLVED that all trustees who were also MHDC councillors[1] had a conflict of loyalty on this item. There were six votes in favour and six against. David Core used his casting vote as Chair and the motion was carried.

On the proposal of David Core, seconded by Frances Victory, it was RESOLVED, with 11 in favour, nine against and one abstention, that David Fellows as a Guarlford Parish Councillor had a conflict of loyalty on this item.

The Board received a paper from the Governance Change Officer (GCO) on the implications of the review for the Trust. She confirmed that the decision of the parish councils on whether or not to merge was not the Trust's business, but an amalgamation would have an impact on the Trust's governance. A trustee interjected at this point to state their belief that the whole Trust had a conflict of interest because some residents within an amalgamated council would be liable to pay the levy and others would not, and that the Trust should not therefore comment at all. There were further interruptions and laughter from individuals and the Vice-

[1] Paul Bennett, Mark Driscoll, Chris McSweeny (not present) David Mead, Cynthia Palmer, John Raine, Frances Victory, Malcolm Victory

Chair repeatedly had to warn them to allow the GCO to speak. The GCO said that there was no money at stake for the Trust, because the Board set a levy and the District Council collected it; whatever the outcome of the review, there would be no change to the amount of income received.

The issue for the Trust was purely a matter of interpretation of the current statutes and those Trustees deemed unconflicted on this item had been given a copy of the legal advice that the Trust had received.

Some trustees queried whether it was necessary to respond to the consultation at all, since the issue appeared to be contentious for some Board members. The GCO insisted that there were issues for the Trust around voting arrangements and it was important for the Trust to explain these to MHDC, because they ran the Trust's elections. She suggested that she could discuss these privately with the MHDC if that was the Board's preference, but the Council would expect some sort of response. At the time of the first consultation, she had been phoned and asked directly for her opinion.

It was proposed by David Core and seconded by Felicity Robinson to delegate to the GCO to respond to the second Guarlford/Madresfield consultation. There were four votes in favour and eight against and so the motion was not carried.

On the proposal of Simon Baggaley, seconded by Allan Cottam, it was RESOLVED, with six in favour, five against and one abstention, to delegate to the GCO to respond to the second Guarlford/Madresfield consultation, *following circulation of a draft to Trustees for comment.*

11. Urgent Business

There were two items of urgent business, to be discussed in the confidential session.

The Chair called a recess at 8.40 pm. The meeting resumed at 9 pm. Five members of the public remained in attendance at this time. The Chair advised of a change in the agenda order, with FAR Committee being taken first.

12. Finance and Administration Committee (FAR)

12.1 **Approval of Minutes**

On the proposal of David Core, seconded by John Raine, it was RESOLVED, with eight in favour and one abstention, to approve the minutes of the FAR Committee meeting held on 4 June 2026.

12.2 **Adoption of Minutes**

On the proposal of David Core, seconded by John Raine, it was RESOLVED, with 19 in favour and two abstentions, to adopt the minutes of the FAR Committee meeting held on 4 June 2026.

12.3 **Chair's Comments**

- The Chair had no further comments.
- A trustee asked if there was any update on advice received from the Data Protection Officer (DPO) or the Charity Commission about records retention by trustees. The CEO said that she had some generic advice from the Charity Commission but had yet to hear back from the DPO. She would report back to the next FAR meeting. The trustee said they would prefer to receive it before then.

12.4 **Resolutions**

- **On the proposal of David Core, seconded by Robert Berry, it was RESOLVED, with 21 in favour and one abstention, that easement fees should increase by an inflationary uplift of 49% (measure CPE MM23 in line with other land-based calculations (with sensible rounding)) and thereafter increase annually by an appropriate index and a full review carried out within twelve months.** The original recommendation from FAR had been for a review to be carried out within six months, but officers advised the meeting that this was impractical.
- **On the proposal of Mark Driscoll, seconded by John Stock, it was RESOLVED, with 13 in favour, eight against and one abstention, that the set of identified KPIs[2] should be monitored for the remainder of the current Land Management Plan and Business Plan periods.**
- **On the proposal of Andrew Myatt, seconded by Mark Driscoll, it was RESOLVED, with 12 in favour and ten abstentions, that a fundraising group should form to work with the CEO on defining future fundraising activities.**
- **On the proposal of Malcolm Victory, seconded by Andrew Myatt, it was RESOLVED, with 20 in favour, one against and one abstention to raise the Free reserves level from £350k to £375k**. It was noted that the FAR Committee had considered it rational to give the reserves level more headroom, although the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee had both voted against the motion.
- **On the proposal of Robert Berry, seconded by Andrew Myatt, it was RESOLVED, with 20 in favour and two abstentions, to record a reserves assessment of satisfactory as at 31 March 2026.**
- **On the proposal of Andrew Myatt, seconded by Robert Berry, it was RESOLVED, with 20 in favour and two abstentions, that FAR Committee should consider the position of the Unrestricted Gift Fund and report back to the Board within the next six months.**
- **On the proposal of Malcolm Victory, seconded by John Raine, it was RESOLVED unanimously to approve the revised Anti-Bribery Policy and the revised Fraud Prevention and Detection Policy, subject to the caveat in the Anti-Bribery Policy that only gifts of higher value**

[2] See Paper C received at the FAR Committee meeting on 4 June 2026.

than £25 would require CEO approval. Gifts to the CEO were to be approved by the Chair of the Board and the Chair of FAR.

David Core left the meeting at 9.20 pm

13. Land Management Committee

13.1 **Chair's Comments**

The Committee had met on 2 July; the minutes were not yet available. The Committee Chair noted with disappointment that several committee members had been absent from the meeting without submitting apologies and that attendance at the last Land Management workshop had been poor. The next workshop was scheduled for 14 July at Lyttelton Well and she urged trustees to attend.

The Committee Chair recorded her thanks to the U3A Natural History group for providing some evidence for the Land Management Plan.

There was one resolution arising from the meeting, which would be taken in confidential session.

14. Benchmark report on Key Performance Indicators

Item deferred due to lack of time.

15. Red Flags on the Risk Register

Item deferred due to lack of time.

16. Trustee Exchange Feedback

Item deferred due to lack of time.

17. Reports from Outside Bodies

A report of the Wildlife Panel meeting held on 18 March 2026 had been circulated with the meeting papers.

18. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 10 September 2026 at 7 pm at Colwall Park Hotel

Confidential

Since all members of the public had by now left the meeting, there was no requirement for a resolution to exclude the public and the meeting therefore moved straight into confidential session.

The meeting closed at 10.50 pm

Public Comments for Board Meeting on 9 July 2026

David Smallwood
In response to objections raised by petitioners, some significant changes to the Bill were made by the House of Lords Committee.

However, other major issues such as the levy were not addressed and opposition to these and other matters remains unabated. It is inevitable that a further wave of petitions will be submitted to the House of Commons, probably considerably more than previously, asking to be heard under their discretion granted by Standing Orders.

The Trust has had the experience of seeking to disqualify most of the 50 petitioners to the House of Lords, and then of opposing the changes proposed by those who were granted the right to be heard.

If only the same number petitions are submitted to the House of Commons and the right to be heard is only granted to the same number as in the Lords, what budget would the Finance and Administration Manager recommend to the Trustees to cover the costs of disqualifying and opposing these petitioners and what provision is for this in the existing budget?

Response from the Chair:
I've already announced that the Trust will hold a Special Board Meeting provisionally on Thursday 27 August, to discuss the progress of the Malvern Hills Bill and review the budget for preparation and promotion. At that time, the Board will have a projection of costs and how the Trust intends to pay for them.

Response from the Governance Change Officer:
David, you are I'm sure well aware that the Trust isn't able to promote any changes to the levy provisions in the existing Acts of Parliament and also you are very well aware, because you were there, that all the petitioners were given an opportunity to make their case before the Select Committee of five independent people. They heard the petitioners and they heard the Trust. They've made changes to Bill, as you've alluded, and it would be a great shame if the people who petitioned don't respect the conclusions of the Select Committee.

Malcolm McCrae
At the last Board meeting under this agenda item, I and others asked a number of questions concerning the evidence submitted to the HoL Select Committee, the financing of the Private Bill process and concerns expressed by the Select Committee and others over the Trust's communications with Stakeholders. Despite having sight of these questions ahead of the meeting no answers were forthcoming on the night and that continues to be the case in the statements made by the Chair of the Governance Committee in the draft minutes of the meeting.

Also linked to the proposed Private Bill; since he took up his position as Chair of this organisation we have seen a stream of what can be euphemistically termed 'alternative facts' about the organisation being pumped out, the most recent example being a letter by the Chair in the Gazette concerning the charitable status of the Trust.

When can the public expect this type of behaviour to stop, the factually correct situation to be properly endorsed by the Board and a public apology for the behaviour having occurred be forthcoming?

If the Board members who seem happy to support these types of behaviour do not start adhering to the Nolan Principles set for them as public servants, the controversy surrounding the Private Bill proposal is only likely to continue and grow, putting the whole future of the organisation in jeopardy.

Response from the Chair:
I provided you with an answer at the time and it is unfortunate that you won't accept it.

The Board will have a chance to speak about its communications this evening.

The Trust's statements to the press are always factually accurate. I believe 'alternative facts' are in your domain.

Katharine Harris
I note that the Governance Change Officer is proposing herself to be given delegated powers to respond to the Consultation on behalf of the Trust to the Madresfield/Guarlford proposed merger.

I would suggest that the most appropriate people to be involved in any response should be the Elected Trustees for Guarlford and the Chase Ward, perhaps together with 2 other Elected Trustees, who have genuinely been elected to their positions, such as the Priory Ward Trustee, Malvern Wells Trustee or West Malvern Trustee. They at least know the area, the people and the sensitivities involved.

In any event, the proposal of a delegated power for this matter, is above and beyond the agreed and publicised role of the Governance Change Officer.

The proposed response whoever produces it, together with any legal advice obtained, should be brought back to the Board for ratification.

Response from the Chair:
There is a paper to be discussed under agenda item 10, after which the Board will make a decision on next steps.

Catherine Swire, read by Sasha Munn

I'm writing this very simply to express our growing sense of despair at no longer being able to access our drive because of the collapse of the track, in the care of the Trust, on the way up to St Ann's Well.

The distress it causes is three-fold. Firstly, it is now a daily juggle to get in and out of our house, in a car - it often takes up to twenty minutes to manoeuvre. For a larger car, if the road is parked up, easily a sixteen-point turn. Sometimes, we try to reverse all the way along the road. Often, we meet vehicles coming the other way. Always, we have to carry all our equipment and books (my daughter and I both teach) and (often) lead then lift our ancient dog to where we have parked, at considerable distance from the house. From September four driving adults will be living with us. Our drive can accommodate those cars. The road cannot. Sometimes, steered by the Trust we have parked on the track - this so far has resulted in three abusive notes and our car being severely keyed down one side. Just to be clear it is not simply those of us who live here, who struggle now daily with access into our own home. As a dear friend of mine with a heart condition, who used to visit weekly, points out "I struggle now to reach you, I can't park at the Unicorn and walk up". As another friend who is a regular visitor observes, "It takes thirty minutes now to get up your road".

Secondly, safety is compromised at a number of levels. It has not, from the beginning, demonstrably been either the Trust or the Council's first priority, even though ethically, it is hard to argue for any other. I wrote to both Trust and Council, in November 2025 months before the track's collapse to say it was inevitable, unless some remedial action was taken. I pointed out then the wall could collapse on a pedestrian or a car (as well as being assuredly cheaper to repair intact). It was luck that no one was killed when it fell. For the first few months of the collapse, as young and sometimes drunk people wandered up the hill, the barriers were regularly flat. Weak, thin police tape blew off in the first night. People still use the, certainly under the legal metreage, aperture between barrier and our house, to walk down the swiftest way by the crater - often stopping to observe how terrible it is - and how they feel for us - and how it would be different in another country; the US, Japan. (Has the Trust considered that this is a central, international threshold for the Hills and for Malvern). My father is now ninety and my mother and godmother in their late eighties struggle now to visit. It is no longer safe for them or any mobility vehicle to come to the house. Should we need an ambulance or fire engine they will not be able to get access to the house. This feels particularly relevant given we have already had a nearby wildfire on the hills this year and more heat waves are predicted.

Thirdly, we are suffering a significant practical and economic impact. We were in discussion with Estate Agents about putting the house on the market this year. This plan is now scrapped - it is impossible to market or sell a house without access! We cannot make the major repairs we need to undertake - roof and window work - because of the drive blockage. Major deliveries are impossible. I have discussed with neighbours the possibility of simply withholding Council Tax to express our distress and am advised eventually bailiffs would come and take away our white goods - frankly, let them try! The Council and Trust may then better understand the trouble we are in. We have been encouraged towards and are seriously considering legal action - it is extremely daunting -

and depressing - to hire Counsel at high cost, when the only, longed for possible win - is everyday access to our own home. While we understand, very clearly, there is a dispute between the Council and the Trust about boundary, it seems to us, literally, incredible that after the contest metres away, a more efficient protocol has not yet been developed! The cost of construction materials will only escalate over this year. A year-long legal dispute between both parties could swallow the entire cost of a rebuild. Pettiness can turn out to be very expensive. So far, in both their responses, it is clear to us that the Trust and the Council are ducking responsibility by expressing their deepest regrets - but basically implying the other side bears the brunt of the delay. Both the Trust and the Council should be of no doubt, we consider both equally and fully responsible. The track is Trust land. The road is Council. Would not a 50/50 split be an equitable shouldering of this responsibility the first priority of which should be not an abstract battle for funds, but the safety and well-being of people who live here? It should not take sixteen months. Or, truthfully, sixteen hours to determine.

It genuinely grieves me to have to complain so vociferously about a charity I have admired, spoken up for, voted for and supported - and about a Council whose political purpose I uphold.

But the truth is that the conduct of both bodies has from the outset been negligent. No response but painted lines that gradually vanished, to the widening fissures and my warning. No response to my email about having my car keyed ('we didn't know what to say' Deborah Fox explained, having reassured me that she did understand because she once lived somewhere where people often parked to block her own drive). We have watched the arrival of a Council digger without diesel at the debris site, that had to be loaded back on the lorry on arrival and returned. Rumours abound about some geological fault or impasse. If this is the case, then surely that information should be shared with those who are affected. So far, in terms of sharing and formal time setting, a representative of the Council and the Trust without appointment or warning wandered into our kitchen when I was at work and asked a friend to pass on the message orally, that our drive was likely to be blocked (after four months) for another year. The casual haphazard rudeness in imparting such vital and devastating information only confirmed that neither body has any idea of the day-to-day attrition their pacification without action is causing.

Wall collapse as anyone who has lived long in Malvern knows, can happen to anyone. I understand only a few residents are affected. But it takes a certain callousness to respond to it the way the Trust and Council have on this occasion. Pretty much every day you meet someone saying on the road how incompetent and indifferent the Trust and Council appear. Your reputation at least should concern you. Our distress, already keen, has been worsened by response. I can approach the ombudsman about the Council but do not know yet how to bring the Trust to account. That really should not be the - desperate - question I am researching at this moment.

I hope very much that in communicating some of the impact of the track collapse at the AGM some awareness is raised about the day today impact of this solvable problem.

Please mend the track - and give us back access to our own home - now.

Response from the Chair

We don't normally allow such long speeches to be presented to the Board, but I used my discretion to allow it because I felt that it was really important for everyone to hear the problems that have been going on in the Terrace.

Firstly, I acknowledge Catherine's distress. I also thank Catherine for her warm words of support for the Trust until now.

We invited her to make this comment as I feel it is important that all of our Board members hear about the impact of the track collapse on her life and that of family and friends.

I felt it was important for Deborah and me to meet with Catherine and we are following up on some actions in the short term.

Pedestrians can walk between the barrier and Catherine's property.

The Trust has primed Rangers to put fences back up, which were erected by the Public Rights of Way Team.

We are aware of the importance of this access to St Ann's Well and the significance of this property to Malvern and as an historic asset.

We are continuing to work collegiately with Worcestershire County Council on a solution and will keep in touch with Catherine throughout this.

Paper C
For Decision

Ordinary Meeting of the Board
Trustee Mediation
10 September 2026

Background Papers
The Russell Reports of December 2020 and May 2025
Confidential Board minutes of 10 July 2025
Confidential Board minutes of 15 January 2026
Confidential Board minutes of 14 May 2026
Charity Commission guidance: [Disagreements and disputes in charities - GOV.UK]

Background
Divisions on the Board regarding governance changes date back a number of years and were noted as a significant issue in the Russell Reports of 2020 and 2025. The first Russell Report proposed that the Board should embark on a process of mediation, but the Board voted against this at the time due to the costs involved.

Prior to 2025, trustees opposed to the Private Bill were in the minority on the Board. The motion to submit the Bill to Parliament in November 2024 passed by a majority of 17 votes to two. In February 2025, five trustees petitioned against the Bill. The Board subsequently resolved that these trustees had a conflict of interest and they were therefore excluded from further Bill-related decision-making.

During 2025, several new trustees joined the Board who had either petitioned personally against the Bill or were members of bodies who had, and they were also excluded from Bill-related business due to conflict of interest. The group of trustees that petitioned against the Bill now forms approximately a third of the total Board.

On 10 July 2025, the unconflicted trustees decided that they wished to pursue the option of mediation, without a formal resolution. Recently appointed trustees Simon Baggaley and Andrew Willmott carried out initial discussions and research on how mediation might work. Following Andrew Willmott's resignation from the Board, Robert Berry and later Andrew Myatt joined the conversation. At the Board meeting on 9 July 2026, Simon Baggaley proposed that there should be a workshop led by an experienced facilitator, whose credentials were tabled at that meeting for trustees' information. There was general agreement from trustees on this recommended way forward, but again no formal resolution was taken and no budget set.

On 18 August 2026, an initial meeting was held with the mediator; this was attended by trustees Robert Berry, David Core, Andrew Myatt and John Raine, with the CEO in attendance. The cost of this meeting, including the mediator's preparation time, was £3,840, for which the Board's retrospective approval is sought. Following the meeting further mediation sessions are planned for early October, including a face-to-face meeting in Malvern with a group of up to 12 trustees. At this stage the exact costs are not known, but will include the mediator's time and expenses, plus the cost of venue hire and catering for a face-to-face meeting in Malvern. A budget of £10,000 is proposed to cover these sessions, to be authorised by the CEO. The mediation is being conducted in accordance with a mediation agreement prepared by the mediator and signed by the four trustees and the CEO.

The Board is asked to delegate responsibility for pursuing the mediation process to Robert Berry, David Core, Andrew Myatt and John Raine, including decisions on who is to attend the extended session. This delegation does not empower them to make any commitments on behalf of the Board, only to manage the process that may lead to proposals being put to the Board.

The retrospective costs and, if agreed by the Board, projected costs of the mediation process will be charged to the Trust's governance budget within Legal & Professional Fees.

Further Legal Advice
As a result of stakeholder consultations and the mediation process the Trust may require further legal advice on aspects of the Bill. In order to facilitate full and open discussion of any outputs from the mediation process, it is proposed that trustees deemed conflicted on the Bill be allowed to participate fully, with access to additional legal advice that might be sought.

The Board is now asked to give its formal approval to the mediation process, and the associated steps.

Update - 2 September 2026
Since this paper was drafted, Robert Berry and Andrew Myatt have indicated their intention to withdraw from the mediation process. However, if mediation were to take place, these steps would be required.

Recommendations:

1. Board to resolve to purse a mediation process in accordance with the mediation agreement prepared by the mediator.
2. Board resolves to delegate responsibility for pursuing the mediation process to Robert Berry, David Core, Andrew Myatt and John Raine.
3. Board retrospectively to approve expenditure of £3,840 for Phase 1 of the mediation including preparation by the mediator and the meeting on 18 August.
4. Board to approve a budget of £10,000 for the mediation meetings in October. Should there be any risk of costs exceeding the budget, the matter is to be referred back to full Board immediately.
5. Board to resolve that petitioner trustees may participate in further discussion of Bill matters resulting from the current stakeholder engagement and mediation process, including access to additional legal advice that might be sought.

David Core, Chair of Governance Committee
Alison Marlow, Secretary to the Board
1 September 2026

Ordinary meeting of the Board
Tractor purchase
10th September 2026

Background documents

Land Management Plan 2021-2026

Malvern Hills Acts 1884-1995

Background

In April, the Trust disposed of two tractors, the Landini tractor VF19 KHE and the Landini Rex tractor WX17 GNP. The work carried out by these tractors is still required, so replacements are needed.

The Board set a budget in January 2026 of £75,000 which was for the replacement of one tractor. A John Deere 5120M Tractor VN26 XPS was purchased in May 2026 at a cost of £65,400 which has been reliable since purchase and is regularly used for amenity mowing and stewardship works.

The Board subsequently suggested that this purchase would be a good use of the Unrestricted Gift Fund and a resolution was passed on 9th July 2026 using the Unrestricted Gift Fund for the May 2026 John Deere tractor purchase, rather than using general fund as was originally budgeted.

In line with the operational needs of the Trust and due to health & safety requirements, it is now imperative that we replace the second disposed tractor. A proposal for this replacement is addressed in this paper.

The need for replacement

The acquisition will address health and safety concerns about using a cabless tractor for side-arm flail operations. Recent periods of extreme weather have highlighted the need to better protect operators from excessive heat and prolonged sun exposure. As the employer, MHT has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to manage these risks.

The proposed replacement tractor

Following research and a field trial, purchase of a John Deere Compact 4066R is proposed. The enclosed cab of the John Deere 4066R will improve operator safety, comfort, and welfare. See information on the field trial in Appendix 1.

This tractor is an essential part of the fleet, supporting land management across the estate and helping to deliver the Land Management Plan. Its work includes amenity grassland mowing, track and path vegetation cutting, hedge cutting, and scrub control. It also supports MHT's access and conservation objectives.

Finance

TAG Evesham has quoted £45,100 plus VAT, representing a substantial discount against the retail price of £65,087. Additional items required to meet the Trust's specification—including a 2,500-hour or five-year warranty; window guard kit; front-mounted counterweights; 540E PTO; rear wiper; and hedge-cutter fitting customisation—total £4,825, bringing the overall purchase cost to £49,925. This is the lowest of the three quotations received, with the alternatives priced at £53,430 and £50,805.

Because the Unrestricted Gift Fund was used for the first tractor the General Fund budget of £75,000 remains unused and potentially available.

It is also recognised that the tractor fleet deliver a lot towards our Stewardship agreements and that some of these designated funds have accrued a reserve after the successful delivery of the Stewardship agreement requirements. It is therefore appropriate to use some of this designated fund for the purchase of equipment that will help us to deliver Stewardship and Conservation works now and in the future.

Approximately half of the tractor's work would be conservation/stewardship and half will be access/property management. Therefore, the proposed funding proportions are:

50 % Countryside Stewardship (£24,692) – Southern Hills Agreement.

AND

50 % General Fund (£24,693) – Capital Land Management budget **OR** 50 % Unrestricted Gift fund (£24,693).

Recommendation:

That the Board:

1. Approve the purchase of the John Deere Compact 4066R as detailed;
2. Decide on the preferred funding split as detailed.

Martin Barnett, Operations Manager

26th August 2026

Appendix 1: Tractor options considered and trial

Key considerations:

- Build quality, Cab ergonomics
- Ease of use
- Local dealer support, future availability
- Operator team opinion

Brands considered:

- John Deere 4066r, 65hp, rear lift 1419kg, £45,100
- Kubota L2 -622 HDC, 61 hp, rear lift 1750kg, £50,000
- Massey Ferguson 1755M, 55 hp, £31,000
- New Holland Boomer 55, rear lift 1250kg ,55 hp, £30,000

Testing of Demonstration Machine:

The preferred option is the John Deere 4066R. The Field Team have undertaken extensive testing of this model during a generous demonstration period provided by TAG Evesham. As part of the trial, TAG Evesham fitted the Trust's side-arm flail to the tractor, enabling the team to assess its performance under normal working conditions and across a range of operational tasks.

Feedback from the entire team has been extremely positive. Operators found the tractor straightforward and intuitive to use, allowing them to focus more effectively on the task being undertaken rather than the operation of the machine itself. The tractor demonstrated excellent stability, visibility, and ease of operation during the evaluation period.

The comfort and protection provided by the enclosed cab were also highlighted as significant benefits. Field staff spend many hours each week carrying out essential land management activities for the Trust, often in challenging weather conditions. Providing a modern, comfortable working environment supports staff welfare, reduces operator fatigue, and contributes to safer and more efficient working practices.

The successful demonstration has given the Field Team confidence that the John Deere 4066R is the most suitable replacement and will provide a reliable and versatile asset for the Trust's ongoing land management requirements.

Given that we already operate a tractor under warranty with support provided by TAG in Evesham, and as outlined in our Vehicle Replacement Policy, it is both more efficient and more cost-effective to build a long-term working relationship with one dependable local dealership.

Malvern Hills Trust
Ordinary Meeting of Land Management Committee
Malvern Hills Hotel, Wynds Point, Malvern WR13 6DW
Thursday 26 March 2026 at 6.00 pm

Present: Felicity Robinson (Chair), David Baldwin, Mark Driscoll, Chris McSweeny (arrived 6.10 pm), Peter Rogers, Chris Rouse.

In attendance: CEO, Secretary to the Board, Conservation Manager, Operations Manager, Conservation Officer.

Absent: David Mead, Cynthia Palmer, David Reynolds.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   Richard Bartholomew, David Core (non-voting), John Michael, John Stock.

2. **Declarations of Interest**
   None.

3. **Chair's Communications**
   - Unfortunately despite receiving 70 applications it had not been possible to appoint to both Ranger vacancies and it would be necessary to readvertise. However, the one appointment that had been made was going very well. The new Ranger Team Leader, Tracy Sutton, would be taking up her position on 3 August. She had worked for the Trust as a Ranger before.
   - The Chair thanked those trustees who had taken part in the recent Land Management Plan (LMP) 'meet and greet' sessions, which had all gone well. The next LMP workshop was planned for Tuesday 14 July at 7 pm in the Lyttelton Rooms, Malvern. It would focus on the Vision and overall strategy, and all trustees were warmly invited to attend.
   - There was to be a demonstration of the remote controlled mower, as requested by trustees, on the morning of Wednesday 5 August. This was to be part of a 'Discovery Morning' for Malvern in Bloom; Malvern had reached the national finals in the large town category.

4. **Public Comments**
   None, no members of the public being present.

5. **Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2026**
   None.

6. **New Land Management Plan**

6.1. Consultation feedback and workshop progress

The Committee received a paper from the Conservation Manager, to which he spoke. He explained that the Trust was about half way through the planning stage for the new Plan, which was due to go live on 1 April 2027. There were three stages to the planning: consultation; evidence, and; drafting.

6.1.1 Consultation

This was going well. This had begun with the first trustee workshop in June 2025. Over 100 people had attended the 'meet and greet' sessions held at various locations across the area; a report of these was attached to the paper. The Trust had now moved on to 'one-to-one' informal meetings with organisations to discuss their particular areas of interest relating to MHT land and ways in which the Trust could collaborate with them in future.

6.1.2 Evidence gathering

Trustees' attention was drawn to a 'traffic light' table showing what information was being gathered. It was noted that there were 10 'greens', eight 'ambers' and eight 'reds'. All evidence was to be in and complete by early August.

Chris McSweeny arrived at 6.10 pm

6.1.3 Drafting

Once all the evidence was in, the Trust would move to drafting the Plan. Trustees had asked for a six page summary as well as the full document. The trustee workshop would pull all this together.

6.1.4. Questions from trustees

- The Chair asked whether staff would be in receipt of all the evidence they needed by August. The CM said that some of the 'reds' would not happen at all, such as assessments of SSSIs by Natural England; these would be replaced by rapid assessments undertaken by MHT staff, currently shown as amber.
- A trustee said that they had attended one of the 'meet and greets' and had appreciated the opportunity to have more detailed conversations. They wanted to know whether any information had emerged that had surprised the Trust or changed its thinking. The CM said that around ¾ of comments from the public concerned issues of which the Trust was aware. There had been some surprise about resistance to the fencing off of Gullet Quarry. The CEO said that the Trust needed to update the 10 year old guidance from RoSPA on the dangers of swimming in quarries. The Trust had been featured in recent press discussing this. The CEO observed that the Trust needed to communicate better *why* it took the action it did. She

added that the consultations were helping to inform wider Trust communications, because they offered good intelligence on what the public wanted. There was a paper on KPIs going to Board; while SSSI condition surveys could not be ignored, there were always secondaries sitting under those KPIs and Land Management Committee was well ahead on this.

- A trustee asked whether a sufficient number of trustees would be attending the workshop on 14 July. The Secretary to the Board said she was not in a position to give a view on this, due to some trustees not having responded either way. The CEO suggested that it would be a good idea to ask trustees how they wished to engage; if the workshop format did not work for them, what might? Another trustee observed that although few trustees had attended the previous workshop in June, those who had been present had done a lot of work and there had been positive outcomes.

7. Land Management updates

7.1. Field Team

The Operations Manager (OM) provided an update of works undertaken since the last meeting, which included:

- Discussions with the National Trust about erosion control, in relation to British Camp hill fort;
- Tree safety work, including ash removal from the railway embankment;
- Quarry fence checks and repairs;
- Mowing as per the schedule, with a conscious policy to strim and mow round wild flower patches. In answer to a trustee question, the OM confirmed that the team had completed two cuts in total to date, but he had noticed growth tailing off due to the recent heat.
- Becoming familiar with the new tractors and the robot mower. The CEO commented that the Health and Safety Advisor had noted with approval the improvements made. The team was well-equipped and professional and Top Shed was clear and well-organised. She noted that that there was a tension between the public wanting work done and the health and safety of Trust staff, particularly during the red weather warning that had been in place the week before this meeting.

The OM confirmed that the next priorities for the team would be hill paths, fitting gates for grazing projects and then tree works. There had been additional pressure on the team due to low Ranger numbers. The Chair recorded the Committee's thanks to the whole team.

7.2. Conservation Team

Nothing further to report.

7.3. Rangers

The CEO provided an update on Ranger activities since the last meeting, which included:

- Dealing with barbecues and camp fires, especially over the May bank holiday, and the ground fire on 2 May;
- Persuading people to stop swimming in Gullet Quarry and helping them out safely. The police were patrolling the area twice a day.
- Dealing with stray animals on the highway and a bullock trapped in a water trough, reported by a member of the public.

Forthcoming activity included:

- A trial of three large bins on Malvern Common, where there had been high levels of manual handling of waste. A two person lift was the best option for such areas, but there weren't always two people available and so there would have to be some use of machinery.
- Installing a new card reading option for parking machines. The existing machines had been losing hundreds of tickets and income was reduced further by the closure of the A449 at British Camp. A trustee asked whether the Trust planned to change all the machines, but the CEO said that this would require a full review and new procurement process, for which the Trust did not currently have capacity.

8. Graziers' Report

A written report was received from Matt Gardner. The Committee noted with concern that water bowsers on the northern and central hills had been interfered with repeatedly.

9. Urgent Business

None

10. Date of next meeting

Thursday 3 December at 6.30 pm at the Park View Community Room, Victoria Park Road.

11. Confidential

The meeting moved into confidential session. There was no resolution, since no members of the public were present.

The meeting closed at 6.55 pm

The Summer Stroll took place immediately following the meeting. Trustees viewed the two parcels of land newly acquired by the Trust at Little Malvern.

Malvern Hills Trust
Ordinary Meeting of Governance Committee
Park View Community Room, Victoria Park Road, Malvern WR14 2JY
Thursday 16 July 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present: David Core (Chair), Robert Berry, Mark Driscoll, Lucy Hodgson, John Michael (non-voting), John Raine.

In attendance: CEO, Secretary to the Board, Jenny Burford, Andrew Myatt, Cynthia Palmer, Peter Rogers, Chris Rouse, 4 members of the public.

David Core welcomed everyone to the meeting and clarified that this was the meeting that had been postponed from 18 June.

1. **Apologies for absence**
   Richard Bartholomew, David Fellows.

2. **Chair's announcements**
   None.

3. **Declarations of interest**
   None.

4. **Public comments**
   There was a public comment from Dr Trevor Parsons, which is attached at Schedule 1, together with the Trust's response.

5. **Matters Arising from previous meetings**
   5.1. **7 November 2024, Minute 2 – *Whistleblowing rights for trustees***
   The Committee received a paper from the Secretary to the Board (SttB), updating trustees on the case of Dr N MacLennan v The British Psychological Society and Dr MacLennan's argument that as a trustee he should be treated as a worker and protected from reprisals for whistleblowing. The tribunal had now ruled that he was *not* entitled to whistleblowing protection, which had potential implications for a decision taken by the MHT Board in November 2024 to extend whistleblowing policies and procedures to include trustees. It was noted that Dr MacLennan planned to appeal the decision and in discussion it was agreed to take no action at present but to wait for the final outcome. In answer to a trustee question, it was confirmed that trustees wishing to 'blow the whistle' had the option of using the Trust's Complaints Procedure or reporting concerns directly to the Charity Commission. It was suggested that it would be sensible to research whistleblowing models used by other bodies and the SttB was asked to carry out this research.

6. **Changes to the Governance Handbook**
The Committee received a paper from the SttB.

6.1. Amendments to the Handbook

Trustees were invited to comment on the proposed changes to the Handbook. It was suggested that it was unnecessary to specify a location for Board meetings, since this might vary. The SttB asked to amend the sentence on the approval of the Annual Accounts, adding the qualification that in an election year, this would be done in October prior to the end of the old Board term.

A trustee referred to the public comment received earlier and expressed concern at the proposed deletion, observing that the rights of commoners to petition had not been challenged by the Trust in the House of Lords. The Committee Chair reiterated that what was in the Bill Act itself was a reference to the public, that was the superset, but there were some specific clauses on commoners. He added that the standing of commoners had not been questioned because some of the changes to fencing powers in the Bill would specially and directly affect them.

A trustee referred to the bullet point on the Trust's obligation *to conserve and enhance biodiversity, SSSIs and scheduled ancient monuments on its land*. The trustee said that they couldn't see any such obligations in the Acts and that this must be an add-on interpretation. The CEO pointed out that the paragraph referred to the Malvern Hills Acts and other relevant legislation. Another trustee observed that at the recent Land Management Plan workshop the Trust's commitment to enhancing biodiversity, culture and wildlife had been recognised as a key duty. It was agreed that the obligation as currently listed in the Handbook would be checked.

On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by John Raine, it was RESOLVED, with four in favour and one abstention, to recommend that Board approve the proposed changes to the Governance Handbook. Queries raised in this meeting would be checked ahead of the next Board meeting.

6.2. Changes to Standing Orders

The SttB had noted in the paper that it was possible for members of the public to influence the order of speaking under public comments by timing the submission of their comment. Committee members did not think this was an issue. However, a trustee recommended that the SttB might group any comments on the same or similar subject; this was agreed as a sensible way forward for which no resolution was required.

A trustee observed that there had been a lack of consistency in meetings as to how, and in what order, changes to the resolution suggested by officers should be proposed and voted upon. It was noted that the District Council's practice was to vote on the amendment first and the substantive recommendation second, and it was suggested that it would be appropriate, albeit not obligatory, to adopt the same policy, since the Trust was not a council. The SttB wanted advance notification of any proposed change to a resolution, but committee members considered this unrealistic. It was noted that it was the role of the Chair to ensure that everyone, including the SttB, was clear on the motion being voted upon. A trustee pointed out that the SttB recorded the meetings anyway, but the SttB cautioned that recordings did not necessarily catch everything that was said and could not be completely relied upon.

On the proposal of David Core, seconded by Robert Berry, it was RESOLVED unanimously to recommend to Board that the Governance Handbook be updated to specify that when an amendment to a resolution was proposed, a vote on the amendment would be taken before the vote on the substantive resolution. If necessary, the Chair would adjourn the meeting briefly to allow for the amended resolution to be prepared in writing.

6.3. Policies in the Governance Handbook

The SttB asked for the Committee's view on what policies, if any, needed to be included in the Governance Handbook. Trustees acknowledged that the Governance Handbook, like the Staff Handbook, had developed into a large document due to the accumulation of material over several years. It was agreed that all policies could be removed from the Governance Handbook; this could be done as part of the overall revision of the document ahead of the new Board in 2027. A formal resolution was not required.

The CEO added that there was due to be a review of the Trust's web pages and some simplification of its content in the autumn.

7. **Policy Review**

7.1. Schedule of Policies

The Committee received a paper from the Secretary to the Board, detailing the review schedule for all policies overseen by the Governance Committee. She highlighted that a new draft policy on Access to Information was due to be presented to the next meeting in October.

7.2. Trustee Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedure

The Committee received a paper from the Secretary to the Board, together with a proposed revised policy and procedure. The SttB reported that policy remained closely aligned with the version provided by VWV in 2017, but the language had been simplified and made gender neutral. The revised draft did however aim to take account of new advice from the Charity Commission, which went further than previously on the definition of conflicts of loyalty. A specific point had been added at the request of the Chair of the Board to require either the CEO or SttB to raise potential conflicts of interests with relevant trustees ahead of a meeting, provided of course that they were aware of them.

Comments from trustees were invited. A trustee referred to the addition of the phrase ‘an interest group’ to the list of possible instances of conflicts of loyalty in point 3.5.1 of the policy and asked that this be defined. They also suggested that ‘a political party’ should be added to this list; there was general agreement from other trustees.

Trustee David Fellows, who was unable to be present at the meeting, had sent comments to the SttB, who read them out to the Board. Mr Fellows was concerned that documents PB1 (on the requirement for a charity to deliver a public benefit reflected in its objects to quality as a charity) and PB2 (which covered the legal requirement to carry out the charity’s purposes for the public benefit) had not been taken into account. The Committee Chair said that these were broader definitions of what defined a charity, which pre-dated the current policy anyway, and they were not relevant to the conflicts of interest issue. Mr Fellows had also pointed out that statute took precedence over charity law. The Committee Chair acknowledged this but said that in this instance ‘statute’ meant the Malvern Hills Acts, and the Acts were silent on conflicts of interest.

A trustee referred to the proposed change in point 5.5.2 of the policy that would require a trustee to abstain from a discussion and voting, when they were a member of another charity but did not have any management or trustee responsibilities. The trustee thought that this change was extreme. The SttB acknowledged this but said that she had followed Charity Commission guidance in proposing it. The Committee agreed to remove the proposed changes to 5.5.2. The trustee also recommended that under 5.5.1 a trustee with a conflict of loyalty should still be allowed to speak, albeit not to vote. Another trustee agreed, observing that otherwise there was potential for a trustee with relevant experience and knowledge that could be useful to the Trust to be unable to share it. The Committee also agreed to this change.

On the proposal of Mark Driscoll, seconded by Robert Berry, it was RESOLVED unanimously to recommend that Board approve the revised Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedure, subject to the amendments made in this meeting.

7.3. Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Committee received a paper from the SttB. She reported that the procedure had last been reviewed in 2018, but there was currently no policy sitting above it. It was noted that the policy and procedure applied to external complaints. The SttB advised the Committee of a query that had arisen about an instance where a complainant added to their complaint at a later date, and whether this reset the clock on the timescale for response. It was suggested that the original complaint should still be due for response by the original deadline, provided that this was still possible given the additional material, but that for any extension of the complaint the clock would reset.

A trustee asked whether there was a compliments policy as well as a complaints procedure. It was noted that any compliments were publicised by means of the CEO to staff in her internal newsletter and Chair's announcements at Trust meetings. The SttB said that there was a new requirement in the policy for Governance Committee to receive reports on complaints trends and suggested that there could be similar reports for compliments. The CEO and SttB were asked to consider suitable mechanisms for reporting compliments.

On the proposal of John Raine, seconded by Lucy Hodgson, it was RESOLVED unanimously to recommend that Board approve the revised Complaints Policy and Procedure.

8. **Urgent Business**
   None.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**
   Thursday 22 October 2026 at 6.30 pm at Park View Community Room, Victoria Park Road.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

Schedule 1

Public Comment from Trevor Parsons

At section 3.5.2 the revised Conflicts of Interest Policy states that a trustee "appointed by, or nominated on behalf of, a ward or parish" may have a conflict of loyalty when decisions affect that ward or parish. Under paragraph 5.5.1, a trustee with such a conflict may remain for discussion but must leave before the vote and is not counted in the quorum.

Elected ward trustees are neither appointed nor nominated on behalf of a ward; they are elected by the ward's electors. Does this provision apply to elected ward trustees or not? If it does apply, how is a policy that excludes elected representatives from voting on matters affecting the communities they were elected to represent consistent with the democratic principle that the Lords Select Committee sought to protect when it strengthened the elected majority on the Board? How does the Committee distinguish between legitimate representation and the conflict of loyalty described in this policy?

In addition, Paper B asks the Committee to delete, as an 'error,' the statement that the Malvern Hills Acts were set up to protect the rights of commoners and the public. But on 17 March the promoter's own counsel told the Select Committee that the 1884 Act 'was trying to protect, in particular, the rights of freeholders, tenants and commoners.' Those same Acts created a representative body to do it — counsel accepted that representation meant 'a voice on the board for the levy payers,' people elected by them, sitting on the board and taking the decisions. Purpose and representation are two halves of one design: the body is elected because it exists to protect the public's and the commoners' rights. How can a proposition that is the foundation of the Trust's case to Parliament be an 'error' in the Trust's own Handbook? And if the Committee deletes it, will it record that this is a change to how the Trust describes its purpose and representative character — not the correction of a factual mistake.

Response from the Trust:

- The Secretary to the Board confirmed that point 3.5.2 referred to appointed trustees and not elected trustees. The essence of this bullet point was unchanged from the current policy, although the language had been simplified. The Committee Chair clarified that Policy as a whole applied to all trustees. The example given in point 5.5.1 was not a blanket statement, but had to be applied in specific circumstances, by a decision of the Board.
- The Committee Chair said that, whilst the preamble to the 1884 Act did refer to the "interest of freeholders tenants and commoners" [see 1884 Act p3 para 2] section 13 of the Act stated that the Trust must maintain its land "for the use and recreation of the public" [s13 p8 para1]. This reference covered the interests of the *whole* population, including commoners. It was that point that was simplified here.

Paper E
For Decision

Ordinary meeting of the Board
Amendments to the Governance Handbook
10 September 2026

At the Governance Committee meeting of 16 July 2026, a trustee queried the bullet point in the Governance Handbook on the Trust's obligation *to conserve and enhance biodiversity, SSSIs and scheduled ancient monuments on its land*. The trustee said that they couldn't find any such obligations in the Malvern Hills Acts and that this must be an interpretation. This query was referred to the Governance Change Officer and the Conservation Manager for further advice.

The duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity comes from the Natural Environment & Rural Community Act 2006 (NERC) s40. Officers carried out research and established that **this Act does not strictly apply** to the Trust, because it does not fall within the definition of *Public Authority* in that section. It may be argued that the Trust is obliged to conserve biodiversity as part of its duty to 'preserve the natural aspect'. In any event, all MHT's obligations in relation to land management are being revisited as part of the Land Management Plan review that is currently in progress.

Officers therefore recommend that the reference to NERC should come out. They also point out that the bullet misses out the Trust's obligations in relation to listed structures.

It was also found that the Trust's duty to prevent encroachment (1930 Act s3) is also missing from page 2 and page 5 of the Governance Handbook.

The Secretary to the Board has advised Governance Committee of these findings and requested that the Committee incorporate these changes in its recommendation to update the Handbook. The proposed new page 2 and page 5 are attached.

Alison Marlow
Secretary to the Board
17 August 2026

Annex 1

Governance Handbook – Page 2

Introduction

Malvern Hills Trust

The statutory name of the charity is Malvern Hills Conservators. The Trust adopted the working name of Malvern Hills Trust in 2016.

Malvern Hills Trust (MHT) is a body corporate constituted by and deriving its powers from the Malvern Hills Acts 1884, 1909, 1924, 1930 and 1995 (see Appendices).

~~The Malvern Hills Acts were set up to protect the rights of commoners and the public, and to prevent encroachment on those parts of the Malvern Hills and commons placed under the jurisdiction of the Trust~~. Under these and other relevant Acts, MHT must manage the hills to:

- **Preserve the natural aspect of the hills**
- **Protect and manage trees, shrubs, turf and other vegetation**
- **Prevent unlawful digging and quarrying**
- **Keep the hills open, unenclosed and un-built on as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public**
- **By all lawful means, prevent, resist and abate all enclosures and encroachments**
- **Conserve ~~and enhance biodiversity,~~ Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and protect Scheduled ~~Ancient~~ Monuments on its land**.

Charity trustees
MHT is a registered charity (Charity No: 515804). The Conservators (referred to as trustees) are appointed in accordance with the Acts and have control over and legal responsibility for the charity's management and administration. (See – '*The Essential Trustee*' and '*It's your decision: charity trustees and decision making*').

Meetings of the Board
There are five scheduled Ordinary board meetings each year which are currently held at 7:00pm on the third Thursday of January and the second Thursdays of March, May, July and September. The Annual Meeting takes place in November and is held on the second Thursday except in an election year when it is held on the third Thursday.

These meetings ~~generally take place at~~ ~~Council Chambers (formerly Priory Lodge Hall), Avenue Road, Malvern and~~ are open to the public. At each meeting, there is the opportunity for members of the public to make comments, subject to ~~letting the Trust know their intention to do so beforehand~~ providing these to the Trust in advance and in writing .

~~The meeting for examining and settling the Annual Report and Accounts and for appointing auditors normally takes place prior to the Annual meeting except in an election year when it takes place in October.~~ The Annual Report and Accounts are received at the Annual Meeting in November, at which the auditors for the next year are also appointed; in an election year, the Accounts are received in October. At this meeting the public are welcome to ask questions on the Accounts without prior notice.

Land holding
MHT has approximately 1200 hectares of land under its management. This includes hill land, commons, roadside verges, woodland and fields (See appendix). About 86% of the land holding is within the Malvern Hills ~~AONB~~ National Landscape, about 90% is registered common and around 62% is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The definitive maps of land holdings are kept at Manor House.

Governance Handbook – Page 5

MHT Duties and Powers

Malvern Hills Trust's (MHT's) duties and powers are set out in the Acts.

~~The Malvern Hills Acts were set up to protect the rights of commoners and the public, and to prevent encroachment on those parts of the Malvern Hills and commons placed under the jurisdiction of the Trust~~.

Under these and other relevant Acts, MHT must manage the hills (land under the jurisdiction of the Trust) to:

- Preserve the natural aspect of the Hills (MH Act 1924/21)
- Protect and manage trees, shrubs, turf and other vegetation (MH Act 1924/21)
- Prevent unlawful digging and quarrying (MH Act 1924/21)
- Keep the Hills open, unenclosed and un-built on as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public (MH Act 1930/3)
- By all lawful means, prevent, resist and abate all enclosures and encroachments (MH Act 1930/3)
- comply with its obligations under Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981/28, Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- ~~Conserve and enhance biodiversity (Natural Environment & Rural Community Act 2006/40), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981/28) and Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979) on its land.~~

[…]

Malvern Hills Trust

Conflicts of Interest Policy as amended on 16 July 2026

1. Purpose and scope

1.1. This policy sets out how the Board of Malvern Hills Trust (MHT) identifies, declares and manages conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty involving Trustees. It applies to all Trustees and requires conflicts to be handled openly and properly so that decisions are made in MHT's best interests. This protects MHT and the people involved, while also promoting public trust and confidence in MHT. The policy also aims to reduce the risk of situations where someone outside the Board may reasonably believe that a Trustee has a conflict of interest, even when the Trustee has acted properly and in MHT's best interests. Such perceptions can damage MHT's reputation, take time and effort to address, and distract from MHT's work.

1.2. In this policy, "conflict of interest" includes financial interests and conflicts of duty or loyalty (see 3.5). They may relate to the Trustee or a connected person (see 3.7).

1.3. The responsibility for identifying and managing a possible conflict rests with the Board as a whole, not just with the Trustee concerned.

1.4. Any examples in this policy are illustrative only and are not exhaustive.

2. Background

2.1. Trustees have a legal duty to act in MHT's best interests and to follow its governing documents. Managing conflicts is one of the seven legal principles of trustee decision making[1]. Trustees must act fairly and objectively. They must avoid conflicts of interest, including situations that could reasonably appear to be a conflict.

2.2. Conflicts may restrict open discussion, lead to decisions that are not in MHT's best interests and create a risk of the Board being perceived as having acted improperly.

2.3. Conflicts can arise in many different ways. Each Trustee must think about whether a conflict could apply to them, to someone connected to them, or because of another role they have (for example, responsibilities to another organisation).

2.4. There are two categories of conflict of interest:

2.4.1. A financial conflict of interest; or

2.4.2. A conflict of loyalty.

In this Policy 'conflict of interest' includes both financial and loyalty conflicts.

[1] Decision-making for charity trustees (CC27) - GOV.UK.

3. Legal Context

3.1. Trustees must understand the key legal points that apply to conflicts of interest. A summary is set out below.

3.2. Trustee benefits

3.2.1. Trustees must not receive a personal benefit from MHT unless the law clearly allows it. A 'benefit' includes money and anything else with financial value (for example, property, goods or services). It also includes being paid for supplying goods to MHT, even on normal commercial terms. If a Trustee could benefit, there is a conflict between their duty to MHT and their personal interest. A possible benefit is enough to create a conflict, even if no benefit is actually received.

3.2.2. A benefit does not include repayment of expenses permitted under MHT's Trustee Expenses Policy.

3.3. General Trustee Benefits

3.3.1. Trustees may receive the following 'general' benefits (i.e. benefits available to all Trustees):

- Indemnity insurance paid for by MHT; and
- An annual car park pass

3.4. Financial Conflict of Interest

3.4.1. A Trustee has a financial conflict of interest if they (or a connected person) have a financial ~~or other personal~~ interest in the outcome of a decision. The conflict exists if that interest could, or could reasonably appear to, affect their ability to decide only in MHT's best interests. This includes situations where a decision affects one Trustee more than it affects others.

3.5. Conflicts of Loyalty

3.5.1. A conflict of loyalty arises when a trustee has a duty or loyalty to another person or organisation (for example, a friend or relative, another charity, a council, a pressure group, a political party, or a company). It can also arise where that person or organisation is involved in a transaction or arrangement with MHT or could be affected by an MHT decision. In such a situation, the Trustee may have a conflict between their duty to MHT and their loyalty to the other person or organisation. This may be because the Trustee is, for example, a trustee, director, shareholder, member, officer, or employee of that organisation. A conflict of loyalty may exist even if the Trustee cannot benefit personally.

3.5.2. Examples include:

- A Trustee who is also a member of a council may have a conflict of loyalty when decisions affect that council, its work or the delivery of its agreed policies.

- A Trustee who sits on a council development control (planning) committee may have a conflict of loyalty where an MHT decision is linked, or could be linked, to a past, current, or future planning application that has come (or may come) before that committee (for example, applications for easements linked to potential development sites).

- A Trustee appointed by, or nominated on behalf of, a ward or parish may have a conflict of loyalty when decisions affect that ward or parish, or the delivery of its agreed policies.

3.6. Duty to avoid conflicts

3.6.1. Each Trustee must declare any actual or potential conflict of interest to comply with their legal duty to act in MHT's best interests. The duty is not only to manage conflicts that arise, but to avoid conflicts where possible.

3.7. Connected persons

3.7.1. A Trustee may have a conflict if MHT enters into a transaction or arrangement with, or makes a decision affecting, a family member, or business they are involved in, or any other person connected to them. Any benefit to a connected person is treated as a benefit to the Trustee. In this policy, a 'connected person' means:

- A Trustee's spouse or civil partner; and their parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent or grandchild (including the spouse or civil partner of any of those people);

- Any other person who is in a relationship with a Trustee that could reasonably be regarded as equivalent to a spouse or civil partner;

- Any company, LLP, or partnership where a Trustee (or any of the people listed above) is a paid director, member, partner, or employee, or holds more than 2% of the issued share capital or capital;

- Any company, LLP, or partnership where two or more of the people listed above, taken together, hold more than 2% of the issued share capital or capital.

For the purposes of conflicts of loyalty, a 'connected person' may also include:

- A Trustee's employer;

- Another charity for which they are a trustee (even if the other charity has a similar purpose);

- The organisation that appointed them as a trustee;

- A Trustee's wider family; or

- A Trustee's friends.

Malvern Hills Trust

4. Declaration of Interests

4.1. On appointment, and at the start of each Board term, Trustees must complete the declaration of interests form. They must declare their interests. They must also declare any gifts or hospitality offered, whether accepted or declined, if it could reasonably be seen as influencing their role. Where known to the Trustee, this may also include relevant interests of their spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner.

4.2. Trustees must include the following on the declaration of interests form:

- Any role held as part of the Trustee's normal employment or professional practice;
- Any company or firm where the Trustee is a partner, or where they are paid to act as a director;
- Membership of any professional body or trade union;
- Any organisation that makes a payment connected to the Trustee's appointment;
- Any shareholding or more than 2 % of the issued share capital in any local company (public or private);
- Any land the Trustee owns or rents in parishes where MHT owns land, or any land within 500 metres of MHT land;
- Any trusteeship or membership of any other charity (including overseas charities);
- Any organisation or body where the Trustee represents MHT;
- Any a) public authority or b) company, industrial, or provident society, charity, or other charitable body of which the Trustee is a member or has a management or control role;
- Any office or position the Trustee holds in any organisation in the public, private, or voluntary sector (for example: president, chair, trustee, chief executive, treasurer or secretary);
- Any consultancy, directorship, or advisory role;
- Membership of any political party or pressure group that has an interest in MHT's activities;
- Any gifts or hospitality offered, whether accepted or declined.

4.3. The Secretary to the Board will use these declarations to maintain a register of interests for all Trustees. The register will be available to Trustees in the Board Member area of the website and to the public on request.

4.4. Trustees must update their declaration as soon as possible if their circumstances change. In any event, they must review and update their entry each November (i.e. at the start of the Board year).

4.5. In addition to completing and updating the declaration of interests form, each Trustee must tell the other Trustees and the Secretary to the Board about the nature and extent of any direct or indirect interest in any existing or proposed transaction or arrangement with MHT of which they are aware.

4.6. If a Trustee is unsure what must be declared or when a declaration must be updated, they should contact the Secretary to the Board or the CEO for guidance.

4.7. Each year, before the annual accounts are prepared, all Trustees must complete a Related Party Transaction form if asked to do so.

5. Managing Conflicts

5.1. This policy is intended to support the proper conduct of Board business and not to impede it unnecessarily. However, conflicts must be identified and managed properly. The Board will take a practical approach, based on the level of risk to MHT's best interests. The key points are set out below.

5.2. Declarations at meetings

5.2.1. Where it appears from an agenda that one or more Trustees may have a conflict of interest in relation to a particular agenda item, either the CEO or the Secretary to the Board will, where practicable, contact the relevant Trustee(s) privately in advance of the meeting to discuss the matter.

5.2.2. At the start of each meeting, every Trustee must declare any interest relating to items on the agenda. They must state which agenda item it relates to and what the interest is.

5.2.3. If a Trustee realises during the meeting that they have an interest in something being discussed, they must declare it immediately.

5.2.4. If a Trustee does not declare an interest, an officer or another Trustee may raise the matter at the meeting. However, where possible the conflict or potential conflict should be discussed in advance with the Trustee (see paragraph 5.2.1).

5.3. General Trustee benefits

5.3.1. If a Trustee's only conflict relates to the 'general' Trustee benefits described in paragraph 3.3, they may take part in the vote and can be counted in the quorum for decisions about that benefit.

5.4. Financial conflicts of interest

5.4.1. If a Trustee has a financial conflict of interest relating to a transaction or arrangement (see paragraph 3.4), they must not vote on any Board or Committee decision about it. They must not be counted in the quorum for that decision. They must not be present for either the discussion or the vote.

Malvern Hills Trust

5.5. Conflicts of loyalty

5.5.1. If a Trustee has a conflict of loyalty (see paragraph 3.5), relating to a particular transaction or arrangement and they have no financial interest in it, they may speak at the meeting during the discussion. However, they must leave before any vote is taken and must not be counted in the quorum for that vote.

5.5.2. If a Trustee is a member of another charity (such as RSPB or the National Trust) but does not have a management or control role in that charity (for example, they are not a trustee or a director), they do not need to leave the meeting. They may take part in discussions, vote, and be counted in the quorum.,

5.6. Decision making

5.6.1. This paragraph applies if a conflict (or potential conflict) is not covered by paragraphs 5.4 or 5.5. It also applies if there is a disagreement about how 3.5.1 or 3.5.2 applies. The Trustees at the meeting must decide whether the interest could, or could reasonably appear to, affect the Trustee's judgement about what is in MHT's best interests.

5.6.2. A Trustee with an actual or potential conflict of interest must explain their position to the meeting and then withdraw. They must not take part in the discussion or decision about how the conflict will be managed. They must not vote and must not be counted in the quorum.

5.6.3. If a Trustee has a conflict of interest, they must not be involved in any tender process related to that interest. They must also not manage or monitor any related contract. Contract monitoring will include independent checks of bills and invoices. Any related contract may be terminated in accordance with its terms if the arrangement proves unsatisfactory.

5.7. Minutes

5.7.1. Meeting minutes must record ~~the nature and extent of any conflict of interest. They must also summarise the discussion and the steps taken to manage the conflict~~ how any conflict of interest was identified, declared and managed. They should include:

- the nature and extent of the conflict;
- to what it related;
- when it was declared;
- how it was managed;
- any relevant legal or regulatory guidance considered; and
- whether legal advice was obtained, if applicable.

6. Appointments to outside bodies

6.1. If a Trustee is appointed to represent MHT on the Recreation Advisory Panel, Wildlife Panel, 4C's, Malvern Hills National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee, or the Malvern Spa Association, they may remain at an MHT meeting when that body's business is discussed. They may take part in the discussion, vote, and be counted in the quorum. This does not apply if the discussion concerns a financial transaction between MHT and that body.

7. Data protection

7.1. MHT will handle the information provided in line with data protection principles set out in the Data Protection Act 2018. The information will be used only to support compliance with the Trustee duty to act in MHT's best interests. It will not be used for any other purpose, except where the law requires it (including for law enforcement or regulatory investigations).

8. Receipt of information

8.1. The Board (or a Committee) may decide that a Trustee with a conflict must not receive certain information about the matter under consideration. Information received in a Trustee role is confidential. It must not be used to benefit the Trustee or any external person or organisation.

8.2. Before a meeting, the CEO may withhold confidential Board or Committee papers from a Trustee, where, in the CEO's reasonable opinion, the Trustee has a conflict of interest in relation to the business of the meeting or will be required under this policy to withdraw from the meeting.

8.3. If papers are withheld under 8.2, the CEO must:

- tell the affected Trustee as soon as possible, including the reasons for the decision; and
- tell all other Trustees and staff who received the paper that it has been withheld from that Trustee and that the content must not be shared with them.

8.4. The CEO must report their decision under 8.2 to the meeting to which the papers relate, explaining the reasons. The relevant Committee or the Board must then either confirm the decision or overturn it.

8.5. If the register of interests shows that some Trustees may have conflicts on items due to be discussed, the CEO must include a note with the meeting papers setting out:

- the name(s) of the Trustee(s) who may have a conflict;
- what the conflict is; and
- which agenda item(s) the conflict may relate to.

9. Inquorate meetings

9.1. If conflicts of interest mean a Committee meeting is no longer quorate for a particular agenda item, discussion of that item must stop and the matter must be referred to the next Board meeting for a decision.

9.2. If conflicts of interest mean a Board meeting is no longer quorate for a particular agenda item, discussion of that item must stop. A special meeting of the Board must be called as soon as practicable to decide that item.

Version Control - Approval and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, and earlier if required following changes in legislation, Charity Commission guidance, or other significant factors.

Version No	Date approved by Board	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	March 2017	Initial draft approved	Annually
2.0	September 2026	• Text amended to reflect Charity Commission guidance dated 22 April 2026. • Language made more accessible and inclusive. • Reformatted in MHT house style. • Guidance added about advance notification of potential conflicts of interest before meetings.	Annually

Next review due: September 2027

Regulatory Guidance

Charity Commission (England & Wales)

Identifying and managing conflicts of interest in a charity - GOV.UK

Related MHT Policies & Procedures

Data Protection Policy

Trustee Expenses

Trustee Code of Conduct

Malvern Hills Trust

Procedure for Dealing with Conflicts of interest

In this procedure, "conflict of interest" includes both a financial conflict of interest (3.4.1) and a conflict of loyalty (3.5.1). "The Policy" refers to the Conflict of Interest Policy, and item numbers refer to that Policy.

1. The Trustee Register of Interests is available in the Board Member area of the website. The Secretary to the Board will notify Trustees of any updates.
2. Before each meeting, the CEO or Secretary to the Board will alert relevant Trustees to any likely conflicts of interest. If asked, they will also help a Trustee understand how the Policy applies to their particular situation.
3. All Board and Committee agendas include a "Declarations of Interest" item. Trustees must declare any possible conflict at that point and say whether they think they should leave for the discussion and vote. If they stay, they must not take part in the discussion or vote.
4. If a possible conflict is identified by the Trustee, another Trustee, or an officer, and the Trustee concerned does not think they should leave, the Chair will ask them to explain why either: (a) there is no conflict, or (b) the conflict is so minor that a reasonable person would not see it as affecting the decision.
5. The Trustee must then leave the meeting while the remaining Board or Committee members decide what to do.
6. If several Trustees have the same type of potential conflict, the Board or Committee may consider them together. Different types of potential conflict must be considered separately.
7. If managing conflicts of interest means a meeting is no longer quorate, the agenda item must be referred to a future meeting (see item 9 of the Policy).
8. Once the remaining Board or Committee members have made their decision, the Trustee or Trustees will be invited back and told the outcome.
9. If the Chair has a potential conflict but believes they do not need to leave for that item, the Vice Chair will take the chair while the meeting decides what to do. If the Vice Chair is unavailable, or has the same conflict, the meeting will appoint a temporary chair.
10. If the meeting decides the Chair has a conflict for an agenda item, the Chair must not chair that item. The Vice Chair, or a temporary chair if one is appointed, will chair it instead.
11. If the meeting decides that a Trustee has a conflict of interest and must leave, but they refuse to do so, the unconflicted Trustees may choose one of the following:
    a. Pause the item and defer it to a later meeting;
    b. For a Committee meeting, refer the item directly to the Board for a decision; or
    c. Take any other action that is appropriate in the circumstances.

Receipt of information (item 8)

12. The Board or Committee may decide to withhold confidential papers from a Trustee with a conflict, either under “Declarations of Interest” or immediately before the relevant agenda item.
13. If the CEO withholds confidential papers before a meeting, this must be reported under “Declarations of Interest”. The Board or Committee will then decide whether to confirm or overturn that decision, either at that point or immediately before the relevant agenda item.
14. Before the meeting decides whether to withhold papers, the affected Board member will be invited to explain their position. They must then leave the meeting and must not take part in the discussion or decision.
15. The Board or Committee may decide to exclude the public while considering whether to withhold papers.
16. If papers are withheld from a Trustee, the other Trustees must be clearly told not to share the contents with that person.

Malvern Hills Trust

Balance Sheet as at 30th June 2026

**** Opening balances subject to audit ****

	£	£	NOTES
Fixed Assets			
Heritage assets	1,469,147		
Other land and buildings	204,734		
Improvements to capital assets	50,782		
LM vehicles & equipment	283,622		
Office equipment	7,144		
Investments	1,394,043		**B1**
		3,409,472	
Current Assets			
Livestock	31,452		
Investments	353,718		**B2**
Debtors & accrued income	257,200		
Deposits and Cash	911,823		**B3**
VAT Asset	3,691		
		1,557,884	
Current Liabilities			
Creditors : Short Term	333,535		
Payroll Taxation	15,826		
Wages/Pension	5,795		
VAT Liability	0		
		(355,156)	
Current Assets less Current Liabilities:		1,202,728	
Total Assets less Current Liabilities:		4,612,201	
Long Term Liabilities			
FRS 102 pension liability		(147,000)	**B4**
Total Assets less Total Liabilities:		**4,465,201**	
Capital & Reserves			
General fund	384,483		**B5**
Designated funds	1,257,631		
Restricted funds	2,970,087		
FRS 102 pension	(147,000)		**B4**
		4,465,201	

Malvern Hills Trust

General fund income and expenditure versus budget for the 3 months (Q1) ended 30th June 2026

** Opening balances subject to audit **

	Actual 3 mnths £	Budget 3 mnths £	Variance £	*Budget Annual £*	NOTES
Income					
Levy	201,425	201,425	(0)	*805,700*	G1
Grants	3,863	5,863	(2,000)	*23,450*	G2
Car park takings	141,604	172,095	(30,491)	*523,949*	G3
Donations & legacies	1,417	3,000	(1,583)	*12,000*	
Rents and licences	5,301	4,655	646	*18,620*	
Ice cream concessions	675	700	(25)	*2,800*	
Wayleaves	333	1,500	(1,167)	*6,000*	
AONB contribtions	1,561	1,561	(0)	*6,245*	
Sundry income	2,155	2,060	95	*8,240*	
Investment income	4,844	6,000	(1,156)	*24,000*	
Profit on disposal of fixed assets	31,144	2,000	29,144	*8,000*	G4
Total income	**394,322**	**400,859**	**(6,536)**	***1,439,004***	
Land management expenses					
Contract labour	600	2,790	2,190	*11,900*	
Drainage	0	250	250	*1,000*	
Vehicle and equipment expenses	3,332	5,500	2,168	*22,000*	
Hire of plant and equipment	0	250	250	*1,000*	
Waste Management	3,026	5,800	2,774	*23,200*	G5
Tree work	18,255	117	(18,138)	*33,000*	G6
Grass cutting	1,554	0	(1,554)	*4,400*	G7
Purchase of materials and tools	1,498	2,125	627	*8,500*	
Protective clothing	172	875	703	*3,500*	
Field consultancies	0	1,500	1,500	*6,000*	
Conservation volunteers	62	300	238	*1,200*	
Water testing	0	125	125	*500*	
Management plan	1,863	375	(1,488)	*1,500*	G8
Tracks and paths	0	2,875	2,875	*11,500*	
LM miscellaneous	0	1,637	1,637	*6,550*	
Total land management expenses	**30,362**	**24,519**	**(5,842)**	***135,750***	
Visitor services expenses					
Car park meter expenses	7,716	6,925	(791)	*27,700*	
Car park passes	670	750	80	*3,000*	
Car park repairs	0	250	250	*1,000*	
Rangers' vehicle expenses	3,573	3,375	(198)	*13,500*	
Rangers' uniform and tools	486	1,125	639	*4,500*	
Rangers' phones	410	200	(210)	*800*	
Total visitor services expenses	**12,855**	**12,625**	**(230)**	***50,500***	
Communications and public engagement expenses					
Leaflets	0	500	500	*2,000*	
Annual report	0	150	150	*600*	
Newsletters	801	300	(501)	*1,200*	
Campaigns	0	250	250	*1,000*	
Signs, display and information boards	125	500	375	*2,000*	
Events programme	4	188	183	*750*	
Exhibitions	0	250	250	*1,000*	
Other PR expenses	0	175	175	*700*	
Fundraising expenses	60	62	3	*250*	
Communications support and engagement	6,035	6,000	(35)	*24,000*	
Total communications and public engagement expenses	**7,026**	**8,375**	**1,349**	***33,500***	
Administration and governance expenses					
Rates	4,495	2,475	(2,020)	*9,900*	
Buildings maintenance	417	2,750	2,333	*11,000*	
Electricity and gas	1,475	2,650	1,175	*10,600*	
Telephones	1,383	1,450	67	*5,800*	
Depreciation	15,331	17,750	2,419	*71,000*	
Insurance	10,646	9,750	(896)	*39,000*	
Office equipment	883	1,500	617	*6,000*	
IT	4,350	4,625	275	*18,500*	
Website	1,383	1,625	242	*6,500*	
Legal and professional fees incl H&S	9,333	24,300	14,967	*97,200*	G9

Malvern Hills Trust

General fund income and expenditure versus budget for the 3 months (Q1) ended 30th June 2026

** Opening balances subject to audit **

	Actual 3 mnths £	Budget 3 mnths £	Variance £	*Budget Annual £*	NOTES
Governance costs	807	1,575	768	*6,300*	
Subscriptions	1,485	1,325	(160)	*5,300*	
Bank and investment charges	951	1,050	99	*4,200*	
Postage	913	1,000	87	*4,000*	
Stationery, printing and recycling	1,323	1,180	(143)	*4,720*	
Cleaning	1,394	1,500	106	*6,000*	
Travelling expenses	154	200	47	*800*	
Miscellaneous exps	285	250	(35)	*1,000*	
Newpaper ads	0	250	250	*1,000*	
Total administration and governance expenses	**57,007**	**77,205**	**20,198**	***308,820***	
Staff costs					
Basic salaries	158,318	177,775	19,457	*711,100*	**G10**
Employer's NI	9,592	18,575	8,983	*74,300*	**G10**
Pension contributions	35,885	35,127	(758)	*140,508*	
Group life assurance	1,057	1,200	143	*4,800*	
Training - staff	0	3,250	3,250	*13,000*	
Recruitment	0	625	625	*2,500*	
Total staff costs	**204,853**	**236,552**	**31,699**	***946,208***	
Total ALL expenses	**312,102**	**359,276**	**47,174**	***1,474,778***	
Surplus for the period before transfers	**82,220**	**41,582**	**40,637**	***(35,774)***	
Transfers from other funds	15,491	529	14,962	*27,616*	**G11**
Transfers to other funds	(14,018)	(13,783)	(235)	*(32,713)*	**G11**
Surplus for the period after transfers	**83,693**	**28,328**	**55,365**	***(40,871)***	**G12**
General fund brought forward	300,790	312,696	(11,906)		
General fund carried forward	**384,483**	**341,024**	**43,459**		

Malvern Hills Trust - Designated Funds Income and Expenditure for the 3 months (Q1) ended 30th June 2026

NOTES	D3	D1A	D1B									D2	D4			
** Opening balances subject to audit **																
Codes	Unrestricted Gifts £	Modernisation of Acts other costs £	Preparation & Promotion of Private Bill £	Dog campaign des fund £	Election exps des fund £	Tree disease des fund £	Ash Dieback fund £	CS Southern £	CS North & Central £	HLS Chase End £	HLS Old Hills £	Grazing reserve £	Designated Fixed Assets £	Pond works £	Basic Payment Scheme £	Total £
4020 - Stewardship annual grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12,368	52,303	1,626	1,840	0	0	0	0	68,137
4200 - Donations	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
4310 - Land rentals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	188	1,440	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,627
Income total	**10**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**12,555**	**53,743**	**1,626**	**1,840**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**69,774**
5000 - Contract labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	(11,511)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(11,511)
5100 - Graziers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(3,625)	(15,600)	(632)	(675)	0	0	0	0	(20,532)
Land management expenses total	0	0	0	0	0	0	(11,511)	(3,625)	(15,600)	(632)	(675)	0	0	0	0	**(32,043)**
Visitor services total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
6075 - Legal fees Governance based	0	0	(14,658)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(14,658)
6090 - Legal fees Land based	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,590)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,590)
6140 - Travelling expenses	0	(67)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(67)
Adminstration costs total	**0**	**(67)**	**(14,658)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(1,590)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(16,315)**
7000 - Basic salaries - field staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(600)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(600)
7010 - Basic salaries - office based staff	0	(5,172)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(5,172)
7021 - Employer's NI - field staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(87)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(87)
7030 - Employer's NI - office based staff	0	(662)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(662)
7040 - Pension contributions - field staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(60)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(60)
7050 - Pension contributions - office based staff	0	(1,170)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,170)
Salaries total	**0**	**(7,004)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(747)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(7,751)**
Surplus/(deficit) for the period before transfers	**10**	**(7,071)**	**(14,658)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(11,511)**	**8,930**	**35,805**	**994**	**1,165**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**13,665**
4600 - Transfers from other funds	0	0	66,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	65,400	0	0	131,400
8100 - Transfers to other funds	(65,400)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,123)	0	0	(67,523)
Surplus/(deficit) for the period after transfers	**(65,390)**	**(7,071)**	**51,342**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(11,511)**	**8,930**	**35,805**	**994**	**1,165**	**0**	**63,277**	**0**	**0**	**77,542**
Designated funds brought forward	390,153	38,377	(51,563)	1	14,276	33,570	44,530	99,818	459,465	6,289	19,569	60,060	57,489	6,725	1,331	1,180,089
Designated funds carried forward	**324,763**	**31,306**	**(220)**	**1**	**14,276**	**33,570**	**33,019**	**108,748**	**495,271**	**7,282**	**20,734**	**60,060**	**120,766**	**6,725**	**1,331**	**1,257,631**

Malvern Hills Trust - Restricted Funds Income and Expenditure for the 3 months (Q1) ended 30th June

NOTES	R1	R3	R3	R2									
** Opening balances subject to audit **													
Codes	Capital Outlay d'chgd £	Parliamentary fund £	Lands Maintenance fund £	Land Purchase (1992) fund £	Land Purchase 2 fund £	Restricted Gift fund £	Picnic bench donations £	Tree donation scheme £	Foothill Grasslands CSMT £	Urban Tree Challenge fund £	Access for All £	Handgate (DEFRA) £	Total £
4020 - Stewardship annual grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	366	0	0	0	366
4500 - Income from investment portfolio	0	3,793	1,484	3,033	1,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,811
4510 - Bank interest receivable	0	0	0	1,463	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,463
Income Total	**0**	**3,793**	**1,484**	**4,496**	**1,500**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**366**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**11,639**
5045 - Purchase of materials	0	0	0	0	0	(298)	0	0	(30)	0	0	0	(328)
Land management total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(298)**	**0**	**0**	**(30)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(328)**
Visitor services total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
6010 - Buildings maintenance	0	(840)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(840)
6115 - Investment manager's charges	0	(42)	(16)	(35)	(19)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(112)
8000 - Depreciation - other land and buildings	(694)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(694)
8005 - Depreciation - impt's to land and buildings	(5,950)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(5,950)
Adminstration costs total	**(6,644)**	**(882)**	**(16)**	**(35)**	**(19)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(7,597)**
Surplus/(deficit) for the period before transfers and investment gains	**(6,644)**	**2,911**	**1,468**	**4,461**	**1,481**	**(298)**	**0**	**0**	**336**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3,714**
8110 - Investment gains or losses	0	45,857	17,833	39,396	15,296	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	118,381
4600 - Transfers from other funds	4,147	(4,147)	0	14,018	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14,018
8100 - Transfers to other funds	0	0	0	(68,745)	0	0	0	0	0	(10,623)	0	0	(79,368)
Surplus/(deficit) for the period after transfers	**(2,497)**	**44,620**	**19,301**	**(10,871)**	**16,777**	**(298)**	**0**	**0**	**336**	**(10,623)**	**0**	**0**	**56,745**
Restricted funds brought forward	1,727,160	522,016	202,785	193,048	242,876	4,693	5,291	684	(0)	10,623	3,619	547	2,913,342
Restricted funds carried forward	**1,724,663**	**566,636**	**222,086**	**182,177**	**259,653**	**4,395**	**5,291**	**684**	**336**	**(0)**	**3,619**	**547**	**2,970,087**

Malvern Hills Trust
Notes to the Management Accounts 3 months (Q1) ended 30th June 2026

**** Opening balances subject to audit ****

General Funds

G 1 JUN26 year to date levy amount per management accounts is 3/12ths of the total for 2026/27.

	£
To summarise:	
General Fund Income year to date	394,322
Designated Fund Income year to date	69,774
Restricted Fund Income year to date	11,639
Total Income year to date	475,736
3/12 Annual levy (prorata actual total)	201,425
Levy % as a proportion of total income year to date	**42%**

Statutory accounts information:

	25/26 **	24/25	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20
Total Levy	739,100	697,070	663,800	595,300	566,950	534,850	519,250
Total all income	1,753,596	1,636,872	1,441,202	1,273,061	1,395,317	991,187	1,415,335
Levy % as total of GF, DF, and RF (all funds)	42.15%	42.59%	46.06%	46.76%	40.63%	53.96%	36.69%
			Average over 7 years 19/20-25/26				44.12%

*** draft subject to audit*

** GF = general funds DF = designated funds RF = restricted funds*

G 2 Grant Income comprises:

	£
25/26 WCC Countryside Contribution (2/12ths)	3,863
	3,863

G 3 We are already quite notably under budget across this income stream which is being monitored and analysed. We are under budget to date on car park takings and pass sales (annual and residents). With the continuing hot weather there is a strong chance that this could continue for the next quarter. There is no intention to revise the budget at this time but as the year progresses we may need to find cost savings to match lost anticipated revenue.
British Camp carpark income is down notably on the same months last year. This will be both the weather and the roadworks. Ticket sales on average in Q1 are down 20% and particularly in MAY/JUN where the average is more like 30%.

G 4 The sale of a series of assets at auction including 2 tractors, one of which is replaced in MAY26 generated a large profit on sale as the assets were fully written down in the accounts (£27,690 relating to the 2x tractors). At the 12th March Board meeting it was agreed that any profit on the sale of the 2 tractors be rolled into the new purchases. In July the 1st purchase was agreed as an excellent use of the unrestricted gift fund and this allocation was resolved at the 9th july Board meeting. The 2nd tractor purchase paper is included in the 10th September Board papers.

G 5 The bin review is now underway and so costs attched to this will start to come in during Q2.

G 6 Treework for 25/26 that did not start until 26/27 but it is felt that the budget, although weighted to the back end of the year, will support this, and so no designation was made at 31.03.26.

G 7 Due to the weather the cutting is ahead of budgeted schedule, the cost normally starts in Q2.

G 8 Budget is pro rata but actuals are front end for the LM Plan.

G 9 Legal and professional fees comprises: £

LAND BASED

Health & Safety general 40

	Land and property based	5,361	
			5,400
	STAFF BASED		
	HR support	675	
			675
	GOVERNANCE BASED		
	GDPR & Information requests	225	
	Governance and general other charity based	96	
	Audit y/e 31.03.27	2,938	
			3,258
	TOTAL		**9,333**

G 10 Salary costs are quite notably under budget predominently due to appointments for Ranger and Ranger Supervisor being delayed.

G 11	Transfers GF comprise:	£
	Annual 2nd repayment of loan interest and capital to Land Purchase fund (which falls due each April) that is partly financing the Private Bill.	(14,018)
	Release UTCF to general fund as agreed 09.07.26	10,623
	Depreciation on designated fund assets	2,123
	Transfer interest earned on non restricted LP investment amounts to general fund Q1	2,745
		1,474

G 12 The surplus after transfers is currenty ahead of budget.

Designated Funds

D 1 There are 2 funds set aside as designated for the Private Bill. Other costs (D1A) has a total budget now set at £201,958, this was revised at the Board meeting 14.05.26 from £140,377. Promotion & Preparation of the Bill (D1B) has a budget currently set at £503,472 (Charity Commission approval on the additional £31,500 granted on 29.06.26 and the budget has been updated in the numbers below):

D 1A	OTHER COSTS this year	£
	Staff costs	7,004
	Travel costs	67
		7,071
		£
	OTHER COSTS OF BILL 2023/24	3,413
	OTHER COSTS OF BILL 2024/25	73,964
	OTHER COSTS OF BILL 2025/26	63,381
	OTHER COSTS OF BILL - TOTAL COSTS TO DATE	147,829
	Remaining budget (PER REVISED BUDGET AS AGREED 14.05.26)	***54,129***
D 1B	PROMOTION & PREPARATION OF BILL this year	£
	Sharpe Pritchard	14,658
		14,658
		£
	PROMOTION & PREPARATION OF BILL 2023/24	14,342
	PROMOTION & PREPARATION OF BILL 2024/25	190,354
	PROMOTION & PREPARATION OF BILL 2025/26	195,102
	PROMOTION & PREPARATION OF BILL - TOTAL COSTS TO DATE	414,455
	Remaining budget	***89,017***

The balance on the Land Purchase fund loan to help finance the private Bill at 30.06.26 is £296,507.

D 2 The grazing reserve represents c. 1 year grazing costs and was established to ensure that vital grazing projects can continue should there be an issues with stewardship schemes or funding. This will allow time to seek alternative funding sources or review the strategy.

D 3 The unrestricted gift fund was used to purchase the new John Deere tractor in MAY26 as agreed at the Board meeting 09.07.26.

D 4 This is the carrying value of all assets purchsed from designated funds or restricted funds. The main things are the Robocutter and the tractor.

Restricted Funds

R 1 The Capital Outlay Discharged fund is represented by the cost of land and the net book value of improvements to land and buildings, the original cost of which was funded from the Land Purchase or Parliamentary Funds. These assets can only be sold in very limited circumstances and any proceeds must be used for the purchase of land.

R 2 The Land Purchase Fund has been recompensed with the 1st and 2nd (of 25 years payable each April) annual interest and capital repayment of the loan, as well as compensation payments on drawdown accordingly.

As agreed in the 26/27 budget and also in the 29.05.25 special Board meeting, the remaining £66k of the land purchase loan available for drawdown has been drawn at 30.06.26.

R 3 Investment income earned on these funds is shown throughout the year here, then transferred at the year end to general fund, this is in line with the conditions on these funds.

Balance Sheet

B 1 Quarterly investment portfolio update last carried out at 30.06.26. This covers all movements (including market value revaluation which is unrealised). Each in between month will just include cash transactions eg management fees or banked investment income.

B 2 Represents the Flagstone investments with > 3 months terms. This is considered and adjusted quarterly. Other more liquid Flagstone amounts are included under the deposits and cash header.

B 3 Includes all bank and cash including Flagstone amounts < 3 months to maturity from balance sheet date. The Flagstone <> split is updated quarterly.

B 4 This is revised and updated annually, the value as stated is the 31st March 2026 value as provided by the fund actuary. The triennial valuation of the pension fund was last carried out at 31.03.25 and the report was included in the confidential section of the DEC25 FAR meeting. This valuation is a separate exercise from that carried out each year to calculate the FRS 102 figure whose sole purpose is for disclosure in the annual accounts each year.

B 5 Reserves review is carried out quarterly but I am also monitoring it monthly. Headroom is as follows:

31st May 2026	131.25 %	£109,379
30th June 2026	145.89 %	£172,081

Paper F
For Information

Ordinary Board

Benchmark report on strategic KPIs

10 September 2026 deferred from 9 July 2026

Background papers

FAR Paper C Fundraising strategy and key performance indicators 4 June 2026

Malvern Hills Trust Business Plan 2022-2027 Adopted March 2022
https://www.malvernhills.org.uk/looking-after/business-plan/

Background and context

It is the recommendation of FAR to the Board, that the CEO commences monitoring of a set of identified KPIs for the remainder of the current Land Management Plan and Business Plan periods.

Strategic KPIs monitored

The reason for choosing the land management and conservation KPIs shown in Table 1, is that other similar organisations to the Trust, like wildlife trusts and conservator-type organisations, will also be monitoring condition of SSSIs and path condition using a methodology aligned to that of local authority public rights of way, for comparison.

Natural England's data for Overall condition for SSSis is out of date (2018) but is supplement by numerous secondary land management metrics that are reported to Land Management Committee. For comparison, current data shows that 62 % of SSSI features in England and Wales are in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition, while the remainder are facing various degrees of decline.

The Trust is currently assessing route condition on its paths through a project with volunteers on the northern hills. The intention is to roll this out across the whole landholding.

The annual Land Management Plan Annual Report used qualitative and quantitative information to report on the delivery of the Land Management Plan (LMP) for the year 1 April 2025 – 31March 2026. Legal obligations met is rated green.

Finance measures reflect the Trust's position at end of March 2025 and March 2026 and the latter are subject to audit. Income is rising. Level of reserves is lower although within policy. HR KPIs are being compiled. The first employee engagement survey was in April 2025. Results were reported to Staffing Committee. An overall staff satisfaction score wasn't included in the 2025 survey and can be included in future surveys.

The Trust has commissioned Alder since September 2024 to compare communications performance with a small number of other similar organisations to the Trust, like wildlife trusts and conservator-type organisations. Performance against Media coverage sentiment mentions for "Malvern Hills Trust" is currently higher than the three comparator organisations and the share of voice compares favourably with them.

Table 1: Latest position on strategic KPIs

Business area	KPI	Frequency	Latest position
Land management and Conservation	Overall condition of SSSIs[1]	Annually	7/18 units are favourable 8/18 units are unfavourable recovering 3/18 units are unfavourable declining
	Path accessibility	Annually	To be confirmed
	Rag-rating of LMP projects	Annually	All legal obligations met (no breaches in legislation) – green
Finance (administration)	Total income	Annually	31 Mar 2025 £1,636,872 31 Mar 2026 £1,753,596
	Level of reserves	Annually	31 Mar 2025 £4,275,183 31 Mar 2026 £4,247,220
Human resources (administration)	Employee turnover rate	Annually	To follow
	Absenteeism rate	Annually	To follow
	Employee engagement	Annually	No score yet available
Communications (administration)	Media coverage sentiment for mentions of "Malvern Hills Trust"[2]	Bi-annually	Sept 2024 65 % Mar 2025 68.7 % Sept 2025 77 % Mar 2026 71 %
	Share of voice[3]	Bi-annually	42.5 %

Deborah Fox
CEO
22 June 2026

[1] Natural England Standard: SSSI Monitoring and Reporting (NESTND035). Natural England's last formal on-site condition assessment of the main Malvern Hills SSSI occurred in 2018.

[2] Alder Comparisons Report 1 October 2025-31 March 2026. This KPI measures percentage of positive, trending positive, neutral, trending negative and negative coverage as rated by a third party.

[3] Alder Comparisons Report 1 October 2025-31 March 2026. This KPI measures the percentage of coverage attributed to the Trust compared with three similar organisations.

Paper G
For Information

Ordinary meeting of the Board
Land Management Plan 2027-2032 – Consultations Report
10 September 2026

Introduction
This paper is made of two parts – part one is a summary of all 5 of the completed consultation exercises held to support the development of the Land Management Plan (LMP) 2027-2032.
Trustees have already received detailed reports on consultations 1 and 2. Part 2 of this paper provides detailed reports of consultations 3, 4 and 5.

PART 1: CONSULTATIONS SUMMARY

Between August 2025 and August 2026, 5 multi-format consultations were held in line with the consultation schedule agreed by Board. These consultations involved: staff, trustees, members of the public and external organisations giving them all opportunities to share their views on the current and future land management of the Malvern Hills and Commons.

These consultations were planned with reference to the Cabinet Office's 'Consultation Principles: guidance'. Consultation principles: guidance - GOV.UK

The tables below summarise all the consultations held.

Consultation:	1 - Internal review
Aims:	• To garner collective ownership of the LMP especially in those who will be delivering it. • To ensure the new document(s) is fit-for-purpose and the audiences identified. • To collect informed views on the current LMP, recent practical work and how these could be improved upon.
Date undertaken:	August and September 2025
Method:	Internal. Questionnaire for all staff and trustees plus workshops.
Results:	A 95% response rate from staff and 42% response rate from trustees.
Conclusions:	• A concise, strategic version of the LMP is required. • Having a full version acts as a useful and comprehensive resource. • The vision should be much more prominent. • Detail and evidence should be gathered but kept in the background. • Staff generally found the plan easy to navigate and well-structured but trustees reported difficulties. Both groups noted challenges with technical language. • Operational work schedules should be kept internal only. • Better use should be made of images and infographics. • Progress on the LMP should be measured and made readily available including annual progress reports. • Issues to focus on include: climate, nature, visitor management and internal capacity.

Consultation:	2 - Call for Evidence
Aims:	• To gather relevant data and evidence to base the plan upon.
Date undertaken:	November 2025 – January 2026 (3 months)
Method:	External.
Results:	35 pieces of evidence were received. 21 were considered to be of vital use with specific information relevant to MHT land. 14 pieces of evidence were considered useful reference material, typically these were wider third-party plans to which MHT may contribute. Evidence covered a variety of topics including: public rights of way, historic photographs, species and climate change.
Conclusions:	n/a

Consultation:	3 - Picture postcards
Aims:	• To collect informed views on the current LMP, recent practical work and how these could be improved upon. • To gather informed opinion on localised issues that need addressing and also larger issues that MHT could give more focus to in the next five years.
Date undertaken:	December 2025 – July 2026 (7 months)
Method:	External. Pre-paid postcards were made available at 11 venues around the Hills & Commons and handed out to visitors. Explanatory text was provided. Participants filled in their top three special features and top three environmental challenges for MHT. This provided a snappy, simple way of contributing.
Results:	171 postcards were received. This included 22 from pupils at Wyche Primary School. The most frequent results are given here (lumped). Special features: nature/wildlife (20 %); views (19 %); public access (14 %); landscape/scenery (12 %) and public goods (fresh air, tranquillity) (8 %). Environmental challenges: Climate change (10 %); visitor pressure (9 %); bikes off-piste (9 %); litter (9 %); dogs/dog poo (8 %); car parking inappropriately (6 %).
Conclusions:	• There is strong public affection for the Hills and Commons and awareness of the variety of public goods that they offer. • There is widespread awareness of the changing world and that this change is/could negatively affect the Hills and Commons – chiefly these changes were climate change, visitor pressure and nature loss. • Certain behaviours are very unpopular and the public look to MHT to curb these.

Consultation:	4 - Meet & greets
Aims:	• To inform stakeholders about MHT and our care of the Hills and Commons. • To collect informed views on the current LMP, recent practical work and how these could be improved upon. • To ensure a shared appreciation of what can and cannot be negotiated. Certain aspects of our land management are required

	by law and there is only limited flexibility as to the delivery of these aspects. • To gather informed opinion on localised issues that need addressing and also larger issues that MHT could give more focus to in the next five years. • To grow wider understanding, tolerance and support for MHT's work.
Date undertaken:	May and June 2026
Method:	External. 4 public events with staff, trustees and a range of MHT info and photographs available to the visiting public. Widely advertised.
Results:	103 people attended 4 events at Colwall, Welland, Great Malvern and Malvern Link. All attendees were engaged with by staff and/or trustees. 57 questionnaires were completed.
Conclusions:	• Strong support for the ongoing conservation and land management work carried out by the Trust. • Recognition of the importance of grazing, habitat management and maintaining open landscapes and views. • Strong appreciation for the Hills and Commons as spaces for wellbeing, recreation, quiet enjoyment and connection with nature. • A desire for continued communication, education and opportunities for public engagement with the Trust. • High levels of concern around: wildlife decline and the impacts of increasing visitor pressure; erosion; litter; anti-social behaviour and conflicts between different user groups especially rogue mountain bikers.

Consultation:	5 - One-to-ones
Aims:	• To inform stakeholders about MHT and our care of the Hills and Commons. • To gather relevant data and evidence to base the plan upon. • To collect informed views on the current LMP, recent practical work and how these could be improved upon. • To ensure a shared appreciation of what can and cannot be negotiated. Certain aspects of our land management are required by law and there is only limited flexibility as to the delivery of these aspects. • To gather informed opinion on localised issues that need addressing and also larger issues that MHT could give more focus to in the next five years. • To grow wider understanding, tolerance and support for MHT's work. • To garner collective ownership of the LMP especially in those who will be delivering it. • To ensure the new document(s) is fit-for-purpose and the audiences identified.
Date undertaken:	June and July 2026
Method:	External. One-to-one meetings between staff and representatives from a range of invited organisations including small local groups and national bodies.
Results:	
Conclusions:	

PART 2: DETAILED REPORTS ON CONSULTATIONS 3, 4 & 5

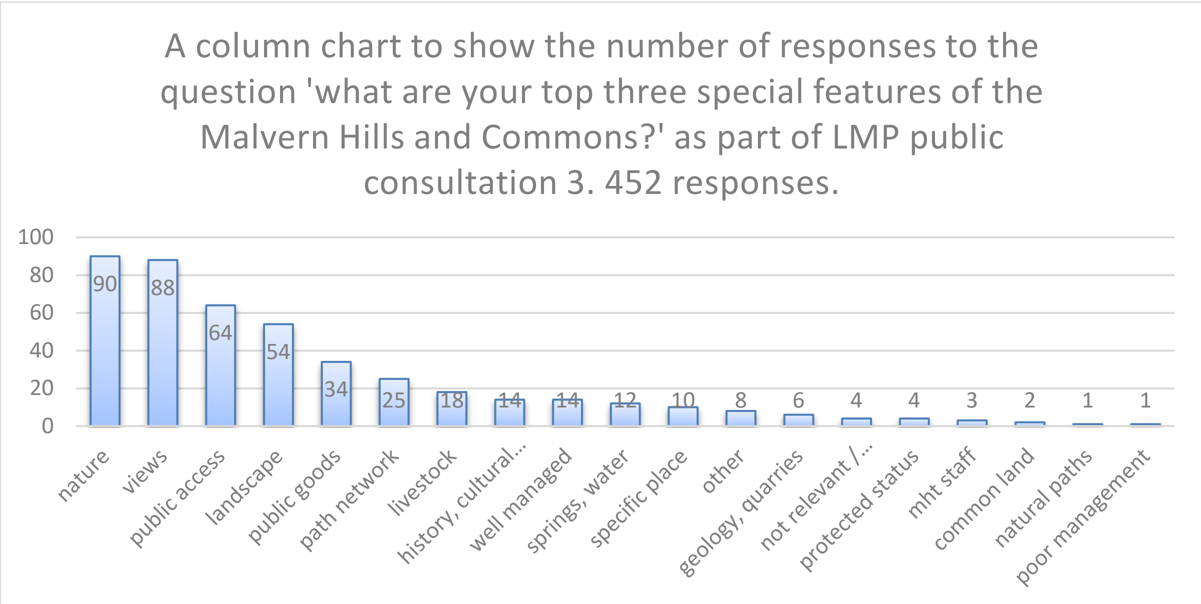
<u>Consultation 3: Postcard exercise</u>

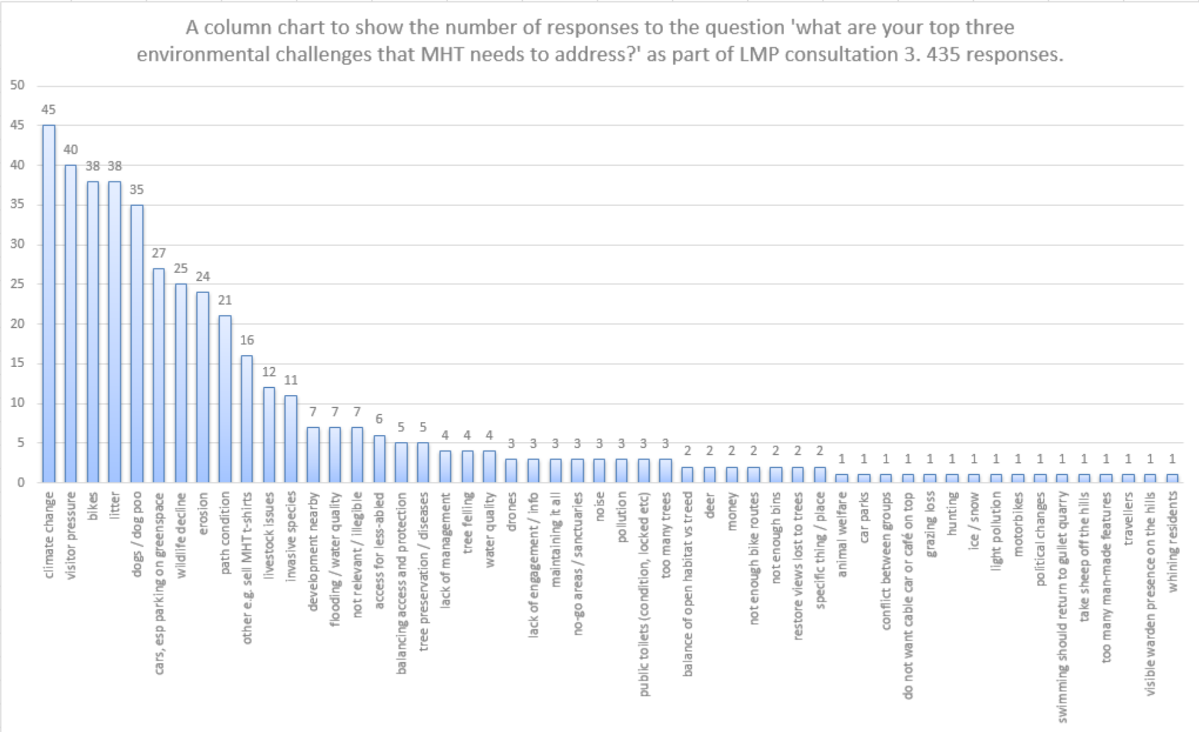
The aims of this consultation were to:

- To inform stakeholders about MHT and our care of the Hills and Commons.
- To collect informed views on the current LMP, recent practical work and how these could be improved upon.
- To gather informed opinion on localised issues that need addressing and also larger issues that MHT could give more focus to in the next five years.

External consultation. Pre-paid postcards were made available at 11 venues around the Hills & Commons and also handed out to visitors. Explanatory text was provided via accompanying poster, website info, newspaper article or verbally.
Participants filled in their top three special features of the Hills and Commons and also their top three environmental challenges for MHT.
This provided a snappy, simple way of contributing toward the LMP.

The results are shown below:





<u>Consultation 4 – One-to-one consultations</u>

03/08/2026

Marie Dipple, Community and Conservation Officer

Summary

During summer 2026, the Malvern Hills Trust held several stakeholder and partner consultations, to give organisations opportunity to share their views on the current and future land management of the Malvern Hills and Commons and discuss upcoming opportunities.
12/14 invited organisations attended a one-to-one and provided a completed questionnaire. These included: Natural England, Castlemorton Common Association, Malvern Environmental Protection Group and Malvern Spa Association. The events were well attended and generated valuable discussion around the current and future management of the Malvern Hills and Commons.

Overall, feedback demonstrated strong appreciation for the work undertaken by the Malvern Hills Trust. Respondents widely recognised the importance of balancing conservation, recreation and public access across a nationally significant and heavily used landscape.

Key findings from the events included:

- Climate change and increasing recreational pressure were identified as the key challenges for the next five years, with concerns including wildfire, drought, flooding, erosion and impacts from cycling and dog walking.
- Stakeholders identified a strong need for better monitoring, evidence and data sharing, supporting a more adaptive approach to land management.

- There was significant appetite for greater partnership working, with 8 mentions relating to collaboration and opportunities for landscape-scale working, external expertise and funding.
- Communication and engagement were also identified as important tools for improving understanding, encouraging responsible visitor behaviour and supporting conservation outcomes, with 6 mentions.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim of consultation

MHT invited various stakeholders and partner organisations to a one-to-one meeting to help inform the Land Management Plan. This event and accompanying questionnaire were designed to gather feedback, views and technical insights. The aims were:

- To inform stakeholders about MHT and our care of the Hills and Commons.
- To gather relevant data and evidence to base the plan upon.
- To collect informed views on the current LMP, recent practical work and how these could be improved upon.
- To ensure a shared appreciation of what can and cannot be negotiated. Certain aspects of our land management are required by law and there is only limited flexibility as to the delivery of these aspects.
- To gather informed opinion on localised issues that need addressing and also larger issues that MHT could give more focus to in the next five years.
- To grow wider understanding, tolerance and support for MHT’s work.
- To garner collective ownership of LMP especially in those who will be delivering it.
- To ensure the new document(s) is fit-for-purpose and the audiences identified.

2. Survey Methodology

2.1 Survey design

Initially, MHT staff drew up a list of key stakeholders and partners it had previously worked or was currently working with. This included organisations which had provided technical advice and expertise, funding, or shared activities across MHT’s land holdings. The consultation was kept to organisations within the counties of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire- relevant to the counties within which MHT’s jurisdiction sits.

Invitees were emailed in advance inviting them to a one-to-one meeting along with a questionnaire which could be pre-populated ahead of the meeting to help guide discussion. For invitees who were not able to attend in person, virtual teams meetings were offered – some organisations were happy to send in their thoughts via the questionnaire alone due to time constraints. These invitations were sent directly to partner organisations and stakeholders, so no external promotion was needed.

The questionnaire included open-ended questions, allowing respondents to provide detailed comments in their own words. The questionnaire was intentionally kept concise to encourage participation and enable respondents to focus on the issues they felt were most important. Questions were designed to gather views on:

- How organisations use or influence the Hills and Commons
- Understanding of the work of the Trust and its impacts on organisations' work
- Perception of good management vs improvements
- Challenges and priorities for future land management
- Key environmental pressures

2.2 Event delivery

The scope of the questionnaire was carefully considered to ensure that expectations around the LMP remained realistic and transparent. While feedback is an important part of informing future management, there are aspects of land management and access that are shaped by the Trust's legal duties, governance responsibilities and statutory obligations. The consultation was therefore designed to gather meaningful insight and identify priorities and concerns, rather than create expectations around issues that fall outside the Trust's powers or responsibilities.

Each session was led by two MHT staff, providing partners and stakeholders with the opportunity to:

- Speak directly with staff and Trustees
- Raise questions or concerns
- Learn more about current conservation and land management work
- Provide further information on their organisation's work, upcoming projects and opportunities

3. Results

Number of organisations/bodies represented: 12. Natural England, Castlemorton Common Association, Malvern Environmental Protection Group, Malvern Spa Association, Historic England, Environment Agency, H&W Earth Heritage Trust, Wildlife Advisory Panel (including Worcestershire Wildlife Trust), Recreation Advisory Panel, MH National Landscape, Malvern Landowners Group and Herefordshire Council.
Number of attendees = 34
Number of sessions held = 11
Number of questionnaires completed and returned = 12

3.1 Question 1: How do you/your organisation currently use MHT land or influence it in some way?

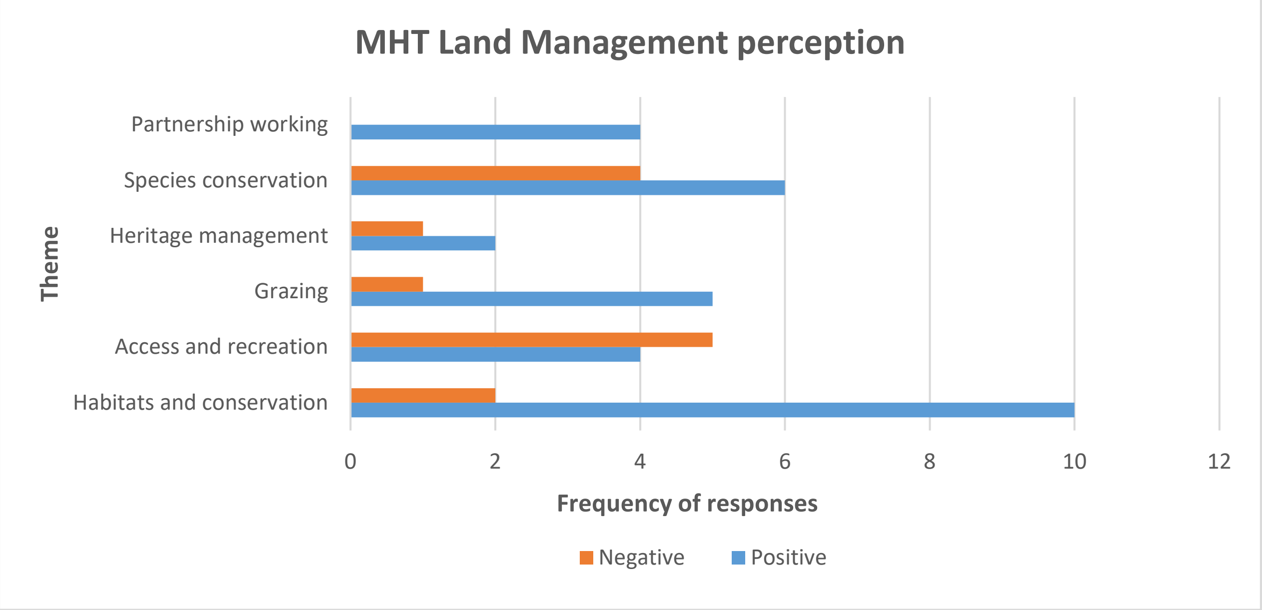
Out of 11 sessions held, respondents gave the following answers, grouped by theme these were:

- Conservation, land management & ecological recovery: **6**
- Strategic planning, funding & partnership delivery: **4**
- Access, recreation & public enjoyment: **3**
- Geological & heritage conservation: **2**
- Public access & infrastructure: **1**

Many stakeholders identified more than one way in which they use or influence MHT land; therefore, responses may be represented within multiple thematic categories and percentages do not total 100 % .

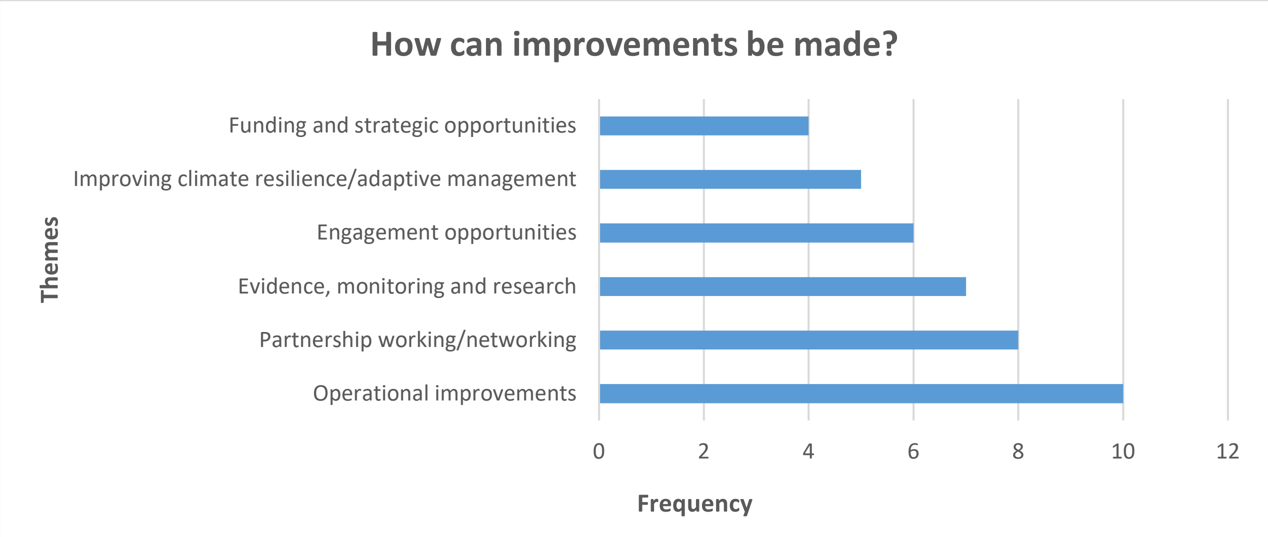
Six out of ten respondents identified their primary involvement with MHT land through conservation, land management, environmental monitoring, or ecological recovery activities. A further four respondents described involvement through strategic planning, funding or partnership delivery mechanisms. Recreational and access interests were represented by three respondents, while geological and heritage interests were represented by two.

3.2 Question 2: How has MHT land management affected your area of interest – please include any positives or negative examples.



Overall, stakeholders were positive about MHT's land management, particularly grazing, habitat management, access provision, geological and heritage conservation, and partnership working. Most concerns related to balancing competing interests, including recreation versus conservation, species-specific management requirements, path erosion, invasive species, and the long-term sustainability of current management approaches.
Positive feedback: *"We have been pleased to see the management carried out by the Trust across the hills and commons. Positives include a beneficial grazing regime and careful tree and scrub management. Bracken control and management aimed at creating habitat for specific species has been welcome and we hope that this continues."*
Negative feedback: *"Footpath erosion on the ridges is an ongoing concern as are the incursions into the scrub and woodland by mountain bikers."*

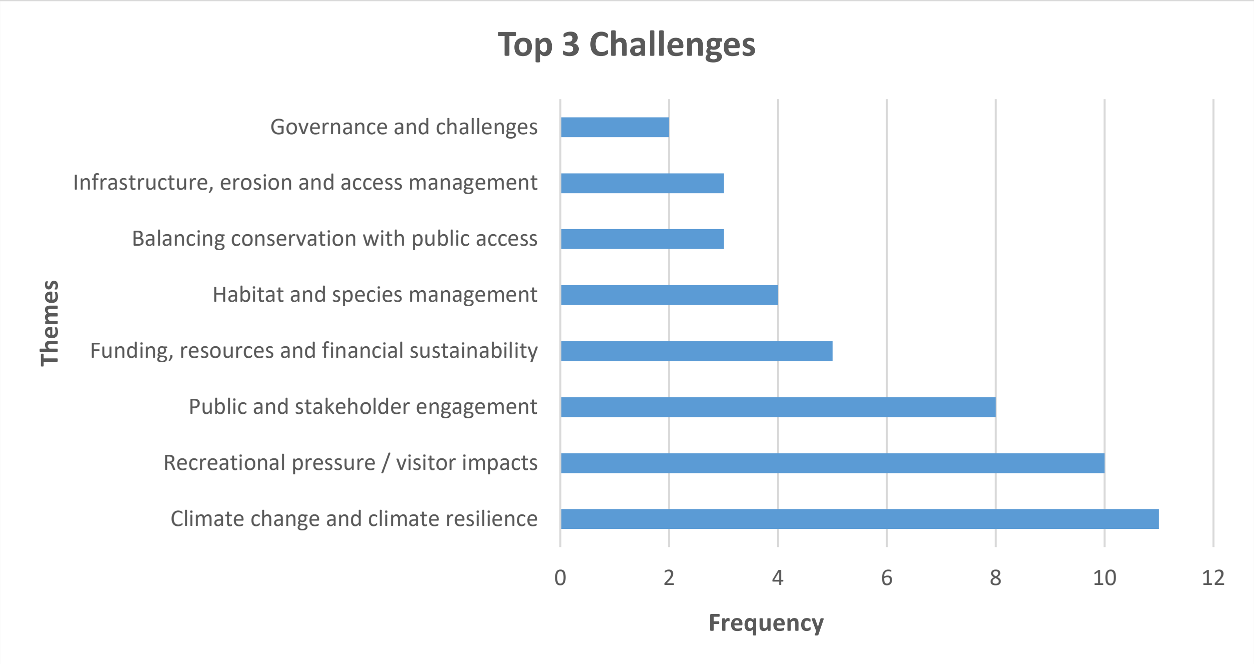
3.3 Question 3: Is there a way that can be improved upon? (Links to question 2)



The most common suggestions were not calls for major changes in land management philosophy. Instead, stakeholders primarily wanted:

- Practical improvements to existing management (10 mentions) e.g. "*More paths/gangways and pond management, managing recreation pressure and signage, grazing changes, deer and squirrel control, woodland management*"
- Better engagement and communication (6 mentions) e.g. *"Joint engagement events and walks, community engagement and storytelling, tourism messaging, citizen science, internships, volunteering"*
- More collaboration with partners (8 mentions) e.g. *"Joint engagement events, attendance at meetings and conferences, LNRS involvement and external expertise, working with tourism organisations and businesses."*
- More focus on data collection and monitoring (7 mentions) e.g. *"Better project reporting and data sharing, use of assessment tools and external expertise, combined mapping initiatives, citizen science projects, strategic species monitoring and targeted water management."*
- Improvements to climate resilience and adaptive management strategy (5 mentions) e.g. "*Adaptive grazing and Natural Flood Management, hydrological restoration and water retention, fire risk planning, climate buffering and resilience for species, drought impacts, fire breaks.*"
- Strategic focus on funding opportunities and collaboration (4 mentions) e.g. "*LNRS opportunity mapping and wider connectivity planning, funding support through Malvern Spa Association, additional funding opportunities for path management, landscape-scale habitat connectivity and strategic planning.*"

3.4 Question 4: What do you/your organisation see as the top 3 challenges for Malvern Hills Trust's land management for the next 5 years?



Stakeholders identified climate change and increasing recreational pressure as the most significant challenges facing land management over the next five years. Respondents highlighted concerns relating to wildfire risk, flooding, drought and the need to improve habitat resilience in the face of climate change. Increasing visitor numbers, associated erosion, and impacts from activities such as dog walking and cycling were also commonly raised.

Many stakeholders emphasised the importance of improving public understanding of the Trust's work, strengthening stakeholder relationships, and addressing misinformation surrounding land management decisions. Funding constraints, rising management costs, invasive species management, and the ongoing challenge of balancing nature conservation with public access were also recurring themes.

3.5 Question 5: What do you/your organisation see as the top 3 priorities for Malvern Hills Trust's land management for the next 5 years?

Overall, the responses indicate that stakeholders see climate resilience, nature recovery and habitat management, and the management of recreational pressure and public access as the key priorities for Malvern Hills Trust over the next five years. There was also strong emphasis on engaging and educating local communities and visitors, alongside improving monitoring, evidence and research to inform adaptive land management. A number of respondents highlighted the importance of sustainable grazing and land management, as well as securing the funding and resources needed to deliver these priorities.
Collectively, the responses suggest that stakeholders value an approach that balances the conservation and enhancement of the Hills' natural and heritage assets with appropriate public access, while becoming more resilient to future environmental and social pressures.

4. Discussion

4.1 How stakeholders/partners use the Hills and Commons

The findings from Question 1 demonstrate that stakeholders and partners engage with the Hills and Commons in a range of ways, with conservation, land management and ecological recovery forming the largest area of involvement. Other organisations influence or use the land through strategic planning, funding and partnership delivery, access and recreation, and geological and heritage interests.

This demonstrates that the Hills and Commons are important not only as a place for public recreation, but also as a site for conservation, research, partnership delivery and wider strategic environmental activity. It also highlights the breadth of organisations with an interest in, or influence on, the Trust's land.

For the next LMP, this reinforces the importance of recognising the Trust's role within a wider network of organisations and initiatives, and of maintaining opportunities for partnership working across conservation, access, heritage and landscape-scale activity.

4.2 MHT's work positive/negative impacts

The findings from Q2 demonstrate broad support for the Trust's current land management. Stakeholders particularly recognised the benefits of grazing, habitat management, scrub and tree management, bracken control, geological and heritage conservation, access provision and partnership working.

The concerns raised were generally focused on the impacts and practical challenges associated with managing a heavily used landscape, rather than fundamental disagreement with the Trust's approach. These included path erosion, mountain biking impacts, invasive species and the need to balance competing requirements between recreation and conservation.

This provides evidence that the next LMP can build on a generally positive foundation, while recognising the need to address specific pressures and conflicts where they affect the condition of habitats, infrastructure or the visitor experience.

4.3 Improvements

The findings from Q3 indicate that stakeholders are primarily seeking improvements and strengthening of existing management rather than a significant change in direction. The most frequently identified opportunities related to practical land management, partnership working, monitoring and evidence, engagement and communication, climate resilience, and funding.

The strength of these responses suggests that the next LMP should provide a framework for continuous improvement, with clear opportunities to work with partners, improve the evidence base, secure external expertise and funding, and develop more effective approaches to emerging pressures.

In particular, the findings support a more integrated approach in which practical management, monitoring, communication, partnership working and funding are considered together rather than as separate areas of activity.

4.4 Views on challenges

The findings from Q4 identify climate change and increasing recreational pressure as the most significant challenges for the Trust over the next five years. Concerns relating to wildfires, flooding, drought and habitat resilience demonstrate that environmental change is expected to have an increasingly important influence on land management.

At the same time, increasing visitor numbers and the associated impacts of erosion, dog walking and cycling highlight the continuing challenge of balancing public access with the protection of the landscape. Other challenges, including funding constraints, rising management costs, invasive species and the need to address misinformation, demonstrate that pressures on land management are both environmental and organisational.

These findings suggest that the next LMP needs to be sufficiently flexible and adaptive to respond to multiple, interacting pressures, rather than addressing individual challenges in isolation.

4.5 Views on priorities

The findings from Q5 reinforce climate resilience, nature recovery and habitat management, and the management of recreational pressure and public access as the principal priorities for the next five years.

The emphasis placed on engagement, education, monitoring and research also demonstrates that stakeholders see these as important mechanisms for achieving effective land management, rather than as separate activities as described above.

The combination of these priorities is significant. It suggests that stakeholders value an approach which protects and enhances the natural and heritage assets of the Hills while recognising that this must be delivered alongside appropriate public access and a resilient approach to future environmental change. Sustainable grazing and land management, partnership working and securing sufficient funding and resources were also identified as important enablers of delivery.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the consultation provides strong support for the Trust's existing conservation-led approach, with stakeholders seeking to see current management strengthened and adapted rather than fundamentally changed. Climate change and increasing recreational pressure emerged as the key challenges, with climate resilience, nature recovery, habitat management and appropriate public access identified as priorities.

The findings also highlight the importance of evidence, monitoring, partnership working, funding and engagement in delivering these priorities. Together, they provide a clear basis for shaping the next LMP around proactive, adaptive and collaborative management that can respond to changing environmental

Consultation 4 - Meet and Greet events.

18/06/2026
Marie Dipple, Community and Conservation Officer

Paper G
For Information

Photo: attendees at consultation event at Malvern Link.

Summary

During spring/summer 2026, the Malvern Hills Trust held four public consultation events to give people the opportunity to meet staff, learn more about the work of the Trust, and share their views on the current and future land management of the Malvern Hills and Commons.

The events were quite well attended and generated valuable discussion around the future management of the Malvern Hills and Commons. A total of 57 questionnaire responses were received across the four events. Overall, feedback demonstrated strong public appreciation for both the landscape itself and the work undertaken by the Malvern Hills Trust. Respondents widely recognised the importance of balancing conservation, recreation and public access across a nationally significant and heavily used landscape.

Key findings from the events included:

- Strong support for the ongoing conservation and land management work carried out by the Trust.
- Recognition of the importance of grazing, habitat management and maintaining open landscapes and views.
- Strong appreciation for the Hills and Commons as spaces for wellbeing, recreation, quiet enjoyment and connection with nature.
- A desire for continued communication, education and opportunities for public engagement with the Trust.
- High levels of concern around: wildlife decline and the impacts of increasing visitor pressure; erosion; litter; anti-social behaviour and conflicts between different user groups especially rogue mountain bikers.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim of consultation

MHT is running a series of consultation events to help inform the LMP. Part of consultation 4 was a series of four public engagement events called 'meet and greets'. This event and accompanying questionnaire were designed to gather feedback, views and local insight from residents and visitors. The aims were to:

- To inform stakeholders about MHT and our care of the Hills and Commons.
- To collect informed views on the current LMP, recent practical work and how these could be improved upon.
- To ensure a shared appreciation of what can and cannot be negotiated. Certain aspects of our land management are required by law and there is only limited flexibility as to the delivery of these aspects.
- To gather informed opinion on localised issues that need addressing and also larger issues that MHT could give more focus to in the next five years.
- To grow wider understanding, tolerance and support for MHT's work.

2. Survey Methodology

2.1 Survey design

The consultation exercise was delivered through a series of four public engagement events held across different locations within the Malvern Hills area. The events were designed to provide an accessible and informal opportunity for residents, visitors and stakeholders to speak directly with representatives from the Malvern Hills Trust and contribute feedback towards the development of the Land Management Plan. Two events were held 10-3pm and 1-5pm and two events 3-7pm. The events were advertised in a wide campaign involving: social media, website, local newsletters, posters, leaflets and in local newspapers.

A questionnaire was developed to support the engagement process and capture public views in a consistent format across all events. The questionnaire included a mixture of closed and open-ended questions, allowing respondents to provide both measurable feedback and more detailed comments in their own words. The questionnaire was intentionally kept concise to encourage participation and enable respondents to focus on the issues they felt were most important. Questions were designed to gather views on:

- How people use and value the Hills and Commons
- Awareness and understanding of the work of the Trust
- Perception of good management vs improvements
- Opportunities for improved communication and engagement
- Priorities for future land management
- Key environmental pressures

2.2 Event delivery

The scope of the questionnaire was carefully considered to ensure that expectations around the Land Management Plan remained realistic and transparent. While public feedback is an important part of informing future management, there are aspects of land management and access that are shaped by the Trust's legal duties, governance responsibilities and statutory obligations. The consultation was therefore designed to gather meaningful local insight and identify priorities and concerns, rather than create expectations around issues that fall outside the Trust's powers or responsibilities.

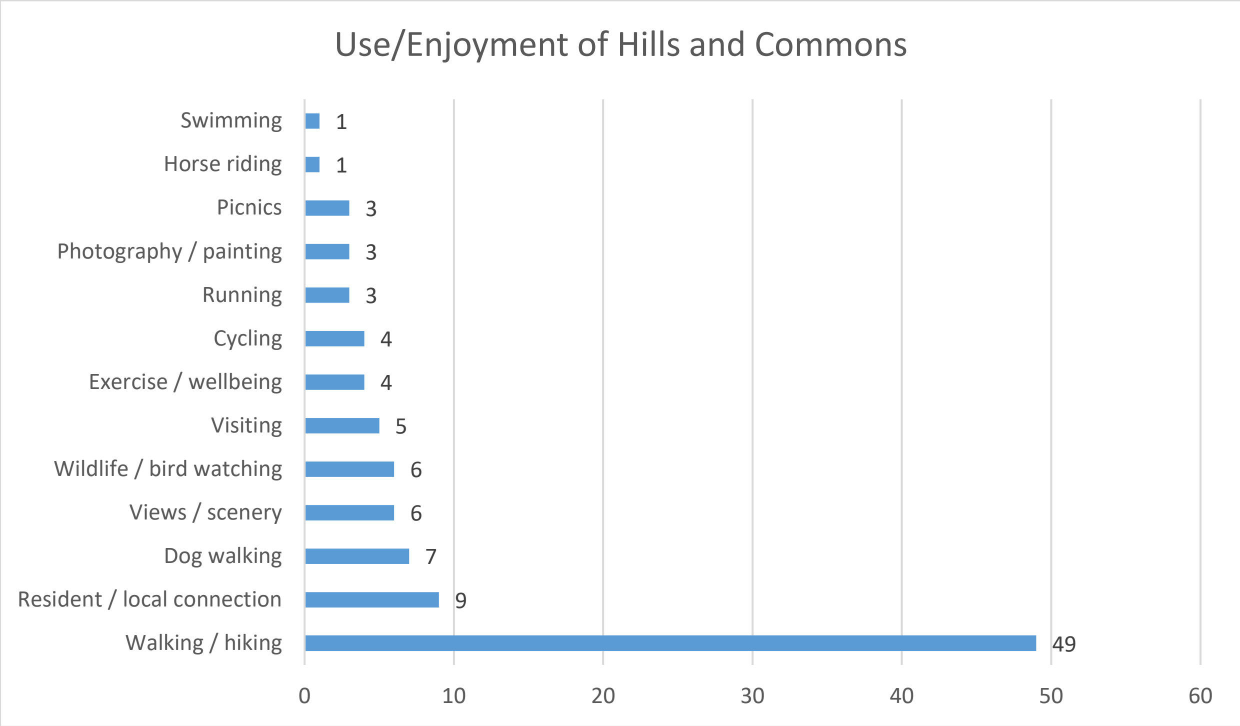
Each event was staffed by staff and Trustees, providing attendees with the opportunity to:

- Speak directly with staff and Trustees
- Raise questions or concerns
- Learn more about current conservation and land management work
- View information displays and take material home.
- Sign up to the Trust newsletter to receive future updates and information about engagement opportunities.
- Complete a questionnaire, providing both quantitative and qualitative feedback.

3. Results

Number of attendees = 103
Lyttleton Well, 13 May - 34
Welland Parish Hall, 20 May - 12
Colwall Park Hotel, 10 June - 28
Malvern Link United Reformed Church Hall, 17 June – 29
Number of questionnaires completed and returned = 57.

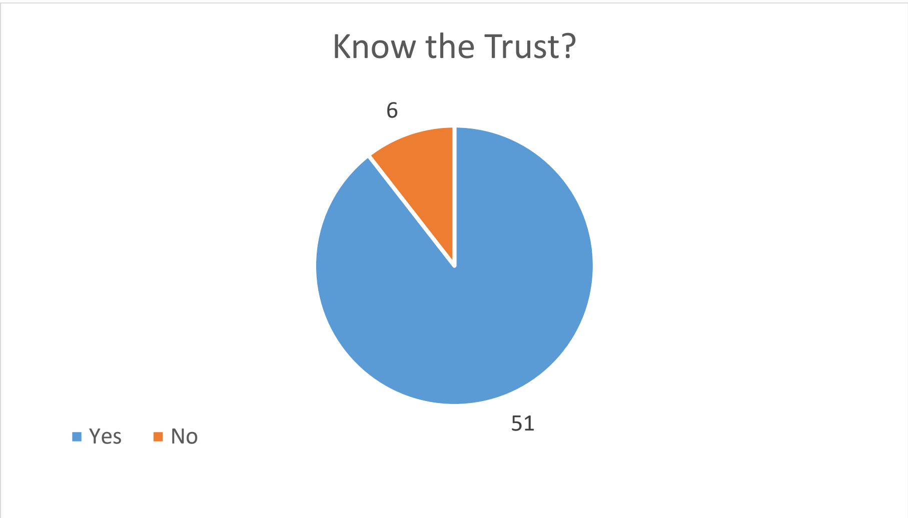
Question 1: How do you use or enjoy the Malvern Hills and Commons? (free text)



The responses highlighted the importance of the Hills and Commons as a space for everyday recreation, physical and mental wellbeing, nature connection and community identity.

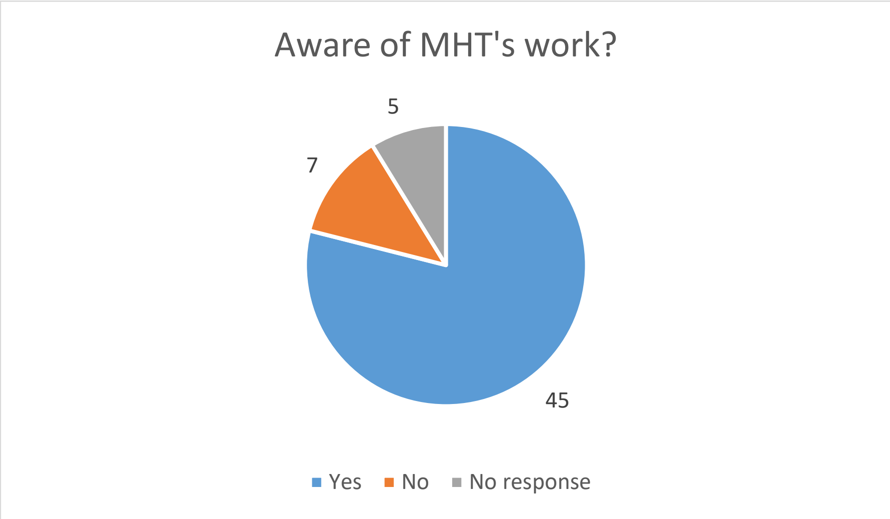
Several respondents also highlighted:
'Quiet enjoyment and relaxation; Appreciation of wildlife and open space; the importance of access to nature close to home; the cultural and community value of the landscape'.

Question 2: Are you familiar with the Malvern Hills Trust? (yes/no)



The responses suggest that the majority of attendees (51 of 57) already had some awareness of the Trust and its role. This is likely reflective of the fact that many attendees were local residents, regular visitors or individuals with a pre-existing interest in the landscape and its management.

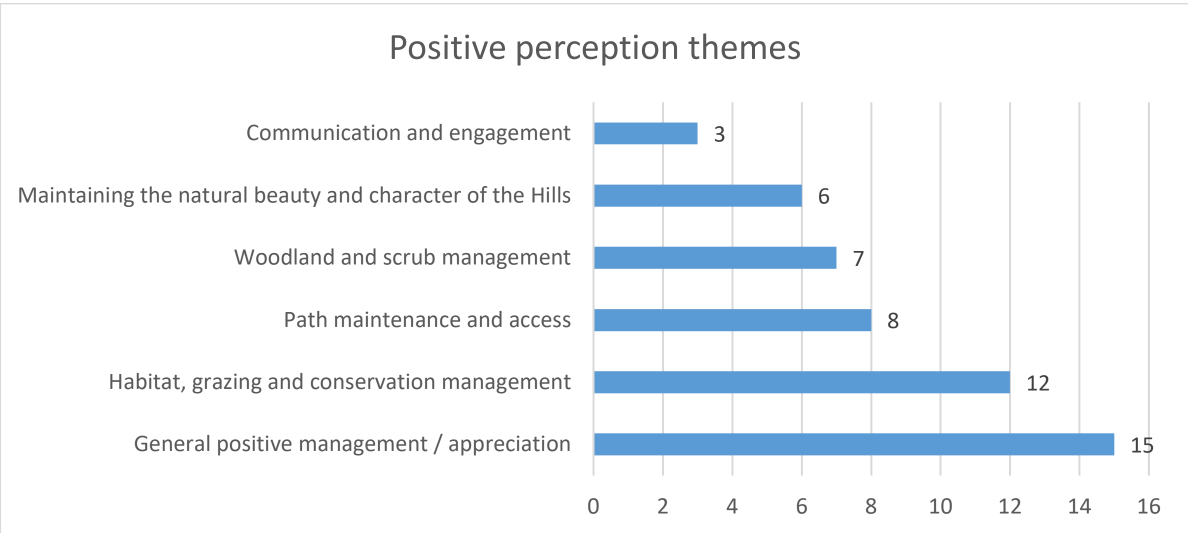
Question 3: Do you know how we look after the Hills and Commons?

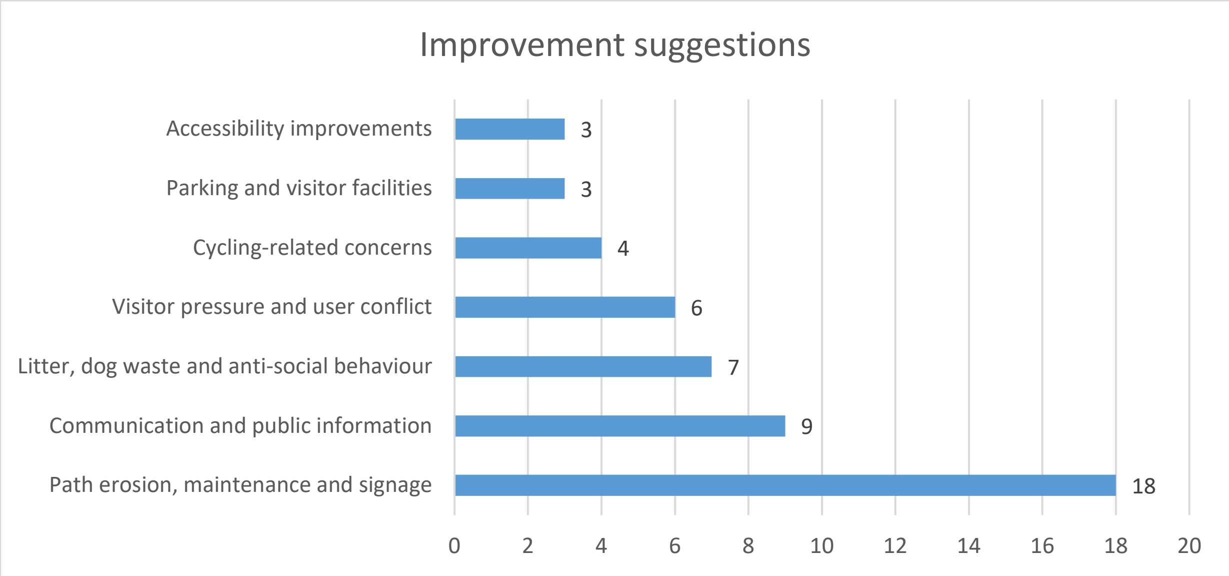


Respondents who indicated they were familiar with the management of the Hills and Commons commonly referenced:
'*Conservation grazing; Habitat and grassland management; Scrub and woodland control; Path maintenance; Balancing wildlife conservation with recreation and public access*'

Examples of positive feedback included: "*Keep doing what you're doing*" "*The Trust does a good job. Please keep it up.*" "*Thank you for everything you do.*" "*We are lucky to live in such a lovely place.*"

Question 4: What do you think we manage well or could improve on?





52 respondents provided comments in response to Question 4. Many respondents identified aspects of the Trust's work that they felt were being managed positively. Individual comments could be counted across multiple categories. Overall, the responses reflected support for the outdoor work of the Trust, alongside a desire for continued investment in communication, visitor management.

Positive feedback commonly referenced:

- *Conservation grazing and habitat management*
- *Maintaining open landscapes and views*
- *The overall condition of the Hills*
- *Path maintenance and accessibility*
- *The work of staff and volunteers*

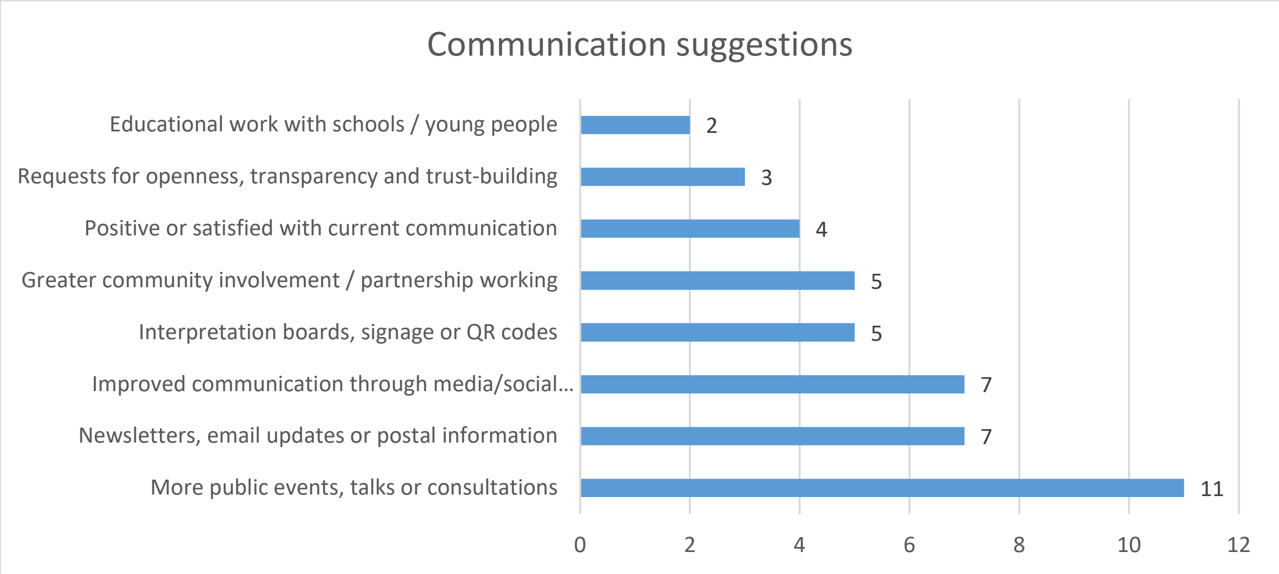
Several respondents also specifically valued opportunities to learn more about the work of the Trust through engagement events and communication materials.

The most common concerns/issues related to path erosion and visitor pressure, with respondents highlighting the impacts of increasing use on some routes and locations.

Several respondents requested:

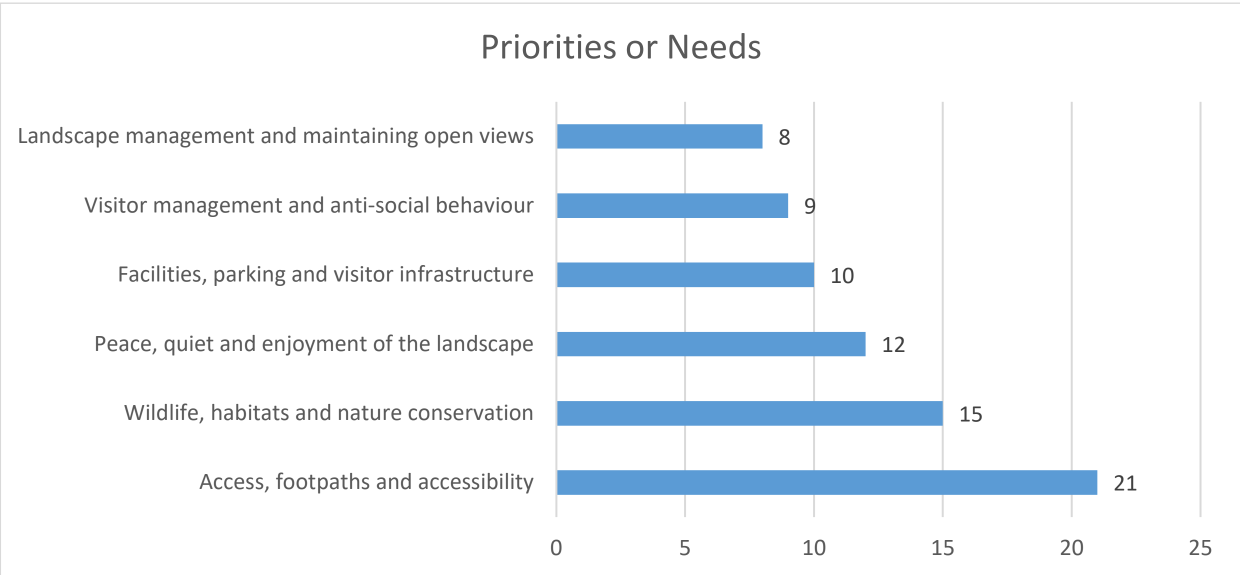
- *More interpretation and educational information*
- *Clearer communication about conservation work*
- *Additional signage and waymarking*
- *Greater visibility of the Trust's activities and decision-making*

Question 5: Would you like to learn more? Suggest ways we could better communicate what we do (free text).



46 respondents provided comments in response to Question 5.
The responses demonstrated strong interest in learning more about the work of the Malvern Hills Trust and highlighted a clear appetite for continued communication, engagement and transparency around land management activities. A smaller number of comments reflected concerns around transparency and public trust, with respondents requesting more open communication and clearer feedback on how community views are considered in decision-making.

Question 6: As a user/enjoyer of the Hills, what are your top 3 'needs' or priorities for visiting? (free text)

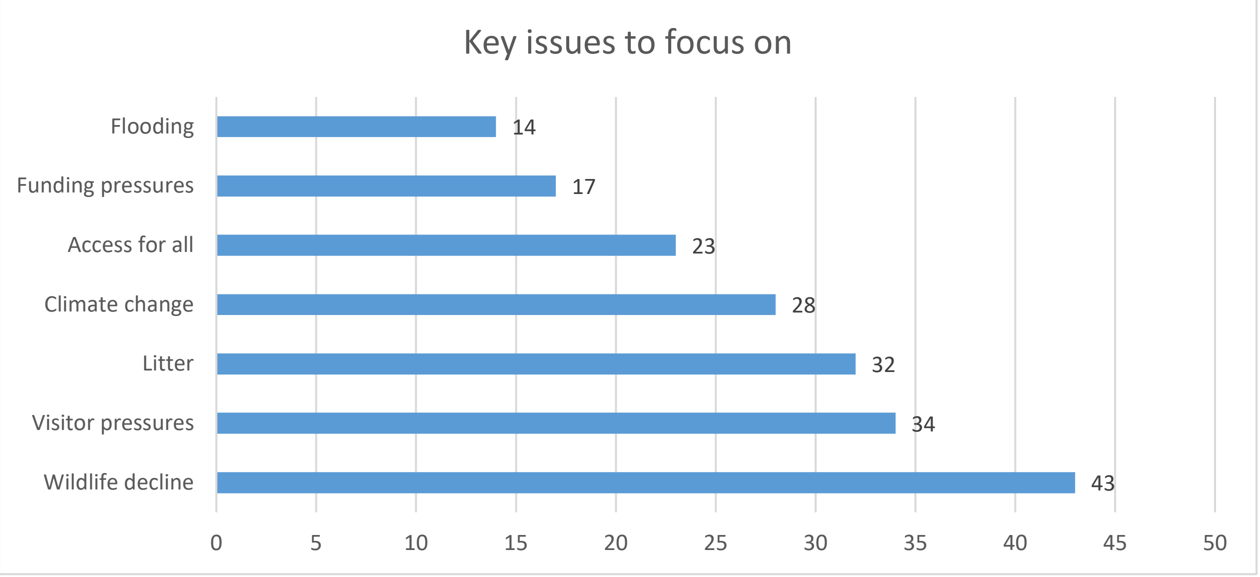


51 respondents provided comments in response to Question 6.

The responses highlighted a strong desire to protect the special character while ensuring the land remains accessible, well managed and resilient to future pressures. The most frequently raised priorities were:

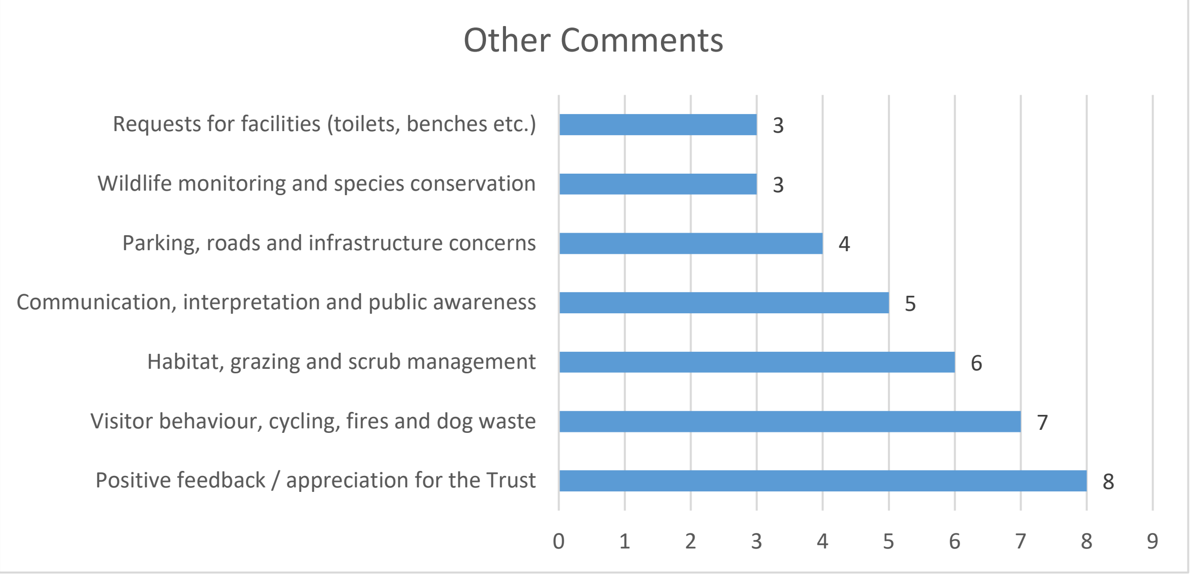
- *Well-maintained paths and trails*
- *Clear signage and waymarking*
- *Accessibility for older people and less mobile visitors*
- *Continued open access to the landscape*

Question 7a: What would you like the Trust to focus on (key issues) over the next five years? (multiple choice and tree text)



57 responses were received. The findings demonstrate particularly strong concern around environmental pressures and the long-term protection of nature. The visual state and lack of access to Gullet Quarry was raised several times.

Question 7b: Other comments (free text)
36 respondents provided additional comments. The comments covered a broad range of topics and reflected both practical concerns and wider views about future management.



Several respondents used the section to express appreciation for the work of the Trust and staff, including comments recognising the challenges involved in managing the landscape and balancing a wide range of interests. Overall, the additional comments reinforced many of the themes identified throughout the consultation, particularly around conservation, visitor pressures, communication and the long-term protection of the special character of the Malvern Hills and Commons.

4. Discussion

4.1 How people use the Hills and Commons

The findings from Question 1 demonstrate the significant social, recreational and wellbeing value of the Malvern Hills and Commons to local people and visitors. Walking and hiking emerged overwhelmingly as the most common activity identified by respondents, reinforcing the importance of maintaining public access, path infrastructure and opportunities for informal recreation.

The responses also demonstrate that the Hills and Commons function as a multi-purpose landscape, supporting: Physical health and wellbeing; Quiet recreation and relaxation; Nature connection and wildlife appreciation; community identity and sense of place.

4.2 Awareness of the Malvern Hills Trust

The findings from Question 2 demonstrate a generally high level of awareness of the Malvern Hills Trust amongst those attending. This suggests that attendees were already engaged or interested in the future management of the Hills and Commons, and that there is an existing level of public recognition around the Trust's role.

However, wider discussions during the events indicated that awareness of the Trust does not always translate into detailed understanding of: Legal responsibilities; Land ownership and governance arrangements; Conservation obligations; The practical challenges involved in balancing competing pressures on the landscape.

This finding supports the continued importance of public engagement and communication work in helping communities better understand the role and responsibilities of the Trust.

4.3 Understanding of the Trust's work

The findings from Question 3 demonstrate that many respondents had at least some awareness of the types of management activities undertaken, particularly grazing, habitat management and path maintenance. This suggests that key conservation and land management practices are visible to the public and recognised as important elements of maintaining the landscape.

However, the responses also demonstrated varying levels of understanding around the reasons behind certain management decisions and the complexity of managing a nationally significant and heavily visited landscape.

This finding reinforces the value of: Interpretation and educational work; Community engagement; Visible communication around conservation activity; Opportunities for direct dialogue with staff and trustees.

The events therefore helped address not only information gathering, but also public understanding and relationship-building (see also question 5).

4.4 Views on positive management or improvements.

The findings from Question 4 demonstrate broad support for the work currently being undertaken by the Malvern Hills Trust, particularly in relation to habitat management, conservation grazing and the overall upkeep of the landscape. Positive responses suggest that many attendees recognise the complexity of balancing conservation, recreation and access across a landscape that experiences high levels of visitor use.

At the same time, respondents identified several consistent priorities for improvement, particularly: Path erosion and maintenance; Visitor pressure; Signage and interpretation; Communication and public awareness; Litter and anti-social behaviour.

These findings demonstrate that, while there is strong support for the Trust's work, there is also a clear expectation for continued investment in visitor management, communication and landscape maintenance. The responses also suggest that people place high value not only on environmental conservation, but also on the quality of the visitor experience and the protection of the character and tranquillity of the Hills.

4.5 Suggestions for improving communications

The findings from Question 5 demonstrate strong public interest in continued communication and engagement with the Malvern Hills Trust. Many respondents expressed appreciation for the opportunity to speak directly with staff and trustees and highlighted the value of face-to-face engagement in helping them better understand management decisions and conservation work.

The responses suggest that people would welcome: More public events and talks; Greater visibility of conservation work; More interpretation and educational material; More regular updates through newsletters and digital communications.

The findings also demonstrate that engagement is viewed by many respondents as an important part of building trust, transparency and understanding between the Trust and the wider community. This supports the importance of continuing public engagement as part of the development and delivery of the LMP.

4.6 Priorities for future management

The findings from Question 6 demonstrate that respondents place strong importance on protecting both the environmental value and public accessibility of the Hills and Commons. The responses show broad support for: Nature conservation and habitat protection; Continued public access; Well-maintained paths and infrastructure; Preservation of tranquillity and landscape character.

The findings also demonstrate awareness of increasing visitor pressures and concerns around how recreational use is managed in the future. Importantly, respondents did not frame conservation and access as opposing priorities. Instead, the responses suggest strong public support for a balanced approach that protects wildlife and landscape quality while continuing to enable people to enjoy and connect with the Hills. This supports the central role of the Land Management Plan in balancing environmental protection, recreation, accessibility and long-term landscape resilience.

4.7 Future pressures and wider issues

The findings from Question 7 demonstrate public awareness of the environmental and social pressures affecting the future management of the Hills and Commons.
Wildlife decline emerged as the most significant concern identified by respondents, suggesting that biodiversity protection and habitat resilience are viewed as key priorities for the future.

High levels of concern around visitor pressure, litter and climate change also demonstrate public awareness of the cumulative impacts facing the landscape, including: Erosion and habitat degradation; Increased recreational pressure; Fire risk and extreme weather; Disturbance to wildlife; Pressures on infrastructure and maintenance.

The findings further demonstrate that respondents recognise the need for active and long-term land management to protect the special qualities of the Hills and Commons.

Additional comments within the "Other" responses reinforced recurring themes around: Visitor behaviour; Conservation management; Public communication; Infrastructure pressures; Community involvement.

Overall, the findings from Question 7 demonstrate broad support for proactive, sustainable and conservation-led management of the landscape, alongside a strong desire for continued public involvement.

5. Conclusion

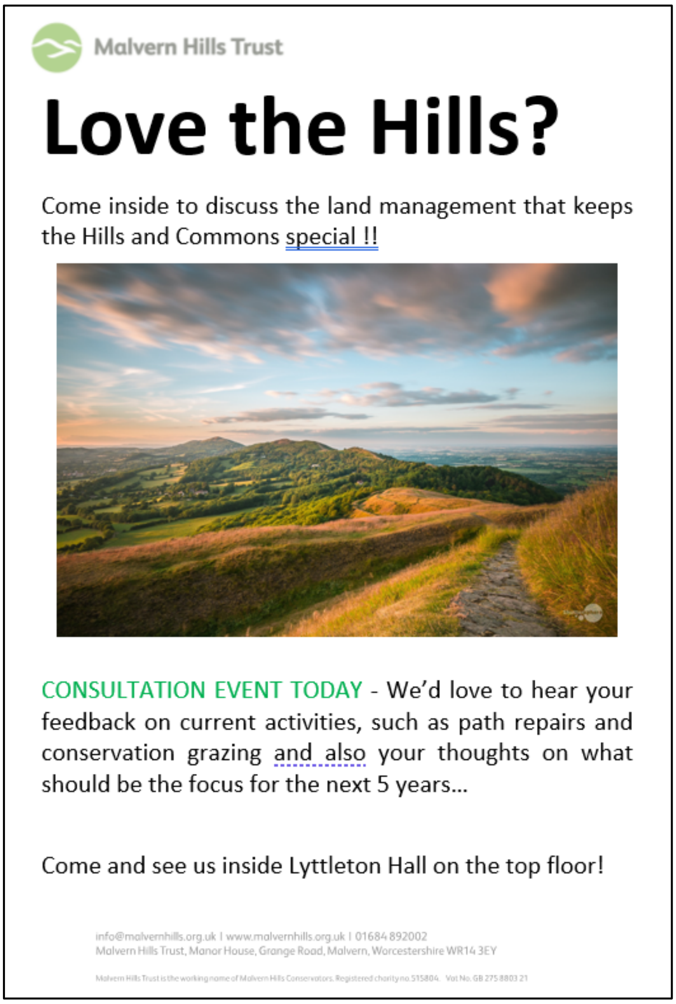
The findings from the public consultation demonstrate good public engagement with the future management of the Hills and Commons, with respondents showing a clear understanding of both the value of the landscape and the pressures it faces.
Across the responses, there is consistent emphasis on the importance of protecting wildlife, habitats and biodiversity, indicating that nature conservation is viewed as a central priority for future management. This is reinforced by wider concerns relating to environmental change and long-term ecological resilience.

Alongside environmental concerns, respondents also placed importance on the quality of the visitor experience and the need for effective management of recreational use. This demonstrates recognition of the need to balance access with protection of the landscape's special qualities.

Further recurring themes throughout the consultation included the importance of communication and engagement with the public, responsible visitor behaviour, and the value of continued community involvement in shaping future decisions. These responses suggest strong support for transparent, inclusive and well-informed management approaches.

Overall, the findings from the consultation indicate broad support for proactive, sustainable and conservation-led management. They also demonstrate a clear expectation that future decision-making should continue to balance environmental protection with public access, supported by ongoing engagement with local communities and users of the landscape.

In future it is recommended that a complementary online option be available for members of the public not able to attend these sessions.



Marie Dipple
Community and Conservation Officer

Jonathan Bills
Conservation Manager

1 September 2026

Paper H
For Information

Ordinary Meeting of the Board
Malvern Hills Bill update
10 September 2026

There was no Bill update given at the July meeting.

Parliament was prorogued on 29 April and met again on 13 May for the State Opening of Parliament. Bills can be carried over from one session to the next, with permission, to avoid any Parliamentary scrutiny that has already taken place being wasted.

The Trust requested a revival motion in the Lords in May and it was listed for 9 June. It is very unusual for an objection to be taken on what is purely a procedural motion but Baroness Coffey did so. She was reminded by the senior deputy speaker that should a member wish to debate or object to the Bill, the appropriate time to do so was at Third Reading, but nonetheless the motion was withdrawn. The Trust's Parliamentary Agent's understanding is that this is only the second time in history that a private bill revival motion has been objected to in the Lords.

The motion now has to be debated, and because of the summer recess, followed by the conference recess, the debate will not be listed until late October. It is understood that Baroness Coffey intends to ask for a "Take note" debate. There is no information at this time as to what the Lords will be asked to "take note" of.

The Trust's Parliamentary Agent has written to invite Baroness Coffey to discuss any concerns she may have about the Bill.

Susan Satchell
Governance Change Officer
29 August 2026

Paper I
For Information

Ordinary Meeting of the Board
Community Governance Review: Guarlford and Madresfield Parish Councils
10 September 2026

Background papers
Paper D Board meeting 14 May 2026
Paper B Board meeting 9 July 2026

Malvern Hills District Council (the Council) is carrying out a community governance review, following a request from Guarlford and Madresfield Parish Councils to consider amalgamation of Guarlford and Madresfield Parishes.

This proposal has implications for the Trust (and the Council), since residents of Guarlford Parish are required to pay a levy to the Trust and are able to elect a trustee (under the Malvern Hills Acts 1884 – 1924). Madresfield parish residents do neither.

At the moment, the Council is obliged to collect the levy and also conducts the Trust elections (although there is no obligation to do this).

The advice that the Trust has received is that it must continue to collect the levy from the area that was the parish of Guarlford at the time of the 1924 Act and similarly that the election of a trustee is to be from that same area.

The unconflicted trustees were sent a copy of the second consultation response as per the resolution on 8 July.

Present position
The Council has considered the responses and has issued a further consultation on another set of proposals. All trustees were send a copy of the recommendations on 27 August.

The summary of the proposals is:

Recommendation:
- Group Guarlford Parish Council and Madresfield Parish Council, maintaining two separate civil parishes with one common parish council
- Parish name: Guarlford and Madresfield Parish Council
- Number of Councillors: 8 in total, 5 from Guarlford and 3 from Madresfield
- Date of first election: Thursday 6 May 2027

This recommendation, as set out in the Council's paper, solves the issues which would have arisen under the Malvern Hills Acts from an amalgamation.

It is proposed that the GCO should respond to the consultation, having circulated a draft to unconflicted trustees prior to delivery as agreed on 8 July2026.

Susan Satchell
Governance Change Officer
29 August 2026

Ordinary Meeting of the Board
Creation of South Worcestershire Unitary Authority
10 September 2026

Trustees are probably aware that on 16 July 2026 a decision was made to create two unitary authorities in Worcestershire. Malvern Hills District Council will be subsumed into South Worcestershire Council, together with Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils.

A draft Order will be published in the autumn dealing with the establishment of the Council – subject to Parliamentary approval. This is likely to confirm the number of councillors and the electoral boundaries. It is anticipated that there will be shadow elections to the new authority in May 2027 and that the new authority will take over the local council services previously undertaken by the County, City and District Councils in April 2028.

The current wards/division boundaries could be revised, and the new authority may decide to undertake a review of the parishes, given the range of their sizes. Malvern Hills Electoral Services currently believes that the shadow elections will be conducted on the basis of the existing County divisions.

Impact on the Trust
No advice has been taken on this as yet, and it is not appropriate to do so until the draft Order is available.

Subject to advice, it is thought unlikely that the change will affect the levy. The levy area is defined by parish and any changes to the parishes are not likely to happen straight away (although the draft order will confirm whether this is the case).

Appointment of trustees
The 1924 Act and the agreement between Worcestershire County Council and the Trust dated 22 July 1968 details how trustees are appointed at present.

The appointed trustees include:

- (i) Seven persons to be nominated from and by the urban district council of Malvern (MUDC);
- (ii) One person to be nominated by the rural district council of Upton-on-Severn;
- (iii) Two persons to be nominated by the county council of Worcester;
- (iv) Three persons to be appointed by Worcestershire County Council. (This arrangement can be terminated upon 12 months' notice by either party)

The appointments specified in (iv) have for the last 50 years been nominated by the parishes of Castlemorton, Newland and Powick. Trustees may be aware that the leader of Worcestershire County Council sought to intervene in the most recent appointment by

Castlemorton Parish Council. The Trust understands that Worcestershire County Council took legal advice on the matter and the outcome was that the Castlemorton Parish Council appointee was (after a long delay) eventually confirmed.

Malvern Hills District Council (MUDC) took over the functions of the two councils named in (i) and (ii) under the Local Government Act 1972. Since the new authority will take over the functions of the District Council, they will take over these appointments.

The Church Commissioners no longer appoint a trustee; consequently there are 28 possible trustees. Under the new arrangement, 13 of the appointments are in the gift of the new authority – nearly half the Board. The new council will be comprised of councillors from as far away as Tenbury in the north west to Broadway in the south east. This is very different from what was envisaged under the 1924 Act, with trustees being appointed from the areas of Upton and Malvern town.

Elections

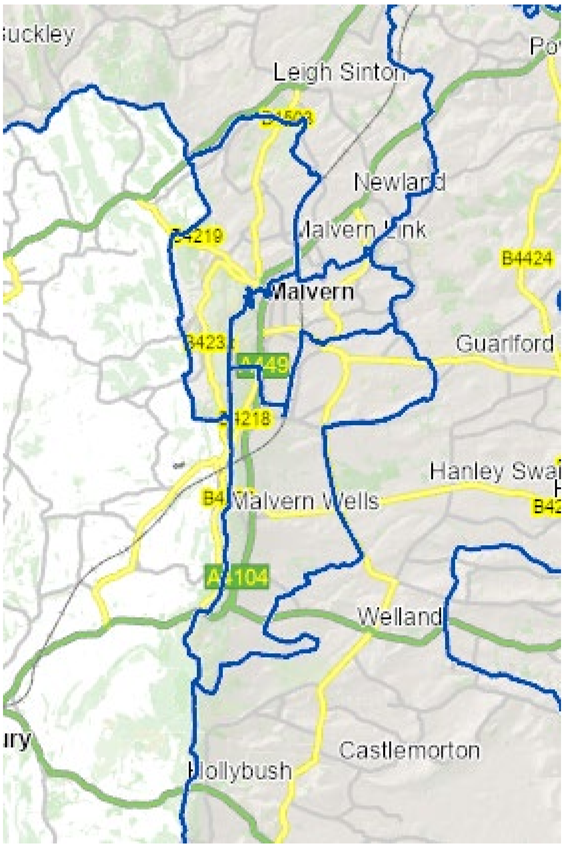
The electoral areas are defined in part by parish and in part by the seven wards of the MUDC (abolished in 1972). The Trust's legal advisers (two different counsel advising on separate occasions) have said that the most likely interpretation of the Acts is that the elections must take place in the area originally envisaged by the 1924 Act. This was reasonably straight forward until 2023, because seven of the District Council wards were coterminous with the old MUDC area. Problems arose in 2023 when Link ward was extended outside the MUDC area, as was what is now called Castlemorton, Welland and Wells ward.

The Trust's elections are conducted by the District Council. They make a charge for this but they have the expertise to run the elections and more importantly access to the electoral register. The Trust does not have access to the full register, access to which is prescribed in legislation. The Council is not obliged to run the Trust's elections. The Trust cannot do so, nor can a third party do so on the Trust's behalf because of the issue with the electoral register. The Malvern Hills Bill overcomes this by including in it a provision to allow the Trust access to the full register.

When changes were made to the wards in 2023, the immediate response was that the council software could not be adapted to run the elections what had become part ward areas. However, a "work around" was found and the Council ran the elections in 2023.

Overleaf is a map of the current county divisions. There are 4 divisions covering the area, and whilst some divisions seem to be entirely within the old MUDC area, others include areas which are not.

It remains to be seen whether the new authority would be willing and able to conduct the Trust's elections within a bespoke area.



Current County Divisions

The position will be reviewed once the Order amalgamating the councils has been published.

Susan Satchell
Governance Change Officer
29 August 2026