Malvern Hills Trust

Ordinary Meeting of the Board

Thursday 15 January 2026 at 7.00 pm

Hampton Suite
Colwall Park Hotel
Colwall
Malvern, WR13 6QG

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Thursday 15 January 2026 at 7 pm

Agenda

Introduction

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chair's Announcements
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Public Comments

Confirmation of Previous Board Meeting

5. To confirm the Minutes of the Ordinary Board meeting held on 11 September 2025 (*previously circulated with the papers for the Annual Meeting on 13 November*) the Special Board meeting held on 9 October 2025 (*previously circulated with the papers for the Annual Meeting on 13 November*) and the Annual Meeting of 13 November 2025. Pages 5-26
Confidential page 2
6. Matters arising from the previous Board meeting not otherwise on the agenda
    6.1. Appointment of auditors for 2025-26 to take place at a **future** Board meeting (NOT at this meeting).

Items for Decision

7. Committee and Other Bodies appointments
    7.1. To elect a trustee representative onto the Malvern National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee.
    7.2. To appoint trustee representatives to Castlemorton Co-ordinating Committee, Wildlife Panel and Malvern Spa Association.

8. **Budget 2026-27** **Paper A** Pages 27-48
    8.1. To receive the proposed budget .
    8.2. To receive and consider the following recommendations from FAR:
    8.2.1. that the levy for 2026-27 be set at £805,700, an increase of 9 % on the previous year, subject to a possible review of the levy total when tax base information is made available, *and also subject to the provision by officers of an indicative budget showing what would need to be cut if the increase to the levy payer were to be set at the current RPI of 3.4%;*
    8.2.2. that, subject to the levy being set at £805,700, daytime car park meter prices at main car parks be increased to from £6.00 to £6.50 per day and evening prices from £3.75 to £4.00 from 1 April 2026;
    8.2.3. that, *subject to the levy being set at £805,700,* residents' passes to remain **fixed** at £8.00 per annum from 1 June 2026;
    8.2.4. that, *subject to the levy being set at £805,700,* annual pass prices be increased from £55 to £59 per annum, and from £28.00 to £30.00 per annum for a second car at the same address, from 1 April 2026;

8.2.5. that the WCC Grant claim be requested at £15,450, a 9 % increase on 2025-26;
8.2.6. that, *subject to the levy being set at £805,700,* Board approve the General fund budget for 2026-27;
8.2.7. that, *subject to the levy being set at £805,700,* Board approve the designated funds budget for 2026-27;
8.2.8. that, *subject to the levy being set at £805,700,* Board approve the restricted funds budget for 2026-27.

9. **Malvern Hills Bill – Budget and Update** **Paper B** Page 49
10. **Health and Safety Policy** **Paper C** Pages 50-62
    To consider and approve a revised Policy, as recommended by the Health and Safety Working Group.
11. Urgent Business

<u>Other Committee Business for Decision</u>

12. **Land Management Committee**
    12.1. Committee to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2025
    Pages 63-68
    Confidential page 3
    12.2. Board to adopt the minutes of the meetings held on 16 October 2025 (*previously circulated with the papers for the Annual Meeting on 13 November*) and 4 December 2025
    12.3. Chair of Committee - updates and questions
    12.4. Resolutions recommended to Board (not otherwise on the agenda)
    - To grant permission to Malvern Wells Parish Council (MWPC) for the removal of the fire-damaged bus shelter and installation of a bench at Peachfield Road, subject to: the execution of an appropriate licence with MWPC; approval of the bench design and colour by the Trust (approval delegated to staff), and; compliance with Conservation Team advice regarding site reinstatement.

13. **Finance, Administration & Resources Committee**
    13.1. Committee to approve the minutes of meeting held on 11 December 2025
    Pages 69-78
    13.2. Board to adopt the minutes of the meetings held on 25 September 2025 (*previously circulated with the papers for the Annual Meeting on 13 November*) and 11 December 2025
    13.3. Chair of Committee - updates and questions
    - To note that FAR is proposing to hold one or two workshops to develop a suite of key performance indicators for the Business Plan and to define a fundraising and income strategy. All trustees are encouraged at attend.
    13.4. Resolutions recommended to Board (not otherwise on the agenda)

- That following a review by FAR of the Privacy Policy and data retention periods, to keep both the same as now, and *not* to introduce a separate data record keeping policy.

14. **Staffing Committee**
    14.1. Board to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2025 (*previously circulated with the papers for the Annual Meeting on 13 November*)
    14.2. Chair of Committee - updates and questions
    14.3. Resolutions recommended to Board (not otherwise on the agenda) **- none**

<u>Items for Information</u>

15. Red flags on the Risk Register
16. Management accounts to the end of November 2025 Pages 79-88
17. Reports from Outside Bodies
    17.1. Castlemorton Commons Co-ordinating Committee – summary report of the meeting held on 26 November 2025 Page 89
18. Date of next meeting
    Thursday 12 March at 7 pm at Colwall Park Hotel

<u>Confidential items</u>

Resolution to exclude the public for discussion of items 19-24 on the agenda on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the exempt or confidential nature of the business to be transacted (matters relating to individuals/legal privilege).

CONFIDENTIAL

19. Matters arising from confidential sections of the previous Board meeting not otherwise on the agenda
20. Resolutions recommended to Board from confidential sections of committee meetings.
21. To agree a collective response to Charity Commission letters to trustees of 18 December 2025 **Paper D** Confidential pages 4-8
22. Serious Incident Report update (deferred from 13 November meeting) **Paper E** *(recirculation)* Confidential page
23. Conciliation process update (deferred from 13 November meeting)
24. Notifiable incident update report (for information) **TO FOLLOW**

Malvern Hills Trust

Colwall Park Hotel, Colwall, Malvern, WR13 6QG
Thursday 13 November 2025 at 7 pm

Present: John Michael (Chair), Simon Baggaley, David Baldwin, Richard Bartholomew, Paul Bennett, Robert Berry, David Core, Allan Cottam, Mark Driscoll, David Fellows, Richard Fowler, Lucy Hodgson, Chris McSweeny, John Raine, Cynthia Palmer, David Reynolds, Felicity Robinson, Chris Rouse, John Stock, Frances Victory, Malcolm Victory, Andrew Willmott, Sheila Wren.

In attendance: CEO, Secretary to the Board, Finance and Administration Manager, Governance Change Officer, Land and Property Manager, Katherine Parkin (Azets Audit Services – left after item 12), 70 members of the public.

David Core welcomed everyone to the meeting as Vice-Chair, apologising for the lack of a microphone, which the Trust had understood would be provided.

1. **Election of Chair**

   A trustee raised a point of order, asking for Public Comments to be taken before the Chair election, because there was reference to this election in one of the comments. This request was declined by the Vice-Chair.

   There were two candidates for the position of Chair: John Michael, nominated by Frances Victory and seconded by Sheila Wren, and; Andrew Myatt, nominated by David Fellows and seconded by Cynthia Palmer. Both candidates were invited to speak and David Fellows spoke in support of his nomination of Andrew Myatt. Trustees were given the opportunity to question both candidates.

   On the proposal of Frances Victory, seconded by Mark Driscoll, it was RESOLVED, with 18 in favour, one against and six abstentions, that the election would be carried out via secret ballot.

   John Michael was elected as Chair by a majority of 14 votes to ten, with one abstention. Andrew Myatt offered his congratulations.

2. **Election of Vice-Chair**

   There were two candidates for the position of Vice-Chair: David Core, nominated by Richard Bartholomew and seconded by Malcolm Victory, and; Richard Fowler, nominated by David Fellows and seconded by Robert Berry.

   Both candidates addressed the Board. David Core began with a statement about an anonymous letter he had received accusing him of failing to declare property interests. This was an accusation that he categorically denied. He was raising it now in case anyone should accuse him of deception ahead of the Vice-Chair election vote.

Questions to the candidates were invited from trustees were invited, but there were none.

On the proposal of Frances Victory, seconded by Mark Driscoll, it was RESOLVED, with 18 in favour, one against and six abstentions, that the election would be carried out via secret ballot.

David Core was elected as Vice-Chair by a majority of 14 votes to ten, with one abstention. Richard Fowler offered his congratulations.

3. **Apologies for absence**
   David Mead.

4. **Chair's Report for 2024-2025**
   This is attached at Schedule 1.

5. **Chair's announcements**
   5.1 The Chair thanked staff for their work removing fallen branches and trees and clearing paths following recent adverse weather, and for attending to fly tipping and a crashed car on Peachfield Common.
   5.2 The Trust had secured a grant of £12,000 from the Government's 30x30 funding for the replanting and deer-proofing of Colwall Coppice, which would take place in December.
   5.3 The Chair thanked the Community and Conservation Officer and volunteers for conducting a survey of memorial benches across the Hills and Commons. 380 benches had been mapped.
   5.4 The first phase of public consultation on the refresh of the Land Management Plan had begun. As part of this, the Conservation Team had met around 100 pupils at Malvern St James School at a 'beyond COP 21 Symposium'.
   5.5 The Trust had taken part in this year's Remembrance Parade, laying a wreath in memory of the fallen and of Martin Cottrell.
   5.6 Work was in progress to improve the Reception area at Manor House. Around 2000 people had visited during the year to purchase car park passes.
   5.7 All trustees were invited to Christmas drinks after the meeting of the Finance, Administration and Resources Committee on Thursday 11 December, venue to be confirmed.

6. **Declarations of interest**
   Richard Fowler observed that David Fellows had been previously deemed to have a conflict of interest on the Malvern Hills Bill because he was a member of Guarlford Parish Council and suggested that Frances Victory was similarly conflicted because she was a member of Newland Parish Council. Mrs Victory pointed out that Newland had not petitioned and stated that she was not conflicted.

Chris McSweeny said he had an interest to declare in confidential agenda items and that he would do this in the confidential session of the meeting. Frances Victory declared an interest in the item on Newland Parish bus shelters.

7. Public Comments
Public comments were received from Malcolm McCrae, David Smallwood, Charles Penn, Mick Davies, Graeme Crisp and Anthony Madigan. These are attached at Schedule 2, together with the Trust's responses.

8. Public Questions on the Accounts
No questions had been received in advance. Two members of the public raised questions, but these were not permitted by the Chair, because they did not relate specifically to the 2024-25 accounts.

9. Risk Management Strategy for 2025
The Board received a paper from the CEO together with an updated Corporate Risk Strategy and the Risk Register for the Malvern Hills Bill. The CEO went through the paper, explaining that the previous version of the Corporate Risk Strategy had been considered by the Board in July, with Finance, Administration and Resources (FAR) Committee reviewing red risks at its September meeting. There had also been a trustee workshop in September to consider risk strategies and any movements appropriate. The CEO recorded her thanks to all those who had contributed. Following the workshop, the CEO had refined scores and responsibilities so that each committee could consider risks relevant to their remit, and focused on strong control measures around corporate risks, as recommended by trustees. She stressed that adopting a proactive approach did not necessarily mean that a risk was heightened. A new risk requested by a trustee on staff impartiality and misconduct was pending consideration.

Questions and comments were invited.

- A trustee said that they were not clear what they were being asked to approve, although they were content with the process. They recorded a number of anomalies in the documents for the CEO's attention. They considered that the Bill risk register read like a tool for defending the Bill process and asserted that this positioning was wrong. They were also alarmed that the 'Governance' risk in the Bill (*Resignations create a change in balance of trustees in favour of the Bill*) had been assigned the maximum score for severity of impact and likelihood and urged the Board to pause and review. They asserted that 'morale building' was insufficient as a mitigation for this high risk.

- A trustee thanked the CEO and her staff for producing a useful strategic document. They asked why the risk was high for grant funding from the Rural Payments Agency. The CEO said this was because there was so much delay in receiving the money and uncertainty as to how the scheme would work in the future. The Trust could not plan conservation objectives if income to support them was uncertain. Another trustee asked what contingency the Trust had to replace this income if it were not received. The CEO said that the overall contingency policy would apply; for example, it might be necessary to appoint staff on temporary contracts.

- A trustee recommended that the Bill Risk Register should be seen as part of the whole, and not as a separate entity.

Andrew Myatt proposed an amendment to the recommendation in the paper as follows:

In the light of the governance risk recorded in the Parliamentary Bill Risk Register (Severity 6, Likelihood 6, Impact Score 36), as well as seven other highly probable catastrophic risks, the Board resolves to pause all further actions and expenditure relating to the Malvern Hills Parliamentary Bill until all risks have been independently reviewed, mitigated, and demonstrably reduced to acceptable levels, in accordance with trustees' fiduciary duty of prudence under Charity Commission guidance.

A vote was taken on the amendment. There were nine in favour, 14 against and two abstentions. The amendment was therefore NOT carried. Andrew Myatt asked for his vote in favour of the amendment to be recorded.

On the proposal of Richard Bartholomew, seconded by Lucy Hodgson, it was RESOLVED, with 14 in favour, nine against and two abstentions to approve the Risk Management Strategy for 2025, as published in the Board papers. Andrew Myatt and Robert Berry asked for their votes against to be recorded.

10. Reserves Policy and Going Concern

The Board received a paper prepared by the Finance and Administration Manager (FAM). The FAM reported that FAR Committee had considered a paper on the Reserves Policy at its September meeting and would have further discussions about in December about whether an inflationary uplift or expenditure based formula should be applied to the current free reserves level, approved by the Board, of £350k. The paper included comparisons of reserves levels over the last three years for trustee information.

The FAM referred to the section of the paper on Going Concern, drawing attention to the General Fund Balances Forecast up to April 2027. This supported the assessment made that the Trust **was** a Going Concern. The FAM pointed out that there were comfortable levels of reserves, including £415,314 in the unrestricted git fund.

On the proposal of Allan Cottam, seconded by Lucy Hodgson, it was RESOLVED, with 22 in favour and three abstentions as follows:

- **To keep the free reserves level above £350k until the next review at FAR in December and the Board in January 2026;**

- **To assess that the reserves were at a satisfactory level as at 31 March 2025; and**
- **To approve the assessment that Malvern Hills Trust is a Going Concern.**

11. Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

The Annual Report and Accounts were received. The FAM reported that two changes had been made since the publication of the document on 22 October 2025: the resignation of Mike Wilkinson from the Board on 31 October 2025 and the inclusion of the Trust's web site address and phone number on the front page.

Katherine Parkin of Azets Audit Services was invited to address the Board. She thanked the FAM and her staff for all their help during the audit. She confirmed that the audit had been carried out to international standards. No significant deficiencies of internal control and no ethical issues had been found. Subject to the signing of the Letter of Representation, the Auditor was happy to issue an unqualified i.e. clean audit opinion.

A trustee drew attention to the top bullet point on page 19 of the Report, pointing out that the Charity Commission had now approved the increased budget for the Malvern Hills Bill. The FAM said she would update this.

Lucy Hodgson, Chair of FAR, thanked the FAM and her staff for all their work on the accounts and audit.

On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by Malcolm Victory, it was RESOLVED, with 21 in favour and four abstentions, to approve the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025, which were then signed by the Chair.

12. Letter of Representation

The proposed Letter of Representation was received. The FAM explained that this was the Trustees' formal letter of confirmation to the auditors that they were satisfied with the financial statements.

On the proposal of Sheila Wren, seconded by Lucy Hodgson, it was RESOLVED, with 21 in favour and four abstentions, to approve the Letter of Representation, which was then signed by the Chair.

The Chair recorded his personal thanks to the FAM and her team.

Katherine Parkin left the meeting at 9.08 pm.

13. Appointment of Auditors for 2025-26

The Board received a paper from the FAM, who explained that due to the unexpectedly large increase in the quotation from the present Auditors, the Trust was not at this time content to recommend that they be reappointed, but that instead a tender process should be carried out and the appointment of auditors for 2025-26 adjourned until that had taken place. So far no proposals for an alternative auditor had been received from levy payers; the FAM was content to extend the deadline for nominations for a further week following this meeting. The FAM advised of a correction to the paper – the dates at the top of page 38 of the Board pack should read 2025-26 (not 2026-27).

David Core, speaking as a levy payer, said that in 2022 there had been a selection process after an amended proposal, which had seen Azets Audit Services appointed. They had committed at that time to restrict increases to their fees to inflation for three years; that period had now expired. A period of 3-5 years was typical between tender processes. A levy payer asked why the quotation had increased so much. David Core explained that typically auditors had a floor to their fees and that the Trust fell significantly below that of Azets, who were originally the Gloucester office of KPMG. It was purely a price increase and nothing else. A trustee levy payer asked whether this problem could be avoided in the future. The FAM said that the Trust had chased several times for the quotation; Azets had apologised for their late submission.

A trustee levy payer asked whether there was a realistic prospect of securing a better quotation and this was confirmed. In answer to a question as to whether the reconvened meeting would take place in January 2026, the FAM said that there was a lot of work to be done in the next few weeks, which meant that the meeting might not be as soon as January. There was no particular hurry, since the appointment was for the financial year ending 31 March 2026. She added that Azets had said they were happy to retender.

On the proposal of Graeme Crisp, seconded by Richard Bartholomew, it was RESOLVED, with 59 levy payers in favour, to adjourn the appointment of auditors for the financial year 2025-26 until a resumed meeting of levy payers; and that the Trust should invite tenders from a selection of suitably qualified and experienced auditors, with a view to appointing at a reconvened meeting in early 2026.

Approximately 60 members of the public left the meeting following the vote. There was a short recess, during which Paul Bennett, David Fellows and Cynthia Palmer left the meeting.

The Chair informed those remaining that it was not going to be possible to complete the planned agenda in the time available and that the meeting would therefore be adjourned once urgent decisions had been taken[1]*.*

14. Appointment of Committees for 2025-26

A paper listing the proposed committee membership was received. The Secretary to the Board explained that trustee applications had been considered by the 2024-25 Chairs

[1] It was subsequently agreed that it would not be possible to reconvene the meeting before Christmas and that outstanding business would therefore be added to the agenda for the Board meeting on 15 January 2026.

and Vice-Chairs of the Board and Committees. Trustees' skills audits had been taken into account. The proposed membership was as follows:

Land Management 1. David Baldwin 2. Richard Bartholomew 3. Mark Driscoll 4. Chris McSweeny 5. John Michael 6. Cynthia Palmer 7. David Reynolds 8. Felicity Robinson 9. Chris Rouse 10. John Stock 11. Sheila Wren	Finance, Administration & Resources 1. Simon Baggaley 2. Robert Berry 3. David Core 4. Allan Cottam 5. David Fellows 6. Richard Fowler 7. Lucy Hodgson 8. Andrew Myatt 9. John Raine 10. Frances Victory 11. Malcolm Victory 12. Andrew Willmott
Governance (7) 1. Richard Bartholomew 2. Robert Berry 3. David Core 4. Mark Driscoll 5. David Fellows 6. Lucy Hodgson 7. John Raine	Staffing (7) 1. David Baldwin 2. Richard Bartholomew 3. Lucy Hodgson 4. John Raine 5. John Stock 6. Frances Victory 7. Sheila Wren

The Chairs and Vice-Chairs were recommending to the Board that it would be impractical for a trustee deemed conflicted on the Malvern Hills Bill to become Chair or Vice-Chair of either Finance, Administration & Resources Committee, or of Governance Committee, due to them not being able to receive confidential information on the Bill or to vote on Bill-related matters.

It was noted that Jenny Burford had not been nominated to a committee, because she had qualified her signing of the Code of Conduct. Mrs Burford told the meeting that she had stated that she would find some of the commitments 'difficult' to abide by, but this did not mean that she would not do so. Following a request from the Chair, she confirmed that she would abide by the Code of Conduct. It was therefore agreed that the Chairs and Vice-Chairs would meet again consider her application alongside her skills audit in the same way as they had considered the applications from all other trustees.

On the proposal of John Stock, seconded by Malcolm Victory, it was RESOLVED, with 12 in favour, five against and two abstentions, that it would be impractical for a trustee deemed conflicted on the Malvern Hills Bill to become Chair or Vice-Chair of either Finance, Administration & Resources Committee, or Governance Committee.

On the proposal of David Core, seconded by John Stock, it was RESOLVED with 19 in favour to approve the committee memberships for 2024-25.

15. Appointment of Board Members to Other Bodies for 2025-6

A paper listing individual trustees' applications to serve on Other Bodies was received. It was noted that there was one vacancy each remaining on the Recreation Advisory Panel, the Wildlife Panel. the Castlemorton Common Co-ordinating Committee and Malvern Spa Association. Chris McSweeny volunteered to serve on the Recreation Advisory Panel. The position to represent the Trust on the Malvern National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee was contested between three trustees, two of whom had already left the meeting. The Secretary to the Board recommended that the appointment be deferred so that all candidates could have the opportunity to address the Board and this was agreed. The proposed appointments were therefore as follows:

Recreation Advisory Panel (4)	Castlemorton Common Co-ordinating Committee (4Cs) (2)	Wildlife Panel (4)	Malvern Landscapes (1)	Malvern Spa Association (1)
David Baldwin David Fellows Chris McSweeny John Raine	Chris Rouse *Vacancy*	Mark Driscoll Felicity Robinson Sheila Wren *Vacancy*	*Deferred to next meeting*	*Vacancy*

On the proposal of David Core, seconded by Felicity Robinson, it was RESOLVED with 20 in favour to approve the above appointments to Other Bodies for 2025-26, with the appointment to the Malvern National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee being deferred to the next meeting.

16. Resolutions from the Land Management Committee meeting of 16 October 2025

16.1 **Replacement bus shelters in Newland Parish**

Land Management Committee had discussed an application from Newland Parish Council (NPC) for the replacement of bus shelters on Trust land and was asking the Board to approve the design requested. A trustee objected to shelters being built of wood, pointing out that the arsonist was still at large, but other trustees pointed out that NPC had voted in favour of the wooden shelters and that the Trust did not have a valid reason to oppose their request. The Land and Property Manager read out a letter from NPC confirming their request.

On the proposal of Sheila Wren, seconded by Malcolm Victory, it was RESOLVED, with 15 in favour, one against and two abstentions, to approve the design for replacement bus shelters submitted by NPC; to authorise the

CEO to proceed with finalising the licences and co-ordinating with NPC, and; to authorise the CEO to sign off the completed licences.

16.2 **Bin Strategy**

On the proposal of Mark Driscoll, seconded by Lucy Hodgson, it was RESOLVED unanimously to approve the allocation of £2,000 + VAT to undertake a bin trial as per the Land and Property Manager's Bin Strategy.

It was noted that the Board would need in due course to consider whether any proposed new bin design met its objectives.

17. Malvern Hills Bill Update

The Governance Change Officer (GCO) gave an update:

- The Select Committee had been appointed; members had a quasi-judicial role and so there should be no attempt to contact them.
- The GCO and Parliamentary Agent (PA) were still looking at comments from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) with a view to reaching agreement that would enable WCC to withdraw its petition. They were also reviewing further comments (round 3) from House of Lords counsel.
- The Trust had finally received consent from the Charity Commission to increase spending on the Bill and to allow the Trust to enter into any debate on changing the levy arrangements in response to petitioners and from Select Committee.
- Guarlford Parish Council had had their s239 meeting and West Malvern Parish Council had theirs set up for end of November.

17.1 **Renewal of delegated authority**

The Board received a paper from the GCO. This set out the requirement for renewal of delegation of authority during the Bill's progress through Parliament. This applied to decision making where it had to be done quickly and where there was not time to call a Special Meeting of the Board, which had to take place in person.

The GCO referred to the public comment made earlier by David Smallwood and reminded the meeting that Mr Smallwood was a petitioner against the Bill. She stressed that the Acts did not specify all the decisions that the Board could make.

The GCO reminded unconflicted trustees of the reporting process that was already in place. Where changes had been proposed, they had been reported to trustees. Any decisions required would be notified to trustees by email and a Teams call convened if necessary to allow the Delegates to seek the views of Trustees. The Select Committee was expected to last for eight weeks and it was simply not practical for the Board to meet to make every decision.

A trustee suggested that it would be sensible to include a third trustee on the list of delegates, so that the balance of Delegates would be in favour of trustees. This suggestion was backed by two other trustees. A trustee proposed that the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Governance Committee would be a suitable candidate, provided that person was not a conflicted trustee.

On the proposal of Malcolm Victory, seconded by Mark Driscoll, it was RESOLVED with 15 unconflicted trustees in favour, as follows:

1. **That, where decision-making has to be done quickly, the Trustees resolve to delegate to the individuals holding the posts of Chair, Vice Chair, Chair or Vice-Chair of Governance Committee (provided not conflicted in relation to the Bill), Chief Executive Officer and Governance Change Officer of the Trust (together the "Delegates") the power and discretion to take all such steps as they consider to be necessary or desirable to give effect to the Trust's resolution to promote the Malvern Hills Bill. This resolution to be reviewed on or before 31 May 2026 or once the Bill has completed its passage through the House of Lords.**
2. **The Delegates will where possible consult the Board about a) any proposed significant amendments to the Bill or b) any significant undertakings, assurances or agreements proposed to be given to or made with third parties relating to the drafting of the Bill or its implementation if enacted.**
3. **All decisions of the Delegates to be made by simple majority.**

Confidential
On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by Frances Victory, it was RESOLVED with 14 in favour to exclude the public for the discussion of item 29 on the agenda on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the exempt or confidential nature of the business to be transacted (legal privilege).

Members of the public left the meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm

Schedule 1

Chair's Annual Report 2024-25

The Malvern Hills Trust was, and continues to be, deeply saddened by the untimely passing of one of its Field Team. **Martin Cottrell**, a dedicated member of the staff for over thirty years, died on 2 May. I want to thank again the emergency services for their fast response to the incident, including the Air Ambulance, and we are grateful for all of the understanding and support for Mr. Cottrell's family and colleagues. Planning is underway with the family for memorials to be commemorated in the New Year.

As much as 2024 was a year of *wet, wet, wet*, this spring and summer were *dry, dry, dry*. **Rangers** have dealt with over 30 manmade and barbecue related fire incidents on the Hills and Commons. I want to thank them for their tireless work: from emptying over 50 bins to educating the public about our byelaws. I also want to thank all of the emergency services, who work tirelessly to keep local residents safe in light of such extreme weather conditions affecting the Hills and Commons and other hazards.

Dogs worrying livestock is a difficult topic to reflect on. One of our graziers has lost 10 sheep this year and our Rangers are often first on the scene to see sheep horrifically wounded. I thank the National Sheep Association, which is based locally, for helping us to get the message across to dog owners and walkers that it is vital that you keep your dog on a lead around sheep, even if you can usually trust it to come to call. Vehicle drivers also need to heed livestock signs on the highway.

The CEO has served notice on numerous **traveller encampments** this year. I thank the public for calling the office with their concerns about them and rough sleepers and we manage the situations as best we can. Sometimes there are safeguarding issues and I give credit to StreetLink, which connects people sleeping rough to local services.

Under the guidance of new **Operations Manager**, Martin Barnett, **the Field Team** has worked hard to maintain the Hills and Commons, including 80 miles of hill paths. There has been a very long grass cutting season and I'm encouraged to see how they are learning to use new robot mowers.

The new **Land and Property Manager** has made her mark, explaining to utility companies that they cannot simply dig up Trust land. I'm pleased to report the **purchase** of a small traditional cherry orchard on Castlemorton Common, next to the Foxhalls property and the acquisition of two blocks of principally woodland, extending as a whole to approximately 64 acres at Little Malvern. This acquisition strengthens the Trust's stewardship of the Malvern Hills and aligns with our long-term conservation objectives.

The Trust is now calling for evidence to refresh our Land Management Plan, which guides what we do. By taking part, you will be helping to shape the future of the Malvern Hills and Commons for generations to come. This is guided by the expertise of the **Conservation Team**.

We deposited our **Parliamentary Bill** on 27 November 2024. This followed 10 years of hard and focused work on identifying the problems with our outdated legislation and identifying the best solutions. There was an eight-week public consultation over the summer and an intensive period of considering the feedback, special board meetings held in public and a series of decisive votes by the board of trustees. My thanks to **Susan Satchell** for her stalwart support on this. The Bill now is being considered under full public scrutiny.

Our **public engagement programme** has brought the Trust into contact with over 600 people at over 25 events. Nearly 40 people enjoyed our summer events programme and we continued our drop-in sessions on the Bill. Staff met over 100 people from local families at Malvern Fire Station on August Bank Holiday Monday and over 100 school pupils at the recent 'beyond COP 21 Symposium'.

I personally enjoyed handing out medals to those who completed the **Malvern Hills Challenge** in September. Charities have raised many thousands of pounds from events and activities that we licence on the Hills and Commons and this one raised £21,500 for Help the Heroes.

Volunteers have provided many hours of service this year and help enormously to manage parts of the Hills and Commons that are hard to reach with machinery. I was delighted to hear that, in March, a 40th birthday party of 17 family members, young and old, came and cleared scrub and small trees on the ramparts of British Camp and enjoyed it immensely.

Whether it is litter picking, scrub bashing or managing sensitive and protected habitats, I thank them all. **Company employees** have lent a hand too, including from INDRA, Raytheon and Speller Metcalfe.

Next, I want to thank all of the **office team**. In particular, the Secretary to the Board, who has collated and issued papers for 11 board meetings and 12 committee meetings and organised many others. The sheer numbers of trustees on the Board now (26) makes this a huge administrative task. I'm grateful to Alison for finding time to update Trust policies, which helps **trustees to 'steer', while staff 'row'**, which is the right dynamic.

The **Finance and Administration Manager** deserves particular thanks also, whose exceptional quality of work on the Trust's finances always receives favourable comments from trustees in our meetings. In this issue period, her team welcomed nearly **2,000 local people to our Reception** to purchase discounted levy passes, annual passes for our car parks or report issues.

And I **thank the CEO**, who has a tough job managing so many priorities and overseeing the whole staff operation and yet always remains cheerful.

Now, thanks to all of you, **the trustees**. We've achieved a lot this year together. We don't always agree and constructive challenge and debate reflect your diversity of experience and is a sign of healthy governance.

Some, like John Stock, Sheila Wren, Andrew Myatt and Felicity Robinson have **contributed their skills to the Trust as volunteers**.

I feel the loss of some really good trustees this year: Charles Penn, Mary Turner and now Mike Wilkinson and I thank them for their service to Malvern Hills Trust.

The Staffing Committee has also gone above and beyond, forming the **Protocol Working Group** with staff to carry on the good work of a protocol the Board adopted in May 2024. They met and thanked staff at our depots and held a workshop with Trust managers to take forward good ideas from staff. I particularly enjoyed handing out the **long service award certificates** to staff in September and hearing their stories: 12 awards have been made in total.

Last but by no means least, I **thank the Levy payers** for their financial contribution to our work, which is caring for the Hills and Commons and that's what we will continue to do.

Schedule 2

Public Comments

Malcolm McCrae

Given that the Trust usually has some six Board Meetings each year I am puzzled by this meeting being called the Annual Board Meeting. What has happened to the annual levy payers meeting that usually sits alongside the Board meeting that occurs to approve the accounts for the previous financial year?

The Annual Levy Payers meeting is the only occasion on which Levy Payers have the power under the Commissioners Clauses Act to formally challenge proposed action by the Board. When in 2022 levy payers exercised this power over a recommendation to reappoint auditors they were told by officers that the recommendation to appoint auditors is made following a well-established, presumably documented procedure of evaluating possible auditors. I could elaborate on the unfortunate events that followed the overwhelming vote by levy payers to reject the Board's recommendation in 2022 but suffice it to say that paper E on tonight's agenda clearly shows that assertions made in 2022 were untrue.

The Annual Levy payers meeting should be properly called in the context of a meeting that is considering the annual accounts together with a recommendation from the Chair on the appointment of auditors, which is not the case for this meeting. So, to reciprocate the respect that the Board demands from levy payers and the wider public, I suggest that either this meeting is abandoned at this point or consideration of the accounts is held over until a subsequent meeting at which any recommendations on the appointment of auditors can be discussed and voted on.

Finally, since submitting my comments to the Board Secretary, I've learned that another levy payer has been blocked by the Chair from informing the meeting that if it proceeds as planned it makes various breaches of the Commissioners Clauses Act.

Response from the Chair

Thank you for your comment. It has always been the case that the accounts are approved by the Board and the appointment of auditors is voted on by levy payers at the Annual Meeting of the Board. It is not a separate levy payers' meeting. Consideration of the accounts is not dependent on the appointment of auditors for next year, which will be discussed under item 13 on the agenda.

David Smallwood - Statement on the Recommendation in Paper G

I have previously spoken about the lack of clarity regarding how delegated decision making to two trustees and two officers would work.

I wish to make two comments on the proposal in Paper G, on which you will be asked to vote, as it has now been clarified that decisions will be made by a simple majority.

This has two implications:

Firstly, if two are in favour of an amendment to the Bill and two are against, then no amendment can be made. If the two Trustees wish to approve a change to the Bill and the two officers oppose the change, then the change cannot be made.
Secondly, if, for example, the Deputy Chair and the two officers wish to agree to a change, and the Chair is against it, the Chair would be over-ruled.
In both cases, the two officers, working together, will have taken control away from the trustees and frustrated their wishes.

I cannot understand why you are not voting for an arrangement where decision making is delegated to four trustees, who would take into account advice from officers. Voting would be by simple majority, with the Chair of the trustees having a casting vote.

As trustees you should remain in control in any decision-making process and therefore you should reject the proposal in Paper G.

I am also concerned with assumption that the Trust even has the power to delegate decision making

A charity is controlled by its Governing Document – in this case the Malvern Hills Acts.
There is nothing in these Acts which permits the delegation of decision making to a group of officers and trustees. In fact, the words the words "delegation" and "delegate" do not appear anywhere in these Acts at all.

Your Governance Handbook specifies that only the CEO and the Secretary can give legal advice to the trustees, so would either of them now please explain how it is lawful to delegate decision making to a group of officers and trustees.

Response from the Chair

Thank you for your comments. They have been circulated to trustees so that they might consider them as part of the discussion under item 22 on the agenda. It is a well-established practice that the Board may decide to delegate decisions to staff and groups of trustees.

Mr Smallwood asserted that it was significant that the CEO and SttB had remained silent on his point about delegated authority on 'giving legal advice'.

Charles Penn

First, I had to resign earlier this year as a trustee due to deteriorating health and increasing age.

I know from personal experience over the past ten years that the majority of trustees have care and preservation of the hills and commons at the heart of their aspirations for the trust. There is no other reason why anyone would wish to offer their time and effort, as none have been paid, received expenses or gained benefits. I hope everyone at the meeting can share that volunteering spirit, and that all can work together to achieve long-lasting and effective governance of the Trust.

I was however dismayed to see a trustee standing for election as chair, making fundamentally mistaken and misleading statements about the current efforts to achieve essential updating and increased effectiveness of the governing legislation. I would like to put on record these errors.

First, he stated that 'the Trust' has employed 'selective interpretation of charity law'. I can assure him that extensive legal advice has been taken from solicitors with specialised expertise in charity law, regarding both the drafting of the new bill and questions that have arisen in discussion with individuals and organisations since its submission to parliament.

Second, he refers to 'blinkered persistence and borrowed funding' by the Chair and leadership. The Board has voted by a clear majority to pursue the governance changes, on numerous occasions over almost eight years. The proposals have been considered in detail and supported by a large majority of current and past trustees. The funding is borrowed from one of the Trust's own funds and will be repaid with appropriate interest. This strategy was also employed the last time a new governing bill was passed by Parliament in 1995.

Permission was sought this time from the Charity Commission who considered it at length and granted approval.

Finally, there is a clear contradiction in the statement that 'there may well be merit in new legislation' when the proposed legislation had been dismissed in the previous sentence as 'to expose the Trust and the Hills to the roulette wheel of parliamentary scrutiny and the associated ruinous costs of that gamble.'

In 2020 the Charity Commission and DCMS directed the Trust to use a private bill to modernise its governance because it would allow greater scope for public scrutiny and debate than under a parliamentary scheme. I am happy to see the eminently sensible Bill considered through the parliamentary process, which will consider the reasonable concerns that many have expressed.

Response from the Chair

Thank you for your contribution to the development of the governance changes over your 10 years on the Board. I note particularly that it was the Charity Commission and DCMS who directed the Trust to follow the Private Bill route and that is what we are doing now.

Mick Davies

Thank you for enabling me to speak tonight, my purpose being to offer support and to encourage resolve in those hard working and committed staff members and trustees who selflessly serve us through The Malvern Hills Trust.

Many of you know me as, among other things, a supporter of the governance reforms that are set out in the current Bill. As a nominated trustee for eight years during which the proposals were being developed and refined, I was sure and I remain sure that the research, consultation and evaluation has been thorough and painstaking, that the proposed governance changes represent no threat to any stakeholder in the community and that without some change, the Trust would never be able to engage properly with and serve the community as we all want it to.

As a detached but well-informed and still interested member of the public, I have been amazed and saddened by the wilful misrepresentations about the Bill that have swirled around social media and print and, in some cases, election materials, promulgated by opponents of the Trust, most of whom acknowledge the need for governance reform but remain resolutely silent on alternative proposals.

The whole content of the submitted Bill had been subject to frequent and continuing scrutiny by the Board and its governance committee. The Board and that committee are properly constituted including elected and nominated Trustees and make their decisions in public.

From the 2011 Inquiry into the St Ann's Well debacle, when the Trust was advised again to undertake a review of flawed governance, to November 2024 when the Bill was deposited, the proposals have continually been available for scrutiny by the Board. And if anyone wants to scrutinise it now, it is there, in full, on the Government Website.

Nevertheless, the Bill is now going through the Parliamentary process in accordance with the direction of the Trust's regulator and the Government. That process was prescribed, not to initiate a "roulette wheel" gamble but to ensure that the proposals were subject to proper public scrutiny and debate.

Sadly, the process seems not to include any channel for anyone to Petition In Favour of the Bill, but let's hope their Lordships also appreciate that the largely silent majority have expressed sensible, supportive views, for instance in last week's letters in the Gazette. And let's hope that the staff and trustees who have worked so hard to do the right thing for our Hills and Commons take heart in the knowledge that the properly informed public are with you.

Response from the Chair

Thank you, Mick, for your continued support of the Trust. I share your disappointment that ill-informed comments continue unchecked on social media, but as you say the focus for us all should be on the committee stage in Parliament, where the concerns of petitioners will be considered.

I note that many social media comments express concern that petitioner trustees are being denied access to documents and unable to speak on matters pertaining to the Bill. To put that in context, so far only four documents fall into that category. The Board has not discussed the contents of the Bill since it was submitted and as Mick notes, it is the Select Committee rather than the Board that is now considering the Bill. The Trust is content to present its case for changes and support the Committee's deliberations.

Graeme Crisp

Chair; As a levy payer I would like to know:

When and how did the Trust invite members of the public wishing to propose the appointment of an alternative firm of auditors to notify the Trust of their proposal no later than 5 pm on Friday 31st October 2025. I and many others are unaware of this edict.

How the Trust reconciles this deadline with their obligations under the provisions of the Commissioner's clauses act 1847 which entitles the rate payers to appoint auditors at the annual meeting.

The recommendation under item 8 is unclear as to how the accepted tenderer should be appointed at a reconvened annual meeting. It is clear that the final choice should rest with the levy payers as set out under the Commissioner's clauses act 1847 and I am sure that the levy payers would pay due attention to a new paper setting out the costs and merits of a set of suitable tenders at such a reconvened annual meeting.

However the resolution proposed leaves the door open to a decision of questionable legality by the Trustees to appoint an auditor of their choice without reference to the levy payers present at the reconvened meeting.

It is open to the levy payers to assert their authority this evening by making a snap decision to appoint an auditor of their choice. I think it would be in everyone's interests if this were avoided. I invite the Trust to give an undertaking tonight, before item 8 is considered by the levy payers, that if the meeting is adjourned and reconvened to allow for tendering, the Trust will invite the levy payers at the reconvened meeting to appoint the auditor, informed by a new paper prepared by the Trust, setting out the costs and merits of a suitable selection of tenderers.

Without such an undertaking the Trust runs the risk of having a rerun of the time consuming problems which arose prior to the appointment of Azets following a levy payer's choice at the annual meeting of PWC.

Response from the Finance and Administration Manager

The Trust invited members of the public by way of a public notice in the 10 October edition of the Malvern Gazette. This is normal and proper practice. There is no change to the obligation under the Commissioners Clauses Act requiring the levy payers to appoint the auditor at the Annual Meeting. This item, if the levy payers accept the recommendation by officers in Paper E, will be adjourned until the tender process is complete. Thereafter the levy payers will vote for appointment in the usual manner.

Paper E outlines why the recommendation is not to reappoint. To be clear, there will be an agenda, there will be Board papers prepared, the meeting will be advertised in the Gazette, the papers will be publicly available, as is always the case, and the levy payers will vote to appoint the auditor. I have also added in Paper E that we will extend the time window again until the end of next week, giving levy payers a further week to put forward auditor suggestions.

Anthony Madigan

As I look back over a year or more of following the Trust's work and the proposed improvements to its Board and ways of working, the most stark development has been the near total evaporation of common decency and responsible behaviour, in meetings and online, as we've been divided by the noisy opposition to the Bill.

When I walked every street of West Ward during the recent trustee election, I kept hearing the same thing. People staying out of the discussions, the elections, the meetings, because the environment has become so toxic.

This is not what Malvern is about. And there's a groundswell within the community now, starting to push back against the antagonism, the scare stories and the attacks on the Trust. I'm expecting responsible, grown-up behaviour from all trustees this evening, as you all know I assume what being a proper trustee involves, although I have to say I've already been disappointed by some of the childish behaviour that we've seen.

No one is saying the Bill is perfect. That's what a lengthy Parliamentary review process is actually for. It's a reassurance. They'll find any weaknesses and balance the compromises, in the same way ta they'll spot hollow objections. That process has to continue whatever the Bill's opponents want. The agitators' allegations need scrutinising as well, and it's easy to see why they are perhaps afraid of the process. We are after all in the main talking about a protest group who during the public consultation last year produced a guide telling us all not to read the consultation document, but to simply fill in the objections that they had provided. They are afraid of independent minds, you see, people who are happy to think things for themselves, people like us.

For anyone who is at a Trust meeting for the first time, well done for taking an interest. It's more than possible, though, that the widespread misrepresentation of the Trust and the changes being proposed have provoked you to come tonight to protect something that seems under threat. And we're here because we care. But there is no need for fear. I absolutely understand what's happening and why.

Some people have it in for the Trust for whatever reason. There are always people like that. But the great majority of people care more about the landscape we live in and around than they do about petty grievances, and many people feel that care and energy is being actively exploited by those determined to resist changes that don't suit them. The growing view in the community is that the future of the hills is being threatened by this opposition to the Trust's modernisation. If you weren't aware, there are more trustees in this room than there are employees of the Trust in total.

So if you find in time that you've been provoked unnecessarily into anger and resentment against the Trust, don't redirect your anger to the people responsible. We need to get back to being grown-ups. Instead, let's point that caring energy at understanding what the Trust really does, the way it really works, how it needs to change, what Trustees are actually for. There's no better protection against misinformation than education.

Let's not be told what to think and believe by people who have their own reasons for doing what they're doing. We're bigger and better than that. This isn't the people versus the Bill. It's some people versus the Trust. So, the fair but firm fight we have on our hands is for the community-informed independent management of conservation of the Hills through the Trust, and against those in our community who would divide us and impose their preferences on the whole 33,000 of us levy payers. I'm confident which side of the argument the majority in our community are on.

Response from the Chair

Thank you Anthony. The Trust is in the process of renewing its five-year Land Management Plan. That is the core document describing the core activities of the Trust: to protect, conserve and maintain the land under our management, and to keep it unbuilt upon as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public at large.

Paper A
For Decision

Ordinary meeting of the Board
Budget and levy 2026/27

15 January 2026

The draft general fund budget for the year ended 31st March 2027 was presented to the FAR Committee for review on 11th December 2025. The budget has been based on on-going core activities and programmed work elements within the land management plan and the business plan where appropriate.

The budget here presented to Board in JAN26 has been modified in 2 small respects from that produced in DEC25:

General surplus/(deficit) FAR budget	(66,558)
Error identified in first staff budget corrected + reinstate the 4% estimate salary rise that is customary and prudent (previously 3.4% at FAR)	4,600
Provide additional legal fees to governance that will be required	(4,600)
General surplus/(deficit) Board budget	(66,558)

The narrative which follows is largely the same as that taken to FAR.
The FAR Committee asked for consideration to be given to a budget outline showing what would need to be cut if the increase to the levy payer were to be set at the current RPI of 3.4%. This is referred to throughout as the "3.4% levy rise budget".
That has been prepared and a summary is included in this report. The detail has been considered in conjunction with the FAM/CEO and Chair/Vice Chair of FAR due to the limited time available to meet between 11th December 2025 and 15th January 2026.

It is important to note that there are significant land and property budgeted projects in 26/27, as taken to the Land Management meeting on 4th December 2025. We are also in the middle of the Bill process and should be very careful in ensuring that we have sufficient funds to deal with any unexpected costs if, for example amendments are made by the select committee, as we approach the final stages of the Bill process.

General fund 25/26 budget Outlook

The outlook for the general fund in 25/26 is shown in the left-hand column of the 26/27 General budget figures. OUTLOOK considers all actual results from APR25 – SEP25 (6 months) and revised estimates for the remainder of the year.
We have not included the full 25/26 Outlook budget but this can be made available to the Board on request.

The outlook after transfers is better than the original budget for 25/26 (original budget deficit £101,048 revised deficit £59,265).

Actual results explanations have been dealt with in the management accounts up to SEP25 (explained in the management accounts each month). Further NOV25 management accounts are also now available too, and when Q3 is complete the intention is to update OUTLOOK again, in advance of the MAR26 Board meeting.

Broadly speaking, the primary factors contributing to the improved anticipated 25/26 deficit are:

- Car park takings and rents/licences has been boosted by contractor income for the use of our land during the year. This has been offset somewhat by lower than budget pass sales and takings from car parks.
- Donations and other voluntary income look likely to exceed budget. This is difficult to budget for.
- Investment income is expected to end up greater than budgeted.
- Profit on sale of assets has exceeded expectations slightly.
- Land management spend overall will probably be slightly under budget.
- Staff costs will likely be slightly under budget, mostly due to the timing of recruitment and also the agreed NJC pay award was lower than budgeted.
- Communications will probably be under budget within General Fund, partly due to the designated £25k fund budget that was approved by the board.

Please note that the amount of work done to estimate OCT25-MAR26 activity is not extensive as it is time consuming and the main purpose is to ascertain the opening position for the new budget. Whilst that is important it does not warrant huge amounts of time, especially as there is quite a lot of estimation and assumptions required.
We had hoped to rework Outlook before the board meeting, but because a revised 3.4% budget option was also required that has taken priority. Outlook still considers only APR25-SEP25.

General fund budget 26/27

The draft general budget for 2026/27 shows a deficit after transfers of £66,558 (25/26 deficit £101,048).
In recent years it has not been uncommon for us to budget for a general fund deficit after transfers:

For information:
22/23 – budgeted deficit £5,292
23/24 – budgeted deficit £26,954
24/25 – budgeted deficit £168,827 (largely due to a £104k designated fund transfer ref the Bill)
25/26 – budgeted deficit £101,048

Detailed notes are contained in the Appendix for each area of income and expenditure within the general fund budget.

It is important to be reminded that budgeting for a deficit is not recommended but can be reasonable if there are clear explanations, it is closely monitored and has a finite timescale.

The Trust has identified that our general reserves levels have in the past been higher than they need to be and an active decision was made (24/25 and 25/26 budgets at least) to deplete these reserves. This has happened through both operational actual general spend and to fund the private Bill.
We have also recruited a new Land & Property Manager and a replacement Operations Manager which results in greater capital spend being budgeted for 26/27.

The Bill costs have been financed partly from general fund reserves over the last 2 years via fund transfer and partly via an internal loan from the Land Purchase Fund. The loan repayment to the Land Purchase Fund will continue until 2049 (unless it is possible to make early repayment, as was the case with the 1995 Act).
Any costs not covered by the loan ultimately come from the general fund.

In reality, the actual deficit in 24/25 was less than the budgeted deficit but regardless of this, we will not be able to continue to budget again for a general fund deficit after transfers. This must be made clear to all Trustees.
The reserves review highlights that the level of general fund reserves looks to be near the limit by April 2027.

Designated and restricted funds budgets 26/27

These are shown on pages 5 and 6 of the 26/27 budget figures.

Detailed notes are contained in the Appendix for each area of these funds where further explanation is required.

Reserves

An estimate of the free reserves at 31st March 2027 is shown in the table below.

As can be clearly seen, our free reserves level is reducing quite rapidly and the headroom is almost extinguished.

Any investment in general fund fixed assets is not deemed to be free – since free reserves need to be in cash or assets readily converted to cash so this is excluded when looking at free reserves.

We are planning sizeable capital asset investment this year as we have not done that for a few years and we are now in a stronger position with the new Land & Property and Operations Managers to take these projects forward.

The budgeted 26/27 reserves position is still above our policy level of £350k but we are getting much closer to this number and there has been discussion on possibly lifting the reserves requirement next year.

Paper A
For Decision

Policy

	> **350,000**	ACTUAL		> **350,000**	ESTIMATE		> **350,000**	ESTIMATE	
	31/03/2025			**31/03/2026**			**31/03/2027**		
General Fund Total	371,961			*312,696*			*246,138*		
Remove NBV of assets (vehicles and equipment + office equipment)	161,649			*188,702*			*254,587*		
rounding									
General Fund excluding NBV of assets	**210,312**			*123,994*			*-8,449*		
All designated Funds:	**Free**	**Not free**	**Total**	***Free***	***Not free***	***Total***	***Free***	***Not free***	***Total***
Gift fund	406,903		406,903	*390,305*		*390,305*	*384,295*		*384,295*
HLS		79,081	79,081		*75,662*	*75,662*		*75,440*	*75,440*
Countryside Stewardshep		380,838	380,838		*550,748*	*550,748*		*670,658*	*670,658*
Tree disease fund			0		*28,570*	*28,570*		*8,570*	*8,570*
Ash dieback		33,570	33,570		*14,320*	*14,320*		*0*	*0*
Fundraising		61,515	61,515	*0*		*0*		*0*	*0*
Modernisation of Acts - other costs	7,252	63,000	70,252		*22,070*	*22,070*		*0*	*0*
Modernisation of Acts - Prep/promotion of bill		16,287	16,287		*232*	*232*	*-5,268*		*-5,268*
Election expenses		5,000	5,000		*15,135*	*15,135*		*25,135*	*25,135*
Dog Campaign	3,501		3,501	*1*		*1*	*0*		*0*
Boundary commission advice		12,276	12,276		*0*	*0*			*0*
Track & Tree bad weather		14,000	14,000		*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*
Marketing comms Board approved 25/26 spend		25,000	25,000		*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*
Designated fixed assets		10,411	10,411		*8305*	*8,305*		*51,199*	*51,199*
	627,968			***514,300***			***370,578***		
	179.42%			*146.94%*			*105.88%*		

Cashflow budget 26/27

A summary of cash flow for all funds and a month-by-month estimate for the General Fund is shown below.
Please note that the cash investment as noted on the balance sheet is incorporated into the cash flow workings below as this cash whilst held in a variety of drawdown funds is sufficiently liquid to be deemed as cash. The presentational aspect of this was an auditor requirement.

Malvern Hills Trust
Cash flow movement by fund group 2026/27

	General fund	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£	£
Cash balances brought forward	(125,689)	776,793	176,651	827,754
Net cash inflow/(outflow)	(131,558)	61,788	(105,935)	(175,706)
Cash balances carried forward	(257,247)	838,581	70,715	652,049

	General fund	*Designated funds*	*Restricted funds*	*Total*
	£	*£*	*£*	*£*
Cash balances B/F (incl Flagstone)	*214,099*	*776,793*	*176,651*	*1,167,542*
Net cash inflow/(outflow)	*(131,558)*	*61,788*	*(105,935)*	*(175,706)*
Cash balances C/F (incl Flagstone)	*82,541*	*838,581*	*70,715*	*991,837*

Ensure GF cash remains > NIL

General fund monthly cash flow

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	(5,016)	18,684	8,237	(3,133)	16,907	(16,413)	(8,873)	(24,749)	(11,673)	(6,994)	(23,152)	(10,385)
Add back depreciation	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917
Less capital expenditure	(76,000)	0	(50,000)	(2,000)	0	0	(1,000)	0	0	(2,000)	0	(5,000)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net cash inflow/(outflow)	(75,099)	24,601	(35,847)	783	22,824	(10,496)	(3,956)	(18,832)	(5,756)	(3,077)	(17,235)	(9,468)
Cash balance brought forward	(125,689)	(200,788)	(176,188)	(212,034)	(211,251)	(188,427)	(198,923)	(202,879)	(221,711)	(227,467)	(230,544)	(247,779)
Cash balance carried forward	(200,788)	(176,188)	(212,034)	(211,251)	(188,427)	(198,923)	(202,879)	(221,711)	(227,467)	(230,544)	(247,779)	(257,247)
Flagstone CAI - but accessible	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*
	139,000	*163,600*	*127,754*	*128,537*	*151,361*	*140,865*	*136,909*	*118,077*	*112,321*	*109,244*	*92,009*	*82,541*

Decisions required
The FAR Committee reviewed the full budget in DEC25.
A "3.4 % levy budget" was requested and has been produced. A summary of the outcome is as follows.

3.4% levy Budget **

Following its meeting in December 2025, FAR is recommending the draft budget for the Board's approval. This is subject to the provision by officers of an indicative budget showing what would need to be cut if the increase to the levy payer were to be set at the current RPI of 3.4 %.

The key areas identified to meet the request from FAR were land management cut backs, amendments to some staff-based costs, a reduction in communications support and removal of the gardening contract. However, diverting staff resources into gardening, reducing the discretionary spend on communications and reversing some modest benefits like long service awards and professional subscriptions agreed in 2024/25 feels counterintuitive at this time. If a 9 % levy uplift is approved, a clear message would be shared with all staff to seek efficiencies in-year and utilise grants where feasible to offset costs to the general budget and help to reduce the deficit.

As part of the exercise the Trust executive identified a few further efficiencies that could be made. These would result in some modest savings and a very slight increase in income from grants, whilst still allowing the Trust to meet its main objectives. If implemented, they would help reduce the proposed budget deficit (see recommendation 9).

A summary outline of the possible savings:

	£	
General surplus/(deficit) FAR budget	(66,558)	
Reduction in levy INCOME to meet 3.4 % requirement	(29,900)	**
Series of Land Management cut backs *eg. Curtail fence work, pond work, a few area paths, look for further savings on waste disposal*	12,000	
Amendment for a few staff based costs, already adjusted:	4,600	*
eg. Small changes to some staff hours, some training, curtail staff subscriptions, reconsider on-call and staff development amounts	7,700	
Cut back the time for communications support even further	5,500	
Increase levy pass INCOME ... 25 % rise	5,000	**
Other savings *reduce paper/postage/printing costs ref meeting papers, remove all non essential training, remove gardening budget, curtail website project, remove staff development budget, curtail subscriptions, etc.*	9,400	
Legal costs that got scaled back, linked to new governance, but will be necessary, already adjusted:	(4,600)	*
Further contingency	(5,400)	
Further contingency (balancing figure)	(4,300)	
General surplus/(deficit) 3.4 % budget	(66,558)	

** Already covered earlier in report*
*** This would not happen if the levy is approved as recommended*

The Charity Commission guide ‘The Essential Trustee’ (CC3) gives the following advice on budget setting:

You and your co-trustees need to work out what funds and other resources your charity will need and where the charity will get these from. A charity can only succeed in meeting its aims if it manages its money and other resources properly. You will need to plan and monitor its income and outgoings so that it can meet its short, medium and long term goals.

Recommendations

The FAR Committee recommends to the Board (subject to information being provided on the “3.4% budget” summary) that:

1. Parking meter charges, that the Board approve:
    a. Day time car park meter prices at main car parks be increased to £6.50 (from 25/26 £6.00) per day from 1st April 2026.
    b. Evening rate parking charges be increased to £4.00 (from 25/26 £3.75) from 1st April 2026.
2. Parking passes, that the Board approve:
    a. Residents’ passes remain fixed at a cost of £8.00 (25/26 £8.00) per annum from 1st June 2026.

       This ensures that the levy payer is not experiencing both the levy rise and the parking pass rise.
    b. Annual pass prices be increased to £59.00 (from 25/26 £55.00) per annum, plus £30.00 (from 25/26 £28.00) per annum for a second car at the same address, from 1st April 2026.
3. The Board is reminded that previous decisions to cancel adding 2x new parking meters at Old Hills remains for 26/27. Additional parking meters will not be considered again until 27/28 budget.
4. That the Board approve the WCC Grant claim is requested at £15,450 which is an 8.99% rise on last year and in line with the levy rise.
5. That the Board approve the General fund budget.
6. That the Board approve the designated funds budget.
7. That the Board approve the restricted funds budget.
8. That the Board approve that the levy for 2026/27 is set at £805,700.

    This is a 9% increase on the prior year total levy.

    This is a 7.03% increase to an average Band D levy based on tax base information currently available.
9. That the Board be presented with some modest cost saving proposals, to be presented at MAR26 Board meeting with the aim of reducing the budgeted 26/27 deficit.

Appendix – detailed notes

General fund

The detailed budgeted general fund income and expenditure is shown on pages 1-3 of the 26/27 budget figures.

Income

1. **Levy**

- The figures assume an increase of 9% applied to the total levy, making a 26/27 total levy of £805,700.
- The tax base data is correct for 26/27 for Mathon and Colwall but still not final for Malvern, the FAM received an update on 5th January 2026.
  The GREEN highlighted boxes show the information as presented to FAR and the BLUE highlighted is updated for new MHDC tax base information for JAN26 Board, which we anticipate will not change but that is not certain.
- Average band D levy to increase from £50.25 to £53.78 (a £3.53 increase which is 7.03%).

Increase on 25.26	Band D MHDC tax base same	Band D MHDC tax base	Total income	25.26 Band D	26.27 Band D	£ rise	rise
6.00%	13,351.08	*25/26 actual*	783,600.00	£50.25	£53.15		5.76%
7.50%	13,351.08	*25/26 actual*	794,700.00	£50.25	£53.90		7.26%
8.50%	13,351.08	*25/26 actual*	802,100.00	£50.25	£54.40		8.26%
9.00%	13,351.08	*25/26 actual*	805,700.00	£50.25	£54.64		8.75%
10.00%	13,351.08	*25/26 actual*	813,200.00	£50.25	£55.15		9.76%
11.00%	13,351.08	*25/26 actual*	820,600.00	£50.25	£55.66		10.76%
12.00%	13,351.08	*25/26 actual*	827,900.00	£50.25	£56.15		11.74%
	1.398% up	AT FAR KNOWN					
6.00%	13,537.67	*1.398% up*	783,600.00	£50.25	£52.48		4.44%
7.50%	13,537.67	*1.398% up*	794,700.00	£50.25	£53.23		5.92%
8.50%	13,537.67	*1.398% up*	802,100.00	£50.25	£53.72		6.91%
9.00%	13,537.67	*1.398% up*	**805,700.00**	£50.25	£53.96	£3.71	**7.39%**
10.00%	13,537.67	*1.398% up*	813,200.00	£50.25	£54.46		8.39%
11.00%	13,537.67	*1.398% up*	820,600.00	£50.25	£54.96		9.37%
12.00%	13,537.67	*1.398% up*	827,900.00	£50.25	£55.45		10.35%
	1.771% up	AT BOARD KNOWN					
6.00%	13,587.48	*1.771% up*	783,600.00	£50.25	£52.31		4.09%
7.50%	13,587.48	*1.771% up*	794,700.00	£50.25	£53.05		5.57%
8.50%	13,587.48	*1.771% up*	802,100.00	£50.25	£53.54		6.55%
9.00%	13,587.48	*1.771% up*	**805,700.00**	£50.25	£53.78	£3.53	**7.03%**
10.00%	13,587.48	*1.771% up*	813,200.00	£50.25	£54.28		8.03%
11.00%	13,587.48	*1.771% up*	820,600.00	£50.25	£54.78		9.01%
12.00%	13,587.48	*1.771% up*	827,900.00	£50.25	£55.26		9.98%

- The maximum levy chargeable for 26/27 would be £864,396 (25/26 £827,147). All suggested sensitivity calculations are well within this figure.
- Note - each 1% change to 25/26 total levy amount changes total general fund income, and therefore total general fund surplus/deficit by c.£7,400.

2. Car park takings

Proposed charges from 1st April 2026:

- Meters in the main car parks £6.50 per day (from £6.00) and an evening rate of £3.75 (from £3.50).
- Meter sales budget assumes ticket sales levels remain the same as 2025/26. It is of course difficult to predict how sales volume will change with a small change in price.
- Annual passes £59.00 for first car, £30.00 for the second (from £55.00 & £28.00).

  And from 1st June 2026:

- Residents' passes remain fixed at £8.00 per year (25/26 budget £8.00).

  The combined above measures should generate a budgeted additional c. £39k general fund income. Of course, this income stream is not guaranteed.

3. Grants

- WCC grant budget increased to £15,075 with the request to ask for 9 % being £15,450 in line with levy.

- Other grants includes our share of the Castlemorton stewardship income as grant income, We have not calculated the value yet. A prudent £8k is budgeted for all other grants including this, with the anticipation that additional general grants will be secured.

4. Rentals

- The budgets for property and land rentals have been based on the agreements already in place.
- One off contractor licence income is proving to be a welcome boost to unbudgeted income in 25/26. We have prudently not budgeted for this unknown but anticipate that we may generate similar extras in 26/27 that will help improve the general fund position.
- Concessions and wayleaves are estimated based on a combination of prior budgets and actual results to date.
- No capital receipts from easements are included in the budget. It is very intermittent and is restricted fund income if we do receive it.
- The AONB contribution decreased slightly last year and remains lower as we gained some office space back in 25/26 which has been valuable.

5. Other income

- Budgets for sundry income items are estimates based on a combination of factors; previous years' levels, previous years' budgets and inflation if applicable.
- The budget for profit on disposal of fixed assets is based on the estimated trade-in values of that machinery due for replacement and includes any initial quotes where available.
- Budgets and actuals for bank interest receivable look high but this is because they now reflect the general fund interest earned on the Flagstone account that is relatively new. The Flagstone investment activity only commenced in FEB23 so Flagstone costs and income has historically not been a standalone budget line.

Expenditure

1. Land management

The land management budget was reviewed and approved by the Land Management committee when it met on 4th December 2025. A breakdown of the budget and commentary on the budget is provided with the papers for that meeting.

2. Visitor services expenses

- The budget for meter charges is based on the last 3 years actual information, with particular focus on the 25/26 year to date.
- An allowance of £1,000 has been made for car park repairs. Any significant work would likely be met by Parliamentary Fund though no plans are afoot for 26/27. A small budget remains to improve the markings in the main office carpark.
- Ranger vehicle costs have been high and we know that this will fall when the vans are replaced which is the intention, 2 vehicles are due to be disposed in 26/27 (1 is field team, the other is Ranger team). As the exact timing of this is unknown the budget remains for 26/27 with the aim to reduce the actual and budget amounts in 27/28 or sooner.

3. Communications and public engagement

- During 25/26 an additional £25k budget was designated for communications support. For 26/27 this has been brought back into the general fund budget and so on first look it appears to indicate a far higher budget but, in fact it is actually £10k lower than last year.
- Broadly speaking we imagine similar hard costs as in previous year for campaigns, newsletters events etc. but there may be a slightly different output strategy, with the help and support of Alder Media Services and Aran Parker.
- Staff development is a new title and includes a budget of £500 for staff development which may include events. This was historically in miscellaneous expenses. We believe this is a valuable budget line addition to compliment the improvements to staff relations and sits well in communications.

4. Administration and governance

- This header covers many overhead costs that the Trust faces.
- All budget lines have been considered carefully alongside:
    - historical budget information for the last 3 years.
    - actual data for the last 3 complete years.
    - actual data for 25/26 year to date (6 months actuals).
    - consideration where applicable of the 5 year business plan where this is still in line with actual expectations.
    - Inflation where applicable.
- Points of particular note as follows:
    a. Utility costs budget is down on last year, we will be in a fixed contract throughout 26/27 and the budget has been prepared considering actual costs since that renewal.
    b. As the exact purchase dates on capital items are unknown the budget for depreciation does not assume a full year of charge for all budgeted additions, it is best guess. Depreciation is considerably higher as there are some sizable asset

purchases planned, whereby the things they replace had been fully depreciated some time ago.

c. IT costs were uplifted in 25/26 knowing that we were losing 2 members of staff that brought good IT skills alongside their main role. 26/27 has considered actual spends last year as well as known upcoming challenges which may require additional support. The Windows 11 project in 25/26 was completed successfully and under the budget set aside.
d. Legal costs are somewhat dependant on the events of the year and management accounts provide detail on the nature of the actual historic spend. In 26/27 the legal costs budget has been broken down to separately capture costs that are governance, land or staff based. All headers have been notably increased because actual spend has warranted this. It is a very difficult thing to budget for. The land based header includes some known upcoming projects that tie in with lease and tenancy renewals.
e. Health and Safety continues to be one of our greatest priorities and the budget line uplift reflect this. It is important to also note that many other health and safety linked costs are also being carried out that do not sit under this header, for example training, bin replacement project and capital improvements on access. In short, this is not all that we spend on health and safety.
f. Board training is incredibly important and has been slightly uplifted on account of new Trustee appointments (following resignations) in recent times. We have also provided for specialist training.
g. Flagstone charges are built into the return rate, this was new in 25/26 so the budget line has been removed.
h. We have reached out to our insurer for further information regarding policy renewal in 26/27, in light of recent events but it is too early to even get an indication of premiums. The budget reflects a greater than inflation, moderate uplift.
i. The CEO proposed last year, and this has carried through to 26/27, that professional fees pertinent to the key roles in the business are introduced as MHT subscription costs. This helps to attract and retain high quality staff with support from their professional bodies. Examples are RICS, ICAEW, CAAV, The Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations.

5. Staff costs

- Allowance has been made for a 4.0% pay increment at 1st April 2026. This will be determined by NJC pay scales and we have no control over this, but last year the agreed percentage was 3.2%. We are unlikely to know the amount until Autumn 2026 and it will be backdated to 1st April 2026 when it is agreed.
- All known changes as a result of the OCT25 National budget have been factored in, the budget was largely static in this area. There is due to be a very small rise in the lower earnings threshold, but the employment allowance and rates should remain the same. These both saw big change in the OCT24 national budget that was carried into the MHT budget for 25/26.
- The CEO continues to review operational effectiveness and a number of minor adjustments to staff working patterns are being made to meet operational needs. These changes are included in the budget for General Fund.
- The long service award to be continued, the introduction of this last year cost was c.£2k in APR25. In 26/27 this cost will be minimal.
- We have recently received the actuarial valuation and LGPS employer's contributions are budgeted at 22.7% (25/26 22.4%) and the deficit contribution is now also to be paid via payroll at a further 39.3% (25/26 £81,200 lump sum paid), this method will be less costly

for 26/27 but that of course is also because the pension deficit is reducing all the time. To be clear, in 25/26 budget and actual results a lump sum was paid but in 26/27 the extra will be collected via payroll and is budgeted within each staff category accordingly.

- The implemented change last year splitting staff into;
  - Office
  - Conservation, Land & Property
  - Rangers
  - Field team

  Will be the same in 26/27.

6. Capital expenditure

A list of budgeted capital expenditure from the general fund is on page 3 of the budget figures. These are mostly operational (field team). Office equipment upgrades will be lower in 26/27 having gone through a series of upgrades in 25/26 to meet Windows 11 needs. The narrative on the land based capital upgrades is covered in the Land Management meeting on 4th December 2025.
We are expecting to have to spend in the region of £10k on website migration. The exact details and timing are still unknown but currently £5k is included as a capital asset and £5k is in website costs. In reality, whether this will be revenue or capital spend will be determined when the project is clearer.

Designated funds

The designated funds budgets are shown on page 4 of the 26/27 budget figures.

- The stewardship budgets are based on the extant agreements. As explained in the Land Management Paper it is important to be clear that although the balances are high, the cash flow is slow on these funds but much improved on earlier years. We received on 1st December 2025 the first payment for the 2025 year. There is some work to do on a few queries raised but we are comfortable and confident that the rest will follow.
- As mentioned already, the 25/26 marketing and comms budget will become general fund spend in 26/27 and this designated fund has now gone.
- As described in the Land Management paper, the unrestricted gift fund will be used for 2 small projects (walkers shelter and fishing platforms) in 26/27. There may be others as time goes on that are a good use of this fund.
- In light of high election costs experienced in 25/26 that were unexpected, the fund for election expenses has been uplifted to prepare for future election costs more completely. At the end of 26/27 the fund will have c. £25k set aside which has come from general fund. This assumes no more by-elections. If this happens we will need to consider further designation.
- The tree disease fund and ash die back fund combined are acceptable for 26/27 expected spend after consultation with the Conservation Manager. We are likely to need to review the ongoing expectation of costs in this regard and consider a new designation for future years.

<u>The Private Bill</u>

This has been extensively documented, reported on and budgeted over the last year. Management accounts clearly outline the position on the 2 designated funds and detailed additional cost analysis is done monthly and reported to members on the website as well as in papers.

The revised bill budget as submitted to the Charity Commission was approved in October 2025 and the actual costs are mapped to that budget month on month.

The 26/27 budget in respect of these 2 funds is produced from that budget as presented and passed on 29th May 2025.

In due course we may need to look again as each hurdle in the process is reached.

The additional information gained 5th January on transcription costs being levied is a good example of Bill cost contingencies that can't be fully known. The detail on this is in a separate paper but it highlights the potential need to have to modify the budget as the Bill progresses.

It is important that Trustees fully appreciate that the private bill, at this point in time is of the utmost priority and funds to ensure successful completion must be made available.

Restricted funds

The restricted funds budget is shown on page 5 of the figures.

- The Parliamentary, Lands Maintenance and Lands Purchase funds are held in the investment portfolio with Brewin Dolphin as well as some Land Purchase monies invested with Flagstone.
- During 26/27 the extensive plans on capital projects will deplete the Land Purchase and Parliamentary funds but they were established for that purpose.
- The Land Purchase fund is budgeted to provide additional loan amounts of £116k to pay for the promotion and preparation of the Bill, and repayment of the loans which commenced in APR25 will continue with the next repayment amounts in APR26. The budget reflects capital and interest repayments from general fund.
- Investment gains and losses are not budgeted for as is always the case.
- Income from the Parliamentary and Lands Maintenance fund is recognised on a quarterly basis in restricted funds but transferred to general fund at the year end in line with the rules attached to those 2 funds. The budgeted amounts for interest earned were estimated using fund balance levels and actual interest rates achieved last year to determine an estimated value for 26/27.
- There are a number of small restricted fund balances which do see actual change but budgeting for these movements is not practical. Managers are aware of the balances and restrictions and make every effort to use them when appropriate.

Transfers

In line with the detailed narrative on transfers in the stat accounts. It is made equally clear and transparent in the budgeting too so below illustrates the transfers between funds budgeted in 26/27.

Key
DF/GF/RF = designated/general/restricted funds
PM = Parliamentary Fund
LM = Lands maintenance fund
COD = Capital outlay discharged
CS = countryside Stewardship

Transfers	General Fund
Balance to clear Bill "Other costs" to NIL	(8,930)
Election budget uplift	(10,000)
DF fixed assets dep'n	2,116
Move DF asset dep'n to DF	1,500
Investment income PM and LM transferred	13,000
Investment income PM and LM transferred	6,000
Dep'n on new robocutter tfr to DF	5,000
Interest on loan #1#2	(5,934)
Capital repayment of loan #1#2	(7,848)
	(5,097)
Transfers FROM other funds	*(32,713)*
Transfers TO other funds	*27,616*
Total	*(5,097)*

RESTRICTED FUNDS	Parliamentary fund	COD	Land maintenance	Lands Purchase fund 1
Transfers				
Investment income PM	(13,000)			
Investment income LM			(6,000)	
Loan drawdown 30.04.26				(50,000)
Loan drawdown 31.01.27				(66,000)
Transfer cost of PM assets to COD	(220,500)	220,500		
Transfer cost of LP assets to COD	(20)	20		
Interest on loan #1#2				5,934
Capital repayment of loan #1#2				7,848
	(233,520)	220,520	(6,000)	(102,217)
Transfers FROM other funds	*0*	*220,520*	*0*	*13,783*
Transfers TO other funds	*(233,520)*	*0*	*(6,000)*	*(116,000)*
Total	*(233,520)*	*220,520*	*(6,000)*	*(102,217)*

Paper X
For information & decision

DESIGNATED FUNDS	Modernisation of Acts other costs	Promotion & Prep od Bill	Election exps DF	CS North & Central	Unrestricted gifts	DF assets	Grazing reserve
	Designated Funds						
Transfers							
Balance to clear Bill "Other costs" to NIL	8,930						
Election budget uplift			10,000				
Unrestricted gift fund assets memo					(10)	10	
DF fixed assets dep'n						(2,116)	
Move quad bike dep'n to DF							(1,500)
Loan drawdown 30.04.26		50,000					
Loan drawdown 31.01.27		66,000					
Dep'n on robocutter tfr to DF						(5,000)	
Robocutter CS scheme purchase				(50,000)		50,000	
	8,930	116,000	10,000	(50,000)	(10)	42,894	(1,500)
Transfers FROM other funds	*8,930*	*116,000*	*10,000*	*0*	*0*	*50,010*	*0*
Transfers TO other funds	*0*	*0*	*0*	*(50,000)*	*(10)*	*(7,116)*	*(1,500)*
Total	*8,930*	*116,000*	*10,000*	*(50,000)*	*(10)*	*42,894*	*(1,500)*

Nicky Gutteridge FCA
Finance and Admin Manager

Deborah Fox
CEO
6 January 2026

Malvern Hills Trust
Forecast Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2027

	OUTLOOK opening balance sheet 1.4.26 £	Closing balance sheet 31.3.27 £
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	1,982,360	**2,262,999**
Investments	1,140,620	**932,100**
	3,122,980	**3,195,099**
Current assets		
Livestock	31,452	**31,452**
Debtors, prepayments and accrued income	245,167	**245,167**
Cash investments	339,788	**339,788**
Cash at bank	827,754	**652,049**
	1,444,161	**1,268,456**
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	240,290	**240,290**
Net current assets	1,203,871	**1,028,166**
Pension FRS 102 liability	(130,000)	**(130,000)**
Net assets	4,196,851	**4,093,264**
Represented by funds:		
Unrestricted - General Fund	312,696	**246,138**
Unrestricted - Designated funds	1,105,347	**1,210,029**
Unrestricted - Pension FRS 102 liability	(130,000)	**(130,000)**
Restricted funds	2,908,808	**2,767,097**
	4,196,851	**4,093,264**

Malvern Hills Trust
General fund budget 2026/27

Outlook 2025/26 at SEP25 £		Budget 2026/27 £	Prior year APPROVED budget £
	Income		
	4000 - Levy MHDC	728,900	668,700
	4005 - Levy Hereford Council	76,800	70,400
	4010 - WCC annual grant	15,075	14,175
	4015 - Other grants	8,000	4,000
	4100 - Car park meter takings	439,000	401,361
	4110 - Residents' passes	33,000	35,000
	4120 - Annual passes	47,749	44,625
	4125 - Parking fines	4,200	4,000
	4200 - Donations	12,000	8,000
	4300 - Property rentals	11,100	11,100
	4310 - Land rentals	7,400	7,400
	4320 - Sundry rentals	120	120
	4330 - Fairs and circuses	0	0
	4340 - Ice Cream concessions	2,800	2,800
	4350 - Easements	0	0
	4360 - Wayleaves	6,000	6,000
	4380 - AONB contribution	6,245	6,500
	4370 - Sales of books, leaflets and maps	0	0
	4400 - Administration charges levied	0	0
	4410 - Compensation for work on land	0	0
	4420 - Sundry income	8,000	6,500
	4425 - Fishing permits	120	100
	4510 - Bank interest receivable	24,000	21,000
	4700 - Profit on disposal of fixed assets	8,000	5,000
1,339,736	**Total income**	**1,438,509**	**1,316,781**
	Land management purchases		
	5000 - Contract labour	11,900	11,500
	5001 - Tracks and paths	11,500	11,500
	5005 - Drainage works	1,000	1,562
	5010 - Vehicle and equipment expenses	11,000	17,836
	5015 - Field staff vehicles fuel	11,000	14,300
	5020 - LM equipment purchases less than £500	0	0
	5025 - Hire of plant and equipment	1,000	3,000
	5030 - Waste management	24,200	9,360
	5035 - Treework	33,000	30,940
	5040 - Grass cutting	4,400	5,533
	5045 - Purchase of materials	7,500	8,000
	5046 - Purchase of tools under £500	1,000	1,500
	5050 - Protective clothing	3,500	2,700
	5055 - Field survey/research	1,500	1,904
	5060 - Tree safety survey	4,500	4,472
	5065 - Conservation volunteers	1,200	1,196
	5070 - Evendine Spring	500	603
	5080 - Gardening	4,000	3,952
	5081 - LM miscellaneous	6,550	6,520
	5085 - Management plan	1,500	750
126,539	**Total land management purchases**	**140,750**	**137,128**
	Visitor services expenses		
	5200 - Parking meters maintenance and repairs	6,000	7,800
	5210 - Parking meters IT costs and transaction charges	21,000	20,500
	5220 - Parking meters - tickets	700	250
	5230 - Parking passes printing costs	3,000	3,465
	5240 - Car park repairs	1,000	5,000
	5250 - Other car park expenses	0	0
	5300 - Rangers' vehicles fuel	6,500	6,500
	5310 - Rangers' vehicle maintenance	7,000	4,444
	5320 - Rangers' uniform and PPE	2,000	1,200

Malvern Hills Trust
General fund budget 2026/27 - cont'd

Outlook 2025/26 at SEP25 £		Budget 2026/27 £	Prior year APPROVED budget £
	5330 - Rangers' tools and equipment	2,500	2,530
	5340 - Rangers' mobile phones	800	792
	5350 - Rangers other expenses	0	0
50,666	**Total visitor services expenses**	**50,500**	**52,481**
	Communications and public engagement expenses		
	5400 - Leaflets	2,000	2,450
	5405 - Council tax payers leaflet	0	0
	5410 - Annual report	600	850
	5415 - Newsletters	1,200	200
	5420 - Campaigns	1,000	1,000
	5425 - Signs	2,000	2,000
	5440 - Events programme	750	1,500
	5445 - Exhibitions	1,000	1,500
	5446 - Membership scheme	0	0
	5455 - Other PR expenses	200	1,500
	5456 - Staff development	500	0
	5457 - Malvern RHS shows	0	0
	5500 - Fundraising expenses	250	250
	5510 - Communications support and engagement	25,000	10,000
16,350	**Total communications and public engagement expenses**	**34,500**	**21,250**
	Administration and governance expenses		
	6000 - General rates	5,400	3,000
	6001 - Rates British Camp car park (will not use)	0	1,700
	6005 - Water rates	4,500	4,320
	6010 - Buildings maintenance	11,000	10,000
	6015 - Electricity	5,600	7,500
	6016 - Pay & Display meters electricity	2,500	2,600
	6020 - Gas	2,500	3,500
	6025 - Telephones - landlines	2,600	2,500
	6030 - Mobile phones (exc Rangers)	3,200	3,000
	8010 - Depreciation - car park improvements	0	0
	8015 - Depreciation - land managment equipment	67,000	40,750
	8020 - Depreciation - office equipment	4,000	3,500
	6045 - Insurance	39,000	37,000
	6050 - Office equipment maintenance	1,000	1,600
	6055 - Office equipment purchases under £500	1,000	1,400
	6060 - Photocopier	4,000	2,500
	6065 - IT support costs	5,000	6,000
	6066 - IT other costs	13,500	15,100
	6070 - Website	6,500	1,000
	6075 - Legal fees GOVERNANCE	56,600	30,000
	6085 - Legal fees LAND BASED	15,000	1,000
	6085 - Audit fee	15,000	14,000
	6095 - Legal fees STAFF BASED	4,700	3,000
	6100 - Other professional fees	5,000	6,500
	6101 - H&S	7,000	4,000
	6210 - Room hire	2,800	3,000
	6215 - Training - Board	3,500	3,000
	6105 - Subscriptions	5,300	5,000
	6110 - Bank charges	4,200	2,600
	6116 - Flagstone Charges	0	1,800
	6040 - Postage	4,000	3,500
	6125 - Stationery	4,000	4,000
	6135 - Recycling	720	700
	6035 - Cleaning	6,000	5,500
	6140 - Travelling expenses	800	1,000
	6141 - Visits to other sites	0	0
	6142 - Board social events	0	250

Malvern Hills Trust
General fund budget 2026/27 - cont'd

Outlook 2025/26 at SEP25 £		Budget 2026/27 £		Prior year APPROVED budget £
	6145 - Miscellaneous expenses	1,000		3,000
	9998 - Suspense Account	0		0
	6120 - Newspaper ads	1,000		1,100
233,469	**Total administration and governance expenses**	**314,920**		**239,920**
	Staff costs			
	7000 - Basic salaries - Field Staff	199,800		198,400
	7005 - Basic salaries - Rangers	146,000		136,500
	7010 - Basic salaries - office based staff	226,950		*211,850*
	70xx - Basic salaries - Conservation, Land & Property	147,950		*135,950*
	7015 - Basic salaries - casual staff	0		0
	7021 - Employer's NI - Field Staff	20,100		19,800
	7025 - Employer's NI - Rangers	13,500		13,200
	7030 - Employer's NI - office based staff	24,600		20,300
	70xx - Employer's NI - Conservation, Land & Property	16,000		16,300
	7040 - Pension Contributions - Field Staff	34,100		26,300
	7045 - Pension Contributions - Rangers	27,900		17,200
	7050 - Pension contributions - office based staff	43,250		25,650
	70xx - Pension contributions - Conservation, Land & Property	40,350		23,050
	7055 - LGPS lump sum deficit contributions	0		81,200
	FRS 102 compensated absences provision	0		0
	7060 - Group life assurance	4,800		4,000
	7070 - Training - staff	12,000		8,500
	7075 - Recruitment	2,000		3,500
929,703	**Total staff costs**	**959,300**		**941,700**
(16,992)	Surplus/(Deficit) for the year before transfers	(61,461)		(75,698)
(87,705)	Transfers to Other funds	(32,713)		(63,500)
45,432	Transfers from Other funds	27,616		38,150
(59,265)	Surplus/(deficit) for the year after transfers	(66,558)		(101,048)
371,961	General fund brought forward	312,696	**	318,789
312,696	**General fund carried forward**	**246,138**		**217,741**

Capital items from the General fund	£
IT, printers and website	7,000
Motor manual	4,000
trade in WX17GNP and purchase reform tractor	75,000
replace VA16DLE with Isuzu elec(?) pickup	50,000
	136,000

*** B/F when 25/26 budget was approved*

Malvern Hills Trust
Designated funds budget for the year ended 31st March 2027

N/C	Unrestricted Gifts	Modernisation of Acts other costs	Prom & Prep "£306k"	Marketing & Comms Board approved £25k 25-26	Dog campaign des fund	Election exps des fund	Tree disease des fund	Ash dieback fund	CS North & Central	CS Southern Hills	HLS Chase End	HLS Old Hills	Grazing reserve	Basic Payment Scheme	Bad weather	DF assets	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
4015 - Other grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	0	0	1,000
4020 - Stewardship annual grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	209,000	49,000	3,537	4,020	0	0	0	0	265,557
4025 - Stewardship capital grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4200 - Donations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4250 - Legacies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4300 - Property rentals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4310 - Land rentals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,279	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,279
4320 - Sundry rentals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4325 - Licences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,500	750	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,250
4420 - Sundry income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4700 - Profit on disposal of fixed assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total income	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**216,779**	**49,750**	**3,537**	**4,020**	**0**	**1,000**	**0**	**0**	**275,086**
5000 - Contract labour	6,000	0	0	0	1	0	20,000	14,320	9,000	5,000	750	1,000	0	0	0	0	56,071
5045 - Purchase of materials	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5100 - Graziers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62,400	15,000	0	2,500	0	0	0	0	79,900
5110 - Stewardship schemes direct costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,000	2,219	2,529	500	0	0	0	0	8,248
5035 - Treework	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5510 - Communications support and engagement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6075 - Legal fees	0	0	105,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	105,500
6100 - Other professional fees	0	6,000	16,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22,000
7015 - Casual staff inc on costs	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25,000
8015 - Depreciation - land management equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total expenditure	**6,000**	**31,000**	**121,500**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**20,000**	**14,320**	**74,400**	**22,219**	**3,279**	**4,000**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**296,719**
Surplus/(deficit) for the period before transfers	(6,000)	(31,000)	(121,500)	0	(1)	0	(20,000)	(14,320)	142,379	27,531	258	20	0	1,000	0	0	(21,633)
4600 - Transfers from other funds	0	8,930	0	0	0	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50,010	68,940
4600 - Transfers from other funds	0		116,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	116,000
8100 - Transfers to other funds	(10)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(50,000)	0	0	0	(1,500)	0	0	(7,116)	(58,626)
Surplus/(deficit) for the period after transfers	(6,010)	(22,070)	(5,500)	0	(1)	10,000	(20,000)	(14,320)	92,379	27,531	258	20	(1,500)	1,000	0	42,894	104,682
Funds brought forward	390,305	22,070	232	0	1	15,135	28,570	14,320	458,585	92,163	2,882	16,470	56,310	0	0	8,305	1,105,347
Funds carried forward	**384,295**	**(0)**	**(5,268)**	**0**	**0**	**25,135**	**8,570**	**0**	**550,964**	**119,694**	**3,140**	**16,490**	**54,810**	**1,000**	**0**	**51,199**	**1,210,029**

Capital items purchased from Designated Funds	£	
#1	10	URGF
Robocutter (CS Scheme)	50,000	CS N&C
#3		
	50,010	

Cash movement	£
Surplus/(deficit) as above	104,682
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	0
Add back DF assets movement (not cash)	(42,894)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	0
Net increase/(decrease) in cash	61,788
Cash brought forward	776,793
Cash carried forward	838,581

Malvern Hills Trust
Restricted funds budget for the year ended 31st March 2027

N/C	Parliamentary fund	Capital Outlay d'chgd	Lands Purchase fund 1	Lands Purchase fund 2	Lands Maintenance fund	Restricted Gift fund	Picnic bench donations	NIM book	Boost4biodiversity	Handgate (DEFRA)	Foothill Grasslands CSMT	Access for all	Tree donation scheme	Urban Tree Challenge fund	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
4015 - Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4200 - Donations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4350 - Easements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4360 - Wayleaves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4500 - Investment income @ 3%	13,000	0	6,500	5,500	6,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31,000
4510 - Bank interest receivable	0	0	4,982	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,982
4600 - Transfers from other funds	0	220,520	13,783	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	234,303
Total income	**13,000**	**220,520**	**25,265**	**5,500**	**6,000**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**270,285**
5000 - Contract labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5036 - Tree planting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6075 - Legal fees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6115 - Investment manager's charges	3,000	0	2,300	1,200	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,500
6116 - Flagstone Charges	0	0	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200
6145 - Miscellaneous expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8015/8020 - Depreciation	0	47,775	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	47,775
8100 - Transfers to Other funds	13,000	0	116,000	0	6,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	135,000
8100 - Transfers to Other funds	220,500	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	220,520
Total expenditure	**236,500**	**47,775**	**118,520**	**1,200**	**8,000**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**411,995**
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	**(223,500)**	**172,745**	**(93,255)**	**4,300**	**(2,000)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(141,710)**
Funds brought forward	448,682	1,781,538	230,176	226,908	191,604	5,800	4,580	2,901	1,389	547	1,465	1,911	684	10,623	2,908,808
Funds carried forward	**225,182**	**1,954,283**	**136,921**	**231,208**	**189,604**	**5,800**	**4,580**	**2,901**	**1,389**	**547**	**1,465**	**1,911**	**684**	**10,623**	**2,767,097**

Capital items purchased from Restricted Funds	£	
Manor House building & access improvements	10,500	*PM*
Manor House decorating	2,000	*PM*
Manor House H&S capital in nature	4,500	*PM*
SAW toilet block	95,000	*PM*
SAW redecoration	3,000	*PM*
Top Shed Storage proposals	88,000	*PM*
Top Shed Welfare facilities	7,500	*PM*
Top Shed EV power supply	10,000	*PM*
Land purchase#2	10	LP
Land purchase #1	10	LP
	220,520	

Analysis

LP	20
PM	220,500
	220,520
	0

Cash movement	£
Surplus/(deficit) as above	(141,710)
Add back COD movement (not cash)	(172,745)
Add back funds transferred from investment portfolio to cover expenditure	220,520
less LP investment income retained in portfolio	(12,000)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash	(105,935)
Cash brought forward	176,651
Cash carried forward	70,715

Malvern Hills Trust
Cash flow movement by fund group 2026/27

	General fund	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£	£
Cash balances brought forward	(125,689)	776,793	176,651	827,754
Net cash inflow/(outflow)	(131,558)	61,788	(105,935)	(175,706)
Cash balances carried forward	(257,247)	838,581	70,715	652,049

	General fund	*Designated funds*	*Restricted funds*	*Total*
	£	*£*	*£*	*£*
Cash balances B/F (incl Flagstone)	*214,099*	*776,793*	*176,651*	*1,167,542*
Net cash inflow/(outflow)	*(131,558)*	*61,788*	*(105,935)*	*(175,706)*
Cash balances C/F (incl Flagstone)	*82,541*	*838,581*	*70,715*	*991,837*

Ensure GF cash remains > NIL

General fund monthly cash flow

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	(5,016)	18,684	8,237	(3,133)	16,907	(16,413)	(8,873)	(24,749)	(11,673)	(6,994)	(23,152)	(10,385)
Add back depreciation	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917
Less capital expenditure	(76,000)	0	(50,000)	(2,000)	0	0	(1,000)	0	0	(2,000)	0	(5,000)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net cash inflow/(outflow)	(75,099)	24,601	(35,847)	783	22,824	(10,496)	(3,956)	(18,832)	(5,756)	(3,077)	(17,235)	(9,468)
Cash balance brought forward	(125,689)	(200,788)	(176,188)	(212,034)	(211,251)	(188,427)	(198,923)	(202,879)	(221,711)	(227,467)	(230,544)	(247,779)
Cash balance carried forward	(200,788)	(176,188)	(212,034)	(211,251)	(188,427)	(198,923)	(202,879)	(221,711)	(227,467)	(230,544)	(247,779)	(257,247)
Flagstone CAI - but accessible	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*	*339,788*
	139,000	*163,600*	*127,754*	*128,537*	*151,361*	*140,865*	*136,909*	*118,077*	*112,321*	*109,244*	*92,009*	*82,541*

Paper B
For Decision

Ordinary meeting of the Board
Private Bill – updated budget

15 January 2026

Promotion & Preparation of the Bill

Background

As you are aware, the Trust revisited the cost of preparation and promotion of the Malvern Hills Bill back in May 2025 and set a budget of £471,972.

Additional costs

The Private Bills Office has unexpectedly informed us that the Trust will have to pay the cost of preparing the transcript of the Select Committee proceedings. "Hansard have confirmed that they intend to charge the promoter 100 % of the transcription costs of the committee stage proceedings on the Bill, which aligns with the principle of full cost recovery in relation to managing public money".

Transcription costs are £300 per hour and with the Select Committee sitting 12.5 hours per week that will amount to £3,750 per week. My understanding is that petitioners have been asked for their availability up to 20 March. Whilst that is not to say the hearing will run for that length of time, there would seem to be little option but to budget for 8 weeks – a cost of £30,000.

Having discussed this development with the Finance and Administration Manager (FAM) and the CEO, we will seek to fund this so far as possible from savings from the 2025/26 budget. The FAM is cautiously optimistic that this may in part be possible. Otherwise, it will have to be funded from reserves.

Recommendation

That the board resolves to increase the budget for preparation and promotion of the Bill to £501,972 and to request authorisation for the expenditure of that amount from the Charity Commission.

Other costs – update

At present it is impossible to predict the outcome in relation to other preparation and promotion costs. Legal costs are over budget in the run up to the select committee hearing but so much depends on what happens at the hearing and how long it runs.

So far as internal costs are concerned, it is clear that further costs will need to be authorised. At the end of November, we had roughly £30,000 of the £140,000 budget remaining. This will not cover staff costs to the predicted end of the passage of the Bill. Once we are clearer about the time the select committee hearings will take, this will be brought back to the Board meeting in March.

Susan Satchell
Governance Change Officer
6 January 2026

Paper C
For Decision

Ordinary Meeting of the Board

Health and safety policy

Date 15th January 2026

Introduction

The Trust last updated its health and safety policy statement and policy in 2019. Regular reviews help the Trust to stay legally compliant and reflect new processes and/or equipment, ensuring that the Trust's statement and policy remain living documents.

The Trust's health and safety advisor recommended a new template for the statement and policy that is considered good practice. This has afforded a fresh look and the introduction of clear accountabilities, new processes and regularising a calendar of proactive checks.

A draft policy statement and policy was prepared by the CEO who consulted on it internally with the senior management team and health and safety advisor. The Health and Safety Working Group (HSWG) met on 10th November to consider the draft policy statement and policy in detail.

New processes that are considered good practice and will commence when the policy statement and policy go into implementation include:

1. Contractors and suppliers will be responsible for their own safety and be required to use their skills and competencies to carry out their activities to at least as high a standard as the Trust's own (policy statement page 1).

2. Clear identification of Responsible People (policy, section 1 pages 2-3).

3. Identification of general areas of risk (policy, section 2 page 3).

4. A suite of procedures (policy, sections 3-5 pages 4-9).

5. That all line managers will carry out proactive, dynamic monitoring assessments for every staff member and key volunteers they are responsible for who work without direct supervision and/or supervise others (policy, section 4.5 page 8).

6. That an annual update on tree safety will be supplied to the HSWG in April or May annually (policy, section 4.4 page 8).

7. A regularised calendar of centralised health and safety related information that requires recording when procedural, insurance compliant and legal checks and monitoring is carried out (policy, section 6 page 10).

In addition, the policy includes the Terms and Conditions of Health and Safety Working Group.

The draft policy statement and policy is provided at Annex 1.

Recommendation

For the Board to adopt the new Health and Safety Policy Statement and Policy.

Deborah Fox, CEO 5 January 2026

Malvern Hills Trust

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

The Malvern Hills Trust (the Trust) is a safety conscious organisation that encourages ownership of health and safety by all its employees, contractors, volunteers (including trustees), visitors and anyone else affected by its activities. Our objective is to operate in as safe a way as practicable and to enhance the wellbeing of people through effective health and safety risk management. We will demonstrate this in our actions and records of them and through our monitoring and reporting processes.

The Trust will:

- Comply with relevant legislation.
- Provide sufficient resources, information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to meet our health and safety commitment to our staff, volunteers, contractors and other agents. and
- Seek continually to improve our performance, by routinely and actively monitoring, recording and reporting on improvements as necessary, keeping our staff, volunteers and any other people affected by our work safe and well.

To this end:

- Trustees accept their responsibility to maintain health and safety as an organisational priority and will always take the lead in promoting standards.
- Everyone with supervisory responsibility will ensure that significant risks in their workplaces are assessed, controlled and regularly reviewed so that the likelihood of harm to employees and others affected by our activities is made as low as reasonably practicable.
- The Trust expects employees and volunteers to take ownership of their responsibilities.
- Contractors and suppliers will be responsible for their own safety and be required to use their skills and competencies to carry out their activities to at least as high a standard as the Trust's own.

This policy and the Trust's way of its implementation will be reviewed at least annually or more often if the nature or scope of health and safety risk or legislation changes significantly.

Signed	Malvern Hills Trust Chair	Date:
Signed	Malvern Hills Trust Chief Executive Officer	Date:

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY – as approved by the Board on 15 January 2026

1. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA) to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees and other people who might be affected by its activities. Employers, staff and volunteers must do whatever is reasonably practicable to achieve this.

Overall responsibility lies with the Trust's Board, which has delegated the day-to-day running to the Chief Executive Officer. The Trust's Responsible People are charged with implementing the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and reporting to the Chief Executive Officer. The table below identifies the Responsible People and their areas of responsibility.

Location/Work Area	Note	Responsible Person
Overall responsibility – Board	Trustees have overall final responsibility for Health and Safety and safeguarding. Four trustee representatives will form the Health and Safety Working Group.	All trustees to have a general understanding; Lead Trustees on HSWG
Delegated responsible person	The Chief Executive Officer acts as the delegated responsible person for ensuring the information supplied to the Trustees is correct and that decisions made by Trustees are in line with legislation and policy. The CEO has the overall responsibility for the managers of the Trust.	Chief Executive Officer
Delegated responsible person	K Tomkins CMIOSH provides external independent health and safety advice and support.	K Tomkins CMIOSH
Field Team Building (site) Fleet vehicles Directly managed staff Field Team specific PUWER (Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998) COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations)	Assuming overall responsibility for Top Shed and their own team only.	Operations Manager with ability to delegate to Estate Supervisor
Rangers Building (site) Fleet vehicles Directly managed staff and volunteers	Assuming overall responsibility for Lower Shed and their own team only.	Chief Executive Officer with ability to delegate building (site) to Land and Property Manager and fleet vehicles to

		Operations Manager
Conservation Team Building (site) Directly managed staff and volunteers	Assuming overall responsibility for the Conservation Team, certain volunteers and the grazing project, including buildings.	Conservation Manager
Office-based Staff Directly managed staff and volunteers	Assuming overall responsibility for the Finance and Administration Team, and any office volunteers.	Finance and Administration Manager
Buildings (sites)	Assuming overall responsibility for buildings (sites) including Manor House and St Ann's Well building (tenanted).	Land and Property Manager

Oversight of the health and safety of all Trust property and people will be delivered through the Health and Safety Working Group (HSWG), which comprises trustees and Responsible People noted above (CEO to lead with others as needed).

2. TRUST AREAS OF RISK

As part of our overarching risk management the Trust has identified a range of '**general areas of risk**' representing the most significant areas of risk and offering the opportunity to incorporate a wide range of legal responsibilities. These areas of risk are:

1. Fire, emergency evacuation procedures and Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)
2. First aid
3. The workplace
4. Hygiene and welfare
5. Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH)
6. Provision and use of work equipment (PUWER)
7. Manual Handling
8. Lone Working
9. Children and Adults at risk
10. Contractors
11. Dealing with unreasonable behaviour
12. Highways and driving
13. Quarries and waterbodies

The Trust has created a suite of procedures outlining:

- What these areas of risk are - **Definition**

- The general approach the Trust takes in respect of this risk area - **Policy**
- What the Trust expects in the way of risk management - **Requirement**
- Outline for how the area of risk should be managed - **Method**

3. RISK ASSESSMENT

Definition

A risk assessment (RA) is a considered examination of what could cause harm to people or property in order to weigh up whether enough precautions are in place to reduce the risk. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill.

Policy

The Trust recognises RAs as the tool by which it identifies and acts upon hazards to any people for whom it accepts a level of responsibility. RAs are not in themselves a protection from harm but methodologies by which Trust staff and volunteers plan for safe places and activities. All people and places for which the Trust accepts a degree of responsibility will be considered through this process. The Health and Safety Policy constitutes the first level of our RA process.

Requirement

All workplaces (Trust properties, including St Ann's Well) will have a **Fire Risk Assessment** that will include general emergency evacuation procedures. The procedures required, together with **good housekeeping** to manage mundane hazards, will constitute workplace risk assessments.

Each department will create at least one **generic activity Risk Assessment** covering the 'general areas of risk' identified in this policy. These generic assessments will be supported by additional assessments covering specific areas of work, such as (but not limited to); working by or in water, with power tools, at height, using fire, HAVS, etc.

Generic activity RAs will require daily **dynamic assessment** and/or day sheets, either to confirm that the generic assessment is suitable or record the additional precautions put in place. Day sheets will also allow people who are supervising to confirm that weather conditions are suitable and that all participants are sufficiently equipped and have received suitable instruction.

All sites for which the Trust accepts responsibility will have **site Risk Assessments** supported by safety audits and tree safety plans. High level visitor sites have additional emergency plans to protect the public. Accepting all sites will have a range of mundane hazards that do not require recording (and are not advised to the general public), site risk assessments will identify specific hazards that our workers or others need to be aware of, together with emergency procedures such as nearest facilities, instructions for locating and accessing site, and other relevant specific information.

All **contractors** will work to site and activity RAs agreed with the Trust.

Organised events where the Trust expects greater than usual numbers of visitors, more than one generically assessed activity, or other organisations taking part, will require a stand-alone **Event Risk Assessment**.

Method

All staff and key volunteers will be trained in generating RAs commensurate with their roles, and how to act upon them before they are permitted to take charge of any sphere of activity for which covered by RAs (this will be recorded by their line manager as competence, or in the case of volunteers by their Designated Volunteer Leader).

RAs and Events will be standing agenda items at every HSWG meeting, where issues relating to RAs will be discussed.

All generic and site RAs will be reviewed by the relevant Responsible Person annually or as a result of a significant incident or change in legislation.

All generic RAs will address and mitigate each general area of risk identified in this Policy.

4. MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Trust has a range of feedback processes in place:

4.1 Near misses, accident and incident reporting by all staff and key volunteers (reactive)

An accident or incident is an unplanned incident that results in actual loss through injury, material damage or environmental degradation, or has the potential to cause such loss.

A near miss has the potential to result in such incidents.

Trust Policy

The Trust shall investigate all significant accidents with an aim to ensure they do not happen again. We will also monitor reported near misses and minor accidents and incidents in order to adapt our work practices for continual improvement.

Requirement

The Trust will notify the Health & Safety Executive as required under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations).

All trust staff and key volunteers will be instructed on how, when and why we have an accident and incident reporting procedures (trigger levels will be defined in generic RAs).

The HSWG will consider and investigate all reported accidents and near misses and report as appropriate to the (Board or Staffing Committee and inform the reporting individual of the result of the investigation.

Method

The CEO and all Trust line managers are aware of their duties under RIDDOR and will follow the procedures under these regulations.

In the event of any accident or near miss (RIDDOR notifiable or not), any line manager may request an Accident Investigation and Report process be undertaken. It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer to assess the level of investigation required. They may seek guidance from the HSWG before deciding.

Where accidents are investigated and reported upon, a sub-group will consist of the Chief Executive Officer, the direct line manager responsible for the person injured or area of loss and an appointed investigating/reporting officer (normally a Responsible Person or person with suitable work process knowledge).

Interviews with staff, volunteers or other people involved in the incident will be conducted by the Trust Chief Executive Officer or a single nominated deputy alone, not an interview panel.

The final report will be submitted to the HSWG and lessons learned will be circulated throughout the Trust.

4.2 Routine monitoring of workplaces and staff by responsible people

Trust Policy

The Trust will gather records from across all areas of work confirming that workplaces are safe and managed in line with our policy. If unsafe conditions cannot be rectified, then the issue is escalated up the line management system.

Requirement

Responsible people are required to submit records of routine monitoring of the workplace and staff they are responsible for whom prior to each HSWG meeting.

Method

There is a standardised recording form (2. Routine Monitoring) where the format is broken down into the ‘general areas of risk’ in line with the Health and Safety Policy. This includes both workplace and staff; notes are provided to help completion. Responsible people should not be shy of entering N/A in boxes where they have no responsibility; for instance, if you have no building management responsibility you do not need to undertake a review of fire safety. Equally, individuals who believe a hazard exists may report outside of their competencies.

4.3 Routine monitoring of infrastructure

Trust Policy

The land under the Trust’s jurisdiction is either owned and managed by the Trust or owned by a third party but managed by the Trust. The management of Health and Safety may vary depending upon the particulars of any agreement. At a minimum, the Trust will work to limit its liabilities by undertaking management that reduces risks to Trust staff and volunteers, to the public visiting the property, to and from contractors on properties, and to our neighbours.

Requirement

This management requires routine inspections of physical attributes; or checks on constructed assets such as access infrastructure. Safety of staff, volunteers and contractors will be managed through suitable risk assessments based on the capability of personnel and method statements for operations being undertaken. The capacity to amend any issues identified should exist within these inspections and assessments.

Method

The Trust will report on improvements made.

4.4 Routine monitoring of tree safety

Trust Policy

Please refer to Malvern Hills Trust Suburban Tree Management Policies in a suburban setting and to the Land Management Plan.

Requirement

The Trust's tree stock will be adequately risk assessed as dictated by a suitable Tree Safety Policy.

Method

As guided by the Tree Safety Policy, all trees are placed into risk zones. Those in the highest risk category shall be inspected triennially by a competent person and the results are recorded in a report together with any recommended tree works. All required tree works will be undertaken within a reasonable time scale, typically the following winter, with all works being recorded and retained.

Outdoor staff (rangers, conservation and field staff) will all be trained and accredited in basic tree survey so that trees can be assessed during normal work activities.

An annual update will be supplied to the HSWG.

4.5 Dynamic monitoring of sites and activities by line managers

Trust Policy

The provision of risk assessments, information, training, routine and reactive monitoring go a long way to deliver an excellent Health and Safety Management System. However, the direct dynamic monitoring of our work within the Line Management reporting system is one of the most proactive methods for demonstrating that working practices in the Trust are safe and confirming the competence of our supervising staff and volunteers.

Requirement

All line managers will carry out proactive, dynamic monitoring assessments for every staff member and key volunteers for whom they are responsible who work without direct supervision and/or supervise others. These assessments may be carried out by observation or be pre-arranged.

All staff and key volunteers must be assessed:

- Prior to taking on unsupervised or supervisory tasks, confirming Job Description induction training is complete;
- Annually;
- As a result of a significant change of job role;
- Where an incident has occurred or been reported that indicates a review is required; and
- Following a significant change in a person's circumstances, e.g. pregnancy.

Method

There is a standardised recording form (Active Monitoring form to be included). The format is broken down into the 'general areas of risk' in line with the Health and Safety Policy. It is worth noting that while it is an advantage, a monitoring line manager does not necessarily need to be fully trained and competent in specific areas of the work being carried out. For instance, it is not essential that a pesticide application monitoring activity need only be monitored by a certified pesticide user; our 'general areas of risk' process together with information supplied by the participants should allow for robust assessment.

5. COMPETENCY AND TRAINING RECOGNITION AND RECORDING

Trust Policy

It is the ability and competence of our staff and volunteers that allows the Trust to carry out its work in a safe manner and we will support our people through resources, training and recognition of competency so they can continue to do so. We will recognise the skills and competence of our staff and key volunteers and record this as part of our Health and Safety management system.

Requirement

Staff will work with their line managers, and Administration Assistant acting as health and safety coordinator for the Trust, to record training and competence commensurate with their job role on the Trust system. Training and competence for key volunteers will be recorded by Designated Volunteer Leaders on the volunteer database. All volunteers will receive a role-specific induction from their Designated Volunteer Leader, including health and safety information relevant to their role; this will also be recorded on the system.

Specialist volunteers (e.g. patrol wardens) not directly managed as staff (not registered to Trust roles) and any autonomous volunteer groups will have their competency, training and experience recorded in a parallel system managed by the relevant Responsible Person at the Trust.

Method

There are six routes where staff / volunteer training, competence and experience can be captured.

1. Induction – the induction and training that all staff / volunteers need, for instance, basic manual handling and what to do if there is a fire.
2. Job description / person specification – what is in the person specification for each post and confirming that each member of staff has it (role description for volunteers).
3. Use of equipment – under PUWER we are required to keep a record of trained / inducted people for equipment; this can range from gazebos to tractors. Some seem obvious but others are not, so staff should fill this in as they identify it (remember ladders, climbing equipment and working at height, driving and trailers, compressors and pressure vessels, vehicle jacks in workshops).
4. Appraisal – As part of the appraisal process line managers and staff (or key volunteers) will review existing records, update them, record any changes in an individual's circumstances and identify future training needs.
5. Risk assessments – where RAs have created additional training this can also be captured.
6. Additional – when a staff member or volunteer brings additional experience or training that is not required but that is potentially advantageous to record.

Training, competence and experience can be gained / assessed through various methodologies:

- Certification or licence – driving on the road, pesticides, chainsaws, first aid, etc.
- Uncertificated external – such as online training.
- In-house training and toolbox talks – it is perfectly acceptable to train people in house, but it needs recording.
- Competence - identify level or methodology of confirming competence, for instance engaging contractors.

6. CALENDAR OF CENTRALISED HEALTH AND SAFETY RELATED INFORMATION

Trust Policy

The Trust will maintain a record of safety and health management and performance in order to demonstrate and evidence both compliance and a strong safety culture e.g. via Staffing Committee agendas and minutes and HSWG agendas and notes/actions.

Requirement

There is a range of procedural, insurance compliant and legal checks and monitoring that need to be carried out to help the Trust maintain an excellent monitoring system. These are managed centrally by the Finance and Administration Team (FAM Team).

Method

Routinely the CEO, supported by the Administrative Assistant acting as health and safety coordinator for the Trust, will initiate a call to all managers, staff and key volunteers requiring them to confirm that specific health or safety processes or checks are in place as below. This is additional to regular tests at operational sheds e.g. Top Shed.

Month	**Health or safety processes or checks**
January	Check first aid kits (every three months). Fire extinguisher checks. Electrical safety certification. Gas safety checks. Asbestos checks.
February	Fire, emergency evacuation procedures and DSEAR*. All responsible people to review their fire and emergency procedures and DSEAR provision. Confirm records are maintained and sufficient.
March	Clock changes to trigger appropriate actions.
April	Health and Hygiene, tick awareness and response. Check first aid kits (every three months).
May	PUWER, HAV awareness and response, health monitoring.
June	Workplace workstation suitability assessments including home working locations. Building electrical safety certification.
July	Highways and driving, Driving Licence and business use insurance checks. Tractor Driving Certification. Check first aid kits (every three months).
August (ahead of winter works)	Contractors. Checks and review of safe systems and insurance cover of all routine contractors, including; cleaners, graziers etc. Sweep fireplaces at St Ann's Well.
September	Review and refresh all generic risk assessments, together with associate supporting procedures.
October	Review all site Risk Assessments and supporting documents. Check first aid kits (every three months). Clock changes to trigger appropriate actions.
November	Health and Safety Policy and procedure review.
December	

*the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002.

Annex 1 The Health and Safety Working Group

The Trust formed a Health and Safety Working Group (HSWG) to fulfil several important roles in respect of Health and Safety (H&S) Management. It comprises a range of Trustees and supported by the CEO, and will contain:

- Up to four Trustees.
- The Chief Executive Officer or dedicated deputy.
- Previously identified responsible people by invitation.

- Any members of staff or key volunteers co-opted due to the experience they bring or over a short period if carrying out a relevant ‘start finish’ piece of work.
- Any other individuals offering external support or advice when required.

The HSWG will:

- Act as a repository for positive H&S reports (monitoring and positive incidents).
- Be the location for lodging H&S related decisions which fall outside the regular monitoring or reporting process.
- Review and monitor near misses, incident and accident reports and facilitate investigations if needed.
- Make H&S decisions where applicable or advise the Chief Executive Officer (or their Deputy) where more appropriate.
- Report to the Staffing Committee.

Health and Safety Working Group Agenda (agreed in September 2024)

1. **Apologies from working group members -** *Where H&S responsible people cannot attend a HSWG meeting they will still be expected to provide routine monitoring reports. Where unavailability is prolonged a deputy will be required.*

2. **Previous meeting notes -** *These need not be full minutes but should be a fair account and include an action log.*

3. **Action points completed from previous meeting -** *Each committee meeting will result in the generation of a number of action points that someone is charged with undertaking. Action points will be updated at the beginning of each committee meeting.*

4. **Accident and near miss reporting -** *These should be discussed with a view to considering:*
   i. *Is it acceptable? If not do we want to investigate or can we issue advice in respect of changes in behaviour?*
   ii. *Is this a simple “these things happen”? If so consider any trends that may be arising.*
   iii. *What response should be sent to others?*

5. **Routine workplace monitoring by responsible people**
6. **Routine monitoring and updates from land management**
7. **Dynamic monitoring reports**
8. **Ash dieback, tree safety**
9. **Risk Assessments and Events**

10. **Competency and training record update -** *Any new starters, significant changes in job roles or new requirements, any new equipment or plant.*
11. **Wellbeing, workplace stress and happiness -** *note this is a 'general area of risk' but due to its sensitive nature open written reports are not expected.*
12. **Dealing with unacceptable behaviour / behavioural change -** *Associated with stress but an additional agenda item.*
13. **Any Other Business**
14. **Action Points** *Re-assign action points that were identified during the committee meeting*
15. **Date of next meeting.**

Malvern Hills Trust
Ordinary Meeting of Land Management Committee
Park View Community Room, Malvern Town Council, Victoria Park Road, Malvern WR14 2JY
Thursday 4 December 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present: Felicity Robinson (Chair), David Baldwin, Richard Bartholomew, David Core (non-voting), Mark Driscoll, Chris McSweeny, John Michael, David Reynolds, Chris Rouse, John Stock.

In attendance: Matt Gardner (grazier), CEO, Secretary to the Board, Conservation Manager, Land and Property Manager, Operations Manager.

John Michael opened the meeting as Chair of the Board, Mike Wilkinson (Committee Chair) having resigned from the Board. Mr Michael began by expressing the Board's deepest sympathies to Chris Rouse on his recent family bereavement.

1. **Election of Chair**
   Felicity Robinson was appointed unopposed as Chair, proposed by Mark Driscoll and seconded by John Stock.

2. **Election of Vice-Chair**
   Mark Driscoll was appointed unopposed as Vice-Chair, proposed by Felicity Robinson and seconded by Sheila Wren.

3. **Apologies for Absence**
   Cynthia Palmer.

4. **Declarations of Interest**
   - David Core declared an interest in the discussion of a replacement for the bus shelter in Peachfield Road, which was adjacent to his land.
   - Mark Driscoll also declared an interest in this item as a former temporary Chair of Malvern Wells Parish Council.

5. **Chair's Communications**
   - Felicity Robinson recorded her thanks for Mike Wilkinson for his service as a trustee and committee chair.
   - Mrs Robinson reported that there was now a public call for evidence for the new Land Management Plan, alongside a postcard exercise, and encouraged committee members to invite friends and family to forward any evidence they might have.

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

7. Matters arising from the minutes of the meetings held on 26 June and 16 October 2025

There were none.

8. Property Matters

8.1. General Update

- The Land and Property Manager (LPM) reported that an initial assessment of bin provision at Old Hills had been completed. A second assessment was underway at Peachfield Common, focusing on five bins. Several bin types had been considered and two selected for trial at Old Hills.
- An external clear up was in progress at Lower Shed. The Conservation Manager had confirmed that the hazardous trees around the site could now be addressed. LPM is looking at the primary uses of Lower Shed / Yard for waste collection along with the storage of conservation and volunteer equipment. Whilst identifying what current uses should be relocated to Top Shed such as COSHH storage.
- There had also been a major tidy up at Top Shed, initiated by the Operations Manager. The workshop and barn had been cleared and staff were now moving on to the external yard area.
- An initial assessment of St Ann's Well toilet block has been completed, grant funding for these initial works has been sought.
- Work to improve the access to Manor House Reception is being explored, following a recent accident. A local architect had been engaged and a survey would be undertaken shortly with the aim of improving accessibility.
- The farm business tenancy with John Richards Tree Nursery at the Hacketts was ongoing, following an external market rental review.

8.2. Bus Shelter at Peachfield Road

A paper was tabled by the LPM, giving the background and legal context to the request by Malvern Wells Parish Council (MWPC) to replace a bus shelter at Peachfield Road, which had been destroyed by fire, with a bench. MWPC proposed to remove what remained, reinstate the area to grass, and then install a suitable pad to hold a bench. A model of bench had been suggested, which was available in a variety of colours, to be discussed with the Trust; alternatively, the Trust could suggest an alternative model. The PC had suggested the addition of planters, but the Trust would probably resolve on a bench only. The Trust would confirm the arrangement by means of a licence with MWPC.

In answer to a question, it was confirmed that the bench proposed by MWPC was composite blanks and not wood. A trustee advised that MHT had adopted an approved standard design of bench some years previously. The LPM said research suggested that the Trust had at one time halted the installation of any new benches.

A trustee asked if the bus stop had been removed[1] and for clarification that there was no longer a service there and that there was no chance of it coming back. The LPM said that the Trust had not been formally notified that the bus stop no longer existed. A trustee said that there was a bus stop around the corner on St Andrew's Road, which was in operation.

It was agreed unanimously to recommend to Board that permission be granted for the removal of the fire-damaged bus shelter and installation of a bench at Peachfield Road, subject to: the execution of an appropriate licence with MWPC; approval of the bench design and colour by the Trust (approval delegated to staff), and; compliance with Conservation Team advice regarding site reinstatement.

The CEO reported that Guarlford Parish Council also wished to replace a bus shelter and bench, and that she was in touch with their clerk about this. She had advised them to remove the existing structures since they were unsafe. It was likely that a paper on a proposal for Guarlford would be brought to the next meeting of the committee.

9. Land Management Budget 2026-2027

The Committee received the proposed budget with an explanatory paper from officers, all of whom were present and available to take questions. The Conservation Manager acknowledged that the land management team was asking for a higher budget than last year, referring trustees to explanations in the paper as to why the team had a long to do list at present. Firstly, the Trust had been in receipt of new advice and guidance, for example from its retained Health and Safety Officer, which resulted in required actions. Secondly, there were new staff and new managers, including the LPM who was tackling areas of work never done before.

The CEO said that she was currently reviewing the Business Plan, noting that the current version (2022-2027) included proposals for Lower Shed, Top Shed and Manor House, which had never been implemented. She assured the Committee that the Trust did not seek to adhere to old plans however, but was focused on current short to medium-term operational needs.

Questions on the paper and proposed budget were invited from trustees.

A trustee asked about the safety record of the new Suzuki quad truck. The OM replied that it was equivalent to a Landrover Defender and it would be used for short distance trips.

[1] The trustee has asked for the minutes to clarify that the bus stop sign is still there.

A trustee noted that there had been a small increase in the tree safety budget to meet Highway safety requirements and observed that there was some restriction in the Trust's insurance as to how close Trust staff could work to the highway; did this have an impact on the budget? The Conservation Manager said that the issue was whether skilled staff could be doing something more relevant with their time and that it was more efficient to contract out the roadside tree work to a qualified contractor, which is what the Trust did 85 % of the time anyway. The CEO thanked the Health and Safety Working Group (HSWG)for raising issues around the risks of working close to the road.

A trustee asked whether it was envisaged that the Trust would not use tractors at all but use contractors instead. The Operations Manager said that all field staff had just received tractor training. The experience that had been lost from the team recently was in steep slope work. This skill required training and a lot of experience, likely to be a two year process. The robot mowers were a help and could be used on the rest of the estate as well as the steep slopes. The CEO recommended that trustees read the paper that had gone to the October meeting of Staffing Committee, concerning near misses with the robot mower. The HSWG had been pleased to see these.

A trustee noted the £50,000 cost of a remote-controlled mower and asked whether consideration had been given to leasing a mower, or whether purchase was more cost-effective. The CM said that the Trust had leased a model for some years, but the amount of work that it was possible for it to do had increased significantly this year following recent events. Also when hiring a robot mower, there was no guarantee that it would be available when the Trust needed it. The Trust had made a grant application to cover the £50k cost; if this were unsuccessful, funding would come from the Stewardship Scheme (this had been budgeted for).

A trustee referred to plans to install electric vehicle (EV) charging points at Top Shed and asked when the Trust anticipated moving to EVs. The LPM said that due to uncertainty about overground or underground electricity supply, it was unclear when this might happen but acknowledged that the Trust was under pressure to convert to EV use. Older vehicles had diesel filters that were prone to clogging up. The FAM was advised to reduce the budget from £10k to £8.5k.

It was noted that the Finance, Administration and Resources (FAR) Committee would be considering the Trust's financial priorities at its budget-setting meeting on 11 December; Land Management Committee was invited to suggest the key priorities for land management. The Committee Chair was clear that health, wellbeing and safety must be top priority. It was considered that the £3.5k investment in the fishing platform at Clevelode was low priority, given that the Trust received less than £100 a year from fishing permits. The Chair asked staff to look into a consideration to remove it or close it. A trustee suggested looking at phasing expenditure; the CEO confirmed that the LPM was already doing this. The CM insisted that the proposed land budget was not a 'shopping list' and had been prepared with cost reduction in mind. He pointed out that, without the essential investment in skip hire and bin purchase, the requested General Fund allocation would have been £20k lower than last year.

Trustees acknowledged that there was a long to-do list for land management but were pleased that staff capacity for tackling these projects had increased.

On the proposal of Richard Bartholomew, seconded by John Stock, it was RESOLVED unanimously to recommend approval of the Land Management Budget to FAR Committee and the Board.

10. Land Management – looking back and looking forwards

10.1. Looking back

- The Operations Manager (OM) gave a brief update on the work his team had been doing in recent weeks. Two new team members had now been inducted into the team and given good training. The CEO added that the OM had himself made a major contribution, bringing new expertise and ideas to the Trust, which were much valued.
- The CM was pleased to report that volunteers from the Earth Heritage Trust had done some good work with MHT recently. One of their experts had recently led a session with MHT volunteers at North Quarry.
- The CEO reported that the Ranger team had been dealing with a whole range of issues, including unauthorised encampments, as recently discussed at a meeting of the Castlemorton Commons Co-ordinating Committee. The challenge was keeping the public informed when there were legal or safeguarding restrictions. The CEO planned to issue a news release about all the work Rangers had been doing e.g. attending around 30 fires caused by barbecues this year.

10.2. Looking forwards

- The CM reported that tree safety works were due to start soon. The arboricultural report was in, and although this was worse than those of some years ago, it was not too bad compared to recent years. Also due shortly were: tree work at Colwall Coppice; fencing at MHT's new land 'Mannings Orchard' (near Foxhall, Swinyard Hill) and also at the Hacketts; scrub works; and also benches and a tree to be installed in memory of Martin Cottrell. The CM recorded thanks to Sheila Wren for liaising with the Cottrell family about this.

11. Graziers' Report

Matt Gardner noted that in his last report to the committee, he had been remarking on a recent dry spell, whereas this time it had been a wet period. Stock was still out on the Hills. Sheep worrying tended to lessen when the weather turned, which was a relief. There had recently been a cow fatality at Castlemorton Common, which had resulted in local residents and councillors calling for additional signage and speed limit lowering; the local MP was also taking an interest. Forage levels were tight following the drought; there was less vegetation than normal, which meant that stock might have to move. The water trough installed by the Trust was very helpful.

The CEO said that a public engagement exercise was planned on livestock worrying for around Easter, when the Hills became busier again. A trustee asked whether it was known what proportion of stock worriers were prosecuted. It was noted that the police tended to favour community resolution orders, but the experience of graziers was that people took no notice of them. A trustee noted that the Trust had invested in resources to educate to the public and asked whether there had been any improvement. The OM said that these measures did help, but that the situation had worsened since the pandemic, with more people on the Hills with more dogs, many of which were not well-trained.

12. Review of Land Management Plan

The Committee Chair reported that the review was on-going and progressing as planned. Following the departure of Mike Wilkinson, there was a place on the LMP working group. Mark Driscoll volunteered to join; this offer was welcomed and accepted by the Committee.

The CM said that the current big push was the two consultations, which had been running for two weeks and would continue until January:

- A call for evidence from the public and targeted organisations.
- A postcard exercise inviting the public to suggest what makes the Hills special and what are the environmental challenges of the next few years.

13. Outdoor visits 2025

It was agreed that there would be a March visit to Clevelode and the Rhydd Junction, and that the Summer Walk would take place at the two new parcels of land at Little Malvern.

14. Urgent Business

None

15. Date of next meeting

Thursday 26 March at 6.30 pm.

16. Confidential

On the proposal of John Stock, seconded by Mark Driscoll, it was **RESOLVED** to exclude the public for discussion of item 17 on the agenda on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the exempt or confidential nature of the business to be transacted (legally privileged).

Matt Gardner left the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm

Malvern Hills Trust

Finance, Administration and Resources Committee
Park View Community Room, Malvern Town Council, Victoria Park Road, Malvern WR14 2JY
Thursday 11 December 2025 at 6.00pm

Present: Lucy Hodgson (Chair), Simon Baggaley, David Core, Richard Fowler, John Michael (non-voting), Andrew Myatt, John Raine, Frances Victory, Malcolm Victory.

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

John Michael opened the meeting as Chair of the Board and chaired the first item.

1. **Election of Chair**
   Lucy Hodgson was elected unopposed as Chair, nominated by David Core and seconded by Malcolm Victory. Mrs Hodgson took the Chair.

2. **Election of Vice-Chair**
   David Core was elected unopposed as Chair, nominated by Malcolm Victory and seconded by Frances Victory.

3. **Apologies for absence**
   Robert Berry, Allan Cottam, David Fellows, Andrew Willmott.

4. **Chair's communications**
   Lucy Hodgson drew the meeting's attention to the schedule of meeting dates for 2026 and to the dates for the office Christmas closure.

5. **Declarations of interest**
   There were none.

6. **Public comments**
   There were none.

7. **Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2025 and Matters Arising**
   7.1. **Minutes Approval**
   On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by David Core, it was RESOLVED, with four in favour and one abstention, to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 September 2025.

   7.2. **Communications**
   The CEO referred to a question from a trustee at the last meeting as to whether the Trust had made any comparisons for its overall sentiment measure on

communications. The CEO had consulted Alder UK, who had prepared a Comparisons Report that was received by the Committee. This compared MHT with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, Ashdown Forest Foundation, Wimbledon & Putney Commons, and Kemerton Conservation Trust. Given the resources available to MHT and the investment it had been able to make, the CEO was delighted with the outcome of the report. MHT's share of voice was just behind Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, which had more resources. MHT was also on a par with Herefordshire for negative sentiment, which was encouraging given the difficulties MHT had experienced with communications on the Private Bill.

The CEO asked committee members to digest the report and stated that the position would be monitored annually. Questions from trustees were invited, but there were none.

8. **Management Accounts for the six months ended 30 September 2025**

The Committee received the accounts and explanatory notes; these had been circulated to Board for the Annual Meeting, but there had not been time to discuss them. The Finance and Administration Manager (FAM) reported that she was bringing them to this meeting because they were the six monthly accounts and it was important that they be properly scrutinised, since they represented the starting point for setting the 2026-27 budget. She had modified some of the narrative since the Board papers circulation, but the figures were the same. She drew the Committee's attention to the following points:

- Reserves were comfortably above the agreed level.
- Following the Board's resolution on 29 May 2025 on additional funding for the Private Bill, an application had been submitted to the Charity Commission but permission had not been confirmed until October. This meant that some transfers would be required in Quarter 3; these were listed in the paper.
- It was likely that the Trust would be selling one tractor rather than two; this was addressed in the 2026-27 budget.
- At this point in the year, the levy accounted for 41 % of the Trust's income.
- The Rents and Licences income line was much higher than expected, due to receipt of income from contractors using a car park.
- Land management expenditure was showing as under budget; this was because much of the planned expenditure would come towards the end of the financial year. The FAM had addressed this issue in the 2026-27 draft budget by apportioning expenditure on a percentage basis.
- Communications expenditure appeared to be under-budget; this was because a designated fund for communications had been used first.
- Legal expenses were already over budget; the FAM drew attention to the breakdown of expenditure in the notes.
- There was a slight difference in the presentation of the Bill costs in the notes to the management accounts and in the additional costs pages available to Trustees on the web site each month. Now that Charity Commission approval

had been received, all costs were being tracked against the new budget figures. The Bill costs report to the end of November was now available on the Members' Area of the web site.

Questions from trustees were invited. A trustee asked whether Flagstone was becoming less competitive. The FAM said she would review the Trust's Flagstone investment for the June FAR meeting. She considered that it was helpful having liquid funding available; Flagstone was a better option than leaving the cash in a bank account where it would earn minimal interest. The amount of funding held as liquid cash was reducing in any case.

9. **Budget 2026-2027**

The Committee received the proposed draft budget, together with explanatory notes from the FAM.

9.1. **Introduction by the FAM**

- The FAM drew attention to the outlook budget, which had been used to generate a projected opening balance for 1 April 2026. She was predicting a deficit on the General Fund of £66,558. The Trust had budgeted for a deficit for a few years now, although on each occasion the outcome had been better than expected. It was acceptable to do this if there were good reasons and a finite timescale. The Trust *did* have good reasons, for example: the Bill costs; new areas of work generated by the appointment of the Land and Property Manager, and; a healthy level of reserves.
- A predicted calculation of reserves was presented based on the outlook to March 2026 and budget to March 2027. Reserves levels were comfortable based on the current policy. Reserves levels took into account assets in General Fund that were readily convertible into cash.
- On the advice of the auditors, Flagstone was shown as a current asset investment in the cashflow budget, but as previously indicated this was liquid cash.

9.2. **The Levy**

- The FAM had provided a sensitivity analysis table for the levy, which also showed the projected rise for the individual levy payer. She cautioned that the Tax base changed each year, but the basis for the calculations was up to date. The recommendation was for the levy to be set at £805,700, a 9% increase on the previous year. This translated into a rise of £3.71 or 7.39% for a Band D property. There would need to be a fresh debate at the January Board meeting if the Tax base were to change by plus or minus 1%.
- A trustee observed that the proposed levy would be more than twice the level of inflation and recommended that the Trust should be more circumspect. The FAM pointed out that the Trust could charge a maximum levy of £864,396; the proposed figure was well below this. The

CEO pointed out that as usual officers had been through the budget line by line; it was not a case of applying a blanket inflationary increase. She also drew attention to the proposal not to increase the parking permit cost for levy payers. The FAM said that in most cases, costs were going up by more than inflation; the exception was salaries. There were budget lines with proposed reductions, but if the Board was going to implement actions in the Business Plan they needed to be resourced.

- A trustee said that they would support an increase of 3.4%, but that the Board would need to understand what this meant. The trustee queried whether limiting the increase to 3.4% would take the closing position below the agreed reserves level. The FAM said it would be close to it, pointing out that there was general agreement that the reserves level should be increased to £400k; if that happened, the closing position would be below that level. She said that each percent reduction to the levy would mean c £7,400 less income for the Trust. An increase of just 3.4% would not meet its needs.

9.3. Other Income

- Car Parking
  - A trustee asked whether the Trust regularly benchmarked its car parking prices. The CEO said that it did. The Trust only had a limited number of Rangers to oversee car parking. The logic of the proposals was to keep down cost rises to levy payers. However, the Trust did not want to encourage people to park on the verges in order to avoid parking charges.
- Grants
  - The FAM said that the percentage increase to Worcestershire County Council had mirrored the levy in the past and she proposed to increase it by 9% if the levy was approved at that level. The County Council had never previously presented a counter proposal.

9.4. General Fund Expenditure

- It was noted the land management budget had been considered by Land Management Committee and recommended for approval. There was some shift in terms of using contractors and higher than inflation lifts for visitor services.
- The FAM drew the Committee's particular attention to the following proposed increases in governance and administration:
  - Depreciation would be higher due to capital asset purchases. A trustee queried whether this was a cash item; the FAM confirmed that it was not, but said that it was an annual cost that the Trust had to recognise.
  - Legal costs had been split across separate headings and set at £41,000. The FAM cautioned that this budget had been overspent by £30k last year. There would be commitments on land renewals next year.
  - Although there was a budget line on health and safety, there was related expenditure across other lines too, for example training.
  - There were some minor modifications to staff hours under discussion, but no major changes to staff numbers expected. In future, the LGPS pension

deficit contribution would be paid month on month through payroll rather than as a lump sum. A trustee asked why expenditure on field staff was projected to increase by just £300. The FAM said this was due to personnel changes.

9.5. Capital Expenditure

- It was not yet known whether the new web site would be capital or revenue expenditure. A trustee queried whether it was possible for it to be capital; the CEO explained that the current web site platform had reached the end of its life and so the Trust had to migrate to a new one, which provided the opportunity to review. The Trust would be investing in an information asset, hence the argument for it to be capital expenditure. The Trust was in receipt of some estimates for the project, but there were no quotations yet.
- Discussions continued as to whether vehicles should be replaced with electric or non-electric models.

9.6. Designated Funds

- It was hoped that the new robocutter would be funded by a grant; if not, funding would come from North and Central stewardship income.
- The recent by-election had cost £20k, which indicated that the budget of £5k per annum for elections was no longer sufficient. Therefore, the budget for 2026-27 had been increased to leave £25k designated balance at 31 March 2027.
- The Bill costs mirrored what had been agreed with the Charity Commission. The Trust would probably review both the Bill costs budget and the Promotion and Preparation budget next year.
- There was no budget for income to the gift fund. The FAM said there was an active effort to spend this fund on 'nice' things.

9.7. Restricted Funds

- There were some potential land purchases coming; trustees were encouraged to read the schedule in the Land Management Committee papers from 4 December 2025.

9.8. **Resolutions**

Simon Baggaley requested an amendment to the resolution on the recommendation of the levy. He wanted to see what the budget would look like if the increase to the levy were capped at the current RPI of 3.4 %, together with an indication of what decisions would have to be made. It was stressed that officers would be asked to identify indicative areas only, not to present a whole new budget.

The FAM said that such a cap would wipe £41,500 off the bottom line of the budget and the CEO warned that trustees would be exposing staff to appearing to propose decisions that would be unpopular with the public. The Land and Property Manager said that such a step would have major negative implications for the Trust's land management plans.

9.8.1. On the proposal of Simon Baggaley, seconded by Richard Fowler, it was RESOLVED, with six in favour and two against, to allow an amendment to the resolution on the levy, namely that it would be recommended for approval subject to the provision by officers of an indicative budget showing what would need to be cut if the increase to the levy payer were to be set at the current RPI of 3.4%.

9.8.2. On the proposal of David Core, seconded by Lucy Hodgson, it was RESOLVED unanimously to recommend to Board that the levy for 2026-27 be set at £805,700, an increase of 9% on the previous year, subject to a possible review of the levy total when tax base information was made available, and also subject to the provision by officers of an indicative budget showing what would need to be cut if the increase to the levy payer were to be set at the current RPI of 3.4%.

9.8.3. On the proposal of Malcolm Victory, seconded by David Core, it was RESOLVED unanimously to recommend to Board that, subject to the levy being set at £805,700, daytime car park meter prices at main car parks be increased to from £6.00 to £6.50 per day and evening prices from £3.75 to £4.00 from 1 April 2026.

9.8.4. On the proposal of Simon Baggaley, seconded by David Core, it was RESOLVED unanimously to recommend to Board that, subject to the levy being set at £805,700, residents' passes should remain fixed at £8.00 per annum from 1 June 2026, and that, also subject to the levy being set at £805,700, annual pass prices should be increased from £55 to £59 per annum, and from £28.00 to £30.00 per annum for a second car at the same address, from 1 April 2026.

9.8.5. On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by David Core, it was RESOLVED unanimously to recommend to Board that the WCC Grant claim be requested at £15,450, a 9 % increase on 2025-26.

9.8.6. On the proposal of Malcolm Victory, seconded by John Raine, it was RESOLVED with six in favour and two against, to recommend to Board, that subject to the levy being set at £805,700, Board approve the General fund budget for 2026-27.

9.8.7. On the proposal of Simon Baggaley, seconded by David Core, it was RESOLVED with six in favour, one against and one abstention, to recommend to Board that, subject to the levy being set at £805,700, Board approve the designated funds budget for 2026-27.

9.8.8. On the proposal of David Core, seconded by Malcolm Victory, it was RESOLVED unanimously to recommend to Board that, subject to the levy being set at £805,700, Board approve the restricted funds budget for 2026-27.

The two members of the public and the Governance Change Officer left the meeting at 7.35 pm.

10. **Business Plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

The Committee received a progress report paper from CEO, who reminded the meeting that the Board had resolved to remove the need for an interim review of the Plan in 2025. The CEO had however taken the opportunity to review progress on projects other than those related to the delivery of the Land Management Plan or those contingent on a new Act. The overall goal was to replace the existing 80+ targets with a manageable suite of KPIs. The CEO had found that there were not many non-land management projects and that there was little business that was not already been monitored as part of the Board cycle, including the three tasks allocated to FAR. The report included a list of capital projects that were in the Plan and the CEO invited trustees to consider and prioritise these. Other projects that might benefit from fresh attention were also listed; these were mainly operational and would be good things to do if time and resources allowed. One of the projects was to develop a fundraising and income generation strategy; the CEO cautioned that grants were always accompanied by a project to deliver, for which management costs could not be reclaimed. She referred to the environmental-related tasks and in answer to a question about efficiencies, suggested that these be removed from the task list; they were unlikely to lead to efficiencies and were not part of any staff member's objectives.

The CEO recommended that the Board hold one or two workshops to develop a suite of KPIs and define a fundraising and income generation strategy. The new suite of perhaps 10-12 KPIs would give trustees something to measure against when holding officers to account. The Committee supported the option of a workshop; it was not felt necessary to hold a vote on this.

A trustee asked about work needed at St Ann's Well, observing that it was difficult to consider priorities if trustees were not familiar with the problems. The CEO referred the trustee to the Land Management Committee paper. She thought that the Trust needed to invest to save costs at St Ann's Well; had targets not slipped over the years, some costs could have been avoided.

11. **Policies**

11.1. **Privacy Policy and data retention periods**

The Committee received a paper from the CEO. She reported that she had met with the Trust's Data Protection Officer (DPO) to discuss whether the current Privacy Policy and data retention periods were fit for purpose. She confirmed that it was good practice to have these documents, but it was not a requirement, and it was not in the Trust's best interests for them to be too granular, because otherwise they would be difficult to enforce. The DPO and CEO had also discussed whether a Record Keeping Policy was required and had established that it would be a 'nice to have' but was not a legal requirement. She confirmed to the committee that there was no question of data being deleted before the end of the stated data retention periods and stated that her recommendation to the Board was to make *no* changes to either the Privacy Policy or the data retention periods, and *not* to introduce a Record Keeping Policy.

Committee members had received an email from Andrew Myatt in advance of this meeting, proposing an amendment to the recommendation in the paper. He reported that he had served a Records Preservation Request (RPR) on the Trust on 2 October 2025, out of concern regarding the Parliamentary process for the Private Bill. He considered that the Trust was not taking retention of data into account and was concerned about the short retention period for certain data, including emails. The Trust had stated that the RPR was not valid[1]. The CEO said that final versions of documents was the best evidence that could be provided. It was not in the Trust's best interests to retain drafts and messages. Board minutes were the Board's records. She could not impose an artificially enhanced reason to retain a particular piece of data. She confirmed that no information was being wilfully deleted and that staff would adhere to Trust policy, pointing out that the Trust needed a legal or business case to retain data beyond the periods specified. She also confirmed that there was no automatic deletion of emails after two years.

Andrew Myatt was asked what specific legal threat he was concerned about, given that he had received assurance from the CEO that records were being retained. He said he was concerned about a future regulatory review, and that the Trust needed to have records available should the balance of the Board to move in a different direction, as had been highlighted as highly likely in the Bill Risk Register. He proposed the following amendment to the recommendation in the paper (amendment in *italics*). The proposal was seconded by Richard Fowler.

To review and make proposals to amend the Privacy Policy and data retention periods; and for the CEO to consult with the external DPO on the proposed changes and on the production of a Data Record Keeping Policy. *Provided that noting in this recommendation, nor any resulting policy changes, shall apply to, limit, or authorise the deletion, narrowing, or non-retention of any material relating to the Malvern Hills Bill that is subject to an active Record Preservation Request of legal hold.*

David Core suggested that 'is subject to' be replaced with 'may be subject to', but Andrew Myatt declined to make this change. A vote was taken on the amendment. There were two in favour of allowing the amendment, five against, and one abstention, and so the motion was not carried. The CEO repeated that her recommendation, following consultation with the

[1] The Trust's solicitors had advised that a RPR could only apply when there was a legal case against it in process, which was not the case here.

DPO, was to make no changes and not artificially to inflate data on the Private Bill.

On the proposal of David Core, seconded by Lucy Hodgson, it was RESOLVED, with six in favour and two abstentions, to recommend to Board that no changes be made to either the Privacy Policy or data retention periods, and not to introduce a Record Keeping Policy.

12. **Reports for Information**

12.1. **Investments**

The latest report from RBC Brewin Dolphin was received under confidential cover. Trustees were invited to forward any questions to the FAM, who would pass them on.

12.2. **Pension Fund Triennial Review**

The Triennial Review was received under confidential cover. The FAM reported that the 22.4 % rate had gone up to 22.7 % going forwards, and the debt recovery was being collected via payroll, at a rate 62 % in total including 39.3 % recovery.. The funding had increased from 75 % at the end of 2022 to 89 % at the end of 2025, and the deficit had reduced from £802k to £339k. The FAM reminded trustees that the FRS102 provision in the statutory accounts was not the same as this. In answer to a question from a trustee, the FAM confirmed that just five employees remained in this scheme.

12.3. **GDPR – Review of Data breach log**

The CEO reported that the Information Commissioner (ICO) had written to the Trust to say that the complaint made against the Trust under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) had not been upheld because the information requested had not been environmental. The CEO observed that the Trust received a number of enquiries under the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act; if the Trust were to be subject to the Act, much resource would be diverted to handling these enquiries. She stated that the Trust did need a more systematic method of tracking general enquiries to ensure that they were all answered and confirmed that she would pursue this with staff. In answer to a question from a trustee, the CEO confirmed that the Trust did observe the spirit of the FoI Act and aimed to be helpful.

12.4. **Risk Management red flag items**

The CEO recorded her thanks to Andrew Myatt for his detailed comments on the Risk Register.

13. **Urgent Business**

13.1. **Auditor tender process**

The FAM reported that the process had not yet begun. One levy payer had recommended an auditor and that auditor would be included on the list of those to be invited to tender. It was possible that a Special Board meeting would be required to appoint. It would definitely not be on the agenda for the January Board and it was suggested that this should be made clear on the web site and in the papers in order to avoid confusion to levy payers.

14. **Date of Next Meeting**
Thursday 4 June 2026

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

For Information

Ordinary meeting of the Board

Management accounts to 30th November 2025

15 January 2026

The management accounts for the first 8 months of the financial year to NOV25 are presented for Trustees' information.

I will provide a narrative to support these at the meeting and there is the usual detailed notes included in here too.

Nicky Gutteridge FCA
Finance and Admin Manager
6 January 2026

Malvern Hills Trust

Balance Sheet as at 30th November 2025

	£	£	NOTES
Fixed Assets			
Heritage assets	1,469,147		
Other land and buildings	206,353		
Improvements to capital assets	60,365		
LM vehicles & equipment	173,942		
Office equipment	9,378		
Investments	1,406,532		**B1**
		3,325,716	
Current Assets			
Livestock	31,452		
Investments	266,187		**B2**
Debtors & accrued income	456,228		**B3**
Deposits and Cash	636,689		**B4**
VAT Asset	9,326		
		1,399,881	
Current Liabilities			
Creditors : Short Term	189,723		
Payroll Taxation	18,199		
Wages/Pension	6,754		
VAT Liability	0		
		(214,676)	
Current Assets less Current Liabilities:		1,185,205	
Total Assets less Current Liabilities:		4,510,921	
Long Term Liabilities			
FRS 102 pension liability		(130,000)	**B5**
Total Assets less Total Liabilities:		**4,380,921**	
Capital & Reserves			
General fund	417,834		
Designated funds	1,079,489		
Restricted funds	3,013,598		
FRS 102 pension	(130,000)		
		4,380,921	

Malvern Hills Trust

General fund income and expenditure versus budget for the 8 months ended 30th November 2025

	Actual 8 mnths £	Budget 8 mnths £	Variance £	*Budget Annual £*	NOTES
Income					
Levy	492,736	492,736	0	*739,100*	**G1**
Grants	16,175	16,842	(667)	*18,175*	**G2**
Car park takings	328,823	339,343	(10,519)	*484,986*	**G3**
Donations	10,540	5,333	5,207	*8,000*	
Rents and licences	32,217	12,413	19,803	*18,620*	**G4**
Ice cream concessions	1,800	1,867	(67)	*2,800*	
Wayleaves	1,311	4,000	(2,689)	*6,000*	
AONB contribtions	4,538	4,333	205	*6,500*	
Sundry income	7,402	4,400	3,002	*6,600*	**G5**
Investment income	17,627	14,000	3,627	*21,000*	**G6**
Profit on disposal of fixed assets	5,283	3,333	1,949	*5,000*	**G7**
Total income	**918,452**	**898,600**	**19,852**	***1,316,781***	
Land management expenses					
Contract labour	7,640	7,667	27	*11,500*	
Drainage	1,439	1,041	(398)	*1,562*	
Vehicle and equipment expenses	9,979	21,424	11,445	*32,136*	
Hire of plant and equipment	170	2,000	1,830	*3,000*	
Waste Management	12,645	6,240	(6,405)	*9,360*	**G8**
Tree work	3,410	20,627	17,217	*30,940*	**G9**
Grass cutting	4,683	3,689	(994)	*5,533*	
Purchase of materials and tools	5,427	6,333	907	*9,500*	
Protective clothing	2,483	1,800	(683)	*2,700*	
Field consultancies	3,760	4,251	491	*6,376*	
Conservation volunteers	64	797	734	*1,196*	
Water testing	0	402	402	*603*	
Gardening	2,331	2,635	304	*3,952*	
Management plan	0	500	500	*750*	
Tracks and paths	7,070	7,667	597	*11,500*	
LM miscellaneous	529	4,347	3,817	*6,520*	
Total land management expenses	**61,629**	**91,419**	**29,790**	***137,128***	
Visitor services expenses					
Car park meter expenses	16,828	19,033	2,205	*28,550*	
Car park passes	1,781	2,310	530	*3,465*	
Car park repairs	820	3,333	2,513	*5,000*	
Rangers' vehicle expenses	8,715	7,296	(1,419)	*10,944*	
Rangers' uniform and tools	3,033	2,487	(546)	*3,730*	
Rangers' phones	755	528	(227)	*792*	
Total visitor services expenses	**31,931**	**34,987**	**3,056**	***52,481***	
Communications and public engagement expenses					
Leaflets	771	1,633	862	*2,450*	
Annual report	0	567	567	*850*	
Newsletters	0	133	133	*200*	
Campaigns	0	667	667	*1,000*	
Signs, display and information boards	330	1,333	1,003	*2,000*	
Events programme	36	1,000	964	*1,500*	
Exhibitions	33	1,000	967	*1,500*	
Other PR expenses	0	1,000	1,000	*1,500*	
Fundraising expenses	158	167	8	*250*	
Communications support and engagement	0	6,667	6,667	*10,000*	**G10**
Total communications and public engagement expenses	**1,329**	**14,167**	**12,838**	***21,250***	
Administration and governance expenses					
Rates	5,954	6,013	59	*9,020*	
Buildings maintenance	5,391	6,667	1,275	*10,000*	
Electricity and gas	5,471	9,067	3,595	*13,600*	
Telephones	3,317	3,667	350	*5,500*	
Depreciation	32,261	29,500	(2,761)	*44,250*	
Insurance	24,351	24,667	315	*37,000*	
Office equipment	3,251	3,667	416	*5,500*	
IT	10,635	14,067	3,432	*21,100*	
Website	663	667	4	*1,000*	

Malvern Hills Trust

General fund income and expenditure versus budget for the 8 months ended 30th November 2025

	Actual 8 mnths £	Budget 8 mnths £	Variance £	*Budget Annual £*	NOTES
Legal and professional fees incl H&S	39,087	39,000	(87)	*58,500*	G11
Governance costs	1,979	4,000	2,021	*6,000*	
Subscriptions	2,913	3,333	420	*5,000*	
Bank and investment charges	3,152	2,933	(219)	*4,400*	
Postage	1,951	2,333	382	*3,500*	
Stationery, printing and recycling	2,491	3,133	642	*4,700*	
Cleaning	3,453	3,667	214	*5,500*	
Travelling expenses	227	667	440	*1,000*	
Miscellaneous exps	718	2,167	1,448	*3,250*	
Newpaper ads	804	733	(70)	*1,100*	
Total administration and governance expenses	**148,070**	**159,947**	**11,877**	***239,920***	
Staff costs					
Basic salaries	451,628	455,133	3,505	*682,700*	G12
Employer's NI	46,780	46,400	(380)	*69,600*	G12
Pension contributions	108,789	115,600	6,811	*173,400*	G12
Group life assurance	2,880	2,667	(213)	*4,000*	
Training - staff	11,112	5,667	(5,446)	*8,500*	G13
Recruitment	773	2,333	1,560	*3,500*	G14
Total staff costs	**621,963**	**627,800**	**5,837**	***941,700***	
Surplus for the period before transfers	**53,531**	**(29,719)**	**83,249**	***(75,698)***	
Transfers from other funds	6,994	0	6,994		G16
Transfers to other funds	(14,652)	0	(14,652)		G15
Surplus for the period after transfers	**45,872**	**(29,719)**	**75,591**		G17
General fund brought forward	371,961	318,789	53,172		
General fund carried forward	**417,834**	**289,070**	**128,763**		

Malvern Hills Trust - Designated Funds Income and Expenditure for the 8 months ended 30th November 2025

NOTES		D1A	D1B	D6	D8				D2	D2			D5	D4	D7	D3		
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 £**	**Boundary Comm advice fund £**	**CS Southern £**	**CS North & Central £**	**HLS Chase End £**	**HLS Old Hills £**	**Grazing reserve £**	**Designated Fixed Assets £**	**Track & Tree bad weather £**	**Marketing & Comms Board approved £25k £**	**Basic Payment Scheme £**	**Total £**
4020 - Stewardship annual grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32,981	139,475	5,078	5,741	0	0	0	0	0	183,276
4030 - Stewardship other grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,331	1,331
4200 - Donations	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35
4250 - Legacies	10,416	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,416
4310 - Land rentals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	500	3,839	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,339
4370 - Sales of books, leaflets and maps	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
01 - Income Total	**10,451**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**33,481**	**143,314**	**5,078**	**5,741**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,331**	**199,395**
5000 - Contract labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(536)	(1,966)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,502)
5035 - Treework	0	0	0	0	0	0	(14,495)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(14,000)	0	0	(28,495)
5040 - Grass cutting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(3,200)	(1,000)	(1,700)	0	0	0	0	0	(5,900)
5050 - Protective clothing	(2,034)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,034)
5100 - Graziers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(9,667)	(41,600)	(1,686)	(2,700)	0	0	0	0	0	(55,653)
02 - Land management expenses total	(2,034)	0	0	0	0	0	(14,495)	0	(10,202)	(46,766)	(2,686)	(4,400)	0	0	(14,000)	0	0	**(94,584)**
5240 - Car park repairs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5400 - Leaflets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(321)	0	(321)
5455 - Other PR expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5510 - Communications support & engagement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(19,998)	0	(19,998)
03 - Car parks, wardens and PR total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(20,319)**	**0 0**	**(20,319)**
6075 - Legal fees	0	(7,089)	(80,662)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(87,751)
6100 - Other professional fees	0	(1,500)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,500)
6205 - Election expenses	0	0	0	0	(18,789)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(18,789)
6210 - Room hire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6040 - Postage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6125 - Stationery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6140 - Travelling expenses	0	(242)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(242)
6145 - Miscellaneous expenses	0	(76)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(76)
6120 - Newspaper ads	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
04 - Adminstration costs Total	**0**	**(8,907)**	**(80,662)**	**0**	**(18,789)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(108,358)**
7010 - Basic salaries - office based staff	0	(15,295)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(15,295)
7030 - Employer's NI - office based staff	0	(2,782)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,782)
7050 - Pension contributions - office based staff	0	(4,644)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(4,644)
10 - Salaries Total	**0**	**(22,721)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(22,721)**
Surplus/(deficit) for the period before transfers	**8,416**	**(31,628)**	**(80,662)**	**0**	**(18,789)**	**0**	**(14,495)**	**0**	**23,279**	**96,548**	**2,392**	**1,341**	**0**	**0**	**(14,000)**	**(20,319)**	**1,331**	**(46,587)**
4600 - Transfers from other funds	0	0	0	0	12,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12,000
8100 - Transfers to other funds	0	0	0	(3,501)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,058)	0	0	0	(4,559)
Surplus/(deficit) for the period after transfers	**8,416**	**(31,628)**	**(80,662)**	**(3,501)**	**(6,789)**	**0**	**(14,495)**	**0**	**23,279**	**96,548**	**2,392**	**1,341**	**0**	**(1,058)**	**(14,000)**	**(20,319)**	**1,331**	**(39,145)**
Designated funds brought forward	406,903	70,252	16,287	3,501	5,000	33,570	61,515	12,276	316,206	64,632	2,571	16,450	60,060	10,411	14,000	25,000	0	1,118,634
Designated funds carried forward	**415,319**	**38,624**	**(64,375)**	**1**	**(1,789)**	**33,570**	**47,020**	**12,276**	**339,485**	**161,180**	**4,963**	**17,791**	**60,060**	**9,353**	**0**	**4,681**	**1,331**	**1,079,489**

Malvern Hills Trust - Restricted Funds Income and Expenditure for the 8 months ended 30th November 2025

NOTES	R1			R2											
Codes	Capital Outlay d'chgd £	Parliamentary fund £	Lands Maintenance fund £	Land Purchase (1992) fund £	Land Purchase 2 fund £	Restricted Gift fund £	Picnic bench donations £	NIM book £	Tree donation scheme £	Boost4biodiversity £	Foothill Grasslands CSMT £	Urban Tree Challenge fund £	Access for All £	Handgate (DEFRA) £	Total £
4015 - Other grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,631	0	0	4,631
4020 - Stewardship annual grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,343	0	0	0	1,343
4200 - Donations	0	0	0	0	0	0	500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	500
4350 - Easements and application fees	0	700	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	700
4500 - Income from investment portfolio	0	9,805	3,843	5,563	3,301	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22,512
4510 - Bank interest receivable	0	0	0	3,539	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,539
01 - Income Total	**0**	**10,505**	**3,843**	**9,102**	**3,301**	**0**	**500**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,343**	**4,631**	**0**	**0**	**33,224**
5000 - Contract labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5040 - Grass cutting	0	(400)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(400)
5045 - Purchase of materials	0	(60)	0	0	0	0	(1,445)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,505)
2 - Land management total	**0**	**(460)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(1,445)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(1,905)**
6066 - IT other costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	(40)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(40)
6100 - Other professional fees	0	(1,825)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,825)
6115 - Investment manager's charges	0	(1,480)	(576)	(665)	(678)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(3,400)
6116 - Flagstone Charges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8000 - Depreciation - other land and buildings	(1,850)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,850)
8005 - Depreciation - impt's to land and buildings	(15,449)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(15,449)
04 - Adminstration costs Total	**(17,299)**	**(3,305)**	**(576)**	**(665)**	**(678)**	**0**	**(40)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0 0**	**(22,564)**
Surplus/(deficit) for the period before transfers and investment gains	**(17,299)**	**6,740**	**3,268**	**8,437**	**2,623**	**0**	**(985)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,343**	**4,631**	**0**	**0**	**8,756**
8110 - Investment gains or losses	0	31,629	12,300	31,199	14,909	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	90,037
4600 - Transfers from other funds	37,410	0	0	2,652	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40,062
8100 - Transfers to other funds	0	(37,410)	0	(2,435)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(39,846)
Surplus/(deficit) for the period after transfers	**20,111**	**959**	**15,568**	**39,852**	**17,532**	**0**	**(985)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,343**	**4,631**	**0**	**0**	**99,010**
Restricted funds brought forward	1,615,701	520,207	192,800	336,577	222,589	5,800	6,025	2,901	684	1,389	1,465	5,992	1,911	547	2,914,588
Restricted funds carried forward	**1,635,812**	**521,166**	**208,368**	**376,429**	**240,121**	**5,800**	**5,040**	**2,901**	**684**	**1,389**	**2,807**	**10,623**	**1,911**	**547**	**3,013,599**

Malvern Hills Trust - Notes to the Management Accounts 8 months APR25-NOV25

General Funds

G 1 NOV25 year to date levy amount per management accounts is 8/12ths of the total for 2025/26.

	£
To summarise:	
General Fund Income year to date	918,452
Designated Fund Income year to date	199,395
Restricted Fund Income year to date	33,224
Total Income year to date	1,151,072
8/12 Annual levy (prorata actual total)	492,736
Levy % as a proportion of total income year to date	**43%**

Statutory accounts information:

	24/25	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19
Total Levy	697,070	663,800	595,300	566,950	534,850	519,250	499,250
Total all income	1,636,872	1,441,202	1,273,061	1,395,317	991,187	1,415,335	1,226,396
Levy % as total of GF, DF, and RF (all funds)	**42.59%**	**46.06%**	**46.76%**	**40.63%**	**53.96%**	**36.69%**	**40.71%**
			Average over 7 years 18/19-24/25				**43.91%**

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

G 2 Grant Income comprises:

	£
25/26 WCC Countryside Conbtribution	14,175
National Landscapes grant	2,000
	16,175

G 3 Q1&Q2 were on budget for car park income, partly thanks to the Earnslaw Quarry contractor income which came to an end in early JUL25, otherwise we would be down. Annual and resident pass sales at the end of Q2 are both around £3k each down on budget. NOV25 leaves us quite notably down for this header and at the end of Q3 I will look at this more closely to see if there is any evidence that the work at British Camp is significantly affecting things. It will be a combination of that and pass sales I expect.

G 4 Excellent boost to budget through Q1 due to unexpected and unbudgeted Severn Trent works income and a separate project, car park use by contractors, both now ended but has generated over £16k additional general fund income in Q1. Q3 sees the first instalment of the British Camp work licenec but this is not a large sum.

G 5 Boost to sundry income in Q2, the bulk of this total is postal income and some filming small projects.

G 6 This is all Flagstone interest earned reconciled monthly on funds invested whereby the earnings are general fund, plus small amounts of bank general fund interest. Any general fund Brewin Dolphin investment income is included in the restricted fund until year end when it is transferred to general fund where applicable.

G 7 A series of assets have been sold at auction mostly at fully written down value so the result was a profit on sale.

G 8 A new split of waste management to better keep track of these costs - we are over budget but it has been heavily documented and it is as a result of changed skip facilities for health and safety reasons. The whole bin project is under review. We also had a one off waste removal cost at lower shed.

Malvern Hills Trust - Notes to the Management Accounts 8 months APR25-NOV25

G	9	Under budget as budget is prorata but the work often comes in the winter months.	
G	10	Communications are being costed initially against the designated fund set aside for this as agreed by Board. Costs will appear against general fund when the set aside amount is fully used in the year.	
G	11	Legal and professional fees comprises:	£
		GDPR & Information requests	600
		HR & staff related	2,562
		Governance & general Charity matters	34,451
		Land and property based	1,449
		Health & Safety general	25
			39,087
G	12	We are still slightly under budget. The primary reason is that we haven't recruited in line with our budget as quickly as we had planned, and the annual actual uplift % was lower than the budget amount. The revised pay was agreed in AUG25 and backdated amounts appear in that month. Other payroll costs mirror gross pay and so these are under budget too at the moment.	
G	13	To date this covers numerous and extensive training, around 80% being land based and 20% office based staff training.	
G	14	The total is just 2025/26 costs, being Ranger post advertisements.	
G	15	Transfers comprise:	£
		Annual first repayment of loan interest and capital to Land Purchase fund (which falls due each April) that is partly financing the Private Bill.	(2,652)
		Transfer to election expenses as approved by board.	(12,000)
			(14,652)
G	16	Q1 Q2 designated asset depreciation charge	1,058
		Board approved release of dog fund	3,501
		Transfer interest earned on non restricted investment amounts to GF Q1 & Q2	2,435
			6,994
G	17	For numerous reasons, some of which will catch up throughout the year, and the main reasons oulined above, we are comfortably above general fund budgeted net surplus at the end of NOV25.	

Designated Funds

D	1	These are the designated pots set aside regarding the work towards the Private Bill. From 1st April 2024, 2 separate designated funds ran, one for the specific legal costs permitted by a consent under s74 Charities Act which could not exceed £306K. We received confirmation from the Charity Commission in October 2025 confirming that we can increase this budget per the Special Meeting on 29th May 2025 to £471,972. This fund is named "Preparation & Promotion of the Private Bill" (D1B). A formal process is required to draw down the loan to help cover these costs. That commenced on 31.12.24 with a £100k loan followed by a second tranche on 31.3.25 of £90k. The second fund named "Modernisation of Acts other costs" captures all other costs associated with the bill preparation (D1A). There was a proposal to increase the budget on this fund too as agreed in the same Board meeting on the 29th May 2025 from £104,000 to £140,377. This decision was passed by the Board and no Charity Commission approval is needed for this decision.	
D	1A	<u>OTHER COSTS this year</u>	£
		Staff costs	22,721
		Legal other costs - Withers	1,500
		Legal other costs - Sharpe Pritchard	7,089

Malvern Hills Trust - Notes to the Management Accounts 8 months APR25-NOV25

		Travel costs	318
			31,628
			£
		OTHER COSTS OF BILL 2023/24	3,413
		OTHER COSTS OF BILL 2024/25	73,964
		OTHER COSTS OF BILL - TOTAL COSTS TO DATE	109,005
		Remaining budget	*31,372*
D	1B	PROMOTION & PREPARATION OF BILL this year	£
		Sharpe Pritchard	77,381
		VWV legal fees	3,282
			80,662
			£
		PROMOTION & PREPARATION OF BILL 2023/24	14,342
		PROMOTION & PREPARATION OF BILL 2024/25	190,354
		PROMOTION & PREPARATION OF BILL - TOTAL COSTS TO DATE	285,358
		Remaining budget	*186,614*

At the end of Q3 (DEC25) transfers will be made to bring the promotion and preparation fund back to a positive balance using amounts agreed at the 29th May Board meeting.

D 2 We have received over 92 % of the 2024 stewardship monies and over 96 % of the 2023 stewardship monies. The first tranche of 2025 stewardship was due and was paid in DEC25. These results recognise the accrued amount for APR25-NOV25. I am investigating the shortfalls to ascertain if they are recoverable. It is not uncommon for them to be late.

D 3 The board approved in JAN25 a £25k designation for 12 months PR spend for communications output. Costs are being charged to this fund from MAY25 onwards, until it runs out then general fund will be used.

D 4 The designated fixed asset fund represents the book value on designated asset purchases which remain designated until fully written down. This is reviewed quarterly.

D 5 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 6 The dog campaign fund £3501 was released to general fund as approved at the 11th September Board meeting.

D 7 The works at British Camp were carried out in JUL25 which uses all of this fund.

D 8 Per the 11th September Board paper £12,000 was designated to help cover the cost of the 2 elected seats. NOV25 saw costs of £18,789, this will be covered by fund transfer in DEC25 and the 26/27 budget has been set with these new higher costs in mind.

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 Lands Maintenance or Parliamentary Funds. These assets can only be sold in very limited circumstances and any proceeds must be used for the purchase of land.

Malvern Hills Trust - Notes to the Management Accounts 8 months APR25-NOV25

R	2	The Land Purchase Fund has been recompensed with the first (of 25 years payable each April) annual interest and capital repayment of the loan, as well as compensation payments on drawdown accordingly. The loan balance currently sits at £188,492 (which is within the promotion & preparation of the bill fund balance).

Balance Sheet

B	1	Quarterly investment portfolio update last carried out at 30.09.25. This covers all movements (including market value revaluation). In between months will just include cash transactions eg management fees or banked investment income.
B	2	Represents the Flagstone investments with > 3 months to maturity from balance sheet date. This is considered quarterly.
B	3	Throughout 2025/26 the levy is being recognised month my month prorata to make the monthly results easier to analyse and to avoid 'spiky' results, this is in line with the budget and was explained in the JAN25 Board meeting. Any accrued levy income due is included here (in debtors) or if deferred levy income needs to be recognised it is included here (in creditors). Also included here is the income we are due to be paid from Northern & Central and Southern Countryside Stewardships. As already explained we are now in a much better cash position regarding this and so the accrued amount is much lower.
B	4	Includes all bank and cash inclusing Flagstone amounts < 3 months to maturity from balance sheet date. This is updated quarterly.
B	5	This is revised and updated annually and the balance is the 31.03.25 liability. The triennial valuation of the pension fund is 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.

Castlemorton Common Co-ordinating Committee

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Summary Report of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 November 2025 at Castlemorton Parish Hall

1. Mike Wilkinson was elected as Committee Chair for 2025-26.
2. Keith Stevens and Jeremy Hubbard have stepped down from the committee. Mike Wilkinson has resigned from the Board of Malvern Hills Trust and is now representing Castlemorton Parish Council on the committee. The PC is seeking a replacement for Mike on the MHT Board and anyone interested should contact the Parish Clerk. The PC hopes to appoint at its next meeting in January.
3. The Committee discussed concerns raised by local residents about travellers and campers on the Common. There is a perception that the problem is getting worse. The Malvern Hills Trust CEO went through the procedure that the Trust follows when it receives a report, explaining the challenges faced by staff. Committee members made various suggestions as to how the public could be kept informed. Illegal motorbiking was also discussed. Residents are urged to report any incidents to the police.
4. The committee discussed livestock safety on the Common, following the recent fatality of a cow. It was noted that due to the road closure at British Camp, there is more traffic than usual in the area, and action is needed now. Worcestershire Highways are aware and it is understood that the local county councillor is pushing for a reduction in speed limits. It was suggested that a join working party be set up, including members of the Parish Council, CCA, and 4Cs, to influence on this issue.
5. The Committee was informed that Malvern Hills Trust is consulting on its new Land Management Plan and wants all stakeholders to get involved. The Trust is calling for any evidence that might be useful, such as old photos, maps and scientific reports. There is also a postcard exercise where local residents are encouraged to nominate their top three special features of the Hills and Commons and to give their views on the likely environmental challenges of the next five years. Postcards are available in 20+ locations around the area.
6. Meetings of the committee in 2026 will take place on 18 March, 8 July and 25 November. Any items for the agenda may be sent to the MHT Secretary to the Board via info@malvernhills.org.uk.