Malvern Hills Trust

Ordinary Meeting of the Board
Colwall Park Hotel, Colwall, Malvern, WR13 6QG
Thursday 15 January 2026 at 7 pm

Present: John Michael (Chair), Richard Bartholomew, Robert Berry (left 9.35), Jenny Burford, David Core, Allan Cottam, Mark Driscoll, David Fellows (arrived 7.25, left 8.45), Richard Fowler (left 9.35), Lucy Hodgson, Andrew Myatt, John Raine, David Reynolds, Felicity Robinson, Chris Rouse, Frances Victory, Malcolm Victory (left 8.45).

In attendance: CEO, Secretary to the Board, Finance and Administration Manager, Governance Change Officer, 6 members of the public.

Absent: Paul Bennett, David Mead, Cynthia Palmer, Andrew Willmott.

Due to an accident on the road between Great Malvern and Colwall, the start of the meeting was delayed until 7.15 pm.

1. **Apologies for absence**
   Simon Baggaley, David Baldwin, Chris McSweeny, John Stock.

2. **Chair's announcements**
   - 2.1 It had been a busy Christmas period on the Hills, but there had been no issues. The Chair recorded his thanks to staff for managing the difficulties caused by a recent storm and urged the public to take care when using the Hills in winter weather.
   - 2.2 There had been a spate of fly tipping on Trust land. The Chair confirmed that any contact details found in dumped rubbish were passed on the enforcement team at the District Council.
   - 2.3 The Malvern Hills Bill was due to move to committee stage in the House of Lords in the week following this meeting. The Chair asked everyone to allow the Parliamentary process to run its course and not to seek to derail this independent scrutiny of the Trust's governance proposals.
   - 2.4 The Charity Commission had written to all trustees in December to remind them of their responsibilities. The Trust believed that this approach was linked to a concern raised by Dame Harriett Baldwin MP. The Trust had met with Dame Harriett and reassured her that it was acting within Charity Commission guidelines in managing conflicts of interest around the Bill. The Charity Commission letter bore this out and the Trust had published it with their permission.
   - 2.5 The Chair announced that Sheila Wren had resigned from the Board due to relocation and read out a farewell statement from her. He thanked Mrs Wren for her dedicated service as a trustee, particularly for her work on Staffing Committee. She had led key improvements, including the Staff Trustee Protocol.

A trustee raised a point of order, asking why agenda item 21 on the letter from the Charity Commission was in the confidential session, given that the Trust had published the letter and commented upon it. It was confirmed that there were reputational issues and associated legal advice, which it was appropriate to discuss in a closed session.

David Fellows joined the meeting at 7.25 pm

3. Declarations of interest
None.

4. Public Comments
A public comment was received from Malcolm McCrae, which is attached at Schedule 1.

5. Confirmation of Previous Board Meetings

5.1 **Ordinary Meeting of 11 September 2025**

5.1.1 A trustee complained that they had not received a response to a request for an amendment to these minutes made on 10 October 2025. The trustee said that neither they nor members of the public expected absolute accuracy in the minutes, but they did expect reasonable accuracy if someone raised a point. The Chair said he would discuss the proposed change with the Secretary to the Board (the SttB) and proposed that the minutes be approved now with the proviso that there might be this one amendment. The trustee did not accept this proposal.

On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by John Raine, it was RESOLVED, with 10 in favour, six against, and one abstention, to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2025, with the proviso that the Chair will discuss one possible amendment with the Secretary to the Board.

Richard Fowler asked for his vote against to be recorded in the minutes on the basis that he had not been responded to for some months on these minutes and that therefore they should not be approved.

5.2 **Special Meeting of 9 October 2025**

On the proposal of Mark Driscoll, seconded by Richard Bartholomew, it was RESOLVED, with 11 in favour and six abstentions, to approve the minutes of special meeting held on 9 October 2025.

5.3 **Annual Meeting of 13 November 2025**

5.3.1 A trustee proposed an amendment to the footnote on the sixth page of the minutes so that it would read ‘it was subsequently decided *by the Chair and officers* that it would not be possible to reconvene the meeting before Christmas […]’. The Chair agreed to accept the amendment.

On the proposal of Malcolm Victory, seconded by John Raine, it was RESOLVED, with 11 in favour and six abstentions, to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 13 November 2025, subject to the amendment of the footnote on the sixth page.

6. Matters arising from previous meetings

6.1 Special Meeting of 9 October 2025, minute 4.2

Andrew Myatt referred to the commitment given to obtain advice on access to information and to share this with all trustees; this had not happened. He had been attempting to secure access to minutes and other information since this meeting. He had now received some confidential minutes and papers on the St Ann's Well inquiry and the Bill consultations, but despite 25 email requests, he had not received confidential minutes prior to 2023. He had also requested access to archived material relating to 1995 Bill but had been informed that it would have to be sifted first and that the trustee would have to be supervised when viewing. Mr Myatt referred to the letter from the Charity Commission, which stated that the new trustees should need to understand key decisions previously made by the Board and asserted that they could not do so without access to all the information requested. He asked whether all other trustees had to be supervised when accessing archive material and this was confirmed. He also wanted confirmation of what material was being removed under privilege and why, and it was confirmed that this was because he had a conflict of interest in relation to the Malvern Hills Bill and that there was some legal advice and other confidential material within the archive. This was advice received some time ago from solicitors.

6.2 Annual Meeting of 13 November 2025, minute 13

The Finance and Administration Manager (FAM) reminded the meeting that the Trust had not recommended the reappointment of its current auditors, due to a large fee increase, and that levy payers had therefore voted to go out to tender. The current auditors had confirmed that they would tender and the FAM had approached six others, including an auditor suggested by a levy payer. The closing date for tenders was noon on 10 February 2026. Shortlisting would take place between 11 and 13 February and the appointment would be made at the Reconvened Annual Board Meeting arranged for Tuesday 24 February. Key information would be made available to that meeting, but not the tenders in full. Contracts would be agreed before the end of the financial year.

7. Committee and Other Bodies appointments

7.1 Malvern National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee

The SttB reported that there were three candidates for the one position on this committee: David Fellows, Cynthia Palmer and Frances Victory. The candidates had been invited to provide a statement to support their candidacy. Mrs Victory's statement was read out by Malcolm Victory, since she was indisposed. David Fellows said he did not have any comment to make and Cynthia Palmer was not present.

It was proposed by Andrew Myatt and seconded by Richard Fowler that a secret ballot should be held. There were seven in favour, nine against and one abstention and so the motion was not carried.

A show of hands vote was held and the result was: four votes for David Fellows, three votes for Cynthia Palmer, and ten votes for Frances Victory. Mrs Victory was therefore confirmed as elected.

7.2 **Remaining vacancies**
The Chair asked for any nominations for the vacancies on the Castlemorton Commons Co-ordinating Committee (4Cs), the Wildlife Panel, and Malvern Spa Association. Mark Driscoll volunteered to join 4Cs and was duly appointed.

8. Budget 2026-27

The Board received the proposed budget for 2026-27, as approved by FAR on 11 December 2025 (*the proposed budget*), subject to the provision of an indicative budget increasing expenditure by the RPI rate of inflation as at November 2025, 3.4% (*the indicative budget)* . This indicative budget had been considered in detail by trustee Simon Baggaley, who had asked for it, the Chair and Vice-Chair of FAR and the FAM. The FAM said that the proposed budget, which would involve a 7.03% increase to the individual Band D levy payer, was broadly the same as scrutinised by FAR, but that there had been two small changes; the budgeted deficit remained at £66,558. The FAM said that it was acceptable to budget for a deficit provided that there was a clear explanation close monitoring and a finite timescale. Reserves had recently been higher than required by the Reserves Policy and it would be appropriate to use these. The FAM confirmed that she had carried out a review of the reserves position, as she did every quarter, and drew attention to this in the papers.

The indicative budget had been prepared to show what cost savings would be necessary to restrict the total increase to 3.4% to the individual levy payer; to do this would reduce the total levy received by c£28k. The FAM cautioned that there would be no change to the cost of car park passes for levy payers in the proposed budget, but there would be in the indicative budget. She read out a statement from Simon Baggaley, confirming that he had asked for the indicative budget because he was interested to see what cuts would have to be made to support a smaller rise for levy payers, and what risks that would involve. Having reviewed the indicative budget, he remained supportive of the proposed budget, although he considered that the exercise had presented some ideas for cost savings that could be explored. The FAM said that there was an additional recommendation, namely that if the levy were approved as 7.03% to the levy payer, the Trust would undertake to look at some of these costs with the aim of improving the deficit.

She pointed out that the inflation figure of 3.4% was an average across the economy, but that many of the Trust's day-to-day expenses had risen by much more than this, such as health and safety, training, postage, waste removal, and professional fees.

The Chair of FAR Committee proposed a vote of thanks to the FAM and her staff for their work on the budget and for the extra work that had gone into the preparation of the indicative budget.

8.1 **Questions from Trustees**

- A trustee asked whether the income from Worcestershire County Council was guaranteed, given that the Council was in significant debt. The FAM said that they had never challenged the amount. It was confirmed that the payment dated back to the 1968 agreement when the Trust took on Castlemorton, Powick and Newland.
- A trustee expressed concern about a significant use of reserves, observing that the Reserves Policy needed to reflect today's increasingly uncertain world. The FAM confirmed that she reviewed the reserves position every three months and that FAR Committee planned to review reserves levels. The FAM said that she hoped the 2025-26 outturn would be £30k better than forecast.
- A trustee referred to a possible legacy and asked if the Trust was aware of it. The FAM said she was aware, but had not budgeted for it, because legacies could take a long time to come through. The trustee asked for assurance that a freely given legacy would not be used to pay for the Private Bill. It was stated that this would be a matter for the Board, but the FAM said that normal practice was for such a legacy to go into the unrestricted Gift Fund.
- A trustee asked whether there had been modelling with the aforementioned trustees about the possibility of reducing the amount spent on reputation and consultants. It was explained that the communications budget now sat under General Fund and in the 2026-27 budget was in fact £10k lower than last year. The CEO added that this was for communications support and not 'spin'.
- A trustee said that the Trust had set a deficit budget every year since 2017 and a deficit had never materialised. The FAM commented that certain income streams were unknown and that if the Trust were ahead of budget, it would not have the reserves problem discussed earlier. The CEO added that the tangible difference was that the Trust was now in a position to deliver work promised in the Business Plan.
- A trustee asserted that the work done by the Trust was a 'nice to have' for most people, suggesting that the budget was padded and questioning whether the Board fully understood it and whether the CEO read her own figures. The trustee thought that the budget should be reduced by 20%.

The CEO objected to the fact that these comments had not been raised at the FAR meeting. She said the trustee made similar remarks every year and that they did a disservice to the staff who were keeping 3,000 acres open and unbuilt on.

8.2 **Resolutions**

8.2.1 It was proposed by Richard Fowler, seconded by David Fellows, that the resolution on the levy should be amended to restrict the increase in the levy to 3.4%. There were six votes in favour, 10 against and one abstention. Therefore, the motion was defeated.

8.2.2 On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by David Core, it was RESOLVED, with 12 in favour, four against and one abstention, that day time car park meter prices at main Trust car parks should increase from £6 to £6.50 per day from 1 April 2026, and that evening rate charges should increase from £3.75 to £4 from 1 April 2026.

8.2.3 On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by Frances Victory, it was RESOLVED, with 16 in favour and one abstention, that residents' passes should remain unchanged at £8 per annum from 1 June 2026, and that annual pass prices should be increased from £55 to £59 per annum, and from £28 to £30 per annum for a second car at the same address.

8.2.4 On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by Felicity Robinson, it was RESOLVED, with 13 in favour, two against and two abstentions, to request the WCC Grant at £15,450, which was an 8.99% increase on 2025-26 and in line with the levy increase.

8.2.5 On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by Richard Bartholomew, it was RESOLVED, with 10 in favour, five against and two abstentions, to approve the General Fund Budget.

8.2.6 On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by Malcolm Victory, it was RESOLVED, with 11 in favour, two against and four abstentions, to approve the designated funds budget.

8.2.7 On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by Frances Victory, it was RESOLVED, with 16 in favour and one abstention, to approve the restricted funds budget.

8.2.8 **On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by Richard Bartholomew, it was RESOLVED, with 10 in favour and seven against, to set the levy for 2026-27 at £805,700.** This represented a 9% increase on 2025-26 and a 7.03% increase for the average Band D levy payer, based on tax base information now confirmed by Malvern Hills District Council. The following trustees asked for their votes against to be recorded: Robert Berry, Jenny Burford, David Fellows, Richard Fowler and Andrew Myatt. Richard Fowler asked for his reason to be recorded, namely that he thought it was an imposition on levy payers to increase the levy by more than inflation.

8.2.9 On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by David Core, it was RESOLVED unanimously that the Board should be presented with some

cost saving proposals at the March 2026 meeting, with the aim of reducing the budgeted 2026-27 deficit.

At 8.45 pm, the Chair called a 10 minute recess, during which David Fellows and Malcolm Victory left the meeting.

9. Malvern Hills Bill - Budget and Update

Trustees deemed conflicted in relation to the Malvern Hills Bill were not allowed to contribute to the discussion or to vote on this item. There were, however, interruptions, including laughter by individuals.

The Board received a paper from the Governance Change Officer, who said she was sorry to have to bring a further request to increase the budget for Promotion and Preparation of the Bill to cover two disbursements; these had been omitted from the costs estimates, for which the Parliamentary Agent had apologised. The Trust had been informed that it would be obliged to meet the full cost of providing a transcript of the Select Committee meetings, at a cost of to £300 an hour. With the Select Committee expected to last eight weeks, this could result in a cost of £30,000. There was a further cost of £1,500 to be added for preparing the bundles for the Select Committee. The Trust had no alternative but to increase the Promotion and Preparation budget by £31,500, if it wished to proceed with the Parliamentary process. The FAM was cautiously optimistic that the Trust would be able to finance the additional expenditure from savings in the 2025-26 budget; otherwise, reserves would be used.

On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by Richard Bartholomew, it was RESOLVED, with 10 in favour and one abstention, as follows:

Since all of the reasons for the Trust agreeing to promote a private Bill in order to update and consolidate its governing Acts still pertain and:

- **it being apparent that in order to fund the continuing promotion of the Bill in Parliament, the Trust needs to revise its budget to take into account the requirement to pay the cost of transcribing the select committee proceedings, estimated at £30,000 and the cost of preparing documents for the select committee hearing estimated at £1,500 and;**
- **the Trust being satisfied that it has the resources to meet the increased budget and;**
- **in the light of the cap on expenditure set out in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 of the Charity Commission's consent given under section 74 of the Charities Act 2011 dated 8 August 2023, revised in the Charity Commission's letter of 16 October 2025;**

it is expedient in the best interests of the charity to request that the Charity Commission varies the cap on expenditure pursuant to section 74 Charities Act

2011 set out in its letter of 16 October 2025 (£471,972) to the sum of £503,472 to reflect additional disbursements estimated at £31,500.

The Governance Change Officer reported that the Select Committee was due to start sitting on Tuesday 22 January. Following opening remarks by the Trust's barrister and a presentation on the Hills by the Conservation Manager, the Right to be Heard challenges would be considered. The GCO confirmed that should the Select Committee decide that the first of the levy payers had the right to be heard, the Trust would not pursue its challenges against the others. She confirmed that Select Committee sessions were open to the public and available to stream online.

10. Health and Safety Policy

The Board received a new Health and Safety Statement and Policy. The CEO recorded her thanks to the Trust's Health and Safety Advisor and to the Health and Safety Working Group (HSWG) for their advice and support on the development of the Policy. She explained that the new policy provided clarity on chain of command and individual responsibilities together with a statement of risk areas. The Chair of Staffing Committee had been consulted and had confirmed that she was happy for the new Policy to go straight to Board, rather than to wait for the next Staffing Committee meeting.

Questions and comments were invited from trustees.

- Lucy Hodgson said that she sat on the HSWG and that there had been useful discussions on the Policy, which was robust and which she welcomed. She recorded her thanks to the CEO and her staff.
- A trustee thought that there was discretionary concentration of power within the executive and asked the CEO to comment on the thresholds of visibility and how she would ensure that trustees were kept informed. The CEO explained that she presented a Health and Safety paper to every meeting of Staffing Committee, on which every accident and near miss was listed, together with training completed and required. The HSWG then went through accidents and near misses in detail and would ask for additional information if they were concerned about anything, as had happened recently in the cases of a side arm flail. The new Operations Manager was now a member of this group.
- A trustee observed that trustees had oversight of health and safety but were also volunteers of the Trust; they suggested that this could be made explicit.
- A trustee said that they were not 100 % in favour of the template. It stated that contractors were responsible their own safety, but the trustee recommended that there should be a corollary to state the Trust had a responsibility to engage contractors who knew what they were doing and had policies in place. If the Trust did not understand their work it might need to take advice. The CEO confirmed that there was more procedural detail for contractors in addition to the policy and said that the way in

which the Trust engaged with contractors varied[1]. In answer to a question, the FAM said she would check with her staff whether contractors were asked to sign Trust rules and procedures.

On the proposal of Richard Bartholomew, seconded by Frances Victory, it was RESOLVED, with 11 in favour and four abstentions, to approve the Health and Safety Statement and Policy.

11. Urgent Business

None

12. Land Management Committee

12.1 **Approval and adoption of Minutes**

On the proposal of Felicity Robinson, seconded by Mark Driscoll, it was RESOLVED, with six in favour, to approve the minutes of the Land Management Committee meeting held on 4 December 2025.

On the proposal of Felicity Robinson, seconded by Mark Driscoll, it was RESOLVED unanimously to adopt the minutes of the Land Management Committee meetings held on 16 October and 4 December 2025.

12.2 **Chair's Comments**

The Committee Chair reported that the bin review was underway and a new style bin was being trialled. The Land Management Consultation postcard exercise had been operating for nearly two months and was due to run until the end of January. Volunteers would be handing out postcards on the Hills in the coming days. The Conservation Manager was pleased with the response to date.

A trustee requested that the Board should be consulted on expenditure at Top Shed, Lower Shed and Manor House.

12.3 **Resolutions**

A trustee referred to the proposed resolution on the bench in place of a bus shelter, as requested by Malvern Wells Parish Council (MWPC). The trustee said that there was a bus still running on school days. It was pointed out that the request had come from MWPC and agreed that they would be free to put in an alternative request if they decided they did want a bus shelter after all.

On the proposal of Felicity Robinson, seconded by David Reynolds, it was RESOLVED unanimously to grant permission to MWPC for the removal of a 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,

[1] It varies according to the level of risk in the contract.

and; compliance with the Conservation Team advice regarding site reinstatement. MWPC is free to make a further application to the Trust should they decide to reinstate the bus shelter in the future.

13. Finance, Administration and Resources (FAR) Committee

13.1 **Minutes approval and adoption**

Andrew Myatt said that he had proposed an amendment to the minutes of 12 December 2025, which the Chair and Vice-Chair of FAR had not accepted. The Vice-Chair, acting in the absence of the Chair who had been on holiday, had proposed a form of words, but Mr Myatt did not agree to them. The Secretary to the Board pointed out that minutes were not verbatim and that it would be impossible to include verbatim remarks from all trustees She read out the amendment that Mr Myatt wanted: 'Mr Myatt advised that in his view, a valid records preservation requests exists'.

On the proposal of David Core, seconded by Lucy Hodgson, it was RESOLVED, with six in favour and two abstentions, to approve the minutes of the FAR Committee meetings held on 12 December 2025, subject to the addition of Andrew Myatt's amendment.

Robert Berry and Richard Fowler left the meeting at 9.35 pm.

On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by David Core, it was RESOLVED unanimously to adopt the minutes of the FAR Committee meetings held on 25 September and 12 December 2025.

13.2 **Chair's Comments**

The Chair of FAR announced that FAR was proposing to hold one or two workshops to develop a suite of key performance indicators for the Business Plan and to develop a fundraising and income strategy. All trustees were encouraged to attend.

13.3 **Resolutions**

On the proposal of Lucy Hodgson, seconded by David Core, it was RESOLVED, with nine in favour and three abstentions, following a review by FAR of the Privacy Policy and data retention periods, to keep them the same and not to introduce a separate data record keeping policy.

14. Staffing Committee

14.1 **Minutes adoption**

On the proposal of Frances Victory, seconded by Lucy Hodgson, it was RESOLVED unanimously to adopt the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 9 October 2025.

14.2 **Chair's Comments**

The Chair of Staffing Committee said that she did not have any updates but did have a statement that she would like to read out and she asked for this to be recorded.

In my opinion, Malvern Hills staff, without exception, have worked their socks off, remaining professional often in challenging circumstances. I am very grateful for everything they do and for the advice they provide.

Members of staff present thanked the Committee Chair for her statement.

15. Red flags on the Risk Register

The CEO gave a verbal update, reminding the meeting that the full Risk Register was received at the Annual Meeting in November and stating that she reviewed this ahead of every Board meeting in order to bring particular issues of the moment to trustees' attention.

- There was an amber risk on wider safety, which related to public property and the environment. Staff had undertaken an emergency cascade following warnings of snow, and the CEO planned to review this cascade at the next meeting of the Senior Management Team, since it was a useful test for a more severe emergency. The CEO hoped this assured trustees that an effective Business Continuity Plan was in place.
- There was an amber risk on the safety and costs implications of tree health. Tree safety inspections were underway and there would be a report made to the Health and Safety Working Group in the spring, as now outlined in the new Health and Safety Policy.
- The CEO highlighted the risk of not meeting conditions for grants. The Trust had recently explored its eligibility for Shared Property Fund, wishing to ensure before it accepted the monies that it was allowed to do so, because otherwise it would have to return the money. The CEO wished to assure trustees that such consideration was given prior to the acceptance of grant monies.

16. Management accounts to the end of November 2025

The accounts and accompanying narrative were received for information. The December management accounts were due shortly and would be discussed at the March meeting.

17. Reports from Outside Bodies

The Board received for information a summary report of the meeting of the Castlemorton Commons Co-ordinating Committee held on 26 November 2025 and a report of the recent activities of the Malvern National Landscapes Joint Advisory Committee.

18. Dates of Next Meetings

Tuesday 24 February at 7 pm at Colwall Park Hotel – Special Meeting to appoint the auditors for 2025-26.
Thursday 12 March at 7 pm at Colwall Park Hotel

Confidential

On the proposal of Richard Bartholomew, seconded by Lucy Hodgson, it was RESOLVED with 12 in favour and one against, to exclude the public for the 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). Andrew Myatt asked for his vote against to be recorded, on the basis that he did not believe that agenda item 21 (*To agree a collective response to Charity Commission letters to trustees of 18 December 2025*) needed to be confidential.

Members of the public left the meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.25 pm

Schedule 1

Public Comments

Malcolm McCrae

The trust does not have a functioning accountability process for the spending of the public funds that support more than 98 % of its activities through the obvious route built into the structure of its board. Neither it or the Charity Commission have been able to provide any documentation to support the trust's assertion that the Commission has any authority over the trust's statutory mandate fulfilment of which should be the sole purpose on which its public funds are spent. Consequently, this agenda item and questions on the accounts at the Annual Board meeting are the only routes available for levy payers to highlight dysfunctionalities in the trust's policies and procedures.

I have tried to highlight these functionalities on numerous occasions over a number of years only to be faced with obfuscation and assertions that have no evidential support. If time allowed I could cite multiple examples of this behaviour covering a variety of issues but will just focus on one that is contained in the minutes of the Annual Board meeting held last November. I tried through multiple interruptions from the Board to ask five questions of the 2024/25 accounts at the meeting. No credible responses were received on the night and when I supplied written copies of my questions after the meeting the responses failed to either address or answer the questions posed.

Against this background, the only reference to this in the minutes of the meeting is a statement that in the opinion of the Chair my questions did not concern the 2024-25 accounts. This type of failure by the current Board to adhere to the Nolan principles for the operation of public sector organisations lies at the heart of the ongoing opposition to its current operation and plans going forward.

The Finance and Administration Manager advised the Chair that she had received the questions from Prof McCrae on 17 November 2025 and had responded two days later with answers to all five questions. At the suggestion of a trustee, the Chair said that he was happy to look into the publication of the facts on the five questions.

The Chair thanked Prof McCrae for his public comment. He and the Vice-Chair reiterated the opportunity for Prof McCrae to discuss his concerns with them.