

**Minutes of the Mavisbank Trust Board Meeting**  
held at 2 pm on Wednesday 18 April 2016 at Swanston

**Present**

Rhona Brankin	Trustee and Joint Acting Chairman in the chair
Duncan Campbell	Trustee
Charlie Cumming	Trustee
David Harrowes	Trustee and Joint Acting Chairman
Chris Lewis	Trustee
Keith McIntosh	Trustee
Kirsten McKie	Architectural Historian
Richard Prenter	Trustee
James Simpson	Project Adviser
Jeff Stoddart	Trustee
Ian Young	Trustee

**Apologies**

Bob Constable	Trustee
Willie Macnair	Trustee and Chairman

**Minutes of the Meeting**

**Action**

**Previous Minutes**

- 1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 23 February 2016 were approved with the following amendments. Paragraph 13: the site of the proposed car park was within the Designed Landscape area. Paragraph 18: the total cost of the base photography was £500 plus VAT. Paragraph 22: the Mavisbank Trust Annual General Meeting did not take place on 23 March 2016.

**Bob Constable**

- 2 Bob Constable had tendered his apologies for the meeting due to illness. The board wished him a full and speedy recovery.

**Digital Model of Mavisbank House**

- 3 Historic Environment Scotland had said it would produce a laser scan of Mavisbank House. James raised concerns about the type of survey and asked whether Historic Scotland might contact Simpson and Brown regarding advice on this. This would be raised at the next Steering Group.

**Provision of a digital model of Mavisbank to be raised at the next Steering Group**

**The Mavisbank Trust Annual General Meeting**

- 4 This would be held immediately before the Trust meeting of 15 September 2016.

**Charlie to arrange the Trust AGM**

**Europa Nostra**

- 5 Mavisbank had not attained inclusion on the 2016 list of the seven most endangered buildings in Europe. Nevertheless reaching the last 14 most endangered was no small achievement and had depended on the hard work of several people. A letter of support from Europa Nostra would help with a revised application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Adam Wilkinson's support was greatly appreciated. It was agreed to renew the Trust's subscription to Europa Nostra.

**Charlie to renew the Europa Nostra subscription**

## **The World Monuments Fund**

- 6 The World Monuments Fund maintained a watch list of endangered building. Mavisbank had previously appeared on this in 2008. It was uncertain as to whether a re-application for inclusion was required.

## **Steering Group Meeting**

- 7 Although promised, the minutes of the last Steering Group meeting of 25 February 2016 had not been received. This would be raised at the next meeting of the Steering Group on 17 May. The minutes of the previous Steering Group meeting of 25 February 2016 would be circulated to board members for information. The condition of the doocot and any proposed action by Heritage Environment Scotland to deal with its instability would also be raised.

**Early receipt of Steering Group minutes to be raised at the next Steering Group meeting**

**Ian to circulate the minutes of the Steering Group of 25 Feb 16**

## **Meeting with Jane Ryder**

- 8 Despite attempts Rhona had not yet been offered a meeting with Jane Ryder the Chairman of Heritage Environment Scotland. Rhona would continue to pursue this.

**Rhona to pursue meeting with Jane Ryder**

## **Meeting with Anna Keay**

- 9 A meeting between Anna Keay the Director of the Landmark Trust and Rhona and David had been held on 23 March 2016. A note of this meeting had previously been circulated. Given Landmark's interest in taking on the restoration and management of Mavisbank House Chris Lewis outlined a series of possible options for the Mavisbank Trust. The Trust's governing Memorandum & Articles allowed the trust wide scope within which to operate.

## **Community Benefit**

- 10 Any community benefit would be achieved through the opening up of the policies with little from the house. Community benefit would be a crucial component of a re-application to the Heritage Lottery Fund which placed great emphasis on this.

## **Possible Amalgamation with the Penicuik House Trust**

- 11 As a way forward for the Mavisbank Trust an amalgamation with the Penicuik House Trust was thought to be only a possible option, the benefits being not yet clearly defined.
- 12 While the Penicuik House policies were open to the public and had a ranger service it was not Penicuik's local country park in the way that access to the Mavisbank policies was envisaged. Substantial resources would be required to manage the Mavisbank policies. Although these were currently owned by Heritage Environment Scotland expenditure had been inadequate for proper maintenance. There could be two complementary Heritage Lottery Fund applications, one for the house and the other for the grounds. In view of the much longer timescale required for repair of the house it was very possible that improvement of the grounds could come first. While Midlothian Council might contribute to the project by maintain the grounds and extend its Ranger service to cover these it was very likely that it would require full funding to do so.

## **Heritage Environment Scotland's £500,000**

- 13 Heritage Environment Scotland (in 2012, as Historic Scotland) had originally agreed to contribute £500,000 towards the restoration of Mavisbank house. While this was no longer available any Heritage Environment Scotland contribution would not be available to the Landmark Trust but could be used for improvement of the grounds.

## **Enabling Development**

- 14 The obtaining of enabling development on the Clerk field was thought to be very unlikely and, as far as was known, was no longer being pursued by Penicuik Estates. James however would contact Toby Metcalfe at Savills to ascertain the current position. It was noted though that remote enabling development remained a possibility even if somewhat unlikely. This could be investigated at some point in the future.

## **Community Engagement**

- 15 A paper on engagement with the local community was tabled. Community involvement would be almost entirely within the policies rather than directly associated with Mavisbank house. While the Mavisbank Trust was taking an initial role on community aspects it would not continue this in the longer term. Immediate resources would come from Heritage Environment Scotland not from the Mavisbank Trust.

## **Site Access and De-scheduling**

- 16 Site access was required for such activities. As no access, especially for the disabled, was available this was a major problem. It was therefore desirable that the site was de-scheduled to help to allow planning permission to be granted for a new access. Heritage Environment Scotland had asked whether the Mavisbank Trust would be prepared to request it examined the case for de-scheduling and it was agreed that Ian would do this. A temporary car park and a footpath were the initial requirements. If this was not provided there could be access only for small and able-bodied groups. The necessity for this should be emphasised to the Steering Group. A planning application would be necessary. A Planning Application for a car park and road had been prepared and submitted (the fee paid) but had never been registered. This was because further information had been requested by Midlothian Council and not supplied. The request was for visualisations of the proposed footpath or road. The best way to proceed would be raised at the next meeting of the Steering Group.

**Ian to request de-scheduling**

**How to handle Planning Permission for a footpath to be raised at the next Steering Group meeting**

- 17 A programme of possible events had been compiled in association with the Loanhead Community Development Association. A site visit would be held at 6.30 pm on 25 April to be attended by Pauline Megson, Andrew Martindale, Adrian Cox and Alan McLaren. Others were invited and Chris volunteered to attend. The landslip should be drawn to the attention of those taking part in this visit.

**Chris**

- 18 In more general terms good site access was required. This could include possible vehicle access from the car park to Mavisbank house extended to the cricket field.

## **The North Drive**

- 19 Grant Ballantine of Midlothian Council was discussing limited access along the North Drive with the owner Faith Szczuka.

## Visualisations

- 20 Slides of the base photography previously commissioned were shown. The boundary of the proposed car park should be made less regular. Mark Turnbull Associates (landscape architects) might be commissioned to amend the previous design, as would Alan Gilmore of Peter Brett Associates for the road engineering aspects. The field beyond the car park could be planted with groups of trees rather than completely planted. It was noted that even should the Mavisbank site be de-scheduled that Heritage Environment Scotland's Heritage Management Section was still likely to object to the construction of the road unless the viability of the whole project could be demonstrated. The proposed route from the car park into the policies could be too steep for wheelchair use unless carefully graded. A car park for the disabled would be provided close to the house where there would also be a car park for residents of the self-catering units. The cost of the car park and road had been estimated at around £340,000. The army had agreed previously to construct the car park and footpath but not the road. While the current commanding officer had inherited this commitment it was unlikely this would last beyond the next commanding officer. It was agreed to delay the commissioning of the development of preparatory work at around a cost of £3,000 for photomontage until circumstances became clearer.

## The Doocot

- 21 Slides were shown of the condition of the doocot, past and recent. Heritage Environment Scotland had undertaken drainage repair and was recording the situation. The safety map Heritage Environment Scotland had prepared was shown. The landscape management plan proposed improvement works. On the whole though it appeared Heritage Environment Scotland was uncertain about how to proceed. Heritage Environment Scotland estimated the cost of further survey work to identify the cause and options for the stabilisation of the land slip at £11,000. Should the Mavisbank Trust contribute towards this cost there had been an indication that this could encourage Heritage Environment Scotland to undertake the survey. It was agreed in principle that a contribution of up to £2,000 could be made subject to knowing the proposals and the time scale. This offer would be made to Diana Murray at the next Steering Group meeting. In view of the uncertainty of the ground conditions a strong possibility was that the doocot could be dismantled the stones stored and numbered for later re-erection.

A contribution of up to £2,000 towards a survey of the doocot was agreed subject to approval of the proposals. To be raised at the next Steering Group meeting

## The Dunard Fund

- 22 It was possible that the Dunard Fund would contribute up to £25,000 towards the Mavisbank project. Detailed proposals would need to be submitted.

## Governance

- 23 It was essential that the Mavisbank Trust demonstrated that it was capable of delivering the project. To achieve this it would be necessary to have not only an updated Memorandum & Articles of Association but clearly set out governance policies and procedures. While some work had been undertaken on this the Trust needed to carry out a full review of its governance and board skills audit. In the meantime it would be useful to clarify the intentions of existing board members regarding attendance and involvement. A three year renewable board tenure might be considered. Chris would bring forward governance items for the next board meeting.

Chris

## **Acting Chairmen**

- 24 In Willie's absence the Mavisbank Trust had two Acting Chairmen. It had been suggested a better provisional arrangement would be to have one Acting Chairman and an Acting Vice-Chairman. This would provide a clear structure. Various arrangements were considered including a rotational acting chairmanship and shared responsibilities. After discussion it was agreed that a secret ballot would be held to determine whether Rhona or David would be the Mavisbank Trust's Chairman. Charlie would arrange for this be independently conducted through the Edinburgh Greenspace Trust.
- 25 In the longer term a new Chairman would be required should Willie not be in a position to return. It was suggested that it was desirable that any new chairman should serve on the board for a period before being elected. The need to identify options for recruiting a new chairman was raised. Charlie said that because the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust was subject to Freedom of Information legislation the Mavisbank Trust was also subject in the same way.

**A secret ballot to be held to determine who should be the Acting Chairman. Charlie to initiate.**

## **Date of the Next Meeting**

- 26 Because the date of the next board meeting was not suitable for a number of people it was agreed that Ian would initiate a Doodle Poll to determine the date of the next meeting.

**Ian**

Ian Young 17 May 2016