

Minutes of the Mavisbank Trust Board Meeting

held at 2.30 pm on Thursday 14 December 2017 at Swanston

Present

Rhona Brankin	Trustee and Acting Chairman in the chair
Duncan Campbell	Trustee
Bob Constable	Trustee
Charlie Cumming	Trustee
David Harrowes	Trustee
Chris Lewis	Trustee
Keith McIntosh	Trustee
Ian Young	Trustee

Apologies

James Simpson	Project Adviser
Jeff Stoddart	Trustee

Minutes of the Meeting

Action/Agreed

Approval of Minutes

- 1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 17 August 2017 were approved subject to the following amendments.
- 2 **Paragraph 2** Midlothian Council had rescinded its appointments to the Mavisbank board.
- 3 **Paragraph 7** An appropriate date for the restoration of the Mavisbank landscape might be 1750 and not 1760.

Doors Open Day

- 4 The Historic Environment Scotland Doors Open Day event at Mavisbank had been over subscribed.

Archaeological Dig

- 5 There was a possibility of another archaeological dig being held in association with the local community.

Historic Environment Scotland

- 6 It was emphasised that the Mavisbank Trust was a full partner in the Mavisbank project. This should continue to be recognised by the other partners with full and open communication maintained.

The Heritage Lottery Fund

- 7 There was some uncertainty as to how the Heritage Lottery Fund viewed the Mavisbank project. It was thought that this remained positive both in Edinburgh and in London. In particular it would be important to know how the fund viewed the long term benefits of restoration. It might be worth approaching Seonaid Reid who was the chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund (Scotland) or even the chairman of the UK board.

The Midlothian Context

- 8 Support from Midlothian Council was very important. Possibly this could be increased. While Midlothian Council through its Members and the Chief Executive was supportive of the Mavisbank project it would be useful to further investigate possible help from the Council. The Council could be helpful to the Mavisbank project by way of clearly recognising the importance of the house and policies within its Local Plan, Economic Development and Tourism policies. This could be within the context of the very significant heritage of the valley of the river North Esk. A paper on Mavisbank could possibly be presented by the Chief Executive to the Council. Within the Esk valley the Council was promoting a Townscape Heritage Initiative in Penicuik. Information already collected as part of previous grant applications for such initiatives could assist an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Ian would contact Ian Johnson, Head of Planning, to discuss this.

Ian to contact Ian Johnson Head of Planning Midlothian Council

The Esk Valleys Heritage Group

- 9 The Esk Valley Heritage Group had been formed to promote the singular heritage of the two valleys of the rivers Esk.
- 10 The valley of the river North Esk alone contained Newhall, the Penicuik Estate, the remains of Brunstane Castle and Ravensneuk Castle, Auchendinny House, Roslin Castle, Rosslyn Chapel, the Battle of Roslin site, Hawthornden Castle, Mavisbank house and policies, Melville Castle, Dalkeith House and policies, Newhailes House and policies as well as Pinkie House. The South Esk possessed Arniston house and policies, Dalhousie Castle and Newbattle Abbey house and policies.
- 11 The group had the following representation. Rhona Brankin, Duncan Campbell, David Harrowes (Chairman), James Simpson and Ian Young all from the Mavisbank Trust; Graeme Munro from the Rosslyn Chapel Trust; Grant Ballantine from Midlothian Council; Paul Zochowski from East Lothian Council; and John Oldham and Peter Raine from the Esk Valley Trust. A sub-group formed to progress work had comprised Peter Gordon, Pauline Megson, James Simpson and Ian Young although the first two had subsequently resigned.
- 12 James had produced a paper on The Villas of the Esk. The group had set out on one page of A4 a draft proposal setting out the main aims of the project. It was intended to contact local landowners. Already much information had been assembled including the study by Viv Wood-Gee possessed by the Esk Valley Trust. It was agreed that Ian would circulate such relevant material as existed.
- 13 The group had decided that a map-based inventory would be the first step to thinking through proposals. Due to other commitments this had not yet been undertaken.

Ian to circulate relevant papers produced by the Esk Valleys Heritage Group.

Landscape Partnership Scheme

- 14 In 2012 the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust had made an unsuccessful grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Landscape Partnership Scheme along the valley of the river North Esk. Charlie would research this with a view to ascertaining its relevance as a source of information to support any future grant bids.

Charlie to investigate the North Esk Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The Mavisbank Trust's Role in Promotion

- 15 The Mavisbank Trust could play a larger role in any future Mavisbank campaign. This might involve nationally-known individuals who could raise the profile of Mavisbank.

Meeting with Richard Prenter

- 16 Following Richard's resignation from the board he had expressed his desire to help the Mavisbank Trust as appropriate. Rhona had intended to meet with Richard to discuss this and intended now to do so.

Rhona to meet with Richard Prenter.

The Mavisbank Trust's Paper on Possible Future Roles for the Trust

- 17 At its special meeting on 31 August 2017 the board had discussed a paper by Charlie and Keith on possible future roles for the Mavisbank Trust in view of the joint submission by Historic Environment and The Landmark Trust of a Pre-application Form to the Heritage Lottery Fund. It was agreed at the special meeting that the report, together with the comments noted in the minutes of that meeting, should be recommended for approval to this board meeting. Approval was given.

Paper on possible future roles for the Mavisbank Trust and additional comments agreed.

- 18 Charlie would send a copy of the paper on how the Mavisbank Trust could assist with the Mavisbank project to Historic Environment Scotland.

Charlie to send a copy of the paper on how the Mavisbank Trust could assist to Historic Environment Scotland.

Digital Survey and Documentary Research

- 19 It was noted that the Digital Survey and Documentary Research would be extremely useful in an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Jura Consultants

- 20 Historic Environment Scotland had appointed Jura Consultants (Managing Director Paul Jardine), based in Loanhead, to support the preparation of an Historic Environment Scotland / Landmark Trust / Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 1 grant application for the restoration of Mavisbank house and policies. It was noted that changes to the current HLF grant programme that had just been announced might be problematic for the application. Chris would be the key contact between Jura and the Mavisbank Trust. He would enquire as to how the trust could best assist Jura. The material the trust had assembled could be of prime help to Jura.

Chris to be key contact with Jura Consultants and to enquire as to how the Mavisbank Trust can assist.

Access

- 21 Access to the Mavisbank site remained highly restricted. Easy access was now becoming essential to the opening up of the site. It would be helpful if Midlothian Council could apply some pressure on Historic Environment Scotland to provide clear access. This would be raised at the Steering Group.

Rhona to raise at the Steering Group the possibility of HES providing clear access to the policies

- 22 Duncan had suggested opportunities for access to the policies and these would be circulated.

Duncan's suggestions for access to the policies to be circulated.

The Policies

- 23 The possibility of applying to Historic Environment Scotland for funding to improve the policies was raised. This would be investigated by Charlie. It would be worth enquiring about the future of the policies at the next meeting of the Steering Group. An initial contact might be made with Chris McGregor at Historic Environment Scotland.
- Charlie to investigate the possibility of applying to HES for funding for the policies. Rhona to raise at the Steering Group the future of the policies.**

Education

- 24 Education about Mavisbank was progressing slowly but had involved Bonnyrigg and Paradykes primary schools. It would be worth following up Pauline Megson's list of community organisations.

Grant Ballantine and Emma Hay

- 25 Grant Ballantine represented Midlothian Council on the Steering Group. It would be appropriate to invite Grant, or possibly Emma Hay (who also attended) to the board meetings of the trust.
- Grant Ballantine or Emma Hay to be invited to attend board meetings**

Additional Board Members

- 26 There could be up to 12 trustees. There were currently nine. A brief should be prepared for the purpose of advertising vacancies. Some progress on a recruitment pack had been made by the working group comprising Rhona, Chris, Keith and Charlie.
- Prospective board members brief to be prepared.**

Additional Board Members

- 27 It was important that the Trust recruited representatives of the local community onto the board. A potential suitable candidate had been identified. It was agreed that Chris would approach this person to see if they would be interested in applying to become a trustee.

Chris

Finance

- 28 Chris had submitted the Trust's 2016-17 annual accounts (which had been approved by trustees between meetings) to Companies House and OSCR. These had been accepted, as had the OSCR annual return.

The Board noted the trust's income and expenditure account to 30 November 2017 which showed a closing balance of £7,552 after taking into account outstanding creditors and committed expenditure.

Trust Website

- 29 While Sara Bronsdon and Chris were in the process of making basic amendments to the website, in the longer term a volunteer was needed to manage the site and update it on a regular basis.

Data Protection

- 30 As the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust's server could no longer host material relating to the Mavisbank Trust, Chris and Charlie would liaise on the setting up of an independent Mavisbank system.
- Charlie and Chris to set an independent IT arrangement for the Mavisbank Trust.**

Dates of Future Meetings

31 Ian would circulate proposed dates for meeting of the trust in 2018.

Ian to circulate future meeting dates.

Ian Young 13 March 2018