

**Minutes of the Mavisbank Trust Board Meeting  
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 5 December 2019 at ELGT's offices, Swanston**

**Present**

Rhona Brankin	Trustee and Chairman
Sarah Barron	Trustee
Duncan Campbell	Trustee
David Harrowes	Trustee
Bob Constable	Trustee
Keith McIntosh	Trustee
Charlie Cumming	Trustee
Chris Lewis	Trustee
Ellen McCalman	Trustee
Jeff Stoddart	Trustee
Ian Young	Trustee

**Apologies**

Michael Steven	Trustee
James Simpson	Project Advisor

**In Attendance**

Grant Ballantine	Midlothian Council
Pauline Megson	Historic Environment Scotland

<b>Welcome</b>		
Rhona welcomed Sarah Barron to her first board meeting as a new trustee.		
<b>Item</b>		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
1.1	Apologies were received from Michael Steven.	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Mavisbank Trust Annual Accounts 2018-2019</b>	
2.1	After due consideration, the Trust's annual accounts for the 2018-2019 financial year which had been circulated previously were approved and Rhona was authorised to sign the balance sheet and directors' report on behalf of the Board. It was agreed that Chris would then lodge the accounts with Companies House and complete the OSCR annual return.	RB/CL
-----		
<b>Adjournment to hold Mavisbank Trust 2019 Annual General Meeting</b>		
At this point the board meeting was adjourned whilst the Trust's 2019 Annual General Meeting was held.		
-----		
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Minutes of the Minutes of the Board Meeting of 3 September 2019 and Matters Arising</b>	
3.1	The minutes of the board meeting held on 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2019 were approved as a true record.	
3.2	Paragraph 3.1 - The updating and revision of the previous Historic Environment Scotland Mavisbank Landscape Conservation Management Plan by Peter McGowan was still not complete.	
3.3	Paragraph 3.3 – Pauline had not yet been able to gather any further information	

	regarding the possible use of HES's 3D printer to create a model of Mavisbank house and Michael had intended to report to the meeting about a similar facility at Edinburgh University.	PM/MS
3.4	Paragraph 3.4 – Chris noted that, unfortunately, Mavisbank had not been selected for inclusion on the World Monuments Fund's Watch List for 2020.	
3.5	Paragraph 3.7 – A query had been raised as to why the results of a recording outing by the Wildlife Information Centre at Mavisbank had not noted any badger activity. They had responded by saying the excursion had been a joint meeting of The Wildlife Information Centre and the Lothians Amphibian and Reptile Group. The woodland areas had not been covered comprehensively and no badger signs had been recorded.	
3.6	Paragraph 4.3 - Ownership of the Mavisbank site remained an aspect that was still being examined by Historic Environment Scotland and Midlothian Council. Chris had circulated an updated version of the post-1950 ownership table he had produced last year. He had also discovered a plan in the Harrowes 1956 title deeds which appeared to indicate that the likely SE boundary of HES's land ownership lies beyond their current perimeter wall/fence and actually follows the centre line of the River North Esk. This would then form a continuation of the boundary line already recognised by the relevant South Drive property owners.	
3.7	Paragraph 4.5 – Pauline said that it was yet to be decided if a grant application would be made to the National Lottery Heritage Fund's 'Heritage Horizons' programme for around £7 million or to the Scottish Fund for £5 million although the latter option was likely to be regarded as a fall-back position. The funding mix was yet to be determined but the total estimated project cost was estimated at £20 million. Potential sources of income included the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Landmark Trust, Heritage Environment Scotland, charitable trusts and wealthy individuals.	
3.8	Paragraph 6.3 – Chris said that the proposed changes to the administration of the Trust's bank account had now been completed.	
3.9	Paragraph 6.4 – Consideration of the Trust's VAT registration status was awaiting further information on the progress of HES/LT's funding bid to the NLHF.	
3.10	Paragraph 7.2 – The special resolution regarding a trustee's second term of office was approved at the 2019 AGM held earlier.	
3.11	Paragraph 8.2 - Neither James Kinch at Midlothian Council nor Midlothian Council's Chief Executive had yet been contacted regarding the lack of responsible access by horses to the Mavisbank policies. This remained a serious problem and it was desirable that a damaged barrier should be re-instated urgently. Pauline said that she would ask Martin Fairley to contact Ellen regarding the unauthorised access by horses and also arrange to erect suitable signage stating 'No Horses'.	PM
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Mavisbank Project Steering Group Update</b>	
4.1	Rhona said that a meeting had been held between members of the Project Steering Group and representatives of Midlothian Council, including six Council members (from all three political parties), the Deputy Leader and the Deputy Provost. HES and the LT gave a presentation on the Mavisbank project proposals and pointed out that this was a multi-million pound project which would bring substantial benefits to Midlothian without cost to the Council. No "Plan B" was envisaged. The Council representatives, including the Chief Executive (Dr Grace Vickers) had expressed broad support for the project.	

4.2	<p>Midlothian Council was seen as a key partner in the project especially as the promoter of a Compulsory Purchase Order that would be required to take ownership of Mavisbank. Grant said that Council officers were currently preparing a paper on the Mavisbank project that would be submitted to the Council on 17 December 2019. This would be especially useful to newly elected members on the Council, many of whom were not familiar with the background to Mavisbank and the proposed restoration project.</p>	
4.3	<p>HES was considering the possibility of establishing a training space for heritage skills in the South pavilion as their St Mary's Cathedral scheme had now finished and could be transferred to Mavisbank. This might be broadened to include horticulture and arboriculture as Mavisbank had many venerable trees. Forestry Commission Scotland (now Scottish Forestry - SF) should be a consultee on such a scheme and they were already working with Greenspace Scotland in the woodlands at Newbattle Abbey.</p>	
4.4	<p>Rhona had met with NHS Lothians to discuss social prescribing (where health professionals refer patients to community-based activities in order to improve their health and well-being) which could be developed at Mavisbank. ELGT was already heavily involved in similar types of work e.g. NHS Lothians/CEC funded projects in South Edinburgh and SF's 'Branching Out' mental health programme (see Trust website), plus developing a community gardening GP referral scheme in Midlothian.</p>	
4.5	<p>Pauline said that a positive involvement of local people was crucial to a successful National Lottery Heritage Fund application. As part of wider ongoing consultation on the Mavisbank project HES intended to carry out on-street questionnaire surveys in Bonnyrigg, Loanhead and Lasswade. This would assess the community's perception of the Mavisbank site in its present condition and what aspects mattered most to local residents. It was noted that the Trust had previously undertaken several similar surveys, in addition to holding drop-in exhibitions and workshops and all the information gathered shouldn't just be ignored.</p>	
4.6	<p>The current round of consultation related mainly to the policies as the future use of the house had largely been determined although it was planned that some space would be made available for community facilities. LT's project consultants intended to set up a consultative group with representatives from key sectors of the community to help shape proposals, in particular to develop an activities plan for the grounds.</p>	
4.7	<p>It was suggested that Lucy Wood should be contacted as she had developed an extensive local network of support for Mavisbank in her time as a Mavisbank Community Engagement Officer. Her knowledge, skills and input would be very useful as would that of Catherine Dunn, Midlothian Council's Community Officer. The community should also be approached via local organisations and venues e.g. community councils, schools, clubs, churches and sports facilities.</p>	<b>PM</b>
4.8	<p>Pauline said that work was continuing to address the issues of ownership and access with neighbouring properties. Access would be dealt with within the context of the Land Reform Act. Two HES directors, Alison Turnbull (Director of Development and Partnership) and Donella Steel (Director of Finance) had also made a site visit to Mavisbank recently.</p>	
4.9	<p>HES, LT and MC were assessing the preliminary steps required to secure the compulsory purchase of Mavisbank House by the Council as this was thought to be the preferred method of obtaining ownership of the building. Should the project go ahead it had not yet been decided whether ownership should be transferred to Scottish Ministers or to LT. If it were to be Scottish Ministers, this might be an appropriate</p>	

	arrangement as they already owned the policies and the house could then be leased to LT.	
4.10	Rhona pointed out that the restoration of Mavisbank house would be the largest single project undertaken by LT to date. However, it was in a strong position to achieve the restoration and remained very supportive of the project.	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Trust Governance Matters</b>	
5.1	Following on from the earlier Mavisbank Trust AGM the trustees discussed the special resolution that had been passed to enable the board to extend the length of a trustee's second term of office. After further deliberation it was agreed that where the second term of office of a trustee was due to end on 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2019 that term of office should be extended for a period of 18 months until 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2021.	
5.2	Trustees discussed potential changes to the future role and structure of the Trust to enable it to support more effectively the delivery and longer term aims and objectives of the current Mavisbank project. Whilst LT would be responsible for the restoration and future operation of the house it had no desire to be involved with the restoration and management of the landscape or activities in the grounds. However, as HES and LT had still not made known their overall plans this made it difficult for MT to decide the best way to proceed. Nonetheless, it was agreed that the Trust should remain willing to adapt and it needed to evolve to remain relevant.	
5.3	The Trust could easily make known its own views to HES and LT on how it might contribute to the project but it would be more productive if they could give an indication as to how they envisaged its future role. MT possessed a valuable collective knowledge of Mavisbank and a wealth of information, including the recent digital reconstruction work, which would be of great use. RB noted that the way forward for both the project and the Trust would become much clearer soon once the outcome of LT's pre-application to the NLHF was known.	
5.4	Pauline said that she was aware of a number of good examples of different types of "friends groups" in Scotland, which might be an appropriate model for MT. At Dundonald Castle in Ayrshire the friends group ran the visitor attraction and undertook other roles. A friends organisation at Duthie Park in Aberdeen was closely involved with a successful bid for Lottery funding by Aberdeen City Council whilst at Kinloch Castle the friends group had campaigned for castle repairs. The friends of Saughton Park in Edinburgh supported and promoted the park which was the subject of a successful National Lottery Heritage Fund bid. It was suggested that a Mavisbank friends organisation might, for example, take on discrete projects such as the restoration of the doocot as a contribution to the overall restoration of Mavisbank.	
5.5	Rhona noted that Duncan's and Bob's imminent retirement meant that there would be two vacant places on the Trust board. There was a particular need to attract new trustees who were active in the local community and not just those with a professional interest in Mavisbank. Trustees discussed a number of possible candidates with a view to inviting applications.	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Financial Update</b>	
6.1	Chris introduced the main points of the Mavisbank Trust 2019-20 Income and Expenditure Account at 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2019 which had been previously circulated. There had been relatively little movement over the last quarter and, after taking into account outstanding creditors and debtors, there was a closing balance of £1,244. He noted that this figure was approximately the total expected overheads for the next	

	year but that it would still be very helpful if additional core funding could be secured.	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Trust Online Media Presence</b>	
7.1	Chris pointed out that the Trust's website, Facebook page and Twitter account all needed to be kept up to date and serviced regularly. Michael had been evaluating what was needed and had been intending to report his conclusions to the meeting but unfortunately was unable to attend because of illness.	MS
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
8.1	This was the last board meeting for Bob and Duncan as they were both retiring as trustees. On behalf of the Trust Rhona thanked them both for their many thoughtful and helpful contributions to board meetings, as well as their valuable support for the Mavisbank Trust's activities over many years. It was agreed that any informal input from them in the future would be greatly appreciated.	
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Dates of Future Meetings</b>	
	A Doodle Poll would be circulated to determine the date of the March meeting.	CL
	Agreed dates for 2020: 4th June, 3rd (or 8th?) September and 3rd December 2020.	