

**Minutes of the Mavisbank Trust Board Meeting held at on
Tuesday, 2nd December, 7PM as Online ZOOM meeting.**

Present

Rhona Brankin - Chair
Sarah Barron - Vice-Chair
Sam Black - Trustee
Charlie Cumming - Trustee
Chris Lewis - Trustee
Ellen McCalman - Trustee
Michael Steven - Trustee

Attendees

James Simpson - Simpson & Brown
Grant Ballantine - Midlothian Council

1. Apologies

Lucy Linforth - Trustee
Pauline Megson – HES

2. Minutes of Board Meeting held on 9 September 2021

Minutes agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising

Six members of the board had visited Bannockburn House on 21/11/21.
JS suggested contacting HES regarding establishing a potential Mavisbank archive. CL said that he had discussed this with them already and it was a possibility but it was agreed that the idea needed a great deal more thought. JS suggested William Kay might be a good person to approach for help.

SB intended to visit the Botanic Gardens to get suitable photos for her forthcoming Mavisbank blog article and MS said the Trust's website now had a new link to a 'Just Giving' donation page.

JS advised that he was not intending to continue a formal involvement with the Mavisbank Trust once it became a community trust but would always be available for advice.

4. HES/Landmark Trust NHLF Application Feedback

CL reported on a useful telephone conversation with PM in connection with HES's future involvement with the Mavisbank restoration project. HES is now working on cementing relationships with existing project partners but is now in a more of a 'holding' position. They are looking to set up a steering group with involved parties but it might not happen quickly. RB said that Anna Keay, Landmark Trust (LT), had confirmed that they are still keen on the project and were looking to see if they can progress the restoration of the house on its own.

RB had also talked with Colin Beattie, MSP, and he intended to request a meeting with HES regarding Mavisbank. Jenny Gilruth is the new Scottish Government Culture Minister. RB advised that Owen Thompson MP has had to rearrange his tabled motion on Mavisbank at Westminster from Tuesday 7th December.

5. Development of Mavisbank Community Trust

RB felt political pressure on HES was needed to make any progress at Mavisbank and the Trust should request a meeting with Alison Turnbull, HES. RB and SB to arrange this and it was agreed that it would be good to get coverage of the issue in local papers. SB felt starting a petition might be helpful and sites like Change.org and promoting it to the Trust's email contacts using Mailchimp were suggested.

CC advised caution in pushing for something the Trust had no control over and RB advised that the Trust hold off with a petition for now whilst SB thought that the Trust should be aware that some local people would welcome the policies being left to 'rewild'. Many similar issues had been raised recently in an article by Fraser MacDonald who had written about rewilding proposals at Kinloch Castle on Rum.

CL said that evolving the current Trust into a genuine community organisation would be an important step in enabling the local community to express its views and GB agreed with EKM that action had to come from the bottom up. The Board agreed that the community trust proposals and setting up an advisory group should be progressed on the timescale suggested by CL.

RB agreed to engage with Midlothian Council elected members regarding potential help in progressing small-scale works at Mavisbank and which projects might be done first. SB asked if it was possible to have access to the recent LT/HES plans but RB advised that these were regarded as legal/confidential documents.

SB said that as the overall situation had now changed a new vision statement was required for Mavisbank although CL felt that the views of the proposed community trust would need to be taken into account as well.

CC said that social prescribing/ environment/ green spaces and the climate emergency were all potential project themes that could be developed quickly but a part-time post to facilitate and develop the community trust was needed. RB asked that if the Trust was successful in securing funding whether ELGT might be able to host such a post and CC said yes.

CC said it would be ideal if a two-year funding package for a post could be secured but it should be done in partnership with HES. CL thought that ELGT could potentially carry out projects at Mavisbank in its own right given its track record. RB asked if MS and GB would engage with CC to look at possible funding sources. CL thought that it was important that HES should take the lead in setting up a new local Mavisbank working

group consisting of MC, MT, ELGT, the community councils, etc., in order to progress and co-ordinate efforts.

6. Website and Social Media

MS advised that Edinburgh University was referring people to a new programme of virtually delivered social prescribing based on cultural heritage. Its project leader and coordinator, Ruthanne Baxter, was interested in using Mavisbank if someone was prepared to give a talk. MS suggested JS and said he would check whether presentations could be viewed by a wider audience.

7. Financial Update

CL indicated that the Trust's bank balance @30/11/21 was £1,332 which was close to the amount required by the Trust to cover annual expenditure whilst operating at its current low level of activity. There had been very few transactions over recent months and apart from the Trust's insurance policy renewal in January there would be no significant outgoings until next summer. The Trust had received £600 for three images of Mavisbank that had been used in BBC Scotland's 'Scotland from the Air' programme and CL had negotiated with the owners who had all kindly donate their fees to the Trust.

8. Any Other Business

MS said that the Mavisbank debate at Westminster was set for Westminster Hall at 11am on Tuesday 07/12/21.

MS said that FOI requests to HES to view other previous restoration project bids had been released redacted so making one for the latest project would probably not be very useful.

9. Governance – Trustee/Appointments

CL noted that with director retirements and potential new appointments there were a number of resolutions that required board consideration to ensure continuity and help manage the process of transition to a community trust. In addition, directors needed to consider in more detail how procedures such as the Trust's change of name, the establishment of a 'Friends of Mavisbank' and an advisory group could be achieved successfully. Following discussion the resolutions below were agreed by the Board.

Resolution 1:- Directors agreed that the second term of office of Charlie Cumming should be extended for a further six months.

Resolution 2:- Directors agreed that following her retirement as a director Rhona Brankin should be appointed as an honorary patron of the Trust.

Resolution 3:- Directors agreed that following his retirement as a director Chris Lewis should be appointed as a Trust advisor and authorised representative.

Discussions regarding establishing a 'Friends of Mavisbank' Membership Scheme and the change of name of the Trust were deferred until the January 2022 meeting. CL pointed out that the trustees already possessed all the necessary powers within its M&A's to allow it to progress its transition to become a community-based trust. Whilst the Trust intended to recruit additional trustees over the coming year RB's retirement meant that a replacement as board chair needed to be found.

The Trustees gave a big thank you to RB for her many years chairing the board and her valuable support for the Mavisbank project but were delighted that she would be continuing her support as a honorary patron.

12. Date of Next Meeting and AGM: - 7pm on Thursday 27th January on ZOOM.