

Minutes of the Mavisbank Trust Board of Trustees Meeting
Held at 6.00pm on Monday, 13th June 2022
at ELGT Offices, 109/11 Swanston Road,
Edinburgh, EH10 7DS

Present

Sarah Barron - Acting Chair

Sam Black (SB1) - Trustee

Charlie Cumming - Trustee

Lucy Linforth - Trustee

Ellen McCalman - Trustee

Simon Shackley - Trustee

Michael Steven - Trustee

In Attendance

Chris Lewis – Trust Advisor

Eleanora Lekavicuite – Edinburgh University MSc student

1. Apologies

Grant Ballantine – Midlothian Council

Pauline Megson - Historic Environment Scotland

2. Minutes of Board Meeting held on 3rd March and Sub-Group meetings held on 12th April and 10th May 2022

2.1 CL - noted that the minutes of the March Board and April sub-group meetings had already been considered and approved by the Trustees.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 None.

4. Edinburgh University MSc Student Dissertation

4.1 SS - Introduced Eleanora Lekavicuite (EL) who was embarking on a series of ‘talk and walk’ interviews at Mavisbank with a range of local people to discuss their relationship with the site, how they use it and their views on any potential development. She would also put up posters locally to identify people interested in being interviewed.

4.2 EL – She was deploying a semi-structured approach based on a set of questions

and would include interviews with people who had never been to Mavisbank to help identify why not. All to supply EL with possible names for interviews.

ALL

5. HES/Landmark Trust Update

5.1 CL - Although awaiting feedback from RB, as far as he was aware Landmark were still pursuing a possible NHLF funding bid to at least stabilise the shell of the house as a first stage of their restoration plans. However, they didn't appear to be interested in the policies anymore as that was HES's remit.

5.2 EKM - Midlothian Council (MC) had already prepared a CPO to be served if/when funding was secured. If any owners came forward they would have a month to reply to the CPO.

6. Development of Mavisbank Community Trust and establishment of a 'Friends of Mavisbank' Group

6.1 SB – The overall and detailed document outlining the Trust's 'Friends of Mavisbank' proposals should be sent to the various stakeholders, such as HES, MC and the community councils, for information and comment.

6.2 SB1 – It would be advantageous to have a smaller explanatory document for wider distribution and SB suggested producing a leaflet like that produced by the 'Friends of the Pentlands'.

6.3 CL – The leaflet should be seen as part of an overall communication plan and EKM said that she would meet with Kirsteen Rowlands soon to discuss producing one.

EKM

6.4 MS - A considerable amount of the detail within the 'Friends of' document could be include as appendices so as to make it easier to get an overview. SB asked everyone to comment on the draft that MS had sent out.

ALL

6.5 - With regard to identifying projects for volunteers to undertake SB and CL suggested that the Trust's proposals should make links with HES's current plans for Mavisbank, such as in their NHLF application's activity plan, Landscape Conservation Management Plan, tree survey and for climate change mitigation measures.

6.6 SB1 - Suggested that an ideal early volunteer project would be to work to clear invasive species which were a growing problem within the grounds and along the river bank.

7. Midlothian Doors Open Day

7.1 SB - The Trust's Door Open Day activities proposals had been sent to HES and to MC (Sheena Devlin, MC Doors Open Day co-ordinator). Tom Addyman and PM had agreed to lead the guided walks. However, Grant Ballantine, MC, wanted to refer the proposals to Councillors over his concerns about potential parking problems created by visitors to Mavisbank. Pauline Megson (PM) had sent an HES events permission form which needed to be submitted to HES in advance of the day.

MS noted that local bus routes to Mavisbank were highlighted on the Trust's Facebook page and SB1 suggested that it might be possible to direct people to the car park at Loanhead Cemetery to use on the day.

7.2 – The level of the Trust's public liability insurance was discussed as HES required it to be at least £5M for events held on its properties. CL said that he had obtained a quote from the Trust's current insurers to increase the cover to £5M and the trustees approved the £78 additional expenditure, pro-rata until the January policy renewal date.

CL

7.3 LL - Suggested that the drop-in sessions could be run from 12–1pm, 1-2pm & 2-3pm and they could include activities and a walk within the grounds. LL and SS would draft activity proposals, including a risk assessment. SB advises that HES would open the gates in front of the House on the day.

LL/SS

7.4 SB - Said she would draft a short description of the Trust's 'Friend of Mavisbank' proposals which could be handed out to people on the day.

SB

8. Trust Website and Social Media update

8.1 MS - There had not been much activity since the last meeting and he would email all for suggestions of new content. LL suggested developing Mavisbank's literary connections as a theme.

9. Financial Update

9.1 CL – There had been very little financial movement over the last quarter and the Trust's current bank account balance was £1,083. Preparation of the Trust's 2021-22 accounts would need to be progressed soon and, if possible, it would be very helpful if the Trust were able to secure the services of a suitably qualified accountant on a voluntary basis which would avoid the customary annual cost.

ALL

10. Trust Governance

10.1 CL - As there had been slower than anticipated progress in developing the Trust's transition to become a community-based trust CC has kindly agreed to delay his retirement and continue as a director for a further six months if the board was in agreement.

10.2 - SB thanked CC for his support and after further discussion it was resolved that Charles Cumming's second term of office as a director of the Mavisbank Trust be extended until the 31st December 2022.

9. AOB

9.1 - MS said that he had recently visited Mavisbank for a workplace away day with colleagues from Edinburgh University which had been very enjoyable and was an excellent location.

9.2 - SB1 explained that Woodlands Trust (Scotland) were visiting Mavisbank policies again on Friday 5th August to verify additional trees for inclusion on their inventory of ancient trees. He would update trustees once he had further information.

SB1

10. Date of Next meeting - CL to circulate a Doodle poll to arrange a sub-group meeting in a month's time.