

Minutes of the Mavisbank Trust Board of Trustees Meeting

Held at 4.00pm on Wednesday 28th September 2022

At the Offices of ELGT, 109/11 Swanston Road,

Edinburgh, EH10 7DS

Present

Charlie Cumming - Trustee

Sam Black - Trustee

Ellen McCalman - Trustee

Simon Shackley - Trustee

Michael Steven - Trustee

In Attendance

Chris Lewis – Trust Advisor

1. Apologies

Sarah Barron - Acting Chair

Lucy Linforth – Trustee

Grant Ballantine – Midlothian Council

Pauline Megson – Historic Environment Scotland

ACTION

2. Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting held on 13th June 2022

2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held on the 13th June 2022 were considered and approved as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 SS said that the dissertation based on Mavisbank submitted by Edinburgh University MSc Student, Eleanora Lekavicuite, had now been completed successfully. She had been most appreciative of the support given to her by the Trust and was considering producing a podcast based on her work.

3.2 CL said that he had been contacted recently by another architectural student who wanted to produce her own restoration plan for Mavisbank House for an MSc dissertation at Innsbruck University and was intending to make a preliminary visit in October. In addition to sending her information held by the Trust he had put her in touch with Simpson & Brown and was arranging a site visit for her in October.

CL

4. Doors Open Day 2022

4.1 CL said that the Trust's 'Doors Open Day' Mavisbank guided walks with Tom Addyman and Pauline Megson had been very successful and he thanked SB(I) and SS for their help with organisation them on the day. In addition to 15 people on each walk there had been 30 others on the waiting list. SB(I) said that SS had also taken 10 people for an extra session at the end and most people on the walks had been enthusiastic about the idea of setting up a Mavisbank Friends group.

4.2 It was agreed that, if possible, additional walks should be arranged over a weekend in October/November and EM and SB(I) said they would be happy to be involved. CC felt that any new guided walks should not just concentrate on the house but also focus on the policies as well.

EM/SB(I)

5. Development of Mavisbank Community Trust and establishment of 'Friends of Mavisbank' Group

5.1 MS pointed out that the Trust had a Mail Chimp account which would be very useful for managing regular mailings and keep people on the guided walks mailing list and others interested in future events. SB(I) said that he would liaise with MS to that end and to create a Friends application form in Google Forms whose output could be easily downloaded in Excel format. MS said that any draft documents could also be put on Google Drive so that all trustees could comment.

SB(I)/MS

5.2 EM said that Midlothian Outdoor Festival was taking place on Friday 14th October and Mavisbank was a location on a route that had been chosen. She would contact Midlothian Council to see if it was possible to rendezvous with them on-site and give a short presentation about Mavisbank and the Trust's proposals to set up a Friends group.

EM

5.3 It was agreed by all that it was important to make sure that all the various elements were in place before any Friends launch happened. Preferably, a relatively low-key initial launch should be held pre-Christmas with the aim of having a more public facing event next spring.

5.4 CC proposed setting up a meeting with Pauline Megson and others at HES to discuss and identify a number of initial small projects which could be undertaken by volunteers at Mavisbank. He also felt that it would be useful to get information from HES about other community groups that they worked with at other sites they owned.

5.5 With regard to the Trust and HES developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to allow it to carry out projects and other activities at Mavisbank CC said that there were already many good examples operating elsewhere e.g. at Craiglockart Hill between the Friends and Edinburgh Council. MS thought one was essential so that the Trust wouldn't have to keep seeking HES approval every single time.

5.6 SS said that he would create a final draft of the Trust's proposals for the structure and administration of Friends Group and circulate it for approval.

SS

6. Trust Website and Social Media update

6.1 MS said that rather than develop a dedicated Friends website the easiest way would be to create a Friends section on the Trust's existing website and have a friends.mavisbank.org.uk address linked directly to that page.

MS

6.2 MS congratulated those trustees who had been involved in the Doors Open Day and said that he would put a post of the event on Facebook. He thought the photographs that had been taken would be very useful for various other purposes as most did not have distinguishable faces.

MS

7. Financial Update

7.1 CL presented the Trust's income & expenditure account at 31st August 2022 and noted that there had been very little financial activity to date and the account balance was currently £1,043.

7.2 CL said that the significantly higher cost estimate from the Trust's usual accountants this year meant that the search to find an alternative company/qualified person to audit the Trust's 2021-22 annual accounts was in progress and becoming more urgent. Various unsuccessful approaches had been made but in the meantime he was putting together a file of all the financial information that would be required based on previous years' accounts. He asked the trustees to help secure the services of a suitable auditor as soon as possible and, preferably, be given as in-kind support.

ALL

8. Any Other Business

8.1 CL pointed out that voting was now open for the Woodland Trust's 2022 'UK Tree of the Year' competition which included the Portal Tree in the grounds of Mavisbank and encouraged trustees to spread the word.

9. Date of Next meeting – SS to circulate a Doodle Poll to arrange a date for a December board meeting and AGM.

SS