

**The Mavisbank Trust**  
**Meeting of the Board of Trustees**  
**held at 5.00pm on Monday 15th April 2024**  
**as an online Zoom meeting**

**1. Present:**

Sarah Barron- Trustee and Chair  
Charlie Cumming- Trustee  
Simon Shackley - Trustee  
Michael Steven – Trustee  
Chris, Lewis - Trust Advisor

**2. Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023\***

The minutes were approved as a true record.

**3. Matters Arising**

3.1 Sarah noted that she had received an email from Pauline Megson of HES who had now moved into a different role within the organisation and would no longer be the point of contact responsible for Mavisbank. However, she would be happy to help with information where she could. Her replacement is George Findlater and Chris noted that he had been involved with the Mavisbank project since before the Trust's 2013 HLF grant application.

**4. The Mavisbank Dining Room Table**

4.1 Further to emails previously sent to Board trustees James Simpson had sent out an appeal to potential donors in order to raise sufficient funds to purchase the original 1733 dining room table at auction in Edinburgh on 27<sup>th</sup> March. Chris was managing the whole process and over 50 people had responded within just a few days. As a result, the Trust had been able to purchase the table by agreement after it had been withdrawn from sale the night before the auction.

4.2 The provenance of the table, made by Daniel Millar of Glasgow in 1733, has been confirmed by furniture historians and restorers David Jones, Charles Taylor and William Kay. Sarah had visited Lyon and Turnbull with them and James Simpson on 10<sup>th</sup> April to inspect the table. William had previously discovered the original purchase invoice for the table in the Clerk archive at Penicuik House whilst carrying out research for the Trust.

4.3 Charlie asked about storage of the table and insurance and Chris said that the intention was that SHBT would store the table at Strathleven House. However, the table would remain the property of the Trust and, using donated funds, insured accordingly until such time as Mavisbank was restored.

4.4 Chris said that all donors were being approached to see if they would allow the Trust to claim Gift Aid on their donations as this would be significant net revenue for the Trust and support some of its future activities and running costs. The Trustees felt that it was also heartening that so many people were sufficiently interested in Mavisbank that they were willing to donate so much money so quickly. It was agreed that a press release about the table purchase should be produced and Sarah would also ask James to follow this up with a short blog for the website. **SH**

## **5. Landmark Trust's Mavisbank House Project Update**

5.1 Sarah has communicated with Anna Key of the Landmark Trust about their NHMF funding application. The NHMF Trustees, plus Anna Key and a senior member of HES, had visited Mavisbank on 24<sup>th</sup> March to assess the Landmark Trust's plans. LT were still hopeful as the site meeting had gone very well and it had been recognised that this was probably the final chance for Mavisbank's restoration. The NHMF will announce their decision in the next few weeks after the 2<sup>nd</sup> May English Local Government Elections and ban on announcements.

5.2 It was agreed that, whatever the decision, it was important that a Trust press release was ready in advance for posting on its website once the announcement had been made. Sarah would ask Ellen if she would draft a short statement. **EM**

## **6. Establishing the Friends of Mavisbank**

### **- Promotional leaflet and distribution**

6.1 Simon was working on a draft A5 version of the leaflet which could be displayed in shops, libraries, and easily distributed elsewhere. They can be printed cost-effectively at around £40 for two hundred copies.

### **- Constitution and Membership Document**

6.2 Simon indicated that this was close to completion but needed an appendix for membership terms and conditions. **SS**

### **- Managing new member enquiries**

6.3 Chris said it was important that the Trust was able to handle membership enquiries efficiently and to provide them with information about events and activities e.g. the Forth Rivers Trust walk for the Trust had spaces available which could have been advertised to the members. The FRT walk will be at 11am on the 14<sup>th</sup> May and there are there are spaces for up to 20 persons.

6.4 Michael raised the issue of GDPR policy and privacy relating to information and contact sharing which had become relevant in connection with how the Mavisbank table donors contact details were handled. Michael would review

and draft a short and longer version of a privacy statement which could then be included on all Trust communications and the website. **MS**

#### **- 'Friends of Mavisbank' Launch event**

6.5 Midlothian Doors Open Day will be held on the 7th September and Sarah suggested that it would be a good time to launch the Trust's 'Friends' group.

#### **- Potential early volunteer project activities and fund-raising.**

6.6 It was becoming hard for individuals to put in the necessary time required to develop these at present and the Trustees discussed the benefits of the Trust being able to employ someone to organise community activities and events as it had done in 2018-19. However, it was also acknowledged that this would cost perhaps £10k to £15k for a six month part-time post and would require support from ELGT. It might be possible that LMT could direct some resources into the Trust to help deliver its community engagement objectives.

### **7. Website and Social Media Update**

7.1 Trustees discussed updating the Trust's website, the benefits of using a different platform such as WordPress and trying to secure a cheaper hosting deal. Michael said that he would circulate an analysis of visitors to the website. It was noted that there would be an upfront investment required for a new website and Chris said that he would discuss the issue with the company that designed the current one. **MS/CL**

7.2 Whatever the outcome, it was agreed that trustees would look at providing new content for the website. Two possible new blogs were the Mavisbank dining table and the Landmark grant announcement. **All**

### **8. 2022-23 Financial Update**

8.1 Chris presented a financial update to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This included most of the recent donations to the Mavisbank dining table appeal which had generated far more activity than usual. The closing balance was £15,078 although much of this figure was accounted for as an outstanding creditor arising from the Mavisbank Table purchase. However, Gift Aid from many of the donations would generate much needed income and several donors had indicated that the Trust could keep any remaining funds left after the purchase.

### **9. Governance - New Trustees.**

9.1 Sarah reported that two persons she had approached about potentially becoming a Trustee had declined due to other commitments but a third person was interested but needed to determine whether there might be a conflict of interest in doing so. **SB**

## **10. Any Other Business**

10.1 Sarah said that the Architectural Heritage Society was intending to organise a walk around Mavisbank and Kevock Road on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July and invites were being handled through Eventbrite. She has requested that the Mavisbank Trust be a formal partner and said that she would pass on trustees concerns around parking issues, site risk assessment and the need to inform get permission from HES. **SB**

10.2 Michael said that University of Edinburgh community development grants worth up to £5K were available which might support Trust activities but the closing date was imminent. It was agreed that there was insufficient time left to make an application but it might be possible to do so for the next round.

10.3 Sarah mentioned that she would contact the Mining Museum in Newtongrange to see if there is an expert on the Loanhead coal mines who might be able to provide information about the relationship between mining and Mavisbank. Coal Authority data shows that there are old mine workings underneath Mavisbank House and in the grounds. **SB**

## **11. Date of next meeting**

Simon to send out a Doodle Poll for the meeting of the Board in June.