LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MASEFIELD MATTERS PROJECT BOARD HELD ON 13 AUGUST 2025

PRESENT: Amy Howard (AH), Tim Keyes (TK) Caroline Magnus (CM), Councillor Morris (NM) (Chairman), Chris Noel (CN), Justine Peberdy (JP) (remotely), Christine Tustin (CT) (remotely)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Harvey (EH) (Chairman of Ledbury Town Council), Isabel Lewis (IL) (Project Assistant Intern), Angela Price (AP) (Town Clerk)

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Philip Errington and Emma Clowsley.

8. LETTER OF APOLOGY

TK requested context for the letter of apology recently sent by NM to EC. AP explained that the letter was the result of an internal process that was nearing its conclusion and that a way of working going forward had been agreed.

It was noted that this process has highlighted the need for the Masefield Matters Board to receive training in Town Council policies and procedures and their responsibilities as a Board. AP advised that she was planning to run a workshop with Board members and project staff in attendance. CM requested that this workshop be available to join remotely; AP replied that though it would be preferable for members to attend in person, online attendance would be available.

CM asked what the nature of the internal process was. AP replied that it was not appropriate to discuss this but confirmed that it had arisen as a result of the previous Board meeting.

9. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MASEFIELD MATTERS BOARD HELD ON 7 MAY 2025

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Masefield Matters Board Meeting held on 7th May 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

NM requested an update on the document for the parents at John Masefield High School. IL advised that a draft had been previously sent to him. It was agreed that this draft and a reformatted version of the FAQ document will be re-sent to NM. A short paragraph containing a link to the FAQs on the website will also be drafted, as TK and IL were concerned that the other proposed documents would be too long.

An update on the Poem of the Week was requested. IL confirmed this had not yet started. AH suggested that a monthly poem may be more manageable. It was also

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suggested that Philip Errington suggests and provides information on the poem, but to reduce the workload guest writers could be asked to contribute. AH volunteered to find guest writers for this.

AH advised that the risk register has not yet been completed as the risk subcommittee has yet to meet. She agreed to ask John Holmes to join this group. The risk subcommittee will meet in the near future and the risk register is to be included in the next Board meeting agenda. The risk register will cover strategic risk.

TK clarified that the project staff need not be at every subcommittee meeting but may be invited to participate if they feel it relevant to do so. The notes from these meetings would be sent to the project staff and Town Clerk.

CM advised that she would like to be involved in the Pauntley Court activity. LH recommended that poems about places in Ledbury be available around the town during Heritage Open Days.

CT left the meeting at 11.36.
JP joined the meeting remotely at 11:38.

It was noted that the walking map and list of musical settings requested in May have both been shared with the Board. JP offered to send the list of musical settings to local choirs to encourage them to perform Masefield.

It was noted that the sea shanty activity was outside the scope of the project but as both a composer and funder had been found, this project should go ahead. JP noted that text for the shanty still needs to be found. It was suggested that poetry written by HMS Ledbury sailors or for a poetry slam may be good sources for this text. JP is to progress this activity. It was noted that Stephen Furlonger had raised reservations via email, but it was generally agreed that this activity was worthwhile. The need to keep lines of communication with HMS Ledbury open was stated.

CM mentioned the link between the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire canal and Masefield's work, noting upcoming plans to reopen the canal. EH explained the Canal Trust are in contact with Ledbury Town Council. AH noted there was a canal Poet Laureate, which may be relevant to the project.

EH recommended that local business sponsorship could be an important process with diminishing opportunities as the project continues. TK has written a draft fundraising strategy that will be discussed by the fundraising subcommittee in September. CM asked if there was a deadline for fundraising; AP explained that fundraising must occur during the course of the process, and that the release of the final 10% of the

NLHF funding was dependent on match funding being raised. CM would like to be kept up to date to the activities of the fundraising group.

ACTIONS:

MM09 (1) **IL to re-send draft versions of update documents to the Chair.**

MM09 (2) **EC and PE to arrange the appropriate permissions to run a Poem of the Month segment.**

MM09 (3) **AH to ask John Holmes to join the Risk subcommittee.**

MM09 (4) **JP to share the list of musical settings with local choirs.**

MM09 (5) **JP to progress the sea shanty activity.**

10. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MASEFIELD MATTERS BOARD HELD ON 25 JUNE 2025

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Masefield Matters Board Meeting held on 25th June 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

11. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE ACTION SHEET

It was noted by AH and CM that Simon Armitage and Piers Torday both felt the project was in too early of a stage for them to become involved but may be interested once it has become more established. TK suggested that the Board needs a clearer idea of what is required of a patron. CM and AH suggested that the idea of a patron should be revisited later in the project.

TK proposed the FAQ document being a live document that is updated as the project progresses. TK would like the fundraising team to have a list of venues, as CM raised concerns that offers of assistance were being lost. NM requested that a document stating 'where we are and where we're going' is uploaded to the website. Others suggested that the FAQs and blog fulfilled this purpose.

TK suggested the list of people who we would consider potential supporters and donors be derived from the list of launch attendees. It was suggested that all members should add names to this as it is currently incomplete. This has been sent to the Chair to distribute to the Board.

ACTIONS:

MM11 (1) **EC and IL to provide list of possible events venues offered to the funding subcommittee.**

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MM11 (2) **NM to distribute list of attendees from the launch event to the Board.**

12. INTERIM REPORT AND TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE LIST OF FAMILIARISATION ACTIVITIES

NM requested that exact dates of the Cutty Sark activity be provided, which IL will provide. AH advised that she was in the process of organising the Midnight Folk dance activity but was not looking to use Ledbury Rugby Club as a venue. TK recommended that the Rugby Club played an important role in the project and should be involved in another activity within the project.

ACTIONS:
MM12 (1) **IL to confirm date of the Cutty Sark activity.**

13. TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON FUNDING AND DONATIONS

NM raised that a £25 contribution had been contributed earlier in the project.

CM stated that registering the John Masefield Society for GiftAid was still in progress. She also stated the need for an assistant treasurer for the society. AH recommended Nigel Falls be contacted about this role.

JP noted that this year UKSPF was oversubscribed, but recommended monitoring this as in previous years unspent money had been reallocated. AH said that Herefordshire County Council are looking to fill Sarah Lee's role. The potential for funds to be raised via sponsorship was restated by AP, LH and CM.

ACTIONS:
MM13 (1) **CN and NM to provide evidence of £25 contribution.**

14. TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING

IL suggested that if the Board members would like to, they would be welcome to contribute a guest blog post.

IL expressed that though able to produce content for social media and the blog, she believes she does not have the skillset to expand the reach of the project's digital platforms. JP noted that the social media accounts were not currently being followed by many Board members, so suggested that members follow these accounts and use their networks to expand the reach. It was recommended that the Town Council use

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their social media presence to share posts from Masefield Matters to a wider audience.

EH recommended that a registration form for a newsletter be available on the website. It was also recommended that IL ask for guidance on the newsletter from the Community Engagement Officer.

JP suggested that a social media expert be paid to help expand the reach of the accounts on a one-off basis. Other members were concerned that this may require too much of the marketing budget. It was suggested by AH and CM that before spending the money on external assistance, the board should use their own platforms to promote the accounts and re-evaluate at a later date. JP advised that the consultant may not be very expensive, and she would make enquiries with Natalie Jolley, a consultant she had previously worked with.

JP suggested that we cross promote with other organisations more often. TK stated the need to do all we can to raise the local profile.

ACTIONS:

MM14 (1)	**All Board members to use their social media connections to expand the reach of the MM social media and website.**
MM14 (2)	**IL to add newsletter registration form to the Masefield Matters website and to talk to the Community Engagement Officer about how the Town Council runs its newsletter.**
MM14 (3)	**JP to ask contact for rates on short-term social media consultancy and report back to the Board at the next meeting.**

15. EVALUATION WORKSHOP

AP asked if those not able to attend the evaluation workshop with Steve Green, the project evaluator, had made contact and arranged meetings with him. AH had not been contacted, CN, CM and PE had begun to arrange a time to meet with Steve Green but he had so far not responded to their last communication.

AP said that the Town Council have reservations about his ability to perform the role due to lack of communication and initiative. The consultancy specialists (Janine from Engaging Heritage and Andrew from A Meredith Associates) are being consulted on this as they also carry out project evaluation services.

ACTIONS:

MM15	**AP to chase Steve Green for evaluation workshop communication.**

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16. BOARD TRAINING AND SKILL SETS

JP noted there is still some remaining budget for staff and Board member training. AP reminded the Board of the upcoming workshop, which JP agreed was useful training. This would confirm what the project needs to deliver and what the responsibilities of the members are. This workshop could also identify skill gaps, which could be then brought in via an external organisation, a new Board member, or Board member training.

If new people are brought in, it must be clear what is required of them and what their relationship with the Board should be. TK recommended that each Board member should have a role, and that there was a need to evaluate the skillset held by the Board members against the skills required for the project.

ACTIONS:

MM16 (1) **All Board members are to attend Town Council processes workshop.**

MM16 (2) **IL to share Board member list of skills with all members, prompting any members who have yet to respond to do so.**

17. MERCHANDISING

IL briefly described the reasoning for costing out the merchandise, stating concerns over limited return on investment and excessive staff time requirements. EH suggested exploring the option of print on demand, as this would save committing to a large amount of stock and the associated financial risk. AH suggested that there are a different set of considerations for merchandise if it is to raise funds to or be a familiarisation activity.

NM said that he had received a quote from Martin at Tilley's Printers for three posters. AH and AP said that is not part of the original application so should be considered separately to the project. CM recommended an outside sponsor for the posters could be found but noted that match funding should be prioritised first.

ACTIONS:

MM17 **IL to explore print on demand options for merchandising and report back in the next Board meeting.**

18. SUSTAINABILITY IN MASEFIELD MATTERS

IL stated the importance of environmental sustainability to the NLHF and the need to record that we are considering this within the project.

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JP recommended policies such as refilling water bottles at events and reducing single use plastic, such as that in disposable bottles of water. AH suggested using local suppliers to reduce the carbon footprint of travel. A reduction of printed material was also suggested.

The need to capture these considerations for reporting to the NLHF was stressed by EH. EC and AP are arranging a meeting with Liz Warren (NLHF relationship manager) and will ask her advice on this.

EH raised that as the project has been in progress for some time now, we need to consider how we show that environmental sustainability has been a decision making factor throughout. It was asked if the project required a sustainability statement or a list of ways that sustainability has been taken into account. It was also asked if it was in the remit of the project evaluator to provide a framework for recording sustainability related actions.

ACTIONS:

MM18	**AP and EC to raise environmental sustainability in their meeting with Liz Warren.**

19. ACCESSIBILITY IN MASEFIELD MATTERS

IL briefly described the need for accessibility considerations in the project. EH suggested that communications text (for example, text on the website) be run though a plain English analyser to check its suitability for accessible communication. She noted that this would be easy to metricate and report on.

ACTIONS:

MM19	**IL to use readability analysis software to identify any communications text that require improvement, noting down accessibility scores.**

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TK requested the Board be prompted to respond to actions quickly when these minutes are distributed. EH requested that the Board be sent regular updates of action progress between meetings. It was recommended to add initials and colour coding of tasks to increase clarity.

RESOLVED:

To note that the next meeting of the Masefield Matters Board will be held on Tuesday 14th October at 11am at Ledbury Poetry House.

The meeting ended at 13:15.

NM

Signed.. Dated 25.10.2025