

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE MASEFIELD MATTERS PROJECT BOARD HELD ON 21 APRIL 2026

PRESENT: Philip Errington (PE), Tim Keyes (TK), John Holmes (JH), Amy Howard (AH), Caroline Magnus (CM), Nick Morris (NM), Justine Peberdy (JP) (Chair), Christine Tustin (CT)

ALSO PRESENT: Emma Clowsley (EC) (Project Coordinator), Isabel Lewis (IL) (Project Assistant Intern), Andrew Meredith (AM) (Consultation Specialist), Angela Price (AP) (Town Clerk), Janine Rusby (JR) (Consultation Specialist)

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that TK would be joining the meeting online shortly.

64. A PRESENTATION FROM JANINE RUSBY AND ANDREW MEREDITH ABOUT THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

JR and AM gave a brief presentation overviewing the plans for the memorial agreed to by the NLHF in the original application. They outlined the next steps of the commissioning process and outlined what had occurred in the consultation process.

(TK joined the meeting at 9:44)

NM mentioned that the consultation trips to Monmouth and Cardiff were beneficial and inspiring, it was a shame that only a small number of the core group came. He noted the core group seemed generally constructive and well informed.

JR shared list of the top ten public survey responses and then shared how these were ranked by the core group. She then reiterated the aims of the project and the Lottery guidelines.

65. AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE REPORT

CT asked if the memorials visited in Cardiff and Monmouth had similar budgets to the Masefield memorial. JR and IL replied that some had much larger budgets, but there were a range of budgets represented in the memorials visited.

CM asked if any funds above the match funding had been raised, JP replied that so far no extra had been raised, but match funding had been reached.

EC noted that she and JP would have a subsequent meeting with Hywel Pontin, a member of the core consultation group who had extensive experience with commissioning public art. He would be able to advise on the commissioning process.

66. TO REVIEW THE FINAL THREE PROPOSED MEMORIALS PROVIDED BY THE CORE CONSULTATION GROUP

It was decided that each Board Member would share their thoughts on the form of the memorial in turn.

Christine Tustin:

CT felt that tourism was an important part of the town's economy and would like to highlight Ledbury's alleys within the memorial. She shared an idea for a central creative artwork surrounded by interpretation. She highlighted the importance of including Masefield's words within the memorial. She suggested that the courtyard of the Burgage Hall would be near the centre of town but also encourage visitors to come down Church Lane. Another advantage of this location is that it can be locked at night to reduce the risk of vandalism.

John Holmes:

JH noted that it is important we think about what the community has asked for and what can realistically be achieved within the budget. He suggested that creating something people will meaningfully engage with is important. He raised concerns that a dedicated space may be difficult to maintain. He would prefer a mixture of aspects as suggested by CT that builds in memorials that are already in Ledbury. JR noted that most existing local walks do not feature Masefield.

Amy Howard:

AH highlighted the need for inclusivity and that the memorial is an opportunity to work with a range of local voices. She noted that Queenswood has a trail of boards that have wind-up speakers that read poetry. She suggested that a trail ending with a sculpture or bench would be appropriate. She suggested that Ledbury already had plenty of indoor spaces, but there may be more potential in an outdoor space.

Nick Morris:

NM stressed the need to involve local people, especially young people. He also felt that there was a need to make the memorial engaging.

Caroline Magnus:

CM expressed interest in the idea of a sculpture or dedicated outdoor space (but this must be near the town centre). She agreed with CT's idea of a memorial with a trail leading to it. She suggested that the impact on the local economy and tourism be considered. CM was concerned with durability and sustainability, and that the memorial remains focussed on Masefield. She reiterated that interpretation surrounding the memorial is important.

Tim Keyes:

TK suggested that Masfield led a fascinating life, and this should be celebrated alongside what he wrote. He also stressed the importance of including enough information alongside the memorial to encourage people to find out more. He suggested that a trail could tie different places already related to John Masfield around Ledbury together well but does not think that need necessarily end with a dedicated space or central statue.

Philip Errington:

PE raised concerns about ongoing maintenance. He noted there are already dedicated spaces to Masfield in Ledbury, including the John Masfield Society Archive and their display cabinet. He mentioned the screen in the Master's House that is currently not functioning, noting that this, and other Masfield spaces, could form part of the memorial should it be repaired. PE stressed the need for the memorial to be appropriate to Masfield and raised concerns about properties connected to Masfield being on a trail, as they are still occupied by private individuals. He reiterated the idea of the trail ending in a focal artwork, noting the green space in front of the Master's House may be appropriate. JR noted that the core consultation group supported repairing the digital display

Justine Peberdy:

JP noted that there is a commitment from LTC to maintain the memorial. The choice of materials could impact the longevity of the memorial, and artists will have to address the issue of maintenance and longevity in their plans. She saw the memorial as an opportunity to capitalize and enhance the assets the town already has. She noted the submissions often mention the Box of Delights, and that drawing on this work could boost the appeal of the memorial, as could reference to Masfield's life story. She also noted that any statue must not be representative of John Masfield himself.

PE asked if the National Lottery Heritage Fund categorically would not fund a statue of John Masfield. It was noted that it is not specifically disallowed, but this idea had not been endorsed by the consultation process.

CM asked why a traditional statue had moved from ranked second in the public survey to fifth by the core consultation group. AM and JR explained the overall consultation process and the criteria the ideas were judged against.

In response to discussion of location and maintenance of the memorial, AP noted that LTC owns very little land, with most land in the town owned by Herefordshire Council. She noted that LTC manages St Katherine's Square and currently is responsible for maintaining the Town Trail and has staff to carry out maintenance. She also noted that QR codes are a form of interpretation that are easy to replace if needed.

JR noted that lottery require digital maintenance for five years.

PE suggested that a figurative statue of wolves running be considered as a centrepiece to a trail.

67. TO VOTE BY BALLOT ON THE FORM OF THE MEMORIAL

A ballot was held to vote on the focus of the memorial. 5 voted for a trail, 3 for a non-traditional sculpture, and 0 for a dedicated space.

RESOLVED:

The focus of the memorial will be a trail.

JP noted that this decision will be passed as a recommendation to Full Council on the 7th May. She and EC will draft a brief for artists, which will go back to the board for suggestions.

It was noted that the Communications Subgroup will meet soon. EC noted that any press releases need to be sent to the NLHF a week in advance for approval.

68. DATE OF NEXT TWO MEETINGS

Tuesday 19th May at 2pm in the Committee Room.

Thursday 16th July at 11am in the Committee Room.

The meeting ended at 11:01

Signed..... Dated.....