LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MASEFIELD MATTERS PROJECT BOARD HELD ON 16 JULY 2026

PRESENT: Philip Errington (PE), Tim Keyes (TK), Caroline Magnus (CM), Christine Tustin (CT)

ALSO PRESENT: Emma Clowsley (EC) (Project Coordinator, minute taker), Angela Price (AP) (Town Clerk), Councillor Joe Hamblin.

76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

John Holmes (JH), Amy Howard (AH), Nick Morris (NM), Justine Peberdy (JP) (Chair)

The Town Clerk noted that in the absence of a Chair and Deputy Chair at this meeting, another member would need to be voted in. TK was proposed and it was agreed by the majority.

Cllr Hamblin was welcomed to the meeting. The Board were informed by the Town Clerk that he is standing in for Cllr Morris, in order to comply with our terms of reference. TK explained the roles of each Board member present, and the John Masefield Society, to Cllr Hamblin.

The Town Clerk confirmed we are now quorate.

77. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE NOTES OF MEETINGS OF (ALL) THE MASEFIELD MATTERS BOARD HELD ON 19 MAY 2026.

There were multiple amendments requested and noted. Pages of the agenda need to be numbered going forward.

EC advised the Board that concerns had been raised following feedback received from Simon Armitage regarding an individual who had contacted him in relation to participation in the Masefield Marathon. During the conversation, the individual had introduced themselves as a member of the Masefield Matters Board.

EC reported that Mr Armitage had subsequently indicated that he felt the approach had amounted to harassment. He made it clear that, as a result of the interaction, he did not wish to participate in the Masefield Marathon.

AP noted for the minutes that if a task is assigned to a Board member in a meeting that other members should not interfere, and should only complete tasks assigned to them.. TK added that he thinks the damage caused needs to be repaired and AH would be the best person to do it.

PE confirmed it was not him, and that Simon used to be a supporter of John Masefield and if someone has now put him off, that's a serious matter. AP noted that this puts the project at risk of reputational damage.

EC to ask AH to share facts with the Board and explain to Simon that whatever was said to him was not on behalf of the Board, and we had no intention of putting pressure on him to join the event and recognise it was a full day for him. And we would love to involve him in any point in the future if that is appropriate.

RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the Masefield Matters Board Meetings on 19 May 2026 are to be revised and presented at the next regular Board meeting.

78. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE ACTION SHEET

25/MM23(5) TK explained to JH that the Shanty is written as a 2 line refrain to which you can lots of 2 line verses, a light weight way of raising awareness of Masefield and will be used quite a lot at events. In the writing of the show for Ledbury Market Theatre in November, we will be introducing the shanty at regular intervals with new verses to mark a change of scene. It was agreed it was a nice way of involving different groups.

The Board were asked to consider anything we can do to promote it. If local groups in Ledbury could come up with their own verse that in some way describes their response to Masefield that would be great.

AP asked if we ever got anything back from HMS Ledbury. TK responded, that we need a strategy on this to include where it is used/posted (e.g. website, represented in the project brochure). EC reminded the Board that JP is working on this already.

Actions:
MM78 (1) The Board agreed to ask JP to draw up a strategy.

25/MM25.2(2) EC told the Board this action is now closed. The Board missed the opportunity to provide wording for an interpretation Board after missing the deadline. CT suggested the comms team meet to draw up a communications strategy including how things are going to be done and who is going to do it.

CT said the comms team could do the strategy but we need someone who can do the work - EC reminded the Board that we have talked about new Board members with communications and events organisation skills. We need a wider reach for the project if we are going to make it successful beyond Ledbury. CT noted, thanks to EC we've done so much on the local awareness.

AP asked how the Board aim to get new members with the right skillsets. TK suggested we discuss in the September meeting. There are several groups of people who would be a promising source of potential Board members. EC raised a concern that the next big press release is required by 17th August, and we need to have something in place to share news about the chosen designers.

TK commented that we haven't had much press attention about the project so far.

Actions:
MM78 (2) EC will follow up with AH about the marketing position and find out when that person will be in place.

MM78 (3) CT stated she is prepared to discuss with her contact a one off piece of work and find out how much that would be.

25/MM29 TK asked if merchandising is one too many things to have on our agenda. It was agreed that merchandising be kept on hold. It was noted at the theatre events, some merchandise could be sold or given away.

Actions:
MM78 (4) EC to add to the next Board meeting agenda a discussion around a more specific proposal for merchandising.

25/MM37(2)
TK asked the Board if the leaflet need updating. CM proposed we wait until after the chosen designer is announced. A discussion occurred around how the final winning design would be chosen and how it will be announced. All three designs will be on display at the theatre events in November and the public will be invited to vote. The idea, and marketing for this, will need to be developed.

Actions:
MM78 (5) The Board need to agree in principal how they decide how it winning designs will be announced.

25/MM38.2(2) TK suggested that although EC is responsible for website, content is something everyone on the Board can help with.

PE noted EC is "phenomenally helpful" as he always sends blogs late in the day, a note of thanks. PE is supplying Poem of the Month with permission from Society of Authors.

26/MM44 (1) AP had conversation with Ian, Sally has sent an invoice and we are awaiting confirmation that the money has been sent. A process is now in place.

26/MM44 (3) TK shared with the Board, that during the last fundraising meeting, we discussed what we still need funds for and agreed to commit ourselves to a further £10,000 to boost the memorial pot, and what are the possible source of funds. A souvenir brochure was discussed and how to raise funds towards it, we are looking for £1,000 for 300 copies and it will be given free to significant donors and then sold to anyone else involved in the project at a reasonable price. There is money in the pot for a launch event, however we may need additional funds for that.

CM suggested adding to the marketing and publicity budget. She added that she could foresee further problems down the line once EC has left. EC reports that we had a small budget for marketing and there is nothing left in that pot. If you can aim activities at teenagers we can use some funds from the JMHS allocated pot. EC shared what is left in the contingency fund. TK suggested we add marketing to the above list, but also look at cleverly using the resources that we have.

TK is in touch with two Trusts who could be a possible source of funding. Remaining events should raise several thousand pounds between now and the end of the project. The local Tesco blue token fund is something we should pursue.

TK confirmed that we have profits from Masefield Marathon as it's above matched funding. EC suggested this could be used for marketing and promotion.

AP confirmed that any raised above the matched funding will go into a general pot and can be spent how the Board decides. TK is confident we can sell out the theatre events on both evenings and that will raise a decent sum, as will the Pauntley Court event.

26/MM59 (1) CT needs to know if we need any space during HODs. EC confirmed we don't have anything planned for HODs, but we could organise a workshop for young people about John Masefield. EC to explore options with creative practitioners and confirm with CT.

26/MM61.1 (1) NM will draw up target list by Autumn.

26/MM73 (5) CM and PE to draw up programme of lectures for period of final 2 years.

TK suggested hosting an event in the tower with readings about Bells to including a viewing of the bells. Other events suggested are readings of narrative poems in people's homes, the Good Friday play around Easter next year. The Board were asked to continue to think of engagement activities. CM commented on the quality of the sound system at the Masefield Marathon, which was leant by the Market Theatre. AP added LTC have a new sound system too.

MM74 (6.1) 3) AH, JP, JH will form a group to support upcoming school event in March 2027.

EC reminded the Board about the new partnership with SBT and urged them to build on it for future events.

MM74 (6.1) 4) We need to know the book is going to be fully funded and won't take a lot of resources.

PE left the meeting.

79. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

AP raised a concern that a member of the Board had made arrangements with an external company to print programmes for the Masefield Marathon without following the Council's Financial Regulations or the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) procurement requirements.

AP reminded the Board that individual Board members are not authorised to make direct arrangements or commitments with external organisations. All such communications and procurement requests should be channelled through the Project Co-ordinator and approved by AP in accordance with the Council's financial procedures.

It was noted that the Board member concerned had been made aware of the correct process, and AP would provide a further reminder to all Board members regarding the approval and procurement procedures. It was also noted that the programmes could be printed in-house, and therefore there was no operational requirement to commission an external organisation to undertake the printing.

80. PHASE 3 UPDATE

The commission was advertised widely and we have received 7 expressions of interest so far. 5 members of the Core Consultation Group are going to meet with our consultants to shortlist designers on 31st July, measuring the submissions against the criteria detailed in the commissioning brief. The shortlisted EOIs will be presented to the Board ahead of their decision making meeting on 14th August. The Board agreed to take the guidance of the consultants.

81. TO DISCUSS THE ROLE OF EACH BOARD MEMBER

TK suggested each Board member think about how they would most like to be used for the remainder of the project. JP could talk to each of us and get those ideas down and identify any gaps. This needs to be done sooner rather than later, as new Board members could be recruited to fill the gaps.

Actions:
MM81 (1): Board members are to provide ideas of how they'd like to be involved in the project going forward. JP to do a skills gap analysis.

82. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE SUB GROUP UPDATES:
6.1. FUNDRAISING

The last fundraising meeting (15/07/2026) was around business strategy and forthcoming fundraising events on the fundraising side, and ensuring they are efficiently run and marketed. The three main events are; Pauntley Court, JMHS and theatre events . Three people. Including TK, are writing a four act show for the Market theatre events in November, and will involve JMHS and Ledbury Primary.

6.2. COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications sub group have not met since May. There is currently no lead for this sub group. Members of the sub group agreed they could meet online.

Actions:
MM81 (6.2) CM to organise an online sub group meeting.

6.3. RISK

AP noted that JH and EC have had a discussion around the risk register although there hasn't been another meeting. The two issues raised today need to be added to the risk register.

CM raised that the absence of a marketing/PR set up should be listed as a risk.

ACTION: EC to add these issues to the risk register, and sub group to add in mitigations.

TK noted for the minutes that the project is proceeding really well, the familiarisation was successful with lots of engagement activities including additional events, EC and IL did a fantastic job of seeing through the programme that the Lottery required of us and more. AP and EC presence and support at Marathon was appreciated.

Fundraising wise we have hit our target. EC noted that the next payment from NLHF is being processed.

Next board meeting: Friday 11 September 11am
Next extraordinary meeting: Friday 14 August 11am

The meeting ended at 3:30pm

Signed……………………………… Dated………………………………