

Minutes of the M4 2024 Trustees' Meeting

Venue At Root & Branch, Westmill & Online MS Teams	Date Monday 22 nd April 2024 6.30 pm
---	--

Trustees Present Rosie Wheeler Emma Welch Richard Taylor David Atkins Alistaire Knight Neil Griffiths Nick Daisley	Also Present Tanya Parkinson Rachel Brockie (until 7.10 pm)
--	--

Welcome.

David welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Colin Bell.

1. Minutes of the previous trustee meeting

The draft minutes of the Meeting M3 (March 2024) were agreed and ratified as accurate by trustees present. Minutes have not been uploaded to the website, Tanya will ask Sarah to do this, Emma offered to help if required.

Action Tanya/Emma

Matters Arising

Emma updated the board: Pay review letters were circulated and annual pay rises have been put in place.

New Website/Brand: We have had some offers of help to develop the website this year. The trustees expressed thanks to those who have offered, especially to Fiscal Tech (who have nominated us as their charity of the year and who visited recently to donate plant for the plant sale) and to a local digital marketer/illustrator. Staff will continue to work with these contacts on this project.

See Appendix A for Actions.

2. Fundraising Review and Plan for the Year Ahead

Rachel Brockie, the new fundraiser on the staff team, talked through her progress so far and plans for the year ahead. It was an excellent opportunity for Rachel to meet all the trustees. Rachel's impact so far has been very impressive and she is enjoying the challenges of the new job.

Rachels comes with a strong professional background in fundraising and already has forged new and strong relationships within the community local to Root & Branch.

Rachel thanked the Rose and Crown, Ashbury, for their fundraising efforts and Fiscal Tech for their committed support. She has plans this year to apply for several grants for core funds, to plan wreath making workshops and other fundraising events, forge new and cement existing relationships within the community and of course is involved with advertising the Plant Sale (coming up on the 11th May). Rachel is working through a directory of grants and foundation to find new funding opportunities as well as nurturing existing links. She has met the fundraiser at Bridewell to share knowledge and emphasised the importance of building these connections.

Rachel reminded all the trustees to carry on sharing social media posts as widely as possible. Everyone can help to grow the root & Branch profile.

Action All

Rachel feels that she still has a lot of information gathering to do, in order that she fully understands Root & Branch and the trustees will support her with this as much as possible. Nick offered to provide a recent history of Grant Applications.

Action Nick

Richard suggested that Rachel might like to work with a fundraising volunteer and it is agreed that we should aim to recruit someone.

It was excellent and very positive to listen to Rachel, and the trustees all thanked her for coming to the meeting.

3. Financial Review (and Pay Review)

Alistaire reported that he continues to work with the accounts to bring them up to date for the end of March. Sarah C has been doing lots of work on reconciling the cash book and the bank account and has brought us up to date.

Root and Branch remains in a good financial position as we enter the new financial year, the shortfall was less than predicted due to careful spending. But we are reminded that, for the budget 2024/2025, we need to fill a significant funding gap in core funds. Rachel Brockie is aware of this and is prioritising grants for core funds.

Tanya continues to work with the Oxfordshire commissioners to ensure some security in the core statutory funding stream.

Emma asked Alistaire to add a slide to his Finance Report (Management Accounts) that will provide a Year-To-Date balance sheet showing us where we stand against the annual budget. It is complicated by the complexities of our funding (ie the balance between restricted and un-restricted) but Alistaire agreed this is work in progress.

4. Operational Review

Tanya will send her monthly Managers Report to Emma to circulate to the board

Action Tanya

Plant Sale

The plant sale is on the 11th May, 1 – 4 pm. Tanya asked everyone to spread the word, share social media posts and asked for volunteers to help both on the day and in the set up the day before. Tanya gave the trustees some posters to put up in their local areas.

Action All

Recruitment

Everyone on the board is sad that Katie, the therapeutic gardener is leaving Root & Branch to start an exciting new role. Katie has made a huge impact during her 15 months in post and has left a large mark on the garden, not least in the addition of, what will be, a beautiful nature area with wildlife pond. Katie is wished every success in her new job and will be leaving after the plant sale in May. Recruitment is going well, one excellent candidate has been interviewed and Tanya has received applications from at least two further strong candidates who will be interviewed. Closing date for applications is the 29th April.

5. Governance, Policies, Strategy

Policy Review

Emma has created a new folder in Teams for the review of 2024 Policies.

The board thanked Nick who has reviewed and updated three policies.

Nick talked us through the updates he had made to:

The Privacy Policy

The Confidentiality Policy.

The Complaints and Whistleblowing Policy. (Nick has split this into two. Policy (Pol-05) remains a Complaints Policy for any complaint received externally of the organisation. A new policy (Pol-016) has been created for internal complaints and whistle-blowing for use by staff and volunteers.

The board made a few minor recommendations that Nick will add and then the updated policies will be added to the Policies Folder online. Emma will print out a set of the new Policies to be held for easy access at Root & Branch.

Action Nick and Emma

Trustee Recruitment

We are looking for a new member to join us on the board. The advert has been run in the Highworth Link and this will run for 4 months. Emma will ask Simon at the Link to adjust the ad slightly so that we spread the net widely and encourage any individual to apply.

Action Emma

Neil has connections within his other charitable organisation that he will explore.

Action Neil

The advertisement will be shared on social media and on other local networking groups.

Action All

6. Date of Next Meeting

Date of next meetings will be:

13th May 2024: 6.30pm. A short trustee meeting to enable us to touch base online. No Operational Input will be asked of Tanya because this is straight after the very busy Plant Sale Weekend.

Rolling Agenda Items: GDPR Review (**Action Emma**)

Policy Review: Finance Policy (**Action Alistaire**)

10th June 2024: 6.30pm At Root & Branch Westmill (and online on MS Teams)

9th July 2024: 6.30pm At Root & Branch Westmill (and online on MS Teams)