

Minutes of the M12 2021 Trustees' Meeting

Venue Online on MS Teams	Date Tuesday 14 th December 2021
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Trustees Present Nick Daisley Emma Welch Kathryn Worthington Alistaire Knight Svetlina Jeanneret Ian Matheson Lorraine Needham David Atkins	Also Present Karen English Rebecca Brain
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Welcome.

Nick welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no apologies.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting considered for accuracy and Matters Arising.

Minutes from the Meeting M11 (November 2021) were agreed and ratified by trustees present.

These can be moved to the 'Approved Folder' in Dropbox and published on the website.

Action Emma

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting in November.

Four ongoing items remain on the Progress Sheet to be reviewed again in January.

See Appendix A

2. Finance Review

Alistaire updated the board on our financial situation. The current situation is very good, partly driven by the timing of our key donations. The conservative forecast for the full year is that we will arrive at the end of March with our key reserve in the bank.

There are several project-spends going on consecutively at root and branch currently and Alistaire will work with Joanna, Karen and Becky to manage and monitor this spending at invoice level. Currently the stewardship of project-spend is being managed on spreadsheets. Alistaire will speak to Restore to find out what system they use. Karen will give Alistaire a contact at Restore.

Action Alistaire and Karen

Alistaire plans to meet with Karen again in the new year to start a process by which Karen is more involved in a regular financial forecast, forecasting 12 – 18 months ahead. This will give us better financial security.

Action Karen and Alistaire

Alistaire reported to the board that recent fundraising was all for very specific tasks and was project based. These funds are restricted to the specific tasks and whilst useful to drive projects at Root & Branch, they do not help general cash flow and makes the forecast more difficult. Therefore, he recommended that we need to evaluate our approach to raising funds, weighing up the fact that extra administration is involved in these very restricted grants. Trustee discussion following this was useful and constructive with the board finally noting that continuity funding for core funds should be a focus. Strategic direction needs to be given to Becky with this in mind. (Discussion around the fund-raising post continues later in the minutes)

For good practice, Alistaire suggested there should be a second trustee to review what is spent monthly. David volunteered to take on this monthly responsibility.

Action David

3. Operational Review

Karen had circulated her monthly managers' report to the board ahead of the meeting.

Staff Support

The staff would welcome provision of external supervision sessions to provide support and strengthen teamwork. Karen has been recommended an independent provider via contact with Restore. The trustees have asked Karen to approach this contact and clarify a schedule of proposed training. The trustees have also asked for Karen to clarify the expected outcomes of putting this training in place.

Action Karen

Out of area referrals

Karen has received two new referrals from Highworth and one from Gloucestershire, all from outside the area for which we receive funding. The trustees agree to cap the number of service users from outside the Oxfordshire area to 5 from Wiltshire/Swindon plus one other. Karen will continue to research the possibility of statutory funding for service users outside Oxfordshire. It is suggested that we once again contact the clinical commissioning groups for funding opportunity.

Lorraine requested that Karen relook at the Restore Contract to establish whether there is any contractual requirement to take a certain percentage of our Service Users from only the Oxfordshire area.

Action Karen

Monitoring and evaluation

Karen asked for clarity from the trustee board in their requirements for the frequency and format of monitoring and evaluation reporting. Monitoring and evaluation appears once on the rolling agenda for a report to be given to the trustees every year in June. This is useful at that time because it feeds into the writing of the annual report in preparation for the AGM. No further requirement was recommended at this stage apart from the required reporting obligation within each individual fund and fund-provider's contract.

4. Proposal for a New Initiative – Rebecca Brain

Becky was invited into the meeting to present to the board a proposal for a new initiative, for a cafe and plant nursery enterprise closer to the main Swindon road to employ service users moving on from Root & Branch, and to raise the charity's public profile. This was an opportunity for Becky to introduce her ideas and for the board to ask any questions. The outline for the proposal had been circulated to the board prior to the meeting.

The initiative was well received and did present an exciting opportunity for the West Mill Community. The trustees did see real value in the project. Its potential could benefit some service users at Root and Branch, be a bridge back to work for them and an opening back to mainstream activity. It could be a valuable asset in the local community to which Root and Branch would have a close geographical association.

However, in discussion that followed the presentation, the board was decided that this project is not a suitable venture for Root and Branch. The trustees felt that the initiative did not fit within the current strategic plan for the charity neither did it sit within the objects of the charity's governing document. At this time, the proposal was considered to be not in the charity's best interests and posed an element of financial risk the organisation.

The trustees will write to Becky thanking her for coming to the meeting but explaining our decision and reasons. We hope to encourage Becky to find another route by which to make her project happen and wish her every success with it going forward.

Action Emma

5. Governance Policies and Strategy

Thank you, Retiring Trustees.

Nick thanked Lorraine and Kathryn both of whom will be stepping down from the board this month. Both trustees have played an important part over recent years Lorraine for her tremendous stint as Chair but also for her role as Human Resource Lead on the board. Kathryn for her input into the publicity and marketing strategy. Kathryn has helped put Root & Branch on the 'social media' map, and for this the trustees are extremely grateful. The trustees were thanked by all and urged to keep in touch.

Fundraising Update

Nick gave the board an update on the fundraising job description which was offered to Becky last month at a meeting with Nick, Becky and Emma. Becky had felt that there were key instructions missing from the job role but that she was willing to take it on for 6 hours per week from January, to be reviewed after six months. Taking on board the comments that Becky made during the meeting, Nick and Emma recommended that we invite Jane Selman back to the next trustee meeting for advice. We have one more day remaining with Jane in the package of support offered to us via the Lloyds Enhance programme. Nick will get in touch with Jane Selman to arrange this.

Action Nick

Decisions made about the fundraising role during the trustee discussion that followed were:

- For the time being we will not aim to move away from our association with the professional fundraisers until we have a clear action plan with our own internal fundraiser.
- Fundraising internally needs to be managed so that it is less reactive and more proactive.
- Fundraising internally should focus on raising core funds (to aid cash flow) rather than raising only very restricted funds for specific project work.
- The Fundraising role will be assessed in 6 months to mitigate any risk to the financial situation at Root & Branch.
- Karen and Nick will find out from Lloyds if there is more support available from Jane Selman.
- The role of the fundraiser should be managed and directed into raising the funds required to fulfil the needs of Root and Branch according to a planned strategy.

- A new strategy for the fundraiser will be addressed with Jane Selman at the board meeting in January. (Alistaire's work on the budget forecasting with Karen will feed into this)

Action All Trustees

Updated Rolling Agenda

Emma has updated and circulated the Rolling Agenda. Any feedback will be sent to Emma via email

Action All Trustees

Thanking staff and volunteers

As planned at the last meeting all volunteers have been sent Christmas cards from trustees and Karen has arranged small gifts for them from root and branch. Emma had planned to visit the project on Thursday to thank all staff, but this is now sadly not possible due to COVID isolation. Instead, Karen will pass on our very best and warmest regards to the staff, Emma will send all an email and will visit the project with Christmas gifts for the staff in the new year. It is agreed that the gifts for the staff should be paid for by Root & Branch.

Policy Review

The policies were divided up for the review according to the schedule in appendix A. Each trustee will review the policies with sustainability and with diversity, equity and inclusion in mind. It was agreed that diversity, equity and inclusion should be reflected in all our policies. The trustees will bring back any recommended additions and alterations to the policies and feed this back at the January and February 2022 meetings..

Action all trustees. See Appendix A

HR Matters

Svetlina has taken on the HR lead from Lorraine and is now the trustee to whom Karen will report to. Karen and Svetlina have been having weekly telephone contact. Lorraine has a hand over call scheduled with Svetlina this week.

Staff matters were discussed by the board with a decision made to address the staffing issues with performance reviews early in January.

Action Lorraine and Svetlina

Marketing update

Kathryn will send her final update to the board via email. She has offered to help introduce any new trustee into the marketing role in the future should we require her help.

Final action for Kathryn

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday the 11th of January 2021 at 6.30 pm. It will be held online on MS Teams.

Preparation: January rolling agenda items:

Policy Review (To start in Jan if time and finish in Feb) **action All Trustees**

Safeguarding Review **action Karen**

Discussion to set dates for 2022 events and closures.