

Minutes of the M1 2026 Trustees' Meeting

Venue Online on MS Teams	Date Tuesday 10 th Feb 2026
------------------------------------	--

Trustees Present Rosie Wheeler David Atkins Emma Welch Vicki Silk Colin Bell Carolyn Place Martyn Cooper Nick Daisley Richard Taylor	Also Present Tanya Parkinson
--	--

Welcome

David welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.

The trustees expressed their thanks to Neil Griffiths who has been on the board of trustees for more than two years. Sadly Neil has stepped down as a trustee, but his contributions in fundraising, health and safety, volunteer recruitment and policy review have been hugely beneficial. His commitment and support to the participants at the Project has been incredible and he will be missed. Rosie will send a card of thanks

Action Rosie

1. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting and trustee meeting

The minutes of the Meeting M10 (December 2025), were agreed and ratified as accurate by trustees present. These can be published on the website.

Action Emma

Matters Arising (And Progress Sheet)

Rosie confirmed that she had written letters to Fiscal Tech, Nationwide and Zurich to thank them hugely for their corporate sponsorship, their fundraising efforts and their working party days in 2025. She reported that she has heard back from all three companies – all of whom have been wonderful to work with throughout 2025.

Two items remain on the Progress Sheet. A third item has been added at this meeting, in order to track the progress of the Policy Review.

See Appendix A

2. Operational Review

Tanya managers' report will be circulated to the board with this set of minutes.

Action Emma

There was one safeguarding incident during the period December – February 10th 2026. Tanya reported that this incident had been handled correctly, and correct procedure followed. The trustees thanked her and the staff for handling the situation appropriately.

One candidate for the administrator role is being called to interview. Vicky will help Tanya and Sarah with this process.

Action Vicki

The Project is in need of a new craft volunteer to fill the role on a Thursday.

There is an open day on the 10th March. This invitation is a National Lottery initiative and entry to the open day is by lottery ticket. The board confirmed that they have received this invitation from Karen.

Lottery Bid Update

David has had a good interim catch up meeting with Tanya at which he helped Tanya with the next phase of the Lottery bid. Tanya and David have been in contact with Kate from the National Lottery who has given feedback particularly on the financial part of the bid. Kate has recommended that the rate of inflation quoted in the bid be increased from 2 to 3%. The board agreed with this recommendation.

Kate has also encouraged our bid to take on a four year strategy rather than three years. The board discussed this and decided unanimously to increase our bid to a Four Year project. David will circulate the Application Bid Budget Spreadsheet to all.

Action David

The May Plant Fayre

The plant fayre is on the 17th May. Tanya and the staff team would like to combine this event with a celebration of the 25 year anniversary for Root and Branch. A subcommittee was formed to support the staff with planning this event. The committee is Rosie, Colin, Carolyn and Emma. Emma will send an email to this group to make a start.

Action Emma

The Partnership and Audits

Tanya updated the board on news from the Partnership. It is decided that when Root & Branch is audited by the partnership, a trustee will be present to support with this process.

Action All

3. Financial Update

David has had a meeting with Emma Endicote the Charity book keeper who is now supporting us with Xero. Emma E has adjusted some of the reports to make them more meaningful.

Emma E has reported that she is impressed with the way Xero is being kept up to date by Sarah in the office. David will thank Sarah for this, the board are all hugely appreciate of the work that Sarah puts into this

Action David

Finance Reporting/ Current Position.

Emma E had run the reports from Xero – up to and including January 31st 2026. David had circulated the reports ahead of the meeting. He talked through the reports:

The Cash Held Report indicates a healthy growth in cash held in the bank over the past three years. Current cash held is indicative of a healthy reserve.

The Budget Variance Report indicates that R&B will finish the year in surplus. The trustees did discuss the trend appearing to show that the balance of funds is tilting more in the way of restricted vs unrestricted funding. But considering that many of the restricted grants achieved in 2025 are to cover core costs, this was not judged to be a risk.

The Income and Spend of Restricted Grants report did highlight some anomalies that Tanya will address in the office and Emma W will ask Emma E for more advice on this. The anomaly that has arisen from the start of the financial year needs to be addressed and Emma E will be consulted on this.

Action Emma W

Fundraising

Karen has been invited to attend the trustee meeting in April to chat through fundraising ideas and strategy. Vicki and Colin have agreed to support Karen by researching opportunities with corporate sponsors and corporate partners.

Action Vicki and Colin

4. Governance, Policies, Strategy

Annual Return and accounts have been filed with Charity Commission

Rosie confirmed that Vicki has done this ahead of the deadline of 31st January.

Insurance

Vicki and Tanya updated the board. The Occupational Therapy Students were not able to complete their placement with us because they had required Clinical

Malpractice Insurance that was not provided by their Course Provider and R&B's insurer was unable to provide them adequate cover. It was recognised that this was a great pity because the two students would have been a valuable addition to the Team for three months.

Vicki explained that this has drawn attention to whether Zurich is the right insurer for us moving forward. As our service expands and grows it was agreed that our insurance should be more comprehensive and offer the staff an element of cover for malpractice. Vicki, Emma and Tanya had already done some research into this and found that organisations such as R&B, offering therapeutic horticulture in a non-clinical setting presented a bit of an insurance grey area. It was agreed that we should approach a broker to get insurance quotes for a policy that will fit our needs. Emma will start by approaching BIBA. The board agreed that new quotes should be found with immediate effect.

Action Emma, Vicki

Start Annual Pay Review Process for Staff

Rosie has researched legislative changes in Minimum Wage, Real Living Wage and Oxford Living wage to help inform the pay review process. Colin agreed to do some local research into what other similar organisations were doing for annual pay review this year. Changes will be implemented in time for the April Payroll. It was agreed that the pay review process would take place ahead of us finding out about the Lottery funding. If we are successful with the funding, further pay roll changes can take place later in the year to reflect the requirements of the bid.

Action Colin

Emma made the comment that the Pay Review Process would normally occur alongside setting of the new budget for 2025/26. The new budget needs to be in place by 1st April. Last year we had support from a volunteer bookkeeper to set up the budget in Xero at the start of the fiscal year. Emma W will find out if this is support that we can employ from Emma E the charity book keeper.

Action Emma

The setting of the budget and the pay review process requires input from a subcommittee and agreement by the whole board and will be ready to implement by the end of March.

Action All

Policy Review.

We are required, this year to review the policies that need an annual review. We also need to review several policies that are due for a biennial review. It was agreed that the following policies would be reviewed by the named trustee and this will be added to the Progress Sheet to track updates.

The new Environmental Policy (Policy 17) is currently being read and reviewed by staff and then will be published and made available to all.

Action All

Policy 01 Recruitment – Colin
Policy 04 Confidentiality Policy – Vicki
Policy 6 Health and Safety – Carolyn
Policy 7 Safeguarding – Rosie and Martyn
Policy 10 Finance – Emma and Richard
Policy 14 Trustee Handbook – Emma and Richard
Policy 15 Equality Diversity and Inclusion David
Policy 4 & 16 (Internal) Complaints and Whistle Blowing Policies – Nick

Lease renewal

Vicki will contact our landlords at Westmill Farm to negotiate a new lease. Our current leases expires this year in June. Tanya will give Vicki details to make contact.

Action Vicki

Interim meeting for Tanya with a trustee

In January an interim meeting was held between David and Tanya. David circulated a summary of this meeting to all trustees. It was agreed that this was a very useful meeting for Tanya and the next one is scheduled for March 2026.

Vicki will conduct the next interim meeting and will touch base with Tanya to get a date in the diary for this

Dates for 2026

Tanya had circulated the dates for Centre events and closures ahead of the meeting and this had been agreed by the board.

There are additional events that Root and Branch has been invited to attend, Tanya asked for volunteers to help man these events and Emma will circulate these dates to the board.

Action All

5. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next trustee meeting will be **Monday 13th April, 6.30pm at R&B:**

Items from the rolling agenda will include:

- Confirm that the pay review process is complete to be implemented in April payroll
- Financial Review – End of Financial Year complete. Budget set for 2026-2027
- Health and Safety Review and annual Review of Centre Risk Assessment
- Fundraising review (Karen)

The date of the next meeting is set for Tuesday 9th June 2026