

Minutes of the M8 2023 Trustees' Meeting

Venue Root & Branch Westmill	Date Tuesday 8 th August 2023
Trustees Present Nick Daisley Colin Bell Alistaire Knight (online) Ian Matheson (online) Richard Taylor Emma Welch	Also Present Tanya Parkinson Neil Griffiths

Welcome.

Nick welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from David Atkins, Rosie Wheeler and Svetlina Jeanneret.

1. Minutes of the previous trustee meeting

Minutes from the Meeting M7 (July 2023) were agreed and ratified as accurate by trustees present, ND proposing, RT seconding. These can be moved to the 'Approved Folder' in Dropbox and published on the website.

Action Emma

Matters Arising

It was agreed that all matters arising would be dealt with during a very full agenda and are minuted in the sections that follow.

Actions have been recorded on the Progress Sheet for review next month. Seven items have remained on the Progress Sheet.

See Appendix A

2. Financial Update

The board thanked AK for providing a financial update prior to this meeting. AK reported that we are on budget. July has been a good month for fundraising seeing two grants being generated locally for unrestricted spend and two grants received for use to develop the new pond/wildlife area and for use in the forge and other craft areas.

Kitchen spend has been unusually high. It is agreed this is due to the rising cost of provisions particularly as we are now providing a menu to fit within the Healthy Hearts Project, focussing on a very good quality and healthy menu including a breakfast/morning snack option and lunch. We are also feeding more people on a regular basis because TP reported that attendance figures have improved. The trustees agreed that we can spend Healthy Heart Grant money on the increased spend.

Bank account: Helen has completed the bank account documents to remove Joanna and add herself to the account. Joanna continued to work remotely through July and into August. A handover has been scheduled in August.

3. Operational Review

The trustees thanked Tanya for circulating a managers report prior to the meeting.

Staffing

The new Office Manager, Helen, started on the 4th July. She has embraced the role, re-organised the office and is getting on top of the daily work load with remote support from Joanna. Helen has offered to take on the additional role of housekeeping (providing a weekly clean.) The trustees agree that this can be explored by Tanya, and that Helen can take it on if she feels can she manage this additional work alongside her role as Office Manager.

Action Tanya

One member of staff is on long-term sick leave. The board agree to continue to pay full salary. (Emma has been in touch with Andrea Case regarding the payroll and SSP is no longer claimed back via HMRC PAYE). The thoughts and well wishes for our staff member and her family were deeply expressed at the board meeting. TP will communicate this long term absence to staff members first, then volunteers and service users. Emma will write to the staff member.

Action Emma

TP has completed the appraisal for the new Therapeutic Gardener, Katie. Katie will complete her course and achieve the qualification in social and therapeutic horticulture this month. She has achieved a huge amount already since being in post, has an excellent rapport with volunteers and service users and is already a very valued member of the staff team. TP is concerned that Katie's hours are not enough and Katie has expressed a wish to take on more hours. The board will write to Katie with a strong indication of how much she is valued and to offer her 4 hours overtime each week for the next two months. After which point, the board will be in a position to be able to review Katie's contracted hours.

Action Emma

Recruitment

There has been a better response to the Mental Health Key Worker job advertisement in the second tranche of advertising. Three candidates have been shortlisted for interview. Interviews are scheduled for the morning of Monday 21st August. RW and EW will be on site to assist TP with the interviews.

Maintenance Day and Premises Review Update

The maintenance day was on the 18th of July, it was a huge success. The board thanked Katie and RT for co-ordinating the activities for the day. The day welcomed 20 volunteers from Nationwide to the site who worked alongside our own volunteers and service users. A huge amount was achieved and the day created a fantastic buzz at Root & Branch. We have benefitted not only from the practical work that was done on site, but also from the confidence it has given the service users to be part of a wonderful day of team building. Nick will write to Nationwide to express our thanks. TP will add photos of the maintenance day to the website.

Action Nick/Tanya

The strawbale building continues to be restored by two very well qualified volunteers and TP expressed thanks to them for the work they are doing. The building will be turned into gym/healthy living space and the service users have expressed a wish for weights and a yoga mat to be added to the area. A table tennis table has been requested for the outdoor space.

TP thanked Amazon Prime for the donation of chairs for the classroom. She updated the board that another maintenance day is being planned for October with Adkins Estate Agent.

Volunteers

The board thanked CB and RT for organising the process of on-boarding new volunteers.

RT and CB continue to help with the management of volunteers on site, and Nicola has kindly offered to volunteer for us in the capacity of Volunteer Inductor/Trainer. She will give induction training and a basic introduction to mental health and responding. All volunteers will be expected to undertake this training.

RT and CB will work with Tanya and Helen to co-ordinate the volunteer role review, in terms of process, policies, handbook and expectations

A Volunteers' Day is being planned for 6th September, where volunteers for different days will be able to come together, become known to each other and compare notes.

Action Colin/ Richard/ Tanya

IT Update

ON the 24th July we were donated support from a local IT company. A consultant come on site and met with ND, EW and TP. It was decided that R&B should stop using dropbox and btconnect email and move to Microsoft 365. This would be cheaper, easier, safer and more GDPR compliant.

To date we have done the following:

- Registration with the Microsoft Tech for Social Impact Program has been successful.
- Root and Branch Westmill passed the eligibility check and was offered a grant for Microsoft 365 Business Premium (10 free user licenses)
- ND and the IT consultant are now working together to move the (already purchased and set up) rootandbranch.org.uk domain to our new Microsoft 365 account.

It is recommended that the licenses are assigned to individual members of staff. The licences aren't single use, so as people change, we can release licences from unused accounts and reassign the licence to someone new. EW will work with the IT consultant to set this up.

The actual 'email addresses' for the organisation will be set up as mailboxes and every email address will end with @rootandbranch.org.uk

Action: ND and EW will work with TP to decide on the mailboxes.

Action: In order for this to run well in the office we need to update and upgrade the two office PC's. It is advised that we need Windows 11 machines. EW has provided several quotes for recommended machines that are the right spec for office administration. The trustees agreed to spend £1000 to update PCs and monitors. NG offered to fundraise for this. This hugely kind offer was accepted by the board and NG will liaise with TP to supply these funds. It is hugely

important, and also very exciting, to be having this opportunity to update the office systems in this way and the board expressed thanks to both NG and to the IT support company for their donations.

Action Nick/ Emma/ Tanya

Participant Contract

Tanya (with the help of the the staff team) has produced a new participant contract – to be signed both by R&B and by every participant (service user) – it will become part of the induction process when a new participant decides to accept a place. The contract is well thought-out and sensitively written. The board gave TP approval to use this document going forward.

4. Governance, Policies, Strategy

Fundraising

The board congratulated Tanya, who has brought in nearly £35,600 of funds in her four months since starting in the post of Centre Manager – this she has secured internally without the help of the external fundraising company (FCL). FCL continues to be a concern, they have been engaged for almost 11 months and their efforts to fundraise for R&B has brought in a disappointing amount. Following discussion, the board decided to terminate the contract with FCL, in accordance with their terms and conditions of contract. ND will make this known to them formally.

The board were fully in agreement that the fund raising role should not fall to Tanya, but that having someone in house, to work as part of the staff team, would be a huge benefit to the organisation. Therefore we will begin a recruitment process aiming to find our own fundraiser. CB offered to put together a job description and advert. ND will forward to him a job description that has been worked on by the board previously. NG offered to share the job description of a fund raiser who is in post at a charitable organisation where he is currently on the board.

Action Nick/Colin/Neil

Tanya updated the board following her application to the Oxfordshire Community Fund for a new grant. The funding has been offered for a Project over one year and includes core funds. The Project will involve continuing to expand our service, offering more places to more participants. The trustees approved the acceptance of this grant. AK will help TP review the insurance policy with this new project in mind (see below)

Insurance Review

Emma reported that the insurance review is required because we will need to renew our premium in October. Our current policy is with Zurich and is their 'Select for Charities and Small Organisation' Policy. AK is helping Tanya review the policy given current proposed changes and also will review the market for any better offers.

Action Tanya/Alistaire

Preparation for the AGM

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Root & Branch on Tuesday 10th October at 6.30 pm. The invitation and agenda will be written and sent to all our members giving 21 clear days notice. Emma will ask Joanna to hand over to Helen the required process of circulating to all on our current membership list.

In line with the Root& Branch governing articles, two directors on the board (one third of the current board) will stand down by rotation, to be voted back to the board by members present. The members will also be asked to vote to the board the current co-opted trustees: Richard Taylor, Colin Bell and Rosie Wheeler.

It is agreed that it would be useful to remind all current volunteers and participants about becoming a member if they have not already done so. Root & Branch is a membership based charity, being a member is open to individuals over the age of 18 and it gives people the opportunity to attend the AGM and vote on major issues. The membership application form is available on our website.

EW will create the AGM invitation, explaining the voting process and offering all members the chance to vote by proxy if they are unable to attend the meeting in person.

ND is already creating the Trustees annual report and will continue to do so, ready to present at the AGM. AK will present the most recent set of published accounts.

Action Nick/Alistaire/Emma

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

This is a new policy that has been written by DA and reviewed by Tanya. The Policy was circulated to the board ahead of the meeting and the trustees agreed to adopt this, publish it with our current set of Policies and TP will circulate it to the wider R&B community.

Strategic Plan Review

As reminded by our rolling agenda – the board will review the current Strategic Plan ahead of the AGM in October. Board members will bring any thoughts or concerns to the next meeting in September

Action All

5. Date of Next Meeting

Date of next meeting will be Tuesday 12th September at Root & Branch Westmill at 6.30 pm. The meeting will also be streamed on MS Teams.

Action Emma