



Root & Branch
Westmill Farm
Watchfield
Oxfordshire
SN6 8TH

Minutes of Annual General Meeting for the year 2023-2024

Tuesday 8th October 2024 held at Root & Branch Westmill at 6:30 pm

These minutes were approved by members present at the 2025 AGM. 14th October 2025

Present

Tanya Parkinson, Centre Manager
Richard Taylor, Chair of the Trustee Board
David Atkins, Vice Chair of the Trustee Board
Rosemary Wheeler, Trustee
Colin Bell, Trustee
Adam Twine, Founder Member and Patron
Liz Rothschild, Member
Jo Cholmeley, Member
Victoria Silk, Member

Emma Welch, Trustee
Neil Griffiths, Trustee
Carolyn Place, Member
Martyn Cooper, Member
Kate Pritchard, Staff
Sarah Piercy, Staff
Anne Taylor, Visitor
Peter King, Member

Proxy Voting Form

Lorraine Needham, Member

*Minutes prepared by E. Welch
11th October 2024*

Apologies

Nick Daisley, Ian Matheson, Alistaire Knight, Selina Wilkes, Alan Parnham, Marrie Annick Jube, Roger Wilkins, Sarah Coleman, Rachel Brockie, Ed (Farm Manager Westmill)

1. Welcome and opening remarks

David Atkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He explained that he would be chairing the meeting.

Richard Taylor made the opening remarks. He thanked staff, members, volunteers, patrons, stake holders and participants for a successful year. Richard reminded everyone that our Strategy can be found published on our website and he thanked Tanya for her hard work and resilience and thanked her dedicated staff team for delivering this strategy and making a huge impact this year.

There has been plenty of change this year. Tanya has built a brilliant new staff team. But Richard also thanked all out going members of staff and trustees. Yvonne had retired earlier this year, having been a hugely dedicated member of the staff team for 20 years. Nicola had left to start her own counselling business but remains a volunteer at Root and Branch (providing training for our volunteers). Alistaire Knight, our treasurer for three years, was retiring from the board at the meeting this evening. Ian Matheson had retired from the board earlier in the year

having served two long terms (one of nine years and one of six years) as trustee. Katie had left the staff team after a year in post as the Therapeutic Gardener, but in this time had made a lovely impact and started to truly embed therapy at the centre of the garden. Richard gave all heartfelt thanks.

Ian Matheson, on retiring from the Trustee board had accepted the invitation to become a Patron of the charity. Liz requested at the meeting that Yvonne be invited to become a Patron, this was seconded by Emma Welch and agreed by all members present. Rosie will contact Yvonne with this invitation.

2. Minutes of previous meeting (held October 10th 2023)

Emma reminded everyone that the minutes of the previous AGM had been available on the website this year. Our current membership is 55. All members had been notified and invited to this AGM on the 16th September 2024. At this time all members had been directed to the 2023 AGM minutes and the published accounts for the financial year 2023/2024 which are available to download from the website. Emma had received one proxy voting form from member Lorraine Needham.

There were no questions or matters arising from the minutes of the AGM that was held on 10th October 2023. Therefore the minutes were approved as a true record: this was proposed by David Atkins and seconded by Colin Bell. This was voted as accurate by all members who had been present at the 2023 AGM.

3. General Report

Tanya Parkinson presented the general report. This report is attached to the end of these minutes.

Tanya started her presentation with some quotes and testimonies from our current participants. One of whom had described Root and Branch as "A beautiful, safe and welcoming environment".

Tanya thanked her staff team and recognised that the demands on them are great, but they continue to deliver a remarkable service as well as running many successful projects for our participants. The Healthy Hearts Project has continued to inspire and the craft and work shop projects have been numerous and varied. Katie had devised and run the first Growing Roots Programme: An eight week programme of therapeutic gardening designed to both teach skills and develop team work, problem solving and confidence. Tanya thanked Katie for building the strong foundations for this.

Tanya thanked our landlords Adam and Liz for their continued support. Allowing us to run two successful open days this year has generated important funds.

Moving forward Tanya and the staff are running the Branching Out Programme – helping and supporting participants to move on to new meaningful activities once their time at Root and Branch is coming to an end. Importantly, Tanya reminded everyone that participants are supported through this process and once they have left, they are now invited back once a month for a shared lunch.

Fundraising remains an ongoing challenge – but our new strategy of employing an internal fundraiser, Rachel, to work as part of the staff team has so far been very successful. Tanya thanked all our corporate funders, stakeholders and grant givers for their continued vital financial support.

4. Financial Report

David Atkins provided a summary of the official financial situation for the year 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024, highlighting that Root & Branch continues to be in a good financial position. The full annual accounts have been independently checked by an accountant and can be viewed on our website. They will be published with both Companies House and the Charity Commission. There were no questions about the set of published accounts.

David explained that we have moved away from the use of professional fundraisers and our new fundraising strategy had led us to employ a fund raiser to the staff team. David thanked Rachel, who has made a very positive start to the role. During the period before Rachel was employed, Tanya had filled this vital role and all members extended their thanks to Tanya for all the work she did, and continues to do, to raise money for the Root and Branch.

David thanked all the volunteers who together give us 5000 hours of unpaid service every year. The volunteers are an integral part of Root and Branch, without whom the Project would not flourish.

5. Next Steps in the Garden

Kate Pritchard, the new Therapeutic Gardener, gave the members a presentation on her plans to embrace the therapeutic nature of the garden. Kate plans to continue the practice of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture by encouraging gentle peer support, by supporting the connection with 'garden to plate' and by building on the links between the craft, kitchen, wood workshop and garden.

Kate has already led workshops on 'capturing the garden' and gave a lovely presentation on her work so far. The slides of Kate's presentation are attached to the end of this set of minutes.

6. Election of trustees

All members had received notification of the voting details via email on the 16th September 2024. This notice contained details of the two new members nominated to join the board. One proxy voting form had been received from member Lorraine Needham.

Trustee Alistaire Knight stood down by rotation at the meeting. Alistaire did not re-stand for election to the board due to work commitments. The board thanked Alistaire for his contribution as treasurer for three years in post.

Four trustees were put forward for election to the board:

Trustee Nick Daisley stood down by rotation at the meeting. Nick was put forward for re-election. Nick was proposed by Richard Taylor, seconded by Rosie Wheeler, and voted back to the board by the majority of members present and by proxy vote.

Trustee David Atkins stood down by rotation at the meeting. David was put forward for re-election. David was proposed by Richard Taylor, seconded by Rosie Wheeler, and voted back to the board by the majority of members present and by proxy vote.

New member Martyn Cooper was nominated to join the board of trustees. This was proposed by David Atkins, seconded by Richard Taylor, and Martyn was voted to the board by the members present and by proxy vote.

New member Carolyn Place was nominated to join the board of trustees. This was proposed by Emma Welch, seconded by Colin Bell, and Carolyn was voted to the board by the members present and by proxy vote.

7. Meeting Close

Richard thanked everyone for coming to the AGM and for their very valuable support. He invited any questions. Adam Twine remarked on the considerable amount of hard work put in by the staff and thanked Tanya Parkinson for everything she had done for the Root and Branch community this year.

Meeting closed at 19.40

