



Root & Branch
Westmill Farm
Watchfield
Oxfordshire
SN6 8TH

Minutes of Annual General Meeting – for the year 2018

Tuesday 2nd October 2018 held at Westmill Farm and starting at 6:30 pm

Present

Karen English, Centre Manager
Rebecca Brain, Chair of Trustees
Pete Richardson, Member
Dave Breakspear, Gardener
Member
Ian Matheson, Trustee
Sharon Lips, Gardener Member
Ruth Laidler, Garden Manager
Heidi Black, Member

Emma Welch, Trustee
Peter Moss, Volunteer
Jess Day, Co-opted Trustee
Melanie Breakspear, Member
Pat Hand, Member
Lorraine Needham, Co-opted
Trustee
Sally Britton, Lloyds Consultant
Jane Lindsay, Member

Brian Mildenhall, Trustee
Bjorn Watson, Member
Michael East, Member
Sue Hand, Gardener Member
Yvonne Castellano, Volunteer
Greg Burton, Potential Trustee
Clare Hickman, Gardener Member
Nickie Kavanagh, Volunteer

Apologies:

Adam Twine
Geoffrey Bott
Marie Annick Jube

1. Welcome and introductions

Rebecca welcomed those present at the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Minutes of previous meeting (held on 23rd January 2018)

The minutes of last year's AGM were approved as a true record (proposed by Melanie Breakspear and seconded by Dave Breakspear). There were no matters arising.

3. General report

Karen, Centre Manager, gave her annual report. The report focussed on our values as an organisation and on the strategic plan moving forward. In addition, it highlighted the achievements and progress made throughout the year of 2018.

2018 has been a year to cement an effective management structure. This has been achieved by the creation of a new Employment Coach role, by engaging a new Centre Manager, Garden Manager and Administrator and by increasing Key Worker provision to three days a week.

Behind the scenes at Root&Branch there have been two new trustees coming on board, bringing different skills to the board (and recent new expressions of interest). The website is now updated monthly with approved Trustee minutes so that the board can operate more transparently.

Karen noted that key challenges this year had been changes to data protection legislation (new General Data Protection Regulations) and a greater emphasis on Safeguarding from the Charity Commission. This has been tackled head on by a complete review of all policies and procedures, by the creation of a volunteer and staff hand book and by updating, rewriting and recirculating the Code of Conduct for staff, volunteers and gardeners.

Site improvements this year have included a new COSHH shed, storage shed, kindling shed and Employment Coach space. 2019 will see plans for an office refurbishment come to fruition, thanks to the Faringdon Rotary, and an upgrade to all the paths around the project. Health and Safety improvements are taking place and a dedicated Health and Safety Officer has been appointed.

Karen talked through many personal achievements that have occurred this year. Root&Branch has helped 36 people. Our service users continue to take on new projects, learn new skills, engage in mainstream activities outside the Project and find employment with the help and support of Root&Branch. The Project also continues to promote physical health and fitness and has supported service users to join the local gym and attend slimming world classes.

Karen emphasised that Root&Branch fills a vital service gap in the local area and thanked all donors, grant providers and volunteers without whom the Project would not exist. The continuation of our Funding from Lloyds has been confirmed for a further 5 years, from now until 2023 – this is wonderful news and a fantastic achievement.

4. Financial Report

Brian Mildenhall provided a summary of the official financial statement for the year 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018, highlighting that Root&Branch continues to be in a very good financial position, despite the fact that the contribution by external fundraisers is down on previous years. The summary is attached to this document.

The full Annual Accounts have been independently checked by an Accountant.

Rebecca thanked Karen and Brian for their reports.

5. Election of trustees

Trustee Carol Redman has stood down from her role because she has moved out of the area. Rebecca thanked Carol for her contribution this year on the board.

Trustees Rebecca Brain and Emma Welch stood down by rotation at the meeting and put themselves forward for re-election.

Two new trustees stood for election: Jessica Day and Lorraine Needham. Both have been co-opted to the board since the last AGM and the current board support their election.

Each trustee up for election at the meeting spoke briefly to the members, highlighting their connection with the charity and the skills they are able to bring to the board of trustees.

Two notices of proxy voting have been received from Geoffrey Bott and Marie Annick Jube, neither of whom were able to attend the meeting.

Rebecca Brain was voted back to the board unanimously by all members.

Emma Welch was voted back to the board unanimously by all members.

Lorraine Needham was voted on to the board unanimously by all members.

Jessica Day was voted on to the board unanimously by all members.

6. Any other business

Melanie Breakspear, from her experience with other organisations, suggested some further fundraising ideas including seeking grants from St James Place and the VINCI Foundation.

Rebecca Brain stated to all members present that there is still a need for volunteers at the Project – especially with skills in horticulture and blacksmith.

Meeting closed at 19.30

Emma Welch

