

Minutes of the M1 2023 Trustees' Meeting

Venue Online MS Teams	Date Tuesday 10th January 2023
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Trustees Present Nick Daisley Emma Welch Svetlina Jeanneret David Atkins Alistaire Knight Ian Matheson Richard Taylor	Also Present Karen English Colin Bell
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Welcome.

Nick welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies. Colin Bell sat in on the meeting for the second time following his expression of interest to become a trustee.

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

Minutes from the Meeting M12 (December 2022) 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

Funding for blacksmith

Karen has asked if the blacksmith can be reinstated for another six-week course at a cost of £500. Karen will liaise with Alistair and investigate whether there are available funds. The trustees discussed the impact of being able to offer this as an activity versus ceramics. No decision can be made until funding is clarified.

Action Karen

Recording our impact

Richard and Karen have been attending *Measuring the Good* workshops, to date, three modules of the course have been completed. This has proved very useful for information regarding ways to record and monitor our service impact. David can join them on the next group call so that information can be ultimately fed into our new strategic plan.

Seven items remain on the Progress Sheet, with actions highlighted, to be reviewed at the next meeting.

See Appendix A

2. Financial Update

Alistaire Presented his financial update. He confirmed that in December the winter fair generated £3000 and other funds received amounted to £1200. The year-to-date accounts, in which the budget had only assumed our contracted funding plus some income from plant sales, is healthier than expected because of other unbudgeted income from donors. The trustees thanked Alistaire for his report and would like to extend their thanks to all who made donations to Root and Branch in 2022.

The year-to-date spending leaves Root and Branch in a good financial position, the forecast shows we will break even by the end of the financial year. However, the board are aware that the ending of our funding stream from Lloyds has presented us with a gap that needs to be filled. For this reason, the professional fundraisers will be asked to seek replacement funding.

3. Operational Review

Karen had circulated her Managers' Report to all the trustees ahead of the meeting. Emma will forward this report to Colin Bell. There were no issues raised for Trustee decision. The recruitment requirements for the staff team are minuted below.

Action Emma

Dates for 2023 events and closures

Karen will circulate dates to trustees. The Project will be closed for a week at Easter and a week in August. The plant sale will be in May and an Open day will be scheduled in September. Once agreed the dates will be published on the website.

Action Karen

4. Governance Policies and Strategy

Safeguarding Annual Review: January – December 2022

Emma gave an annual report to the trustees. The full report is attached to the end of these minutes. Safeguarding remains a priority at Root & Branch and all staff are trained up to the required standard and volunteers are in receipt of the Safeguarding Policy. All staff and volunteers are given the opportunity to voice any concerns at every 'end of day meeting'.

Annual Policy Review

Some policies have been reviewed and are now in draft form. Nick has created a folder in the policy area on drop box for draft amended policies to be uploaded. To date, policies 2 3 4 5 7 9 11 12 and 14 have been reviewed, commented on and uploaded to drop box. Karen, Ian, Alistaire, and Svetlina are all still reviewing policies 1, 6, 8 and 10. Emma is still reviewing the privacy policy #13. Colin has sent some comments and offered to assist Svetlina with the review of policy #1. Emma will e-mail individual trustees with reminders. Once all amended policies have been uploaded to the draft folder, the board will make decisions to update and publish the new documents for 2023.

Action Emma, Ian, Karen, Svetlana and Alistaire

Svetlina, who is reviewing policy#1: *Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers*, raised the issue about the need to have a clause within the policy addressing mental health. The trustees discussed this issue and agreed that a certain amount of resilience and mental well-being is a requirement of taking a job at Root and Branch, this is both for the safety of our service users as well as for the well-being and safety of the member of staff. However, this cannot be defined as a requirement in the recruitment process. Nick will contact Restore to find out what their policy is regarding this matter.

Action Nick

Fundraising Review

Root and Branch has been assigned a new lead from the professional fund-raising organisation, he is visiting Karen at R&B tomorrow, Wednesday 11th January. Nick has already been in contact with him and has been assured that three applications for funding are being drawn up currently and will be ready to proceed by the end of January. Communication from the professional fundraisers is an ongoing issue that Karen is addressing. The trustees asked Karen to specifically remind the professional fundraisers that we are looking for funding to replace the Lloyds grant.

Action Karen

5. Staff and Recruiting

The trustees expressed their sadness at receiving the resignation of Karen the Centre Manager. Karen has been involved at Root and Branch for six years and has led the organisation through a particularly difficult time during the Covid pandemic. The trustees would like to thank Karen for her huge commitment to work and dedication at the organisation over the years. Karen has agreed to stay at Root and Branch and work a longer notice so that her replacement can be recruited and inducted.

There is also a vacancy for a professional gardener / therapeutic horticulture specialist / nature lead for the garden.

It was agreed that the vacant roles at Root and Branch will be advertised both internally and externally as soon as possible. Karen will start to work on advertisements for the new jobs. Nick and Emma with the help of the staff at R&B will review and update job descriptions. After trustee discussion it was decided that the salaries will be advertised as full time equivalent annual salaries based on working a 40-hour week. An element of an annual pay rise will be incorporated into the salary offers and each job will be advertised with a broad range of salary depending on the experience all the applicants.

Action Nick, Emma and Karen

When the job advertisements have been finalised Karen will circulate to all, so that we can spread the word as widely as possible with each trustee using their own networks. We will also advertise in local publications, job centres, online and on Facebook, and Karen will investigate placing advertisements on forums such as charityjobs.com. Karen will also talk to Fatima, the social media volunteer, about ways to best use social media for advertising job vacancies. Karen and Nick both plan to use their contacts within the Oxfordshire mental health partnership and Restore to advertise. Depending on the numbers of and suitability of applications received this month, the board may consider using a recruitment specialist particularly for the centre manager role. Alistaire recommended a budget of £2000 to advertise.

Action all

Karen will deal with internal communication about staff changes this week and next.

Action Karen

6. Date of Next Meeting

Date of next meeting will be February 14th at 6.30pm on MS Teams.

Action Emma

Rolling Agenda Items for the February Board meeting:

- **Staffing & Pay Review (Alistaire/Emma)**
- **Strategic Plan Update and Review (David)**

The March Meeting on Tuesday 14th March will be held on site at Root & Branch Westmill.

Root And Branch Westmill Safeguarding Report Jan – Dec 2022

Emma Welch became safeguarding lead on the board in 2022 and has completed the Level 3 Safeguarding Adults Course

The Centre Manager also remains up to date with Safeguarding Training to level 3.

All other staff members are trained in safeguarding to level 2.

New member of staff: Beth Jewell, started in November 2022 has completed the Level 2 training.

In 2021 the term vulnerable adults was replaced with either 'Adults with health and care needs' or 'Adults with support and care needs'. It is recognised that all our service users fit into this terminology and need to be protected from different kinds of abuse. The guidelines are fully laid down in our Safeguarding Policy (Pol-007). The policy was reviewed in January 2022 by Ian Matheson and Emma Welch, checked by Karen English and approved in February 2022.

Karen English updates the trustee board monthly on any safeguarding concerns as part of her monthly managers' report. Between Jan and December 2022 there were two safeguarding concerns reported:

In January 2022 an indirect concern was recorded and reported to the Wiltshire safeguarding team – this issue was dealt with and is no longer of concern.

In August 2022 a safeguarding concern was reported to the Swindon Safeguarding team. This issue remains ongoing. Karen English keeps monitoring the situation along with colleagues on the Swindon team and feels comfortable that the issue is being dealt with suitably.

The Safeguarding Policy (Pol-007) is given to all new volunteers and staff at Root and Branch. Staff and volunteers are regularly reminded of the importance to report any issue that they may feel is of concern, no matter how small an issue. The policy of 'See it, Hear it, Report it' is in constant use. The staff use the end of the day de-brief meeting to give all volunteers an opportunity to report.

The Safeguarding Policy is being reviewed for 2023 by Emma Welch. The current Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Matrix is incorporated into our policy to ensure that all reporting channels are correct, easy to use and up to date.