



Root & Branch
Westmill Farm
Watchfield
Oxfordshire
SN6 8TH

Minutes of Annual General Meeting – for the year 2021

Tuesday 12th October 2021 held remotely online on ZOOM at 6:30 pm

Present

Karen English, Centre Manager
Lorraine Needham, Chair of the Trustee Board
Emma Welch, Trustee
Nick Daisley, Trustee
Brian Mildenhall, Member
Kathryn Worthington, Trustee
Clare Hickman, Member
Rosemary Wheeler, Staff
Svetlina Jeannerett, Member and applicant to join the trustee board
Diana Nettleton, Member
Jill Petersons, Member
David Atkins, Member and applicant to join the trustee board
Adam Twine, Founder Member and Patron
Alistaire Knight, Member and applicant to join the trustee board
Nicola Milner, Staff
Marie-Annick Jube, Member
Michael East, Member

Apologies:

Rebecca Brain
Ian Matheson
Yvonne Castellano

1. Welcome and opening remarks

Karen English and Lorraine Needham welcomed those present at the meeting.

In her opening remarks, Lorraine explained that the decision to hold this meeting online was, once again, born of necessity. It is our hope that we will be able to hold a face-to-face AGM in 2022.

Lorraine acknowledged, on behalf of the trustee board, Karen and the staff team and thanked them for all their hard work this year. Lorraine also thanked Jess Day – our retiring trustee who has decided to step down from the role. Jess has been a trustee for three years and has contributed a great deal to the board whilst in post.

2. Minutes of previous meeting (held October 13th 2020)

The minutes of last year's AGM were approved as a true record: proposed by Lorraine Needham and seconded by Brian Mildenhall. There were no matters arising.

3. General report

Karen, Centre Manager, gave her annual report. She described how the service had changed through out the year to meet the demands and the restrictions of the pandemic. Karen's priority had been the safety of our service users, staff and volunteers throughout; and the service offered has reflected this. Whilst in lockdown, staff worked hard to support our service users remotely. Once open again – outdoor activities were offered at the Project and it was a pleasure to welcome people back on site, into the garden.

Throughout the year the garden has remained at the heart of the therapeutic activities offered at Root & Branch and Karen showed a video that showcased some beautiful artwork that has been produced in the garden this year. The video also showed the construction of the new 'Log Cabin' classroom which is now being used for a horticultural course and for adult literacy classes amongst other things.

Karen described how she was immensely proud of all the service users, staff and volunteers for how they had coped and for all they had achieved, given the very difficult circumstances of the year. Karen showed a short clip of a service user and her personal journey to beat the loneliness and isolating effects of the lockdown.

Now and moving forward, Root and Branch is back open offering a full range of activities on three days a week, whilst still offering some remote support for service users who remain unable to come on site. There are future plans to increase referrals to the Project by introducing a self-referral process and Karen's future plans will engage with the local community and once again increase the local profile of Root & Branch.

Karen thanked her staff team and a dedicated team of volunteers and trustees, she thanked Adam Twine and all of the funders and partners who work closely to support Root & Branch.

4. Financial Report

Brian Mildenhall provided a summary of the official financial statement for the year 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021, highlighting that Root&Branch continues to be in a good financial position. The summary is at the end of this document.

The full Annual Accounts have been independently checked by an accountant and can be viewed on our website.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are reflected in this year's accounts and, having received two significant pandemic-related donations, we are immensely thankful to report that Root & Branch remains in a very secure financial position.

Brian thanked all our donors large and small. He also drew our attention to the just giving page (accessible from our website) and to **Amazon Smile**, which continues to raise funds for us via the usage of members who have selected 'Root&Branch' as their nominated charity in their **Amazon Smile** Account.

5. Employment Coach Report

Rosemary Wheeler, the Employment Coach, presented to the members. She described the many-pronged approach to Recovery Coaching at Root & Branch. The service users at Root & Branch are supported in many ways: from the promotion of their physical health through smoking cessation advice and healthy eating to support with housing and benefits.

Rosie's work has been all encompassing: sourcing support for personal development and confidence building courses as well as promoting volunteering opportunities. She has facilitated our service users to engage with the wider community, liaising with other voluntary and statutory organisations. She described how she helps individuals develop an exit strategy for their recovery journey.

Rosie stressed that whilst she has the job title of employment coach, all the staff at the Project assist in this recovery coaching service that has become a very vital and instrumental part of the therapeutic work at Root & Branch.

Lorraine thanked Karen, Rosie and Brian for their reports.

6. Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Update

- At the AGM in 2020, the Board asked members to vote on resolutions to support the conversion of Root & Branch to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
- The members voted and agreed with the recommendation to amend the Articles of Association and the recommendation that the application for CIO status be submitted to the Charity Commission.
- Following further review in the context of the current demands on the Board and Root & Branch, and with input from the Charity Commission, the Board, this year has concluded that, while these changes and conversion may be progressed in the future at a suitable time, the amendment to the Articles of Association and subsequent conversion to CIO should not be progressed at this time.

The Board, therefore advised members that these changes have not been made, that the special resolutions have not been adopted and that the conversation to CIO has been suspended.

7. Election of trustees

Trustees Emma Welch and Jess Day stood down by rotation at the meeting. Jess Day has decided not to stand for re-election. Emma Welch was put forward for re-election. Emma was proposed by Lorraine Needham, seconded by Brian Mildenhall, and voted back to the board by the members present.

8. Any Other Business

Members present thanked Karen and Lorraine for putting on a thoughtful and informative meeting.

Clare thanked Root & Branch for providing a supportive therapeutic environment for her and for being a big part of her recovery journey. Clare has now left Root&Branch and moved on, she is engaged in her own community projects and looking to volunteer at similar charities in the area. It was lovely to hear her personal story, thank you Clare for sharing it.

Meeting closed at 19.30

Minutes prepared by Emma Welch

13th October 2021

Root & Branch Annual General Meeting, September 2021

Treasurer's report for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

This report covers the twelve months to 31 March 2021. The full accounts are available to view at the meeting and this report highlights key aspects. For ease of reading I have rounded some figures.

R&B continues to be in a very good financial position.

For the twelve months to 31 March 2021 our income rose to **£114,684** and our spending understandably reduced to **£92,156**. Our reserves increased to **£87,891**.

The contract with Restore gave us £36,425. The external fundraisers (who approach national foundations on our behalf) raised £24,300 before costs from 17 donations, which was a little less than last year; it's worth remembering how variable this source of income can be.

Lloyds Bank Foundation continued their funding of £21,000 to specifically support our staff structure. They also generously supported us with a "pandemic support" donation of £9,500. We also received pandemic related support of £14,500 from the Charities Aid Foundation Resilience Fund.

Our own sales generated less than normal (£2,000) due to the pandemic closure. This source of income is expected to return this year as the events organised and supported by staff, volunteers and gardeners are important. The trustees wish to acknowledge the tremendous effort that goes into these events and to thank everyone for all their support.

Other donations and support were received from a number of individuals, Amazon Smile and through online giving.

I normally comment on the operational cost of our service, but this year we have understandably spent far less on normal activities. Looking ahead the trustees expect this to remain at around £95,000, which equates to just under £45 for each available daily place at R&B. That's £9 per hour per person. Excellent value.

Notable expenses include staffing and national insurance (£66,400); rent, electricity, insurances and accountancy (£10,900); garden, woodwork, forge and craft supplies (£700); other (£1,380) and fundraising costs (£9,700); depreciation of the new 'dining' room (£3,000).

We are fortunate to have excellent staff and volunteers; we are very appreciative of their dedication, expertise and hard work especially during this very difficult year. We benefit enormously from the support of many volunteers, which does not show in the accounts, but is a vital and special contribution.

Brian Mildenhall, Treasurer, September 2021.