

Minutes of the M9 2024 Trustees' Meeting

Venue Root & Branch Westmill Farm & Online MS Teams	Date Tuesday 3 rd September 2024 6.30 pm
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Trustees Present Richard Taylor Emma Welch Nick Daisley Colin Bell Rosie Wheeler David Atkins	Also Present Tanya Parkinson Martyn Cooper Carolyn Place Vicki Silk
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Welcome

David welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Neil Griffiths and Alistaire Knight.

Martyn Cooper attended a meeting for the fourth time following his expression of interest to join the board. Carolyn Place attended a meeting for the third time following her expression of interest to join the board. David welcomed Vicki Silk who attended a meeting for the first time following her expression of interest to join the board.

1. Minutes of the previous trustee meeting

The draft minutes of the Meeting M8 (August 2024) were agreed and ratified as accurate by trustees present, they can be saved and published on the website.

Action Emma

Matters Arising.

All volunteers have been sent online links to complete level 1 safeguarding training. Tanya reported that she is collating a file to track the progress of all volunteers with this training.

Insurance: Emma has requested an updated quote, taking on board all comments from previous meetings, to make sure that the insurance covers all our needs for another year. A revised quote has been received from Zurich which the trustee will accept for another year. However it is agreed that the clause about passwords on IT equipment must be reworded or removed. David suggests an addendum to the policy, because our IT Support Provider now does not recommend that passwords are changed every 90 days. Instead the use of the authenticator app is now considered to be more secure.

Emma will go back to the IT support company to confirm this and then go back to the insurance company to ask that the policy document be amended to reflect our current good practice.

Action Emma

Website/Branding:

Tanya has received all votes for the new strap line. 'A Place to Grow' has been selected.

Nick and Sarah have met to discuss moving forward with bringing the website up to date. Nick has circulated a report. Richard commented to bring attention to the use of mobile phones and to the SEO.

Emma will connect Nick and Amy Malloy via email.

Action Emma

Three items remain on the Progress Sheet for review and update next month:

See Appendix A for Actions.

2. Financial Update

Finance Report

Tom Case has produced the accounts for 2023/2024 and sent the draft copy to the board for signing off. The draft accounts have been circulated to all. All trustees to make any comments via email by the end of the week (September 6th), then the accounts will be signed off and returned to Tom for publishing.

Action All

Sarah is now using the new cash book for the current financial year. Tanya reported that current project spend is on track according to the annual budget.

The finances are currently in a healthy state, with significantly more than our required reserves in the bank.

Emma has contacted Tom Case he has linked us to a charity book keeper should we need to engage the services of someone to help support the office. Tom agreed that adopting a system that uses accountancy software like Xero was an option for our organisation.

Tanya and Rachel have worked incredibly hard and have been successful in achieving the Thrive Grant from OCF. This is a grant of £75,000 over three years. The board extend their huge appreciation for this piece of work and thank the stake holders at OCF for their continued support.

3. Governance, Policies, Strategy

Trustees Annual Report

The report is required to be published with the accounts and filed with Companies House. Richard is working on this using the template from previous reports. Nick has offered to help with this process, which will be actioned this week. David has offered to proof read.

Action Richard Nick David

Preparation for the AGM

The board agreed the agenda for the Annual General Meeting:

- Welcome and Introductions – Richard – 5 minutes
- Minutes of the last AGM – Emma – 5 minutes
- General Report – Tanya – 10 minutes

- Financial Report – David – 5 minutes. David agreed to field any questions from members that arise from the published accounts.
- Next Steps in The Garden – Kate – 10 minutes
- Election of Trustees – Emma – 10 minutes.

Ahead of the election of trustees Emma will explain that Ian had retired earlier in the year and a presentation will be made to Ian to thank him for his years of service. The trustees agreed that a gift would be appreciated most if it had been made at Root and Branch. Emma will liaise with Tanya about this during the course of the month.

Action Emma

Three trustees will step down by rotation, according to our constitutional requirements. These will be Alistaire Knight, David Atkins and Nick Daisley. Alistaire will be stepping down and is not up for re-election. Emma will thank Alistaire for his three years of service as our finance trustee. Both Nick and David will be put forward for re-election to the board.

During the election of trustees, the two new trustees Martyn and Carolyn will be introduced to members and will each say a few words about themselves. Carolyn and Martyn also agreed to send a short paragraph of introduction to Emma to be included in the invitation to members.

Action Martyn and Carolyn

Emma has produced a draft Notice and Invitation. She will make some changes and circulate the draft to the board before sending it to members. The notice must be sent out to members before the 16th September 2024. Current membership is 52. This includes all volunteers, trustees and members who have attended an AGM in the last three years. As written in our constitution, any member who has not been in touch or been to an AGM in three years ceases to be a member. Emma will update the membership.

Action Emma

Emma and Rosie will arrive for the AGM at 5.30pm to help set it up.

Trustee Recruitment

The position of treasurer is being advertised widely, on our local networks, at Nationwide and within Zurich in Swindon. Emma has emailed the advertisement to all on the mailing list. Richard has used the Reach Volunteering network and has contacted a potential finance trustee who is visiting Root and Branch this week on Thursday.

DBS Update

DBS checks for volunteers are free of charge, however finding a company to provide the service comes with a small cost. Sarah C has been working to find a source that is the best value for money. Sarah will work thorough the current volunteers to bring DBS checks up to date following guidelines that checks should be repeated every 3 years. DBS checks for new volunteers and new trustees will also be prioritised.

Charity Risk Register

David has brought the Charity Risk Register up to date. He has clarified the definition of low/medium/high risk. He will circulate this to all trustees, asking that everyone looks over his headlines and confirms that the impact and likelihood of each looks appropriate for Root & Branch. He asked for comment this month.

Action David and All

Policy Review

Rosie has completed the review and update of the Recruitment Policy. Richard has completed the review and update of the Trustee Handbook. There were no further comments to either Policy via email or at the meeting. These Policies have been published as 2024 editions and stored online.

See Appendix A

4. Operational Review

Tanya had circulated a managers report to the board. There has been lots of progress on the premises this month, with the kitchen project being completed. The kitchen is in use has been received very enthusiastically.

Tanya has completed required staff reviews and Emma will write to Rachel following the successful completion of her probationary period. Emma will inform payroll of changes to be made for September.

Action Emma

The Branching Out Programme is being rolled out gently and appropriately by the staff team. This is a sensitive programme, but is being managed brilliantly by the staff. The trustee board are fully supportive of this roll out.

David asked about reporting. Tanya is currently in discussion with Restore about the levels of reporting required by the Mental Health Partnership.

Our landlord Adam is passing management of the farm to a successor. Ed will be invited to become a member of Root and Branch and invited to the AGM

Action Emma

The family event planned for the 6th Sept has been cancelled due to lack of take up. Instead Participants will be invited with a family member to attend the Winter Fayre an hour earlier, for a quiet time before we open to the public.

The board thanked Tanya for her report this month and had no further questions.

5. Date of Next Meeting

Date of next meetings will be:

The Annual General Meeting will be Tuesday **8th October 2024**, At Root and Branch.

This will be followed by a board meeting for trustees only, to assign roles.

The meeting in November will be on Monday 11th November at 6.30 pm. This will be at Westmill but also streamed online on MS Teams.