

Minutes of the M12 2024 Trustees' Meeting

<p>Venue Root & Branch Office and Online on MS Teams</p>	<p>Date Tuesday 10th December 2024 6.30 pm</p>
<p>Trustees Present Colin Bell Neil Griffiths Rosie Wheeler Richard Taylor Carolyn Place Martyn Cooper Nick Daisley</p>	<p>Also Present Tanya Parkinson Vicki Silk Crispian Denby</p>

Welcome.

Richard welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from David Atkins and Emma Welch.

Vicki Silk had attended three meetings since her expression of interest to join the trustee board. Richard proposed to co-opt Vicki on to the board of trustees, this was seconded by Neil and the proposal was adopted.

Crispian Denby attended the board meeting for the second time following his expression of interest to join the trustee board.

1. Minutes of the previous trustee meeting

The minutes from the Meeting M11 (November 2024) were agreed and ratified as accurate by trustees present, these can be published on the website.

Action Emma

Matters Arising

Yvonne communicated to several trustees that she was honoured to have been made a patron of the charity. Rosie is continuing to look into the planting of roses in the garden for our three patrons.

Action Rosie

Nick has been reviewing the cost of utilities with a view to achieving a reduction by negotiating with current suppliers and/or exploring cheaper future options. Nick will continue to investigate options relating to telephone and electricity suppliers.

Action Nick

2. Operational Review

Health and Safety

Nick updated on investigations into the requirements to ensure the safety of equipment in the woodwork area. Nick's contact advised that for insurance purposes, we need someone qualified to conduct a review and suggested that we contact specialist companies. Nick is continuing to look into this to determine what is required and the cost of a review. In parallel Vicki will consult a contact who runs a wood turning workshop in Highworth to find out how he ensures the safety of machines. Richard will also follow up with Ian to gather information about the processes that he used.

Tanya is considering closing the workshop in so far as machines are being used (the use of power and hand tools can continue) until we can be sure that the machines are H&S compliant. It was noted that this would likely be met with a negative reaction which would have to be managed, but it is essential to ensure the safety of those using the equipment.

Action Tanya/Nick/Richard/Vicki

Attendance Report

Tanya reported on Attendance and answered a number of questions raised by trustees by email:

1. Do we have a target against which attendance is measured?
 - a. We don't. We don't have a formal target from Restore but 50% is a Partnership target. Tanya aims for 60% which is based on the percentage that research indicates is required to obtain therapeutic benefit.
2. Is our location a strength or a weakness?
 - a. Both - it is a strength in that there are very few services offered to those in rural communities, people in these communities can be the hardest to reach and research shows that they are at risk from isolation.
 - b. The challenge is reaching those in rural communities and having the resources to enable them to access Root & Branch.
3. Number of sessions
 - a. These have increased, we were averaging 120 per month, over the previous six months to March 2023. During April -Oct 2024 this increased to 153.
 - b. Attendance previously sat at around 55-60% and is now significantly higher. (71% over the last 3 months). The amount of unexplained absence is also now much lower.
4. General points
 - a. 3 participants are moving on and staff are supporting these changes. Branching out is going well.
 - b. There are several referrals in the pipeline, it was noted that not all referrals result in conversions.
 - c. There is an open question about whether we benchmark against Bridewell.
 - d. We would like a minibus.

Tanya shared a wonderful poem written about Root & Branch by a participant in response to a request for feedback. The participant has given their permission for the work to be used in a pack to be put together for new participants. There was discussion around permissions required to use similar works on social media and it was noted that this was best obtained on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion of the Fire Action plan was rolled over to the next meeting.

Tanya advised that safeguarding procedures are being audited. A response is required by February which will then be peer reviewed in March with any issues identified being followed up after this. It was noted that our procedures are in a healthy position.

Fundraising

Great news on the fundraising front, Tanya provided details of:

1. a local company who will donate £750. *FiveAndCo*
2. Sparsholt have not come back yet (but this will be a sizeable amount). They are visiting on Tuesday 17th December.
3. Oxfordshire Community Foundation will donate £20,000 over 2 years.
4. Wiltshire Trust awarded £15,000 over 3 years.

Christmas Fair - the target to raise was £3,670 (amount raised last year) and this year's fair raised £4,100. There was a lower footfall than last year but overall, a lovely feel to the day.

JustGiving – Carolyn raised the option of considering the upgraded (paid) version of JustGiving and it was noted that this has potential to benefit and will be reconsidered at a later date.

Other News

- Rachel attended the Oxfordshire Community Foundation evening last week which was attended by both donors and donees and was given an opportunity to present at a future event.
- Root & Branch business cards have been printed – not name specific.
- Tanya shared the video produced by Fiscal for Root & Branch, the video is on SharePoint and Tanya will share a link so that trustees can provide feedback.

3. Financial Update

Neil agreed to share forms relating to Gift Aid for Tanya to explore whether there is benefit for Root & Branch.

Action Neil

Xero

Crispian updated on the progress of the Xero project, which is going well, it was noted that the system is user friendly and will provide the functionality that Root & Branch requires.

Sarah has been helping to enter data manually and Richard and Megan will continue to work on this.

Action Crispian and Richard

3. Governance, Policies, Strategy

Risk Register

Risk: "Flooding" Tanya advised that flood defences had held up during the recent storm. There is a plan being put together to move the log store which will require a significant team effort.

Action Tanya

Risk : 'Loss of premises' Emma has shared the lease with Vicki who will look over it to see if other mitigating factors can be introduced.

Action Vicki

The division of responsibility for policies in 2025 will be discussed at the next meeting and it was noted that a death procedure was a gap that needs filling.

Action Trustees

It was noted that volunteer training is required (both initial training and rolling/refreshers training). There will be a session in mid-January that will be open to volunteers and trustees (it will also be possible to join by Teams. Tanya to provide details.

Action Tanya

Working Patterns

It was noted that Tanya and Sarah are giving a lot of their own time to Root & Branch beyond their contractual hours. There is a concern that this is not sustainable and needs to be addressed.

Action Tanya/Trustees

5. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Monday 13th January.

The meeting in February 2025 was agreed: Tuesday 11th February.