

Trustees' meeting

Draft minutes to be approved at the trustees' meeting in May 2014

February 10th 2014

Present - Jen, Erwan, Andreas, Nina, (trustees) Kate (minute taker)
Apologies - Gordon (chair)

Agenda

Format of trustee meeting

2013 annual report
Delineation of trustee roles
Redrafting constitution
Admin role
Review of current documents
Other trustee positions
AOB

| format of trustee meeting

The trustees agreed that the trustees' meeting should be a meeting in public - anyone who wishes to attend can, but only the trustees and anyone they have specifically invited can take part in the discussion
The minutes should be circulated amongst the trustees and published online. Minutes should be approved at the start of the next meeting and any amendments added and noted.

It was agreed that there should be a roving chair for the meetings, but that one trustee should be chosen to be the overall lead. Members have not yet chosen this chair.

Meetings would be held in individuals' houses or in the cabin during the summer months

To allow for the need to approve accounts and accommodate the AGM, the trustees set the following provisional dates for the meetings over the next twelve months

12th May 2014 - chaired by Andreas

8th September 2014 - chaired by Erwan

10th November 2014 chaired by Nina

9th February 2015 chaired by Jen

The trustees meeting in November will coincide with budget setting for the following year.

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The meeting in February will allow the approval of accounts and the chair's report prior to the AGM which will provisionally be on 21st February 2015.

The trustees agreed that at the beginning of the meetings any matters arising from the monthly meetings should be dealt with. The trustees are responsible for reading through the minutes of the monthly meetings and noting any points that should be added to the trustees' agenda.

Dates of the meetings should be published on the website

Andreas has been asked to take responsibility for publishing to the website

Annual report 2013

Erwan summarised the content of his chair's and funding report

Achievements

- Becoming a charity
- Achieving aims - enhancing infrastructure, (composting toilet, boundary, renovating ruin) contact with other community groups, (London Met University project, Mind sessions, participating in research run by Westminster University) events to bring the community together (four successful events, Newham Mayor's Show)
- gaining awards with RHS

Areas that remain a challenge

- Admin
- Appointing freelance admin support

Nina suggested that Erwan added the involvement of all the members who support the gardens which we elicited at the AGM

Lydia has prepared visuals for the report. It was suggested that the FOAG website should be referenced as a source of more information and pictures

Erwan will circulate the draft to the trustees and the agreed final version will be published on the website.

Erwan to complete draft and circulate to the trustees. Everyone to comment. Erwan to complete final version and Andreas to publish on website.

Delineation of trustee roles

Nina listed the roles of trustees and the group discussed the way that they relate to FOAG

legal and financial duties

following company and charity law, prudent financial management, setting budgets, overseeing funding applications appointing cheque signatories, insuring there is adequate insurance

*rather than cheques we use a debit card which Hamish holds - he provides receipts for expenses.
bank details need to be changed now and new signatories chosen (currently Erwan, Ashley and Dasha)*

Erwan to arrange appointment with bank

Employment responsibility

Defining employment policy, managing way freelancers are used, approving job descriptions

Trustees organise contracts and job specs

The chair is responsible to the trustees. The chair should manage the work of the freelancers and volunteers.

Trustees felt that managing voluntary posts is difficult, because there is no contract. Hamish generally works autonomously as the expert in his field, but occasionally needs questions answered by the chair, for example around spending money on tools and other equipment.

This needs further discussion

Policy and planning

Trustees make sure charity is moving in the right direction ,and create a business plan

These are both actions FOAG trustees would expect to take

Advocacy

Trustees represent and are ambassadors for the charity. They are enthusiastic about the charity and also provide a listening point for members and others

Actions FOAG trustees would expect to take

Appoint additional trustees to the board

The trustees discussed this more fully at the end of the meeting.

Set up working parties to deal with or report on specific Issues

The trustees felt that this could be useful in the future

Redrafting constitution

The constitution needs to be redrafted because of the separation of management and trustee roles.

It was agreed that Erwan and Andreas will work on this, keeping flexibility with clarity.

Nina would continue to work on FOAG becoming an incorporated charity.

It was agreed that the trustees would aim for incorporated status by June. An EGM would need to be called for May.

Erwan and Andreas to work on constitution

Nina to work on incorporated charity status

Membership it was agreed that membership of FOAG should be annual, renewable at each AGM. This allows for previous membership forms to be shredded, protecting data, and makes sure that membership lists are current.

Admin appointment

The trustees discussed the potential job spec for this role. They agreed that the job should involve some fundraising, but there were difficulties in pinning down the exact job description and the number of hours and the appropriate pay.

It was agreed to look at the job descriptions of similar posts at Dalston Curve and Bonnydowns

Jen agreed to create a draft job description and circulate it to the trustees with the job description finalised for the March meeting, so that recruitment can begin.

The trustees also need to draw up short listing criteria

A question has been raised as to whether the trustees are a legal entity and are therefore able to enter into contracts. Nina will check this.

Jen to research and create a draft job description to circulate to trustees. JD to be finalised for the March meeting

Trustees to draw up short listing criteria

Nina to check on legal status of the trustee body

Review of current documents

Contract with Hamish - Nina will review Hamish's contract with him, looking at the use of his admin hours and seeing if these can be better allocated to background work such as ordering and picking up equipment, or more gardening hours.

Health and safety policy - Given her experience in the area the trustees have asked Kate to draw up a health and safety policy, liaising with Hamish. Draft will be ready by the March meeting

Equal opportunities policy - it was pointed out that equal opportunities are embedded in our aims as a charity, but it was felt it might be worth having a defining policy to share with members and volunteers and also with funders. Nina will look at this.

Nina to review Hamish's contract with him

Nina to look at equal opportunities policy

Kate to prepare draft health and safety policy

Other trustee positions

Nina had a list of useful skills in trustees. It was agreed that FOAG needed

- legal skills
- horticultural prestige
- fundraising experience

- a councillor

Andreas is going to approach a lawyer friend, Polly, and also Seb from Capital Growth who has horticultural prestige.

It was agreed that while it would not be possible for Liz Shearer to become a trustee, because of her role it would be a good idea to invite her to trustees meetings from time to time, particularly as the lease is renewable in August

Andreas to contact Seb and Polly

AOB

Agreeing the budget for the year - Erwan is going to circulate the budget details to the trustees and chair

Official handover - it was thought it would be helpful for Erwan, Andreas and Gordon to meet so that the chair's role can be officially handed over and previous experience shared. Kate will minute the meeting.

Travel expenses for trustees to attend meetings - it was agreed that it would be hard to give expenses to trustees for travel because the amount given for free by others (eg design work, baking) - would make it hard to know what expenses would count as claimable ones. The trustees therefore felt it would be easier and fairer to say no expenses for anyone.

Erwan to circulate budget details to trustees and chair

Erwan Andreas and Gordon to arrange a meeting. Kate to attend to minute.

Agenda for next meeting

Delineation of roles

Election of a chair for the trustees

Progress of admin appointment

CIO legal issues

Progress in review of current documents

Progress in recruitment of trustees

Renewal of lease

AOB

The next meeting will be held provisionally on Monday 12th May, with Andreas chairing. Venue to be decided

Actions

Andreas has been asked to take responsibility for publishing to the website

Erwan to complete draft and circulate to the trustees. Everyone to comment. Erwan to complete final version and Andreas to publish on website Erwan and Andreas to work on constitution

Nina to work on incorporated charity status

Jen to research and create a draft job description to circulate to trustees. JD to be finalised for the March
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meeting

Trustees to draw up short listing criteria

Nina to check on legal status of the trustee body

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