

## Notes of Transition Network Trustees Meeting 16th February 2021

Present: Hilary, Peter, Darren, Anna

Apologies:

In attendance: Nicola, Julia, Leanna

### **Roles:**

Chair: Peter (first half), Hilary (second half)

Time: Anna

Record: Julia/ (Leanna)

Heart: Hilary

Assumed knowledge/jargon-watch: All

### **Action points collected from meeting:**

Who	Action	Done	Outcome/Notes
Trustee Compliance Link	To gather all action points at the start of the notes in future, as well as in the actions document.		
Amber	Trustees suggest a review of the pros and cons of the TN office in Totnes.	Under way	
Nicola	To feedback to Yaz and follow up on trade mark infringement.	Done	Trade Mark infringement successfully resolved
HR decision-making group	HR decision-making group to help pick up on wellbeing issues, particularly related to Covid lockdown.		
HR decision-making group	HR decision-making group to follow on from budget scenarios discussion, see how we could best prepare to ask if anyone wants to shrink their capacity/hours (if needed).		
Trustee Compliance Link	Ensure we have more time on future agendas for the risk register item - 20-25 minutes?		Keep on the list for future agenda setting
Darren	Darren proposes to produce a more substantial report on reserves targets for a future trustee meeting.		Autumn Trustees Meeting
Nicola	to doodle for a date for trustees to meet towards the end of March to review the financial situation after we hear from The National Lottery Community Fund.	Done	Meeting 1st April
All	Once a year trustees will do one to one reflections with each other as this is really useful.	Done - see below	

Peter	Edit and prepare trustee recruitment pack, circulating to relevant roles including Yaz and incorporating feedback. Aiming for publication 24th February, deadline 11th April.	Done	On website
All	Review edited recruitment pack once circulated, offering edits and suggestions.	Done	On website
Julia	Julia to doodle for trustee recruitment sub-group to meet to discuss process for deadline, short-listing, interviews.	Done	
Hilary	Hilary will send a doodle poll to schedule a first “two-way” evaluation role review for a trustee, as an experiment. To be determined whether this is for an individual or the group of trustees as a whole.	Done and process in place for future sessions	

### **Any conflicts of interest for this meeting**

None

### **Actions from November 2020 meeting**

- Discuss partnering with hub or hubs to access EU funding - this is more of a long-term consideration to go into funding strategy rather than continue as action point here.

Others which are discussed later in this meeting:

- Anna to write suggestions about sociocratic peer review process for trustees
- Hilary to pursue conversation about elders group

### **Acceptance of Notes from November 2020 meeting**

Suggestion that we notice & clarify when an action hasn't been allocated to a person.

**Action: Trustee compliance link: To gather all action points at the start of the notes in future, as well as in the actions document.**

The notes of the November 2020 trustees meeting were agreed and accepted.

## **Heart Circle Lead Link update**

Some of the news:

- Two members of staff reducing their hours
- Held budget scenarios discussion
- Trade Mark challenge
- Transition: Bounce Forward What Next? Summit coming up
- Nice collaboration starting with Transition Town Totnes to support their updating of Transition Streets:
- Heart Circle strategy meeting going to be held, looking at 2021 Areas of Focus
- Rob just ending a virtual tour in France including Mayors of cities
- Inner Transition circle launching a series of opportunities for connection
- Training for Transition mid-way through 6 webinars
- Online Transition training happening in UK, Belgium, Switzerland
- Introduction to Transition Towns webinar held by Transition Japan and Transition Australia, for southern hemisphere

## **Trustee approval of Primary Circle decision at January gathering**

In January 2021 the primary circle agreed these areas of focus for Transition Network for 2021:

TN's primary intention for this year is to...

**Move through reflection to the co-design, resourcing and implementation of strategic interventions, which respond to this time of accelerating and interconnected crises, in collaboration with people across the Transition movement and the wider ecosystem.**

As part of this, and working with others, the TN team will:

- Support deep exploration of the tensions and possibilities arising from the evaluation process, including active exploration of the Transition movement's relationship with social justice;
- Increase the impact and visibility of distributed governance across our international network, testing resilience and effectiveness as we go;
- Find diverse ways to attract resources into the movement, building capacity across different circles, geographies and levels of scale;
- Support the activation of a virtual collaboration platform for Transitioners working at the international level of scale;
- Identify and make visible the purpose and role/s that TN will seek to fulfil in the next phase of our development, to include separating, and facilitating good governance for, project/s or hub/s in England & Wales;
- Weave and share narratives around the impact of our movement and the transformative potential of core Transition practices.

As we focus on delivering our primary intention, TN will retain capacity to:

- Follow through and maximise the impact of our work
- Support emergence, creativity and wellbeing across our team.

No objections received for this proposal.  
Proposal accepted.

## **Risk Register Overview**

Discussion/reflections:

**Health & Safety and Covid risks:** Coming back to whether we should do a proper review of the office? Overall it isn't used as much as it used to be. There may be other reasons to retain it. Need to review what we are storing there, etc.

**Action: Amber: trustees suggest a review of the pros and cons of the TN office in Totnes.**

**Hack attempts on the website:** is it random or targeted? Is it manageable? **Action: Nicola to ask Sam why many website hack attempts are happening, if it is manageable, likelihood of hack attempts succeeding and whether this needs further action.**

**On Trade Mark infringement:** Could be a risk to reputation, tied with financial uncertainty of future landscape if funders think we are them and vice versa. Need to be seen to defend our IP as otherwise sets a precedent. Trustees think it could cause confusion for people that don't know. Trustees happy to get involved if it helps. Trustees willing to consider paying for legal cease and desist letter, if amicable chat and DIY cease and desist letter don't work.

**Action: Nicola to feedback to Yaz and follow up on trade mark infringement.**

**Staff capacity:** Increased likelihood score on risk register relating to staff capacity. Something we haven't cracked to matching work with capacity levels. Seeing if we can build this into the strategy planning around areas of focus, to find ways forward that are more manageable in some way. Anna: Tendency to run away with new exciting proposals, is there a way to safeguard against that?

**Action: HR decision-making group to help pick up on wellbeing issues, particularly related to Covid lockdown.**

**Action: HR decision-making group to follow on from budget scenarios discussion, see how we could best prepare to ask if anyone wants to shrink their capacity/hours (if needed).**

**Action: Trustee Compliance Link: Ensure we have more time on future agendas for the risk register item - 20-25 minutes?**

Hilary: Might be good to discuss Brexit next time, if there's anything we need to be aware of.

## **Treasurers Report**

**Action: Darren proposes to produce a more substantial report on reserves targets for a future trustee meeting.**

Finance groups looked at 2 scenarios - one if we only receive what we expect to receive from our main funder; secondly the scenario of also getting a significant grant from The National Lottery Community Fund.

In both scenarios we made an assumption of contracts starting 1st April, but this is by no means guaranteed.

As a separate exercise we had a discussion about reserves and what we would need in the result of a disaster scenario in case we need to wind up the organisation - it's useful to establish as a ball park as this allows us an informed discussion about the level of reserves that we can utilise if we ever need to do that.

In both scenarios we eat into the level of reserves. In the optimistic scenario we would be marginally behind our reserves target, We have bigger issues if we only have funding from our main funder. We should have a fairly clear idea of The National Lottery Community Fund position before end of the financial year. Realistically there may be some slippage beyond a 1st April contract start with our main funder.

**Action: Nicola to doodle for a date for trustees to meet towards the end of March to review the financial situation after we hear from The National Lottery Community Fund.**

**Proposal to change bank signatories - removing Sarah McAdam and adding Leanna Jones - and cancelling debit card held by Sarah McAdam.**

No objections.

Proposal accepted.

## **Fundraising Report**

Discussion responding to questions:

Anonymous Foundation - 1 year 'bridging' year - we read the situation that there is the potential for further funding at the other side of the bridge.

KR Foundation - a third grant is unlikely, but it is likely that Municipalities in Transition will ask KR Foundation if we can extend the project timescale and adjust budget allocations.

Hilary: It feels key to start thinking about big longer term funders, particularly international funders. Hilary looked through the current spreadsheet of potential funders and many of them are UK only.

Leanna is working on the start of a Fundraising strategy. Ideally to convene a group of trustees and staff interested in core funding, agree a workplan, divide up some pieces of work, then decide priority orders of action.

Anna: Would like to explore what we can do as trustees, eg. support with strategy, specific pressure points, left-field thinking, What can we do? I need some guidance in how I can be useful. Want to be a resource for where there are questions.

Fundraising might need to go in different geographical directions - eg UK, international etc, and those might need to be held by different groups.

## Annual Salary Review point

Darren: we're not in a very inflationary time, and we currently have financial uncertainty.

**Proposal: Trustees are not in a position to recommend a cost of living salary increase at this time, but will keep this under review during the year and may revisit this decision in the light of future funding changes.**

**Agreed - HR Decision-making group to hold this overview.**

## Trustee Recruitment

Feedback and check in with newer trustees - how is it going?

Anna - some issues with capacity, and sometimes overloaded between similar issues in my work and in this voluntary trustee role. Enjoying being engaged with Julia, Feeling safe having a treasurer. Jargon check is needed - as the only one here whose first language isn't English it would be tricky bringing someone else in whose English wasn't very good. It's very English in cultural terms as well.

Darren - Helpful to know that there will be a lot of work needed at the beginning of the year, and probably another in the summer time. It's daunting knowing that the major funding is coming to an end. Really good that strategy gathering was the first big event after he came on board.

Peter - the exit interviews for Henry and Joe were really useful, it would be good to have similar one-to-one reflections with each other during our time as trustees as well as at the end, ideally as part of a more systematic process,

**Action: Trustees: Once a year trustees will do one to one reflections with each other as this is really useful.**

At the last meeting it was agreed that trustee recruitment would specifically target recruitment of young trustees into a mentoring programme, which would be positive not just for our organisation but also for development work in general. However, currently with only four trustees this brings more pressure on each of those trustees. Our priority now is to recruit new trustees, in more of a standard recruitment process, with a view to diversity. Increasing the number in the trustee group will then give more capacity to look again specifically at a young trustees mentoring programme after that point - consider this again in Autumn/Winter.

Peter proposes edits to the trustee recruitment pack, including asking for the cover letter to answer three questions:

- Why would you like to join?
- Perspective/skills/experience?
- What support would you need?

This would let the applicants define what they will bring, rather than focusing on prior trustee experience. We need and are looking for capacity, enthusiasm, commitment and diversity of perspective.

Peter and Hilary stepped forward to be part of the trustee recruitment sub-group for this round, with Team Wellbeing and Trustee Compliance Link. Darren and Anna are happy to read through shortlist but not be fully involved in the recruitment sub-group.

**Action: Peter - Edit and prepare trustee recruitment pack, circulating to relevant roles including Yaz and incorporating feedback. Aiming for publication 24th February, deadline 11th April.**

**Action: All - review edited recruitment pack once circulated, offering edits and suggestions.**

**Action: Julia to doodle for trustee recruitment sub-group to meet to discuss process for deadline, short-listing, interviews.**

## **Review of Schedule of Matters Reserved for the Trustees**

Anna and Hilary had made comments on the schedule of matters reserved for the trustees.

Keeping up to date with legal issues - Team Wellbeing and HR decision making group are important for the overview of legal obligations.

Peer review of the trustee group, and how do we monitor the function of the primary circle. We have a scheme of delegation - Nicola will circulate this, some things need to be updated.

Anna - thinking about bringing the sociocratic model into the way we do evaluation/role review of the trustees: we could schedule one meeting a year as a two way feedback loop, what do we think is working well, everyone goes around the circle, then what do we think isn't going so well. At the end everyone ends up with a support/ upskilling plan. That's a simple framework to use. If doing it individually, 45 minutes to an hour. More informal, focusing on how we can grow together.

Discussed whether issues held in common could be missed by taking this sequentially and individually; ideas for a group review; can these session be done with an approach of fun and finding out about people rather than heat on one person.

**Action - Hilary will send a doodle poll to schedule a first "two-way" evaluation role review for a trustee, as an experiment. To be determined whether this is for an individual or the group of trustees as a whole.**

## **Engagement of Trustees in 2021 Areas of Focus**

Looking at how Trustees can contribute best to supporting the Areas of Focus, and how TN can make best use of the Trustee's limited time.

- Support deep exploration of the tensions and possibilities arising from the evaluation process, including active exploration of the Transition movement's relationship with social justice;
  - Peter - interested in Evaluation. It's been clear how to input into this so far.

- Increase the impact and visibility of distributed governance across our international network, testing resilience and effectiveness as we go;
  - Anna - definitely interested in how to scale distributed governance and make it more visible
  - Peter - interested in distributed governance across the network and beyond, and potentially linking this with resources, for example, working with members of the team if there is potential to develop and deliver workshops that generate income.
  - Hilary - interested as a potential speaker on shared governance if needed.
- Find diverse ways to attract resources into the movement, building capacity across different circles, geographies and levels of scale;
  - Peter - see above
  - Hilary - Interested and happy to be involved in talking to new funders, discussions about attracting resources, and fundraising in general.
  - Anna - interested in diverse ways to resource Transition, especially from a co-practitioner perspective, co-learning with other networks.
  - Darren - resources will be a big part of my life.
- Support the activation of a virtual collaboration platform for Transitioners working at the international level of scale;
  - Peter - could bring some useful input to this in terms of expertise and skills in online network building.
  - Anna - this is something that's happening in a lot of areas, is there synergy to be checked for (eg Ecolise, GEN and TN all looking at collaboration platforms). For example, what if we used the same backing system to give future opportunities to create linked ecosystems.
- Identify and make visible the purpose and role/s that TN will seek to fulfil in the next phase of our development, to include separating, and facilitating good governance for, project/s or hub/s in England & Wales;
  - Hilary - Very interested in England & Wales development. Getting involved on Nudj.
  - Darren - would be interested to play a part in the England and/or Wales hub development.
- Weave and share narratives around the impact of our movement and the transformative potential of core Transition practices.
  - Peter - could contribute time to creation of online videos and films if needed.
  - Anna - interested in narratives to do with COP 26
  - Darren - would be very interested to contribute if there is ever a plan for an In Transition 3.0 film

Can we feed into the team that those are the initial offers, and that the team knows they can reach out and ask for support time-permitting. Noting that trustees aren't looking to "get in the way" or add to workload - but these are some areas where trustees could offer useful advice, capacity, ideas or collaboration if needed.

### **Elders Group idea - advice session**

We didn't discuss this in the meeting - Hilary has this on her list to speak to Henry and get this moving forward.



## **Review of meeting and check out**

General appreciation for a well prepared and facilitated meeting!

Keeping in mind that next time we will assume people have read the documents, focus on the key points we need feedback on.

Lots of other meetings about funding but we still aren't at the point where some decisions have to be made, continuing to hold our nerve.

Thank you to trustees for ideas and offered contributions to this year's areas of focus.

Nudj platform is for the What's Next? summit - sign up to be a part of that.

Excitement about new trustee recruitment.

And it's still light outside at 5pm :)

Will schedule another meeting, but we will probably meet before that.