

TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Sunday 18th July 2021 at 2pm
Stonehouse Court Hotel



In attendance: Michelle Ryan (MR, Chair), Navin Sehmi (NS, Vice Chair), Andrew Longland (AL, Treasurer), Mike Sankus (MS), Jenny Long (JL), Alan Simson (AS), Jaime Bray (JB), Paul Barton (PB).

Apologies: Alastair Durkin (AD), Keith Sacre (KS), Ian Murat (IM).

Staff: John Parker (JP).

No.	Agenda item	Actions
1	Opening	
1.1	Welcome, signing attendance, conflict of interest Attendee record completed. No conflicts of interest declared	
1.2	Apologies for absence Apologies as listed above	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting	
2.1	Approve the minutes of the previous meeting JB proposed, NS seconded. Approved as circulated.	
2.2	Update on actions from previous meeting 1SR. Written summary of why the AA holds money for NTSG. <i>Summary below, beneath the other updates.</i> 2HB. Depreciation of land – needs to be reversed out in accounts and not continued as a practice going forward. <i>Noted, this will be done going forward</i>	

3HB. Gift aid on subscriptions – limited opportunity as it can only be claimed via personal donations from individuals and where services – i.e. discounted training and membership discounts are not provided. The finance team are to try and ascertain the potential volume/value of subscriptions that may be eligible, with a report to be issued, to the auditors, once completed. *Jess is compiling the data; it is a long process. But we believe the majority of our memberships are paid by companies.*

4HB. The detailed Association accounts are to be circulated to Trustees once final checking had been completed. *This has been emailed to Trustees.*

5HB. It was requested that the membership income for year 2022, received in December 2021, is shown in future cashflow forecasts. *This is now shown in the latest cashflow figures.*

6CEO, 7CEO, 8CEO, 9CEO. eBooks and G&T Sponsorship. *We are arranging an eBook demonstration soon. Once we have all seen it and know it works, we will send a communication to all members, ACs and sponsors to say that there might be some sponsorship opportunities for eBooks and that they should contact us to discuss. G&T are aware that this communication will be going out. Outstanding action: **JP to arrange eBook demonstration.***

1JP

1SR. *The National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) is made up of a broad group of stakeholder organisations that came together in 2007 to address certain issues around the management of tree risk. The Arboricultural Association (AA) is one of those stakeholder organisations. The objective of the group was to address the issues and provide guidance to landowners, duty holders, land management and tree professionals on forming reasonable and proportionate strategies for managing tree risk within the context of the benefits trees provide to society. This included organising a consultation conference in 2008 and, following this, compiling, editing and publishing a Guidance document, 'Common Sense Risk management of Trees', plus accompanying leaflets for Landowners and householders. These publications were launched in 2015, and are available for sale via the Forestry Commission.*

In order to achieve this the AA offered to hold funds which were contributed from a wide range of the stakeholder members, to cover the costs of the project and, since publication, to receive royalty fees from Forestry Commission on sales of the guidance. The sums received are held by the AA, in order to cover incidental NTSG costs, such as the maintenance of the NTSG's website (<https://ntsgroup.org.uk/>). As such, there has been relatively little change to the fund over the past few years.

However, for the last year or so the group has re-convened a drafting sub-group to review the guidance and it is proposed to publish a second edition of the guidance later this year, or possibly in early 2022. This is likely to incur considerable costs in the layout, design, printing and publication process (the drafting and editing work is all provided on a voluntary basis).

We can therefore predict that there will be considerably more activity within this fund over the coming months.

3	Finance	
3.1	2021 Management Accounts Presented by JP. AL, JP and Hanif have agreed that the forecasts for next year will be provided in advance of the November BRG meeting.	
3.2	Updated balance sheet Presented by JP. No further questions.	
3.3	Cashflow forecast Presented by JP. MS asked why the increase in computers and consultancy in November, JP explained that this is our annual Oomi payment.	

4	Operational activity	
4.1	Brief operational update JP gave Trustees a brief operational update. Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conference 2021 has been moved online. JP thanked the Trustees for their support in this difficult decision and acknowledged the work of Sophie and Steve in making it happen so quickly.• Plans in the pipeline for in-person events in 2021, possibly related to conference.• HQ seeking to recruit four new members of staff.• HQ expanding upstairs for more space.• Concerns around a training bottleneck ahead as we do not have enough trainers and it will take a few months for us to onboard the new trainers who have expressed an interest. This will lead to a reduction in training output for the second half of 2021.• Team meetings are now twice a week, with a gradual return to the office in progress.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great news on membership – we have equalled our all-time record (2746 paying members) with five months to go. • New members very exciting: 497 this year compared to 361 in 2020 and 307 in 2019. • JP specifically thanked the staff team at HQ for all of the amazing work they have been doing under some very challenging conditions. <p>Questions asked about the recruitment and to what extent the Trustees need to get involved. It was agreed that recruitment within permitted budgets is an operational decision, but that Trustees should be kept informed about what is happening. JP to send summary of recruitment and associated costs.</p>	2JP
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5	Committee reports	
5.1	Professional MS provided an update.	
5.2	Education & Training Minutes taken as read.	
5.3	Media & Communications JL provided a brief update. AA HQ staff should be leading on the administration for M&C – JP to sort out.	3JP

6	Items for discussion and agreement	
6.1	<p>Gift Aid of AATL proceeds to the AA</p> <p>JL proposed, NS seconded.</p> <p>The Trustees of the AA (Directors of the AATL) unanimously determined that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 AATL results: The charitable donation of £107,937 to the AA to be considered and approved as a Gift Aid donation. Payment of the donation to be paid by 30 September 2021. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021 AATL results: With respect to the forthcoming year ending 31 December 2021, it is decided that all profits that would otherwise be taxable, were it not for the Gift Aid distribution, of AATL arising from that year are distributed to the AA as a qualifying charitable Gift Aid donation such that there is no corporation tax liability, with payment made to the AA following completion of the audit of the 2020 financial statements and prior to 9 months post year end. <p>Proceeds of AATL were signed off as a Gift Aid donation to the AA by MR.</p> <p>JP to circulate signed document to Hazlewoods and Finance Manager.</p>	4JP
6.2	<p>Trustee Board meeting packs</p> <p>JP invited Trustees to say what they wanted to see in their Trustee packs and to propose a different approach to minutes etc. The following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No posted hard copies necessary (unless specifically requested). Keep attachments to a minimum. Interim updates to be sent as appropriate, not held back for the next Trustee pack. Use SharePoint to hold all documentation. Only use searchable PDFs (unless impossible to do so). Draft minutes to be circulated as soon as possible after meeting. Trustees to return comments as soon as possible. More infographics in financial data. <p>JP to follow this approach in preparing future Board packs.</p>	5JP
6.3	<p>Committee Nominations</p> <p>JP proposed not issuing a call for nominations for Committees in 2021, but to roll over Committee memberships and terms for 12 months to allow a comprehensive review period to take place.</p> <p>JB proposed, MS seconded.</p> <p>Trustees decided to defer the call for nominations until next year.</p> <p>JP to work with the team to produce a positive message and communicate this to members.</p>	6JP
7	Items for information	
7.1	Complaints update	

	<p>JP updated the Trustees that there are currently four open complaints: C076, C075, C074 and C073.</p> <p>Two of the big complaints which have been going on for some time – C070 and C071 – were closed last week.</p> <p>AL asked if the complaints could be provided in graph form for ease of communication.</p> <p>JP to start providing complaints organised under broad themes (ACs, RCs, key things etc.) and provide a graph.</p>	7JP
7.2	<p>AARC Appeals Procedure</p> <p>NS asked if the layout would be formatted as promised – JP to find out.</p> <p>NS asked if £250 for an appeal is too high? Board agreed that the fee is reasonable as long as it is refundable in the event of a successful appeal.</p> <p>No additional comments on these documents.</p>	8JP

8	Any other business	
8.1	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Questions were asked about tracking Trustee attendance at meetings. JP to produce a spreadsheet showing Trustee attendance.</p> <p>NS suggested a skills audit of the Board should be carried out.</p> <p>MR proposed that a Code of Conduct for volunteers (including Trustees) is produced. <i>Post meeting note: A Volunteer Handbook was listed as one of the policy and procedure priorities in the Strategy Day on July 20th.</i></p> <p>JP to find out more about the deal with the ISA, including MoU. What do we get from them, what do they get from us, what dates do the MoU run for?</p> <p>JP to review all MoUs and update Trustees.</p>	<p>9JP</p> <p>10JP</p> <p>11JP</p>

9	Date of the next meeting	
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9.1	<p>Date of the next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held online on Thursday, September 2nd at 2000, after the online AGM.</p> <p>JP to send out invite and Board papers.</p>	12JP
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10	Confidential items	
10.1	No confidential items were raised.	

Meeting concluded at 1630.

Minutes to be circulated to all Trustees, Finance Manager and CEO.