

# Notes from the Steering Group Meeting – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024

## AGM PLANNING

We spent the majority of the meeting planning for the AGM:

- Running a 'live' practice of the AGM to check the technicals involved and running order – refined to improve visual/sound quality
- Considered the risks outstanding and developed mitigation actions
- Developed answers to Q&As in preparation for tomorrow's zoom session with members

## Response to the Wednesday Q&A questions:

### 1. Affordability/ financial implications:

Firstly, to reassure members, it's NOT anticipated at this time that an increase in staffing costs will need to be covered entirely by membership fees.

As you'll be able to see from the AGM documents, the accounts show a financial buffer this year.

Historically we've had some expensive on-contract and off-contract commitments.

With this future model, we expect clear tendering to make this more affordable.

Also to say that with an organisation of this size it's not normal for it to be entirely volunteer led, and other organisations in horticulture and agriculture use a 'stipend' model.

Future commercial FftF commercial activities will feed into this pot. Furthermore, with our new organisational structure we will be in a stronger position to tender for grants and funding.

### 2. Can the regional co-ordinators be voted in before being eligible for this new stipend?

As part of the EGM the posts of the regional coordinators may be reconfigured.

There will be due diligence followed in the selection process before anyone gets a stipend.

During this re-structuring we're expecting some movement of roles. The new roles will be of interest and open to RCOs and others and there's some flux expected.

### 3. Is there a projected budget for FY 24-25?

An initial financial model is in place but this will not be agreed until after the EGM and after contracts have gone out to tender and due process followed.

As part of the new board structure the new treasurer's role will be to produce a robust budget.

### 4. What will be the criteria for joining FftF, if any?

We did take a broad-stroke decisions following the survey results, that our key members are grower-florists.

We understand these are important questions. If you want to get involved, there will be Task & Finish groups on all these decisions.

Following on from voting IN these proposals - including the Strategy document - one of the first roles of the board will be to look at the big questions. The board will look at what we stand for in terms of Sustainability and accountability etc.

These decisions will feed into the eligibility criteria for joining FftF going forward.

**5. Is there a minimum number of members/percentage of the membership required to vote in order to make constitutional changes**

For the AGM we need a majority of people who vote to approve the proposals.

We will be voting on the changes to the constitution at the EGM which we envisage will be in June, at that point.

75% of the people who are in the room OR have registered a vote have to say yes.

**6. Should we be implementing change based on the opinions of less than 30% of the membership**

The average response rate to surveys is 9 – 11% so we were very happy with that turnout.

We don't have all the answers.

We're not implementing the change, we're enabling change to happen.

We have tested the survey conclusions with several member groups outside the steering group and we have had nothing but a positive reception. Received with resounding positivity.

The Steering Group is enabling change, putting the foundations in place.

The organisation had to change, it had grown so fast it needed a re-structure anyway.

The organisations' current structure & governance is not fit for purpose, (and we're actually standing on a burning platform).

We have put a lot of work in, picked through the details, and we are confident that this is robust.

We have to implement change.

We are building into the structure a much more representative system, getting more buy-in as we go along.

The implementation of the strategy a) hasn't been fully finalised yet, b) it will be re-visited every 5 years.

**7. What are the disadvantages of being a trade association**

Fit/Not Fit, rather than advantages/disadvantages. Not suiting our model, rather ....

It may preclude us from accessing some grants.

We thought these through.

It's a strong identity, but that is always polarising.

There will be some members excluded. Not 100% of members will feel that this is the best fit. For example if you're growing flowers from your back garden for gifting, this may not be the best fit for you. (the original constitution was about growing for profit).

There aren't many disadvantages, and it's a really good fit for FftF.

## **8. Who will decide the sustainability and quality criteria**

Our premise is we're all on a journey with our Sustainability standards, it's got to be accessible, but we're demonstrating leadership, and our commitment to our strategic aims.

No more 'green where possible'

One of the pieces that we're really excited about are The task & finish groups (of which the Steering Group is one) which we're really excited about, we'll throw this out to the membership.

The organisation will welcome a range of views within the Task & Finish groups, not just people with a strong green agenda.

The director responsible for S & Q

The lead is the policy lead.

Also working with experts in the field to help guide the strategy, NEDs as well as Coventry University etc.

## **9. Will volunteers be assessed on their suitability for the roles**

We propose that initially we will manage this process,

We'll follow existing good practise using robust selection assessment criteria from other trade associations

There will be also an independent recruitment panel of members.

The most suitable candidate will be put forward for approval by the board based on solid and transparent criteria

We will try to be as transparent and representative as possible.

Moving forward, we anticipate that the board will put in place defined selection processes. clear set of guidelines.

Scoring matrixes / criteria framework.

T&F groups to develop the criteria

Even under the current constitution a director can be voted out if the membership feels they have failed to perform in role.

## **10. Is it correct the NEDs hold the majority share of votes?**

Incorrect. They are advisers.

We wondered whether this question had originated because of the layout of the diagram and the highlighted black boxes?

At the moment they don't have voting rights.

In order to get a good NED we feel it's best for continuity and commitment to give them a voting buy-in,

It could be that half the board meetings would be executive, and half non-executive.

## **11. How do we vote?**

## **12. Why are we changing the directors now when we're changing the board at the EGM.**

**Key risk identified was that so far we have had very few responses (17 proxy votes received) and that the RCO's might need support/help answering questions from members.**

**We worked an outline for facebook and email messaging as follows:**

Day 1 (yesterday) - didn't go because facebook was down Video of Jo Link to Q & A Call to action - to vote on proposals

Day 2 (facebook & email) 6th March You asked us We said (Q&A) Call to action Link to AGM papers Jo's Video

Day 3 (Facebook and email) 7th March How to vote on proposals Including downloading proxy form Day 4 (facebook) 8th March Why is this AGM different Reminder of the deadlines Reminder Membership organisation, run by members

Day 5 (facebook) 9th March Why the AGM matters Jos Video

Day 6 (facebook & email) 11th March 1 week to go Reminder of deadlines Link to papers

Day 7 12th March Any questions Countdown

Day 8 13th March Countdown - recommendation 1

Day 9 14th March Countdown - recommendation 2

Day 10 15th March Countdown - recommendation 3

Day 11 16th March Countdown - recommendation 4

Day 12 17th March Last reminder

**We also agreed which members of the Steering Group would pair with each Co-Ordinator to offer help/support during the transition period, as follows:**

1. Olivia and Hannah Scotland - Rebecca continuing
2. Jessica - North West - Emma continuing
3. Hannah - North East - Hannah Jackson (Stepped Down) and Andrea stepping in, Sammie Continuing
4. Heather- East Midlands - Karen stepping down - Kerry Stepping up
5. Heather and Jessica - West Midlands - Suzy continuing
6. Pippa - Wales - Rhiannon stepping down, Al Hughes Stepping up
7. Cissy a- East Anglia - Anna Taylor - stepped down, Vacant, Louisa Butcher, Jenna Walker
8. Char and Jen - South East - Amber stepping down, Jill - Little Park Flowers
9. Zanna - South West - Jo Thompson – New, Angela Brooke Smith – New, Pippa and Harriet stepping down (now National Co-Ordinator)






## KEY DECISIONS LOG – LATEST IN BOLD

Decision	Date
Operating Model We will be basing our organisational design work on the assumption that we will become a Trade Association	Agreed at meeting 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
External contractors All new work would be put out to tender, to three providers – who would be provided with a clear brief of the work required. All engagements would be supported by a services contract between them and FftF	Agreed at meeting 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2023  To take effect from Financial year 23/24 (1 <sup>st</sup> December 2023)
AGM will be held on March 18 <sup>th</sup> 2024 and will be an in person and online meeting (ensuring maximum opportunities for voting). Amended to zoom only meeting	Agreed at meeting 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 Amended 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Shannon Keary has a role as Interim PR, focusing on British Flowers Week and the Marketing Plan for the year ahead	For information – 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
British Flowers Week will be the same time each year – third week in June from 2025	Agreed at meeting 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Flower Farmers Big Weekend will be removed from the schedule (our focus will be British Flowers Week)	Agreed at meeting 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Strategic Principles to be presented to the members at the AGM agreed	Agreed at meeting 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Organisational Structure to be presented to the members at the AGM agreed	Agreed at meeting 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
AGM will now be a zoom plus an in-person meeting (at Organic Blooms) due to voting rules (no voting can be taken over zoom, only in person or by proxy)	Agreed post meeting with solicitor 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2024
<b>We won't pay for the existing British Flowers Week logo but will look to develop our own</b>	<b>Agreed at meeting 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>
<b>To stop temporary PR support provided by SK – with thanks for work completed</b>	<b>Agreed at meeting 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>

## NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEP	WHO	BY WHEN
Circulate list of suggested policy's we will require as starters for ten (check with CSA that they are happy for their documents to be shared with us)	Hannah	18 <sup>th</sup> March
Develop recruitment process strawmodel	Jess	Next meeting
Trade Mark FftF logo and name	Jo M	
Contact Minette Batters (NFU) and sound out any interest	Debbie	
Contact Oliver to explain where we are with British Flowers Weeks	Wendy	5 <sup>th</sup> March
Wendy to join the British Flowers Week Task & Finish Group	Wendy	
Send out email to Co-ordinators with details of the SG members supporting	Pippa	10 <sup>th</sup> March

## MEETING REVIEW

Expectations	Review of whether met?
Happy if we get to cover the agenda	
Explore Angela's request	
Come away with understanding of what is next	
How to support handle support for RCO's during transition	
To define the policy documents we will need in the future	

Benefits	Concerns
Good to have the technical run through	The next step after the AGM
Confident it will work	No obvious candidate for chair
More of an operational meeting	How to translate into reality – get to the next stage
Different vibe in the room	
Well prepared for tomorrow	
Working really well as a team	
Really efficient	
Wendy on the zoom	

## MEETING SCHEDULE – additional meetings for March – June and AGM

Date	Venue	Known apologies
6 <sup>th</sup> October	Organic Blooms	Debbie, Oliva & Pippa
7 <sup>th</sup> November 23	Organic Blooms	
9 <sup>th</sup> January	Organic Blooms	Heather, Hannah, Pippa
29 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup> January	Organic Blooms	
13 <sup>th</sup> February	Organic Blooms	
5 <sup>th</sup> March	Organic Blooms	
6 <sup>th</sup> March	Q&A session with members via zoom	
18 <sup>th</sup> March	AGM Zoom	
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> March	Organic Blooms	
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	Organic Blooms	
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> June	Organic Blooms	

Car Park for ideas/issues out of scope at the moment	
Idea/Issues	Date Raised
Should we standardise the way you abbreviate Flowers from the Farm – currently usually shown as FFtF – could be FFTF	29 <sup>th</sup> January 24
We need a policy on workers rights	29 <sup>th</sup> January 24
Work the next level for Strategic Principles – aims and objectives	29 <sup>th</sup> January 24
Formally recognised training re career development	29 <sup>th</sup> January 24