

Flowers from the Farm Board Meeting

Online meeting 12/3/26 @12:30

Attendees: Cissy Bullock, Natasha Midgely, Olivia Wilson, Sarah Wilson, Oliver Jones, Jenna Walker, Heather Ward

In Attendance: None

Apologies: Georgie Newbery, Amber Cottam

Objectives for each meeting:

- To discuss and review our activities in line with our strategic vision
- To review proposals brought forward for Task & Finish groups/sign-off as appropriate
- To review and approve budgets, financial statements, and ensure fiscal responsibility
- To discuss and agree items for approval
- To review progress of key projects/initiatives

AGM

- Run through of procedure for AGM and all slides
- Update on and agreement of delivery of Treasurers report
- Update on and run through of slides for Marketing report. Clear definition of terms and stakeholders.

Finance

- Now that paid positions have started there is a need to draw on reserves to pay staffing costs. Agreement of transfer from Savings account to Current account to fund staff costs.
- Financial policy updated to allow renewal of supplier agreements for up to 3 years subject to annual Board approval.

Economic Data Survey

- Discussion of results and feedback from Task & Finish group. Can we extrapolate when the sample is small? Which figures are we confident to use in the public domain?
- Plan discussed to include data capture in the upcoming Pricing CPD session.
- Need for accurate, simple data collection system 'in the field'. Discussion of potential for an App to eventually feed directly into the data survey. Costs/expertise are currently prohibitive.
- Discussion of communication to members about exactly which figures will be shared. Ensure comms to members stating that **only** value of stems sold, average area under cultivation and contribution to economy can and will be shared publicly.

Internal Policy

- Until a new Internal Chair is appointed there is a requirement for an acting chair at each meeting. The members of the board will meet this requirement by standing as chair in rotation.

- There is much interest in members participating in shows as Flowers from the Farm. Currently a Shows policy is not set out clearly leaving room for confusion. It was agreed that a new policy will be put in place to make the level of admin, finance and PR support clear and help maximise member participation. This will support the aims of both improving member benefits and engagement and unity of external messaging.
- Addition to the Ways of Working policy for dealing with unforeseen and inappropriate behaviour from suppliers.

Membership Communications

- Sarah Wilson will send a 'Farewell' email to members with encouragement to take up volunteer roles.
- Future practice will be that Board Updates will be communicated to members via email only and not posted on Facebook. This will be mentioned in the April newsletter.
- There is a requirement for Board minutes to be posted on the website. These will be compiled from RCO report, Actions and Decisions log and Operations Manager notes.
- Internal Communications Strategy is to be added to the Strategy Implementation spreadsheet. To be worked on by RCO Lead, Operations Manager, Marketing Lead and Marketing Manager.
- It was agreed that a new structure for the monthly newsletter is essential for increasing membership engagement and enabling dissemination of information. Canva would be a useful tool for this until the new website is in place.
- It has been identified that there is the possibility of disparity of representation within regional groups when enlisting member involvement by ballot for large external projects. A note has been made to interrogate any possibility of regional misrepresentation in future ballot processes.
- The 'Community' tool for WhatsApp is being used by the East Anglia region to enable member communications. The possibility of this being used for members at a national level will be explored.
- Discussion of the usefulness and relevance of Facebook as a continuing communication tool for members. It was agreed that it has importance moving forwards and will be reviewed when the new website is up and running with scope for member forums.
- The Conference feedback was reviewed. The question of parity of regional representation was discussed as an important feature of future conference structuring and organisation.

Volunteers

- Suggestion of change to RCO name deemed unnecessary by RCOs and Board
- Suggestion of name change to Task & Finish Groups deemed unnecessary by Board
- Keep a check on free memberships for agreed volunteer positions.
- The possibility of burnout amongst volunteers has been identified and is something the Board need to always consider. Where identified the first course of action is to contact the volunteer and discuss workload, strategy and support. One case identified and action agreed.

Marketing

- Discussion of need to avoid Instagram becoming too 'Chelsea-centric'. Action will be taken to identify other areas for use of 'green tile' and regular posting
- British Flowers Week Instagram. Will be retained for use as a press 'landing page' but will be linked to Flowers from the Farm Instagram through collaborative postings.
- There is an overall marketing plan for Instagram to ensure that all important events are communicated internally and externally.
- Sarah Wilson is in discussion with The Duchy of Cornwall regarding opportunities for farmers in the British Flowers movement in light of key events such as the talk by Rozanne Delamore at the recent NFU conference.
- There has been a broad spectrum of responses to the interim logo. In the Northeast region there has been vocal opposition, and a member survey has been carried out. The RCO has shouldered the communication surrounding this issue but has now elevated it to Board level for response. The Marketing Lead will take this forward by meeting with the relevant members to explain the need for the change and to hear their views.
- After appropriate consider of tender options approval of Wild Strategy as market research partner for Marketing for the Future

Administration

- Website. The central importance of the new website to the future strategic plans for Flowers from the Farm was discussed. The decision to prioritise the new website process was taken.
- All board members to research 'What does good look like' to enable the next phase of development.
- Development of a standardised supplier contract.

Future

- Various matters of Stakeholder Engagement were moved forward to April meeting for discussion.