Alfalfa House Members Council Meeting - Minutes of Meeting

Date: Tuesday 02 February 2016

Time: 7pm

Location: Meeting Space, 8-10 Brown Street, Newtown

Facilitator: Katherine

Minutes: Andrew

Vibe watcher(s): Renata and Jonny

**Meeting opened at:** 7.06pm

**Acknowledgement of Country:** Before we begin the meeting, I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners, both past and present, of the land we occupy and upon which we meet — the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. It is also upon their ancestral lands that Alfalfa House is built.

1. **Attendance and Apologies**

Attendance: Andrew McNicol (MC), David Begg (MC), Emily Mierisch (MC), Jonathan Green (MC), Katherine Lustig (MC), Renata (MC), Simon Holmes (Manager), Adam Taylor (Member), Monika Baumann (Member), Stevie Bee (Member).

Apologies: None.

Absent: Maurice Cabrera (MC).

1. **Approval of Agenda**

That the agenda be approved.

Moved: Jonny Seconded: Katherine*.* CARRIED by consensus

1. **Consent Agenda**
   1. Adoption of Previous Minutes

That the minutes of the 22 December 2015 meeting be adopted.

* 1. New members and cancellations

That 44 members with membership numbers in the range 11109-11160, excluding 3 skipped records (11112, 11115, 11149) and 4 blank records (11118, 11137, 11139, 11140), be accepted as new members.

That members with the following membership numbers be cancelled: 2457, 2345, 2964, 3014, 3956, 4009, 4527, 4746, 4775, 4848, 4951, 5015, 5510, 5605, 5786, 5934, 6129, 6179, 6557, 6647, 6652, 6669, 6707, 6844, 6883, 6947, 6955, 7110, 7166, 7342, 7351, 7501, 7532, 7617, 7673, 7675, 7680, 7733, 7822, 7927, 7968, 8057, 8125, 8138, 8154, 8183, 8225, 8240, 8332, 8338, 8393, 8474, 8480, 8488, 8530, 8595, 8643, 8644, 8758, 8784, 8873, 8897, 8973, 8982, 9005, 9021, 9025, 9033, 9064, 9115, 9119, 9146, 9183, 9187, 9191, 9203, 9206, 9210, 9216, 9224, 9230, 9235, 9239, 9240, 9244, 9247, 9256, 9258, 9262, 9264, 9266, 9285, 9293, 9299, 9301 and 9304.

* 1. Out-of-Session Decisions / Proposals
     1. WHS Gap analysis

Past action:​ Simon to circulate the two received quotes to MC, and the third if/when it is received. - **DONE**

Two quotes were received, from WHS Act Help ($3,000 + GST) and [Benchmark Consulting](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B00J7nXCx_iWMTcwdWNnTkNydWt1azJWTXhROTh4SENzQTdr) ($1,800 + GST). Over email, Simon recommended engaging Benchmark Consulting for our WHS gap analysis, to review Alfalfa House WHS system procedures against the Act, provide an analysis of gaps in policies and procedures and recommend corrective actions. The recommendation was approved by consensus.

* + 1. Stock coordinator job-sharing and amalgamation

[Simon provided a report](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1r9F9MsAgi94WChXa64SFUHzBS51qjF-M8Xzila2OnyU) on the job-share trial for the two stock coordinator positions, and [a report was similarly provided by the staff currently job-sharing](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B00J7nXCx_iWSHJHUzBVeGtHcUFKRzZ1cGl6SUlCemdOdUVz) the Groceries Coordinator role. Their advice was that the position can work well as a job-share or for an individual applicant.

The Manager further recommended that the roles of Groceries and Produce be kept separate at this point. David asked that the matter be discussed during the meeting. See item 5.1.

* 1. Staffing (appointments and resignations) - *NIL*
  2. Reports from Working Groups
     1. Finance (Jonny)

Reports:

[Treasurer’s Report](https://docs.google.com/document/d/152LgZbnLXIb8ftj11zs1rzk1xUhFpNHHs4250ND61Oo/edit)

[December 2015 Monthly Report](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VbN0ul8jK1JXbZQpUWjLD2yyP1DDwzD2JtpQUJ5uOPA/edit#gid=2136455734)

[December 2015 Dashboard Profit and Loss](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2CzrZkqx6HpVGRvN3ljRGxJNDJxQXM5UFp0MWNkc2hoa0xn/view)

[December 2015 Dashboard Revenue Analysis](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2CzrZkqx6HpTGhrVkJnUlA4c2cyMG5INUJENlk3Ykp0MjlN/view)

[December 2015 Dashboard Balance Sheet](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2CzrZkqx6HpTGhrVkJnUlA4c2cyMG5INUJENlk3Ykp0MjlN/view)

* + 1. Risk management (Maurice)

NIL

* + 1. Shop Development (David)

NIL

* + 1. Communications/Marketing (Stevie)

NIL

* + - 1. Website

NIL. On hold while rebranding occurs.

* + - 1. Social Media

NIL. On hold until after website launched

* + - 1. Marketing (Celine as member)

NIL

* + 1. Affordability

NIL

* + 1. Operations (Adam)

NIL

* + - 1. Planning (New convenor/contact point required)

NIL

* + 1. Compliance and Governance (No convenor/contact point)

NIL

* + 1. Sustainability (Katherine/Celine)

NIL

* + 1. Community & Membership (Adam)

NIL

* + - 1. Membership Development

NIL

* + - 1. Volunteer Engagement (Emily / Adam)

NIL

* + - 1. Community Outreach (Adam)

NIL

* + 1. Staff Liaison (Jonny)

Report: [HERE](https://docs.google.com/document/d/13GCEqf9KYr6ZpGNnLiwAMLPSxokaK2NpzWVgFX0XlXw/edit)

* + 1. Product/Supplier (Adam, Katherine)

NIL

That the Consent Agenda Items be approved.

Moved: Katherine Seconded: Jonny, CARRIED by consensus.

1. **Other Reports**
   1. **Manager’s Report**

December 2015 report found [HERE](https://docs.google.com/document/d/17W1d2kyLjcRSBNP2FSDnbs9eEVY4DEU6MMP1EFDGjgo).

That the Manager’s Report be accepted.

Moved: Andrew. Seconded: Renata. CARRIED by consensus.

1. **Business Arising (Action Items from previous meetings) including any deferred agenda items**
   1. **Lease renewal**

Past action: Simon to provide further information regarding the property lease as soon as it is available. - DONE.

At our December 1 meeting the shop redevelopment working group recommended that one of the following courses of action be taken:

1. To proceed with exercising the “option” for renewal of the lease of 113 Enmore Rd, for a 3 year term (i.e. as authorized at the MC meeting on 25 August 2015).
2. To proceed with option i) as specified above, but to amend it by negotiating for an extension of the term from 3 to 5 years.
3. To seek to re-negotiate the lease, as a (new) five plus five year lease.

Macaroni, next door (111 Enmore Road), have a 5 year lease, with an option for an additional 5 years, beginning October 2015, and it is a further option to ask that our end of lease date be matched to theirs..

David recommended that we seek to establish a direct relationship with the owner of the building, and to this end he suggested that we arrange a meeting with the owner at which an approval in principle be sought for a 5 + 5 year lease. David also recommended that we ask Maurice to represent AH at these negotiations, as he has considerable experience conducting commercial negotiations. Additionally he noted that it was not commercially sensible for us to place any reliance on representations from the real estate agent, as these agents are legally required to represent the best interests of the owner, and therefore any information provided by an agent should seen in this light.It was noted that earlier attempts to meet with the owner had been difficult.

Renata proposed:

That Simon ask the real estate for a five year lease, with the end of the fifth year dated to match that of Macaroni at 111 Enmore Rd, and with the option to renew for an additional five years.

That Simon also ask the real estate agent to notify the owner of our interest in meeting at some stage in the future.

Carried by consensus, with David as a stand-aside.

ACTION: Simon to ask for a five year lease, with the end of the fifth year dated to match that of Macaroni at 111 Enmore Rd, with the option to renew for an additional five years.

ACTION: Simon to ask the real estate to notify the owner of our interest in meeting in some stage in the future.

* 1. **Strategic Planning Session**

Sunday 21st February - 10.30am - 1.30pm at Newtown Library

2-3pm follow up for MC (and anyone else who wants to attend).

That a budget of $100 be allocated for snacks and lunch, and materials, allocated from the unused Food Grants.

Carried by consensus.

ACTION: Emily will help Katherine on the day, including help set-up.

Katherine is still looking for one extra person to help (set-up on the day).

Jonny can support in the week prior, including arranging snacks.

ACTION: Adam, Renata and Simon to help draft a strategic and annual plan afterwards.

ACTION: Katherine to send an updated blurb to Simon for the Scoop by 9am Friday morning.

* 1. **Stock coordinator positions**

Past actions

* Simon to send MC a staff feedback report AND Simon’s personal recommendation(s) by January 14 - **DONE** ([Contents of email available here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JhBYOiXd8IglW1oGliiikZZRJez-GgP_dUUdg6d3RvA/edit).)
* Simon to notify staff of the extension until March 14 - **DONE**
* ​Jonny to put forward a formal proposal based on Simon’s recommendation, and to begin creating job description(s) in line with the proposal. - **DONE**
* ​Renata to coordinate MC questions by January 21st, and to ensure responses are available to MC a week before the meeting on February 2. Renata to organise a meeting for us to discuss this issue, if needed. **- n/a**
* At the next MC meeting on Tuesday February 2 we will decide how to move forward and promptly notify staff.

To resolve:

* is job share acceptable?
* any change required to job descriptions / hours of position?
* can the positions now be advertised?
* who will sit on the interview panel(s)?

Discussion:

* The actual hours of the current two roles are: 32 hours for groceries, and 16.5 per produce. 48.5 hours per week total.
* Simon’s recommendation, after consultation with staff, was that the groceries and produce roles are kept separate (not amalgamated).
* David highlighted the importance of taking advantage of the rare opportunity (namely, both roles being vacant at the same time) to properly consider the benefits of amalgamation. David spoke for a limited time on this matter, and a copy of his speaking notes is available [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qFjN2vslzyemJIPDXWV7he9RfrrCEhKYN1qciZ0Yq9A).
* Jonny highlighted the divide in the shop between groceries and produce, where shop staff and volunteers are more likely to help with produce, having a detrimental effect on the workload of groceries. Implementing an explicit hierarchy may be a way to address this (manager => stock => shop). If amalgamation does not occur, Jonny would like to see these changes considered.
* Renata believes staff can work well together without an explicit hierarchy, as the issues are cultural and can be addressed in other ways.
* Monika felt this was a good opportunity to analyse systemic issues and adjust the Shop Coordinator job description to address this.
* Jonny suggested that the job descriptions for Groceries Coordinator, Produce Coordinator and Shop Coordinator be amended before advertising to ensure all positions are directly responsible to the manager rather than to MC, as is currently the case. Further, Stock Coordinators should be able to give tasks to shop coordinators.

Katherine proposed that we do NOT amalgamate the Groceries and Produce roles but that job share be an option for candidates.

Passed with consensus. Jonny and David stood aside on the matter.

Further discussion:

* our current financial situation is not great, and recent produce hours have been lower than the 21 they previously were.

Andrew proposed we make the produce hours a minimum of 18 to a maximum of 21, as determined by the manager to help address financial concerns.

Passed by consensus.

**ACTION:** Jonny and Simon will change job descriptions by Friday, as follows:

* stock coordinators will be able to allocate tasks to shop coordinators
* stock coordinators will be accountable to the manager
* shop coordinators will be accountable to the manager
* in the shop coordinator job description, the section that says they will help with “produce” deliveries will say “stock” deliveries instead
* the Produce job description will state that the hours are a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 21, at the Manager’s discretion.
* the Groceries job description will say that position is for 32 hours.

**ACTION:** Simon to relay the above accountability changes to staff at tomorrow’s meeting.

**ACTION:** Simon to report back to MC, at his discretion, about how the flexible hours for Produce are going.

**ACTION:** MC will approve revised job descriptions by Sunday night over email so the positions can be advertised promptly.

**ACTION:** Simon to advertise the positions next week.

Agreed interview panelists: Renata (Produce), Andrew (Groceries), Simon and one staff selected by Simon.

* 1. **Increasing sales using social media**

Past action:​ Simon to include a progress report about this in the Manager’s Report.

Return to this next month.

* 1. **Open Days at Alfalfa House**

Past action: ​Andrew to notify Adam that the proposal was approved, and to request regular feedback to MC. - **DONE**

* 1. **October 2015 Fundraiser**

Past action: Written report to be received by Adam.

Return to this next month.

* 1. **Shop closing times before holidays**

ACTION: After Induction, Emily to research whether we have a policy on shop closure around holidays and the issues related to this. Draft a policy on it if required.

Emily is still checking her access to the policies, she will begin researching the issues once access is secured. Monika offered assistance.

Return to this next month.

1. **Workplace Health + Safety - NIL**
2. **Policy - NIL**
3. **Food Grants - NIL**
4. **Other Business -** 
   1. **Volunteer Coordinator (From Renata)**

**Report: See** [**HERE**](https://drive.google.com/open?id=14o8ojSSOqEx3MsMyrEPUjnyUh_SKm0DRlAUXLvON_LY)

**Recommendation:** That MC approve a new paid role of Volunteer Coordinator. That SLWG design a job description by the next MC meeting, in consultation with Simon. That staff discuss the role at the next staff meeting, and that the position initially be offered internally.

Discussion:

* Jonny supported the idea in principle but felt that the first step was to work out the real issues and how to resolve them.
* Uncertainty about whether retention is the biggest volunteer issue
* Adam believes the idea would give an immediate return for the investment, from volunteer hours, and noted that most volunteers shop straight after their shift.
* Renata noted the current poor financial situation but considers it a good time of year to facilitate better volunteering with a view to positively affecting our income.
* David expressed significant concern about our financial situation and felt that no commitment to additional spending should be made unless necessary or if there is absolute confidence that it will boost revenue.

**ACTION:** Renata will put forward a formal proposal for next month’s meeting, in consultation with others who may be able to help, including members of the Volunteer Engagement Working Group. The proposal is to an estimate of financial costs and savings..

* 1. **Shop window (Renata)**

See discussion [HERE](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eSki_SAe_zdFOJtENU8RP5EL5PHx4NTMzlG3MSspYak/edit) - proposal to alter the content / design of the front window.

Simon noted that the recent grant includes allowance for change to the front window. Further, that Ben, a volunteer who is also an architect, is currently away but has offered to draft a plan that is more visually appealing.

**ACTION:** Simon to continue to work with Ben / grant monies, and to keep MC informed.

**ACTION:** Those concerned about this issue should raise it at the Planning workshop to ensure it is included in the Annual Plan as a priority.

**Additional**

**ACTION:** Katherine to send out an email to MC (+ Stevie, Adam, Monika and any others interested) to clarify the agenda/minutes publication process.

**Meeting closed at 9:06pm**

**Agenda items deferred this meeting**

Deferred until May meeting - Online purchasing via website. Refer minutes from December 2015 meeting.

ACTION: Katherine to prepare report and recommendations on what exactly can go into the Consent Agenda.