



How the Landworkers' Alliance works

A handbook for members

Version: April 2022



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1. Introduction

Welcome to 'How the Landworkers' Alliance Works – A handbook for members'. This document is designed to give members a broad overview of how the LWA functions, the internal organisation and processes of the LWA and how members can get more involved in the organisation.

This document is constantly being updated as new people take on positions of responsibility and internal policies change. To be sure you have the most up to date version contact the LWA via the general enquiries email address:

info@landworkersalliance.org.uk

As regional organising teams, staff and directors can change please refer to our website for current contact details.

2. About the LWA

2.1 Mission and Vision

The Landworkers' Alliance is a union of farmers, growers, foresters and land-based workers. Our mission is to improve the livelihoods of our members and create a better food and land-use system for everyone.

We have a vision of a future where producers can work with dignity to earn a decent living and everyone can access local, healthy and affordable food, fuel and fibre - A food and land-use system based on agroecology and food sovereignty that furthers social and environmental justice.

2.2 Who we are

We are a democratic member-led union, run by landworkers for landworkers. All our policies and representation comes from farmers, growers, foresters and land-based workers who have direct experiences of the issues we work on.

We operate across the UK and are organised into Branches and regions. The governance of the organisation is driven by a democratically elected coordinating group of people from across the country that aims to represent a balance of sectors and regions whilst maintaining gender diversity and inclusion.

We are members of La Via Campesina, an international organisation of over 200 million peasants, small-scale farmers and agricultural workers unions around the world. We work with them to achieve a vision of agroecology and food sovereignty beyond the UK.



2.3 What we do

We organise our work around 5 key strands.

1) Creating a strong and resilient organisational structure that can support the LWA to grow into a large and democratic grassroots union operating within a participatory social movement dynamic. We aim to build a strong financial and governance basis with well functioning democratic mechanisms.

2) Building social networks and solidarity between members here in the UK and with land-based workers around the world through events, farm walks, parties, festivals, communication channels and activities with other organisations involved in La Via Campesina and the global Food Sovereignty and Agroecology movements.

3) Facilitating agroecology training and exchange to improve our member's skills and knowledge of agroecological farming, forestry and land management, running sustainable businesses, union organising and campaigning and lobbying. This work is orientated towards filling the significant gaps in provision of training for agroecology in the formal education sector and builds on informal peer to peer learning.

We are developing and delivering projects that aim to increase the quality and consistency, and expand the reach, of informal traineeships, apprenticeships, mentoring, farmer-to-farmer groups, farm incubation opportunities, short courses, farm hack events and land skills festivals. We are also looking into the possibilities of developing farm based accredited training at levels 2 – 4.

4) Creating media and advocacy materials that improve the public's understanding of the social, environmental and economic benefits created by agroecological farmers, growers, foresters and land-based workers as well as the challenges they face and to raise the public profile of agroecology and food sovereignty as solutions to current social and environmental crisis.

5) Campaigning and Lobbying for policy changes to support the infrastructure and markets central to our members' livelihoods, and minimise the impact of negative policy directions; to improve the sovereignty, resilience and sustainability of our food and land-use systems and to increase peoples' access to local, healthy and affordable food, fuel and fibre.

Campaigning and lobbying in the UK – Our campaigning and lobbying work in the UK takes a number of forms, both official and unofficial.

The LWA are recognised stakeholders and have a working relationship with a wide range of teams, groups, committees and government departments in Westminster, Holyrood and Cardiff Bay.

The LWA also works in alliance with a number of other food and farming organisations on various campaigns.



Campaigning and lobbying in Europe and Internationally - Through our membership and active involvement in La Via Campesina we have representation in:

- The European Parliament
- The European Commission's Civil Dialogue Groups on agriculture
- The Food and Agriculture Organisations of the United Nations
- The Human Rights Committee of the United Nations
- The Civil Society Mechanism of the United Nations Committee on World Food Security

We offer training and mentorship on campaigning and lobbying for members who want to get more involved in this area of our work. For more information contact the Campaigns Coordinator.

2.4 How we operate

The LWA operates as a democratic, member-led union. We are incorporated as a not-for-profit, co-operative, company limited by guarantee.

We aim to be a dynamic, responsive, democratic and accountable grassroots organisation, in which members can be involved at whatever level works for them. We aim to organise so that the LWA can adapt and respond quickly to changing opportunities, we can expand rapidly without losing coherency or relevance, whilst remaining accountable with strong and clear governance structures.

Legal responsibility for the management and operation of the organisation is provided by a Coordinating Group of up to 12 people who are elected from the membership to serve as directors at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and up to three co-opted external directors who can bring important skills and experiences into the organisation. Directors serve 3-year terms at which point they can re-stand for election. Directors are responsible for the strategic, financial and political governance of the organisation and meet at least quarterly throughout the year. The LWA aims to elect a Coordinating Group that ensures a balance of ages, landworking sectors, regions, genders and ethnicities.

The LWA employs staff members to carry out specific roles; some of these staff members are also directors.

The membership of the LWA is organised into Branches covering England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland according to where members live and work. These Branches are subdivided into regions where members see the need for it and have the energy to drive regional organising.

Members are also organised into sectors depending on the areas of work they are involved in, including Forestry, Horticulture, Livestock and Arable Farming. Sectors organise training, exchanges and skill shares as well as policy work and campaigning around sector specific issues. We currently have an active Forestry sector (called the "Woody Branch"), and other sectors are still in development.



Members who are enthusiastic about organising around a particular sector, issue or geography are welcome to develop projects, committees or initiatives. This can involve planning events, peer to peer learning opportunities, or getting involved in campaigns. The LWA Membership team can share information about what kind of support is available and how to set up an LWA member-led group.

As the LWA is growing rapidly, the organising structure of Branches, sectors and regional teams is evolving. We have established a UK Organisers' Assembly made up of representatives from Branches, regions, sectors and working groups representing members from marginalised identities. This will create a democratic body that is able to steer the vision and direction of travel of the LWA, recognising the expertise and leadership of our membership.

The LWA membership also creates working groups to address specific issues or work on specific projects as and when they are necessary.

2.5 Communications

When you join as a landworker member or supporter of the LWA you will be subscribed to our general and regional mailing list to receive **monthly newsletters**, member news and Branch/regional updates. You can unsubscribe at any time.

If you'd like to submit news or information about an opportunity to a newsletter then email info@landworkersalliance.org.uk to submit via an online form

You can communicate with other members via our online **forum** on our website - to ask advice, advertise jobs or land opportunities and much more. You should have received instructions on how to post on the forum when you joined using your username and password. If you need any support with this email info@landworkersalliance.org.uk

Our website hosts blog posts covering a range of topics. If you're interested in writing one then get in touch with Steph.wetherell@landworkersalliance.org.uk

Stay connected with us on social media also

Facebook: LandWorkersAlliance

Instagram: landworkersalliance

Twitter: LandworkersUK

Some Branches/regions also have their own facebook groups.

South West England - 'South West Landworkers' Alliance'

North England - 'Landworkers' Alliance North

East England - 'East Anglian Landworkers' Alliance and Growers Group'

Cymru/Wales - 'Landworkers' Alliance Cymru'

Midlands of England - 'LWA Midlands'



3. Strategic Lines of Action

Our work is orientated around 5 strands, each with a set of aims and objectives. These are:

1. Organisational Structure
2. Social Networks and Solidarity
3. Agroecology Training and Exchange
4. Media and Advocacy
5. Campaigning and Lobbying

The responsive and emergent nature of our work, coupled with the rapid growth of the organisation and the unstable political times we live in, means we have found it most effective to organise our aims and objectives under lines of action rather than rigid targets.

3.1 Organisational Structure

Aims

1. Create a strong and resilient organisational structure that can support the LWA to grow into a large and democratic grassroots union operating within a participatory social movement dynamic.

Objectives

- To create a strong and resilient financial basis for the organisation
- To put in place and maintain effective and democratic governance structures
- To ensure members have active voices and are able to participate in the development of the LWA
- To create and implement strategic development plans

3.2 Social Networks and Solidarity

Aims

1. To develop strong social networks and build relationships of solidarity and mutual aid between members
2. To improve the quality of life for members
3. To increase the resilience of agricultural and forestry systems by increasing communication and reducing isolation

Objectives

- To improve communication channels between members
- To develop our branch, regional and sectoral representation and structure
- To organise farm walks, parties and events
- To work with other organisations that improve rural social networks and support services
- To work with La Via Campesina and allied organisations in other countries to organise exchange visits and events.



3.3 Agroecology Training and Exchange

Aims

1. To increase the skills and knowledge of our members in agroecological farming, growing, forestry and land management
2. To increase the skills and knowledge of our members in running financially sustainable land-based businesses
3. To increase the skills and knowledge of our members in organising as a union and social movement as well as working with the media, campaigning and lobbying
4. To fill the gaps for practical training and mentoring in agroecological farming and land management
5. To build low-cost and reciprocal models for training and exchange based on the knowledge base of our membership network

Objectives

- To build a network of best practice and exchange between organisations and farms offering incubation or Farm Start opportunities
- To build a network of producers offering traineeships and apprenticeships and work to improve the quality and consistency of the trainees experience through co-learning, teacher training and curriculum design
- To create a mentoring system where new entrants can access affordable mentoring support and advice from experienced practitioners in their field
- To put in place more appropriate and accessible accredited training in agroecological farming, forestry and land management
- To build local and regional farmer-to-farmer groups for skill-sharing and exchange on a low-cost peer-to-peer model
- To organise farm hacks and land skills festivals for exchange of skills and ideas
- To organise trainings on the necessary skills for organising as union and social movement, representing our work to the media, campaigning and lobbying.

3.4 Media and Advocacy

Aims

1. To improve the public's understanding of the social, environmental and economic benefits created by agroecological farmers, growers, foresters and land-based workers as well as the challenges they face.
2. To raise the public profile of agroecology and food sovereignty as solutions to social, economic and environmental crisis
3. To improve our communication channels and increase the reach of our media

Objectives

- To increase the visibility of our members, the benefits of their ways of working and the challenges they face in the agricultural media through publishing case studies, writing opinion and analysis pieces and providing responses to current issues
- To highlight the ways in which agroecology and food sovereignty can offer solutions to social and environmental crisis in the mainstream media



- To produce and distribute content highlighting the work our members do, the social, environmental and economic benefits they create and the challenges they face through films, photography, case studies and podcasts
- To increase the subscribers to and reach of our newsletter and social media
- To improve our website as a resource for media and advocacy

3.5 Campaigning and Lobbying

Aims

1. To increase the numbers of farmers, growers, foresters and land-based workers in the UK
2. To increase the political and policy level understanding of the issues our members face and the solutions they represent.
3. To improve the sovereignty, resilience and sustainability of our food and land-use systems
4. To increase peoples' access to local, healthy and affordable food, fuel and fibre

Objectives

- To build relationships with political parties and decision makers at local, national and international levels
- To build relationships with civil servants in departments relevant to our work
- To build alliances with like-minded organisations and create stronger shared platforms
- To influence policy making to:
 - Improve the economic & social conditions in which our members work and improve the infrastructure and markets central to their livelihoods
 - Reduce the negative impacts of current and future policy on our members
 - Further the development of agroecology and food sovereignty

3.6 Food Sovereignty

The framework of Food Sovereignty underpins the vision and perspectives of the LWA's work. When joining the union all members agree that they support the principles of food sovereignty. The framework of Food Sovereignty was drawn up by La Via Campesina and provides common ground to the positions of farmers and agricultural workers unions, and social movements around the world. Having an agreement on the principles of Food Sovereignty gives the LWA strong starting point from which to work and formulate policy.

La Via Campesina define Food Sovereignty as:

“The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, process and consume healthy and local food at the heart of our agriculture and food systems, instead of the demands of market and transnational companies”.

La Via Campesina agree on 6 pillars of Food Sovereignty which we have adapted to reflect the UK context.



The 6 pillars of Food Sovereignty

1. Food is a right not a commodity

Guaranteeing the right to food will ensure that everybody, regardless of income, status or background, has secure access to enough nutritious, culturally appropriate, good food at all times. Agriculture should focus on producing food to feed people, rather than food as a commodity for the global market.

2. Food producers are valued

The people who produce and provide our food should be properly rewarded, protected and respected. This means decent living wages, secure contracts, fair representation and good working conditions for everyone involved in getting food from the field to our plates.

3. Food systems are localised

Good food should be easily accessible across villages, towns and cities, in both rural and urban areas, through numerous local outlets. Local provision and short food supply chains should take precedence over global export markets. International trade will and should always be part of the global food system, but we must promote the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of all people to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable food production and ensure that we do not undermine the food sovereignty and food systems of people in other parts of the world.

4. There is democratic control over the food system

Control over the resources to produce, distribute and access food should be in the hands of communities and workers across the food system. Civil society should be at the centre of food policy-making, with the power to shape the way the food system functions and influence the policies and practices needed to transition to a just food system.

5. We build knowledge and skills

The knowledge and skills needed to produce, process, distribute, and prepare food should be protected and invested in. The cultures of food producers and communities should be valued, including the ability to develop and pass on knowledge and skills to future generations. This should be supported through democratic and decentralised forms of education, and appropriate research and innovation.

6. Our food system works with nature

Food production and distribution systems should protect natural resources, reduce environmental impact and work in harmony with nature. Agroecology should be the basis for all food production, where food is produced within the finite limits of our planet's resources, protecting and respecting our environment and communities, and without compromising the ability of future generations to provide for themselves.



4. The Internal Organisation of the LWA

The Landworkers' Alliance is constituted as a co-operative company limited by guarantee and operates as a democratic, grassroots union. The following section provides an overview of the internal organisation of the LWA.

4.1 The Coordinating Group

The LWA has up to 12 Directors who are elected by the membership of the LWA at the Annual General Meeting to coordinate the strategic, financial, governance and political work of the organisation and to represent the LWA politically. These directors form the Coordinating Group of the LWA.

The Coordinating group meets at least quarterly throughout the year

Directors are elected for a three-year term, after which they must either stand down or stand for re-election.

Directors are legally responsible for the management and operation of the organisation between AGMs.

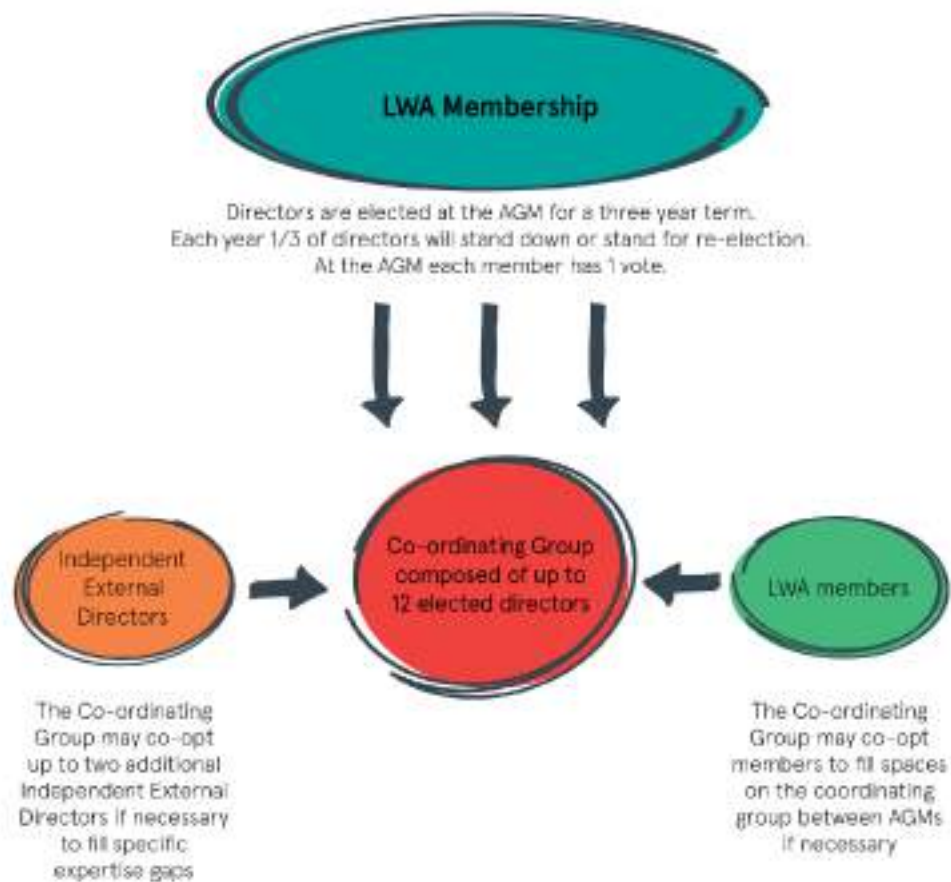
In addition to the 12 elected directors, the Coordinating Group may co-opt up to three external independent directors to serve for up to one year (until the next AGM) if they are necessary to fill any gaps in the organisation's capacity and expertise. They may also co-opt LWA members to fill gaps between AGMs.

The LWA shall endeavor to ensure that the composition of the board of directors reflects an inclusive balance of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, ability, background, sector and region of the UK.

We have a director's role description that can be found in the policies appendix and is available to all members on request.



Diagram of Coordinating Group



3.2 Branches, Regions and Sectors

The membership of the LWA is organised into Branches and regions according to where members live and Sectors depending on the kind of enterprises members are involved in. The four Branches of the LWA are England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. At the moment the England Branch is subdivided into the following regions and other Branches are not subdivided into regions:

North
Midlands
East
South East
London
South West

The LWA encourages active members in each Branch and region to form Organising Teams to support the local work of the organisation.



The remit of the teams include:

- To create a social and solidarity network for members in the Branch or region.
- To organise events encouraging skill sharing, solidarity and mutual aid among members. Helping members address issues they are experiencing.
- To organise training and exchange activities to meet the needs of members in the Branch or region.
- To lobby national and local policy makers.
- To represent the LWA's positions to National and local media.
- To collect and input local needs and experiences into national level campaigning, policy work and strategy.

At regional assemblies, which are held annually in conjunction with the LWA Annual General Meeting (AGM), each Branch/region may propose members to join the organising team.

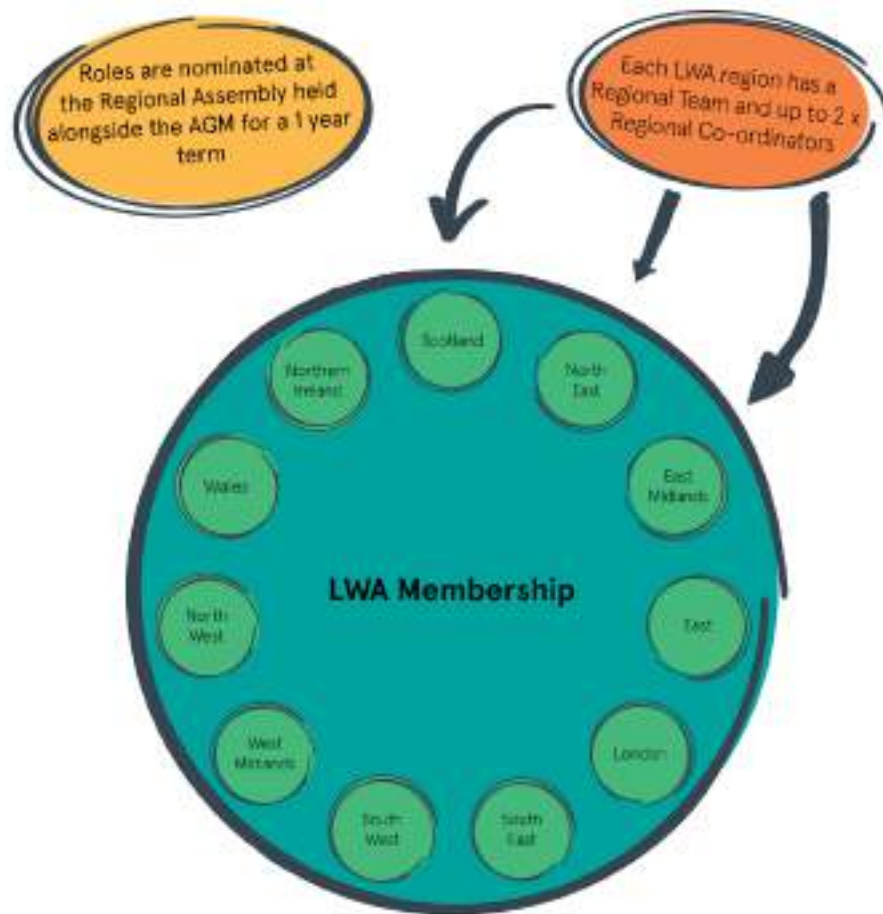
These regional coordinators are responsible for maintaining contact with a staff member on the Membership Team who will support their work and connect them with the wider LWA UK activities and systems. They provide the link between the regional organising teams and the coordinating group of the LWA via the Organiser's Assembly.

Terms of reference for Branch and regional teams and a role description for coordinators are available on request.

Sector-based organising within the LWA membership is under development as we identify what the needs of our membership are and how to best collaborate with other organisations active in various sectors. If you are keen to take a lead in developing sector-based organising within the LWA, get in touch with Natalia in the Membership Team.



Diagram Summary of Branch and Regional Teams and Coordinators



3.3 Member Led Working Groups

The LWA can create working groups to develop work on specific topics or in specific sectors. These topics can vary and cover any situation, from developing a policy paper or campaign to organising an event or training program. All LWA members can participate in working groups and members can propose working groups on important issues. If appropriate, a member of staff or coordination group should be a member of the working group and provide an information link to the LWA staff team and coordination group

The LWA has a commitment to supporting landworkers (or those seeking to do landwork) who come from marginalised backgrounds, or from identities who are traditionally excluded or underrepresented in landwork. Because of this, we support our members to organise in autonomous working groups based on identity.

The existing member led identity based groups in operation are listed below and operate by using google groups.

OOTL

Out on the Land

A working group of LWA members who identify as LGBTQIA+ to create a network within the LWA for support, event organising and exploring issues.

REAL

Racial Equality and Liberation

A working group of Black and People of Colour within the LWA membership.

FLAME

Food, Land, Agriculture: a Movement for Equality

A Landworkers' Alliance youth members working group.

If you would like to join any of these working groups then please email lauren.simpson@landworkersalliance.org.uk

Terms of reference for working groups are available on request.

3.4 Organisers' Assembly

The Landworkers' Alliance Organisers' Assembly is a democratic body which meets once a year and provides a space for the membership to develop and steer the work of the LWA, and strengthen the internal democratic organising of the union. The Organisers' Assembly brings together delegates from each region, Branch, sector and identity based working group (FLAME/youth, OOTL/lgbtqia+ and REAL/Black and People of Colour) in order to learn from each other and provide feedback and steer on the broader direction of travel of the LWA. The Organisers' Assembly aims to strengthen and support the work of members who volunteer their time to do amazing work within the LWA and offers an opportunity for collective learning, skill



sharing and network building for LWA organisers. It also seeks to build up the internal democracy of the LWA as the organisation grows bigger, and creates an opportunity for a diverse body of members to develop and steer the work of the LWA.

3.5 Members in Representational Roles

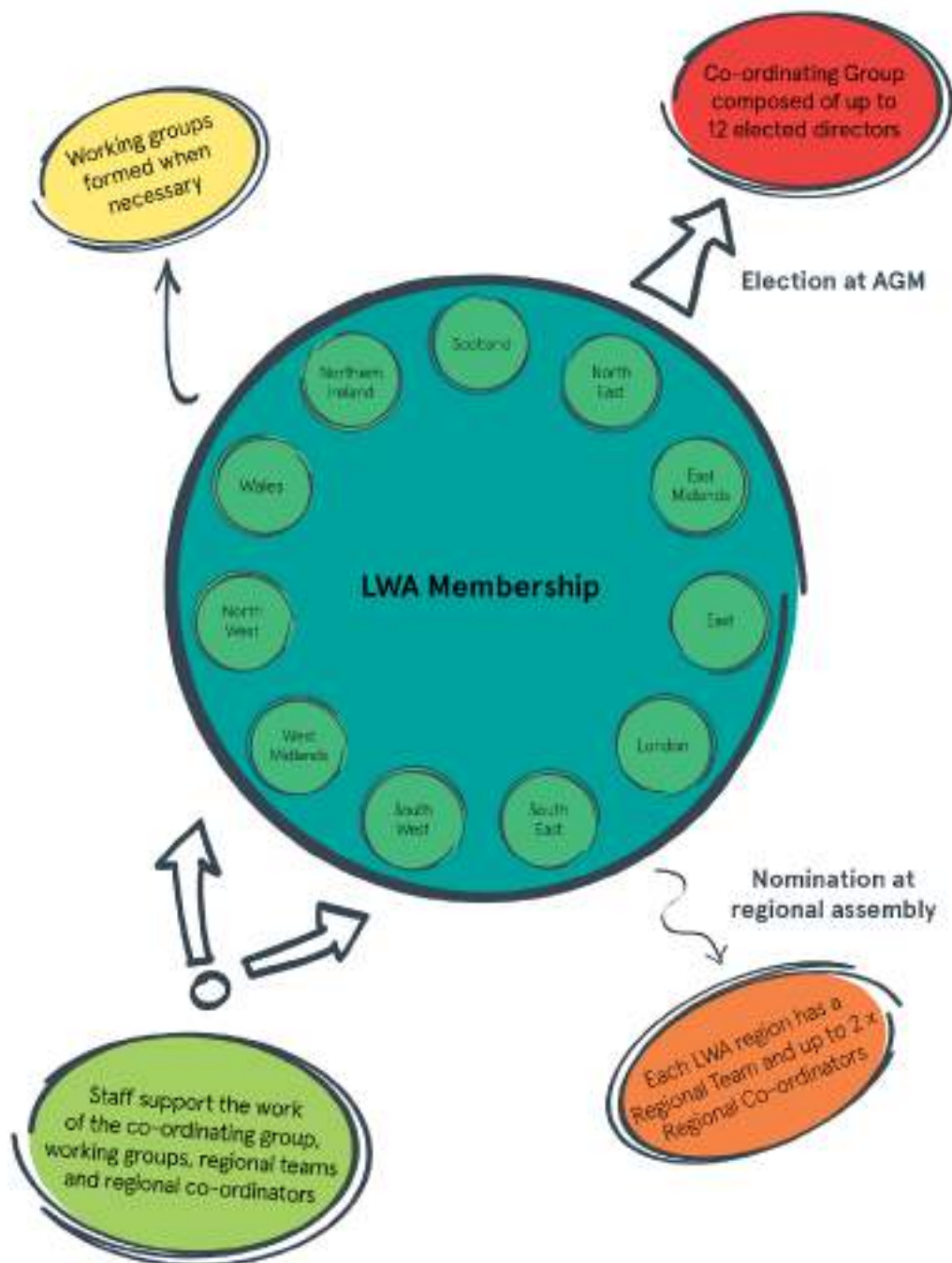
In some situations it is likely that members who are not on the Coordinating Group will be involved in long-term representation of the LWA or important and sensitive negotiations with funders and allies.

In this case the member in question should be assigned a member of the Coordinating Group to offer support and advice, and to provide an information link to the Coordinating group.

Terms of reference for members in representation roles are available on request. When a member takes up a role or mandate that is likely to be long term, important or sensitive, their link person in the coordinating group should go through the terms of reference with them. In cases where they are dealing with sensitive information they may also be required to complete a non-disclosure agreement.



3.6 Overview of the LWA's internal structure



3.7 Glossary of terms

Director: A member of the LWA elected at the AGM, or co-opted between AGMs where necessary to fill spaces on the Coordinating group. The Directors coordinate the strategic, financial, governmental and political work of the organisation and to represent the LWA politically.

Coordinating Group: The governing body of the LWA, made up of the directors.

Staff / Paid worker: Someone who works for the LWA as an employee or on a self employed basis.

UK Organisers' Assembly: A group meeting once or twice per year made up of representatives of Branches, regions, sectors and member groups.

Branch: The four Branches of the LWA are England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Region: A subdivision of a Branch.

Sector: A grouping of members based on the kinds of enterprises they are involved in.

Branch or Regional Organising Teams: A group of members from a Branch or region that work together to coordinate activities at that level of the organisation.

Member: Anyone who has signed up to be a member of the LWA. Members must be actively making a significant part of their livelihoods from land-based work and support the principles of Food Sovereignty.

Supporter: A person or organisation that signs up to support the work of the LWA. Supporters do not have to be engaged in land-based work and do not have voting powers at the AGM.

5. Funding and Finances

The LWA is funded by a combination of self-generated income, donations and grants. Self-generated income is primarily from Membership fees, Supporter subscriptions, Merchandise sales and Events.

The LWA is currently working on grants funded by the following trusts and organisations:

- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Thirty Percy Foundation
- Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
- Friends Provident Foundation



- Erasmus+
- Horizon 2020
- Lush
- The Roddick Foundation
- The Princes Countryside Fund
- Farming the Future
- National Lottery Community Resilience Fund

Grant funders and projects change regularly, we aim to keep an up to date list on our website.

Our latest accounts are available from the Companies House website or by request.

6. Staff and Key contacts

Contact details for Branch and regional teams, as well as staff and Directors are kept up to date on our website. Our Email address format for all staff/directors is firstname.lastname@landworkersalliance.org.uk

If you are unable to find the information you are looking for, and for general enquiries it is best to contact: info@landworkersalliance.org.uk

Staff and paid workers

Operations Team

Operations Coordinator (Finance and Fundraising)
Seeta Rajani

Operations Coordinator (HR and Governance)
Charlotte Steel

Operations Coordinator (HR and Governance)
Hannah Leigh Mackie

Operations Coordinator (HR and Governance)
Dee Butterly

Comms Team

Media and Communications Coordinator
Steph Wetherell

Campaigns Communications Coordinator
Yali Banton-Heath

Press Officer
Joanna Blundell



Merchandise & Sales Team

Marketing, Sales and Merchandise Coordinators

Erin Welch

Roberta Emmott

Sally Lai

Membership Team

Membership Secretary

Lauren Simpson

Membership Engagement and Democracy Coordinator

Natalia Szarek

England Membership Engagement Coordinator

Robyn Minogue

Scotland Membership Engagement Coordinator

Clem Sandison

Cymru Membership Engagement Coordinator

Amber Wheeler

Woodland Membership and Advocacy Coordinator

Olly Craigan

Cultivating Justice project coordinator

Ez North

Events Team

Events & Land Skills Fair Coordinator

Brigite Rowan

Land Skills Fair Coordinator

Bella Thompson

Campaigns Team

Campaigns Coordinator

Jyoti Fernandes

Horticulture Campaigns Coordinator

Rebecca Laughton

Scotland Policy and Campaigns Coordinator

Tara Wight

Cymru & New Entrant Policy Coordinator

Holly Tomlinson



Food Justice Policy Coordinator
Dee Woods

Youth Land Justice Mobiliser - Gloucestershire
Anya Whiteside

Agroecology Research Coordinator
Kate Briton

Migrant Worker Solidarity project coordinator
Catherine McAndrew

Climate, Land-use and Forestry Campaigns Coordinator
Oliver Rodker

Agroecology Training & Exchange Team

Resilient Local Food Systems Project Coordinator
Tony Little

Welsh Food Hubs/Resilient Local Food Systems Assistant
Peter Samsom

Traineeship Program Coordinator
Lucy Saville

Cymru Traineeship Network Coordinator
Rhian Williams

Farmstart and Training Project Coordinator
Hatty Richards

Coordinating Group members

Jyoti Fernandes	Gerald Miles
Oliver Craigan	Ruth Hancock
Roz Corbett	Dee Woods
Adam Payne	Oliver Rodker
Charlotte Steel	Rebecca Stevenson
Beni Stewart	Kate McEvoy

Branch, Regional and Sector Coordinators

Check the website or get in touch with natalia.szarek@landworkersalliance.org.uk for up to date contact information for Branch, regional and sector coordinators

7. Internal Policies and Governance

The LWA Articles of Association, and governing policies are available to members upon request. To access them email info@landworkersalliance.org.uk





Get in touch today



info@landworkersalliance.org.uk



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