

Public Minutes for Coordinating Group Meeting

15th August 2025 - online

- **Coordinating Group Members Present:** Col Gordon, Dionysios 'Dennis' Toulaitos, Hamish Evans, Jo Kamal (morning) Jo Poulton, Rebecca Stevenson, Ronja Schlumberger, Roz Corbett, Susanna Waters
- **Coordinating Group Member Apologies:** Steve Smith, Beni Stewart, Dee Woods,
- **Operations Team members present:** Anaelle Bouabdelli, Dee Butterly
- **Membership Secretary Present:** Lauren Simpson
- **Other staff members present for relevant sections:** Ali Taherzadeh, Cam Jarvis, Natalia Szarek,

Agenda	Key Discussion Points	Actions, Next Steps & Outcomes
1. Standing Items		
Operations quarterly report, presentation and proposals		
Presentation of overview of operational work in last 3 months	<p>Staff Leavers No staff leavers during this quarter</p> <p>New Starters: No new starters in this quarter</p> <p>Current FTE staff: 16 (28 individual staff members)</p> <p>Revised GDPR policies have been launched including</p>	GDPR staff training to be completed in September.

	<p>Work is continuing on making a more formal and clear complaints procedure.</p> <p>The operations team have completed a series of new policy documents (grievance, disciplinary, redundancy, wellbeing, parental leave, other leave, Varying Terms of Employment) each reviewed by different staff members collectively.</p> <p><u>Staff Structure:</u> Work is continuing to transition the staff team to a Sociocratic structure. Staff attended initial training in July.</p> <p>The key 'department circles' which would replace current staff teams are being considered to match the key strands coming out of the next 5 year strategy writing process</p>	<p>The Staff structure working group are working on an implementation timeline to begin early 2026 to be proposed to staff, alongside the decision making process to finalise the details.</p>
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Finance and fundraising quarterly report, presentation and proposals

Presentation of overview financial situation, fundraising focuses and next steps

The quarterly finance report was presented and discussed for the third quarter of the financial year.

The 2023/2024 accounts have been submitted to HMRC

With the funding shortfall projected for the next financial year 2025/26 it was decided at an extraordinary CG meeting on 8th July that cuts needed to be made to protect the longer term financial stability of the organisation, with an agreed level of spending of reserves. The level of cuts has been agreed at £38k of overheads and £45k of payroll which equates to 9 person days per week.

A communication describing the LWA's current funding shortfall was sent to the membership and supporters w/c 18th August.

The 2025/2026 budget was signed off by the CG - with agreed budget cuts to overheads and staff costs. Agreed cuts in overheads include a reduced comms overheads budget, having the 2026 AGM online rather than in person and a reduced CG budget.

Clear fundraising targets are in place to continue the LWA's work.

A review of the LWAs bank accounts and approach to ethical investment is in process.

A budget mid year review is scheduled for March 2026 to see if any expenditure can be increased based on any increased income and to assess the financial situation for the 2026/27 financial year.

Staff have been invited to consider any voluntary reduction in hours, or voluntary redundancy which would be discussed and decided upon on a case by case basis.

A process is ongoing to determine the detail of the payroll reduction by 9 person days per week including which staff will be in 'risk of redundancy pools', what the selection criteria will be to determine what redundancies are made and through what process the criteria will be applied. The timeline is for the payroll costs to be reduced by January 2026 giving as long a notice period as possible to those affected.

	<p>Fundraising:</p> <p>Successes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are partnered on a bid to Farming the Future with Sustain to take forward some of the recommendations from the Local Food Plan report. • In collaboration with the CSA network, Tamar Grow Local, Shared Assets, and Pathways to Land for BPOC collective, we were successful in our bid with Farming the Future towards the Landmatch project to cover some of LWA's staff time and some related project costs. • A collaboration with CFGN, <i>Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide</i> which will address barriers to new entrants focussing on land access for minoritized groups, was successful in its bid to Farming the Future. There are no funds directly for LWA, but some financial support for members participation. • A bid to Farming the Future to expand the Universal Basic Income for Farmers project into Scotland was successful including some paid time for Scotland Policy and Campaigns. <p>Not successful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We were unfortunately not successful in other Farming the Future bids. Namely, ARC and a collaboration with the Scottish Crofting Federation. We were a smaller partner on other bids. <p>Submitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding bids have been submitted to the Evan Cornish Foundation, Esmee Fairbairn and Patagonia Foundation for the continuation of work strands on Migrant Solidarity, The 	
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	<p>Agroecology Learning Collective (TALC) and Land Justice in Scotland.</p> <p>In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications are in process for The UK Fund, John Ellerman, Lipman Miliband and the Pebble Trust for various different strands of work. 	
Working group and staff team reports and updates		
Democracy and Governance Working Group	<p>The Democracy and Governance Working Group is continuing its work in its two main workstreams - but currently focusing entirely on the 2026 - 2030 strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational Strategy: The Strategy writing working group has drafted parts 1 and 2 of the strategy and received feedback from Member Organisers, Staff and the CG in a series of feedback workshops. <p>Part 3 is in the process of being drafted.</p> <p>During the meeting the strategy writing working group ran a feedback workshop with the CG focusing on a few key framings to be considered in the strategy draft document e.g. the wording of the LWA's purpose, vision and theory of change, having a definition of a landworker and the use of the word 'union' as describing the LWA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational Structure: Work on developing the new General Assembly is ongoing alongside the strategy work and staff restructure. (but on the back burner as the strategy is the focus) 	<p>The second draft of strategy (parts 1 and 2) and the first draft of Part 3 will be circulated to Member Organisers, staff and CG for a further round of feedback.</p> <p>The final draft is planned to be ratified at the November 2025 CG meeting.</p>

The HR working group report	The HRWG is currently focused on implementing the reduction in payroll costs by following a legal and collective process to determine which 9 person days per week are cut as agreed for the next financial year's budget. More detail above.	
Comms Working Group	The Comms working group didn't convene in this quarter.	
Staff team reports	<p>The CG received pre-recorded/written updates from each staff team with the LWA - detailing a full range of the work the LWA staff team delivers from membership engagement, campaigns and advocacy work, new entrant training and support work, the 2026 calendar and much more. The weekly members bulletin is a great place to keep up to date with our work or check out all our publications and annual reports on our website.</p> <p>Work on staff structure and ways of working is being developed through sociocracy by the staff structure working group.</p>	
2. Matters arising		
Member Services & Support	<p>The CG were updated by staff member Ali Taherzadeh on the feasibility project to develop more tangible member services and support and the key principles guiding this work.</p> <p>The Key aims of this project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support members to develop successful agroecological livelihoods that can contribute to resilient local food systems and sustainable fuel, fibre and other products from the land. • To increase membership numbers and income and support retention of members • To support members' health and wellbeing in their agroecological landwork 	The timeline is to complete the feasibility project by March 2026 with a view of having a business and implementation plan for a relaunch of the membership offering later in 2026

Principles

A membership services and support offer should:

1. Be financially sustainable
 - The core of the services and support offer built into the membership fee model so services can be consistently offered rather than being grant-dependent
2. Draw on existing members' knowledge
 - Recognising and making best use of the wealth of knowledge and experience within the membership
3. Facilitate knowledge sharing
 - Creating opportunities and providing support for horizontal learning and collective solutions between members
4. Provide advice and services inline with agroecological principles
 - Ensuring any advice, recommended professional, or signposted support is appropriate for members' contexts and aligned with our principles.
5. Strengthen the movement ecosystem
 - Involve collaboration with other organisations, supporting each other's work rather than competing.
6. Address equity across nations
 - Seeking to address imbalances in support and services between and within the nations
7. Address injustice and inequity
 - Identifying where members need support because they are marginalised by their identity or position in the food system or their workplace

	<p>8. Be accessible to all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making sure that all members can easily access support and know what services are available to them <p>9. Not put LWA in legal or financial difficulty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making clear the boundaries of support and services and ensuring LWA does not place itself in positions of legal liability <p>Specifically the CG were asked to feed back on the proposal to pursue working with an insurance broker Nature Save to help members find more suitable insurance for agroecological and often smaller scale enterprises. As this will take some time the request was to begin this work now - which was approved.</p>	<p>Ali is going ahead with pursuing an insurance offering through brokers Nature Save as part of a wider membership services and support offering.</p>
CG election process	<p>A proposal of changes to the CG election process was approved.</p> <p>Changes include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the need for nominations to be seconded by two landworker members (having been a member for at least 2 years) - An election steering group to be formed with staff and CG members - Each candidate after initial nomination to complete an application process and be verified by the steering group before elections begin. Verification criteria includes an additional step of agreeing with the CG 'code of conduct' and visions, theory of change and values of the LWA. - A clear process is outlined for what happens if any concern is raised about any candidate during the election process. 	<p>The process will begin in September 2025 for new CG members to join from the March 2026 AGM.</p>

	The CG 'code of conduct' is currently being finalised by members of the DemGov WG and will be brought to the CG for approval in September.	
CG Co-option process	A review process of the co-option process going forward will soon begin alongside a thorough review of the Articles of Association	A proposal for the process will be presented at the November CG meeting (delayed from May).
Land Skills Fair	The Land Skills Fair took place in July in Devon and the event was a success. This year it was a pared down version compared to 2022 and 2023 due to limited funding but still 451 bought tickets and the budget broke even with the grant funding secured and ticket sales.	There is a scheduled debrief and reporting of LSF 2025 between the LSF team and the finance team for September and discussions will begin with the LSF team, finance team and the CG shortly thereafter around the future planning of Land Skills Fair - with the need for a long term business and financing plan for it to be financially sustainable for the LWA. Referring back to the feasibility report commissioned in 2024 to assess how best to support the LSF in terms of business model.