

Trustee Meeting report

The 74th meeting of the Board of Trustees for the National Flood Forum (NFF) was held at the Custard Factory in Digbeth, Birmingham. Whilst the location was good in terms of being readily accessible, the main driver for using this venue was cost.

As with any board of director's meetings, the Trustees started off by agreeing that the minutes from the previous meeting were true and accurate record of that meeting. Finances were the next item on the agenda. It is very important to note that the NFF is not funded in any way. To remain viable Paul, Heather and the team have to seek out project funding, manage work closely to fit within very tight budgets and constantly seek out opportunities to either bolster funding or find synergies which save money. The discussion on finances was around other ways of gaining funding for the NFF and the quarterly financial report. Paul then gave the group an update on the Frames projects (click [here](#) for more information about Frames) and the finances associated with this.

The meeting moved onto discussing the future strategy of the NFF and our ways of working. There hasn't been an update of the strategy for a number of years, so it therefore doesn't reflect changes in flood risk management nor the additional pressures that we all face in trying to get flood risk managed more effectively. The NFF is the only people centric flood organisation and it is exceedingly important that our strategy reflects this. The new strategy is framed around the required tightly a set of focused short, medium and long-term goals which ensure that the NFF continues to support those living at risk of flooding and helps those recovering from flooding. The new strategy has been developed over a number of months and the board agreed that it was now in good shape subject to a few amendments raised during the discussion. We will launch the new strategy in the coming weeks.

To support the roll out of the new strategy it was felt that our current name; National Flood Forum does not really communicate effectively what it is that the NFF does, nor does it reflect our constant drive to get managing flood risk higher up that national agenda. The board agreed that the best name to support our work is National Flood Action and that we will slowly migrate to using this name, for example starting as NFF: National Flood Action.

The staff update gave us both sad and good news. Tabitha Whitcombe is moving to Devon. She will be sorely missed! We also have a new employee Katia Sanhueza-Pino who has been recruited to work on the Frames project in Kent. Whilst on the subject of the fantastic NFF staff, the board discussed how we could become more connected to the staff. For example, Trustees could attend staff training days, shadow staff for a day to gain an understanding of the pressures of the job or arranging social events. It is very important that we all work together as an equitable team, in particular when finances are tight and national flood risk continues to rise.

One of the potential ways of raising some additional funding is to host another conference this year. Traditionally NFF conferences have been held every other year and contribute greatly towards funding. The principle of holding a conference in February was agreed but subject to risk assessment, for example, to understand what risk there is of losing rather than making money is, what are the risks to our reputation of the conference not being successful, etc.

Philip Wight of the Scottish Flood Forum (SFF) then provided the board with an SFF update. Key points were that the SFF have been successful in gaining £20k to purchase a caravanette and that the new website is ready to be launched.

Finally, the meeting moved onto its AOB section. Items raised included:

- (1) the Environment Agency conducting a flood readiness exercise in Stratford in readiness for winter and whether the NFF should conduct similar 'preparedness' exercises.
- (2) Supporting the Thames RFCC who are looking to host a National Flood Action week. At the core is an award scheme around creating positive stories about flooding.
- (3) The dates for the Trustee meetings in 2018.