

Earth Our Mother Committee Meeting
Thursday 29th May, 7pm
Online, via Google Meet

Present: Sarah Barr - Session Facilitator (SRB), Bob Ball (BB), Kat Bradley (KB), Maddie Bromfield (MB), Nel Coleman (NC), Giulia Frontalini (GF), Seb Lemaire (SL), Simone McKenzie (SMK), Sophie McCarthy (SMC), Mairi McKay (MMK), Marc MacPdraig (MMP), Sammi Searle (SS).

Apologies: Alex Alderton (AA), Newton Harper (NH), Mailis Marty (MMR), Siri Pantzar (SP), Tamsyn Ball (TB)

In Attendance: Jenny Glover - Trustee (JG), Jenny Bloom - Chair (JB)

Minutes: SRB

Minutes:

1. Welcome and apologies

There were apologies from AA, NH, MMR, SP, TB.

Welcome to Nel Coleman, and to Newton Harper in absentia.

2. Review minutes of last meeting - 17/02/25 (SRB)

The minutes from 17/02/25 were approved with no amends.

3. Review Action Log (SRB)

Outstanding and In Progress actions were reviewed.

SMC to progress ECCAN registration, with support from NC.

BB noted that [Climate Outreach](#) conducts research on climate communications, beliefs, and management.

ACTION: Look through Climate Outreach's website resources for useful information into communications and management. (BB)

BB summarised findings on Sniffer (now renamed Verture), regarding flood adaptation and risk maps, noting that Calton Hill has no flood risk areas, but that all access points in Holyrood Park have relatively high surface flood risks. This information has been sent to the Board.

GF suggested EOM do research into viable current account provider options for the BFS Treasurer to consider. SMK and SB to conduct this research.

There was discussion of strategies in improving food vendor sustainability, with SMC and GF noting research done into 100% vegan vendors at appropriate price points/scales/offer types. It was noted that requesting changes to menus from existing vendors is likely to be challenging, and may lead to bad feeling in either vendors or community, as would ending relationships with longstanding beloved vendors who have no or few vegan options. The strategy suggested would be to aim for 100% vegan offers when there are gaps available for new vendors, and potentially instating a quota of at least one vegan vendor per festival, which can then increase over time as and when longstanding vendor relationships end naturally.

ACTION: Ask ECCAN if they know of a resource akin to Glasgow Green Map, beyond just the Edinburgh listings on Opengreenmap.org . (BB)

There was extensive discussion regarding an audience emissions survey. BB noted potential risk of negative misinterpretation of the intent in asking where people have come from, and the need to phrase this very carefully so that it is not misinterpreted. Carbon offsetting was discussed, with the committee noting serious issues with carbon offset schemes and generally recommending against it; however, BB noted that using ticket sales to deal with carbon issues is a good one that could be considered with a dedicated meeting and thorough research. NC noted that Sustrans may be able to provide resources in encouraging people who live more locally to use more sustainable transport methods, a strategy echoed by MB.

SL highlighted the idea of resources for people who live far away to create their own celebrations if they wish; this was echoed by MMP, who also suggested inviting expats in Scotland to set up their own groups within Beltane to see how we do it, and share that knowledge back home.

ACTION: Draft ideas for a blog post series on putting together your own Beltane or Samhuinn celebration. (SRB, MMP, SL)

ACTION: Research feasibility of inviting people living in Scotland temporarily to submit group proposals with the specific aim of learning how to set up a Beltane celebration in their home country. (MMP)

MB summarised the value of having a fossil fuel funding divestment/ethical sponsorships note listed on the website, and will research specific pledges BFS could sign.

4. Projects

4.1 Update on Past Event - Seed Paper Making Workshop (SRB - verbal)

SRB summarised the recent Seed Paper Making event at Augustine United Church during the run-up, noting that the venue, set up and timings worked well, with equipment retained suitable for similar events in the future.

4.2 Update on Prospective Event - Tree Care at Rob Thorburn's Farm (SRB - verbal)

SRB noted contact made with Rob Thorburn around arranging a potential tree care session over the summer and summarised the necessary associated tasks, including a risk assessment and logistics plan. JB noted that Rob is planning to move fairly soon, and so repeat events are not likely to be feasible.

4.3 Update on Almanac Project (SRB - verbal)

No update was provided, as the first meeting for the project team is still to be scheduled.

4.4 Chat about Potential Summer Litter Pick (SRB - verbal)

SB proposed arranging a combined litter pick and Himalayan Balsam control session in Blackford, on 12th or 13th July, and summarised the necessary tasks that need done for this.

MMK noted possible litter pick collaboration opportunities with Black Moon Botanica, and highlighted equipment available via Surfers Against Sewage. SMK also suggested Broughton Knowe Wood as a potential tree care site.

ACTION: Arrange a litter pick and Balsam Bash in Blackford for 12th or 13th July, as per results of EOM Discord availability poll. (SRB)

5. Ground Rules Chat re: expectations, structure, shared values, and communication (SRB)

Ground rules for communications within the committee were discussed and outlined as follows:

- There is no formal time commitment for being a committee member; members are encouraged to give time when they reasonably can, but there is no minimum number of hours required for participation.
- However, members are expected to either do the tasks they've agreed to take on, or let the committee know as soon as possible if they're no longer able to do a task so it can be delegated to other members.
- In large conversations, avoid repeating each other when we agree with someone, simply say that you agree.

- It is fine and expected that occasionally members will need to step back from tasks temporarily - in this case, the member should let the committee know they're taking time off, and list their current tasks so these can be delegated to other members.
- Tell members directly if you would like them to do something, as many of us struggle with noticing hints and indirect requests
- During meetings, there will be a comfort break every hour, unless members unanimously prefer to keep going.
- The committee will aim to have in-person or hybrid meetings where possible, rather than virtual-only meetings.
- The working system is as follows:
 - Meetings are chaired by a session facilitator, who can be any committee member.
 - In between meetings, ideas and suggestions are encouraged and should be shared to the Discord.
 - These are then collated and discussed in committee meetings, along with any other ideas members bring with them.
 - Members at those meetings can volunteer to do tasks in meetings (or you can volunteer to do a task when suggesting it/discussing it on the Discord).
 - Tasks then go on the committee's Action Log to track their progress.
 - The Action Log is reviewed at each Committee Meeting, going over progress made, and deciding on priorities for outstanding actions.
 - Big or shared tasks that become projects are also discussed separately during meetings, ideally with an update provided by the people leading the project.
 - Minutes from each meeting are typed up and sent to the Board, who are also welcome to attend any meeting.
 - The Committee requires the Board's blessing for decisions affecting the Society, beyond just making recommendations to the Board.

ACTION: Put the established committee Ground Rules into a separate document on the EOM Drive, and link to it in a pinned post on the EOM Discord. (SRB)

6. Review Discord Server ideas list (SRB)

The ideas list from the Discord was discussed.

A seed swap event was discussed, with BB and SRB concurring that Imbolc would be a good time for an event, and that it would be useful to get ahead on that now. JG noted the Power of Food Festival happening in mid June, which BB noted EOM could promote to the Society rather than try to do work with it at short notice.

ACTION: Request permission and a budget from the Board for hosting a Seed Swap event at Imbolc, that could be potentially extended to the general public and involve elements such as storytelling. Include preparing communications encouraging people to save seeds over the summer and autumn. (SRB)

SL summarised his suggestion around encouraging a small BFS cycling community, including potential for bike fixing sessions, and group cycle trips.

ACTION: Investigate community bike repair schemes and projects that BFS members could go along to and learn from (e.g. those at Bridgend Farmhouse, Leith Croft, the former Shrub), with a view to having similar events. (SL)

BB highlighted that the Climate Engagement Fund deadline is the 8th of June, which was discussed. BB noted that EOM should be prepared for small government funds being released in spring with little notice, due to underspend becoming available at financial year-end.

The potential for improving BFS' ear defender sustainability was discussed; noting that centralising the purchasing of ear plugs would take financial and logistical pressure off drum group GOs, and may also save money depending on ear protection device lifespans.

ACTION: Ask the Board about the feasibility of making a centralised purchase of mycelium-based ear plugs, and possibly a cache of ear defenders, for use by drum crews.

There was extensive discussion of the idea for a BFS community survey on sustainability, with SRB highlighting the importance of making sure what EOM does is in line with what the community would actually want and find useful.

BB suggested questions to learn opinions on the environment, and see where basic misinterpretations are happening so those can be cleared up and get more motivated people.

JG noted the importance of ensuring sensitive presentation of data gathered.

SL noted the importance of using a survey to know where EOM's priorities can be and where to put more effort into.

SRB suggested that the results of the survey would be mainly for use by the Committee, to inform our work, but that some broad survey data can be put together, for community interest, in a blog post for the website or the Beltonia Bugle.

BB suggested that a full discussion should be had on what the survey's aims are, what the questions should cover, and who the results are for, as an agenda item on the next EOM meeting.

JB highlighted the differences in survey topics discussed, noting a split between determining the membership's values to assess EOM's priorities and strategies, and gathering a list of ideas for improvements from the community. JB noted that these may be better as either two separate surveys, or two distinct sections on the same survey with careful wording.

ACTION: Add discussion of a BFS community survey on sustainability to the June EOM meeting agenda as a separate item. (SRB)

7. Rough scheduling for next meeting (SRB)

SRB proposed establishing a regular meeting date based on a day at the end of the month. It was noted that attendance during the run-up is likely to drop off, and that this is fine and expected. MMP noted that taking part in the festivals themselves do fall under the Committee's remit of helping people connect with sustainability and the environment, and that there should be no pressure to attend committee meetings during the run up, which was agreed by the committee.

ACTION: Put up a Discord poll for a regular meeting date based on a day of the last week of the month. When established, put together a schedule of dates from the present to May 2026, and circulate to the Committee and Board. (SRB)

8. AOB

SL asked what was needed regarding committee administration, which was discussed, with BB noting that having a pool of people available to facilitate a session and minuting will prevent the tasks falling on one or two people. SS noted that she would be happy to facilitate the next meeting.

ACTION: Put a poll on Discord to establish a pool of people happy to minute or facilitate future committee meetings. Use this data along with the meeting date schedule to determine a rota for minuting and facilitation. (SRB, BB)

ACTION: Send previous approved EOM minutes to Robert Lee for publishing on the website; send draft 29/05/25 minutes along with EOM meeting schedule to Board for information. (SRB)