

Farm Management Committee: Introduction and expectations

Introduction

Sutton Community Farm (SCF) operates as a democratic, community-led enterprise. To support this, we have re-structured ourselves as an member-based organisation¹. In 2015, we launched a not-for-profit share offer that enabled people in the community to become members of the farm, with the ability to help shape it.

Members stand for election to the Management Committee.

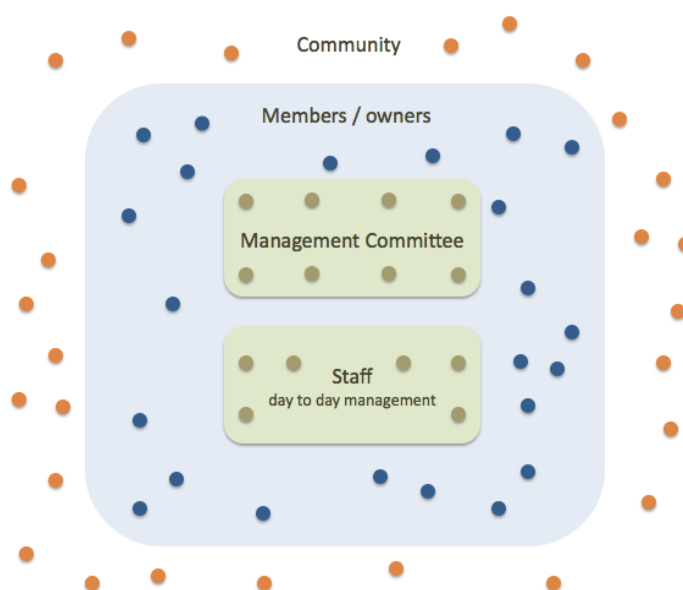


Figure 1. Diagram outlining the structure of Sutton Community Farm. The outside dots represent the wider community that the Farm benefits. The blue dots represent members of the farm, that may be elected onto the Management Committee.

What does the Management Committee do?

The Management Committee makes sure the farm is running well and is doing what it was set up to do. This includes supporting the mission of the farm² and performing these three main functions:

1. **Strategic direction**
Where are we heading?
Are we following our mission?
2. **Oversight**
Are we on track?
Does the farm have the money it needs?
Is it spending money sensibly?

¹ For more information about our legal structure, please see: <http://bit.ly/SCF-IPS-INFO>

² For our 4 aims, see our About Us page: suttoncommunityfarm.org.uk/about-us-sutton-community-farm/

3. Compliance

Are we legally and financially compliant?

Are we following our Rules as a society?

Are Health and Safety regulations adequately implemented?

The Management Committee is elected by members to oversee the affairs of Sutton Community Farm and are accountable to the membership. While the Management Committee is collectively responsible for everything done by, or in the name of Sutton Community Farm³ they may:

- employ a manager or any other staff it considers to be necessary and appropriate;
- delegate to any employee responsibility for day-to-day management of some or all of the farm's business;
- make use of the services of volunteers.

It's on this basis, that the Management Committee employs a General Manager to oversee the majority of the day-to-day management of the farm. The General Manager reports to the Management Committee in meetings every two months.

Members of the Management Committee do not get paid for their role – they act out of a desire to help people and make positive changes. Volunteering as a member of the Management Committee is rewarding and enjoyable.

What is the commitment?

As a minimum, you will be expected to attend Management Committee meetings at the farm, or an alternative venue as agreed. These usually take place once every two months. Additional duties may be required, depending on the outcomes of meetings and the role of the member.

As a member, you will also be acting as an ambassador for the farm and may decide to promote the farm's activities in the community - for example through networking and events.

The Annual Members' Meeting

Each year the Management Committee holds an Annual Members' Meeting. The purpose of this includes:

- receiving the Annual Accounts for the previous financial year; a report on the Farm's performance in the previous year, and plans for the current and next year;
- receiving a report on the state of the membership and the membership strategy;
- appointing any financial Auditors, and any other Auditors;
- declaring the results of elections of those who are to serve on the Management Committee.

What skills do we look for?

Members of the Management Committee should be organised, pragmatic and sensible, with experience in business. We expect the Management Committee to demonstrate wisdom, fairness and support the farm's ethos. We consider it beneficial to have representation of knowledge across the following areas:

- Finance
- Legal and compliance
- Sales and marketing
- Food and farming
- Fundraising
- Small business / enterprise development
- Volunteer management

We aim for the Committee to have a good balance of female and male representation and to support our

³ Taken from our Model Rules for Community Ownership: <http://bit.ly/scf-rules>

[Equal Opportunities Policy](#) in membership recruitment.

Members of staff at the farm share a set of core values and expect the Management Committee to support our aims of being: transparent, professional, democratic, inclusive, passionate, collaborative, innovative, inspiring, fun, pragmatic, promote equality and demonstrate leadership.

How many people will be on the Management Committee?

The Management Committee may comprise of up to 12 persons. Currently the committee comprises of seven members.

Specific roles

Each member of the management committee has joint responsibility for the management and control of Sutton Community Farm although certain board members are given specific roles, as detailed below. In fulfilling its roles and responsibilities, the committee will work with its staff and volunteers, and outside bodies. As agreed, certain activities are delegated to employees of the organisation.

Chairperson

The Chair takes a leadership role on the board. Key duties include:

- Ensuring meetings are run competently;
- Ensuring discussion and decision-making is democratic and everyone is able to participate fully in meetings;
- Holding the casting vote in the event of split decision;
- Preparing agendas for the meeting (in consultation with the General Manager);
- Ensuring relevant matters are discussed and appropriate decisions made;
- Chairing meetings and ensuring the Annual Members' Meetings are carried out according to the constitution.

Treasurer

The Management Committee have a duty to ensure the farm is taking appropriate financial decisions and financial monitoring. While the day-to-day finances are managed by the employees, the Treasurer has strong financial experience and is able to have oversight of the activity. Key duties include:

- Helping advise the Committee and General Manager on financial matters
- Oversight of the organisation's finances and familiarity with the cash flow and budget
- Working with the General Manager to present regular financial reports to the Committee, including raising items for discussion
- Ensure compliance with relevant financial regulation
- Working with the General Manager to prepare the Financial Report for the Annual Members' Meeting

Secretary

The Secretary will support various administrative activities. These may include:

- Convening meetings and booking rooms;
- Preparing agendas for meetings (in consultation with the Chairperson and staff);
- Taking the minutes of meetings;
- Ensuring back-up information is available at meetings where required

General Manager

The General Manager (GM) is responsible for ensuring Sutton Community Farm grows and sells fresh local food, trading as a successful social enterprise in south London. This means ensuring that the farm meets its business targets, and its wider economic, social and environmental targets, and that the farm team works effectively together. The GM is also responsible for effective engagement and communications with

stakeholders.

While the GM has authority and leads decision making on strategy, budgeting, staffing and operations, they should hold a commitment to the process of consensus decision making. For any major decisions concerning strategy of structural changes, this must be referred to the Management Committee for scrutiny and approval.

Farm Representative

The Management Committee has deemed it desirable to include another employee of the farm represented on the Committee. This ensures presentation of the day-to-day affairs of the enterprise does not only rest with the General Manager and enhances accountability and scrutiny.

Community Representative

As of August, 2016 a Community Representative has been sought for election to the Management Committee. Appointing a volunteer or customer onto the Committee ensures that the voice of the farm's broad community base is heard and represented.

Further information

Does the Management Committee have the power to do whatever they wish?

The Management Committee has certain powers that are clearly laid out in our governing document, and can only act within these powers. The Management Committee also works according to an agreed Code of Conduct ([available here](#)).

Where can I find the Farm's Governing Document?

Our Model Rules set out the way in which we are owned, organised and governed. This is the farm's most important document and should be read by all members of the Management Committee. It is available here: <http://bit.ly/scf-governance>

Are Members of the Management Committee insured?

As well as Public/Products Liability and Employer's Liability insurance cover, the farm has Directors & Officers Insurance. Details of this cover is available on request.

I have more questions, who shall I ask?

Please contact the General Manager, Charlotte Steel: charlotte@suttoncommunityfarm.org.uk / 07722 156097