

RAINBOW TURTLE REVIEW 2019

Susan McLean, June 2019

REPORT

Rainbow Turtle has been in existence since 2002. Since that time the Fair Trade landscape has changed significantly and in the last eighteen months Rainbow Turtle has been through a lot of changes. Therefore the Trustees felt this was a good time to review where Rainbow Turtle is currently and its future

To this end it was agreed to set up a series of individual, confidential conversations with Directors, Trustees and Employees and group sessions with Volunteers.

Number of Trustees who took part	5 of 5
Number of Directors	1 of 2
Number of Staff	2 of 2
Number of Volunteers	16
Observers	0 of 1

Specification Headings:

- ***Views currently held about Rainbow Turtle***
- ***Current view of the Strengths and Weakness of Rainbow Turtle***
- ***Current view of the future of Rainbow Turtle***
- ***What would be required to achieve a sound future***

On completion of the Review it has been agreed to create an Action Plan taking full account of the findings.

These Summaries are based on the views expressed by Trustees, Directors and Staff of Rainbow Turtle.

Views currently held about Rainbow Turtle

Rainbow Turtle is highly thought of, the concept, the aims and purpose. It is currently considered unstable and requires major change.

Although respected, the current management is considered to have no strategy and concentrates on financial matters.

The organisation appears to be drifting and lacking energy. There is little follow-up when ideas are discussed and agreed

Communication is poor and often confusing. Meetings lack purpose

The debt is a major factor to all concerned

Current view of the Strengths and Weakness of Rainbow Turtle

Strengths:

The people involved are considered its strength

The shop is an obvious visible reminder and there is a community of locals who stay loyal. The education element in schools is considered very positively

Support and goodwill abounds

Weaknesses:

There appears to be little understanding of who is doing what and a strong sense of no direction and lack of vision.

There is little encouragement or space to discuss issues or seek clarification.

Lack of information causes anxiety

Fair Trade issues, the main purpose, appear to be lost

Lack of support to staff and volunteers causes concern. The management structure is not transparent and little attention is paid to any concern which is (reluctantly) offered

There is unease that no one is taking responsibility for financial control

There is difficulty in challenging someone in a senior position who is also a volunteer.

There is unease that the Trustees have no impact

What is the current view of the future of Rainbow Turtle?

Concern expressed about the viability of the shop. As things are currently there is a fairly consistent pessimistic view.

Without major changes there is concern that closure is inevitable but saving the shop is important

What would be required to achieve a sound future

Consider the skills of the Trustees. There is no sense of the Trustees having an impact or expected to have an impact.

Consider re-location of the shop with possibility of diverse activities e.g. Cafe

Look to Adult educational workshops etc. Be more involved in local events

Examine sound funding sources

Improving staff numbers - current staff are considered exceptional but the number inadequate

These Summaries are based on the views expressed by the Volunteers of Rainbow Turtle

Views currently held about Rainbow Turtle

Rainbow Turtle is well thought of and considered a unique Fair Trade and eco-friendly organisation with a good reputation locally.

There is strong commitment from staff and volunteers but believed to be struggling to be viable with major profitability issues.

There is concern of the lack of drive in the organisation with no sense of strategy or direction

Current view of the Strengths and Weakness of Rainbow Turtle

Strengths:

People who care about the organisation and have a sense of purpose

The enthusiasm of the volunteers and staff who are fully committed and are dedicated to the concept of Fair Trade together with abilities, talents and willingness to embrace change

Shop is in a good position with unique stock in terms of originality, variety and refills

Passion and commitment abound – a happy place

Weaknesses:

Lack of clear strategy for short and long term future

Uncertain or poor communication causing volunteers to feel on the outside. Not using or realising the human assets available.

Lack of support from, and engagement with, Trustees. No understanding of how to promote ideas, concerns or other issues to management. There is a serious lack of knowing who is responsible for what.

There is a significant shortage of stock. Expected items often not available- has impact on regular customers. It is believed that there is some deterioration in stock quality and range. No information on unique items.

The Shop front is in need of improvement. The window displays are considered in need of an overhaul with advertising a serious miss in promoting and developing the image and brand

Absence of Social Media presence

Reduction in activities out with the shop for example – Events, Workshops aimed at adult participants - local presence has been reduced

Lacking a robust recruitment process and induction period

What is the current view of the future of Rainbow Turtle?

If no changes made – decline in profitability to the point of closing

Bleak if unable to generate more income

Can continue only if open to change

Looking for a well-run, well stocked interesting shop to attract customers

Without an uplift it will disappear

What would be required to achieve a sound future?

Improvement in communication between board, staff and volunteers

More boldness in business with a joint marketing initiative

Acknowledging and using current and future Volunteers skills

Better time usage of volunteers with a dedicated Volunteer organiser

Trusting and empowering volunteers e.g. listing all events where stalls could be organised and proposing volunteers to do them

Increased use of out of shop activities extending to Adult activities promoting concept, understanding and profit. Continue to promote and develop school involvement

Clear routes to engaging within the organisation for all personnel

One small step that the organisation should/could take

Full list given:

Bring back stalls as a regular activity – not just one-offs

Involve volunteer group more specifically in events which promote/sell Fair Trade

Advertise more

Better induction process – organised induction

Give volunteers responsibility for e.g. window dressing, in charge of web site, social activities, events etc.etc.etc.

Events calendar for people to volunteer to do stalls at them

More inclusion of the volunteers in the whole organisation events

Think, talk to each other

Calendar for changing shop windows. Rota of volunteers to do new displays

Better information flow between/among trustee's council, management and volunteers

Keeping staff and volunteers better informed

Find volunteers with skills and time to do IT and nothing else

We don't know what the priority is

Making it more efficient – do things

Prioritise the basics

Create stories of the origin of some of the pieces

Something has to change

Feedback is missing

Communication is a two way flow

Get back to Adult Workshops- need to sustain enthusiasm in Adulthood.