



MASH TUN PALACE
CRAFT BEER & KITCHEN
UPSTAIRS

Hackspace 2.0

A proposal

Photo: 1st public meeting in the Mash Tun 2014

What this presentation contains

- Some history and context to the Hackspace
- Pros and cons of Do-Ocracy and Democracy
- A proposed structure based on existing but clarified ie Admin Team, Leads and Core Team working together
- Role descriptions
- Suggestions for people to fulfil roles
- Proposal and decision-making process
- Actions
- Supplementary slides – these are work in progress to discuss at a later date

Who did this?

- As agreed at the last Zoom meeting, **Marion** put together a presentation to explain her recommendation for the Hackspace structure and operation, addressing some of the issues that came up in the review
- She asked working party of members to help and to sense-check – **Alan, James, Ben and Barny**
- It is presented to the members for consideration, and the recommendation is that we accept it and then review in six months time to see if anything needs adjusting
- There will be a presentation and discussion at an open Zoom meeting on **Tuesday 27 October 8.30pm**
- The intention is that all aspects will be on ongoing review

Summary

Headlines

- A **structure** of Admin Team, Core Team and Lead Maintainers, appointed by agreement and reviewed as we go along
- Clear lines of **communication**/who to contact
- Clarified **proposal and decision-making** processes – any member can propose, all members can comment, Admin Team sums up, Core Team adjudicates if necessary – final say is with core team
- Better **documentation** and access to documents
- **Annual meeting** to review the past year, look at finances etc, plan for the forthcoming year
- Regular **open member meetings** via Zoom to discuss any issues and ideas plus quarterly email newsletters
- Clarification of **who owns what**, usage and storage
- **To be worked on** – development of policies such as behaviour, grievance, equality, role descriptions etc

Summary

Immediate actions

- Confirm the Admin Team
- Agree the Core Team and set up a channel
- Make a list of Lead roles needed from suggestions
- Ask for volunteers for Lead Maintainer roles – add and amend as necessary
- Implement and trial Proposal and Decision-making processes
- Monitor the actions that are already underway over next twelve months eg Wiki, equipment list, documentations and resolve
- Set up next member discussion Zoom meeting

Longer term

- Look at various policies and practices, using an ‘agile’ way of working – trial and review to improve practices inc a grievance procedure
- Agree more detailed role descriptions
- Keep the essence and improve the areas that have been neglected

Some background

Where we came from

- The Hackspace has been running for 6 years
- It has grown considerably in that time – from 5-60+ members and no space to two large spaces, £0 to £20k reserves
- It is, by and large, very successful and is run effectively and safely
- When we set up, we followed the basic principles of other hackspaces and makerspaces, drawing heavily from Toby's experience of London Hackspace, other hackspaces and Marion's experience of running Norwich Fringe Festival and other non-profit community groups
- Collective management, involving members in the way the hackspace is run and spreading responsibility according to skills and experience
- Values more similar to a co-operative than a charity or corporate business
- Think like **'open-source' leadership and management**

From the Constitution

We are an Unincorporated Association,
a club governed by its members for its members

Aims of the Hackspace

- To be a community of like-minded people interested in making things
- To have a self-funded, community-run, not-for-profit shared physical workspace.
- To have shared equipment, tools, materials, skills, experience and support.
- To run activities and sessions where people can learn new things
- To run activities and projects that cannot be done, or are harder, as an individual
- To extend access to learning skills and new technology to a wide range of people who do not have their own facilities
- To have fun and provide support to each other

An opportunity to be different

- Hackspace members are often unconventional thinkers who don't always fit the corporate environment, many have got out of it and don't want it in their leisure
- This is an opportunity to devise a system of management that suits us rather than just following conventional structures
- Hacking the 'normal' committee system of managing a club to fit our needs whilst being inclusive, flexible, accountable and efficiently run
- Should grow organically according to the desires, interests, talents and experience of the members
- Reinventing not-for-profit company-style organisation which is more like a co-operative or community – not a corporate business
- **Hackspace is for our pleasure, should be enjoyable and not hard work or stressful – it is not a paid job**
- **We do the best we can and treat each other well**

Do-Ocracy v Democracy

- **Do-Ocracy** – people appointed to a range of responsibilities according to their skills, experience and willingness
- Any member can suggest a change or development but should be prepared to follow it up with action, subject to group agreement – or ask for help to do so
- Inclusive - all members can have a say in decision-making, discussion and ideas – more involvement
- Decisions are based on no significant disagreement rather than majority decision – I want to do/buy this, are there any objections
- More like ‘open-source’ management of the space
- Ideas can get de-railed by other people’s opinions

Do-Ocracy v Democracy

- **Democracy** – a small number people elected to a committee according to willingness and popularity
- Committee becomes accountable to membership for actions and decisions – can be onerous
- Members can become distanced from developments – less involvement
- Reliance on a small number of people
- Decisions wait for committee meetings, rather than rolling system of proposals and decision-making
- Less complicated as fewer people involved in decisions, ideas and running the space

Limitations of a Democracy/Conventional committee system

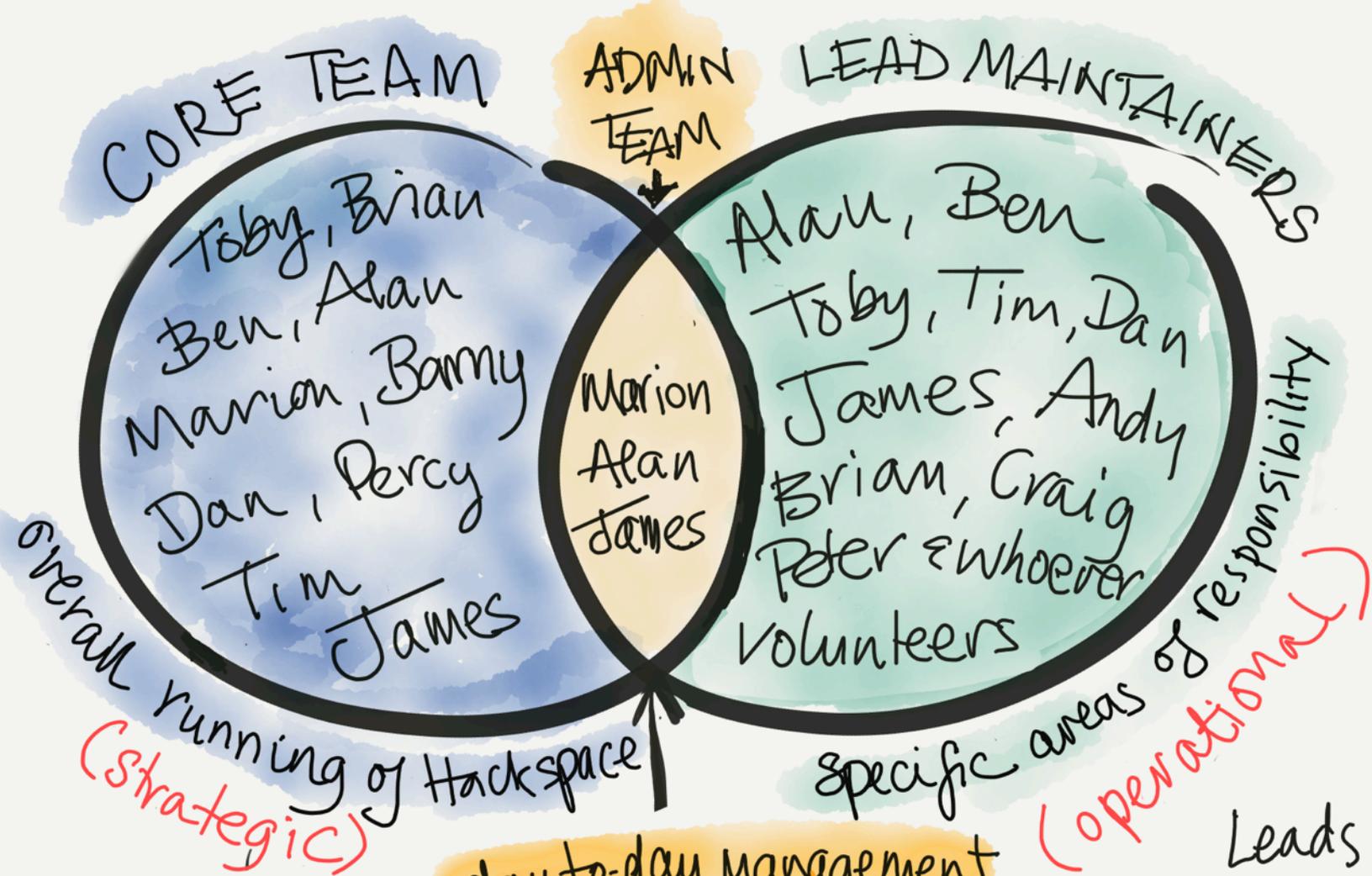
- Just counting up votes doesn't allow for the value or strength of an opinion – someone may have deeper knowledge or experience that goes against the general trend
- Running the club is left in the hands of a few people – can lead to rest of membership being disassociated
- Doesn't make best use of the knowledge within the membership
- Some people may be willing to take on *some* responsibility but averse to committees or time/inclination is limited
- Risk of over-bureaucracy and onerous admin
- Responsibility and commitment can put people off getting involved
- Responsibility for decision-making means that committee has to be interested and knowledgeable in all areas of activity regardless of experience and field of interest – more onerous than spreading across a wider knowledge-base
- Have to wait for meetings and getting quorate attendance/dates can be hard

Proposing a **Do-Ocracy**

Structure

Structure

- **Admin team** – for **day-to-day** management of the space and membership – ideally 3 people – see slides 16/17
- **Lead maintainers** – **operational and practical** team.
Members who have knowledge and experience and are willing to maintain an area of responsibility – eg tools, equipment, space
- **Core Team** – provides **strategic leadership**.
Invoked when bigger or difficult decisions are needed, meeting as necessary.
- Members can be part of one, two or all three.
Individual members decide how much they want to get involved or responsibility they take on
- Any member can make a suggestion for improvement, projects, new equipment or areas of activity
- Roles to be posted in the space and on Wiki so that members know who is who – mug shots?



CORE TEAM

ADMIN TEAM

LEAD MAINTAINERS

Toby, Brian
Ben, Alan
Marion, Barny
Dan, Percy
Tim
James

Marion
Alan
James

Alan, Ben
Toby, Tim, Dan
James, Andy
Brian, Craig
Peter & whoever
Volunteers

Overall running of Hackspace
(strategic)

day to-day management
(admin)

specific areas of responsibility
(operational)

Leads have 'expert' knowledge

All members can propose & have a say in decision

Small decisions, co-ordination works across core & maintainers

Admin Team

Small, nimble team for **day-to-day management of the space smaller decisions
And first point of contact for members**

- Small, very involved, flexible and responsive
- Makes day-to-day running decisions
- Sums up and records proposals in decision-making process
- Sanctions payments under £50
- Is first point of contact for members, new and existing
- Is front face to public and external partners
- Looks after finances and essential admin
- Can take a lot of the responsibility/management on a day-to day basis
- Keeps informed on Hackspace activity

Admin Team

Three people : Marion, Alan, James

Admin Lead - Marion

Finances – Alan

Development – James

- Between them encompass the role of an executive team – chair, treasurer, secretary
- Sharing tasks as necessary and befitting experience and interests
- Make sure constitution is enacted
- Look after membership data, finances, rent, lease, insurance etc
- Make day-to-day decisions to ensure smooth running of the space
- Welcome and be first point of contact for new members
- Resolution of grievance and issues (*procedure to be decided)
- Convening meetings as necessary
- Keep track of proposals and decisions
- Make sure documents & comms etc are reasonably up-to-date and Leads are effective
- Any other tasks or issues that need addressing before referring to the general membership, or passing to core team if not easily sorted or resolved

Lead Maintainers

People who volunteer to take on specific **operational responsibilities as suits their time, availability, skills, knowledge and experience – an active role that enables other members to use and enjoy the space**

- Areas (spaces, equipment, tasks etc) defined and agreed by Core Team and member suggestions
- ‘Areas’ can be as large as a whole room or as small as a single piece of equipment or activity – spread the load and make roles manageable and enjoyable
- Can be teams of people – eg Lead and assistants/minions*
- Any member can offer to take on a role/task, small or large, preferably sitting under an area Lead eg Workshop, 3D printing or Metalspace
- Linked into Core Team as members can be both Core and Leads
- Once accepted as a Lead Maintainer, to fulfill the role as best they can, or hand it on, preferably finding a new person to follow on
- Members should refer to Lead before making changes that affect the area or equipment
- Leads have a major say in decisions affecting their ‘area’ and in the case of argument or dispute, may have the final say – tho’ in cases where it affects whole Hackspace membership that may be Core Team
- Leads can buy consumables and necessities as required without a formal proposal, or a budget can be allocated in some areas if appropriate
- Some areas of responsibility are temporary (such as a project) or ongoing and key such as a space or workshop
- **see last slide for some suggestions of areas and people*

Core Team

People who volunteer to take on **strategic responsibilities for the Hackspace as a whole, sort out problems and bigger decisions**

- Core Team takes overall responsibility of the Hackspace
- Strategic decisions, development, grievances, policies, larger decisions - anything that affects the whole space (rather than individual operational areas).
- Is consulted when needed, convenes as and when necessary, and meets at least twice a year, virtually or physically – has a Slack Channel for instant communication
- Hosts AGM to celebrate and review past year and plan forthcoming year
- Admins and Leads can ask opinions of one or more Core Team members, advice and to sort out problems (esp if with Admin team) – discuss what is quorate, possibly 5?
- Can be called upon/invoked at any time for urgent/important items
- Oversees grievances
- Core team members have to have been an active and involved member for at least 6 months and be willing to take part in planning and discussion with the membership and the rest of the team, offering leadership and general direction on major issues
- Can also be in Admin Team or a Lead, or an ordinary member but expect to be mostly Leads
- Self-selected and agreed by rest of Core Team and general membership

Core Team

People who volunteer to take on **strategic responsibilities for the Hackspace as a whole, sort out problems and bigger decisions**

- The Core Team can and should co-opt the opinions of other members at any time to make best use of the knowledge and experience within the membership as a whole.
- Proposal for a Core Team or Management channel in Slack for those who wish to be involved in discussions about the management of the space and to support easy communication
- Core Team can be invoked in times of disagreement on a decision, even if it is a Lead area, and would have the final decision for the benefit of the whole membership.
- The Core Team could also be called upon to settle grievances, expel members should it be necessary and deal with any 'bad' behaviour, either carelessness or conscious discrimination or harassment.
- Core Team would agree and ratify policies and procedures even if another member writes them up and proposes them.
- The Core Team are the people deemed responsible for the space – this requires a willingness to accept a level of liability

Core Team

Proposal/nominations for Core Team

- Some people have been part of the development of the Hackspace since the early days and have been actively involved in the running and decisions of the space. These are the initial candidates for a Core Team (some people prefer the term management committee – it is the equivalent)
- I am putting these names forward as Core Team members. Some may also be Lead members and the Admin Team should be core members
- **Marion, Alan, Ben, Toby, Barny, Dan R, Brian, Percy, Tim, James M**
- Is there anyone else that would put themselves forward?

I suggest that anyone can become a core team member through being co-opted by the existing Core Team – the main qualification being a willingness to discuss issues and solve difficult problems through discussion for the benefit of the Hackspace overall, and be actively involved

They may act as a group or part of a group, as and when needed

Addressing issues

Some issues that were raised in the review and some solutions in hand

Addressing issues :

Recording proposals and decisions

- There has been a problem with recording discussions, proposals and decisions as Slack doesn't retain them (and nor do our brains)
- Also whether every decision needs a proposal and/or discussion
- **A proposal form is being piloted**
- Proposals, including decisions and actions, to be summarised and recorded by the Admin Team and stored in the Wiki
- Smaller decisions to be take by Admins or Leads but notified on Slack
- Discussions to take place openly on Slack – Dan has a plan to export discussions to archive
- Summary of discussions in proposal on Wiki as a record

Addressing issues :

Decision-making

- Decisions made (mostly*) by general discussion and membership agreement
- Finalised, summed up and recorded by Admin Team
- Process - a proposal is made (form provided) and posted on the Wiki and in #decision-making channel on Slack for discussion
- The proposal should contain costs, practicalities, implications, who will take action and timescale
- Discussion and questioning of the proposal takes place on Slack (people can also talk to each other) within a timescale stated
- All members can ask questions and express an opinion
- Small decisions may not need a full proposal but should be notified to membership via Slack
- At the end of the time period, a decision is made. If there is general agreement, the decision is positive, summed up by Admin Team and actions taken, (final actions recorded in Wiki)
- If there are valid objections, these are weighed against the agreements
- For certain decisions, a Core Team meeting may be called
- New members are advised to join decision-making if they want to be involved in how the space is run and money spent

- * If there is disagreement, then the final decision can be referred to the Core Team to assess if objections are valid and final balance of opinion for overall benefit of Hackspace and its members

Addressing issues :

Documentation and Communication

- **Documentation**

- This has been a problem as only a few people have had access to some documents, no central or easily accessible storage, lack of writing up
- The Wiki is addressing this to some extent
- Need Admins and Leads to write up – best to agree a common tone
- Proof-reading and sense check needed
- More info in the space ie signage and physical as well as digital and remote access to info
- Clarity on info and equipment ownership and usage

- **Meetings and communications**

- Monthly Zoom or physical member meetings (open to all members) to discuss matters arising, new ideas, (also suggestion box in the space)
- Annual meeting to look back on the year past and the year ahead – reports from all Leads to general membership
- Quarterly newsletter emailed to all members
- Admin website to host essential member documents as well as Wiki – link between them

Addressing issues :

Transparency

Transparency

- Some members want to be very involved in running the space and some don't and just want to be a user – either is fine
- If people choose not to be involved, that is their choice
- To be involved, people need to be proactive eg regularly (at least once a week) sign into Slack and to check #decision-making
- They can also make views known to the Admin Team
- To aid transparency, discussions and decisions should be posted on Slack to notify members and we will have Zoom meetings
- Discussions can take place in private (either physical or virtual) but conclusions should be posted up if possible/relevant
- If members choose not to be involved on Slack or Zoom then they are delegating decision-making to those that do, which again, is fine
- People need different ways to engage with the space, to suit them

Addressing issues: Behaviour and grievances

- Hackspace is a voluntary club not a paid job – should not be unpleasant or onerous
- We are a community and must treat each other well
- People should help rather than criticize and understand that ‘tasks’ and responsibilities have to fit around work and families
- Think again before posting or saying anything that might be construed as negative, even if you don’t mean it that way
- If you have a grievance or issue, don’t store it up, contact the Admin Team for a resolution, or a Core Team member – don’t let it fester and grow into a problem
- If you don’t feel comfortable dealing with something, ask for help from someone you trust
- All members should feel empowered to make suggestions for improvement of the hackspace
- All members should feel respected and well treated
- Monthly Zoom meetings and suggestion box in the space should enable issues and ideas to come forward before they become problematic
- Encourage communication
- More face-to-face get-togethers when allowed
- **Mainly, be nice to each other, trust each other and think the best of each other!**

Addressing issues: Slack

Slack is a great asset to Norwich Hackspace but also has some dangers, rather like a real workplace

- It is easy to be misunderstood
- It is easy to upset and offend people
- It is easy to miss out on conversations
- Some things happen quickly because people are 'in the room' and others are not
- It is easy to miss out on important discussion if you are not always on Slack

Solutions

- Think the best of people
- Be tolerant
- Be patient
- Think before reacting
- Give time for people to catch up

Many situations have their equivalent in real life – such as arguments and incompatible relationships so we need to be extra careful to try and keep a harmonious space

Addressing issues: Ownership of equipment & projects

This was raised as an issue – ie ownership of equipment and projects – esp when someone starts something and then leaves it – is it OK to pick that up and ‘interfere’?

Solutions - equipment

- More to be documented on the Wiki
- Most equipment is owned by Hackspace and hence can be used by anyone (subject to inductions). It is the member’s responsibility to use with care
- Associated projects ‘belong’ to the Hackspace – eg casting equipment, plastics, 3D printers etc
- Member-owned equipment eg MIG welder, mortiser where a member has brought in equipment for other members to use without restriction (subject to induction and proper use)
- Members should not, in principle, bring in equipment that cannot be used by other members. However, should this be the case for a specific and approved reason, it should be clearly labelled and respected by members

Solutions - projects

- It should be OK to start a project and leave it for a while if time and knowledge makes it hard to finish but accept that other members may want to get involved – just ask the ‘owner’ if they can take over or assist the project – be kindly
- Handing over of projects – one member starts and another picks it up later – members ask
- Labelling of projects and equipment with QR codes and ownership stickers

If in doubt who to ask or have issues, please talk to Admin Team or Core Team member for advice

Proposed actions

Immediate

- Agree the Admin Team
- Agree the Core Team and set up a channel
- Make a list of Lead roles needed from suggestions
- Ask for volunteers for Lead Maintainer roles – add and amend as necessary
- Implement Proposal and Decision-making processes
- Monitor the actions that are already underway over next six months eg Wiki
- Set up next member discussion Zoom meeting

Longer term

- Look at various policies and practices, using an ‘agile’ way of working – trial and review to improve practices inc a grievance procedure
- Agree roles and descriptions
- Agree the Hackspace has run very smoothly and grown significantly over the last 6 years - in spite of recent problems caused, mainly, by neglect
- Let’s keep the essence and improve the areas that have been neglected



Photo: Arduino Workshop
2019

To be discussed further

Some solutions that are being developed and will be reviewed, refined and amended as time goes on

We have some basic principles – written guidance cannot cover everything

It will take some time to refine ideas

Let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater!

Possible Lead areas (tbc)

New purchases or acquisitions need someone to take responsibility for their use and maintenance – volunteers needed to come forward and spread the load as much as possible. Taking on an area needs some commitment but should not feel like burden – people should offer what they can, when they can

- **3D printers – Lead Dan Robertson**
- D7 – Brian and Tim
- Enders – Dan, ?
-
- **Lasercutters - Lead Ben**
- Sharkfin – Ben and Peter
- plus inductors – Tim, Toby, Nicholas
-
- **CNC Lead – James M**
-
- **Woodworkshop - Lead Alan**
- Overall space - Alan
- Wood lathe –Brian
- Anything else?
-
- **Metalspace - Lead Toby**
- Overall space - Toby
- Forge ?
- Casting ?
- Welding ?
- Metal lathe ?
- Other equipment?
-
- **Booking system Ben**
-
- **Maslow – Lead Ben**
-
- **Member storage**
- Volunteer needed
-
- **Plastic recycling - Leads Brian and Andy**
- Overall Leads – Brian and Andy
- Grinder?
- Extruder - Andy?
- Oven?
-
- **Casting - Leads?**
- Brian and Tim?

- **IT and Network**
- Ben inc broadband, scheduling
-
- **Door Bot _ Lead Paul Johnston**
- Paul Johnston
- Barny Relph
-
- **Electronics bench**
- Not sure who this is currently @Percy? @nick cull? @Paul?
-
- **Website - Lead Toby**
- Programming - Toby
- Admin site - Marion
- Content - Craig
- Contributors – Everyone
-
- **Wiki – Lead Toby & Barny**
- Contributors – Leads and Admins
-
- **Admin - Leads Alan, Marion, James M**
- Accounts - Alan
- Membership and member data - Alan
- Banking and payments - Marion
- Communications, notices, logos and brand
- External projects and PR - Marion
- Tuck shop - Marion
- Lease & landlords - Marion
- New members welcome/ induction - Marion
- Key holder induction – Alan
- Lead member roles co-ordination
- Document storage
- Any admin tasks that arise
-
- **Events and workshops**
-
- **New tech and future developments**
- James Mason?
-