

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.17

Meeting Date: Wednesday 4th December 2019 at 10.00am

Meeting Location: Garden House, Clifton Park, Rotherham.

Meeting Called By: Councillor Brian Steele

Chair: Councillor Brian Steele

Secretary: Jack Taylor (Minutes John Palmer)

Present: Directors: - Al Dean, Mike Farrell, John Palmer, Councillor Brian Steele, Mohammed Suleman, Jack Taylor.

RMBC Officers – Andy Lee. & Tim Archer (part).

Apologies: There were no apologies tendered.

1. Declaration of interests by any board member.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of Board Meeting No 16 held on Monday 18th November 2019.

The minutes were agreed a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising

- Secretary reported that he had now submitted application for registration with the Information Commissioner and this had been confirmed and registration completed. Account for Fee (£40.00) presented to Treasurer to reimburse Secretary.
 - Pursuant to File Ref 16/85 AL agreed to provide a draft Allotment rental letter to Chairman for perusal prior to dispatch.
 - Chair to draft letter to all existing and new societies to inform of RAA status and contact details along with notes of meeting held 17th September.
 - It was agreed that Secretary should circulate to all Board Members email and telephone numbers of all Board Members. It was also noted that when emailing non Board Members BCC option should be selected to ensure other email address are not shared inadvertently.
- File Ref 17/88**

4. Financial Matters

- a. **Insurance costs** – public liability/employee liability/building (fire only). The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer reported on the position of obtaining insurance cover for the RAA. NAS membership (£3) per plot holder only gives cover to individual plot holders on their plots, there would still be a requirement for cover for the communal areas of sites. It was agreed that quotations should be sought for whole site cover from SHIELD and JOLF insurers for the following two options. The Board to consider quotations at its next meeting.
 - a) for all RAA sites,
 - b) for just directly managed sites (Society managed sites to obtain their own insurance).
- b. **Charitable status** - Secretary reported that he had contacted Co-op UK and the pros and cons of obtaining charitable status were considered. It was agreed that Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer should seek guidance from HMRC.

- c. **Financial regulations** - JP raised the following points for clarification and inclusion in the Financial Regulations.
- Only current bank account needed and electronic banking option to be included.
 - Accounting software – ‘Quick Book’ thought to be best option – final decision to be made following appointment of ‘Allotments Support Officer’ and their input into decision.
 - Petty Cash would be required and float of £25 being agreed to cover stationery purchase – petty cash book being required and receipts saved.
 - Ordering procedure within accounting software.
 - Board to agree list of preferred contractors to carry out emergency type work to a maximum expenditure of £500.
 - All work above £500 to be subject to three quotations.
 - Work above £20,000 to be subject to closed tendering arrangements.
 - The Treasurer would present a financial report to each Board Meeting covering the financial position of the RAA with a balance sheet detailing financial transactions during the period, along with a Bank reconciliation every 3 months.
 - Stocks and equipment would be of limited amounts – such as replacement gate locks.
 - Financial records would be maintained for a period of 7 years – electronic duplicate copy to be made and held by Chair. Copy also to ‘cloud’.
- d. **Laptop Provision** - Secretary reported that the RMBC donated laptops can be installed with windows 10. It was agreed that this should be organized. These then be made available to RAA positions of Secretary, Treasurer and Allotments Support Officer to be utilised solely for RAA business.
- e. **Audit Arrangements** – consideration was given to the type of audit that the RAA would be required to complete. It was agreed that the RAA would only require a ‘Lay Audit’. A motion be placed before the next meeting of the Board to approve this approach.
- File ref 17/89**

5. RAA Policies

Consideration was given to previously circulated policy documents concerning the following policies:-

a. Health and Safety

Discussion concerning site inspection / risk assessment procedures. It was agreed that the responsibility for site inspection/risk assessment would be delegated to societies where they were responsible for site management. Directly managed sites would have site inspections completed by RAA. These inspections should be completed during the November to February period when any overgrown plots would reveal hazards more readily.

The proposed RAA Health and Safety notice would be available on web-site.

Plot holders being advised as part of their tenancy to familiarise themselves with this and all other policies.

Site inspections and risk assessments would be completed using the RAA pro-forma and assessing risks with the 5 point matrix template.

b. **Equality** – no observations.

c. **Diversity** - no observations.

d. **Social** – no observations.

e. **Child Protection** – no observations.

f. **Environmental** – no observations.

g. Complaints and appeals procedure

The following amendments and additions were agreed:-

- 1) Day to day operational complaints (for example – smoke from bonfires, cockerels and other neighbour nuisance related issues) would be dealt with in the first instance by the Allotments Support Officer, passing to society managed sites representatives or RAA representative for directly managed sites.

2) Complaints relating to individuals would be investigated as follows:-

- a. Complaint concerning a tenant or society representative – investigated by society or RAA representative for direct managed sites.
- b. Complaint concerning a society – reported to RAA Board.
- c. Complaint concerning a RAA Board member – reported to Chair of RAA.
- d. Complaint concerning Chair of RAA – reported to RMBC Cabinet Board Member.

h. Volunteering

It was agreed to adapt this policy to cover volunteering by plot holder society members carrying out voluntary communal type work on their respective sites.

File Ref 17/90

6. Handyman position

Secretary reported that he had made contact with two prospective companies to carry out emergency work on allotment sites. It was agreed that the companies should confirm their agreement to submit invoice on completion of work to then be settled by BACS. **File Ref 17/91**

7. Web-site establishment, Colony links and email addresses

Consideration was given to a quotation from MCPC and AL reported that he was awaiting information detailing what RMBC IT unit could offer in the production of the web-site to include content detailed in File Ref 9/57 and supporting report. It was agreed that Chair would approve this option for RMBC to complete if all criteria was to be met and completion before end of 2019.

File Ref 17/92

8. Update on new society formation or active contacts willing to assist RAA

MF advised no further progress to report.

9. Administrator Post

Chair reported that arrangements were to be finalised for short listing and interview dates. There being a requirement for the same panel to complete both operations had led to delays in finalising arrangements. The Panel will consist of Chair, Secretary, Mohammed Suleman and HR representative. The RMBC employment procedure will be utilised. **File Ref 17/93**

10. Publicity

Agreed this item be deferred to a future meeting.

11. Lease between RMBC and RAA

AL advised that everything on target for end of year agreement.

12. Agenda items for the next meetings.

16th December

- **Financial Matters**
 - Audit Arrangements. (See attached proposal).
 - Insurance quotations.
 - HMRC – charitable status?
 - Standing Orders (JP to report)
- Allotments Support Officer status report (Chair to report).
- Handyman position status report (Secretary to report).
- Update on policies (JP to report)
- Consider 100K grant available from RMBC 2020/21.
- Sandymount Road Allotment Wath – Fitzwilliam Estates site – status report.

- Agree dates and times (and venue?) for 2020 meetings

Future Meeting Items

- Publicity

13. Date and Time of Next Meetings.

- **Monday 16th December 2019 at 2.00pm**



Signed (Chair)