

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.18

Meeting Date: Monday 16th December 2019 at 2.00pm

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.

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 17 held on Wednesday 4th December 2019.

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

3. Matters arising

- **Web-site establishment, Colony links and email addresses**

Consideration was given to the quotations from MCPC and GET Internet Services, with both suppliers being contacted during the meeting to answer queries and provide further information along with projected completion dates. It was agreed that the revised quote of GET Internet Services (£1000) be accepted for website construction with no link to colony at this stage. This cost to be considered as part of the capitol grant from RMBC. **(File Ref 18/94)**

- **Rental Increase letter**

Pursuant to **File Ref 16/85** the following figures were agreed to be included in the letter – the proposed increase from January 2021 of 2%

- Society sites class A – 25.8p per square metre
- Society sites class B - 23.4p per square metre
- Directly Managed sites class B – 26.1p per square metre.

These increases only to be implement if absolutely necessary.

Chair, Secretary and JP to draft letters for dispatch to all societies and individual tenants before end of 2019. **(File Ref 18/95)**

- **Letter to Societies**

Letter to new and existing societies following meeting in September in line with File Ref 15/84
Chair to draft letter.

4. Financial Matters

- a. **Insurance costs** – Further discussion took place on this matter concerning public liability/employee liability/building (fire only). RMBC confirmed that the current insurance would remain in place until the final lease handover, which would take place during the first three months of 2020 on completion of land registry protocols. At this point the RAA would require its own insurance cover.

- b. It was agreed that site detail would be provided to Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer who would then seek quotations 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). **(File Ref 18/96)**
- c. **Charitable status** – The benefits or otherwise of obtaining charitable status were further discussed. It was agreed that the Secretary should contact Brearley and Co and arrange a meeting with Secretary and Treasurer to discuss the matter in full. **(File Ref 18/97)**.
- d. **Financial regulations** - JP advised he was still working on the document and would hopefully have a draft for consideration at the next meeting.
- e. **Audit Arrangements** – further to File ref 17/89 the Board considered a previously circulated proposal relating to audit arrangements this being agreed.

In considering the Audit Arrangements for the Rotherham Allotment Alliance it is believed that a 'Lay Audit' will meet the needs of the Rotherham Allotments Alliance as a Community Benefit Society. The Lay Auditor(s) will be duly elected at the first Annual General Meeting and subsequently be subject to re-election at subsequent Annual General Meetings. (File ref 18/98)

5. Allotments Support Officer

Chair reported on the short listing and interviews for the post. Five applicants being interviewed and the post had been accepted by the chosen candidate commencing in early January, subject to satisfactory reference checks. **File Ref 18/99**

6. Handyman position

Secretary reported that he had made contact with two prospective companies to carry out emergency work on allotment sites who had now confirmed their agreement to submit invoice on completion of work and accept payment by BACS. It was agreed that the two companies involved form the approved contractor list:- M & J Renovations (Marc Rhodes) and Malcs Handyman Services (Malc Quinn). **File Ref 18/100**

7. RAA Policies

JP advised that he was currently working to revise the draft documents previously considered (File ref 17/90) and would submit the final documents for approval hopefully to the next Board meeting.

8. Consider 100K grant available from RMBC.

AL advised on the type of work which he thought could be undertaken on allotment sites - work of a capital nature to improve facilities and security. He was to seek further clarification and report to a future meeting of the Board.

9. Sandymount Road Allotments, Wath

This site is owned by Fitzwilliam Wentworth Estates and currently leased to RMBC who in turned leased to the Sandymount Allotment Society. AL to look at option of Fitzwilliam Estates leasing directly to the Society.

10. Transfer and Transition arrangements RMBC to RAA

AL outlined arrangements -

- TA would continue to advise RAA during the transition period.
- Two sets of site gate locks and keys were to be handed to RAA. Initially one set was handed to the Secretary – TA retaining the second set for the initial transfer period.
- RAA phone number to become active from 1/1/20. (Possible upgrade to be considered to improve answer phone facilities).
- Emails received by RMBC to be forwarded to Chair, Sec and JP (Allotments Support Officer as soon as in post).

- Water rates are collected in arrears – therefore RMBC will provide figure to recover water costs for 2019 to be collected with rentals for 2020. RAA to then reimburse RMBC. Only applies to directly managed sites. (Societies responsible for their own water rate payments.) RMBC to transfer billing arrangements from RMBC to RAA in 2020.
- RMBC Asset Management confirm that new lease RMBC to RAA will be concluded by the end of March at the latest when Land Registry protocols are finalised and the RAA has received Legal advise (RMBC to fund).
- It is intended that there will be a ‘soft handover’ with AL and TA still assisting RAA during the transition period.
- AL to provide Service Level Agreement.
- **The Board thanked AL and TA for their work and support during the establishment of the RAA.**

File Ref 18/101

11. Agenda items for the next meetings.

6th January

- **Financial Matters**
 - Treasurers financial statement and report.
 - Insurance quotations. (Progress report Treasurer and Assistant)
 - HMRC – charitable status((Progress report Treasurer and Assistant)
 - Standing Orders (JP to report)
- Update on policies (JP to report)
- Website (progress report)

Future Meeting Items

- Publicity
- 100K grant form RMBC
- New leases to existing Societies and new Societies
- Formation of new societies and or site representatives where a society cannot be formed.

11. Date and Time of Next Meetings. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).

All in the Garden Room, Clifton Park at 2.00pm

Monday 6th January 2020

Monday 20th January 2020

Monday 3rd February 2020

Monday 17th February 2020

Monday 2nd March 2020

Monday 16th March 2020

Monday 30th March 2020



Signed (Chair)