

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.2

Meeting Date: 29/04/2019

Meeting Time: 2.00pm

Meeting Location: Garden House, Clifton Park, Rotherham

Meeting Called By: Councillor Brian Steele

Chair: Councillor Brian Steele

Secretary: Jack Taylor

Present: John Palmer John Kirk Mike Farrell Al Dean Brian Steele Jack Taylor Rob Slow
Andy Lee Tim Archer Mohammed Suleman Phil Gill Emma Hoddinott **Apologies:**

Agenda Topics

- **Minutes of previous meetings**
- **Finance**
- **Site Visits Update**
- **Staffing**
- **Land Transfer**
- **Action Plan Update**
- **Any Other Business**
- **Date of Next Meeting**

Important Discussion Points

1. Minutes of previous meetings

Form updating directors personal details yet to be circulated. JT/BS

Quote and benefits of NAS membership still to be completed. AD

PG - Code of Conduct document finalised and passed around to sign.

MF -A meeting at Wet Moor Lane site to discuss first steps to becoming a Society attended by Tony Urwin from NAS. Would be interested in attending our meetings to pass on his expertise and advice.

RS -Thanked MF for doing that.

BS -In future, Chair will sign copy of minutes when finalised to confirm they have been approved by the board. File Ref 2/7

2. Finance

Discussion around an Administrator

- At what point can we appoint an Administrator
- Their role
- Cost
- PG -Is there any possibility of Administrator working with the authority person in the lead-up to the transfer to learn the operating procedures?

Colony

- Costs
- Training (society secretaries?)
- Input of Data

AL -Council has upgraded to version 6 of Colonys paid licence costs until April. It can therefore be used by the Alliance from day one, subject to setting up relevant people as new users. File Ref 2/8

BS -received a letter from Greasbrough Site about concerns about personal data being passed on.

BS -is to attend a meeting on the site 30/4/19 to discuss.

PG -This has been addressed, following advice from the Council's legal dept., by writing to all tenants on directly-managed sites to explain that by paying their rent for 2019-20, they will be giving their consent for the Council to pass their personal details to the Alliance. File Ref 2/9

JP -Poor communication between JP, AD & RS has led to confusion in looking at projected costs before Jan.2020. Two forms produced.

BS -The three to meet and prepare a breakdown of monies needed, reasons and explanations for next month's meeting - speak to TA, PG, AL. File Ref 2/10

PG -The Council will require the Alliance to be able to supply evidence of how money was spent for audit purposes.

EH -Has a meeting arranged with Lee Mann in the Council's HR dept. about staffing - will come back with more details to next meeting.

BS -Asked if £100K capital allocated by the Council has it to be spent this year. -
EH and AL agreed the capital would roll over to 2020/21.

JK -It will be difficult to get match funding if the £100K has to be spent very quickly.

BS -Best split over three years.

AL -Money is to mitigate financial risk of setting up the Alliance.

RS -Can we get guidance from TA on how best to spend £100K. -

TA The tenants on individual sites are in the best position to know what is needed and what is best for their site. BS -Empty plots, inadequate site security. poorly managed paths and fences etc, other environmental problems (e.g. flooding) might all be liabilities that need to be addressed. Suggest starting by developing a 'Shopping List' of requirements.

MS -tabled draft Health and Safety Policy that could be used to inform risk assessment of sites.

RS -Is the £100K to be passed to the Alliance or not?

EH No, bids are needed to access the money. File Ref 2/11

MF -Should a sub-committee be set up to look at ways in which the £100K could be spent?

JP Felt it was too soon as some issues (Financial Projection) are not yet resolved.

3. Site Visits Update

BS -Learned how much more there is to maintenance on a day to day basis;

- Plot Clearance
- Grass Cutting
- Hedge Trimming
- Fence Repair
- Gates and Locks
- Water Leaks
- Rubbish Removal
- Pest Control
- Weed Killing

JT -tabled a summary of inspection findings that showed that most sites are in a reasonable condition, with just a few (e.g. Psalters Lane) with serious liabilities.

JT -The findings support the need for a full-time Maintenance person, which brings in other questions;

- Employment Status
- Transport
- Equipment
- Managing their Time
- Storage
- Hours Worked
- Summer/Winter

JT -The visits highlighted sites requiring support, and those with varying degrees of problems.

JP -There are issues around boundary lines, some tenants have extended back gardens onto allotment plots. - *TA Action is being taken to correct this.*

EH -Suggested the use of Restorative Justice as a possibility to any work needing doing, it is available free and the Council provide a supervisor

4. Staffing.

RS -After a meeting with AD, TA and AL the group came up with three general areas to consider;

A. Maintenance Person. (37 hrs. week)

- Contractor
- Agency Staff
- Directly Employed
- Transport
- Store
- Equipment
- Hours

B. Administrator (20hrs week)

- Colony
- Billing
- Work from home
- Laptop
- Mobile Phone

C. Allotment Officer

The roles of Administrator and Allotment Officer could be combined, and manage the Maintenance person.

The main issues being how much can we afford?

BS -EH to speak to HR to look into employment costs for a maintenance person on contracts for 20hrs, 30hrs, and 37hrs per week.

- self employed
- Directly employed
- pensions
- National Insurance
- Tax
- Benefits
- Drawbacks

1.AL -need to develop Job Description for each role.

RS -Some societies are reasonably independent, whilst others rely heavily on assistance from Council to manage their sites. The level of resource required by the Alliance needs to take this into account. Also, discussion about whether the level of rent charged by the Alliance needs to vary accordingly. Suggests starting with a standard lease agreement for all societies, but then allowing them to evolve independently depending on the capacity of each society.

5. Land Transfer

PG -Met with Officers today (29/4/19) to discuss issues and options about leases. Head Lease (Council to Alliance) an Officer has been allocated (Liz). The basis of the agreement will be the Alliance will be responsible for site maintenance and insurance. .

Over the next two weeks TA to undertake a pilot survey with Estates to allow them to develop a costed programme for surveying all 30 sites this year.

PG -Arrange meeting for PG, AL, BS, JT & Estates to discuss leases, including length of agreements, break clauses etc.

PG -Questions to be asked;

- Is there a requirement to revise leases before 1st Jan.
 - Can we carry on with current leases • Can tenancy agreements run to 31st March • Decide what needs to go into agreements.
- 2.

3.MF -has found that National Society supply model lease and tenancy agreements. PG to supply these to BS.

6. Action Plan Update

PG -Action Plan confirmed that the Action Plan had been updated and circulated immediately prior to this meeting, and will be updated again prior to the next meeting..

7. Any Other Business

BS -All papers to be emailed to JT for storage and distribution as required. File Ref 2/12

MS -to email draft Health and Safety Policy to PG.

BS -Whiston Parish Council have asked the Council to have the freehold of Whiston Allotments transferred to them. File Ref 2/13

MS -Skill assessment and audit needed for Directors. Also training for Board and we need to look at the age and gender of the Board.

PG -Announced his retirement, he will be leaving at the end of June.

AL -will be the primary point of contact with the assistance of TA and others.

8. Date of Next Meetings

13th May 2019 at 2.00pm (apologies JK)

3rd June 2019 at 2.00pm



Signed (Chair)