

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.21

Meeting Date: Monday 3rd February 2020

Meeting Location: Garden House, Clifton Park, Rotherham.

Meeting Called By: Councillor Brian Steele

Chair: Councillor Brian Steele

Secretary: Jack Taylor (Minutes Donna Bushby)

Present: Directors: - Al Dean, Mike Farrell, John Palmer, Councillor Brian Steele, Mohammed Suleman, Jack Taylor. Allotment Support Administrator – Donna Bushby
(RMBC Officers – Tim Archer and Andy Lee for items relating to Transfer and Transitional issues).

Apologies: Cllr Emma Hoddinott

026/02/20 Progress Report from DB

026.1/02/20 - BS and DB did site visits this morning – findings – Vicarage Fields don't want to become a society. Hartley Lane – would like the poly tunnels removing to be able to use the land – who will pay for the skips? Reported that the communal shed roof needs repairing due to a leak. The horse paddock has been left in a mess and the track has been broken up. It has been decided that all sites need visiting and a list of issues drawn up for each BS/DB to do. Need to establish what RAA is actually responsible for in terms of societies i.e. repairs, grass cutting etc.

026.2/02/20 – discussed about sites not wanting form societies – offer an incentive to make it easier for them – i.e. collecting rent for them through Colony. It was expressed that each society site is run differently and some societies have been going for many years, no new societies have been established in the area since the 1970's

027/02/20 Declaration of interests by any board member.

There were no declarations of interest.

028/02/20 Minutes of Board Meeting No 20 held on Monday 20th January 2020

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

029/02/20 Matters arising

029.1/02/20 – has the cloud facility been sorted? – Yes – DB has set up and BS has the log in details. All work DB does is saved on the Cloud.

029.2/02/20 – Sites requesting re-keys – DB has the new locks and keys for Avenue Road. Decided that this will wait until they have formed a society. JT said he can possibly do the welding of the chains. TA advised he knew someone who could do it also. Discussion regarding the issuing and return of keys – discussed new tenants to be charged a minimum of £5 refundable deposit for keys – get it back when key is returned – needs definite decision. Also discussed using key pads and combinations locks – these do have their own problems and need to consider financial aspect. Look at possibly changing the locks on a number of sites per year.

029.3/02/20 – budget needs looking at

029.4/02/20 – devise a list of proforma questions for societies – who cuts paths / maintains fencing / communal buildings / water provision etc.

030/02/20 Transfer and Transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)

030.1/02/20 – TA - Hartley Lane – issue with polytunnels – last rent was paid up to 2 years ago. BS asked why RMBC had not yet cleared the site? BS showed TA and AL the pictures of the horse paddock and track which has been left in a bad state. TA wasn't aware of the state it had been left in. AL advised that this site is on a separate grazing lease and needs to be looked at by Asset Management. Rents from grazing sites will go

to the RAA yet no rent has been collected for 2 years. AL. BS to highlight any other concerns to AL. Regarding the polytunnels, all agreements pre-date TA and AL. What is going to be done about it? stated that if RMBC pays, then this will be deducted from the money given to the RAA. Needs adding to list of works to be done.

030.2/02/20 – BS has decided that all sites need visits. Need to establish who is responsible for communal structures on society sites. TA advised that there are some differences in leases to different societies. JP produced a document which identified the responsibilities.

030.3/02/20 – BS asked regarding existing signage at DM sites – can the RAA cover up the council details with their own? TA said that it shouldn't be a problem. TA to look at the purchase order for the signs to establish their size and how many.

030.4/02/20 - update on SLA. AL advised it has gone in for consultation. Not come back as yet - needs chasing up from Asset Management. Got to be agreed by both sides. JP asked that the RAA to see it beforehand as it will have implications for the business plan. AL advised that a copy will be made available next week.

030.5/02/20 – DB and MF asked regarding marketing. RMBC website needs changing to reflect the RAA now being in operation – correct contact / enquiry details etc. TA advised that this needs to be done by Comms.

030.6/02/20 – TA advised he was working through the water charges for last year – values per site / plot. Advised would be ready by the end of the week.

030.7/02/20 – BS and DB were told by a tenant on Scrooby St that they had not yet paid their rent as they had not had an invoice – DB to supply details to TA to look into.

030.8/02/20 – **issues raised in last meeting:**

030.81/02/20 – Moor Road – Boundary – Estates have requested the Deed Packet

030.82/02/20 – Avenue Road – still waiting. New locks and keys have been handed over to the RAA

030.83/02/20 – Clifton – requested Deed Packet

030.84/02/20 - Greasbrough encroachment – AL trying to make contact with resident. Legal on hold until this happens – *AL advised when leaving meeting that he has arranged a meeting with the resident in 3 weeks' time.*

031/02/20 - Financial Matters

031.1/02/20 - Financial Statement – statement 1 – received £7500 from RMBC. AD produced an email from AL to say that the rest of the money would be released in early February 2020 – this needs requesting – *AL said it would be organized during the discussion of 005/02/20.*

031.2/02/20 - Insurance costs – DB sent information to Shield – awaiting reply. Asked for quotes without building cover as we do not have the correct value information for each site. MF looked at another company – Marsh and also the NAS member insurance which insures the person against injury etc. – also covers you in your own garden and other garden environments. Is aware of 2 previous claims, both of which were turned down as found to be fraudulent. Questioned asked about needing employer's liability insurance – only a judge would decide if a person was classed as employed – this would even apply to volunteers.

031.3/02/20 - Charitable status – JT has sent the paperwork. Some directors had received a letter to declare their 'fit and proper person' status. JT advised the decision will be made in 6 weeks.

031.4/02/20 - Financial Regulations – DB needs direct debit mandate signed by 2 directors to set up Quickbooks – *obtained at the meeting.*

032/02/20 – New leases to existing Societies and new Societies

032.1/02/20 – BS brought up a query which became apparent during the site visits – rules on cockerels – why can't tenants have them? MF described a situation regarding a cockerel noise complaint on a site which he knew about. JP advised that this is actually part of the Allotments Act 1950. Law states allotment holders can only keep bees, rabbits and hens. Pigeons need special permission. A site in Sheffield imposes a maximum of 6 chickens.

032.2/02/20 – questioned raised about how new leases will be processed to ensure that societies agree to them. Need to arrange a meeting with societies and prospective societies - 2 representatives from each site. DB to draft a letter to all existing/new societies – invite 2 people per society – chair and secretary or substitute. Date to be arranged – Tuesday 25th February 2020, 6.00pm – 7.30pm in the garden room (room booked 5.45pm – 7.45pm, may cost £18 per hour for site staff). Secretaries to be sent draft tenancy and allotment rules beforehand.

032.3/02/20 - It was suggested that in order to accept a newly formed society, the RAA must be provided with a copy of the society's basic rules / constitution. Have got to have an AGM and also own bank account.

033/02/20 – Repairs and Maintenance

033.1/02/20 – as per an earlier discussion – the RAA have got authorization to spend money. Any emergency problems need investigating and a decision made immediately. Everything else needs to be assessed.

DB to look into using restorative justice. TA can supply contact details. RMBC have a contract with the service which is up for renewal 31/3/20.

034/02/20 – Website

The domain name issue has been resolved. DB is getting some training from Bob on how to change content etc. DB has written some draft pages using the York website as an example. Need to look into promotion of the website and a Facebook page (DB has set up) through RMBC.

035/02/20 – £100K grant

Needs some discussion after assessment of sites has been done. BS stated that the main focus of the £100k is that it is spent on health and safety on the sites.

036/02/20 – Business Plan

BS thanked JP for all the hard work he had put into the business plan discussion document. Agreed to discuss in detail in next meeting. All directors have been emailed a copy of the latest business plan plus the discussion notes. All to make notes for discussion/comparison in next meeting.

037/02/20 - AGM

037.1/02/20 - points that may come up – why can people only have 1 plot? Discussed regarding co-workers and husband and wife joint tenants. Also discussed that people can't have 2 plots if there are people on the waitlist.

037.2/02/20 – it was asked at what point do people become shareholders of the RAA? The AGM is not until 21st April 2020. MF advised that RMBC are paying the shares currently in theory – allocating £1 of the rent. The Board agreed that anyone who is up to date with their rent is already a shareholder.

037.3/02/20 – it was discussed that BS and EH need to pay £3 each for their associate membership. MF raised the question regarding this – do directors have automatic membership therefore don't have to pay? Situation not clarified in the rules so needs the board to make and agree a resolution.

037.4/02/20 – first item on the AGM agenda should be nominations of directors – would be useful to find out any nominations beforehand – write to tenants before end of March 2020. The RAA needs the names and addresses of tenants on society sites – to safeguard the availability of information should the Society secretary no longer be available – this information request can be sent with the rent letters. BS suggested that existing directors should declare in an email if they wish to stand again. The Chair and Secretary should not be up for election this time. BS is happy to stand as Chair for another 12 months to keep some stability during the initial period of operation.

038/02/20 - Agenda items for the next meetings.

17th February 2020

- **Transfer and Transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)**
- **Financial Matters**
 - Treasurers financial statement and report.
 - Insurance quotations. (Treasurer and Assistant)
 - HMRC – charitable status (Secretary)
 - Financial Regulations (JP)
- **New leases to existing Societies and new Societies**
- **Business Plan**
- **Repairs and Maintenance Issues**
- **100K grant from RMBC**

039/02/20 - Date and Time of Next Meetings. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).

All in the Garden Room, Clifton Park at 2.00pm

Monday 17th February 2020

Monday 2nd March 2020

Monday 16th March 2020

Monday 30th March 2020



Signed (Chair)