

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.25

Meeting Date: Monday 11th May 2020

Meeting Location: Online: Zoom, phone

Meeting Called By: Councillor Brian Steele

Chair: Councillor Brian Steele

Secretary: Jack Taylor (Minutes Donna Bushby)

Present: Directors: - Al Dean (on phone), John Palmer, Councillor Brian Steel, Mike Farrell, Allotment Support Administrator – Donna Bushby,

Apologies: Jack Taylor, Emma Hoddinott

066/05/20 Declarations of Interest
None expressed

067/05/20 Minutes of Board Meeting No 24 held on Monday 16th March 2020
The minutes were agreed a true record and duly signed by the Chairman (electronically).

068/05/20 Administrators Report

- 068.1/05/20** 20+ enquiries since last update – added to waitlists/sent info to secretaries where possible
- 068.2/05/20** All invoices except new societies have now gone out
- 068.3/05/20** Steady stream of payments – Al keeping me informed of what's gone in the bank
- 068.4/05/20** Queries regarding people paying by instalments – asked them to set up standing orders to the RAA
- 068.5/05/20** 3 plots queried invoice as terminated last year
- 068.6/05/20** Plot lets: 2 x High St (1 a school), 1 x Rectory Fields, 2 x Greasbrough, 1 x Moor Rd
- 068.7/05/20** Some tenants on a few sites been a big help with the plot lets – need recognition somehow?
- 068.8/05/20** Emailed circulated with information about Graham Moule who can clear plots (very keen to get started, has kindly cleared a plot for us on High St to see how long it took)
- 068.9/05/20** Skips – need this resolving ASAP following on from Tim's email. Cheapest quote is from KCM who have offered £160 + VAT. JP queried if we had prices from other companies. DB has had quotes from a number of local companies who are more expensive. AD said he'd had someone on site offering this service – will supply the details. JP asked if this was the best rate from KCM – DB replied it was – normal price is £225 + VAT for 8yrd skip. MF – seems to think that in a previous meeting it was discussed with Tim Archer and Andy Lee who said that we would still get to use the council rate. DB to check minutes. This also included Streetpride for grass cutting etc. BS to address with Andy Lee.
- 068.10/05/20** New society tenancies/bills – just need to work these out then get them checked by directors
- 068.11/05/20** EHO visiting Vicarage Fields ref: burning and cockerels - awaiting outcome from site secretary
- 068.12/05/20** Email circulated from Broom Valley Old site regarding what the Alliance is going to do (maintenance/grass cutting etc.)
- 068.13/05/20** Avenue Rd have purchased some lockable notice boards – would they be good for our DM sites? (£50 each, capital item?). Also need to look at getting items such as Hi Vis vests for when we go down to sites – will price them up. Also need to get contact information stickers printed. (MF asked regarding cost, where from and if a photo can be supplied. BS queried if we needed planning permission. Discussed that if it was on the site then not needed – they would be put inside so no one can touch them from outside. Can be taken from Capital? BS suggested to get a quote together to apply for the money.)
- 068.14/05/20** Will be able to go down to sites once restrictions are lifted with other households (childcare)
- 068.15/05/20** Report from Greasbrough site regarding fly tipping on an empty plot

- 068.16/05/20** Queen Street North site having an issue with an abusive tenant – writing to tenant to say if it continues, they will be evicted
- 068.17/05/20** Biggest issue at the moment is getting overgrown plots cleared. Resident living next to Moor Rd has emailed to say that it is growing into their garden. JP – asked where do we start/finish – plots same all over. BS said it's OK to get them cleared as long as we have a tenant to go on them straight away. DB said that each site has a waitlist so this wouldn't be a problem. BS said to go through waitlists and allocate plots. MF suggested that the new tenant should pay the rent and if they clear the plot themselves, they will get the rent back, or get the plot rotivated for them. This guarantees some commitment from the tenant. This was supported by members of the board. AD stated at his site, new tenants have a 3-month probationary period. BS/MF agreed that no money should be given back if a tenant leaves and we have paid for the plot to be cleared. Board agreed that DB can instruct plots to be cleared once the tenant has paid the rent. DB is going to go through the vacant plots to see how long they have been empty – could they be charged as a capital item? BS said he would check with Andy Lee.

069/05/20 Matters Arising

No matters were brought up by the Board

070/05/20 New Board Members

BS happy to support the two applications along with rest of Board. Asked if John Callaghan had sent in tenant information from his society. DB replied it had not been received. AD said that he was still gathering the information for his site. BS suggested that he is happy to accept the applications as long as society rules are followed. The two individuals are John Callaghan from Hartley Lane society and Mick Hirst from newly formed Avenue Rd society. BS needs to get their personal information and permission to pass between the Board. DB asked if any official documentation needed to be filled in. JP said that Jack had some forms which may be on the laptop.

070/05/20 Any Other Business

070.1/05/20 BS asked if anyone had anything to bring up as he had not received anything from other directors.

070.2/05/20 JP asked how many societies have not sent their tenant information. DB replied only received 5 back. A reminder was sent in the rental letter. BS said that this needs chasing up as it is important for the RAA in case anything happens to any of the secretaries. AD suggested they should be chased in a couple of weeks.

070.3/05/20 JP Wanted to pass on thanks to Donna from the society Barnsley Road and Wet Moor Lane sites in regard to the information she has passed on to help them with tenancies etc. JP also asked if it now feasible that the new societies can receive the tenant information from us, even though leases have not been signed. BS said it was agreed that we should get the tenancy agreements signed. Once they have signed then we can pass it on. JP asked if this was OK even though the RAA haven't signed the RMBC leases. BS said this was OK as the directors have signed confidentiality agreements. DB said that the new societies have been collating their own tenant information and this will be checked against the RAA information.

070.4/05/20 DB said that societies have been asking about issues on site – i.e. the asbestos shed on Vicarage Fields and Broom Valley Old asking regarding site maintenance – grass cutting etc. and the conifers that need trimming at Kimberworth Park. JP asked regarding what Streetpride can do? – are the contracts continuing? DB said that it had been split into 3 regions in the borough – do we contact each district? BS said that we need to find out a price from them to do all the work or get another contractor in to quote. JP said it had never been properly quantified. BS suggested that once lockdown has been lifted, this can be looked at on each site. DB said that some things haven't been done for a few years. BS said that RMBC have not done any improvements on sites and have waited for the Alliance to take over to sort the issues. DB said that clearing sites is difficult due to the rubbish on them and the need for skips. BS suggested to do one site at a time. MF suggested that tenants should compost or burn green waste. DB said she will ask the contact who can clear plots to have a look at the plots on High Street to get them cleared. The waitlist has 12 people, all still wanting a plot. Have checked the waitlist for the busiest plots. MF asked if we could negotiate the rate if he is doing a number of plots on the same site.

070.5/05/20 BS asked if there were any outstanding issues regarding collecting payments. AD commented paid payments are coming through. DB raised that she needs access to online banking to check payments have gone in before she can issue keys to new tenants and people who do not have online/mobile banking have the biggest problem with paying. AD said he was looking into this and will advise regarding this soon. BS asked if any charges for Donna's salary have been received – AD said not. AD also said that the website invoice will be paid. DB has asked the website provider regarding the cost of future service. JP asked regarding the page showing up on Google. DB explained regarding Search Engine Optimisation and will speak to Bob about it.

071/05/20 Agenda Items for next meeting

071.1/05/20 BS added regarding the lease. Going to try and get Andy Lee to join a meeting. JP suggested that we also need an update on all the other outstanding items. Will set our next meeting in 2 weeks' time. This will be changed to Tuesday 26th May as the Monday is the Bank Holiday. All agreed this was OK.

072/05/20- Date and Time of Next Meetings. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).

Tuesday 26th May 2pm on Zoom

BS closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending on Zoom. Apart from AD and MS who had technical issues – suggested that we do test runs with them before the meeting to ensure it works. JP also asked if the two new directors are invited – yes, when BS has their information. One of the two new directors must attend each meeting to maintain the quorate.



Signed (Chair)