

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.27

Meeting Date: Monday 8th June 2020

Meeting Location: Online: Zoom

Meeting Called By: Councillor Brian Steele

Chair: Councillor Brian Steele

Secretary: Jack Taylor (Minutes Donna Bushby)

Present: Directors: - Al Dean, John Palmer, Councillor Brian Steel, Mike Farrell, Mohammed Suleman, Jack Taylor, Mick Hirst, John Callaghan. Allotment Support Administrator – Donna Bushby

Apologies: Emma Hoddinott, Andy Lee

083/06/20 Minutes of Board Meeting 26 held 26th May 2020

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

084/06/20 Matters Arising

084.1/06/20 Question asked regarding if the insurance was confirmed. Discussed that RMBC still responsible until Head lease is signed. Agreed to leave until we have a date confirmed. DB to get a re-quote regarding Landlords Liability and send to all directors. Agenda item for next meeting.

084.2/06/20 Sandymount Road progress – DB contacted Wentworth to ask if they wanted the Alliance to take over. They replied that they needed official notification from RMBC. Reply from Andy Lee to RAA with Wentworth copied in to say that they are happy to relinquish responsibility. No response received from Wentworth. Discussed regarding the society on site and how it is run, plus the condition of the site and if a liability for the RAA. BS and MH to arrange to go down to the site to meet with the society representatives.

084.2/06/20 Legal advice from NAS for the lease. NAS can assist for free if the RAA joins members up to them.

085.06/20 Declarations of Interest

None declared

086/06/20 Administrators Report

086.1/06/20 Report had been circulated to Directors prior to meeting

086.2/06/20 Main items discussed:

086.21/06/20 High Street letters gone out regarding the fires. Pictures received of dead animals dumped on High Street. Have suspicions of which tenant is responsible. MH and JT to meet with tenant to address – DB to arrange with tenant. JT has recently looked at the gate. The hinges are bent and needs straightening. Quote removal on the site is £650 per day. Could some be burnt? Who would arrange it? It would need sorting into piles. MH/JT to assess when they visit.

086.22/06/20 Gardens created by Residents on Clifton site – discussed that they are cultivating an unused piece of land but if over a length of time, do they get rights to it? Residents need to be written to say that it is allotment land – DB to draft.

086.23/06/20 DB visiting Greasbrough site to view plots. Directors welcome to accompany. Site has had fly-tipping. Graham also invited to give prices on plots that need work. Quotes received for plots on High Street – can they be considered as capital expenditure? The website and printer costs to be put to capital. DB to send to Andy Lee.

086.24/06/20 Asbestos quote for all sites being obtained on Wednesday. Vicarage Fields have obtained a quote for the removal of the asbestos shed - £1500 plus VAT.

086.25/06/20 Looked into taking card payments over the phone – had a few calls this week requesting to pay – DB did some research on different companies – further discussion in financial arrangements.

086.26/06/20 Signed tenancy agreement received from Avenue Rd, full size of site omitted. Do we need to send a letter to accept they are now in charge and tenant details can be sent? DB to draft and

Chair and Secretary to sign. MH declared an interest in this matter. JP asked if it was necessary to send?

086.26.1/06/20 – Discussion regarding the leases to be sent to existing societies – DB found difficult to draw up as they differ to old society leases and not sure on the wording / measurements to be used. Discussed what measurements will be on the Head leases – Sqm or acres? JP proposed that DB's report with the wording is approved by the Board and directors then voted to use Sqm.

086.26/06/20 Equipment RMBC – Andy Lee is compiling a list. Tim Archer has sent a contact for the Streetpride contract – DB to email to request a quote.

087/06/20 Financial Matters

087.1/06/20 Treasurer's Report

Statement of Account 6 sent to Directors prior to meeting.

087.2/06/20 Issue with paying at the Post office - now resolved – paying in forms received from bank when paying in cash. Cheque payments need to be put in a paying in envelope. Tenants to request forms, envelopes available at the Post Office. Question raised about how much money has come through each of the 3 options to pay. Is it envisaged that we will get a lot of over-the-phone payments? Current payments methods are free to the Alliance. 35% of payments received to date. Tenants given until end August to pay so not in a position to chase yet. It was decided that new payments would be looked at again in a few months. MH asked regarding tenants who want to pay direct debit when the site is a society – BS confirmed that this is down to the society.

087.3/06/20 DB asked if online banking had been set up – AD still working on it. BS/JP questioned regarding updating directors with the bank. AD to contact bank. Secretary also needs to check that all directors are registered with the Co-operative.

087.4/06/20 DB asked if the GMS invoice could be paid. AD asked if it could be authorized. BS stated that in future, BS / JT / JP can authorize expenditure to be paid. If it has been passed in minutes, then it can be automatically paid.

088/06/20 Transfer and Transitional arrangements

No further forward as no response from RMBC. BS to arrange a meeting with AL. JT/DB to attend. Progress needs to be made.

089/06/20 £100k Grant

089.1/06/20 Discussed report (previously circulated) done by JP on the 'wishlists' of direct-managed and society sites. Identified that a lot of items are considered revenue items, not capital expenditure. Health and safety is the priority for the capital. All other areas need to be prioritized by the Board. Before any work is done, AL has to give authorization. MH suggested that plot clearance is a high priority because if plots are tenanted then that improves the site. JP suggested that the priority list is agreed as follows: 1) Health and Safety – asbestos clearance, 2) uncultivated plot clearance – a list needs compiling to quantify all the work that needs doing. Some sites have already been looked at by DB – how long would it take to get a report together and get contractor quotes? Should societies get their own 3 quotes? It would be better to get quotes for all sites from the same companies. Question asked if plots are cleared, can they be tenanted straight away? Not worth getting cleared if no immediate tenant. Although, if tenanted, less chance of vandalism etc. It was voted and motion carried that 3 asbestos quotes are the first priority. Discussion regarding tenants not been sent non-cultivation letters so plots being left to overgrow. Then discussed regarding if work is to be submitted per site, or as a whole quote. Also given authorisation to get the polytunnels removed at Hartley Lane. JC agreed that skips would be OK and they would do the work on site. JC asked about their shed roof which needs repairing - new lease not been signed so RAA still responsible as it was an issue brought up with RMBC a long time ago. JP confirmed that this is a revenue issue. Then discussed regarding skips and new tenants requiring them. JP questioned if AL has spoken to Polly Hamilton regarding the RMBC skip price – not heard back. DB sourced other prices. It was voted in favour for Avenue Rd to get quotes to get their plots cleared (MH declared an interest and did not vote). Then Barnsley Rd & Wet Moor Lane can do the same. Secretaries must find out if tenants still require plots that are overgrown. Then voted that Greasbrough site is to be looked at. MF asked if it is the right site to start with? BS said that it is a good site, despite difficulties with the previous society, and we need to show the tenants we are working to improve the site.

090/06/20 Maintenance

090.1/06/20 Question asked regarding grass cutting / hedge cutting works. DB has a contact at RMBC to ask for a price.

090.2/06/20 AD asked if any plots had been weedkilled? Discussed that sites could do it themselves, although could be difficult for direct-managed sites – necessary qualifications and certification are required.

Needs to be a professional company. Or possibly employ someone? Decided that we should not do any work with weedkiller.

091/06/20 Website

Password protecting pages – DB has spoken to the web designer and knows how to do it. DB said she hopes to get some work done on the website this week.

092/06/20 Any Other Business

092.1/06/20 None submitted to Chairperson

092.2/06/20 *(Added as AOB as did not relate to any agenda item)* Detailed discussion regarding the waitlist policy. Confirmed that with any vacant plots, existing tenants can swap plots, not take as a second plot if there is a waiting list. People from the waitlist who refuse a plot, should be put to the bottom of the list, unless the plot is unsuitable on accessibility grounds. Cannot issue specific plots to people. Discussed regarding long waitlists, plots that are badly overgrown. Will offer plots to tenants free of charge for rest of year if they clear them themselves.

093/06/20 Agenda Items for next meeting

- Transitional Items
- Maintenance – quotes update, possibly employ a handyman
- Insurance quote

094/06/20- Date and Time of Next Meetings. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).

Monday 22nd June 2.00pm on Zoom



Signed (Chair)