

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.29

Meeting Date: Monday 6th July 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, Jack Taylor, Mick Hirst, John Callaghan.
Allotment Support Administrator – Donna Bushby

Apologies: N/A

105/07/20 Declaration of Interest

105.1/07/20 None declared from directors.

105.2/07/20 Emergency item declared by BS – regrettably, Mike Farrell has decided to resign from the board. BS will write to him to thank him for all his time and hard work for the RAA.

106/07/20 Matters Arising

None declared.

107/07/20 Minutes of Board Meeting 28 held 22nd June 2020

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

108/07/20 Administrator's Report

108.1/07/20 Report was circulated to directors prior to the meeting. Main points were reporting the site visits made to Rectory Field, Psalters Lane (site needs some consideration regarding security – MH suggested to visit again and make a plan of action) and St Leonard's, updated quotes for insurance / capital items submitted, issue arisen regarding a society shop on Barnsley Rd and Wet Moor Lane and comments received from 2 site secretaries regarding the tenancy agreements that have been sent out.

108.2/07/20 Met with Contracts Manager from RMBC for quotes for plot clearance work and Mare's Tail removal. Also need a decision on the grass cutting quote which has been revised. Discussed regarding if societies do work such as this themselves, then a rent reduction could be possible – agreed that this needs further discussion. BS suggested that we write to all secretaries to offer them a Zoom meeting to discuss any concerns.

108.3/07/20 JP asked regarding the shop on Barnsley Rd and Wet Moor Lane. DB reported that this issue had been resolved and the shop will be run by the society.

108.4/07/20 JT asked regarding the metal container on Rectory Field. Discussed that this belongs to RMBC and they will be removing it but the RAA will use it if not.

109/07/20 Financial Matters

109.1/07/20 Statement sent to all directors prior to meeting. RMBC staffing costs have been paid. ASA expenses will also be paid by cheque in next few days. Closing balance is £34,768.34 to date. BS asked if payments from individual tenants are recorded as separate – yes – they are listed individually on the statement. AD also reported that one society had paid the full amount without the discount, a refund is being arranged. JP asked regarding percentage of rents paid – DB reported that 46% of DM tenants have paid and 4 current and 3 new societies yet to pay. Discussed regarding giving the new societies support as this is the first time they have done the rent collection.

109.1/07/20 Insurance – DB has an updated quote however the grazing sites need adding. Discussed regarding the discount we get if members of NAS (Approx. £500). Then discussed regarding making all tenants members. BS stated that this issue was decided by the board months ago that it would be taken to the AGM for a decision. It also depends on our financial position this year. We currently do not know how many tenants are already members. It was highlighted that we do not need to consider the benefits of being members of NAS at the current time as the legal costs are being picked up by RMBC. We do not need to take the site insurance out until we know the date the lease is being signed. It was voted in favour that NAS membership should be discussed at a future meeting.

110/07/20 Transfer and Transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)

110.1/07/20 BS, JP, JT, AD and DB held a meeting with Andy Lee prior to this meeting. It was agreed that the RAA will submit 3 quotes for the solicitor fees then the authority will select which one they want to use and will appoint them to work on behalf of the RAA.

110.2/07/20 It was also discussed with Andy Lee regarding how the £100k grant can be spent. The RAA has to send the quotes to Andy Lee for approval and RMBC will pay invoices as this will be better for VAT purposes.

110.3/07/20 DB asked regarding the items that need completing on the Heads of Terms (marked yellow). It was discussed and decided that these items will be put to the appointed solicitor for clarification / confirmation.

110.4/07/20 JP asked to discuss the SLA as an updated SLA was sent out for board members to read. A number of new points have been added since the last version including a list of equipment. MH asked a question regarding the nominated councillors from RMBC on the board and if days and times of meetings can be changed to accommodate their attendance. BS explained that regardless, they have been put on the board because it is within their portfolio. It was also mentioned that a section regarding the procedure for the £100k expenditure is to be added by Andy Lee. It was also discussed regarding trying to get the grant spent as soon as possible – getting the asbestos removed and the skips for Hartley Lane completed first. It was discussed regarding getting society secretaries views by arranging the Zoom meetings.

110.4/07/20 The board then had a discussion regarding clearing plots and allowing new tenants to take on a plot with no rent for the rest of the year if they clear it themselves. JT asked how many plot lets had been done this year – DB stated about 20 (for the purpose of accuracy – DB counted up and it is 30). JP suggested that it would be beneficial to get all the badly overgrown plots cleared, whether a tenant lined up or not, in order to maintain them easier. DB stated that we wouldn't have cleared plots empty due to the waitlists for each site.

111/07/20 Maintenance

111.1/07/20 The grounds maintenance schedule was discussed and it was voted and agreed that it will be implemented in order to get the sites maintained. This contract will then be reviewed for next year.

112/07/20 Any Other Business

112.1/07/20 BS / JT / DB to arrange the Zoom meetings with society secretaries and devise the agenda. JP asked whether we should be asking societies what level of service they require from the RAA. MH mentioned to give 2 options – either all services done by the RAA or the society does all their own. It was stated that any radical changes would have to be discussed and to go to an AGM. It was suggested that a list of items need to be drawn up regarding what is and isn't being covered including items that may arise in the future.

112.2/07/20 MH asked regarding if other sites want to set societies up – how will this now be done? It was discussed that these can still be set up as we have the information regarding what procedures they need to follow. Directors will offer support to help them set up and BS has had assurance from Mike Farrell that he will offer his support if required.

112.3/07/20 The absence of Cllr Hoddinott from meetings was discussed. It was stated that the time and date of board meetings was agreed by all when the Alliance first set up. It would be beneficial to find out when she is available.

113/07/20

Agenda Items for next meeting

- Date and time of meetings
- Subscriptions to NAS
- Insurance / lease updates
- Update of meetings with societies

114/07/20- Date and Time of Next Meeting. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).

Monday 20th July 2.00pm on Zoom

BS thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.



Signed (Chair)