

## Rotherham Allotments Alliance

# Board Meeting No.33

**Meeting Date:** Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Meeting Location:** Online: Zoom

**Meeting Called By:** Councillor Brian Steele

**Chair:** John Palmer (acting)

**Secretary:** Jack Taylor (Minutes Donna Bushby)

**Present:** Directors: -, Al Dean, John Palmer, Jack Taylor, Mick Hirst, Mohammed Suleman.  
Allotment Support Administrator – Donna Bushby

**Apologies:** John Callaghan, Councillor Brian Steele

**139/10/20 Declaration of Interest**  
None declared.

**129/09/20 Minutes of Board Meeting 32 – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020**  
The minutes were moved as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman (electronically).

**130/09/20 Matters Arising**  
AD will change the registered address with the solicitor, FCA and Information Commissioner's Office. JT has changed the company registration address.

**131/09/20 Administrator's Report**  
**131.1/09/20** Report circulated to directors prior to the meeting.  
**131.2/09/20** In summary - 4 new plot lets done. Some terminations due to chasing non-payment of rents. Complaint regarding flooding on Moor Road. DB to contact the Environment Agency for information. Complaint of cockerels on Rectory Field ongoing. Clifton tenant still not happy with a few things onsite. DB spoke to the secretary and is happy with the response. NAS are advising sites to have Zoom AGMs where possible. Our AGM is due to be discussed in a future meeting. Requested to set up Microsoft 365 due to problems with emails. It was voted and agreed that this can be set up. Re-key at Greasbrough site went well. Got varying opinions from tenants regarding setting up a society. JP suggested that the board offer its thanks to DB, JT and BS for their time onsite.

**132/09/20 Financial Matters**  
**132.1/09/20** Interim report sent to directors prior to meeting. Cash in bank to date - £44,307. Work in progress. Skip, solicitors and Colony invoices to be paid. Received invoice from RMBC for ASA costs of October.  
**132.2/09/20** AD received a letter from Co-Op to audit director's information. Will send the form to the directors to complete. The change in director's needs updating  
**132.3/09/20.** JT has given receipts to DB for locks and bolts. DB has submitted to AD to arrange reimbursement.  
**132.4/09/20** DB previously circulated some financial projections for 2021/2022. Doesn't take into consideration rents from grazing sites. Discussed regarding the rent increases that were proposed to tenants previously. It was suggested that a full picture of costs still isn't clear – items such as grounds maintenance haven't been decided for next year. It was suggested that keeping rents the same would be good PR for the RAA and will also still allow to build-up contingency funds and funds to be used on capital projects in the future, once the £100k has gone. It was voted in favour to keep 2021 rents the same. For 2022, it was

suggested and agreed to take the same approach as last year and suggest a 2% increase only if necessary.

**132.5/09/20** It had previously been discussed regarding the ASA employment status – continue to be employed by RMBC and charge costs to the RAA? BS to look into this to see if the arrangement can continue – needs to be discussed in next meeting. Also employee review when been in post for 12 months. DB reported that she had not yet had a contract of employment – will contact HR.

### **133/09/20 Transfer and Transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)**

**133.1/09/20** Discussed regarding the £100k quotes that had been submitted – these have now been approved. The RAA are being reimbursed for the printer and website. Items where there is no VAT, the RAA will pay the bill and be reimbursed by RMBC. Current capital expenditure is £16,263.00 plus the cost of the encroachment work at Greasbrough.

**133.2/09/20** Concerns expressed regarding the availability of the funding due to the current climate. Discussed that the capital was approved a couple of years ago and we have spent an amount of it already. The RAA doesn't have to commit any money – bills are being approved and paid by RMBC.

**133.3/09/20** New quote for fencing at High Street discussed. The height of the fence was discussed and voted and agreed to submit the quote. Same company will also be quoting for replacement fence at Queen Street North and South. MH asked regarding plots at Avenue Road not having fence due to them backing onto the tenant's garden. DB had not been informed by the site secretary.

**133.4/09/20** Discussed regarding the priorities for the £100k being health and safety and plot clearances. Possibly look into a director getting qualified to weedkill although it is wrong time of year for this. Better to get plots strimmed and rotivated. Discussed getting a scheme in place to get some more of the capital spent as soon as possible. Also discussed regarding security cameras for problem sites, not necessarily a priority however. Need to compile a list of what sites are in need of – water supply etc. and look into the costs of implementation. It was decided we should look at what the sites need doing next from the wish lists and arrange to get prices for the works. It was suggested that the money should be spread around the sites as much as possible. It was asked if anything was going to be done on Psalters Lane. Only 1 tenant out of 5 have paid their rent and there are 3 vacant plots that currently can't be used.

### **134/09/20 Societies**

**134.1/09/20** DB has compiled a table of which societies have returned the society audit form which was sent out to secretaries. DB also sent a copy of a model constitution to JP for review. Will need to look at creating a model constitution that the RAA can send out to each society. AD to send JP an editable version. The constitutions that have been returned are very similar. They will all need amending to reflect the management arrangement with the RAA, not RMBC. Any sites that are not running correctly as a society will need to be looked at to see whether they need to be directly managed again. Needs further discussion in the next meeting when more audits come back.

### **135/09/20 Maintenance**

**135.1/09/20** It was discussed that we don't know exactly how much grass there is to cut / size of hedges on sites. Society feedback that has come back so far is varied as to what they will do so need to get feedback from all societies to get a better picture. The current service given by RMBC Grounds Maintenance isn't of a particularly good standard so need to look at alternative contractors. This will probably work out more cost effective as well. JT and MH volunteered to go round the sites with DB to measure the areas on the sites. Dates to be arranged.

### **136/09/20 Any Other Business**

**136.1/09/20** An email was received from a tenant on Greasbrough site asking regarding being able to use the buildings to run a site shop, for the benefit of the tenants. It was

discussed as to whether this could be allowed. They did have the keys taken from them due to not having a society on site so not having use of the building. It was suggested that this request be discussed with Councillor Steele for further consideration. It would need to be investigated as to whether they could form a committee to be able to run a shop if they don't have a proper society. AD to look into this. The ballot on Saturday was unfavourable for creating a society but there was interest in creating a committee. This needs communicating to the tenants onsite. DB to draft a letter. It was discussed regarding the use of the building as it belongs to the RAA – would they pay us rent? and also be legitimate in terms of the financial implications with tax etc.? To be discussed in next meeting.

**137/09/20      Agenda Items for next meeting**

- **ASA Contract**
- **Society Audit**
- **Constitutions**
- **Maintenance**
- **Greasbrough Shop Request**

**138/09/20      Date and Time of Next Meeting. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).**  
Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020 2.00pm on Zoom

JP thanked everyone for their attendance and their contribution, and closed the meeting at 4.00pm.



Signed ..... (Chair)