

## Rotherham Allotments Alliance

# Board Meeting No.34

**Meeting Date:** Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Meeting Location:** Online: Zoom

**Meeting Called By:** Councillor Brian Steele

**Chair:** Councillor Brian Steele

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

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

**Apologies:** John Callaghan

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

**140/10/20 Minutes of Board Meeting 33 – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020**  
The minutes were moved as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman (electronically).

**141/10/20 Matters Arising**  
None declared.

**142/10/20 Administrator's Report**  
**142.1/10/20** Report circulated to directors prior to the meeting. In summary – 2 new plot lets. Break in / gate damaged to Greasbrough site – contacted police. Gate has been repaired. There is some equipment from RMBC to collect – BS will arrange this. Tenant on Greasbrough site has offered to trim the empty plots using our equipment. Society sites who have requested path improvements – given details of a local contractor to arrange quotes. Quotes for fencing have been approved.  
**142.2/10/20** Discussed regarding the situation at Greasbrough site – hopefully now the unregistered tenants will not return to the site and the problems will stop. Suggested about getting references for tenants but agreed this would be impossible to get – tenants should just be monitored for the first 6 months. Also discussed regarding the tenant doing the strimming – agreed that this wouldn't be suitable due to health and safety, insurance purposes etc.

**143/10/20 Financial Matters**  
**143.1/10/20** Statement of account (10) sent to all directors prior to meeting. Balance as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 was £44,802 with £7,000 of outstanding cheques. Balance today is £39, 862.65.  
**143.2/10/20** AD has spoken to the bank and director details need updating – will send information out to directors. Question asked regarding internet banking – this is still in-hand. Co-op bank in Rotherham town centre closes next month so AD has been using the Post Office.  
**143.3/10/20** October ASA costs have been paid – 9 months now been paid.  
**143.4/10/20** ASA contract – BS to check with the Authority regarding employment – employed by RMBC to end of March – needs to check if this arrangement can continue. May be charged for this service to continue. Also need to look at an annual review for DB and to look at salary scales / increases etc. Needs to be done officially – BS will speak to HR for advice on this.  
**143.5/10/20** Received an invoice from Business Stream (Yorkshire Water) for Scrooby St site which seemed to be excessive for 3 months use - £ 654.89. The site is either wasting it,

using for other purposes or there is a leak somewhere. DB to look into this. Could be due to more people being onsite and more water being used. It would be worth looking into water conservation on the site, to reduce the tenant bills. Tenants need to be made aware of these high costs.

#### **144/10/20      Transfer and Transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)**

**144.1/10/20**      Question asked regarding update on Service Level Agreement. The solicitor has now been paid so work is being started. RMBC want this matter signed off before Christmas. Does it need re-profiling for next year? Was discussed that it is an ongoing process. No records of this project in RMBC's plans for next year – concerns for the availability of the £100k. This was explained that it doesn't need to be as it is in budgets from previous years. We have already spent £22k of the grant so it is still available. BS has had a conversation with Andy Lee for an update. It was discussed that some of the grant needs to be matched funded. DB did look into the small business grant for covid – if already receiving grants from other places, not eligible to claim for it. Need to decide which projects we could apply for match-funding for. Would organisations allow us to apply for funding if the SLA isn't completed? All the legal areas need to be completed before we look at this. Discussed items that can be included in the capital – water supply and storage / lawnmowers etc? – would need secure sheds etc. to store them in. Need to make a plan of what work needs to be done.

**144.2/10/20**      Piece of land included in allotment plan for Greasbrough that is not allotments needs looking at. Raised question with Tim Archer who has passed it onto Estates / Legal to look into. Need to determine whether it is allotment land which has implications for the gate those tenants use.

**144.3/10/20**      AD asked regarding some land on Broom Valley New site. This could potentially be developed using the £100k.

#### **145/10/20      Society Audit**

**145.1/10/20**      Had 8 replies back so far – answers are mixed. DB showed the directors a screenshare of tables created to show the sites answers regarding the audits and maintenance. DB to chase up secretaries who have not sent the audit back – give them a month to respond. Discussed regarding what action to take if societies are not formed / operating properly. Need to find out the reasons why it hasn't been sent back, e.g. difficulty getting in contact with committee members. Societies need to be encouraged to hold Zoom meetings and the RAA can mentor them where possible. Discussed regarding some tenants / societies may not have access to it. This does relate back to having all tenants details and being able to contact them.

**145.2/10/20**      Discussed regarding the issue of birds of prey on Queen Street North site. Society need to address this first and then refer to RAA if necessary.

#### **146/10/20      Maintenance**

**146.1/10/20**      JT has an app to measure areas so this can be used to assess how much grass cutting / hedge cutting there is. DB and JT to organise when to visit the sites.

**146.2/10/20**      Grounds maintenance on second round of grass cutting. Needs to be monitored to ensure done properly. DB did raise this issue with the operations manager.

**146.3/10/20**      AD asked regarding the tenant who offered to do grass cutting in lieu of rent. BS advised something like this would need to be avoided as it would have implications with Inland Revenue.

#### **147/10/20      Any Other Business**

**147.1/10/20**      Greasbrough shop request – discussed that the site should create a fully constituted society in order to run a shop. This would then create an agreement to ensure that the shop is being run correctly. The ballot to create a society to manage the site went in favour of not being society-run. It was voted and decided that the site can run a shop if they create it as a society.

**147.2/10/20** Another reported issue on Greasbrough site is the child minder using the allotment. The rules on child minding is that they have to be at their registered premises for at least 55% of their time. The allotment is not the registered premises. The complaint also asked regarding the buildings being used as a school – this has not been requested but would not be allowed any way. Also reports of children being picked up / dropped off. Discussed that the tenant has made good progress with the plot so happy for them to continue with it but they shouldn't be doing pick ups or drop offs onsite. AD has got a book on allotment law – AD to get DB a copy. DB will contact the tenant to advise them.

**148/09/20**      **Agenda Items for next meeting**

- **As per this meeting**
- **Future Actions**

**138/09/20**      **Date and Time of Next Meeting. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).**

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 2.00pm on Zoom. DB advised she is on holiday. JP to do minutes.

BS thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 3.20pm



Signed ..... (Chair)