

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.46

On Meeting Date: Monday 29th March 2021

Meeting Location: Online: Zoom

Meeting Called By: Councillor Brian Steele

Chair: Councillor Brian Steele, (Meeting Chaired by John Palmer (Vice Chair))

Secretary: Jack Taylor (Minutes Donna Bushby)

Present: Directors: - Al Dean, John Palmer, Jack Taylor, Mick Hirst, Mohammed Suleman

094/03/21 (1) **Apologies:** Cllr Brian Steele

095/03/21 (2) **Declaration of Interest**

095.1/03/21 JP declared an interest as a tenant on Barnsley Rd site.

095.2/03/21 AD declared an interest as Secretary of Broom Valley New site.

095.3/03/21 MH declared an interest as a tenant of Avenue Rd site.

095.4/03/21 MS declared an interest as a tenant of Clifton Site.

095.5/03/21 JT declared an interest as Secretary of Wood St site.

096/03/21 (3) **Minutes of Board Meeting 45 – 15th March 2021**

The minutes were moved as a true record and duly electronically signed by the Vice Chairperson.

097/03/21 (4) **Matters Arising**

None declared.

098/03/21 (5) **Administrator's Report**

098.1/03/21 **Barnsley Rd** – society have reported that some of the plots are not the same size as what is on record. Plots were last measured around 10 years ago by Tim Archer using the RMBC. Have advised that we might have to remeasure them as some are out by 100 sqm.

098.2/03/21 **Rectory Field** – complaint received from RMBC Enforcement regarding cockerel noise. Arranged a site visit with Paul Jones from RMBC and MH. Found a plot in the top corner that had a single cockerel on it. Also discovered that this is the plot that is being used for social reasons – evidence of drinks cans, cigarettes and also a chimney that extracts out of a shed. A letter has been sent to the tenant and also a letter from RMBC Enforcement. Just after the visit, someone, who has been seen before on the site, was seen jumping over the gate and going onto plots. Also received a report that someone had been using air rifles on site. Sent an email to all tenants (4 letters) advising them of the security issue and also not using plots for social purposes.

098.3/03/21 **Queen Street South** – tenant reported a complaint towards the site. Sent complaints form for them to fill in and return. Not received back.

098.4/03/21 **Lowfield Avenue** – vine work has been completed on allotment side. Resident has asked if it can be removed from their side roof as it is still hanging over. It was agreed that a price from the contractors can be obtained to remove it. Tenant of plot 4 have asked if their plot can be remeasured as the bottom area is very swampy due to a pond / natural spring and is uncultivable. The Board agreed that this can be done and the tenant's rent reduced.

098.5/03.21 **Avenue Rd** – tenants have complained regarding the rat problem onsite – they can be seen running up and down the site at night. MH made an observation that he's had rat damage on his plot and thinks it could be from having the clearance work done so the rates have had to find elsewhere to live. It was decided by directors that this site would be added to the pest control contract so that the problem doesn't get any worse. Tenant also reported that a resident has been throwing items into the allotment site from their garden.

Have reported to RMBC Housing – awaiting a response. Tenant wants the rubbish removing. It was discussed that this is a one-off issue but cameras could be set up if necessary.

098.6/03/21 Rosehill Park – issue with tenants wanting to take items from newly vacated plots that didn't belong to the tenant.

099/03/21 (6) Financial Matters

99.1/03/21 2021 Rents received to date – 63.3% paid. = £44,192.68. £25,665.50 outstanding – 4 societies to pay.

99.2/03/21 Interim Statement – AD sent to directors prior to meeting. Balance as at 1/3/21 £51, 608. Expenditure to date - £2813. Income to date - £15,816. Balance today - £75,185. Invoice received for hedge cutting received - £4214.64. this will be paid along with the grass cutting invoice - £2281.67.

99.3/03/21 Lay Auditor – AD reported that he passed thanks onto John Kirk for auditing the 2020 accounts. John is happy to continue doing the role.

99.4/03/21 Internet Banking / Quickbooks. AD reported there is still difficulty accessing the account online due to the difficulty obtaining a passcode using the automated system. AD plans to have a look at it again and attempt to make a payment. To be reported back at the next meeting.

99.5/03/21 Share Account – Still process, hopefully resolved by the next meeting.

99.6/03/21 Annual Return – Needs to be sent to the FCA in an official format. It will need counter-signing by 2 directors beforehand. Next year's account will need to be signed off and have a report from the auditor before the AGM. JT/DB have been looking into the process of submitting the accounts to the FCA and also the rule change.

100/03/21 (7) Transfer and Transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)

100.1/03/21 Solicitor update – no further communication received since last meeting. DB to chase up again.

101/03/21 (8) Society Update

South Street – chased up with new contacts on site regarding the committee being set up. Have advised that decisions on the site cannot be made until the society is fully set up. The contacts have asked regarding various policies but advised that these should be looked at following the formation of the committee. It was suggested that the mentor speak to them. MH offered to assist if BS is unable to currently. A further meeting with the new contacts has been arranged for 8th April.

102/03/21 (9) Maintenance

102.1/03/21 Notice Boards. DB has been researching notice board types. It depends on cost and the type / size required for each site. It was discussed regarding attaching to fences where possible but some sites don't have areas available. It was suggested to avoid external fences where possible to reduce risk of vandalism. It was discussed that the rules/tenancy agreement should be displayed on each site but some may not need it – i.e. sites where people don't use the gates or smaller sites - it would be cheaper just to send information to tenants. Some sites i.e. High Street, it wouldn't be possible to attach anything to the gate due to issues with the gate. DB to collate how many required and if they can be fixed to gates / fences and present at next meeting.

102.2/03/21 Electrical Testing – DB contacted the company that MH spoke to but didn't get a response. DB will chase up. JT suggested there may be someone on his site who could do it, or know someone who does.

102.3/03/21 Allotment Works Report. DB found minutes of a RMBC report from 11 years ago which detailed works carried on allotments at that time. Funding was sought from a special budget. Just gives an insight into what sites had new fences / gates etc.

102.4/03/21 Capital Quotes. DB has chased both contractors for the quotes.

103/03/21 (10) AGM

103.1/03/21 Draft Minutes. The draft minutes have been circulated to directors and approval was given to publicise them on the website, with a note to say they would be approved at the 2022 AGM. It was also agreed that the Annual report is sent to Andy Lee as required by the Service Level Agreement.

103.2/03/21 NAS Membership. This motion was carried at the AGM. Two issues were raised – societies who are already members and the GDPR implications with tenant's details.

It may be that we have to contact each tenant to get a positive approval for their details being sent on. The means of doing this needs deciding – possibly send out letter with a stamped return envelope. It was questioned regarding if no details can be passed on, how can a tenant benefit from being a member? It was discussed regarding the seed scheme and insurance and how people would access them on directly-managed sites. It should be offered only to the people who want to join the scheme. It was suggested that societies should enroll themselves as they normally do then be reimbursed by the Alliance. This would work as the society can get the permission and can pass the details on. Renewal dates are also different for each society as it depends on when they joined up. Also need to be aware of if any individual tenants are members as the cost of this is more. It was suggested that we could reimburse the £3, not the full cost. It was suggested that society secretaries are contacted to advise them of the decision and ask if they want to be joined up, if not already members. It is possible that it needs to be added into the tenancy agreement for allowing their details to be passed onto NAS. Confidentiality rules may also need reviewing. Due to the complexity of the issues, it was decided that a meeting should be set up with the representatives from NAS and directors to go through all these issues. DB to arrange.

103.3/03/21 Board Diversity. It was fed back to one of the directors on a site regarding the lack of diversity on the board in regard to gender. This was concurred by directors. It was discussed that director applications have been advertised so people can put themselves forward. There is a small number of tenants who would be very good directors due to their knowledge base.

103.4/03/21 Board Meeting Frequency. It was asked regarding the frequency of board meetings as discussed in the AGM. It was discussed that until the sub-committee are put in place, the meetings will stay the same. Ideally would need more directors to share the workload of the sub-committees.

104/03/21 (11) Business Plan Review

104.1/03/21 Revisions. A revised version of the Business Plan was sent to directors which includes the financial projections. It includes the reserve, contingency and shareholder amounts that weren't included in the 2020 accounts. The projections were discussed and agreed by the board. The Assumptions that were added were also reviewed and agreed. The Business Plan as a whole document was approved by the board.

105/03/21 (12) Future Actions

Groundwork quotes – a table of quotes so far were shown to the board. Still waiting quotes from the 2 contractors who did visits 2 weeks ago. It was questioned about the consistency on some of the fencing quotes due to difference in prices. A summary of all quotes received so far / estimates was shown on screen to directors. Hopefully all quotes will be received by the next meeting.

106/03/21 (13) Any other business

106.1/03/21 Avenue Rd. MH was approached by 2 tenants who had a suggestion for the end plot which has been prone to dumping over the fence in the past. They would like to use bamboo fencing to cover the fence and possibly plant fruit trees to deter people dumping on it. They would like it to be grassed or planted with wild flowers. It was suggested that they email a proposal to DB for consideration at the next meeting.

107/03/21 (14) Agenda Items for next meeting

- Internet Banking
- Share Account
- £100k Capital Quotes
- 26th April – Grounds Maintenance meeting follow up

107/03/21 (15) Date and Time of Next Meeting. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).
Monday 12th April 2021 at 2.00pm.

JP thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting was closed at 3.58pm.



Signed (Chair)