

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.47

On Meeting Date: Monday 12th April 2021

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, John Palmer, Jack Taylor, Mick Hirst, Mohammed Suleman

108/04/21 (1) **Apologies:** Cllr Emma Hoddinott

109/04/21 (2) **Declaration of Interest**

109.1/04/21 JP declared an interest as a tenant on Barnsley Rd site.

109.2/04/21 MH declared an interest as a tenant of Avenue Rd site.

109.3/04/21 MS declared an interest as a tenant of Clifton Site.

109.4/04/21 JT declared an interest as Secretary of Wood St site.

110/04/21 (3) **Minutes of Board Meeting 46 – 29th March 2021**

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

111/04/21 (4) **Matters Arising**

JT asked about the electrical testing. DB has now organized a company and passed details onto relevant sites – 2 booked in so far.

112/04/21 (5) **Administrator's Report**

112.1/04/21 **St Leonard's** – tenant who has left has asked if they can have a refund as paid until end of year. It was agreed that a refund can be issued if the plot is re-let and subject to an admin fee.

112.2/04/21 **Clifton** – fire reported onsite – fire brigade called. Damage to polytunnel and sheds damaged. Police are investigating.

112.3/04/21 **Lowfield Ave** – tenant reported that dead chickens had been put in the water butts in their plot. Concerned about contamination of the water. Suspected it could be a past tenant. The length of time they were there can't be confirmed. Advised that if there is a security issue, the site can have the locks changed.

112.4/04/21 **High Street** – complaints about burning again – letters gone out to 3 tenants. Recently cleared plot had left all the cleared material on a vacant plot behind them. Letter sent to tenant and DB to speak to them about getting the material removed as the plot is unlettable. Tenant also reported that after RMBC had been on site to cut the grass, the slider was missing from the gate leaving it unsecure. Sent a message to the Operations Manager who said it was removed but put back by Operatives.

112.5/04/21 **More complaints about burning** - from Psalters Lane and Vicarage Field.

112.6/04/21 **Barnsley Rd** - reported a water leak. Society managed to fix themselves.

112.7/04/21 **South Street** – found a lot of asbestos on site. Will cost £680 +VAT to collect, along with some on a few other sites. Board agreed this to be submitted as a capital request to get it removed.

112.8/04/21 **Vicarage Field** – issue with parking as lay by opposite site is now fenced off. Possibly won't be allowed to use the pub car park. There is street parking nearby but concerned that road is dangerous with speeding vehicles. Society have asked if they can convert some space into a parking area. Some tenants may rely on having vehicle access. Have advised someone from RAA will visit the site to assess. Visit to be arranged.

112.9/04/21 DB reported that last couple of weeks have been challenging due to number of complaints received and volume of work to get through.

113/04/21 (6) Financial Matters

113.1/04/21 2021 Rents received to date – 63.3% paid. = £44,192.68. £25,665.50 outstanding – 4 societies to pay. Got latest bank statement to work through. DB will start to chase non-paid rents when the last bank statement for March is received.

113.2/04/21 Treasurer not attended meeting so could not run through Treasurer's report. Board discussed that as no apologies received – which the board agreed was concerning as the Treasurer has never missed a meeting– it highlights the need for all the internet banking, making payments etc. to be sorted out which was discussed in the last meeting. It was suggested that the current statement is noted and reported on at the next meeting.

114/04/21 (7) Transfer and Transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)

114.1/04/21 Solicitor update – emailed received from solicitor regarding environmental surveys at a cost of £200 + VAT. It was decided that this should be done to cover the Alliance and the Authority will be picking up the cost.

114.2/04/21 Grazing License – a draft grazing license was sent to directors prior to meeting. It was discussed whether or not separate agreements to the normal tenancy agreements are required, with adjustments made to reflect grazing land. Only 2 of the 4 sites are currently occupied. No information regarding current grazing land tenants has been passed on yet by RMBC. Will need to speak to Andy Lee to discuss progress.

115/04/21 (8) Society Update

South Street – MH and DB had another meeting with new committee members and everything is progressing well in terms of setting up the interim committee. The people involved are very committed to the project. The official committee will be decided when the site can have an AGM when restrictions are lifted. Questions have been raised with the RAA but have advised that any questions should be put to the interim committee. BS has advised that he will offer support and deal with any issues that the interim committee cannot. The people currently involved are showing some great commitment which is benefitting the site.

116/04/21 (9) Maintenance

116.1/04/21 Notice boards – DB no further forward – information to follow.

116.2/04/21 Grass Cutting – meeting with Grounds Maintenance tomorrow. Need to confirm which sites need taking off. Have had reports from some sites that the work done so far has been of a good standard.

116.3/04/21 Hartley Lane grass cutting - Have requested that grass cutting on their site is now done by the RAA. Discussed regarding the society surveys that were sent out last year and the possibility of reducing society rents if they do the work themselves. Nothing further was done on this. Tenancy agreements do not state regarding who is responsible for grounds maintenance. Sites may feel that they shouldn't have the responsibility if not getting a discount. Possibly too late to add onto this year's schedule. What would the value of the discount be? Need to have a consistent approach to all sites. For next year, we should be advised by societies before the end of this year to see if they want the grass cutting by the RAA. We can speak to Grounds Maintenance at the meeting regarding adding on / taking sites off. DB to ask Hartley Lane to measure the site and let us know. Site also asked regarding NAS membership. DB not had any response from the contact at NAS. JT to contact them again to ask to set up a meeting as the matter needs discussing urgently.

116.4/04/21 Lanes for Drains were called to Herringthorpe as they had a blocked drain.

116.5/04/21 Avenue Rd have a loose manhole cover. DB contacted RMBC who were getting Yorkshire Water to look at it.

116.6/04/21 £100k capital quotes – only had quotes back for one of the companies for doing paths. 2 quotes for fencing work received. DB showed the meeting a summary table of quotes received which shows that approx. £20k of the surplus from last year is required to fulfil all the jobs. It was discussed regarding using a cheaper company but this would depend on the scope, quality and guarantee of the work done. The higher quotes are from a council – approved company. We could look at alternatives but it would depend on whether tenants would do any work themselves. It was discussed that some of the works – for drainage etc. needs further investigation as other parties are involved and it is worth pursuing getting funds from these. It was also discussed regarding ensuring that enough funds are kept in reserve to cover any emergency works - it was suggested £20k. DB has looked at the financial projection for 2021 and adjusted it to use some of the surplus to supplement the capital expenditure to the value of approx. £20k which would allow for a £10k surplus. A vote was conducted and directors

approved the existing quotes. The estimated quotes and quotes relating to drainage will remain in abeyance until further information is sought. DB to submit quotes to Andy Lee for approval by RMBC Finance.

117/04/21 (10) Future Actions

Question was asked about setting up the proposed sub-committees. It was discussed that as there are 2 director vacancies, it would be better to leave setting them up until the positions are filled to ensure they can be quorate. It was asked regarding how to encourage directors to join the board. It was suggested to wait until after the elections in May as councillor positions may change.

118/04/21 (11) Any other business

None reported.

119/04/21 (12) Agenda Items for next meeting

- Finance - Internet Banking - Share Account
- Maintenance Update

120/04/21 (13) Date and Time of Next Meeting. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).

Monday 26th April 2021 at 2.00pm.

BS thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting was closed at 3.30pm.



Signed (Chair)