

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.56

On Meeting Date: Monday 16th August 2021

Meeting Location: Online: Zoom

Meeting Called By: Brian Steele

Chair: Brian Steele

Secretary: Jack Taylor (Minutes Donna Bushby)

Present: Directors: Brian Steele (BS), John Palmer (JP), Jack Taylor (JT), Mick Hirst (MH), Mohammed Suleman (MH), Alice Parry (AP), David Sheppard (DS) and Allotment Support Assistant – Donna Bushby (DB).

240/08/21 (1) **Apologies:** N/A

241/08/21 (2) **Declaration of Interest**

241.1/08/21 JP declared an interest as a tenant on Barnsley Rd site.

241.2/08/21 JT declared an interest as secretary on Wood St site.

241.3/08/21 MH declared an interest as a tenant of Avenue Rd site.

241.4/08/21 MS declared an interest as a tenant of Clifton site.

241.5/08/21 AH declared an interest as an interim committee member of South Street.

241.6/08/21 AP declared an interest as an interim committee member of South Street.

243/08/21 (3) **Minutes of Board Meeting 55 – 2nd August 2021**

These were moved as a true record and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson.

244/08/21 (4) **Matters Arising**

BS mentioned regarding the proposed committees – this issue is on the agenda so will be discussed.

245/08/21 (5) **Administrator's Report – submitted to Director's prior to meeting. Summary:**

245.1/08/21 High Street – fires on site again. Tenant found a dead chicken head on their gate lock and aware of some carcasses thrown into their trees. Suspect that it is 2 particular tenants who have done this which is intimidating behaviour. Both tenants have cultivated their plots but continue to break some of the rules. Cameras are going to be installed to monitor activity on the site.

245.2/08/21 Lowfield Ave – resident not happy regarding removal of trees. It was discussed by the board that the removal of the trees does not jeopardise security of the resident's garden.

245.3/08/21 Allotment Tools – these can be collected from Tim Archer this week but difficulty is where to store them. It was discussed regarding getting a secure lock up or use an existing storage box on one of the sites. DB to contact Tim Archer if we can use the container on a particular site.

245.4/08/21 Broom Valley New – following the toilet floor repair, the area needs a specialist sealed lino floor installing. Society has asked if the Alliance can meet some of the cost (£456.30). It was voted agreed that the Alliance would contribute half the costs.

245/08/21 (6) **Financial Matters**

245.1/08/21 AH now has copies of all the bank statements on file. Full visibility is being maintained between DB and AH on a folder shared through OneDrive. Any expenditure is being authorized between AH and DB except ASA expenses which will be approved by BS. Now looking at compiling full reports for 2019/2020.

245.2/08/21 DB has been working through Quickbooks to match all the transactions from the bank statements to ensure than Quickbooks is correct and up to date. Also produced statements and a summary for 2021 which were displayed to the board on the screen. Missing some early statements which can now be obtained from AH. DB reported that the current bank balance is £57,162.05 and there are a few transactions to be approved.

245.3/08/21 DB has also looked at income and expenditure for this year and showed directors on screen a report that calculates what has been received, what has been spent and what expected expenditure is left. We are owed some capital expenditure payments from RMBC. Approx. £4300. It was discussed regarding when the Alliance started trading and what trading records have been

submitted to the FCA. DB briefly showed directors on screen how Quickbooks is set up and reports it can create. DB was thanked for doing this work.

245.4/08/21 JT asked regarding a payment for some items he paid for. DB does not have any records of this. It may be that the receipt is with any paperwork left at Al's. No paperwork has been passed over recently.

245.5/08/21 Rent increase. It was discussed regarding the positives and negatives in regard to increasing the rent. Increased running costs with inflation to the RAA have to be taken into consideration as well as keeping the rents affordable, which they currently are. Tenants have already been informed about the possible increase of 2%. This would only put rents up by around a few pounds per tenant so not a massive rise and rents have not increased for the last 2 years. Need to avoid sharp rises in the future but also ensure the RAA is protected for the future. We need to look at forecasts and budgets in more detail and produce a 1 year and 5-year projection. This can be done by the sub-committee. We will have a better financial picture once we have a few years trading records. Could also look at societies doing some of the maintenance responsibilities themselves to cut RAA costs but this would possibly warrant a rent reduction as previously discussed. This would mean that the Alliance has to ensure that societies are carrying out the maintenance to an acceptable standard. Societies could also be offered other incentives to be self-managed. A vote was conducted and a majority were in favour of implementing the increase. DB to contact societies to inform them of the increase.

246/08/21

(7) Transfer and Transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)

Following the last meeting, JP updated the queries on the site plans and these have been distributed to Andy Lee and our solicitor for consideration. Andy Lee replied to say that they would be looking into the issues and issue new plans where applicable. JP briefly ran through the points raised which include possible encroachments, unregistered land, covenants and areas not within allotment fence perimeters.

247/08/21

(8) Society Update

247.1/08/21 DB visited Barnsley Rd to drop off a new lock. Spoke to the Chairperson regarding the outstanding issues.

247.2/08/21 DB spoke to secretary at Queen Street North who is resigning. Advised they need to set up a site meeting to elect new committee members.

248/08/21

(9) Maintenance

248.1/08/21 Tap has been repaired at High Street.

248.2/08/21 Hedge Survey – new date needs deciding as unable to do 17.8.21.

248.3/08/21 New fence being installed at Queen Street w/c23rd August.

248.4/08/21 Plot clearances and equipment. A point was raised regarding the equipment at Avenue Rd. It was suggested that the equipment be moved so it does not go missing or another lock put on the container. Discussed

248.5/08/21 Need a welder to weld chains on the new locks. Also need to get some more safety bolts. DB to sort.

248.6/08/21 Question asked regarding path works. DB to chase up with contractor.

249/08/21

(10) NAS Membership Update

No formal instruction received from NAS as yet. DB to distribute letter to societies / new societies to start reimbursing them. Direct-managed tenants to be contacted once instructions have been sent.

250/08/21

(11) Rotherham Show

250.1/08/21 It was discussed that the RAA definitely do need to do the show. Need to make a decision on what is going to be done and the rota for manning the stall. A rota was devised during the meeting with some times to be confirmed.

250.2/08/21 DB Contacted Mike Farrell to ask about working together with RADAA – not spoken to him about this as yet.

250.3/08/21 It was suggested to do a giveaway but keep it simple such as seeds in a RAA branded packet. DB was authorised to get a pull up banner and also a display board. As we won't have electricity, it was suggested to produce a QR code so that people can scan a link to our website. DB has obtained a £20 from Tesco at Rotherham which can be used on seeds / a competition prize. It was also suggested about getting branded pencils depending on the cost. It was also decided to do a

competition to be completed by visitors on the day. JT to produce this for DB to print. It was agreed to have enough for up to 500 people.

251/08/21

(12) Sub Committees

251.1/08/21 The sub committees (maintenance and finance) were discussed briefly in the previous board meeting. An observation was made regarding the treasurer not being the chair of the finance committee. This was agreed by the board.

251.2/08/21 It was decided that JP would chair finance with MS / AH / DS. BS to chair maintenance with MH / JT / AP. The quorum for each sub committee was set at 3.

251.3/08/21 It was discussed and agreed that board meetings would be every 6 weeks going forward with either the maintenance or finance meeting in 2-week intervals preceding the board meeting. DB to send out a schedule.

252/08/21

(13) Future Actions

None discussed.

253/08/21

(15) Any Other Business

253.1/08/21 JT advised of an issue relating back to a complaint on Wood Street site regarding an abusive tenant who was asked to apologise by the committee and is refusing. JT to contact the tenant and escalate to RAA if required.

253.2/08/21 DS advised that the flood investigations at Moor Rd are still ongoing and the RMBC Officer will contact DB in due course.

253.3/08/21 Question was asked regarding when the next plot inspections will be. These will be done in next 8 weeks. It was discussed regarding certain tenants being an unofficial point of contact which sometimes can be negative. BS stated that any tenant onsite who is abusive towards anyone, will be removed from the site. The RAA will support and advise any tenants / societies where it is required. Tenants need to be reminded that decisions on society sites are made by the committee and not an individual.

254/08/21

(16) Agenda Items for next meeting

- Finance committee feedback
- Maintenance committee feedback

255/08/21

(17) Date and Time of Next Meeting. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).

Monday 27th September at 2.00pm

BS thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting was closed at 4.00pm.



Signed (Chair)