

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.60

Held: Monday 25th October 2021

Meeting Location: Online: Zoom

(Minutes John Palmer)

Present: Directors: Brian Steele (BS) Chair, Mick Hirst (MH), John Palmer (JP), Jack Taylor (JT), Alice Parry (AP), Alison Howard (AH) – (left part way through meeting – sent apologies), Cllr Dave Sheppard (DS).
Allotment Support Assistant - Donna Bushby (DB).

304/10/21 (1) **Apologies:** N/A

305/10/21 (2) **Declaration of Interest**

MH declared an interest as a tenant of Avenue Rd site.

JP declared an interest as a tenant on Barnsley Rd site.

JT declared an interest as secretary on Wood St site.

AP declared an interest as interim committee member of South Street site.

AH declared an interest as interim committee member of South Street site.

306/10/21 (3) **Minutes of Board Meeting – 11th October 2021.**

Question raised regarding the inclusion of the suggestion to arrange a Christmas meal for directors. It was agreed that this would be ok to be included. These were moved as a true record and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson.

307/10/21 (4) **Matters Arising**

None raised.

308/10/21 (5) **Admin report**

- a) **Tree issue at Greasbrough** – Wentworth Estates have spoken to the tenant and they should contact the Estate direct if there is any further issue.
- b) **Tenancy agreement clause for Groups/Charities.** DB has written a clause to be added to the tenancy agreement. DB also suggested a clause to be added regarding passing personal details onto NAS. It was agreed that the group clause be adopted. It was discussed that membership to NAS isn't mandatory as part of the tenancy agreement. It was agreed that new tenants will be sent the consent form with the option for them to opt in.
- c) **Registered Address** – still down as Phoenix Pavilion. Discussed to change it to JT's address. DB to action.
- d) **Website** – DB has been updating the website content. Enquired about training to learn about advanced content to improve the website further. New page with capital works information has been created – needs to be checked before it goes live. MH/JP offered to look at it. DB to send link.
- e) **Direct-Managed 2022 rental letter** – wording needs approval by the board. DB has also started the letter for societies. Will send to JP for perusal. Also updated invoice templates.
- f) **Invoice billing** – Stationary audit completed. Need stamps. Directors approved the purchase of 500 stamps at a cost of £330.00. It was discussed regarding the cost of sending invoices and reducing it by emailing invoices. It was debated regarding how reliable it would be sending by email and if it is physically easier to do by email. Also don't have email addresses for all tenants. DB described the process and it would potentially mean sending out 300 individual emails – this could be the same amount of time as putting them in envelopes. It was also suggested about simplifying the rent process by charging per plot, not by Sqm so all invoices would be the same. This may be taken to the AGM as a resolution for discussion by tenants. It was stated that the recent AGM at South St opted for price per sqm. There would be a big difference in prices depending on the size of the plot. It was decided to leave it as it is for the time being. There is potential for them to be sent direct from Colony. DB to look into this.

309/10/21

(6) Financial Matters

- a) AH has a debit card in DB's name and paying-in envelopes that need to be dropped off.
- b) AH needs to catch up with DB to discuss the processes for bank statement etc.
- c) **2023 Rent Increase** – notification needs to go out in the 2022 rent letter in December. Debated regarding linking it to a year-average inflation rate but this would be a retrospective figure on future rents. Need to justify to tenants why increases are needed. Do need to specify a figure but could make this a maximum figure which doesn't necessarily have to be implemented. It was proposed that a 5% maximum figure is communicated. This was voted in favour by majority.
- d) **Reserve/Savings Account** – need to open a savings account to keep the reserve/contingency money in. DB has researched accounts with CO-OP. Interest rates are poor but can have instant access. Suggested regarding looking at other banks for a better interest rate but decided it would be simpler to keep it with CO-OP so it can be added to the online banking platform. AH to action opening the account.
- e) It was requested that a monthly statement be submitted as relevant at board meetings. DB/AH to action.
- f) **2022 Finance** – DB has started looking at the budget/forecast for 2022. This needs further discussion so it was agreed that the sub-committee meetings be re-introduced with the next meeting being the finance meeting. DB to action a new schedule for meetings.
- g) **Information Commissioner's Office** – JT advised up for renewal. To be sent to DB to action.
- h) **Mobile Phone** – JT awaiting to collect it from the repairers. JT to be reimbursed for cost when got the receipt.
- i) DB advised that payments set up in the online banking need to be approved within 3 days or they get cancelled. DB offered to do a training session on online banking.

310/10/21

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

No response received from solicitor or Andy Lee regarding last issues raised. DS to contact Andy Lee for an update.

311/10/21

(8) Society Update

- a) **Herringthorpe** – Pest Control Officer at RBC reported infestation problems are related to the way food for livestock is be stored and buildings to being rat-proofed. Sent this information to the site secretary. Still need to speak to the secretary regarding other issues onsite. It was advised that a recent meeting at Barnsley Rd site banned the use of poison due to the effects on the local wildlife. There is also a sewer problem at the site – a contractor has been in touch for access but a further visit is needed.
- b) **Kimberworth Park** – email from tenant querying a meeting held onsite. JP spoke to the secretary who confirmed that the meeting wasn't an AGM. The current treasurer and chair will be resigning so wants people to join the committee and get involved in the running of the site. Would like information on constitutions / AGMs sending. Will contact JP for any queries. DB to send. MH offered assistance if needed. AP offered the use of the documentation used at the South St AGM for other societies and also other assistance.

312/10/21

(9) Maintenance

- a) **Broom Valley Old site** – MH/JT had a meeting onsite with the secretary, treasurer and Bernard Burkinshaw regarding the path problems. Walked round the site and established what remedial works will be done. Been assured by Bernard that the work will be to a satisfactory standard but can't be done for a few weeks due to workload. It was mentioned regarding having a barrier installed at the top corner plot and the society should put in a request for this, however, none of the other plots have barriers next to the path. The same issues on High Street also need bringing to Bernard's attention. The invoices have been sent to RMBC so these will be paid when the remedial work has been completed. The other works will be put on hold until the remedial work has been done. May need to look at requesting an extension on the capital expenditure if need to employ other contractors. BS to contact Andy Lee. It was suggested that we need in writing what remedial works will be taking place, rather than a verbal promise, to refer back to. DB to speak to Bernard. Future works need to have an agreed specification.
- b) **Moor Rd – flooding works.** Email received from RMBC Flooding dept advising that the works can't be done until next year, and ideally after a long dry period. Also stated that the works may

not necessarily remove the problem in full. It was discussed regarding getting a ditch dug down the side of the site as a temporary measure. It would be on the edge of a plot so the tenant would need to be contacted. Also need to find a suitable contractor. It was suggested to ask the tenant who does groundworks for a living to see if they can quote to do it. If more than £500, 2 other quotes will be required. The back ditch had been dug out last year – it may need clearing again.

- c) **Hedge cutting Survey** – Completed by DB, MH and Operative from RMBC. Needs further discussion as some areas are ambiguous as to who is responsible. The work has started to be carried out already. DB has got pictures of all the areas so these will be discussed in the next maintenance sub-committee meeting.
- d) **Restorative Justice** – work almost completed at Greasbrough. Site meeting arranged 1/11 at 10am to view Rectory Field site with a view to starting work on there. MH/BS to accompany DB
- e) **Lowfield Vine** - Visit by JT/BS needs arranging as it is growing back. MH offered to go with JT on Wednesday 27th at 11.00am.

313/10/21

(10) 2022 AGM

- a) DB Contacted a few venues to check price and availability. It was decided to book the Unity Centre on St Leonard's Rd on Tuesday 29th March, 6.00pm – 9.00pm (meeting to be advertised 6.30pm-8.30pm) with refreshments for 40 people. Parking will be available.
- b) Items for the agenda to be submitted. Amend last year's with any new resolutions.

314/10/21

(11) Future Actions

- a) DB advised the re-inspection visits need completing so notices can be sent. DB/BS to organise.
- b) JT is still looking at venues for the Christmas meal.

315/10/21

(12) Any Other Business

316/10/21

(13) Agenda Items for next meeting

- As per this meeting
- Items for sub-committee meetings to be submitted to DB.

317/10/21

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

Finance sub-committee meeting - Monday 8th November 2021.

Maintenance - sub-committee meeting - Monday 22nd November 2021.

Board meeting - Monday 6th December at 2.00pm

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



Signed (Chair)