

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Finance Committee Meeting No.1

On Meeting Date: Monday 8th November 2021

Meeting Location: Online: Zoom

Chair: John Palmer

(Minutes Donna Bushby)

Present: Directors: John Palmer (JP), Dave Sheppard (DS), Mohammed Suleman (MS) and Allotment Support Assistant – Donna Bushby (DB).

F001/11/21 (1) Apologies: N/A

F002/11/21 (2) Auditing End of Year Accounts

- a) It was discussed regarding the rule to disapply the need for a professional audit under the FCA regulations and whether it has to be done every year. A motion to appoint lay auditors was carried in the AGM this year. Would need to look for a new lay auditor as last year's may not be available. It was suggested to contact Voluntary Action Rotherham and National Allotment Society who may be able to help. DB to action. DB advised that there were some items of paperwork not in the Alliance's possession following the death of Al Dean. DB is also collating all paperwork in preparation for the year end.

F003/11/21 (3) Expenses for Volunteers (Directors)

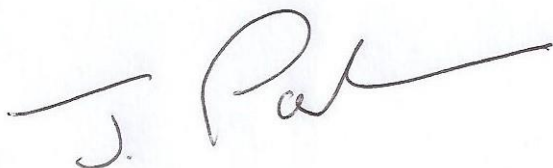
- a) It was discussed regarding whether directors are classed as volunteers. JP has researched with HMRC and directors can be paid expenses only if they are not making a profit from it. It also depends on whether they are, as volunteers, covered for travelling on Alliance business i.e. on their own car insurance. An allowance would need to be put in the budget for this. An expense form would need to be produced.
- b) Also talked about whether other volunteers would be compensated, i.e. bus fares to sites they are volunteering on. It was decided that this should be a board decision so needs to be put to the next meeting and a policy drawn up if required.

F004/11/21 (4) Budgets – 2022/2023/2024/

- a) DB displayed on screen the 2021/2022 budgets previously prepared and explained regarding re-ordering the format to tie-in with Quickbooks. There are 2 versions of the budget – one to show an allowance for capital expenditure projects and one with no capital allowance shown and the surplus distributed in each category. It was decided that the latter version is most accurate as money can be allocated to projects as required. It will also identify areas where there is an overspend/underspend on the different cost elements. DB highlighted that some invoices from 2020 have been paid in this year's accounts, i.e. water bill to RMBC. It would be beneficial to compare the last 2 years expenditure to identify an average. However, this wouldn't be an entirely true picture due to unexpected costs arising, i.e. repairs which won't happen every year. Other cost elements were also reviewed. It was suggested that income from key deposits and water should be separated from the rent figure. This can be done in Quickbooks but would create an extra administrative task. DB will be able to do this however. Income such as the key deposit should possibly be stored separately for accounting purposes.
- b) For 2023/2024/2025, it was discussed that these projections can be summarized, taking into consideration the projected income and expenditure increases and applied year on year.
- c) It was then discussed regarding surplus amounts which should be used for contingency purposes. An amount from the existing surplus will be transferred into the new savings account as a reserve figure and another amount set in the budget for other unexpected expenditure and special projects. It will be then down to the maintenance committee to decide what projects any surplus funds will be spent on.
- d) A small meeting will be arranged with JP and DB to review the updated projections before the next meeting.

- F005/11/21 (5) Financial regulations (Internet banking)**
 a) There are still some outstanding items on the current financial regulations document. The regulations will need reviewing to reflect the current financial practices since the use of internet banking and Quickbooks has been introduced. Some of the standing orders are also not being followed in terms of reporting monthly / quarterly statements / budget comparisons at board meetings. It was suggested AH (treasurer) write up some updated financial regulations that are achievable and adequate to meeting audit requirements. An internal audit by the board should also be periodically during the year to protect everybody. It was discussed regarding the reporting methods to ensure there is an audit trail for every transaction. DB advised that she keeps an Excel spreadsheet of invoices / purchases and has been producing a monthly statement. This can be adapted to meet with the standing orders.
- F006/11/21 (6) ASA Salary Review**
 DB advised that she does not know if she is included in the Salary increment process. DB has only had an electronic copy of her contract of employment and doesn't know any other details. It was discussed that DB should have an employee review/appraisal. JP will seek further information from BS.
- F007/11/21 Any Other Business**
 a) DB raised the email sent regarding the temporary drainage works at Moor Rd. At least 1 more quote to be obtained and also written specification of the work to be completed.
 b) DB reported that Restorative Justice can do the works on Rectory Field but need to have a structure to provide shelter. DB has researched the cost of a shed and containers. It was suggested that the cost of a mobile unit should be researched as this may be a better option as it will be self-contained, can be moved and not the responsibility of the RAA. DB to source prices. A decision needs to be made fairly quickly to ensure Restorative Justice's availability. It was also suggested regarding applying for funding from outside sources to help finance the project.
- F008/11/21 (7) Agenda Items for next meeting**
 Same as this meeting and add matters arising.
- F009/11/21 (8) Date of next meeting**
 It was discussed regarding the 6-week gap to the next meeting which would be 20th December when DB in on annual leave. It was agreed that the meeting be brought forward 1 week to the 13th December to address any issues before the year end.

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



Signed (Chair)