

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Maintenance Committee Meeting No.2

On Meeting Date: Monday 22nd November 2021

Meeting Location: Online: Zoom

Meeting Called By: Brian Steele

Chair: Brian Steele

Secretary: Jack Taylor (Minutes Donna Bushby)

Present: Directors: Brian Steele (BS), Jack Taylor (JT), Mick Hirst (MH), Alice Parry (AP) and Allotment Support Assistant – Donna Bushby (DB).

M007/11/21 (1) Apologies: N/A

M008/11/21 (2) Minutes from previous meeting – 31.08.21:
Moved as a true record and duly signed by the chairperson.

M009/11/21 (3) Matters Arising
None declared – will be covered by agenda.

M010/11/21 (4) Hedge Cutting Survey

- a) A hedge cutting survey was carried out with DB/MH and an RMBC representative, based on the current schedule from Grounds Maintenance. (BS thanked MH for stepping in to do this). DB circulated the findings report to directors prior to the meeting. Each site was discussed individually. A number of sites needed some clarification which were discussed:
 - i. Kimberworth Park – the area around the footpath is not cut by the RAA so will not be in future. It was discussed regarding the large conifers that need attention. Discussion took place regarding the removal of conifers. It was agreed that these could be cut to the fence level so they would provide some security to the site.
 - ii. South Street – the old part of the site is not the RAA’s responsibility so should be removed from the schedule. Other areas of the site that need attention are the responsibility of RMBC so as site secretary, AP, will pursue this.
 - iii. Psalters Lane – there is a very small section outside one of the plots which is not worth being included in the contract so needs to be removed from the schedule.
- b) DB will report back to Neil Archer at RMBC regarding the changes to the schedule.
- c) Following a site visit to Broom Valley New by BS and DB last week, it was requested from the site secretary that some internal areas were cut back around their storage container. BS agreed that if the society could do the work, the RAA would fund/part fund the hire of equipment – chipper e.g. The visit was to investigate a tree on the site that was overhanging onto nearby property. This couldn’t be located and further investigation into the map of the site showed that the site has more land included than previously thought. DB to contact the resident to find out which tree needs looking at.
- d) It was suggested that hedges be removed if unnecessary, but this could cause complaints due to the environmental impact. If hedges are not on the allotment land then the tenant / member of public should be directed to RMBC. Overall, hedges should be cut to as minimum as possible to reduce the need for cutting every year. This is something that needs discussion with RMBC. Any other requests for hedge/trees being cut will be dealt with on an individual basis.
- e) Other sites with tree issues reported:
 - i. High Street – these are not posing a health and safety hazard so not a priority. If Restorative Justice are able to work on the site, then should be able to cut them back.
 - ii. Vicarage Fields – tree that caused damage to resident’s shed – DB to arrange the tree to be looked at.

- iii. Clough Bank – trees are growing into a fence on an housing estate and pushing it over. Directors agreed that they would have the trees removed but would not be repairing the fence – this would be the responsibility of the residents as the fence was put up by the contractor too close to the trees. DB has sourced quotes – best quote was £220. DB to clarify from contractor what was included in the price.

M011/11/21 (5) Restorative Justice

- a) DB previously circulated to directors, documents detailing the planned works on Rectory Field Allotments by Restorative Justice (RJ). In summary: toilet has been ordered and gate key being dropped off 29th November. Works start 30th November and RJ will be on site Tuesday – Friday every week until work schedule has finished. Railway sleepers have been ordered for 9th December and the shed for 10th December which gives RJ time to clear the area. RJ will erect the shed and also dismantle it if required. The RAA will have to find transport to move it if required.
- b) DB to contact tenants to inform them of the works on site so they know who is on the site. They will also be given the opportunity to ask for any help they may require on their plots.
- c) DB to also find out if RJ can work on High Street site, using Rectory Field and the shed for a base.
- d) It was also discussed, following the Broom Valley New site visit, regarding using Restorative Justice to clear some overgrown areas on that site. It was explained that it wouldn't be for a number of months due to the Rectory Field project.

M012/11/21 (6) Pest Control

- a) It was discussed regarding the training of volunteers on site and was decided that those who already have pest control provision have priority. BS and MH also put themselves forward as they would be able to share the responsibility of the direct-managed sites between them and cut travelling expenses. Director expenses were then briefly discussed in regard to mileage and insurance requirements. It would be the director's individual responsibility to declare any mileage to their own car insurance company. BS to consult with all board members to discuss further.
- b) It was then debated regarding what the Alliance would provide after someone is trained. It was decided that the Alliance would supply a set number of boxes (approx. 10-15) and enough poison for approx. 10 refills per year for society sites. Societies would then be responsible for any required above this amount. This would be on the agreement that the trained person is responsible for the safe-keeping of the poison.

M013/11/21 (7) Other Works

- a) Tree Survey – trees that need work were discussed in previous items.

M014/11/21 (8) Any Other Business

- a) Fly tipping reported on St Leonard's. DB has contacted the tenant who's plot it is from.
- b) Caravan and boat on Avenue Rd – tenant advised caravan is used as a shed which is acceptable. JT advised that the boat needs removing.
- c) Queen St South – issue with tenant who wants to claim a fence from a plot they left at the beginning of the year. Board members agreed that this was too late to get the fence back. Ex-tenant been banned from site - been advised to contact secretary to appeal the ban. It was discussed offering the ex-tenant help to contact the secretary if required.
- d) Enquiry from RDASH regarding volunteers wanting to work on allotments. DB to contact.
- e) Resident on Lowfield Avenue has requested access through the site to put a shed on their garden. This was approved pending any fences etc. were put back in place and no damage caused.
- f) Touring caravan on Avenue Rd – board agreed that it does need to be removed as plot is not a storage area. Been given 4 weeks to remove but can extend if required. JT to contact tenant.
- g) Sandymount Road – not had any other information from Andy Lee. BS and DB looked round the site a few weeks ago. It was suggested that another visit be made by the maintenance committee to evaluate what was on the site and what improvements would be required before the site is taken on.
- h) It was discussed regarding introducing a contractor specification policy to avoid issues when work is done on sites. AP offered to draft something together for review by the committee. It

was discussed that there should be a general set of terms and then the specifics of each job added as required.

- i) Risk assessments were raised as our policy states that they should be done every year on each site, either by the RAA or society. The risk assessment form was reviewed earlier in the year to generalise majority of items but also needs to be produced to include items specific to individual sites. DB to contact secretaries to find out if they have their own risk assessments. Direct-managed sites are to be done when site visits are arranged. MH offered to assist with this.

BS thanked everyone who attended and the meeting was closed at 4.00pm.



Signed (Chair)