

## Rotherham Allotments Alliance

# Board Meeting No.63

**Held:** Monday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022

**Meeting Location:** Online: Zoom

(Minutes Donna Bushby)

**Present:** Directors: Brian Steele (BS) Chair, John Palmer (JP), Jack Taylor (JT), Mick Hirst (MH), Mohammed Suleman (MS).  
Allotment Support Assistant - Donna Bushby (DB).

**15/01/22** (1) **Apologies:** Alice Parry (AP), Cllr Dave Sheppard (DS).

**16/01/22** (2) **Declaration of Interest**  
JP declared an interest as a tenant on Barnsley Rd site.  
JT declared an interest as secretary on Wood St site.  
MH declared an interest as a tenant on Avenue Rd site.  
MS declared an interest as a tenant on Clifton site.

**17/01/22** (3) **Minutes of previous Board Meeting –4<sup>th</sup> January 2022.**  
These were moved as a true record by JP and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson.

**18/01/22** (4) **Matters Arising**  
As per agenda.

**19/01/22** (5) **Admin report – circulated to directors prior to meeting**  
a) 9 new lets done, 8 terminations.  
b) NAS membership – approx. 60 signed up. Will be preparing paperwork to send to NAS.  
c) Been approached by a student doing some research on long-term unemployment in men over 50. Will publicise on Facebook / Website.  
d) Complaint about smell from chicken manure on Greasbrough – Environmental Health have been dealing with the complaint. Sent an email to the tenant concerned to ask them to stop on nuisance and avian influenza grounds.  
e) Had an email from a parish council clerk in Barnsley regarding a decision on an issue they have been given by NAS. Directors discussed that as this is not an RAA matter, we cannot help any further.

**20/01/22** (6) **Financial Matters**  
a) Bank balance @ 31.1.21 - £47,208.83. Balance @ 24.01.22 - £46,675.27. Balance this morning: £47,913.97. Payments made: Wood St NAS reimbursement, Skips, VAR/Quickbooks payment / Portable toilet / purchased more batteries & memory cards. Interim January statement emailed to directors prior to meeting.  
b) Rents received to date: £2725. £8500 cheques to deposit (inc. 2 society payments).  
c) Working through documents needed for VAR audit.  
d) QuickBooks subscription has been upgraded (lower cost for better services).  
e) Alison has emailed regarding the paperwork – it is all being posted to the PO Box. Forms will need signing for the new account and change of name/address.  
f) No one has come forward for the treasurer's position despite being advertised on our website / Facebook page.

**21/01/22** (7) **Transfer and Transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)**  
DB contacted the solicitor who advised that they need confirmation from the other solicitor of the costs being covered by RMBC. DB to email Andy Lee to chase this up.

22/01/22

**(8) Society Update**

- a) DB Spoke to stand-in secretary at Herringthorpe regarding the society on the site. Was advised that they are working through the paperwork but have had a few obstacles in terms of tenants following the constitution / rules etc. DB sent some information via email to help and also offered directors to attend a meeting to support the committee. MH/BS offered their assistance with this It was discussed regarding societies not wanting to involve the RAA which is not how they should be operating. Societies need to understand that the RAA is here to support societies in running the sites correctly.
- b) Kimberworth Park – secretary been advised that they don't need public liability insurance or should be reimbursed by the RAA for it. DB explained that until the lease is signed, insurance is the society's responsibility.

23/01/22

**(9) Sub-Committees**

**Maintenance 17.01.22 –**

- a) Grass cutting tender – discussed quotes received, which were considerably more than last year's price. RMBC tender was the cheapest. It was agreed by the board that we should stay with RMBC but arrange a meeting with them to go through any issues that have arisen.
- b) Pest Control – JT asked regarding the pest control training. DB has been in contact with the training company and had sorted access for the trainees. MH confirmed he has accessed and started the course. It is approx. 5 modules long – roughly 1 hour per module. DB asked whether or not the council contract is definitely being cancelled – need to price up boxes and poison. RMBC have confirmed that they would probably leave the boxes in situ – TBC if they will charge for this. Will some sites want traps that don't use poison? It was discussed that provision will only be on sites where it is necessary.

**Finance 24.1.22 (minutes not yet distributed) –**

- c) Points raised being discussed as per agenda
- d) It was discussed regarding BS attending the sub-committee finance meetings whilst we don't have a treasurer to ensure it is quorate.

24/01/22

**(10) Maintenance Update**

- a) Vicarage Fields – requested to extend water provision on the site. Asked if the RAA will contribute to the cost of this. It was discussed regarding giving societies the opportunity to put works such as this to the RAA and we can look at match funding to get the works completed. This would help to improve on the society relationships. There is also a bent fence post on the site that needs looking at. Can ask the same company doing the work at Moor Rd.
- b) Woodside letting – not discussed at the finance meeting as planned. The grazing licence / agreement needs finalizing. It was agreed that the site should be let as it is sat empty. JP/DB to look over the agreement and send out a final copy to directors for approval asap.
- c) Wood St – telegraph pole is in plot 12. JT advised that access can be arranged.
- d) Asbestos removal – Wood St, Moor Rd and Avenue Rd all need some collecting. DB to arrange with the company to find out the cost and when it can be removed.
- e) Moor Rd gates have now been fixed. DB has got the crime number so going to contact the Police Officer involved. MH mentioned a possible avenue for getting reimbursed for the costs – will send further details to DB.
- f) Kimberworth Park container locks repair – been quoted £150 + VAT so instructed contractor to do the job.
- g) Clough Bank – trees have been cut down on the resident fence line. DB confirming with the contractor that they have also been treated for re-growth. Same company been asked to quote for the tree work at Vicarage Field.

25/01/22

**(11) Policy Review**

JP prepared a report which was circulated to directors prior to the meeting to identify possible changes to the policies:

- a) Code of Conduct – DB sent an email to all directors to confirm that they agree to abide by the Code of Conduct rules.

- b) Volunteer Policy – not discussed at the Maintenance meeting. Need to look at the points in the Rotherham Kitemark survey to complete a policy to cover these points. Need to be looked at the next meeting.
- c) Financial regulations – were discussed at the finance meeting:
  - i. Bank account – statement added for income and expenditure through the current account and removal of signatories
  - ii. Internal financial controls – internal audit to be done in month 3 and month 9 – different board member to conduct each audit. Can be done online.
  - iii. All the amendments to the finance policy were proposed and agreed by the board.
- d) Allotment Rules – suggestion to add point about tenant conduct to mirror the tenancy agreement.

26/01/22

**(12) Business Plan / Risk Register Review**

DB circulated a copy of the Business Plan / risk register to directors prior to the meeting. In the Finance sub-committee meeting, it was agreed that directors should put any changes / suggestions forward to be discussed at the next finance meeting. Points raised in JP's report:

- a) 3.1 – Local community figures – difficulty finding up to date deprivation figures. Only found figures which are the same.
- b) 5.32 – working with societies – need to include a statement to show how the RAA are going to build up the relationships with societies. It needs to show that the RAA is working with societies, not against them, to help run the sites better. Societies have to understand that if major rules are broken, the RAA will have to step in to help resolve. A number of societies have been re-established with the help of the RAA. It was suggested that the RAA holds a meeting twice a year, following the AGM, just for societies to discuss any issues and offer support. Need to give all societies continuous opportunity to work with the RAA and show them what we are able to offer. Need to move away from the 'them and us' mindset. It was stated that for some societies, it has been difficult to get people involved with the running of the committee. It would be useful to have dialogue with societies to find out what they want/need. Societies have to let the RAA know what they need. However, everyone has had the opportunity to join the board to assist with decision-making. Has to work both ways. The RAA needs to show that it is putting money back into the allotments i.e. in the form of priority works being done and offering match funding. These can then be shown in the annual report. Any projects would have to be looked at on an individual basis to ensure that it is within the budget constraints. It was suggested that after the AGM, societies are given the opportunity to put forward priority jobs they would like doing with a view to 50% match funding from the RAA.
- c) Risk Register – points/comments to be submitted before the finance meeting on 14.02.22.

27/01/22

**(13) Future Actions**

BS proposed to arrange with DB to visit each society site to meet with secretaries for one-to-one discussions. This was agreed by directors. To be arranged.

28/01/22

**(14) Any Other Business**

Discussed again regarding the research student. DB advised that it would be publicized on Facebook and website.

29/01/22

**(15) Agenda Items for next meeting**

- Annual Report
- AGM

30/01/22

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

Finance sub-committee meeting – Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 2pm.

Board meeting – Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 2pm – Clifton Park.

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



Signed ..... (Chair)