

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Finance Committee Meeting No.3

On Meeting Date: Monday 24th January 2022

Meeting Location: Online: Zoom

Chair: John Palmer

(Minutes Donna Bushby)

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

F016/01/22 (1) **Apologies:** N/A

F017/01/22 *Minutes from Previous Meeting (Omitted from Agenda)*
Moved as a true record and duly signed (electronically by the Chairperson).

F018/01/22 (2) **Treasurer Position Vacancy**

- a) Interest from an existing board member has not been confirmed so it was agreed to advertise on Facebook and the website for someone to join to board with a possible finance specialism to become the treasurer. It was also suggested to ask VAR if they could suggest anyone to do the role.
- b) Update from past treasurer – the paperwork is being sent to the RAA to be completed to open the new reserve account and remove the name from the bank account. As the account currently has the required number of people on it, the current account would stay the same until a new treasurer is appointed.

F019/01/22 (3) **Auditing End of year accounts - update**

- a) DB produced an interim statement and circulated to directors prior to the meeting. The report shows a surplus of £47k which is made up of the surplus from 2020 and also the reserve / share amounts that had not been transferred into a contingency account. An addition to the statement will be made to show where the surplus will be allocated to.
- b) DB is currently collating all the information together for the audit by the VAR Community Accountant. Directors are required to complete a Related Party Form. DB to circulate. DB advised that there will be a number of receipts / invoices missing as they were in the possession of the treasurer who passed away. It was agreed that a short statement be prepared to explain these omissions as the expenditure can be proven with physical items and proof of the transactions. This is to be approved in a board meeting.

F020/01/22 (4) **Business Plan / Policy Review**

- a) JP produced a paper to highlight required changes to policies and the Business Plan. This was circulated to directors prior to the meeting.
 - i. Financial Regulations – directors were happy to put these changes to the full board with the addition of a statement to cover external income/expenditure being put through the current account only. A paragraph to explain the immediate removal of resigned directors was also suggested.
 - ii. Code of Conduct – directors to be sent an email to reply to with a set paragraph to state their agreement to follow the Code of Conduct.
- b. Business Plan –
 - i. Up to date figures are required – it was suggested to contact Public Health, RIDO and the Education Department.
 - ii. Research – internal research can be conducted via a survey to site secretaries / direct-managed tenants. External research can be conducted at Rotherham Show to gauge interest in allotments.
 - iii. Societies – it was suggested that more work be put into building on the relationships with societies to strengthen the partnership and working together, not against the RAA as the aims are the same. It was proposed that an information meeting be set up after the AGM and societies be invited to detail how better the RAA can offer support.

- iv. Site notices – DB to research costs and locations for sites.
 - v. Newsletters – these can be produced 2 – 3 times a year with relevant information for societies and direct-managed tenants.
 - vi. Acknowledgement of work done – include the suggestion from the Improving Places Committee meeting of having the website available in different languages. Also include case studies of work done by societies i.e. Clifton getting funding for a disability garden.
 - vii. Emailing invoices – this is due to come from a Colony update which has not yet been launched. DB to advise progress when possible.
- c. All changes were to be submitted to the next board meeting for all directors to consider.

F021/01/22 (5) Risk Register

It was suggested at the previous meeting that a risk register be devised to look at potential problems. A lot of this is already included in the Risk Assessment section in the Business Plan but there is potential for this to be improved / added to. Copy to be sent to board members for discussion at the board meeting at the end of February along with the Business Plan.

F022/01/22 (6) Any Other Business

- a) Grass Cutting - DB advised that 2 tenders have been received for the grass cutting – RMBC and Countrywide Services which are both considerably more than the current cost. DB advised that RMBC have stated that the current contract, if continued, would have increased in price due to being under-priced in previous years. BS added that the Maintenance Committee had already agreed in the last maintenance committee to continue with the RMBC contract due to the schedules/service already being in place. The price increase was of no surprise due to rising costs / inflation etc. A meeting should be set up with RMBC Officers, however, to review the service received in 2021 and discuss any shortfalls. DB was asked to request a revised price for hedge cutting as this would probably also increase. For future tenders, grass and hedge cutting should be put out together as one contract. It was discussed regarding the option of societies doing their own grass cutting to cut the cost but this was dismissed due to a number of societies not wanting to do this and not being able to guarantee a permanent arrangement due to the use of site volunteers.
- b) It was highlighted regarding all finance sub-committee members needing to turn up to meetings currently due to not having a treasurer. If anyone can't attend a meeting, the Chair/Vice Chair should be informed so then a member of the maintenance committee can attend to ensure the meeting is quorate. BS is happy to attend the finance meetings until a treasurer is sought.

F023/01/22 (7) Agenda Items for next meeting

- Audit update
- Policy update
- Business Plan
- Risk Register

F024/01/22 (8) Date of Next Meeting

Monday 14th February, 2.00pm

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



Signed (Chair)