

## Rotherham Allotments Alliance

# Board Meeting No.64

**Held:** Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022

**Meeting Location:** In person: Garden Room, Clifton Park and Online: Zoom  
(Minutes Donna Bushby)

**Present:** Directors: In person: Brian Steele (BS) Chair, John Palmer (JP), Mohammed Suleman (MS).  
Zoom: Jack Taylor (JT), Alice Parry (AP), Cllr Sheppard (DS)  
Allotment Support Assistant - Donna Bushby (DB).

**31/02/22** (1) **Apologies:** Mick Hirst (MH).

**32/02/22** (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.  
MS declared an interest as a tenant on Clifton site.  
AP declared an interest as chair on South St site.

**33/02/22** (3) **Minutes of previous Board Meeting –31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.**  
These were moved as a true record by JP and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson.

**34/02/22** (4) **Matters Arising**  
As per agenda.

**35/02/22** (5) **Admin report – circulated to directors prior to meeting**  
a) 6 new lets done, 3 terminations.  
b) NAS Yorkshire AGM. 2 members can attend – it was decided that DB and BS should represent the RAA.  
c) St Leonard's - community group have requested to place a portacabin on the site. It was decided to make a decision on this matter when more information is given – size etc. and to be discussed at the next maintenance meeting.  
d) Other items covered as per the agenda.

**36/02/22** (6) **Financial Matters**  
a) DB gave directors and update of current financial figures: Bank balance @ 28.02.22 - £60,537.09.  
Rent received to date: £20,909 = 32.2%. 4 societies had paid, with 1 society cheque to bank.  
Invoices due for payment: Skip = £216, RMBC Grass Cutting = £4216, Hibberds Kimberworth Park repair = £180.  
b) Financial Regulations – the draft policy devised by JP was approved by the board.  
c) 2021 report and accounts – documents circulated to directors prior to meeting. All were happy with the content and approved.  
d) ASA Salary Review – was previously discussed by BS/JP and Andy Lee. A report was drawn up by JP which was circulated to directors, along with Band profiles. Outlined the reasoning behind the review and the justification of the role being moved up a band. The following are the main points identified in the review that needed consideration:  
i. The financial involvement of the ASA in maintaining the accounts fully, with QuickBooks, raising orders and making invoice payments arrangements for our signatory Directors to authorise.  
ii. The on-site involvement in plot allocations and inspections on the directly managed site.  
iii. The organisation of contractors to deal with day to day issues of site maintenance and emergency repairs across all sites.  
iv. Assisting Society managed sites with complaints and day to day management issues along with emergency repair work  
v. In comparison with the role bands, it was recommended that the Board approve the regrading of the post of ASA from Job Profile Band E to Job Profile F with effect from

March 2022 – back dated for pay to May 2021. The increased expenditure will be shown in amended budgets for 2022 and thereafter. The board approved this change.

- e) Treasurer – still not recruited anyone to fill this position. DB to advertise when sending out AGM reminders.

37/02/22

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

No update at the point start of the meeting. *DS emailed Andy Lee during the meeting and received a response to say that the payment the council's solicitor was requesting did not adhere to RMBC's standing orders. Therefore, it has been agreed that the RAA will pay the full solicitor's fees to the value of £7500 and be reimbursed by the council on production of an invoice. DB to inform our solicitor.*

38/02/22

**(8) Society Update**

- a) Kimberworth Park – DB visited the site and met the new committee members. Thanked AP for her help so far. Requested a small area of land to be removed from the bill as currently uncultivable due to large conifers. Equates to £40.64 with the 20% discount. Directors agreed to remove this amount for 2022 with a view to adding it back on in 2023 as the conifers are getting removed. Also talked about areas of fence that are vulnerable to trespass, it was discussed regarding who was responsible for fences and it was deemed the RAA. This has never been fully documented but agreed in principal that the RAA are responsible for major items and the society minor items. The Board agreed to pay for any improvements to the fence – these need to be decided. DB to ask the site committee for suggestions.

39/02/22

**(9) Sub-Committees**

**Finance 14.2.22**

- a) Nothing to cover not already discussed
- b) Next maintenance meeting is 14<sup>th</sup> March.

40/02/22

**(10) Maintenance Update**

- a) Kimberworth Park – asked for conifers to be removed as making nearby land uncultivable. One quote received (£1000), request 2 other quotes.
- b) Rectory Field – a lot of rubbish still on site from Community Payback clearing plots. DB has secured funding of £528 from Ward funds to pay for a roll-on, roll-off skip which should clear it all. Also been informed that the shed had lost its covering in the bad weather. DB has priced up at approx. £120 for the materials. Directors approved this expenditure as needed to protect the shed.
- c) Broom Valley Old – ongoing issues with the paths. not involving Burkinshaws. Small areas of grass growing through so want the paths weed-killed. DB to arrange with RMBC. The grass cutting areas need re-measuring. DB to arrange.
- d) Pest Control – need to look at starting to purchase poison/boxes for when RMBC provision ends in March. MH has completed the training. It was discussed regarding who is getting the provision. Current sites will continue with the addition of Clifton and South St as they have got infestation problems. It was agreed that society sites should have someone trained up to distribute the poison, rather than one of the directors do it. Other sites should be assessed on request where a problem is reported. It was discussed regarding not using poison (due to possible ecological risks) and encouraging tenants to use humane traps/snap traps instead. Physical proof of rats being caught could then be seen. A point was raised regarding what tenants would do with the rat if caught live. It was decided that this would be discussed again in the maintenance meeting.
- e) Moor Rd – the ditch has been monitored by JP/MH and tenants on site. The water is still running and some of the sides are crumbling. Have looked into a French drain being installed but been advised to seek advice from a flooding/drainage expert first as could be very expensive to resolve and could possibly make it worse. It's possible that it is coming from a natural spring as the water is very clear. DB to contact the RMBC flooding officer.
- f) Paths – Burkinshaws are yet to do the test path on South St. However, the site committee have raised some concerns regarding the purpose / process of the test patch. They are aware of the problems experienced on the other sites. It was questioned why the contractor was still

being used. It was explained that the work has been approved through the capital budget and they are a council-approved contractor. They are willing to resolve any issues and will be using different materials on other sites. It was decided that if the test patch was not satisfactory, then a new contractor would be sought. It was suggested that AP contact Burkinshaws to discuss the concerns and arrange the test works on South St.

41/02/22

**(11) Policy Review / Business Plan / Risk Register**

- a) All policy revisions were circulated to directors prior to the meeting. All changes were approved by the board and can be presented at the AGM.
- b) Business Plan – BS thanked JP and DB for the work put into this. Directors agreed the content of the Business Plan. The financial forecasts need adding, with adjustments for the change in ASA salary.

42/02/22

**(12) AGM**

- a) It was discussed that the only motion required would be for NAS membership.
- b) Agenda and documents to be sent to tenants who have registered interest 2 weeks before.
- c) Nominations for directors, including treasurer, to be advertised. Still need to have 2<sup>nd</sup> RMBC-appointed director. DS to chase up with the Select Committee.

43/02/22

**(13) Future Actions**

As already discussed.

44/02/22

**(14) Any Other Business**

- a) A question was asked regarding the ASA contract. It was stated that the arrangement with RMBC would stay the same until notified otherwise. This helps to keep the process simple for the RAA.
- b) Grass cutting – it was reported that Clifton site did not receive the correct amount of grass cutting last year. It was requested that sites should report if grass cutting has been missed as it should be done 6 times a year.
- c) It was requested that the Volunteer Policy and Rotherham Kitemark be discussed at the next maintenance meeting so the Volunteer Policy can be updated. It was discussed regarding having a nominated Health and Safety representative. MH would be the best candidate for this due to prior experience.

45/02/22

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

- Skills Audit

46/02/22

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

Maintenance sub-committee meeting – Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022, 2pm - Zoom.

Board meeting – Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022, 2pm – Zoom

AGM – Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 6.30pm, Unity Centre

BS thanked everyone for their attendance both in person and online. The meeting was closed at 3.30pm.



Signed ..... (Chair)