

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.67

Held: Monday 23rd May 2022

Meeting Location: Clifton Park / Online on Zoom

(Minutes Donna Bushby)

Present: Directors: Brian Steele (BS) Chair, John Palmer (JP), Mick Hirst (MH), Jack Taylor (JT), Tess Sheen (TS), Allotment Support Assistant - Donna Bushby (DB).
On Zoom: Cllr Rachel Hughes (RH)

81/05/22 (1) **Apologies:** MS, DS advised he had a meeting prior so may be late / not able to attend.

82/05/22 (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.

BS declared an interest as the spouse of Cllr Rachel Hughes.

TS declared an interest as a tenant on Avenue Rd site.

83/05/22 (3) **Minutes of previous Board Meeting –25th April 2022**

These were moved as a true record by JP and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson.

84/05/22 (4) **Matters Arising**

All addressed in agenda / admin report.

84/05/22 (5) **Admin report – circulated to directors prior to meeting**

- a) 10 new lets, 10 terminations – mostly due to non-cultivation and non-payment of invoice.
- b) No further communication from tenant regarding claim of refund of overcharged rent.
- c) No further communication from member of public or Commissioner's Information Office regarding South St issue.
- d) Cockerel Noise and Fire complaints reported – various sites. It was stated that Vicarage Fields and High St were sites with the complaints.
- e) Greasbrough – complaints regarding parking at park entrance of site. Also, a number of complaints about evening parties. Tenant of plot in question will be sent a warning letter. Report from resident regarding wood being left outside the site and chicken manure still being delivered. Advised them to report as fly-tipping.
- f) Moor Rd gates – contacted police – still working through the case. Have sent invoice for work done.
- g) Rectory Field – problem with items being removed from plots. DB has put information on FB page regarding this issue.
- h) Newsletter – DB has started a draft newsletter for direct-managed tenants – needs to be completed and sent. Will be emailed and posted to those with no email address on file.
- i) Started looking at emailing invoices - test emails didn't work correctly so need to speak to Colony.
- j) Started looking at the forum page on the website – may not cost anything but need to spend some time looking at how it will work.

84/05/22 (6) **Financial Matters**

a) The Treasurer has not attended and not put in apologies.

b) DB read out latest financial information:

a. Bank balance this morning is £77,150.68.

b. There are no outstanding bills to pay.

c. £596 rents outstanding – most in-hand – letters will be sent this week.

d. Been in contact with the bank – savings account should have been completed by now. Will be chased up by the bank.

c) Insurance – York gets theirs from Chris Knott and includes the trustee indemnity insurance. It was decided that this would be adequate for the Alliance if York has the same. Updated quote is £1860 but will need revising when insurance can be purchased.

- d) Ave Rd – DB has applied for funding from Ward councillor to match fund provision of some skips.

85/05/22

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

- a) No progress report received from solicitor.
- b) DB chased up 2 items with Andy Lee, responses below:
 - i. Grazing land – Liz Ryan at RMBC has been asked to supply tenant details.
 - ii. Sandymount Rd - It is not yet confirmed what is happening as it is tied in with a much larger negotiation regarding adjacent land owned by the Council and Wentworth Estates. The society on the site have recently signed up with NAS. It was discussed regarding the concern for the RAA taking over the site due to its condition. It had been suggested that NAS may want to run the site – this would need confirming. It was also discussed regarding the revenue from the sale of the land does have to be re-invested in allotments so RMBC would have to pass it onto the RAA. Sandymount Rd is currently privately-owned and not statutory allotment land.
- c) It was highlighted that the RAA should be having 2 meetings a year with RMBC so that progress can be reported. DB to arrange this with Andy Lee.

85/05/22

(8) Society Update

- a) Bi-annual meetings – only received response from 1 other society – their preference was in an evening. It was decided that a face-to-face meeting would be set up in June in an evening at the Unity Centre – 21st June was agreed. DB to arrange with the venue and communicate to societies – 2 reps per site to be invited. DB to also ask what subjects societies want to be on the agenda. Need to advise that these will general topics and not individual site issues – these need to be communicated to the RAA separately.
- b) Barnsley Rd & Wet Moor Lane - meeting with tenants took place on 17th May. Meeting went OK. New Officer and committee members have been appointed. Need to find out a few discrepancies with the tenant list and also sort the bank details out. The new Officers will be responsible for doing this. It was discussed that changing the bank details may prove difficult due to the bank's procedures and a copy of the minute from the meeting may be required. It was also discussed regarding the Ward funding that was granted in 2020 – this is still in the account. DB to find out from the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator regarding handing it back or being able to use it for another project on the site. It was reported that a new FB page has been set up and work has been done on the site such as grass and hedge cutting. A skip has been arranged for scrap and a skip provided by the RAA will be requested.
- c) Herringthorpe – RAA were copied into an exchange of emails between the committee and a tenant who had been given notice to quit due to non-payment and non-cultivation. The committee had evidence of this and had followed the correct procedure. The RAA did not have to intervene in this issue.
- d) South Street – secretary and committee have been advised accordingly on the tenant application which is in contention. It was agreed that there were no grounds to refuse a plot and members of the public have a right to select a site of their choice. It was then discussed that if procedures were followed and the offered plot is refused, it would then be acceptable to be moved to the bottom of the waitlist. It was also stated that the RAA would be willing to help the society in offering the plot, i.e. meeting onsite and communicating the site rules and terms of the tenancy agreement. If any of these are then broken, the RAA would assist the society with the correct procedure in removal from the site.

86/05/22

(9) Sub-Committees

Maintenance meeting took place 9th May:

- a. Rectory Field - DB circulated a report prior to the meeting regarding the remaining work that is required on the site to remove the waste piles. It was debated regarding the cost of using contractors versus directors volunteering to do the labour. Surplus funds would be available to pay for the work and directors shouldn't have to do any manual work. A number of directors did state they would be willing to do work on the site. A date would need to be agreed. It was also suggested that tenants be contacted to ask if they can volunteer as well. This would mean that risks assessments would need to be drawn up. It was agreed that 2 loads of the grab wagon can be ordered to remove the bottom pile. It

will then be decided what to do with this area – cover with hardcore for a car park or turn back into an allotment plot. DB to get a quote from the contractor for the removal of the rest of the waste. DB is awaiting a date for the asbestos to be removed.

87/05/22 (10) Maintenance Update

- a. High St – suggestion of request for funding for composting toilet for school plot. Currently unable to attend with site with the children because of H&S. DB to contact the Headteacher to ask if suitable.
- b. Rectory Field – Issue with resident's wall – letters were sent to residents. DB spoke to resident of number 37. Going to speak to tenant to remedy the problem and make the wall safe.
- c. Moor Rd – asked RMBC to let us know when the work can be done. Can't give a date as not a priority. Have been added to programme.
- d. Path works – contacted Burkinshaws for an update on when Avenue Rd path can be done. Still unable to confirm a date due to workload.
- e. Plot numbers – now picked up so need to arrange to put them up.
- f. St Leonards – email from resident regarding overhanging tree. Discussed that a second opinion would need to be sought. DB to contract a tree surgeon for a price for suggested works.
- g. Vicarage Fields – Want RAA to fund the digging of a trench to extend their water supply. Quote for digger come in at £575 – society said they will fund the £75 so it comes inline with standing orders. Society also paying for pipes / connections and all other labour. Directors approved this.
- h. Avenue Rd – it was suggested that when the proposed housing development is confirmed, speak to the contractors to see if a water supply could be run to the allotment site.

88/05/22 (11) Shareholder Additional Meetings

- a. It was decided to hold a shareholder forum in September – Tuesday 6th September in the evening. DB to source a venue in the Rawmarsh area.

89/05/22 (12) Future Actions

As already discussed.

90/05/22 (13) Any Other Business

- a. Wood St – progress following pylon works. Contractor has advised that they would put the fence back in September but not remove the rubbish. JT to contact them again as the missing fence is contributing to the fly-tipping problem. The waste removal will also need organizing.
- b. Pest control – Wood St – asked regarding how often the poison should be changed. It was advised that when the sachet is empty. Also need to remove any old, loose poison from the boxes. The RMBC provision has been found to have been overbaited which could cause immunity to the poison. DB to order some more metal keys and boxes.
- c. Next finance meeting is 6th June – will need a budget update. The names registered with the FCA will need changing and the accounts for 2021 will need submitting to the FCA as well.
- d. BS reported that Alice Parry had resigned from the board due to personal reasons. BS sent an email to thank Alice for the work she had done with the Alliance. This then brought up a point about data protection when directors resign. It was discussed regarding having a policy in which all ex-directors must delete any communications involving Alliance. This was debated in regard to the Code of Conduct, the storing of information, including physical copies of documents etc. It was suggested to have specific email addresses for directors which can access can be restricted to, if directors resign. Needs more discussion.

91/05/22 (14) Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Finance – 6/6/22 – Budget / Income / Expenditure Update
- Board – 20/6/22 – Director Emails / Access to information

92/05/22 (15) Date and Time of Next Meeting. (Meetings will be cancelled if not required).

Finance sub-committee meeting – Monday 6th June 2022, 2pm - Zoom.

Board meeting – Monday 20th June 2022, 2pm – Clifton Park / Zoom

BS thanked everyone for their attendance both in person and online. The meeting was closed at 3.40pm.



Signed (Chair)