

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.74

Held: Monday 5th December 2022

Meeting Location: Garden Room, Clifton Park
(Minutes Donna Bushby)

Present: Directors: Brian Steele (BS) Chair, John Palmer (JP) Vice-Chair, Jack Taylor (JT), Tess Sheen (TS), Cllr Dave Sheppard (DS)
ASA: Donna Bushby (DB)

- 183/12/22** **(1) Apologies:** Cllr Rachel Hughes (RH), Sue Jackson (SJ), Mohammed Suleman (MS)
- 184/12/22** **(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.
TS declared an interest as a tenant on Avenue Rd site.
- 185/12/22** **(3) Minutes of previous Board Meeting –7th November 2022**
These were moved as a true record by JT and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson.
- 186/12/22** **(4) Matters Arising**
a) Question asked regarding the progress with situation with the Avenue Rd cockerels. DB stated that tenants details had been sent to the Community Protection Officer but no response received. Was aware that the workload for the Officer at the moment was quite large due to a shortage of Officers. DB to chase up.
b) BS advised that a third director will be put up for re-election at the AGM to make it comply with the Standing Orders. Following 2 years will have 2 directors up for re-election.
- 187/12/22** **(5) Admin report – circulated to directors prior to meeting**
a) Queen St North – break-ins / thefts reported. Queen St South also targeted. A wildlife cameras was offered but not had a response.
b) Few sites not following Avian Influenza inspections – tenants being contacted.
c) High St – report of unauthorised burning despite an organised day being given to tenants.
- 188/12/22** **(6) Financial Matters**
a) Funds in current account: £3802.25, Funds in Reserve account: £38,967.59. There are some outstanding payments to be made. DB has mis-placed her fob so has ordered a new one. BS agreed to lend his fob in the meantime for the payments to be made.
b) Financial activity reports were circulated to directors prior to the meeting.
c) Budget for 2023 has been adjusted to accommodate a salary increase applied by RMBC. An updated budget was sent to directors prior to the meeting and was agreed in the finance sub-committee meeting.
d) An invoice for £5200 for solicitor fees has been submitted to RMBC. This ideally needs to be received before the end of the year so it goes into 2022 accounts. If not, DB advised that funds will be transferred from the reserve account to ensure there are adequate funds in the current account.
e) £1200 water bill due to come out this month due to accurate meter readings been sent. Water bills now come monthly so a better idea of costs can be seen.
f) The registered address has been changed on the Information Commissioner’s Office record.
g) Minutes from the finance sub-committee meeting on 21st November were circulated to directors prior to the meeting. No questions were raised on these.
- 189/12/22** **(7) Transfer and Transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)**
a) Meeting took place with Andy Lee on 14th November to discuss outstanding items. Majority of solicitor queries had been answered but Andy was still chasing a couple.

- b) Discussed regarding the livestock permission issue raised on Wharf RD. DB spoke to Andy Lee about it and the site was historically a car park and when it was changing to allotment land (date unknown), a petition by local residents was adopted by the council which stated the site could not have livestock. Wharf Rd was a site that did not have a Land Registry entry for the deed held by RMBC which was picked up by the solicitor. It was discussed that there should be a covenant stating no livestock in order to enforce it. He had advised DB that the RAA should be adopting any rules the council had in place. Directors asked DB to contact Andy Lee to see if he had found any more information regarding this.
- c) Discussed regarding pigeons and historical animals on sites. It was agreed that existing animals could stay, but new tenants would not be allowed to keep anything except what is stated in the law.

190/12/22

(8) Society Update –

- a) South St - MH has received an invite to the site's AGM to attend as an observer. It was clarified that that attendance was OK but really should have been sent to DB to offer out to all directors.
- b) Barnsley Rd – been advised they have a new secretary. Question been asked regarding using the the Ward funds to build a shed, due to difficulty getting a container. DB has contacted the neighbourhood co-ordinator who is currently off sick so will advise the society when an answer has been given.
- c) Broom Valley Old – further communication received from tenants with dispute. A response has been sent and the matter is closed.
- d) Vicarage Fields – 2 plots at bottom of site have flooded. Society has requested some drainage ditches. Discussed regarding where it would discharge to. Directors agreed to address in the new year.

191/11/22

(9) Sub-Committees

Maintenance 24th October - *Discussed in conjunction with maintenance item on agenda.*

192/11/22

(10) Maintenance

- a) Moor Rd – DB contacted the Drainage Officer at RMBC regarding the flap / pipe. They advised the land was under the responsibility of Green Spaces but also Danvm Drainage Commissioners due to the discharge into the brook. The existing drainage ditch was put in by RMBC. DB has emailed Andy Lee to ask regarding this and will contact Danvm Drainage if required. The French drain in the new ditch is currently being installed. The path was boggy following the recent heavy rain. The contractors doing the clearance will be finished on Tuesday. A pile of spoil left on the first right-hand plot will be the responsibility of the new tenant. One plot has already been let on the site.
- b) Greasbrough toilet door / window has been done.
- c) Asbestos removal – garage at Greasbrough and piles at Moor rd and Rectory Field have been removed. Some still to remove from Wood St and Clifton.
- d) Trees – been in contact with Trees Officer at RMBC who went to have a look at them. Hartley Lane – resident would like the trees on the fence line reducing to 2m. The 2 trees at Vicarage Fields need to be crown reduced, pollarded or removed completely. It was discussed regarding the cost of each of these methods – ranges from £500 to £2500. DB has requested for Glendale to give a quote for the works. DB has already got a quote from one contractor.
- e) Rectory Field – Community Payback unable to do the car park work due to flooding in the area and poor weather conditions. Work will resume when the weather is better. Community Payback will be working on the plots at the bottom of the site for the charity group. JT asked regarding work on Wood St. It was advised to get the supervisor to have a look at the site.
- f) Avenue Rd – works to the left-hand side tracks is confirmed for Monday 12th December. The other side will be done in due course, pending availability of funds. Discussed regarding outstanding works for other sites from the capital budget.
- g) Clough Bank – car park work has been completed.
- h) Pest Control visit – DB has emailed all sites to advise of boxes being left out or it may be withdrawn.
- i) Lock inventory has been done.

- j) Broom Valley New fire extinguishers – invoice received for 4 new extinguishers and stands. This was done prior to informing the RAA. It was discussed regarding the extinguishers purchased by the RAA for sites last year and Broom Valley New didn't collect one. This society has had a lack of information since inheriting the responsibility from the previous secretary, however. It was stated that societies should not agree for any works to be completed, which is the responsibility of the RAA, before the RAA have approved it. The society will be responsible for any costs incurred of work that the RAA were not informed of. Societies do need to understand that any funds they have in their account, left over from after subsidizing rents, should be used on historical issues that haven't been dealt with by previous committees.

193/12/22

(11) Policy Review

- a) Re-election of directors – discussion paper was circulated to directors prior to meeting. Identified that there was an anomaly between the Co-Op rules and Standing Orders of the Alliance. The nomination form has been updated to include a seconder for any nominations plus agreement to abide by all the RAA rules / policies / Code of Conduct. All directors voted in favour of the changes to the election process.
- b) Other policy changes:
- i. Allotment Rules – addition of 'bees' to permitted animals, with requirement of qualification / tenant behaviour / inspections / site to be occupied during reasonable daylight hours. Question was asked regarding the size of sheds permitted and if it was more suitable to base it on the size of the plot.
 - ii. Complaints procedure – addition of new policy as discussed in Min. Number **178/11/22**
 - iii. Health and Safety - contractors – it was highlighted that some of this relates to the Financial Regulations (D3). It was discussed regarding producing a standard form for when contractors are being considered to ensure that all areas are covered and in greater detail. This is when better planning needs to be done in order to accommodate the time it will take to complete. It was discussed regarding projects being put together and possibly requiring a tendering process. Keeping to the same contractor could offer value for money and consistency. However, there has been a difficulty in finding suitable contractors to be able to obtain 3 quotes.
 - iv. A separate discussion covered insurance and whether societies need to get their own as the RAA have paid for all the sites. DB to clarify this with the insurance company. It should also be added to the next society forum agenda.
 - v. Tenancy agreement – add minimum 12-month period for keeping livestock, no cockerels and statement to highlight accepting RAA's policies and procedures on payment of rent. Question asked regarding the procedure of offering plots rent free. It was decided that this is decided on a plot-by-plot basis.
 - vi. Hardship Policy – separate policy as previously agreed.
 - vii. Volunteer Policy – addition of director's expenses.
 - viii. Director training – question asked regarding if a record is kept for when any training is completed. DB to create a training record.
 - ix. All policy changes need to be completed and approved for the AGM.

194/12/22

(12) Meeting Schedule

- a) DB circulated a proposed schedule prior to the meeting as per previous discussions regarding the frequency of board meetings.
- b) JP made an observation regarding holding maintenance meetings prior to finance meetings so that funds for works can be agreed.
- c) TS advised of a shift / hours change so would be unable to attend board meetings in the proposed schedule and also the maintenance meetings if they were swapped with finance. It was agreed to change the board meeting dates to a week later to accommodate this. The sub-committee meetings will remain the same. Any decisions needed from a sub-committee could be done in a board meeting.
- d) DB to circulate a revised schedule so that directors can populate their diaries to accommodate the meetings. Meetings can be cancelled / changed as necessary.

195/12/22

(13) Future Actions

- a) It was discussed to remove this from the agenda as it is no longer required. The agenda will also be adjusted to discuss the sub-committees with their relevant subject.

196/12/22

(14) Any Other Business

- a) BS expressed his thanks to all directors for their commitment this year. The next year will more than likely get more difficult so thanks for keeping the board going. A lot has been achieved this year.
- b) JP expressed thanks to BS for keeping everything together.
- c) BS also thanked DB on behalf of the board for all her hard work, effort and commitment. She goes above and beyond and has gained respect from tenants on sites.
- d) JT advised that a Trees Officer had visited Wood St and made some suggestions. She will be looking at possible funding for it.
- e) MH reiterated a previous point raised by DS in regard to advertising what good the Alliance has done. DB has started to draft a press release and needs a statement from DS. This will be looked at again in the new year.

197/12/22

(15) Agenda Items for Next Meeting

198/12/22

(16) Date and Time of Next Meeting.

Officer's Meeting – Tuesday 3rd January 2023

Finance – Monday 16th January 2023

Board – Monday 6th February 2023

BS thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting was closed at 4.00pm.



Signed (Chair)