

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting No.75

Held: Monday 6th February 2023

Meeting Location: Garden Room, Clifton Park, Online via Zoom

(Minutes Donna Bushby)

Present (in person): Directors: Brian Steele (BS) Chair, John Palmer (JP) Vice-Chair, Mick Hirst (MH), Mohammed Suleman (MS), Cllr Dave Sheppard (DS), Sue Jackson (SJ), ASA: Donna Bushby (DB)

Present (via Zoom): Jack Taylor (JT), Tess Sheen (TS),

- 199/02/23** **(1) Apologies:** Cllr Rachel Hughes (RH), It was also noted that RH will be submitting their resignation to the board due to schedule conflicts with RMBC business with takes priority.
- 200/02/23** **(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.
TS declared an interest as a tenant on Avenue Rd site.
SJ declared an interest as a tenant on Rectory Field site.
- 201/02/23** **(3) Minutes of previous Board Meeting –5th December 2022.**
These were moved as a true record by JP and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson.
- 202/02/23** **(4) Matters Arising**
None – covered by agenda.
- 203/02/23** **(5) Admin report – circulated to directors prior to meeting**
a) Number of plot releases and lets been done in January.
b) Greasbrough – resident complained about appearance of tenant’s fence at bottom of their garden. Been sent a picture but needs looking at in person to see if above 6ft. The resident’s fence is only 3 or 4 ft high. Directors were shown the picture of the fence and agreed as it is on allotment land and of a good standard, the resident should look at changing their own fence to cover it up.
c) High St - complaint about fires and tenant conduct towards residents – letter has been drafted to send to tenant. Other fires have also taken place without permission.
d) Rectory Field – water leak caused by building works. Has now been fixed but directors expressed concerns regarding the location of the water pipe and the right of way to the allotments. The plans show the area is possibly going to be a garden area. DB has contacted the architect for the site to discuss the issues. Need to be mindful of being charged for the wasted water. DB to speak to Wave regarding this. DB to also contact the Case Officer at RMBC with the concerns.
e) Other matters covered in Finance / Maintenance.
- 204/02/23** **(6) Financial Matters**
a) It was announced that SJ had put themselves forward to be the Treasurer of the organisation. This was voted unanimously in favour by directors. DB to organise paperwork to add SJ to the bank account. The Financial Regulations need checking with regard to number of signatories on the account. All directors have to be named on the account but not necessarily signatories. 4 directors are currently signatories.
b) Current account @ 31.01.23 - £18,187.03, @ 06.02.23 - £17,732.87, (Plus £5k paid by Clifton). Reserve Account @ 31.01.23 - £32,126.59.
c) 2 payments have cleared – RMBC / TK Lynskey. Wood St society (NAS membership) to approve.
d) Received invoice for South Street doors - £3360 (from capital funds) – DB contacted the site secretary to check if done to good standard so it can be paid.
e) DB reported rents received as @ 31.01.23:
i. Society - £ 13,237.16 / 29% (4 sites)

ii. DM - £ 6,124.83 / 24%

iii. Overall – 27% (updated to 30% @ 06.02.23).

Question asked regarding how much rents were paid at same point last year. DB did not have this figure but it was noted that the majority of societies paid in February. Concern was expressed for direct-managed tenant payments. It was noted that the payment deadline was brought a month earlier to end of February for this year. No tenants have requested to use the hardship fund. DB will send out reminders 2 weeks prior to the deadline, considering the issues with invoices initially not being attached to the email when it was sent. Tenants will state that they did not receive the email. Letter to be sent to non-payers giving 2 weeks to pay after February deadline.

- f) Still awaiting revised cheque from Business Stream.
- g) 2022 financial audit underway. No questions been asked so far.

205/02/23

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

- a) DB has emailed the solicitor for an update. Advised they are waiting for responses from RMBC which were chased on 16th January.
- b) Point also raised regarding the other issues of the lease not being fit for purpose and the terms used within it.

206/02/23

(8) Society Update

- a) Barnsley Rd – have now purchased a container. DB will send the monitoring form to RMBC. BS met with a committee member and contractor on site regarding the paths. Need to get price as looking more than the quote from the first contractor. Will need to go down site again to decide the best option. BS commented that the site was much improved and previously unlettable plots had been let.
- b) Vicarage Fields – risk assessment and flooding visit arranged with DB/MH.
- c) Broom Valley Old – issue still ongoing. Working with a local organization to get it resolved.

207/02/23

(9) Maintenance / Sub-Committee meeting

- a) The minutes from the meeting on 30th January were circulated to directors prior to the meeting.
- b) Plot clearances – need to get quotes for Lowfield Avenue and High St.
- c) Skip requests / fly-tipping – discussed regarding the need to educate tenants to not bring waste on to sites. It was asked what is actually going in the skips? If tenants have removed waste in the previous year, then there should be less need for skips.
- d) Barnsley Rd paths were discussed as in point 8a.

208/02/23

(10) AGM

- a) It was reported that the 3 directors up for re-election have submitted their nomination. No other nominations have been received.
- b) Concern was raised regarding all shareholders being made aware of the AGM, especially those on society-managed sites. The notification has always been sent to the site secretary, and it is reliant on them to pass the information on to their tenants. As the RAA is struggling to obtain the tenant information from societies, it is impossible to contact tenants direct. It was reported that only approx. 50% of tenant information had been passed on. It was decided at the last society meeting that sites should submit details in April, once all rents have been paid for the year. The RAA does need to be able to directly converse with the shareholders for the purpose of the AGM. This needs raising at the AGM. The RAA should ensure that it puts the AGM notice on all site gates. It was suggested that all societies be contacted to ask for the tenant details for the AGM purpose. It was also stated that the RAA would have to state what the tenant information is being used for and the RAA also have a right to the information as they are shareholders. Plus, if anything happened to a secretary, who would have the tenant information to be able to administer the site.
- c) Policy review and amendments – the item needs to be identified in the annual report to show what changes have been made. It was suggested that the policy changes do not come into force until passed by the AGM. JP will go through the policy changes at the AGM.
- d) It was agreed that the paperwork be sent to attendees 2 weeks prior.
- e) The agenda was then discussed and compiled.
- f) The forum dates need to be specified to encourage attendance from tenants and societies.

- g) Only 1 motion was agreed – NAS membership continuation. BS expressed that it needed to be addressed regarding waste and fly-tipping on sites and this was a point for education, rather than being a motion, as it is included in the allotment rules / tenancy agreement.
- h) It was identified regarding the publicity regarding the RAA enforcing rules / laws and it needs to be stated in the annual report that the RAA will pursue any contraventions of the rules / law. DB reported that she planned to focus on 1 area per month to promote to tenants, i.e. waste removal / composting etc. to promote the enforcement of the rules in a positive way. DB has also a compiled a guide for new tenants which is viewable on the website.
- i) Question and answers – It was discussed that these should be only regarding the items on the agenda and not individual site issues. Tenants will be given until 2 weeks before to submit questions. Any questions deemed not relevant to the AGM will be dealt with separately. Questions on the night shall only be permitted if relating to the agenda. Any other business will not be included.
- j) It was then debated regarding the re-election of Officer positions for the meeting and also the re-election of unopposed directors. This would all depend on what is listed in the Standing Orders and to ensure continuity of the board. The board would possibly need to agree, prior to the AGM, for existing Officers to carry on with their roles.

209/02/23

(11) Any Other Business

- a) It was asked regarding utilising the screen on the Garden room to display the documentation related to the meeting. It is personal preference to have print outs but everyone will have been sent the documents prior to the meeting to read through. DB advised it could be possible, using the old laptop.

210/02/23

(12) Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- AGM

211/02/23

(13) Date of Next Meeting

Maintenance – 20th February 2023 – 2pm – Zoom.
 Finance – 6th March 2023 – 2pm – Zoom.
 Board – 20th March 2023 – 2pm – Garden Zoom.

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



Signed (Chair)