

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Annual General Meeting 2023

Held: Tuesday 28th March 2023

Meeting Location: Unity Centre
(Minutes John Palmer)

Present: Directors: Brian Steele (Chair), John Palmer (Vice-Chair), Mick Hirst, Sue Jackson (Treasurer), Tess Sheen, Jack Taylor (Secretary), Mike Farrell (NAS representative), 8 Shareholders (representing Clifton, Broom Valley New and Greasbrough allotment sites).

Apologies: Cllr Rachel Hughes (RH), Cllr Dave Sheppard, (Mohammed Suleman (MS), R Lunn (Scrooby St).

1. **Chairpersons Address** – the Chair formally thanked all the Directors for their efforts during the year. Special thanks were given to Donna for her sterling efforts during the period of her employment as ASA. The vacancy will be filled on the same basis through secondment via RMBC.
2. **Minutes from Annual General Meeting – 23rd March 2022** – these were agreed as a true record.
3. **Matters Arising** – there were no matters arising.
4. **Board Members – election and appointment of Directors** – The meeting approved the appointment of the Directors Tess Sheen and Sue Jackson who were appointed during the year. Brian Steel, Mike Hurst and Mohammed Suleman stood for re-election, there being no further nominations, the meeting approved their re-appointment.
5. **Election of Officers** – There being no other nominations the existing Officers were returned unopposed and duly approved by the meeting – Chair Brian Steel, Vice Chair John Palmer, Secretary Jack Taylor, Treasurer Sue Jackson.
6. **Annual Report** – Consideration was given to the content of the Annual Report – attention being given to the following points.
 - a. **Site Statistics** – the meeting considered the information provide. It was noted that additional plots had been made available at Rectory Fields, Moor Road and Scrooby St following work to clear plots by Restorative Justice and contractors, on what previously had been classified as ‘decommissioned or un-lettable plots’. It was questioned if there was available land for future allotment use if demand decreed, the meeting was advised that as part of the RAA lease a number of ‘grazing sites’ were included. These being previous allotment land which had become surplus to requirements in previous years. The RAA’s aim would be utilize these areas if demand and resources allow.
 - b. **Principle successes** – Plot clearances (as detailed above); Maintenance & Repair; Capital Works; Society / Tenant Forum Meetings - Society forums 5th July 2022 – 6 sites / 11 representatives and 15th November 2022 – 9 sites – 13 representatives, Tenant forum 6th September 2022 – 7 sites / 12 tenants; Rotherham Show: Our attendance at the show was well-received by the public again this year; Pest Control - this was now being completed, Directors having the required qualification undertaking the work. Society managed sites could have nominated person, suitably qualified to complete the operation of their site. RAA would fund obtaining the qualification and supply bait and traps.
Challenges - Treasurer Appointment – difficulties in filling the post; Society /Tenant Engagement; Tenant Details for Society Sites – It was again stressed that tenant and waiting list details were needed form societies to enable the RAA to maintain it shareholder register and provide correct statistical information to RMBC as part of the lease agreement; Signing of the Lease – ongoing issues prevent the lease arraignment being formalised mainly regarding land registration issues.
 - c. **Works Completed** – normal revenue expenditure included annual maintenance work including grass and hedge cutting, tree work and skip provision. Larger projects included – Avenue Road, path laying (capital

fund); Clough Bank, car park; Broom Valley New, Fencing work; Moor Road, drainage; Scrooby Street, Fence work.

- d. **Complaints Summary** – Smoke nuisance from fires was seen as the most difficult to combat – tenant consideration of wind direction before lighting fire to prevent nuisance for neighboring plot holders and residents must be forefront. Conflict between tenants was also seen as a challenge.
- e. **Directors attendance** – statistics only included the Board meeting attendance and it was noted that Directors also attended Finance and Maintenance Sub-committee meetings, site meeting with tenants and societies.
- f. **Policy review and amendments** – the following policy changes and amendments were explained giving details of the reasons and background to the proposals.
 - a. Standing Orders – 5 - re-election of directors – change to application procedure / AGM election procedure
 - b. Allotment Rules – change in clauses: 8 – livestock, 14 - tenant behaviour, 4 – inspections, 10.1 - site occupying hours
 - c. Complaints procedure – change to procedure
 - d. Health and Safety – contractors requirements updated
 - e. Financial regulations – D - contractors requirements updated
 - f. Tenancy Agreement – 4.5 - change to include 12 months livestock clause
 - g. Hardship policy – new policy
 - h. Volunteer policy – addition of Directors Reimbursement of Travel Expenses
 - i. The meeting approved there adoption.
- g. **Future Plans** – provision of additional plots with selective site clearance Lowfield Avenue site being mentioned as an example. The ‘Future Plan’ chart within the Annual report was considered.
7. **Accounts 2022** – The RAA Limited ‘Financial statement for the year ended 31st December 2022’, as prepared by Voluntary Action Rotherham were considered and duly approved.
8. **Rules/Tenancy Agreement Adherence** – It was stressed that the RAA would continue to pursue actions were rules and tenancy agreements were breached. Ultimately this could lead to plot tenancy terminations.
9. **Motion 1 – Continuation of NAS subscription payments** – The following motion was considered by the meeting.

This annual general meeting agrees to continue the subscriptions of NAS membership for every shareholder (registered tenant) to be funded from the revenue account and this will be reviewed at every AGM. To ensure membership of NAS, all shareholders must be registered with the RAA.

The Motion was duly carried.
10. **Society / Tenant meetings 2023** – The following dates were noted 2023.

Society Forums would be held on the Tuesday 16th May 2023 and 10th October 2023
Shareholder Meeting would be held on the Tuesday 19th September 2023

All to commence at 6.30pm in the Unity Centre, St Leonards’ Road, Rotherham

The need for all Societies to become involved in these meeting was stressed. The RAA needs the input from Societies and their participation, we have to work together provide the best possible provision for allotments in the Rotherham area.

11. Shareholders Questions.

- Query concerning wording of rent demand letter to directly managed plot holders – the earlier date for payment was to allow quicker re-lets of vacant plots prior to the growing season.
- Representative from Scrooby Street wished to record thanks to Community Payback for the work completed on their site.

- Electronic payment of rentals on Society sites – on line banking was perhaps the most suitable for Societies to pursue.

The Chair thanked all Society representatives for their work in management of their sites and hoped that more society managed sites could be formed in the years to come.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and attendance at the meeting and the meeting was closed at 8.30pm.

DRAFT