

# Rotherham Allotments Alliance

## Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Name:	Board Meeting - 84		
Minute Taker:	Jamie Calvert		
Date:	13 November 2023	Time:	13:00
Location:	Clifton Garden House		

Attendees:

Directors: Brian Steele Chair (BS), John Palmer (JP), Mick Hirst (MH), Sue Jackson (SJ), Cllr Dave Sheppard (DS), and Richard Watson (RW).  
Support Officer: Jamie Calvert (JC)

Apologies:

Jack Taylor (JT)

### 1) Apologies

Jack Taylor (JT)

### 2) Declarations of Interest

JP declared an interest as a tenant on the Barnsley Rd site.

MS declared an interest as a tenant on the Clifton site.

SJ declared an interest as a tenant of the Rectory Fields site.

RW declared an interest as society treasurer on the Clifton site.

### 3) Minutes from the previous meeting

Board meeting 83 minutes were moved as a true record with the following amendment:

11) b. It was resolved that after application, Richard Watson has indicated their willingness to act as a director of the RAA board. The board voted in favour of their appointment as a director of the RAA board with immediate effect.

Moved: JP

Seconded: SJ

The minutes were duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson.

### 4) Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

### 5) Admin Report

- Allotment Support Officer (JC) confirmed acceptance of the admin report sent to invitees on 09/11/2023
- Policy queries were discussed with the following points made:
  - **ACTION:** (JC) will distribute a draft GDPR compliance policy to all directors for review by board meeting 85
  - **ACTION:** (JC) will distribute a draft waiting list policy to all directors for review by board meeting 85. This will be an accumulation of existing processes.
- A discussion was had concerning the waiting list process and how we communicate this with applicants to improve service efficiency. It was suggested that the waiting list applicants should be contacted every 3 months to confirm their application and advise

of their position on the waiting list. **ACTION:** This will be incorporated into the draft waiting list policy.

- The development of 2024 rent letters was discussed. A suggestion was made to include a clear, simpler option to surrender a plot.

## 6) Financial Matters

The treasurer presented the financial report of 08/11/2023 with the balances of the RAA bank accounts; current account £47493.32, Deposit account £24378.22.

- (SJ) provided a summary of the actions taken since finance meeting 12, to prepare for the finance report of 2023 and the budget development for 2024-26
- It was noted that rent income from grazing sites was not included in the 2023 budget although RAA did receive rent for one site. There was a discussion about the allocation of funds raised through grazing land rent and the responsibilities of the RAA for these sites. It was noted that grazing sites may be returned to allotment use and that costs of development and fencing would require significant investment.
- Rents increase for 2024 and 2025
- The marketing budget was identified as currently unallocated and it a discussion was had about the marketing goals and strategy of RAA. Suggestions were made regarding press releases and other forms of publication. It was agreed that a marketing strategy requires further consideration before budgetary decisions are made. **ACTION:** Add marketing strategy as an agenda point to a future board meeting (BS)
- A discussion around pest control budget forecast concluded that due to legislative changes, new poison cost and efficacy there is insufficient data to support reducing the pest control budget despite an underspend in 2023.
- **ACTION:** An order should be placed for pest control poisons to ensure a consistent stock of new products and avoid a compounded impact on the 2024 budget. (MH) to advise (JC) of requirements for order.
- The security budget was discussed to direct future budget allocation. There was a suggestion that funds should be allocated in the budget to enhance/replace the current portable cameras. **ACTION:** (JC) to obtain quotes for wildlife cameras and replacement restricted padlocks. A decision is to be made at the next board meeting.
- The insurance budget was discussed for review as it was previously budgeted on the understanding that building insurance would be required once the RMBC RAA transfer was completed. As the transfer is pending, the budget will need to be adjusted in line with future insurance quotes. No change to the budget was agreed.
- A point was raised that there is a discrepancy between Colony, the allotment management system, and the previous invoice calculation, regarding the chargeable area of Barnsley Road and Wet Moor Lane allotments. No action was determined.

Up to a 5% rent increase was proposed in board meeting 72 and tenants notified in rent letters.

The board agreed unanimously to increase the 2024 rents by 5%.

The board agreed to consider an increase of up to 5% for 2025 rents.

Tenants will be notified in the rent letter distributed in December 2023.

## 7) Policies Review

- A discussion was held about the policy review schedule for all RAA policies. It was clarified that all policies must be reviewed every 12 months and amendments raised at the AGM along with any new policies.
- Submissions for amendment or new policy should be submitted in advance of the board meeting in January to allow time for consideration and distribution with the AGM documents.

## 8) Transfer and transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)

- No additional points were raised. Feedback from the RMBC meeting on 27/11/2023 will be reported back to the next board meeting.

## 9) Society update

- The board was updated on the changes to the committee of the South Street Allotment Society. It was noted that the ASO is in communication with the society secretary to arrange a meeting between RAA directors and the society committee to review support needs.
- A notification of society dissolution has been received from a committee member of Broom Valley Old Site Allotment Society. ASO has emailed the secretary to request confirmation and advise of the initial steps for interim RAA control of the site. **ACTION:** ASO to notify officers when a response is received. It was agreed to allow until the end of the month for a committee response before taking additional action.
- A discussion was had regarding the funds held by the former Avenue Road Allotment Society and the RAA process in reintegrating those funds. **ACTION:** (MH) to contact account signatories to arrange the transfer.
- The request for work to the carpark and access track at Broom Valley New site was discussed. It was decided that additional work quotes would need to be obtained to include only the work to reinstate the damaged track between the gate and car parking area.

## 10) Any other business

- It was requested that the Society Forum draft minutes from 10/10/2023 be distributed for the next board meeting.
- It was raised that director retirement cycle requires notification to shareholders at the end of the year. **ACTION:** (JC) to check standing order 8 and follow the process.

## 11) Agenda items for future meeting

- Marketing strategy and budgeting
- New tenant support and tenancy sustainability
- Feedback from RMBC meeting
- Policies review

## 12) Date of Next Meeting

Finance Subcommittee Meeting 13 - 27/11/2023 - 14:30 - Garden Room, Clifton Park

Board Meeting 85 – 11/12/2023 - 13:00 - Garden Room, Clifton Park

AGM – 26/03/2023 – 18:30 – Unity Centre

BS thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting was closed at 3:43pm.

Signed 

Brian Steele (Chair)

Date 11/12/2023