

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Name:	Board Meeting - 85		
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) and Richard Watson (RW).
Support Officer: Jamie Calvert (JC) ASO

Apologies:

Jack Taylor (JT), Cllr Dave Sheppard (DS)

1) Apologies

- a. Jack Taylor (JT), Cllr Dave Sheppard (DS)

2) Declarations of Interest

- a. JP declared an interest as a tenant on the Barnsley Rd site.
- b. MH declared an interest as a tenant on the Avenue Rd site.
- c. SJ declared an interest as a tenant of the Rectory Fields site.
- d. RW declared an interest as society treasurer on the Clifton site.

3) Minutes from the previous meeting

- a. Board meeting 84 minutes were moved as a true record by JP and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson (BS).

4) Matters arising

- a. There were no matters arising.

5) Admin Report

The ASO admin report was discussed. The following issues were raised:

- a. A request was made to include movement indicators on future plot statistics figures.
- b. A query was raised about the waiting list management and the policy for the allocation of second plots. Questions were also raised about whether there should be a maximum number of plots per tenant and whether applicants should be allowed to join waiting lists for multiple sites. It was agreed that a formal policy should be drafted for waiting lists and plot allocation.

ACTION: (SJ) to draft a waiting list policy and share with directors for input before next board meeting. (JC) to assist with template and distribution.

6) Financial Matters

The treasurer reported the balances of the RAA bank accounts; current account £46409.89, Deposit account £24378.22 (05/12/2023).

The finance report for 09/11/2023 to 05/12/2023 was presented.

- a. The budget projection for years 2024, 2025 and 2026 were presented to the board. The budget forecasts were accepted unanimously.

- b. The 2023 underspend was discussed and acknowledged that spending has been delayed due to the absence of an ASO. It was identified that two significant payments, the ASO salary recharge and RMBC maintenance contract have not been invoiced and so funds will be carried over to settle them on receipt. It was requested that specific figures are allocated to the carried-over budget to justify the underspend and ensure that the budget is allocated to the appropriate delayed costs.
ACTION: (JC) to agree with treasurer (SJ) and circulate the 2023 budget update to directors.
- c. It was noted that funds from the Avenue Road Society are still held in a bank account by the previous society committee members. A request should be made that this balance is transferred to the RAA and ringfenced for site improvements on Avenue Road Allotments.
ACTION: (MH) to contact signatories of the account

7) Meeting Schedule 2024

- a. It was discussed and agreed that board meetings in 2024 will be held in person on a Monday at a six-week interval. Where a bank holiday falls on a scheduled date it will be rescheduled for the following Monday. One additional meeting of the board will be scheduled virtually on 18/03/2024 to allow preparation for the AGM.
- b. Maintenance and Finance subcommittee meetings will each be held at a six-week interval to allow for one meeting of each subcommittee between board meetings.
- c. A shareholder meeting will be scheduled in September.
- d. Society forums will be scheduled in May and October.
ACTION: (JC) book meetings and distribute calendar of meetings to directors for the new year.

8) Maintenance

- a. Quotes have been received for the following jobs:
 - i. St Leonards gate repair £180.00
 - ii. Hartley Lane fence repair £240.00
 - iii. High Street replace 4 panels of fence £1,140.00
 The Board agreed to authorise the works.
ACTION: (JC) to contact the contractor and agree the works as agreed
- b. A quote of £500 was received for road chippings to be delivered to South Street Allotments. The South Street Committee requested the chippings and agreed that they would arrange the distribution of the chippings once delivered. The Board preliminarily agreed to provide the chippings on written agreement of the work to be completed by the South Street Committee and receipt of risk assessment documentation.
ACTION: (JC) to request documentation from South Street Committee
- c. Roof repair for Broom Valley Old site-building. ASO updated the Board that we have not yet received a valid quote for the work to be completed. An email was sent to the BVO society committee for support with the repair works but no response was received. (MH) suggested another contractor previously used for other works and will forward the contact details to the ASO for contact.
- d. (MH) updated board on current rodenticide stocks. Monitoring to ensure old stocks are deployed within the regulatory timescale. It was agreed that stocks of the new compliant rodenticide should be ordered from the current years budget to ensure consistent supply.
ACTION: (MH) to provide an order requirement for new rodenticide to (JC). Order to be raised before the year-end.
- e. The probation service has agreed to work collaboratively on Greasbrough allotments, clearing some plots currently on notice of surrender. Dates are still to be confirmed for the work to begin.
ACTION: (JC) to update directors when dates are agreed

9) Transfer and transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)

Feedback from meeting with Andy Lee representing RMBC

- a. It was noted that RMBC cannot assist with the removal or professional assessment of asbestos materials on allotment sites. It was suggested that small amounts of material are accepted on appointment by RMBC household waste services. It was proposed that RMBC may have a legal obligation and that this should be considered further.
ACTION: (BS) and (JP) to meet with (DS) to discuss this issue.
- b. The grounds maintenance contract for grass and hedge cutting needs to be raised in a separate meeting with the account manager at RMBC.
ACTION: (JC) to agree a date with RMBC representative.
- c. Outstanding issues regarding rent collection and tenancy of grazing sites was raised. No movement on this issue as it will need to be raised as a query with RMBC finance directorate.
ACTION: (JC) to draft emails querying the rent situation and current tenancies. Drafts are to be sent to (BS) before sending to RMBC.
- d. A discussion was had about the site boundary of High Street allotments as there is a large area of land on the plans marked as allotment land to be transferred to RAA which is currently wooded and has public access.
ACTION: (JC) to query this with Andy Lee, RMBC, to confirm with the solicitor's plans.

10) Society update

- a. Update on the position of Broom Valley Old Society – It was noted that the society committee has withdrawn their intention to dissolve the society. An AGM has been arranged by the society to be held outside of the allotment building. RAA is unable to arrange representation for the date arranged. It was suggested that an offer is made for the RAA to facilitate the AGM at a future date if the meeting is postponed.
ACTION: (JC) to contact the committee with the proposal to facilitate the meeting in a suitable location in the new year.
- b. Clifton Allotment Society has requested clarification on the responsibility for a flagstone path. It was agreed that the society should look to making the path safe and if necessary, apply to the RAA for funding contribution. It was also noted that liability insurance is in place in the event of an injury claim.
ACTION: (MH) agreed to visit the site to risk assess the path.

11) Policy Review

A discussion was held about the queries raised about policies and recommendations made for draft amendments to be prepared for the AGM

- a. Fires/burning policy – It was agreed that a consideration policy is more practical and sustainable than introducing fixed time limits. It was noted that the rules could be made clearer to specify the requirement to adhere to temporary site restrictions to burning where necessary and the terms of those restrictions.
- b. Livestock – it was agreed that the current minimum waiting time of 12 months be increased to 24 months is proposed at the AGM. Other issues relating to livestock are covered by the cultivation ratio and business prohibition rules.
- c. Plot inspections – it was suggested that the probationary period in the tenancy agreement is extended from 3 to 6 months and that inspection would take place at the 3rd and 6th month.
- d. A proposal was made to introduce clarification about boundaries and access to allotment sites from neighbouring property. It was suggested that this should be considered for both the tenancy agreement and allotment rules.
- e. Business plan – it was agreed that the business plan for 2024 should be prioritised to ensure a timely publication of the final document.
ACTION: (JP) to update the previous draft and forward to ASO for distribution to the Board.

- f. Code of conduct – It was agreed that a new template should be considered for the skills audit template.
- g. Data policy – A draft data policy was distributed to directors by the ASO. A second draft will be distributed based on feedback and additional GDPR requirements. It was agreed that this would replace the current confidentiality policy.
ACTION: (JC) to distribute the version 2 draft to all directors.
- h. Environment policy – It was recommended that the policy requires a re-write to reflect current environmental goals in line with the business plan.
- i. Skips/waste – It was recommended that the 'one skip per year' policy is removed from the health and safety policy and reviewed under the business plan.
- j. Financial regulations – It was noted that the ASO and Treasurer have started work on drafting an updated document that better reflects current best practices.
- k. Asbestos policy – It was noted that (JP) is drafting a new policy for asbestos management.
- l. Equality – It was noted that as part of the data policy review and to monitor the success of equality policies, the RAA should request appropriate additional data from tenants/shareholders based on consent only. It was suggested that this is discussed at the next society forum before contacting tenants/shareholders of society-managed sites.

12) Any other business

- a. It was requested that society forum notes be sent to society secretaries in addition to posting on the RAA website.
- b. It was requested that minutes be numbered in the previous format as used before August 2023. It was agreed to return to the numbering system from the start of 2024 to avoid confusion.

13) Agenda items for next meeting

- a. Marketing strategy and budgeting
- b. New tenant support and tenancy sustainability
- c. Business Plan
- d. Policy Review – drafts for AGM
- e. Finance - 2023 underspend allocations

14) Date of next meeting

- a. Board Meeting 86 – 15/01/2024 - 13:00 - Garden Room, Clifton Park (venue tbc)

BS thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting was closed at 4:30pm.

Signed  Date 15/01/2024
Brian Steele (Chair)