

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Name:	Board Meeting - 87		
Minute Taker:	Jamie Calvert		
Date:	26 February 2024	Time:	13:00
Location:	Clifton Garden House		

Attendees:

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

Apologies:

014/02/24 Apologies

- a. None received

015/02/24 Declarations of Interest

- a. JP declared an interest as a tenant on the Barnsley Rd site.
- b. JT declared an interest as secretary on the Wood St site.
- c. MH declared an interest as a tenant on the Avenue Rd site.
- d. MS declared an interest as a tenant on the Clifton site.
- e. SJ declared an interest as a tenant of the Rectory Fields site.
- f. RW declared an interest as society treasurer on the Clifton site.

016/02/24 Minutes from the previous meeting

- a. Board meeting 86 minutes were moved as a true record by (SJ) and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson(BS).
- b. Maintenance Subcommittee meeting 11 minutes were moved as a true record by (MH) and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson(BS).
- c. Finance Subcommittee meeting 14 minutes were moved as a true record by (SJ) and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson(JP).

017/02/24 Matters arising

- a. An error was identified in the minutes of the board meeting 85. The date of the meeting was incorrectly recorded.

018/02/24 Admin Report

- a. The ASO summarised the admin report and highlighted key points. The following issues were raised:
 - i. The RMBC CYPS team had requested a community plot. Although we could not offer this on the selected site, the board approved offering a plot on an alternative site when one becomes available.
 - ii. A complaint had been received by previous land users of Woodside grazing land. It was discussed and agreed that this complaint should be referred to the RMBC as this is who tenanted the land to the complainant in error.

- iii. A quote was received for fencing work on the South Street allotment. The board approved the installation.
- iv. Supporting documentation has been received from the South Street committee regarding the track resurfacing proposal. This was approved on completion of the risk assessment. (MH) offered assistance to the committee for this.
- v. A request was made to provide a key to a third-party delivery company for wood chips on the High Street allotment. The board declined this request based on the security risk posed. It was agreed that a tenant must be on site to accompany any deliveries.
- vi. A request was made for a re-key on Barnsley Road and Wet Moor Lane allotments. It was agreed that following previous requests there were two options available;
 - 1. RAA replaces the locks and keys, charging a deposit of £5 per key/tenant
 - 2. The Society can replace the locks and keys and provide a key to the RAA ASO
- vii. An invoice for the 2023 grass and hedge-cutting contract has been received. It was suggested that the 2024 tender be reviewed, including full list of sites cut, schedule for works and cost.
ACTION: refer this item to the Maintenance Subcommittee meeting on 18/03/2024.

019/02/24 Financial Update

- a. The treasurer reported the balances of the RAA bank accounts; current account £88,572.77, Deposit account £24378.22.
- b. It was noted that 69 rent invoices due by 28/02/2024 are unpaid and unaccounted for. The following action was approved by the board.
ACTION: ASO(JC) to email and post a tenancy termination notice to all tenants with outstanding rents.
 - i. Notices are to be mailed by 1st class recorded delivery.
 - ii. The notice terminates tenancy on the 11th of March 2024 unless the rent is paid before that date.
- c. It was noted that the current allowance for annual rent invoices to be paid by 28th February conflicts with the tenancy agreement requirement to pay rent within 40 days.
ACTION: refer this issue to the finance subcommittee meeting on 25/03/2024
- d. It was discussed that the board has previously opted not to complete a full independent audit as permitted by the FCA. The board agreed to continue the existing policy of opting out of a full audit and nominating Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) as Lay Auditors for accounts and independent review. It was noted that this requires an annual resolution at the AGM and that increases in annual turnover should be monitored to ensure the RAA is still eligible to opt out of FCA full audit requirements.
- e. It was noted that there is an ongoing enquiry within the RMBC regarding the grazing land rents that were collected on behalf of the RAA.

020/02/24 AGM

- a. It was noted that the draft asbestos policy cannot be approved by the board until further clarification is obtained from the RMBC regarding disposal and long-term responsibility.
- b. The draft finance regulations were agreed for approval at the AGM with the following additional amendments;
 - i. ASO delegated spending authority is to increase to £300 net.
 - ii. The £500 approval limit is to increase to £1,500 net.
 - iii. Orders over £1,500 net require approval of the board or relevant subcommittee.
 - iv. Removal of the requirement for biannual internal auditing.
- c. The board agreed to approve the 2024 draft business plan. The business plan does not require AGM approval.
- d. A suggestion was made to propose an amendment to the complaints policy regarding malicious and vexatious complaints.
ACTION: ASO(JC) to update and share a draft with the directors
- e. It was agreed that the agenda for the 2024 AGM will remain the same as the 2023 AGM.

021/02/24 Broom Valley Old site

- a. The Broom Valley Old (BVO) Society EGM, hosted by the RAA, was discussed in summary. It was noted that the ASO has received some interest but not sufficient nominations to form a committee at this point.
- b. The meeting room at the Unity Centre is booked again for the 12th of March 2024 for BVO society members to elect a new committee.

022/02/24 Marketing strategy and budget

- a. It was agreed that until further information is available to make a balanced decision on the direction of the RAA marketing strategy, this item will be postponed.

023/02/24 New tenant support and tenancy sustainability

- a. It was suggested that a compilation of the support offered to new tenants of neighbouring authorities is brought to a future meeting for review.
- b. It was noted that a previous draft document was formed and could be used as a framework for a new document.
ACTION: (JT) to update and share the draft document.
- c. It was agreed that a tenant survey would be useful to support the RAA's future goals.
ACTION: (SJ) to begin compiling the questions for the survey and develop with ASO(JC).
- d. It was suggested that workshops be organised to support tenants with topics such as allotment planning, water conservation and composting. It was agreed that suitable interest from tenants should be determined before pursuing further.
ACTION: (SJ) include support topic in tenant survey.
ACTION: (JC) to compile a draft leavers survey to obtain feedback from tenants ending their tenancy. To be shared with board members.
ACTION: (JC) to update the website to remain consistent with new guidance documents once developed.

024/02/24 Any other business

- a. None

025/02/24 Agenda items for next meeting

Lease update – for Board Meeting 89

026/02/24 Date of Next Meeting

- a. Board Meeting 88 – 18/03/2024 - 13:00 – Microsoft Teams, Virtual

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

Signed



Brian Steele (Chair)

Date

18/03/2024