

Rotherham Allotments Alliance

Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Name:	Board Meeting - 89		
Minute Taker:	Jamie Calvert		
Date:	08 April 2024	Time:	13:30
Location:	Clifton Garden House		

Attendees:

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

Apologies:

Cllr Dave Sheppard (DS)

035/04/24 Apologies

- a. Cllr Dave Sheppard (DS)

036/04/24 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.

037/04/24 Minutes from the previous meeting

- a. Board meeting 88 minutes were moved as a true record by (BS) and duly signed (electronically) by the Chairperson.

038/04/24 Matters arising

- a. There were no matters arising.

039/04/24 Admin Report

- a. It was questioned why there are 37 vacant plots despite recent lettings. The ASO confirmed that this is due to the tenancy terminations resulting from unpaid rents.
- b. It was questioned whether the status of unlettable and decommissioned plots had been reviewed. It was agreed that these plots should be assessed again and action considered to bring them into use. It was noted that the 2023 funds ringfenced for plot clearance could be used for this work.
- c. It was noted that waiting lists are still greater than vacant plots across all directly managed sites but that applicants may be offered a plot on a site close to their preferred site to balance the demand for popular sites.
- d. The timescales involved between contacting an applicant and completing a tenancy agreement were discussed. It was agreed that applicants would be permitted 48hrs to respond to invitations to view plots before offering the viewing to the next applicant on the waiting list.

040/04/24 Financial Matters

- a. The treasurer reported the balances of the RAA bank accounts; current account £77,916.19, Deposit account £24,378.22.
- b. It was noted after discussion that a review is needed of key deposit funds including the following points
 - i. Ensuring the record on Colony is accurate
 - ii. Ringfencing deposit funds in the reserve account
 - iii. Clarifying the terms of deposit return – key must be returned within 30 days of the tenancy end date.

ACTION: refer this item to the next finance subcommittee meeting.
- c. It was noted that a previous record of ASO expenses was categorised as Director expenses in QuickBooks.

ACTION: ASO to review in QuickBooks and take corrective action
- d. It was identified that a review of site assets, buildings and scheduled maintenance should take place annually.

ACTION: refer this item to the Maintenance Subcommittee meeting.
- e. It was clarified that the current arrangement for the RAA to use Lay Auditors for annual accounts is sufficient until the yearly turnover exceeds £90,000.00.
- f. It was noted that we have not yet received an update from the insurers to clarify points raised in the meeting on 13/03/2024. The ASO is collating data from societies to complete the return requested by the insurer.

ACTION: It was agreed that insurance should be added to the society forum agenda.

041/04/24 Maintenance

- a. It was noted that the ASO is arranging the collection and disposal of tyres fly-tipped on Wood Street allotments. The cost for this is £354.06.
- b. A question was raised about Japanese Knotweed growing on the outside border of Wood Street allotments. This was on previous RMBC schedule.

ACTION: ASO to follow up with RMBC to ensure it is still on their treatment schedule
- c. It was suggested that we request a copy of the schedule and contract for 2024 grass and hedge cutting by RMBC.

ACTION: ASO to contact RMBC to request schedule and contract
- d. A discussion was had about the repair work required to the lower entrance of Vicarage Fields allotments. It was noted that additional work to raise ironworks is required due to the increased height of the main highway since resurfacing. It was suggested that this is discussed with RMBC at the next meeting before agreeing any works.
- e. A question was raised about the Eastern boundary of Clifton allotments as overhanging trees have not been maintained recently.

ACTION: it was agreed that this issue needs to be referred to the meeting with RMBC

042/04/24 Transfer and transitional arrangements RMBC to RAA (including SLA)

- a. It was noted that we have had no recent correspondence from either the RAA-appointed solicitor or RMBC solicitor. It was suggested that we request an update.
- b. **ACTION:** ASO to contact RAA solicitor and request an update as well as updated lease and map drafts.

043/04/24 Data collection for tenants, shareholders and societies

- a. It was noted that the new Data Policy provides adequate clarification of the data collection requirements.
- b. The ASO explained the current process for collecting shareholder data from societies. It was suggested that this is raised as an agenda item for the Society Forum.

044/04/24 Any other business

- a. Discussion was had about vehicle use on allotments. It was noted that the rules may require clarity or amendment to prevent ongoing damage to allotment paths that are not suitable for regular vehicle use, particularly in wet condition.

It was noted that the maintenance subcommittee has discussed repairs to damaged tracks.

It was suggested that vehicle access on sites is raised as an agenda point at the society forum.

- b. It was agreed that the following points should be added to the society forum agenda and that the ASO should notify society secretaries by email and phone where available to maximise attendance.
 - i. Insurance changes
 - ii. Shareholder data
 - iii. Plot numbering/identification
 - iv. Society website
 - v. Vehicle access
 - vi. Bird keeper registration
- c. It was noted that the probation service manager has changed and that this has resulted in a skip being ordered to Greasbrough allotments and no work team arriving to complete the project.
- d. **ACTION:** ASO to contact the new manager and discuss completing the project
- e. Upcoming changes to registration requirements for bird keepers were discussed. It was agreed that all tenants and societies should be made aware of the changes using the following methods:
 - i. RAA website and Social media
 - ii. Direct email to all tenants
 - iii. Society forum
 - iv. Onsite notices

045/04/24 Agenda items for next meeting

- a. None

046/04/24 Date of Next Meeting

- a. Board Meeting 90 – 20/05/2024 - 13:00 - Garden Room, Clifton Park

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

Signed



John Palmer

Date

21/05/2024