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Rotherham Allotment Alliance Ltd

Annual Report 2025

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Introduction

As the chairperson of Rotherham Allotments Alliance LTD, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the company directors for their dedicated volunteer work on behalf of our shareholders in 2025. Welcome to our annual meeting, where we will present the Board's report on our achievements over the past year and provide an overview of our future plans and projected accounts for 2026.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the societies for their hard work on behalf of allotment holders. The year 2025 has indeed been challenging due to changes in directors and the departure of our allotments support officer, who was replaced by Charlotte Evans. During this period, the directors stepped up and took charge of day-to-day operations. We also faced additional difficulties when both our website and emails were down for about six weeks. However, I am pleased to report that our services to members are now back on track.

I am delighted to announce that we have cleared more allotments and successfully reduced waiting lists. Additionally, we have made the decision not to increase the cost of allotments in Rotherham this year. By working closely with Rotherham MBC, we are hopeful to sign the lease for full control of allotments by the AGM, which would be a significant positive step for our organisation.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind Regards

Brian Steele

Chairperson - Rotherham Allotment Alliance Ltd



Site Statistics

All Sites	Total Plots	Let Plots	Unlettable Plots	Vacant Plots	Decommissioned Plots	Waiting List
Grand Total	1212	1080	29	61	43	176

Direct Managed	Total Plots	Let Plots	Unlettable Plots	Vacant Plots	Decommissioned Plots	Waiting List	Occupied (excluding unlettable and decommissioned)
Avenue Road Allotments	73	61	2	9	1	19	87.14%
Moor Road Allotments	22	15	0	5	2	23	75.00%
Psalters Lane Allotments	10	4	0	6	0	14	40.00%
Broom Valley Old Allotments	72	66	0	5	1	1	92.96%
Rectory Field Allotments	64	52	0	4	7	4	91.23%
Rosehill Park Allotments	28	28	0	0	0	18	100.00%
St Leonards Road Allotments	14	11	0	3	0	14	78.57%
Greasbrough Allotments	88	84	0	3	0	52	95.45%
High Street Allotments	44	37	1	0	5	19	97.37%
Highfield Road Allotments	5	1	0	4	0	6	20.00%
Lowfield Avenue Allotments	14	5	5	4	0	6	55.56%
Grand Total	433	364	9	44	16	176	89.22%

Society Managed	Total Plots	Let Plots	Unlettable Plots	Vacant Plots	Decommissioned Plots	Waiting List	(excluding unlettable and decommissioned)
Barnsley Road Allotments	59	55	0	3	1	0	93.22%
Broom Valley New Allotments	73	69	0	3	1	0	94.52%
Queen Street North Allotment	33	33	0	0	0	0	100.00%
Queen Street South Allotment	49	49	0	0	0	0	100.00%
Clifton Allotments	134	125	3	4	2	0	93.28%
Clough Bank Allotments	67	49	14	3	1	0	73.13%
Hartley Lane Allotments	76	76	0	0	0	0	100.00%
Herringthorpe Valley Road Allotments	57	56	0	0	0	0	98.25%
Vicarage Field Allotments	72	50	2	2	18	0	69.44%
Wet Moor Lane Allotments	38	36	0	1	1	0	94.74%
Wharf Road Allotments	21	21	0	0	0	0	100.00%
Wood Street Allotments	32	32	0	1	1	0	100.00%
Kimberworth Park Allotments	35	34	0	0	1	0	97.14%
South Street Allotments	33	31	1	0	1	0	93.94%
Grand Total	779	716	20	17	27	0	91.91%



Principal Achievements and Challenges

Principle achievements

Society / Shareholder forums

Forums have allowed tenants and societies to engage more with the RAA and discuss issues and ideas. It is hoped that the attendance of these meetings will improve with time.

Society forums	May	6 attended (of 4 societies)
	October	10 attended (of 5 societies)
Shareholder (tenant) forum	September	23 attended

Rotherham show

Attendance at the show was well-received by the public again this year. The competitions and free seed packets were popular with those who visited the stall. The show was promoted to both direct-managed and society tenants to encourage participation in the horticulture show.

New director appointment/roles

Nikki Heffron and Matt Jepson were appointed to the Board in June and November respectively. Mick Hirst was appointed as a 'specialist Director' in August, to advise and assist in Health, Safety and Risk assessment issues.

RMBC nominated Directors to the Board in July, with Councillors Linda Marshall and Dave Sheppard being appointed.

Plot clearances

During the last four months of 2025 plot clearance work has been carried out on six of the RAA directly managed sites, by voluntary effort, in total 20 plots have been dealt with 13 of these have re-tenanted by the end of the year. (Avenue Road; Moor Road, High Street; Rosehill; Rectory Field; Scrooby Street.)

Health, Safety and Risk Assessments

Following the appointment of a director with specific responsibility for Health, Safety and Risk Assessments the majority of directly managed sites have been inspected along with a number of society managed sites where we have been requested to assist them. Any necessary work identified has been attended to.

Principal challenges

Allotment Support Officer

Our ASO, Jamie Calvert resigned from the post in May. Directors covered the duties until an appointment could be made. Unfortunately during July technical problems were encountered with both the Microsoft account, which affected our emails, and the website which also became unavailable. These issues were resolved in early August. In August our new ASO Charlotte Evans was appointed.

Signing of the lease

As a consequence of solicitor inertia caused by changes to solicitor representation, there has been little forward movement in this matter. However, following personnel changes within RMBC during the early part of the year, a more positive environment has now been established with regular 6 weekly meetings taking place between RAA representatives and RMBC representatives from various sections associated with allotment provision and the legal side concerning the lease. A timetable has been established in an attempt to progress the lease to conclude within the first 3/4 months of 2026.



Director vacancies

During 2025 the Board has now filled all Director vacancies and also appointed a specialist Director to deal with Health and Safety and Risk assessment issues. Anyone interested in becoming a Director should apply. It is in the interest of the Board to maintain the sustainability of the RAA in having a waiting list of potential Directors to cover for any possible director resignations. There is still the opportunity of appointing a further 'specialist' Director, the Board would be extremely pleased to hear from anyone who would be willing to offer assistance / advice on any of the following topics: financial, legal (especially pertaining to allotments), website management, a 'web-master'.

Society engagement

There are some societies that have not been actively involved with the RAA, while others have taken a more proactive approach. Although the society forums have been moderately successful, not all societies are represented. There is still a need to improve relations between some societies and the RAA. Due to limited sharing of data and reporting, the effectiveness of managing waiting lists across all sites is reduced. Society members may possess a wealth of information that has yet to be fully accessed for the benefit of all allotment tenants. A trial is underway to integrate society data into the RAA allotment management system.

Tenant engagement

Again attendance at the AGM and shareholder forum was relatively low, but higher than in previous years, in relation to the total number of tenants. In summary, the flow of communication was from the RAA and to the tenants, suggesting a missed opportunity for useful tenant feedback and contributions.

Due to limited resources a planned shareholders survey has been delayed, hopefully this will take place during 2026.

It's worth reiterating, that all ploholders, whether on a society or directly administered site, automatically become a shareholder of the RAA as part of our Cooperative Community Benefit Societies limited company status. It is, therefore, in all our interests to ensure that the RAA can communicate with all its shareholders easily.

Historic waste

Historic waste and unsuitable structures on plots continue to be a problem on sites where these plots are made vacant and unsuitable for re-let. This includes new discoveries of materials potentially containing asbestos, worn tyres and other waste that requires specialist removal.



Summary of Works Completed



Site security improvements – the following sites received repair and improvement work to gates and fences - Herringthorpe; High Street; Wood Street; Wharf Road; South Street.



Improvements to tracks – Internal pathways were improved at South Street and Avenue Road. Entrance roadway issues were resolved at Vicarage Fields.



Drainage works – (none during period of review).



Upgrades and repairs to water supplies and facilities

Water leaks were repaired at a number of sites including Broom Old; High Street.



Urgent repairs

Broom Old – safety issues community building.



10 skips were provided across sites, removing approximately 80m³ of waste from allotments. Years of accumulated rubbish has been removed, by contractor, from one former unused plot at Moor Road. Work continues to locate and identify **asbestos** to allow approved removal from sites.



Vermin control assistance is offered to all directly managed and society run allotment sites. On the first Thursday of the month, sites are visited and bait boxes replenished. Up to 200 bait boxes on 6 sites are serviced. We also supply materials to 3 sites where volunteers have appropriate qualification. If you, or your site requires help with vermin control please email our ASO



Directors & Attendance

Directors	Brian Steele	Chair
	John Palmer	Vice Chair
	Jack Taylor	Secretary
	Richard Watson	Treasurer
	Mohammed Sulleman	
	Nikki Heffron	appointed June 2025
	Matt Jepson	appointed November 2025

Co-opted Director with responsibility for Health and Safety
Mick Hirst appointed August 2025

For RMBC Councillor Dave Sheppard re-appointed June 2025
Councillor Linda Marshall appointed June 2025

Director attendance at Board Meetings:

	Brian Steele	John Palmer	Jack Taylor	Mohammed Sulleman	Clr Dave Sheppard	Richard Watson	Clr Linda Marshall	Nikki Heffron	Matt Jepson	Mick Hurst
27/01/2025	1	1		1	1	1				
24/02/2025	1	1				1				
17/03/2025	1	1	1	1		1				
14/04/2025	1	1	1			1				
12/05/2025	1	1	1	1		1				
09/06/2025	1	1	1	1		1		1		
07/07/2025	1	1		1	1	1				
04/08/2025		1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1
01/09/2025	1	1	1		1		1	1		1
06/10/2025	1	1		1		1				1
03/11/2025	1	1	1	1		1		1	1	1
08/12/2025	1	1	1	1	1	1				1
Total Attendance	11	12	8	9	5	11	2	4	1	5
% Attendance	92%	100%	67%	75%	72% *	92%	33% *	57% *	50% *	100% *

* % based on number of meetings whilst in post



Policy Review and Amendments

(Copies of the revised policies and new draft society site and directly managed tenancy agreements can be found on the RAA website, listed under new policies 2026 section of 'Policies').

Allotment Rules

Amendments to sections: -

- 09.01 – specified maximum sizes of building allowed, along with maximum internal fence height between plots and internal access roads.
- 10.5 – (new clause) prohibition of fire arms.
- 13.2 – (new clause) regarding vehicles on site see also below in the Vehicle policy.

Vehicle Policy

Addition of a prohibitions section – No vehicles or non-powered or towed vehicles, including caravans of any kind can be taken on the actual allotment plot or left overnight.

Volunteer Policy

Changes to clause 7 – allowing volunteers to work on sites other than the ones the tenant plots – to allow formation of the RAA volunteer team.

Inspection and Notice Policy

A new policy to bring together clear details of the process to be followed for plot inspections and procedure for eviction.

Introduction of new tenancy agreements for Society Managed sites and Directly Managed Plots.

It is intended to introduce a new tenancy agreement to for all society managed sites. The new tenancy agreement will ensure that all our society managed sites are operating in a fully constitutional manner by – full committee structure; holding regular AGM's; publishing their AGM minutes and accounts to all their plot holders. If approved the new tenancy agreement will commence on the 1st January 2027. The discount of 10% rental collected will only be given when AGM minutes for the pertaining to the year in question or prior, depending on the society's normal cycle.

A new enhanced tenancy agreement will also be introduced for all tenants of our directly managed sites.



Future Plans

The Rotherham Allotment Alliance is committed to enhancing the allotment experience for our community members. As we look ahead, we have identified several key priorities to address:

Sandymount Road, Wath

As part of a major housing development plan for the area of Wath upon Dearne a currently unused allotment site, Farfield Lane is to be within the housing development plan along with current farm land owned by Fitzwilliam Estates. An allotment site currently owned by Fitzwilliam Estates will be handed to RMBC as part of the arrangements. This site is in a very poor state of repair with very few plots being currently used for allotment purposes, many being derelict or used for other non-horticultural use. The intention is to clear the site and develop the area into a 'model allotment site'. When this is complete RMBC will pass the day-to-day management of the new site to the RAA. We are also taking an active role in the design of the new site. Funded by the overall development scheme.

New Tenant information 'booklet'

Currently under 'draft' is an advisory and information booklet for new tenants. The document will become a working document for the start of next season in 2026.

RAA – Business Plan

This document is currently under review with the aim of launching a 2026 edition towards the middle/end of 2026. This will cover the period to 2030.

Plot Clearance of Unused Plots

During 2026 it is hoped to launch the RAA volunteer plot clearance team. This work is ongoing as plots are given up and preparation needed for new tenants to take over. Clearing unused plots not only improves the overall appearance but creates greater opportunities for new gardeners. Plots being vacated with historic waste left behind is an area which the Board are considering ways to prevent or minimise this happening in the first instance, however, as can be appreciated it poses a very difficult question to answer.

Path Repairs and Improvement

Well-maintained pathways are essential for safe and convenient access to allotments. Due to increasing vehicle use on sites, some paths have been significantly degraded. We will prioritise repairing existing paths where a health and safety risk is present. Enhancing will be considered where the benefit is improved access, durability, or cost-effectiveness of maintaining the site.

Tenant Survey with a Focus on Encouraging Diversity

We value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of our allotment tenants. Through a survey, we will actively seek feedback and ideas to promote inclusivity and celebrate our community's richness.

Engaging More Actively with Societies

Collaborating with societies fosters knowledge sharing and camaraderie. We will actively engage with societies through the continuation of the forums and the introduction of dedicated web pages.

This will include the roll out of the Colony allotment management system for data management on a successful trial outcome.

Engaging Better to Support New Tenants

We will develop a new strategy, guided by tenant feedback, to support new tenants in the first steps of their allotment journey. This will encompass improvements to the existing new tenant documentation and website. The RAA will explore options for knowledge-sharing events.



Finance Report

The Alliance has continued to use the services of the Voluntary Action Rotherham Community Accountant. This has enabled for the accounts to be reviewed professionally and help to identify where any improvements could be made in the financial practices.

Rotherham Allotments Alliance Limited
Statement of Financial Activities
(Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account)
for the Year ended 31 December 2025

	2025	2024
	Total	Total
	£	£
Income:		
Rent	70,034	75,588
Water charges	2,591	-
Capital re-imburement	-	-
Membership	-	-
Bank interest	364	576
Other	-	902
Total income	<u>72,989</u>	<u>77,066</u>
Expenditure		
Staff wages	2 18,292	22,726
Staff expenses	663	1,191
Repairs and maintenance	36,662	33,652
Security, keys, locks and gates	2,419	17,031
Pest control	1,705	1,487
Water	7,276	2,784
Accountancy fees	700	550
Directors expenses	-	64
Memberships and subscriptions	2,206	1,585
Insurance	959	947
IT and Communications	1,815	1,813
Admin expenses	149	742
Printing, postage & stationery	545	618
Marketing	-	134
Sundry purchases	-	168
Depreciation	541	741
Total expenditure	<u>73,932</u>	<u>86,233</u>
Net income/expenditure	(943)	(9,167)
Total funds brought forward	42,785	51,952
Total funds carried forward	<u>41,842</u>	<u>42,785</u>



Rotherham Allotments Alliance Limited
Balance Sheet
as at 31 December 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible fixed assets	3	3,898	4,439
Current Assets			
Debtors	4	1,441	3,034
Cash		<u>41,656</u>	<u>64,731</u>
		43,097	67,765
Current Liabilities			
Creditors	5	(5,153)	(29,420)
Net assets		<u>41,842</u>	<u>42,785</u>
Represented by:			
General Funds		<u>41,842</u>	<u>42,785</u>
Total funds		<u>41,842</u>	<u>42,785</u>



Rotherham Allotments Alliance Ltd Budget Overview



Budget Overview

Expenses Summary		2026		2027		2028			
Payroll	£	27391	£	28761	£	30199	%	35.0	
Repairs And Maintenance	£	40548	£	42575	£	44704	%	51.8	
Office/General Expenses	£	3553	£	3731	£	3917	%	4.5	
Advertising/Promotional	£	231	£	243	£	255	%	0.3	
Memberships	£	2484	£	2608	£	2739	%	3.2	
Insurance	£	1000	£	1050	£	1103	%	1.3	
Utilities	£	3000	£	3150	£	3308	%	3.8	
Total Expenses	£	78207	£	82117	£	86223	%	100.0	
Income		2026		2027		2028			
Interest	£	400	£	420	£	441	%	0.5	
Societies	£	48917	£	51363	£	53931	%	62.5	
Direct Managed	£	23340	£	24507	£	25732	%	29.8	
Grazing	£	2550	£	2678	£	2811	%	3.3	
Water	£	3000	£	3150	£	3308	%	3.8	
Total Income	£	78207	£	82117	£	86223	%	100.0	
Total Income		2026		2027		2028			
Net Income/(Expenditure)	£	0	£	0	£	0			



Summary

Difficulties in filling vacant positions on the board has led to some priorities from 2025 going unmet. A focus on these priorities will be maintained when reviewing potential applicants for new directors to address diversity and skills gaps.

Rising costs will continue to impact the work achievable with a limited budget. The board will aim for a balanced approach, spending cautiously to prioritise health and safety issues as well as maintaining existing assets.

The education and encouragement of good gardening practices will be focused on, with regular inspections ensuring that tenants are working their plots effectively and in line with our aims and policies.

The strengthening of the relationship between the RAA, societies and tenants will continue with the twice-yearly society forums and annual shareholder meeting, where information and advice will be shared.

Waste removal is still one of the biggest issues on our allotment sites and will continue as well established, but run down and mis-used plots are vacated.

Routine grass cutting of communal areas on some sites continues to cause concerns. This work is carried out by RMBC, on contract. We will be discussing the contract specification and 2025 achievements prior to the new contact starting in April 2026. The situation will be closely monitored; however, the vagaries of the climate play a large part in the overall standard and target achievement.

Demand for plots has still been high and waiting lists for direct-managed sites have been managed accordingly.

The ASO remains to be a point of contact for all current and future tenants and will be responsible for promoting the sustainability of the allotment provision for future generations. To aid the workload of the ASO it is requested that contact should be made via email - admin@rotherhamallotments.org.uk – we will undertake to answer all queries within 10 working days of receipt. Obviously, any urgent emails will be answered as soon as practical. Directors ensure that the email account is monitored during ASO absences for holidays or sickness, other methods of communication cannot be offered the same assurance.