**Layton Permanent Allotment Association**

Minutes of Allotment Meeting at St Kentigerns Social Club

Wednesday 26th February, 2013 at 7.45pm

**Attendees**: Jacky Stennett Chairperson **Apologies**: Bernie O’Hara

 Toni Dagnall Site Rep. Gail Blackburn

 Dave Stennett Treasurer Sheila Dryden

 Dave Wignall Committee Jane Keane Com.

 Lesley Roberts

 Dave Roberts

 John Horn

 Gayna Dagnall

 Shirley Horn

 Derrick Walls

 Isabel Horn Sec.

The Meeting was opened by Jacky at 7.45pm who gave the apologies as listed.

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

**Matters Arising** : The Water Bills: Jacky informed the members that a disconnection notice had been received from United Utilities regarding an unpaid account of £210.58 for the water meter in Fordway Avenue. This letter was addressed to The Blackpool Federation of Allotments but sent to the address of Layton Allotments secretary. John Horn, who has been formerly dealing with the council Legal dept. head, Neil MacKey, telephoned Mr. MacKey, who stated that the matter would be dealt with immediately. Shortly afterwards John and Jacky received a telephone call from Justine Hall who assured both that she would attend to this, and that the Federation were paying these accounts by direct debit.

Dave, as treasurer, will be dealing with the United Utilities in future, when Layton take charge of the water accounts in April, spoke to the Accounts dept. he was assured that, in the case of disconnection, as threatened for Non-payment of this account, the £98 re-connection charge would be sent to the Federation. During his conversation with the accounts dept. Dave enquired as to the amounts of the last bills for water supplied to Layton Site, he was told that whilst this information may not be forthcoming they would supply him with a figure averaged on the recent costs of the water supply to the Site. Dave was asked to deliver this disconnection notice to the Federation Treasurer, Derek Cooper, this was done the following day. As the Site is actually serviced by two water meters, one on Fordway, for which the notice was for, and one on Blairway, we now wait to see if another notice is going to arrive in connection with the meter on Blairway! There was speculation that there was some confusion at United Utilities as they have, in the past, address invoices to “Fordway Allotment Site”.

Water and Drainage Project: It was mentioned that hoselock connecters for the taps, as arranged by Bernie, will be delivered shortly. Bernie was also going to recommend that brass fitments be sourced as they would be better than plastic ones, which would be liable to break. It was also mentioned that some tenants had requested double connections on the taps, but with thirty water taps now onsite, the water butts which were issued free to each plot to encourage the recycling of rain water and the restriction of sprinklers and unattended hoses, is this really necessary. As the water rates are the Sites largest expense the use of water must be monitored and waste of same discouraged.

Council Records: these were handed over to Jacky and found to be woefully inaccurate, with the invoices Dave has been issuing there is a small form for members to fill in, if tenants wish to have their plots in two names , fill the form in and give it back to Dave who will adjust the tenancy of the plot accordingly, there can be two names on the lease but only one address.

Termination Letter: All tenants should have received a termination notice from the council, this is part of the changeover to self management and not to be of concern to tenants, however it was found that not all tenants had received this notice and Jacky will mention this to Justine. John then informed the meeting that Neil MacKey had told him that a letter would be sent out informing us which council employees would be acting as our contacts with the council in the future.

**Chairs Report**: Jacky said that there was only one item to mention, on Tuesday, Jacky, Toni and Dave had met with Cllrs. Martin Mitchell and John Boughton on Site and, as a result of them inspecting the bottom area where the poplar trees had been removed and the Site is completely open and unsecured, the Cllrs have agreed to give the Site £1,353 to pay for Mesh fencing, this from the quote Bernie obtained from Thistlewaite Fencing, and includes installation of same. These monies will not be available until April, when the councillors are awarded their budget.

**Treasurer’s Report**: Dave said that he had been sending all the invoices out and then issued Accounts summaries for running totals for the year and February,( copies of these are in the tearooms in the folder with copy of the minutes for anyone wishing to examine them.) The running total for February is £3,509.19 and for the year, £21,533.24. All the equipment has been serviced, the cost of which was £560.49, the item, projects and donations, for £1,400 was the cost of tree felling at bottom of Site, the sum of £338.63 listed as miscellaneous income was the return of a cheque issued for Site insurance in December, this was returned because that particular firm had asked for another £150 to cover the “heavy machinery” on Site. Another insurer was sourced by Dave and Jacky and has provided better insurance for the Site at considerably lower cost of £262.80. Jacky stated due to going self managed the machinery had to be professionally inspected and issued with a safety certificate, she thanked Derrick for all the work he had done in maintaining the equipment in the past, she stated that to incur this kind of expense each year was out of the question, a

Careful assessment of the machinery and the money being made by hiring equipment out, had to be made and discussed at a committee meeting, only the equipment that is actually paying for itself could be kept and those that are not, dispensed with. Dave said that the rental income from equipment only came to £260 for the year.

Lesley enquired about the new Site insurance and it was explained that, in view of going self managed, this insurance had to be much more comprehensive, previously we had only third party but then we ran on the Council insurance, the Site committee are regarded as trustees and, as such, have to be covered by insurance, we are insured for Open Day and also for not just tenants on plots, but also friends, family and children who work on plots are also covered by this insurance. If any member wishes to examine the policy document it will be available to them, please ask Jacky.

As Justine Hall is no longer employed by the council from Thursday 27th Jacky produced a card for her which members signed.

**Site Reps Report**: Plot 9A is vacant, as Coral and Shirley have moved to plot 13. Frank and Joy decided not to renew their tenancy because of ill health.

We have two new tenants, Paul and Francine Jones on plot 43 and William O’Grady on plot 49.

The machinery is back, serviced and checked. While the checks have to be done for safety’s sake it seems that the serving could be done by us. There are several people on Site that are able to do a basic service.

That would save us a sizable sum of money. We have to remember that the associations money is for the good of us all.

We have decided to place a dam in the dyke, it will raise the water level a little to help with the wildlife. It can be removed if the council say that they aren’t happy but I see no reason why it should be.

As mentioned in the report the local Councillors will be giving £1,353.00 towards the fencing project.

As everyone now has water butts people really need to utilize them, we have to remember that it is our money that pays the water bills this year. Keep it low and next year’s bill will be cheaper, reflected in next years rents.

As all can see the roadway is starting to dry out, maybe spring is on the way.

We will announce the month before inspections will be starting, but not long now.

There are twenty people on the waiting list, two of them are Fiona Coyne and Nicola Mattinson, and so eighteen would be more accurate, four of them are new this year.

Toni said that he had spoken to Tim Rilley from the council who confirmed that the culvert on Site will be properly attended to in June when the ground has dried out.

**Secretary’s Report**: An application for funding has been lodged with Democratic Services, this will be heard at the Parklands Area Forum meeting in April. An amount of £1,200 towards the fencing project has been asked for.

An email to Liz. Woods at the Town Hall has been sent asking if the Mayor could attend our Open day on 28th July, it was also suggested that Cllrs. Martin Mitchell and John Boughton be officially invited as guests in recognition of the funding which they are arranging for us.

A small committee needs to be set up soon for the organization of Open Day, would all members who feel they can participate in this please let a member of the committee know and they will be contacted as soon as a meeting is scheduled.

**A.O.B**: John brought up the subject of a Produce and Flower Show, this has previously been run by the B.F.A.A,, but , as Layton is now longer managed by the Blackpool Federation it would seem that we, like David Slack Allotments, are now excluded in participating in the competitions. (As Layton took seven out of the ten trophies last year no doubt there will be a certain amount of anticipation among those competitors who do enter) The only contact been made by the Fed. regarding the Show was by the Lawson’s Road sec, requesting that Dave give her the programme that he set up for all the certificates and paperwork for last year‘s event!!! Dave, not being petty, is quite willing to oblige, and provide her with the help she has requested. It was put forward that Layton organize our own event, perhaps in conjunction with David Slack Allotments, Gayna suggested that St. Kentigern’s be approached as to the availability of their hall, this has been done and the hall would certainly be available for a nominal sum. Jacky did speculate as to whether the Federation would be returning Layton’s cup to us. Dave is to contact D.S. Allotments and put the proposal to them The question of sponsors was discussed and various suggestions put forward.

Jacky then produced the Allotment Magazine and pointed out the excellent article written by Bernie about Layton Site on page 47.

Jacky then declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm. The next meeting on 27th March.