Attendees:

Jacky Stennett (**JS**) Chair, Dave Stennett (**DS**) Treasurer, Dave Wignall (**DW**) Min Sec, Isabel Horn **IH** (Sec.), John Horn, Derrick Walls, Jane & Shaun Keane, Shirley & Coral Horn, Gail Blackburn, Derek Reid, Martin & Beverley Craven, Elaine Aldous, Geoff Brayshaw, Tamzin, Ruth, Tom, Margaret, Imogen, Elizabeth Westhead

**JS** opened the meeting at 13:30hrs and welcomed all.

**Apologies**

Albert & Bernie O’Hara, Sarah Mather, Mica, Stuart, Dave & Lesley Roberts, Alison & Christine, Sheila Dryden

**Minutes of previous meeting** 25/02/2015 were accepted without amendment by the meeting.

**Matters arising** from previous meeting

Produce Show – JS reported that they had received a telephone message from Steve, the chair of David’s Slack Allotments. It stated that, following a meeting of their Society, it was decided that they no longer wished to be involved in the running of the Produce Show. They offered to loan tables/chairs and any other equipment required in running the show.

Following this call, DS approached Neil Cartmell, plot 32, who has previous experience in helping to run shows. He readily agreed to help.

Fence and encroachment, behind plots 13 & 14 – Council officer Neil Makie and Legal Services are dealing with this issue. The neighbours have not responded to the Council’s letters on the subject. IS will make contact with Neil to obtain an update on progress.

On site machinery – At the previous meeting there was a discussion regarding the purchase of another 2-stroke tiller. ‘Mantis’ are no longer available in a 2-stroke machine (not environmentally friendly), only 4-stroke. However, Sheila and Milton have donated a 4-stroke machine and we thank them for this kind donation. Whilst our 2-stroke Mantis may require new tines (blades), JS had looked on the internet and these seem only available from the US and with postage would cost about £90. JS knew of a dealer/garden machine shop in St. Annes and agreed to visit to enquire about new tines and an estimate for the safety checking of our onsite equipment.

**Chairperson’s report**

Not a great deal to report this month. JS had attended two CVS meetings. The second on the 17th March was interesting as there were a number of tables from groups offering help/services. One of which was UR Potential. This is a group that painted or decorated walls etc. JS thought that they could be useful in the future for decorating items such as a container.

A member was aware of this group of young people who would decorate unsightly areas with murals to suit the environment.

**Secretaries report.**

IH distributed Bernie and Albert’s email that had been sent to her of a report on Machinery Hire charges,that compared the Association cost against a hire shop charges. It did indicate that the rent the Association charge was substantially less than that from a hire shop, and asked a number of questions…

The Association hire charges should take into account

* The cost of the machine, the cost of the petrol and the servicing/safety check costs.
* Unfair that the majority of plot holders are subsidising those that use the machines - rather than reducing the plot rental for all.

JS did state that this had been discussed at the previous meeting.

DS did state that at the previous meeting it had been agreed that our equipment hire charges would be increased by 50p per item.

Derrick did point out that the indicated Hire Shop charges were ‘by the day’, and ours were per hire – ½ hr or hour. This could then be comparative.

After a discussion by the meeting, it was agreed by vote that the new hire charge (50p increase) should remain and that the equipment was an expected ‘service’ that should be available to all plot holders from the Association, and that it should not become a money making venture.

Another item Bernie had asked to be raised was why the water charges were being listed separately and why are they so high? 11672m2 @ 14p/m2 is £1634.08.

DS was asked to respond. He stated that the reason was so that it was clear to all how much we were being charged and how much was raised throughout the year for water use.

Last year, water bills totalled £1899.41 and this includes the rebate (from the Federation for those who were plot holders when the Fed. were in charge) and included the standing charges.

It was also pointed out that DS distributed at each meeting, to those in attendance, a breakdown of monthly and ongoing yearly incoming and outgoing costs to the Association, and this included water bills.

If anyone wanted more coffee grounds, then please contact IH.

Open day – RSPCA and Blackpool Music Academy – IH will visit them this week to confirm that they would be available on the day and it was confirmed by the meeting that 10% of any money made on the day would be donated to those local organisations who help on the day.

**Treasurers Report**

DS distributed his account summary report.

One side showed the accounts from March 2014 through to March 2015 and on the other side for March 2015.

The next summary report would be from January 2015. This will give a better indication of accounts as the plot rents are now payable in January. The Association books would continue to cover the period April to March.

Total £9353.45. Bank - £9107.96 & £245.49 in hand. Shop sales this month - £92.40 (to be added)

Water bills have been received this month (we have 2 water meters, so 2 bills), however, one has not yet been paid as it was an estimated bill for £119.51 and the water had been turned off since November. DS had contacted them for an accurate bill two weeks ago, but was still waiting( we should only be paying for the standing charge at this time of year).

All have now paid this year’s rents.

New membership cards (including Baguleys discount) had been distributed to most – contact DS if you have not yet received yours.

**AOB**

JS – We are all members of the NSALG (National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners), £2 of your £5 membership goes to the NSALG. They have now become more ‘connected’ and are distributing emails from the NW group. Do you wish to see these? The members agreed to receive them. DS asked if these could be made available on our website? DW did not think the emails were available from their website but there is a link to their website on ours. ([Layton Permanent Allotment Association](http://www.laytonallotment.org.uk/) )

Items have been ordered for the shop from our regular supplier. They should be delivered in the next few days.

There is an offer for some greenhouse glass, nearly enough for a 6x6 greenhouse. If anyone is interested contact Denise Hind … [hind163@sky.com](mailto:hind163@sky.com) or 07730892256.

An enquiry from a member – Are any scaffolding planks being ordered this year? IH replied that none were planned to be ordered but she would give her contact a ring and ask.

An enquiry from a member – What is happening with the solar power for the tearoom? DS replied that Neil Cartmel had provided an estimate of no more than £1000… but this work was dependant on the Layton Bee Project getting funding.

DS then asked Jane Keane, chair of the Layton Bee Project to provide an update.

Jane was pleased to inform the meeting that the Project had been successful in their bid for funding and a container was to be supplied to the site. This would be used as the site shop and store to enable the tearoom to be opened up for meetings of the Association and the Layton Bee Project.

A discussion then took place as to what would the solar power plans provide.

Would a ‘commercial’ solar power installation be more beneficial?

Would a mains supply to the site be required/be useful for the site? Cost? A previous enquiry was more than £2500 to bring mains to the site.

Sources of funding were now reduced. Should we reconsider our decision not to become a charity? This was not an option favoured by the committee.

Those in attendance were unable to provide answers to these many questions, but JS agreed to ask Neil what his solar powered plans would provide for the site.

The next part of the meeting was to discuss plans for Open Day.

JS reminded all that this was the major fund raiser for the Association and would once again be reliant on the efforts of all plot holders that it was a success.

Whilst there would be similar stalls to previous years, John suggested that a stall to exhibit or sell the skills/interest/creativity of plot holders would be a useful addition. Card making, cross stitch, embroidery, crafts, engraving, knitting, pot / glass decorating… let us know of your skills and hobbies. This could be located on own plots??

Shaun reminded all that donations for the tombola and bottle stall can be made now. Please pass these on to a committee member or leave them in the tearoom.

Aspired Futures (face painting), RSPCA and Music Academy will be hopefully available.

Other suggestions included… Apple bobbing, hook-a-duck…

Next month’s meeting would be used to discuss Open Day plans in greater detail.

**Next meeting Sunday 26th April 2015 at the allotment tea rooms 13:30hrs**

JS then closed the meeting thanking all for attending.

The meeting closed at 1430hrs.