Jacky Stennett (**JS**) Chair, Dave Stennett (**DS**) Treasurer, Dave Wignall, Peter Eccles, Sarah Mather, John & Isabel Horn, Gail Blackburn, Bernie & Albert O’Hara, Derrick Walls, Dianne Tew & Chris Thompson, Christine & Alison Penistone, Albert & Maggie Mottershead, Michelle Swarbrick, John Lettice, Louise Beavers, Geoff Brayshaw, Katie Nickson, Anna, John Bishop

**JS** opened the meeting at 13:00hrs and welcomed all.

**Apologies**

Jane & Shaun Keane, Liz & Alan Westhead, Francine Jones

With the resignation of our secretary, there was a request for someone to cover the post until the AGM. There has been no rush of volunteers. The remainder of the committee have temporarily taken on some of the secretary’s roles, but are hopeful someone will come forward… please!

**Minutes of previous meeting**

14/08/2016 The minutes were accepted by the meeting.

**Matters arising** from previous meeting

Toilet – The installation manager from WooWoo had visited the site and accepted responsibility for the toilet and stated that the toilet ‘hopper’ would need to be repaired or replaced. As WooWoo had not got back to us, DS agreed to make contact with them this week.

The water course (dyke) and large Willow tree. JS & DS had visited the Council offices and met with Diane Farley (Council contact). The Council responsible person for cleaning and maintaining the water courses was unfortunately off ill. With no replacement officer during this time (Council cutbacks!), Diane had sent him an email and copied it to JS.

The large Willow – following their visit to the Council, a few days later the site was visited by the manager responsible for trees. He inspected the Willow and agreed with our concern , that the roots were being exposed and, as it was on a steep bank, action was required. Unfortunately, the leader of the only remaining tree gang left in the council was on leave and it would have to await his return for further inspection.

Unfortunately, now our contact at the Council, Diane Farley, has gone on three weeks leave. It does appear that if someone at the Council is absent from work, then no replacement for that period is made. We await someone’s return and will then urge action.

Charitable donations from our Open Day – Following the £100 donation to Aspired Futures and the £60 donation to the RSPCA, letters of thanks have been received from both charities. These were then circulated to the meeting by JS.

Painting of the tea room external rear wall – This was known to be damp and masonry paint had been purchased. With thanks to Peter Eccles and family, it has been given a coat of paint.

Flooded midden – This had caused us problems on Open Day by preventing us using that space. By examining the old field drain map of the site, DS was able to find one of the field drains running close to the midden, after a bit of digging. DS then was able to rod the drain, in each direction, to ensure they were clear. At a cost of £82.85, DS purchased two new drains and connecting pipes and DS & JS created new gulley drains one inside and one outside the midden retaining wall. This does appear to have been successful in keeping the midden clear of water, following recent rain.

A question was raised asking if the drain from the tea room could be connected to these field drains, rather than collecting the tea room waste water in a tub. JS replied that the field drain was for rain or surface water and not for waste water from the tea room which may contain fats and oils, which could build up and block the drains.

Blackpool Produce Show – Those attending the event agreed that it was a good event, despite the horrible weather. The setup of the marquees was good in that it gave us more room than last year at the Stanley Park Visitor Centre.

It was nice that more people from the site entered the event than in previous years.

The donated cakes on sale in the tea room impressed the produce judge who stated that they would have been contenders for prizes had they been entered in the show.

Visitors to the show were few, apart from those taking part. It was thought that this was due to the poor weather and our location. The show closed at 3:30pm.

With £65.50 from entries, £65 from the tea room and expenses just under £100 (prizes, insurance and misc. running costs), the show produced a profit of £17. Which wasn’t a lot for all the work involved!

It was run in cooperation with David’s Slack Allotment, and as agreed with them, it will be hosted at their site next year. They plan to run the show on the same day as their Open Day, where they have a larger area to host both events. As we did use one of their marquees on the day, it is anticipated that they will ask to borrow one of ours for the event.

**Chairperson’s report**

JS, DS, Dave & Margie Wignall attended David’s Slack ‘Apple Press Day’ and Macmillan fundraiser, last Sunday. It was good weather and a well attended social event for the site.

Everyone got involved, from collecting apples, chopping them up, crushing them and them putting them into a hand operated press, all well organised. Everyone came away with a bottle of apple juice.

We did wonder if we should hold a similar event here. David’s Slack has offered the use of their press but, as it is three years old and does have some cracks in it, we are wary of borrowing it.

During the discussion that followed, the following points were raised…

Cost of new press and crusher about £500. A second hand one was on ebay for £70. Pears could also be pressed. The juice could be kept in the refrigerator for 3 days, it could be frozen and could be kept in glass or plastic bottles, could be used as a social event onsite, windfall apples can be used. Possible to get 25% juice (by volume) from the apples, David’s Slack site is larger hence more apple trees, a production line needed to make the juice and would we get the ‘volunteers’ to run the process? Volume of apples needed, Apple juice can be bought from supermarkets for £1, home juicers are available that you put the whole apple in and out comes juice on one side and the pulp on the other side.

After further discussion, it was felt that the meeting were not keen on the idea, due to the expenditure required, work involved, alternatives available and that this item would not be pursued.

**Site Report**

Break-ins earlier this week – JS & DS had been going away at the time it was discovered and were of the understanding that a number of sheds had had the locks cut, entered and minor damage occurred. There was no mention of items taken. Plot 8 reported that a small pair of blue bolt cutters had been taken and that whilst these were capable of cutting very small padlocks, they would be insufficient to cut anything larger.

A recent email from a plot holder stated that a small black waterproof jacket had been found on their plot that contained a small ‘swiss’ type pen knife in the pocket. This was then claimed by one of those attending this meeting.

Plot 29 let it be known to another plot holder, that his plot had been entered and his chickens had been ‘tormented’ and they were still in a shocked and frightened state, only now just coming out from beneath the coop. Beer cans had also been left on his plot. At 5:30, when he came onsite to feed the chickens, he thought that the intruders were still onsite, at the far end. He did not feel comfortable to approach them or investigate further and the meeting agreed that this was a sensible approach. When back home at 6pm, he emailed the LPAA secretary.

A discussion ensued and a couple of ‘points of entry’ were suspected and these would be checked.

There were a number of suggestions to improve security of the site with CCTV. These included dummy cameras (with flashing lights), CCTV signs, notices, a moveable camera and anti-vandal paint and getting a quote for a professional installation of CCTV system.

The committee agreed to look into the options available.

In the meanwhile, Isabel suggested that, any items of value be removed from plot holders sheds and taken home or locked in the tool store or container.

JS reported that the area and allotments had been targeted recently.The Lawson Road site had been broken into 3 times.

John Horn reported that he had spoken to the police and had taken down to the police station a couple of items (spanner, bolt lock with padlock) as evidence. Others at the meeting stated they also had items that may also provide evidence.

He also reminded the meeting that, under our constitution, we should notify the Council. JS stated that having just come back from being away; she would be getting in touch with the Council about the dike and trees and would add this to the list.

Isabel let the meeting know of an incident from a couple of weeks ago when she approached 2 youths walking down the site. When she approached them, they were unable to give the name of ‘their grandfather’ they were supposedly visiting. She escorted them off site but was unaware who had let them on to the site. It was a reminder to all plot holders to be careful who they let onto the site.

JS informed the meeting that a plot inspection had taken place by members of the committee and a plot holder, which included a check of rubbish on plots. As a result, two weed notices were issued and a number of emails sent to tenants regarding the state of their plots. These had now been addressed by the tenants.

Isabel asked the chair if the rule regarding weed notices was still in force, as it was her understanding that one tenant has now received two ‘weed notices’ in a four month period.

JS stated that the rule was still in force and the committee were unaware of such a case.

A tenant raised his feelings that he was not in favour of eviction notices, as people do go through difficult periods in their lives, to compound this with an eviction from site, was not correct. JS did state that any notice issued does ask the recipient to inform the committee if there were any issues then the committee should be informed. Other members of the meeting then confirmed that it was ‘known’ that any tenant with issues preventing them from working their plot were encouraged to inform the committee. This would then be taken into account.

**Secretary’s Report**

No secretary in place to report.

**Treasurer’s Report**

DS distributed his monthly report.

£7714.66 in the bank, £115.82 cash in hand. The water bill has been paid (£281.94).

Expenditure this month includes midden drainage, items for the Produce Show, £30 Dores Signs (signs for Open Day & Produce Show) and £12 for table hire.

Asked why there was no income for Equipment Hire, DS replied that these are entered at the end of the month and it was not the end of the month yet.

John Horn asked if the audited reports for 2015/16 had been put on the notice board as promised. DS stated that the auditors ‘sign off’ had been displayed on the notice board.

After a discussion, JS stated that the confirmation from the auditor (Peter Mason) that the accounts for 2015/16 had been audited is displayed on the notice board and anyone who wishes to see the full accounts for that year, previous years or current year’s accounts is welcomed to inspect the accounts on request to DS.

A comment was made that they thought we were too close to David’s Slack Allotment.

*(sec note:- Peter Mason has a plot on David’s Slack Allotment site)*

DS stated that that would be up to the Treasurer following the AGM in November. The cost to the LPAA, charged by the auditor was £25.

A comment from a member thought that the committee was doing a marvellous job, in an unpaid and voluntary role and could not understand where this grievance was coming from.

**AOB**

Our next event is the Macmillan fundraising event here, on Sunday 2 October 2016, starting at 11am. This was a community event and open to everyone onsite, family and friends.

Cakes, biscuits, plants, jams, chutney, contributions to the raffle would be gratefully received.

A discussion took place with one member appealing to all plot holders to join in these onsite events, including the monthly meetings. “…*There seemed to be a lack of community spirit onsite. With over 50 plots onsite, it was very rare that attendance at these events reached a third of the plot holders – and it always seemed to be the same 10-12 people organising and arranging these events – for the benefit of all plot holders – everyone uses the toilet, makes use of the middens, car parks, tea room, drainage, water supply. But what have they done to contribute or show their support? It is time to get a better community spirit onsite…*”

As the discussion became more heated, JS brought the meeting to order.

Another plot holder spoke to the meeting stating that they had had a difficult year and the support from everyone, especially the committee and the ‘slack’ they had been given, they were truly grateful for. There was a community spirit onsite and the Macmillan fundraising event was a great opportunity and worthy cause that everyone should be contributing.

Bonfire night – Saturday 5 November 2016 – A bonfire and fireworks event will be held with BBQ and plot 38a curry. Vegetable donations for the curry would be welcomed.

Numbers will be needed so please let us know if you will be attending and how many in your party.

It was also hoped to hold a Christmas event later in the year.

The LPAA AGM needed to be held in November and after agreeing a Sunday, it was agreed that the AGM would be held on Sunday 27 November 2016 at 1:30pm.

The AGM nomination forms will be sent out in the next week. These will require signatures and paper copies will only be accepted. These will need to be returned at least two weeks prior to the AGM.

A discussion took place on voting at the AGM. Postal/email voting will be acceptable, but the meeting could not agree on the voting per plot. The LPAA constitution did not make it clear and JS would contact the legal rep at the Council for a definitive answer.

As a general feeling of the meeting – a show of hands was taken on the number of votes per plot. The result of this was…

1 vote per plot – 11

2 votes per plot - 6

**Date of next meeting Sunday 30 October 2016 at 1:30 pm**

JS closed the meeting at 14:25hrs