Attendees:

Jacky Stennett (**JS**) Chair - 6, Dave Stennett (**DS**) Treasurer -7

Isabel (**IH**) Sec. & John Horn – 12, Dave Wignall Min. Sec – 40, Jane & Shaun Keane – 4, Derrick Walls – 36, Michelle Farmer – 42, Derek & Linda Reid – 15, Lesley & Dave Roberts – 2,

**JS** opened the meeting at 1945hrs and welcomed all.

**Apologies**

Stuart, Sarah, Gail, Margaret & Jeff, Mica, Christine, Alison, Christine & Peter.

**Minutes of previous meeting** 26/11/2014 were accepted without amendment by the meeting.

**Matters arising** from previous meeting

Produce Show – a joint event held with David’s Slack Allotments. Still seeking a new venue for this year’s show as it would not be held at Baguley’s. An alternative is being sought and Blackpool Cricket Club and Go Football (Garstang Rd) have been considered and rejected on cost.

Our show is planned for the weekend of 22nd August 2015. The vegetable judge has been booked and confirmed for that weekend. The Federation are holding their show at the Visitor Centre in Stanley Park. DS will contact Davids Slack Allotments to discuss alternative venues – the Visitor Centre, Bispham Community Centre and IH was attempting to contact the FCCC on Raikes Rd.

The perimeter fence had finally been completed and trees removed. Unfortunately the site’s neighbour encroached onto the allotment site land (plots 13 & 14) and has damaged the fence. This has been reported to Blackpool Council along with photographic evidence. The current advice from the Council is not to enter into discussion with the occupants but leave it to the Council’s legal department.

The bid for the relaying of the Allotment road had failed. The Association had bought some ‘road burnings’ and with huge thanks to John, Albert and Dave S, these had been spread to fill in the holes and dips on the road. The attendees agreed that the road looks a lot better and gave their thanks. John H commented that the pathway to the bees could do with a further layer.

**Chairperson’s report**

Not a great deal to report this month. On 26th January I attended a meeting of The Friends of Kingscote Park.

The Kings Seed order had been placed. The order totalled £278.75. The Association receives £25.80 towards Association funds for this order. Confirmation has been received from Kings that the order is being processed.

**Site Report**

There have been a few changes of plots on site,

Claire and Abbey (9b) have decided to give up their plot.

Anthony (9a) had asked to upgrade to a larger plot. As 9b has become free, Anthony has now taken on plots 9a and 9b.

John Bishop (21b) had swapped plots with Toni Dagnall (3). Toni & Gayna have now left the site.

Debra Green (14) wished to downsize and has now moved to plot 21b.

Ruth & Michelle (22) who wished to have a larger plot are moving to plot 14.

The result is plot 22 has become free and will be offered to the next person on the waiting list at the start of the new allotment season and once all current plot holders have settled their accounts.

A question was asked if it was within the rules for such changes. JS explained that under the Associations constitution and rules, provided that a plot holder had maintained their plot and had not received a weed or cultivation notice during the previous 12 months, the committee could agree to a plot holder upgrading to a larger plot or downsizing to a smaller plot.

DWraised the issue with the waiting list. He reported that the list now contained 56 names and asked the meeting if the waiting list should be closed to new applicants. After a discussion, it was agreed that the waiting list should be closed immediately. It should then be re-opened when the list reaches 30.

**Treasurers Report**

DS distributed his account summary report.

To date, there have been 28 invoices paid for this year’s rents. Dave reminded all that the invoices had been emailed (to save postage costs) and should be settled by 2nd February.

There is £337 cash and £6767 in the bank. Although this looks good, there were still bills to be paid – e.g. water and £870 in key deposits. IH asked how this compared to previous years. DS said it was difficult to make comparisons at this moment as the rents were being taken in sooner this year, but it was looking comparable to other years. DS stated that some will have noticed they had received a rebate against their water rate and this was only given to those who paid their rent in 2012. This was a share of the rebate we received from the Federation for the overpayment made in in that year.

JH asked about a breakdown of the expenses in the misc. category. DS was unable to give a clear answer with the information he had available at this meeting, but would supply John a full breakdown, as he had provided to Mica after the previous meeting.

**A/P 01/01/15 - DS**

JS stated that it was OK to have money in the bank but that was not the idea and we should be looking at what should be spent to improve the site. An area of interest was the machinery. The machinery was ready for servicing. The previous cost was over £600. It was also to ensure that the machinery was safe and fit for use. DS stated that last year machinery rent brought in £289 & cost of petrol was £157. After a discussion, JS asked DS & Derrick to assess the type and number of machines we have available and make suggestions whether any machines should be retired and if any new considered for purchase

**A/P 02/01/15 - DS**

**Secretaries report.**

IH let the meeting know that the Open Day is not that far away and there was a great deal of preparation required. She asked the meeting if the Mayor of Blackpool was to be invited. The consensus of the meeting was that although the new Mayor in waiting was not a ‘fan’ of allotments, he should be invited. IH would send an invite.

IH had provisionally booked the Blackpool Music Academy to play at our Open Day. She and John had visited this week to confirm their continued availability. They would be able to have their own stall, but IH was asking the meeting what, if any, donation we should make to them. The RSPCA would again be invited. After a discussion and comparison to previous year’s charity donations, it was confirmed that the donation would again be a percentage of the takings and shared between the charities invited.

**AOB**

JS let the meeting know that Toni Dagnall was a signatory for the bank account. A new signee was required. Elizabeth Westhead (plot 45) had volunteered to be the new signee. The meeting confirmed this appointment.

JS informed the meeting that Toni was also a named Trustee of the Allotment Association Self-Management Agreement that we signed with the Council. Hence a new Trustee was needed. There was no personal liability in holding this role and it was proposed that the replacement should come from the membership rather than from those on the committee.

**A/P 03/01/15 – IH** – Invitation to all allotment holders be sent to become a Trustee of the Allotment Association.

JShad been approached by a plot holderwith regard to having ‘named co-workers’ who have gate keys. The idea is there is someone to look after the plot when away on holiday or ill. Having researched this item, JS could only find one Council managed site that allowed this. It did come with an overhead of lots of forms and rules..

A question was asked of JS if the current insurance covered the ‘named co-workers’. The insurance policy did cover ‘friends and family members’ working on an Association members plot. After a discussion it was agreed that there was no need for this type of category and if a member had asked someone to maintain their plot whilst away, a member of the committee should be informed to ensure those on-site were ‘known’.

**Bee project** Jane informed the meeting that it was hoped soon to announce progress on this project.

JS – Neil Cartmel is looking into a solar powered installation for the Allotment to provide lighting and charging of small appliances. The cost of this will determine if a grant/funding would need to be sought or covered from Association funds.

DW – raised the issue of the coffee grounds that McDonald’s had ‘donated’ to the Association. McDonalds had given the coffee grounds on the proviso that a donation be made to their charity. After a discussion, it was decided by the meeting that, when sufficient grounds had been collected, each plot be given two ‘jars’ and the Association make a donation of £30 to the McDonalds charity. If further ‘jars’ were requested by a member, then an expected donation of 25p per ‘jar’ was made by the plot holder. It was also suggested that a list of the uses of the coffee grounds be provided to the plot holders.

John and Isabel were thanked for arranging collection of the grounds and transporting them to the site.

It was also suggested that McDonalds be approached for PR/publicity and a contribution towards our Open Day.

JS then closed the meeting thanking all for attending.

Next meeting Wednesday 25th February 2015 at St Kentigerns 19:45hrs

The meeting closed at 2055hrs.