**Layton Permanent Allotments Association**

**Minutes of Allotment Meeting held at St.Kentigern’s Social Club**

**Wednesday, 30th January 2013 at 7.45pm**

**Attendees –** Jacky Stennett (Chairwoman). Dave Stennett (Treasurer). Toni Dagnall(Site Representative).David Wignall(Committee Member). Gayna Dagnall, Sheila Dryden and Derrick Walls.

**Apologies –**Isabel Horn, John Horn, Jane Keane and Gail Blackburn.

The meeting was opened at 7.50pm by Jacky, who gave apologies as listed. The minutes of the last meeting on 28th November 2012 were agreed.

**Matters Arising :**

**The water bills.** It was expected that we would be responsible for these from the 2nd December 2012. However, the Blackpool Federation of Allotment Associations reversed their decision, without informing us, and notified United Utilities that they would be responsible for our water bills until 31st March 2013. No doubt putting off the time when they should refund monies to us for the overpayment of last year’s water bill. Neil Mackey (Principal Legal Officer for Blackpool Council) who we now deal with said he understood that Layton had been informed and had raised no objection. We had not!

**Water/Drainage Project.** Bernie has contacted the contractor, and the tap adaptors, to take Hozelock connections, have been ordered from the firm that supplied the taps. They will be arriving shortly.

Council workmen did come to flush the culvert earlier this month. Unfortunately the ground was very wet and there was concern that the movement of the large tanker could cause it to become stuck or possibly overturn, so the job couldn’t be done. They have promised to return when the ground has dried.

**Main Car Park.** The proposed scrapping of the car park did not go ahead. The contractor would have done this for free but we cannot, at this time, afford the cost of the gravel to resurface it.

**Chairs Report:**

A committee meeting was held at her house on the 26th January, the details given below were discussed.

Justine Hall, the Councils Allotment Officer, had called her earlier that week. Layton’s Council Allotment Records had been returned by the Fed. and she wanted to hand them over .Justine came straight round to her house to deliver them. David Stennett and David Wignall were also present. The records are not imposing and comprise one green arch-lever file. Justine had been through the file and listed missing and out of date records. Jacky has since been through the file and found additional discrepancies with our own records, which are more up to date.

The committee agreed that now was the time to get the correct names on the plots, and a discussion followed to decide the criteria, keeping in mind the Council’s previous guidelines. It was agreed that two names be allowed for each plot, but only one address .If the addressee gives up the address of the other tenant will be added. The named tenant(s) are those when the plot is taken on. It will not possible just to add a further name at a later date. There can be no inherited plots. If a person wishes to put their name on a plot the only way is to go on the waiting list and the plot be adjusted when they reach the top of the list. There are many variables and a common-sense approach is needed. Also, it is appreciated, that there may be extenuating circumstances so a final decision can be made at the discretion of the full committee.

Our insurance was due for renewal earlier this month. Difficulties were experienced with the first policy chosen, but we now are insured with’ Shield total insurance’ which is the company recommended by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners(NSALG). Last year we only had Pubic Liability insurance, and this caused problems about who we could allow on site. This year we have included Member to Member and Employers’ Liability. This means cover has been extended to include Members’ immediate families,parents,children and friends when they are engaged in gardening on the members plot. Volunteers are also covered when doing jobs on site. Machinery tools are covered for £10000, association building for £2000 and £1000 for stock. We also have cover for one Open Day. All this for a cost of £262.80, which means insurance on the invoices this year will be £4.38.This insurance is dependent on plot holders being members of the NSALG, which they are, as £2 from the £5 association membership is paid to them.

A question was asked ‘are we covered for bonfires’. Blackpool has a **no burn** policy. Tenants are NOT permitted to light fires at any time with the exception of the burning of pernicious weeds and diseased crops. The insurance policy excludes bonfires, unless they have been informed. Conditions are given but it would be possible to have a bonfire on Bonfire Night.

When Justine Hall visited questions were asked about weed and cultivation notices .She was most helpful and has sent us the Council templates for all letters .Guidelines for rental dates were discussed with her (the Fed. changed it to the 1st April, from the traditional 2nd February).Justine advised us to look at the Council Allotment Strategy in which tenants surveyed had stated that their preferred date was 2nd February. At the committee meeting a unanimous vote was taken to return to the 2nd February. **However,** only today**,** the Principal Legal Officer for Blackpool has contacted our Treasurer (Dave) and advised that new tenancy agreements will run from April to April. Discussion followed about the way forward. It was agreed that a rental date of 2nd February was better for plot management. It was felt that the wording of the termination letter that is going out to all tenants in mid- February (no need to worry this is all part of the ‘going self-managed’ process) could give us the answer. Jacky said she would contact Justine asap.

The £5 association membership is due in February. This year it will be included on the invoice, so bills will look higher because all monies are being collected together.

**Treasurers Report:**

The water charge is the biggest concern. Dave only had the 2011 figure of £1383 and his own reading of £317 for last year. Enquiries had been made but no other figures are available at this time. To get an average he took the 2011 figure as the norm for 4 years, added last years and divided. This gives a charge of 9.5p per square metre. All figures were discussed by the committee and the figure was agreed. Last year the water charge was 5.4p per square metre, **but this was only a half payment, it should have been 10.8p per square metre,** Blackpool Council had agreed to pay the other half. Dave added that if we get a refund from the Fed., for the over-payment last year, we could deduct this from next year’s water charge, and it could be an on-going thing.

The question was asked how do we police water use. It was said that we must all police it, all tenants know that sprinklers, and soaker hoses from a tap, are not allowed. If you know a plot is unattended and a hose-pipe is running from a tap you can turn the tap off and disconnect the hose.

Our Bank current account stands at £3,091.88 and there is £332.35 cash in hand. However, we have yet to pay for the tree felling which will be £1400 and key deposits stand at £890.

**SECRETARY’S REPORT:**

None – on holiday

**SITE REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT:**

Happy New Year!

Plots 43 and 49 are free as the tenants have given up.43 moved to David Slack and Viv Gaffney from 49 gave up as her husband died.

Liz from 17 is now on 45.We have 4 new tenants, Claire O’Hara and Abby Walker on 9b, Allan Brown on 21a,John Bishop on 21b and Matt Moore on 22. All are either related, or friends, of present tenants.

17 is still lying empty for a little while.

Toni has been informed that 2 more tenants are leaving.

The machinery has been sent away to be checked over and serviced. In future, anyone hiring the machinery will have to sign the sheet declaring that they have been instructed in the use of the machine and that they understood the instructions.

The backs of the plots at the bottom of the site,42 to 49, have now been roped off. There can be no encroachment beyond that point!

As you can see the 3 Poplars at the bottom have been taken down thanks to Isabel acquiring the funding and making the arrangements. We will be trying for more funding ASAP to replace the fencing in this area.

There are 21 people on the waiting list.

**A.O.B**

Also discussed at the committee meeting was the need to be more visible. David Wignall has been putting together a new web-site for us **[www.laytonallotment.org.uk](http://www.laytonallotment.org.uk)** which is excellent. Thank You David.The site is in its infancy but we hope to ‘grow it’ with further links. If you have any photos we can put on the web-site or any ideas please let us know, or speak to David who is on 40b.

Self-management will be here before we know it, **1st April 2014.**When Justine visited she informed us that she would no longer be in post after February this year. There will be no future Allotment Officer. Anyone enquiring about Allotments will be referred to the Council’s web-site. Justine is arranging for our phone number to be added to the Council web-site. It has been decided that a site mobile phone is the best way to go .It will be held by the site rep. who can pass it to someone else if they are on holiday.

Jacky at that point in the meeting offered her old mobile phone. It still had £11 credit on it. Toni described it as ‘sweet’ and was grateful it wasn’t pink. The good news is the SIM could be put in another phone. So the future site number will be 07840856102.

We need a sign at the front of the front of the site with our name, established 1946, contact phone number and new web address. The sign writer in Layton had done the tea-room sign for £50 so the meeting agreed that he should be approached.

**Baguley’s Discount Card**. Dave will approach them for the 10% discount they normally give. David W suggested that we could put a link to them on our web-site. **Since the meeting this has already been arranged.**

**Shop.** Horticultural Supplies have usually been purchased on an ad hoc basis relying on tenants to pick up supplies .An account has been opened with ALTY’S at Hesketh Bank .They have a good range of supplies at reasonable prices and orders over £150 include delivery to the site. You can have any mix of supplies so tenants wanting items for home eg. lawn feed could order through us if they pay the money up front. The catalogue will be displayed in the tea room, please do not remove it as it is our only copy at the moment.

The meeting ended.

**NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 7.45PM, AT ST KENTIGERN’S**