

**Hackney Borough-Wide  
Leaseholder & Freeholder  
FORUM**



## Minutes of AGM

7.00pm Tuesday 6 November 07

at

Regan Way Community Centre, Regan Way, N1 6PH

### Committee members present

Duriye Beidas (DU) Secretary

Luke Egemba (LE)

Fred Filce (FF)

Peter Kinsey (PK) Chair

Brian Marsh (BM) Vice-Chair

James Merchant (JM)

Pat Ronayne (PR) Head of Leasehold & Right to Buy Services

### 1. Apologies

Denise Bingham (DE) Treasurer

Jarriet Oloye (JO)

### 2. Minutes of last AGM

PK gave a summary of the minutes of last year's AGM, held on 8 November 07 at Hackney Town Hall Assembly Rooms:

During that meeting there had been much constructive criticism from leaseholders and freeholders about the erratic nature of the Forum's communication. It was agreed by all present that better methods of communicating with members and potential members should be the top priority for the work of the Forum in the next year.

The autonomy of the Forum was also put under scrutiny. At what stage should the support of Hackney Homes cease and the Forum become self-supporting ?

The Chair's report was delivered by BM on behalf of FF, who was unwell.

The Treasurer's report was given by DE.

These reports were followed by the election of the new committee, overseen by PR, in his capacity as returning officer.

The minutes of this meeting were agreed as correct.

### 3. Matters arising

The matter of the Forum's independence came up again. PK explained that once the Forum started to generate income it should make it possible to become independent of Hackney Homes. Currently we rely upon it for many of our service, including mail-outs and advertising.

#### **4. Chair's Report**

PK gave a summary of the work of the Forum during the last year, saying we had made steady progress, especially in matters of communication.

For instance, we produced regular newsletters, held open meetings and made Forum minutes available at Hackney Central Library.

In January 08 there will be a newsletter listing the dates of open meetings for the forthcoming year.

There have been numerous meetings with officers of Hackney Homes to promote the rights of leaseholders and freeholders, as well as involvement in many Forums (TRAs, Neighbourhood Panels etc).

Officers from the Forum have attended Tender evaluations meetings, Neighbourhood Investment boards, Audit Commission focus groups, Right to Buy focus groups and taken part in planning for the Leaseholder & Freeholder Conference on 26 January 08.

The Chair has met the new Acting Chief Executive of Hackney Homes, Susmita Noonan, to discuss the Neighbourhood Management fee. She had agreed to recommend to Hackney Homes that this be capped for a further 2 years.

The Forum's casework group has helped leaseholders to save £559,360.00 on their service bills and for other reasons connected with purchasing their properties.

#### **5. Casework Group's Report**

FF gave examples of some of the cases resolved which contributed to the savings made.

One of the cases involved checking job tickets for £31,095.00, which had been charged to the wrong estate. When the tickets were checked and presented to Leasehold & Right to Buy Services, it was agreed that the charges were to be reimbursed, as they had in fact been incurred by another estate.

Other cases highlighted involved the reimbursement of major works fees because leaseholders were not informed that major works were to be done on the properties they were purchasing.

#### **6. Treasurer's Report**

PK read the Treasurer's report on her behalf, as she was unable to attend.

The balance of the Forum's account was £442.00. At the start of the year the account held £510.00 and expenditure was only £68.00 (postage and refreshments for open meetings). It is hoped that £900.00 from the Shoreditch Leaseholder & Freeholder Association, which was recently wound up, would soon be transferred to the Forum.

If it is agreed to charge for membership of the Forum, this will also considerably boost Forum funds.

#### **7. Membership Subscription**

First, PK explained that the Forum had carried out a survey over the last six months, to find out the views of its members on whether membership should remain free or be by subscription.

Out of 490 responses received, 316 stated that there should be a charge of £1 per month and 54 of £1 per year. The rest of the responses advocated smaller amounts.

Then, there was a general debate. Should there be a charge and if so, how much should it be?

Some leaseholders felt that such a small charge would not be enough to provide solicitors and legal advice and casework or even enough money for postage and mail-out of newsletters.

PK pointed out that the Committee favoured a small charge to cover administrative costs only.

Finally, it was proposed that membership of the Forum should be by subscription. This should be £12.00 a year per member (or members in one household), to be paid in one sum.

This was agreed by a majority of those present.

## **8. Election of Committee**

Pat Ronayne, in his capacity as returning officer, supervised the election.

The following committee members were elected:

Duriye Beidas, Denise Bingham, Susan Fajana-Thomas, Peter Jajua, Brian Marsh, James Merchant, Habib Musisi, Elizabeth Odufeij, Florence Ogunjiamusan, Jariet Oloye, Sarah Salem, Juliet Turner, and Andrew Wilson.

In accordance with the Forum's constitution, the Forum's officers would be elected by this committee, at a later meeting, set for December 10<sup>th</sup>.

## **9. Any other business**

A short Q & A session followed the election.

Pat Ronayne, in his capacity as Head of Leasehold & Right to Buy Services, also answered questions on the Major Works Programme and Service Charges.

**Meeting ended at 9.30pm**

**Next open meeting**

**Date, time and venue to be announced in next newsletter**

**Next committee meeting**

**7.00pm Monday 10 December 08**

**at**

**2, Lovell House, Shrubland Road, E8 NJ**