

**2010 ANNUAL MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING
FEDERATION OF PRIVATE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS LTD
Held on Wednesday 27 October 2010 in the Grill Room, Victory Services Club, 63-
79 Seymour Street, London W2 2HF**

Present: FPRA Committee Members: Robert Smytherman (Chairman), Richard Williams (Deputy Chairman), Michael Derome (Hon Treasurer), Robert Levene, Muriel Guest-Smith, Philippa Turner and Stephen Guy

In Attendance: Nick Roberts (Legal Adviser), Nick Shulman (Consultant).
Anthony Essien (Chief Executive of LEASE), Frances Kneller (Digital UK), Nigel Wilkins (CARL)

Members representing over 30 associations were also present.

1. Confirmation of a quorum. The Chairman confirmed this was so.

2. Apologies for absence were received from MPs, individuals, Member Associations, Government Ministers, Honorary Consultants and David Hewitt (ARMA) a total of 25 details of which were recorded.

3. Chairman's opening remarks. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. and said he was particularly pleased to see Tony Essien from LEASE and Frances Kneller from Digital UK.. He gave a detailed report that would be reproduced in the next Newsletter.

4. Approval of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 22 September 2009. Approval was proposed by Alan Goodrich (Langwood RA) and Sheila Eustace (13-45 Engadine Court) and unanimously agreed.

5. Honorary Treasurer's Report. Mike Derome reviewed the income and expense, the overall result was excellent with an increase in reserves from £24,008 to £37,882.

FPRA's had a healthy bank balance so the financial situation was satisfactory.

He was asked about FPRA's policy on reserves and replied that as a result of difficult times in earlier years FPRA had a policy of always maintaining a healthy bank balance.

Another member queried the expense of hiring rooms in the Victory Club as her association had found it too expensive. She was advised that cost at £80 + VAT for a Committee room and £250 + VAT for the AGM the Club was a good deal less expensive than similarly situated venues and there was general acceptance of this.

6. To receive and adopt the Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31 march 2010. Proposed by Roger Southcott (Malford Court) and seconded by Veronica Brody (Eastway Management). and unanimously agreed.

7. To reappoint auditors for the current year. A member had proposed that FPRA no longer have its accounts fully Audited but rely on an Accountants' report. Since 2006 company law permitted this change, for all companies with a low turnover.

However, before FPRA could change its auditing arrangements, it would have to change its Memorandum and Articles and for this a Special Resolution was required. FPRA could save around £1000 in accountancy costs.

Members were being asked whether they were in favour, if so FPRA would convene a special meeting with a view to making the changes in the current financial year. Nick Roberts explained the legal implications and procedures.

RL confirmed that the company officers' insurance cover would not be affected by the change.

A general discussion took place with points being made in favour as well as against (outside perception being the main concern).

On a show of hands 32 were in agreement with 4 against. The Committee would now proceed to carry out a review of the Memorandum and Articles of Association and follow the correct procedures but would take into account in drafting these, the discussion that had taken place.

It was decided to retain the existing accountants for the current financial year and this was proposed by David Smalley (Rocquaine Court RA) and seconded by Colin Cohen (278 Hale Lane Management Ltd).

8. To elect and reappoint officers to serve on the Executive Committee.

Mr Robert Smytherman, Mrs Philippa Turner and Robert Levene were standing for re-election. This was proposed by David Smalley (Rocquaine Court RA) and seconded by Anthony Swing (Clarence Gate Gardens).

9. To transact any other ordinary business of which due notice has been given. None had been received.

10. Any Other Business.

1. Robert Levene introduced himself and reminded members that he was responsible for RL Business Consultancy which was the paid for business that ran FPRA's admin as shown in the accounts.

He gave an outline of the services provided including the receipt of between 20 and 30 phone calls, emails and letters every single day.

He asked that members when emailing always included the name of their association in the subject line.

He recorded his thanks to Claire, Diane and Jacqui who do a job share as well as Karen who looked after our systems on an ad-hoc basis, he also particularly mentioned Stephen Guy's help on the website and Amanda Gotham and Sarah Phillips for the newsletter.

He also thanked Philippa Turner for her help with the legal digest as well as all the committee and consultants for contributions to the newsletter and helping to answer 310 questions from members an increase from 250 the previous year. The most common questions were legal followed by Service Charge/Collection, Insurance, Health and Safety, Lease Variation and Section 20.

He appealed to existing members to recommend new members as this was a very effective of increasing the membership which was steady and of course would have been much better if we had not had some 80 members fail to renew. In response to a question he advised that in addition to the main invitation to renew three further written reminders had been sent and volunteers had then telephoned as many of those that could be contacted.

In response to a further question the main reasons given for non renewal were, no longer needing help, change of officers, saving money etc. None had expressed any dissatisfaction with the services offered by FPRA.

In response to a further question most new members came via the website, recommendation or referral from other organisations such as LEASE.

He reminded members that our next AGM would be our 40th and was planned for the 9 November 2011.

2. Colin Cohen said FPRA produced a fantastic newsletter and the Editor was to be congratulated. He was interested in its lobbying activities, particularly with regard to S20 procedures. These were explained and full details of the all the activity was on the website. He said it might help if lessees were to spell out to their MPs what was required. FPRA will consider including a draft letter in a Newsletter for members to send to their MP. The Chairman said that MPs would be interested in specific cases and the Shadow Minister for Housing had indicated a willingness to meet with him.
3. Nick Shulman asked members for their thoughts on asking members to pay for legal advice. The feeling was that the legal advice was a major selling point in attracting and keeping members but those that only joined for assistance on a specific problem and then left should face a financial penalty should they then rejoin. The meeting was told that this was already the case.
4. The Committee was asked how many members owned their freehold, how many had external landlords and/or right to manage and how was this reflected in the makeup of the Board. RL said that about half the member associations still had outside landlords and about half had bought the freehold and about half the members self managed. The majority of the Committee lived in blocks that had over time successfully purchase their freeholds.
5. It was suggested that FPRA tailor its lobbying towards the Government's particular interest in the Big Society in pressing for greater powers to be given to lessees rather than in, say, regulating managing agents,
6. David Smalley asked if FPRA had considered applying for charitable status and was told that FPRA, being a representative organisation, did not qualify.
7. Alan Goodrich raised the problem of solar panels on roofs. Nick Roberts said this was similar to the issues on mobile phone masts on roofs in determining who was likely to profit/benefit and whether it was a disposal by granting a lease for the roof rather than a licensed for use.. It was further complicated by the increasing popularity of independent heating and hot water systems within blocks. Bob Smytherman also said this whole issue was being considered as part of our participation in the Energy Saving Alliance.
8. Linda Hantrais (NPPRA) said that her block had considerable problems with their managing agents for which they had received extensive advice from Nick Roberts. Some non members of the RA were mounting their own case before the LVT and she wondered if a decision made by the LVT on one case would apply to all lessees in the same block. Nick Roberts said that in such cases the LVT should write to all lessees telling them they could accept the decision or opt out. If some lessees had raised other, issues then the LVT would deal with them separately.

The formal business ended at 7.35pm.

Following the end of formal business there was an interesting presentation from Nigel Wilkins, Chairman of the Campaign for the Abolition of Residential Leasehold(CARL).