

## **Chairman's Annual report to members 2010**

Good evening and welcome to another AGM of the Federation in our new venue which I hope you like and find more convenient, in particular a very special welcome to our guests who have taken the time to be with us this evening.

At the last AGM we were preparing for a General Election and since then we have lobbied the Former Labour leasehold minister Ian Austin regarding the implementation of the new accounting rules, The new Tory Minister Grant Shapps on regulation and section 20 and the new Lib Dem Home Office Minister Lynne Featherstone regarding proposals for wheel clamping on private land.

To raise our profile ahead of the General Election we produced an FPRA manifesto which we sent to all the main political parties sadly the one response we did receive failed to understand the issues we face as long –leaseholders and therefore we have plenty to do over the next year lobbying the new coalition especially with the implementation of the Equalities Act 2010 that we expect to be implemented in April.

We have continued to issue a number of press releases to property journalists to widen the appeal of the Federation and again we have had a number of media appearances including last November I appeared on the BBC Rip Off Britain and most recently last month live on BBC Radio Kent breakfast show.

We have continued to influence the new Government representing the Federation at Digital UK to inform them of issues we face ahead of Switchover.

I have also represented the Federation on the End Fuel Poverty coalition lobby group who are campaigning for changes to the law to prevent people from falling in to fuel poverty and I have attended various meetings at Consumer Focus and working with John Mills from ARMA we continue to raise our concerns with Government.

Sadly the new Housing Minister has ignored the findings from the "Task & Finish" group looking in to providing a regulation scheme for property managers. We will need to continue to lobby Ministers to improve the leasehold system that is still in need of reform.

I was invited to appear on a panel of experts at this years Lease annual conference which helped to raise our profile within the sector.

Nic Shulman once again has invited me to be one of the judges for the News on the Block awards which will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> December and I would encourage you to get your nominations in for your own association, porter of the year or self managed block of the year or one of the many other categories.

I would like to thank Nic for agreeing to provide a web-site fee of charge to our existing members and as an incentive to attract new ones. In addition we have partnered with Cuboid Media who will be running two events next year in Manchester and London aimed at those of us who are involved in managing blocks

of flats and I am please to announce we have negotiated free entry to one of these events for FPRA member associations. Please see the newsletter for details of how to register. I have arranged for another week to get yourself registered.

I would also like to thank all of the committee members and our consultants for their hard work and commitment to the Federation during the past twelve months answering a wide selection of your queries. Despite having many new members one of our biggest challenges remains the number of members that decide not to renew their membership for one reason or another and I hope these latest benefits to members will encourage many more members to renew next year. In addition I would like to thank our newsletter editor Amanda Gotham for continuing to produce an excellent and topical publication and Stephen Guy for keeping the web-site updated and topical.

Next year we will be celebrating our 40th birthday and we have invited the Secretary Of State RT Hon Eric Pickles MP to address members and we will let you know if he accepts our invitation.

Thank you

Bob Smytherman

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