

**MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
FEDERATION OF PRIVATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
Held on 18 November 2009 at the Committee Room, Victory Services Club,
63-79 Seymour Street, London W2 2HF**

Present : FPRA Executive Committee Members: Robert Smytherman (Chairman), Robert Levene(CEO), Mike Derome (Treasurer), Stephen Guy & Muriel Guest -Smith.

In Attendance: Nick Roberts (Legal Adviser) & Nic Shulman (Hon Consultant).

1. Apologies for absence: Martin Coleraine, Ann Ellson, Yashmin Mistry, Martin Redman, Leigh Shapiro, Philippa Turner and Richard Williams.

2. Approval of minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 23 June 2009.

These were approved and signed

Matters arising:

- a. **Consultation on Transparency:** Stephen Guy attended the RICS meeting which he found to be largely a talking shop. A report is to be produced but this was unlikely before the election. A loose form of regulation was likely to be proposed and RL suggested that FPRA might offer to act as regulator.
- b. **Rugg Review.** There had been no feedback.
- c. **Transfer fees in 3. Retirement Development.** Provided these went into the services charges for the benefit of residents, FPRA could see no real objection to their imposition but most responses showed that the fees actually ended up with the Ground Landlord. NS will prepare a press release on this issue. FPRA had been mentioned in a *Which* report which had resulted in a number of enquiries, mainly from individuals, so their membership numbers had not increased.

3. CARLEX: It seemed to be composed of a random group of people involved in retirement housing and had been unaware of FPRA's existence. It was agreed that BS meet with them to explore mutual areas of interest. Peverel despite being the largest firm of Managing Agents had only been taken to the LVT on 5 occasions. They had won four and had costs awarded in their favour. This was probably due to their effective internal dispute system.

4. Free Website: *News on the Block* is prepared to offer a free system to FPRA members which would enable them to set up an individual website for their own block. It would be password protected and include a discussion board and email. There would be no advertising on the system offered to FPRA members. The basic would be free but there would be a charge for any member block wishing to upgrade or personalize theirs at around £250 a time which is to be split 50/50. It was agreed

that this would be a most useful addition to services offered by FPRA and the launch date would be announced in the next Newsletter.

5. Right to Manage Federation: This was owned by Dudley Jones and Peter Haler had provided information on the organization. Jones mother lived in a Peverel managed retirement flat and formed a RTM company for his mother's block. He went into business to replace Peverels and was paid commission by a managing agent called Ben Young of RLHA – (Retirement Lessees Housing Association) with whom he has since fallen out. RL felt FPRA should be extremely cautious about getting involved with them.

6. RMC/RTM Membership: It is evident from the frequency of enquiries from RMC's and RTM's that they are unsure as to whether they qualify for membership. RL will draft something for consideration of the EC. eg. new leaflets , headed paper etc.

7. Campaign issues update:

a. Improve section 20 – it was agreed to seek an increase in the S20 £250 limit. BS

b. Energy efficiency and green agenda (FPRA has joined Fuel Poverty Action Group) – there had been no recent action.

c. Disability issues - current status of disability bill to be checked.

d. Disclosure of insurance commissions – RL will write another letter to the FSA regarding disclosure of insurance commissions.

e. Safety of lessees' money/regulation of managing agents – BS is a member of the group discussing the safety of lessees money and regulation of the managing agents and will report back on the current position.

f. Making Commonhold work - it was agreed that Commonhold was a dead duck.

g. Improving legislation – it was agreed to leave improving legislation for the moment.

h. Improving operation of LVTs – two members had complained that the current set up was legalistic and increasingly difficult for non-lawyer appearing before the LVT. A more user-friendly system was required as well as consistency in rulings between different LVT's. RL said he would check the qualifications required to site as a lay member on LVTs in case any FPRA member wished to apply. Nic Shulman would represent us at next user group meeting.

8. Membership: This now stands at 552. On average a new member is joining each week. The current bank balance is £42,284 and little in the way of receipts is expected for the rest of the financial year.

9. Changing the Bank Account: The changes would result in FPRA earning interest on a Lloyds TSB deposit account. A post Office account was also opening for paying in cheques and drawing petting cash. The forms were completed.

10. External Publicity: This was noted.

11. Location and dates for future meetings:

Dates for the 2010 meetings – all being held on a Wednesday

24 February 2010

12 May 2010

15 September 2010

15 December 2010

AGM subject to room booking 19/20 or 26/27 October 2010 and should take account of ARMA conference while a speaking had to be found. BS/SG

12. Membership Fees: It was agreed that annual membership be increased by £5 and the joining fee be increased to £50.

13. Chief Executive: RL resigned as CEO but would continue to run the administration which was now firmly established. Agreeing the contract for this was deferred to the next meeting and it was agreed that SG would take a lead on FPRA issues until the February meeting. A member of the office staff would be asked to attend future meetings.

14. Regulation of Managing Agents: In principle FPRA was in favour but did not wish to see additional administration burdens imposed on self-managed blocks. If such blocks were included FPRA would press for inclusion in the regulatory body. NS will draft a note. Andrew McKeer thought self-managed blocks should be held to the same standard as those with professional agents. (Email read out).

15. Any Other Business:

- a. AGM minutes – these were accepted and would be printed.
- b. ARMA – they had prepared a leaflet on subletting in leasehold property and FPRA had suggested that it be a joint publication with FPRA but had had no response.
- c. It was agreed to use up existing stocks of leaflets and when reprinting to include reference to RMC's etc.
- d. AGM speaker to be arranged.

Date for next meeting 24 February 2010
