

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND MEMBERS FORUM
OF THE LONDON REGION**

22nd MAY 2008 (12.30pm)

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER – CAMDEN TOWN HALL

PRESENT: **Jenny Douse (in the Chair)**
 Andrew Banfield
 Tony Bride
 Peter Brown (Trustee)
 Peter Carey
 Dave Crookenden (Joint Regions Board Representative)
 Gerry McCarthy (Treasurer)
 Nigel Watson
 Peter Kemp (Secretary)

In addition, other members of the London Region as identified on the Attendance List and those that neglected to sign in totalling 30 Members in all

AGENDA ITEMS

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

In the absence of the President of the London Region who attending another meeting and therefore unable to be with us today, Jenny Douse, Chair of the London Region Management Board (LRMB) conducted the meeting.

Apologies have been received from, Steve Miller, Carlene Thomas, Robert Belton, Timothy Bage, Mark Duval,

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE LONDON REGION INTERIM MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 24th MAY 2007

Notice of the AGM was circulated to all the London Membership via email. The email indicated that the Agenda for the AGM, copies of the Minutes of last years meeting, Nomination Forms for election to the London Region Management Board and all other relevant documents were available via the London Region web pages on the main CIEH website.

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Peter Kemp briefly updated the meeting on the result of the London Region Business Plan - 2008 evaluation and the savings that had had to be made from the original London Region funding bid to meet the reduced overall spending limits set by the CIEH. He explained that this was more fully covered in the following item on the Agenda, the Chair's Report. He also spoke of the implication this might have for the London Region in 2009.

Jenny Douse, Chair of the LRMB spoke on how the London Region Study Groups were funded and how the larger CPD events were organised and paid for. She stressed the importance of the Study Group meetings as many CIEH organised courses were now becoming too expensive for members. At times the activities of the Study Groups followed peaks and troughs but it was important that the Management Board received feedback from them and some idea of the type of activities they wished to arrange so that the necessary funding bids could be put together.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

Copies of the Chair's Report were circulated at the meeting and will be available as an attachment to these minutes via the London Region web pages on the main CIEH website.

The Chair addressed the meeting and reported on the activities the LRMB and the Study Groups had undertaken during the past year. The main points covered in the Chair's Report were as follows:

"The Management Board for the London Region was elected during the Annual General Meeting/Members Forum held on 24th May 2007. It has met on five other occasions during the year.

In addition to its normal business meetings, the Management Board was represented at the twice yearly Region, SIG's, Branch Secretaries and Treasurers Meetings held in London in July, and November 2007 and most recently April 2008.

The Development of the Region/SIG Structure, The Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities and its implications in relation to how environmental health services might be delivered in the future, the roll out of the CIEH's re-branding project, the new Accredited Associate grade of membership of the CIEH, the current drive to encourage lapsed members back into membership of the CIEH, changes to the route to qualification as an EHP with the introduction of Curriculum 2007 and improving service to customers and members by way of a new Customer Relations Project were among the matters discussed at these meetings

During 2007 and early in 2008 the Secretary represented the London Region at three meetings of "The Forum". This is the CIEH body responsible for overseeing the Centre and Branch reorganisation process. Representatives of every Region and SIG attend and the Forum's primary role is that of evaluating the Business Plans prepared by the Regions and SIG's against a standardised template. It then makes recommendations to the Resources Committee as to the appropriate level of funding to support the activities and programme of events for members set out in the Business Plans.

During 2007 the major task undertaken by the LRMB was the preparation of the Region's first ever Business Plan. The activities and planned events for which funding was requested was based on the results of various membership surveys carried out by the CIEH early in 2006 and previously by the Greater London Centre Council and the Association of London Environmental Health Managers (ALEHM).

These identified low cost training to maintain professional competence and satisfy CPD requirements and lobbying as the key issues which concerned members in the London

Region and the London Region Business Plan sought to provide a full programme of training and other events either through its Study Group structure or arranged centrally.

The London Region Business Plan with those of the other Regions and SIG's were evaluated at a meeting of the Forum in July 2007 and subject to a number of amendments all Business Plans and budgets were endorsed by the Forum and referred to the Resources Committee with the recommendation that the funding requested be approved. The total level of funding at that time was well within the total budget set by the CIEH

However at the meeting of the Forum in November 2007 the CIEH's new Director of Finance Milan Grubnic said that the Regions must demonstrate value for money in spending their budget. In looking at the BP's, he had identified four which were seeking a total of £112,000 in funding but were only generating £7,000 income.

The Regions needed to become more self sufficient and more externally focused. There was also a need to look for ways to increase membership and to encourage non-members to join the CIEH.

A number of representatives at the meeting expressed their concern that the CIEH appeared to be moving from a membership organisation to one whose primary focus was to make money!

The London Region was one of the four identified as not generating sufficient income and during the Christmas period work was carried out to identify either additional income streams or savings to be made to meet a £30,000 cut in the overall budget for the Regions required by the Director of Finance. Further meetings with the Director of Finance and other Headquarters staff took place in January but we were unable to convince them that London was a special case that required particular consideration.

Rather than at have to start to charge for attendance at Study Group meetings we took the option of making a number of savings which left the no-cost training and CPD programmes intact, but meant we could no longer fund free places to the Joint Regions Study Course or the Best of the Best Conference.

Your Board believes that the funding available to the Regions will be further significantly squeezed in 2009 which will require us to undertake a fundamental review of what we can provide for the money we are allocated.

The regional re-organisation went "live" on the 1st January 2008 and although we are only just one quarter through the year, the process of drafting the London Region Business Plan for next year has already commenced and the first very rough draft is available for viewing on the London Region web pages.

Today we are looking for a general endorsement from you, the members, to allow your Board to continue the process, but I would ask that you take the time to look at the draft and let us have any suggestions or comments which we would welcome before the end of June. This will allow time for any changes to be made before the next meeting of the Forum on 15th July.

In September 2007, Tay Potier, former Head of Food and Health and Safety, London Borough of Lewisham was appointed London Region Policy Officer, replacing Sharon Smith who resigned as a result of her family relocation to the West Country

Tay has quickly established herself as a energetic and potent force in the London Region and she has successfully contributed to and progressed a number of important on-going and new initiatives, for example the launch of the London Scores on the Doors pilot and the Food Champions Award Scheme

Tay has continued to establish and build relationships with bodies and organisations where environmental health is poorly represented or had no active voice.

The London Region Management Board strongly believes that the role of the London Region Policy Officer is fundamental in ensuring that environmental health in London is given the prominence and priority it warrants. We also consider the London Region Policy Officer's post should be at Director Level. Even more so now, a Director for London is required who should enjoy an equal footing to those posts that already exist in respect of Wales and Northern Ireland and the Board will continue its efforts to bring this about.

During 2007, the London Region Management Board has continued to strengthen its links with ALEHM. Steve Miller our President is currently the Chair of ALEHM and a Trustee for the London Region and Keith Hill, Co-ordinator of ALEHM attends our meetings as an appointed ex-officio member of the Management Board.

Our Secretary spoke at ALEHM's AGM in January updating members on London issues in particular the London Region Business Plan 2008 budget.

With many emerging issues relating to London where we both have an interest, such as the recruitment and retention of professional staff, Scores on Doors with the FSA apparently disregarding the successful London Pilot, the newly elected Mayor for London and how he will approach the former Mayor's Housing and Food Strategies and, only five years away, the London Olympics, it is vital that we have an efficient exchange of information to ensure that our respective business plans do not conflict but complement each other.

2007 was a year of fundamental change in the status and way ALEHM will function in the future and we look forward to another year of working closely with them.

The London Region is twinned with the Centre for Communicable Disease Control, Atlanta, USA and the Jamaican Association of Public Health Inspectors.

Building on the visit to Jamaica in October 2006 by Andrew Banfield OBE, former President of the CIEH and a current Vice-President of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health, and Carlene Thomas, a former Trustee for the London Region, and former Secretary of the European Federation of Environmental Health, and who represented the London Region at the 60th Anniversary Conference of the Jamaican Association of Public Health Inspectors, during 2007 and 2008, the London Region maintained a supportive and constructive dialogue with the JAPHI.

Following the devastation caused by Hurricane "Dean" to Jamaica in August 2007, the London Region made a donation to a charity nominated by the JAPHI to aid relief work.

The London Region also offered a significant contribution towards the travel costs of a member of the JAPHI to enable them to attend the International Federation of Environmental Health Conference 2008 which was held in Brisbane, Australia just a few days ago.

We are also encouraging members of the JAPHI to apply for Commonwealth Professional Fellowships. The Professional Fellowship Programme seeks to enhance the skills of mid-career practitioners in developing countries and you may recall the International Special Interest Group meeting held on 13th November 2007 where there was a chance to meet and hear from three visiting Commonwealth Fellows who talked about their work in Uganda, Kenya and Zambia and gave a thought provoking talk about their experiences in the UK during the two months they were here as part of their Commonwealth Fellowship visit.

The London Region International Interests representatives continue to contribute to the work of the International Interests SIG.

The Study Groups were active during the year. The London Food, Health and Safety, Housing and Pollution Study Groups held regular meetings during 2007 providing no-cost CPD opportunities for the London membership. A number of full day CPD events were also held. The Housing Regulatory Sub Group established last year also met and continues to attract members.

Funding has been obtained to enable a full programme of meetings to be organised during 2008 but the Study Groups and the Joint Regions Study Course cannot function without the hard work put into them by the small number of volunteers who arrange speakers, the venue, refreshments and notify the membership of the meetings. The LRMB thanks them for all their efforts this year and invites any other members who would like to become involved in running the study groups to speak with either the Chairs or Secretaries whose contact details can be found on the London Region web site.

The London Region continues to support the Joint Regions Study Course, which, in previous years with the SE Centre has organised and delivered very successful two-day seminars at Guildford. The 2008 study course held in April attracted a small but enthusiastic number of delegates. Subject to funding being available we will continue to support this event and hope with the SE Region to expand it and attract a larger number of delegates

The LRMB continues to struggle with the significant problem of being able to communicate effectively with the London Membership. After discounting the circulation of information by post due to the very high costs and labour involved, attempts to email newsletters and other information to members using the CIEH's central membership database has confirmed that a proportion of the addresses listed are out of date or wrong. A percentage of emails sent are bounced back or non deliverable and we also have the situation that a number of members living and working abroad do not realise that they are members of the London Region although the CIEH was supposed to notify them some time ago.

The Membership Section of the CIEH is aware of the problem and the LRMB has pressed the CIEH for this to be urgently rectified. The current difficulties will be addressed in part as improvements to and functionality of the CIEH and Regional websites are rolled out as part of the CRM project. We hope to be able to see the first of a whole raft of improvements this year.

The LRMB successfully obtained via the Business Plan sufficient funding to allow it to recruit and employ an Executive Officer to take overall control of a Membership Database project and working with the LRMB's Membership Officer ensure the LRMB has access to an accurate and current email and postal address database of its members both based in the United Kingdom and Overseas.

The post has been advertised in EHN and full details can be found on the London Region web pages, meanwhile we again ask that all members of the London Region make every effort to ensure their email and postal address contact details are up to date by using the facility to do this on the CIEH website and by ensuring that the changes section of the annual subscription renewal notice is also completed and returned to the CIEH.

The elections for Trustees held towards the end of 2007 returned Steve Miller, Peter Brown and Peter Kemp to serve as London Trustees from 2008 to 2010.

Pete Kemp our Secretary replaces Carlene Thomas who last year stood down not only as a Trustee but also as Secretary of the European Federation of Environmental Health. On behalf of the LRMB and all the London membership I am sure you would wish to join me in thanking Carlene for her years of service and great commitment in representing the profession and the CIEH both here in London and internationally and we wish her every success for the future".

Further comments and information relating to matters raised in the Chair's Report were made as follows. Peter Carey, Secretary of the London Region Pollution Study Group expressed his concern at the direction the CIEH appeared to be taking. He pointed out the significant amount of unpaid work carried by volunteers, very much of it in their own time that was given by them in organising the Regions, Branches and Study Groups. He did not think it acceptable to now begin charging members to attend meetings and a number of other members at the meeting also voiced their objections to paying to attend Study Group activities.

Members requested the London Region Trustees pass these concerns upwards to the CIEH top management.

Nigel Watson, London Region Membership Officer spoke on the problems outlined in the Chair's Report that are experienced in using electronic means to communicate with the London Region and Overseas members. Recent mass emailing to members with an email message being sent to over 1000 members had resulted in about 50 bounce-backs, a very considerable improvement on the position found after a similar task undertaken last year.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Gerry McCarthy spoke to his report and circulated copies of the 2007 audited accounts of the London Region. He commented that the London Region in organising activities and training through its Study Groups was finding itself increasingly in direct competition with the CIEH which now had its own in-house Events Team recently set up as a stand-alone section previously part of the Chadwick House Group Limited.

The London Region was delivering low-cost events and he cited a very successful Pollution Study Group event held last year which was well attended where delegate fees were only £40.00 per person.

Gerry also called for members to consider volunteering to assist in the running of the Study Groups and to help organise events.

Gerry reported to members that financially the London Region had retained at good balance at the end of 2007. In 2008, so far this year the Region had only received about half of the agreed funding. Last year it had received over £9,000 from the CIEH but would only be getting less than half that in 2008. 2009 could be very difficult financially for the Region.

Questions from the meeting suggested that the Management Board look at what training the London authorities were offering and to investigate the opportunities for organising joint events and partnership working.

Peter Kemp spoke on the range of skills-based low-cost training events which the CIEH wanted Regions and SIG's to market. The Management Board was somewhat sceptical as to whether these courses were of much value in London as very many of the subject areas covered were often offered to members via their respective employing authorities as part of their internal staff development training programmes and could be accessed via this route at no-cost. He said that the London Region might organise one or two towards the end of 2008 to gauge interest.

Andrew Banfield informed the meeting that referring back to earlier comments on the London Region trying to organise events and training courses while expected to be in direct competition with the CIEH he had looked at this week's edition of the EHN and found that of the 36 courses being advertised, 53% were being held in London. He thought it outrageous that the CIEH should expect the London Region to be able to compete.

6. TRUSTEE'S REPORT

In the absence of the two other Trustees', Steve Miller and Carlene Thomas who had represented the London Region during 2007, and who could not attend the AGM due to prior commitments, Peter Brown the third London Region Trustee reported to the meeting.

First commenting on the reduction in the funding allocated to the Regions and SIG's for 2008, and the savings the London Region had been required to make, Peter explained that the CIEH was trying to re-align its budget. The membership if it is unhappy with the direction the CIEH appears to be taking it needs to make more noise and speak up to voice these concerns.

Peter remarked on the disappointing number of members from the largest Region numerically that had bothered to attend this AGM despite the date, time and venue being well advertised via a personal email to all members and a notice in EHN (although this did finally appear a little late).

He again echoed the comments already made that the Management Board would welcome volunteers to help organise and run the Study Groups. He also reminded members that the Trustee's were there to help them with any particular problems they might have or to listen to any issues causing them concern and to speak to your Trustee's.

Peter commented on the CIEH Strategic Plan currently in draft form and its underlying themes of visibility, high profile activity, membership engagement, capacity building and efficiency. He also spoke on the drive of the CIEH to encourage and attract lapsed members back into membership and the inducements that were being offered if a former member rejoined during 2008.

Looking specifically at the matters the Trustees had dealt with during the past year via the CIEH Council and its Boards and Committee's Peter said that Steve Miller was a member of the Resources Committee and the Education and Professional Standards Board and that he sat on the Policy Development Board.

Summarising the work of the Education and Professional Standards Board Peter said that in 2007 it had met almost all its objectives and most of its work programme. These had included, the Centre and Branch reorganisation, the Curriculum 2007 roll-out and Competency Framework development, putting the final touches to the APD process, in recruitment and retention, working with ALEHM and the Improvement Development Agency, acquiring Key Worker status for EHP's, putting together proposals to widen the membership and encourage lapsed members back into the CIEH, working on the Code of Conduct for Elected Members and the Disciplinary Regulations.

The Policy Development Board had moved from an annual work plan to a rolling programme. Policy and position statements had been prepared covering a wide range on EH interests including, Water Poverty, Contaminated Land, Climate Change, Social Marketing, 2012 Vision Review, Private Sector Housing Strategies, Unitary LA's Health and Safety at work, Local area Agreements, Fire Safety, the Olympics, Health Eating Hospital Hygiene, Emergency Planning and re-emerging Infectious Disease and finally HHSRS Research. The Board had also drafted submitted numerous responses to Consultation Documents.

Peter said that it had also been a very busy year for the Resources Committee. The CIEH was on track to receive something in the region of £3.2m in Gift Aid from the trading activities of the Chadwick House Group Limited. The Committee had overseen the delivery of the IT and CRM projects which were now back on track, the new 15 Hatfields Conference facilities were creating a lot of interest and beginning to generate income and CHGL were expanding their business activities into new markets, India, China, USA and Singapore.

Commenting on the CIEH's budget for 2008 and Regional funding Peter explained that the approach being taken was one of ensuring sustainable growth reflecting the significant investment in the organisation and the expansion of its influence. He pointed out however that the effects of the economic downturn were already being felt as seen in the CIEH's accounts for the first quarter in 2008.

The Chair thanked Peter for his very interesting report.

7. London Region Management Board Nomination / Election of Board Members

The Secretary reported that no nominations for election to the London Region Management Board had been received. In the absence on any other candidates, Jenny Douse, Gerry McCarthy and Peter Kemp were elected to serve as Chair, Treasurer and Secretary respectively of the London Region Management Board for 2008 / 2009 being proposed by Andrew Banfield, seconded by Nigel Watson.

The Chair thanks all the members of the Management Board and the Study Groups for their support and for all their efforts and hard work during the year.

Keith Hill Co-ordinator of ALEHM and an ex-officio member of the LRMB spoke to the meeting on the changes that ALEHM had undergone during the year and announced that it would be formally re-launched later this year at events being organised at Chadwick Court and at the Best of the Best Conference – 2008.

8. London Region Business Plan - 2009

The Secretary, Peter Kemp reported that an early draft of the London Region Business Plan – 2009 had been circulated to members via the London Region web pages on the main CIEH website and that copies were also available at the meeting.

He explained to the meeting the method he had employed in drafting the Business Plan to meet the requirements as regards content etc and that this had very much followed the process undertaken in preparing the 2008 Business Plan. Revised budget templates were being produced by the Director of Finance at the CIEH and these had to be used in putting together the London Region's bid for funds. He foresaw that if the current economic situation continued the overall funding available to the Regions and SIG's for 2009 would be further reduced.

The overall aim of the Management Board was to provide a good selection of no-cost meetings, training and other events via the Study Groups but being realistic if may well be necessary that for the larger all day CPD events, where 5 or 6 hours Core CPD was offered, a small charge might have to be made as the CIEH, it is anticipated will still be expecting Regions and SIG's to raise and generate income from their activities.

Peter Kemp said that he appreciated that at this stage the Business Plan lacked a great deal of detail which will be added after consultation with the Study Groups drawing on their suggestions of what activities they would like to support next year. Any contribution from members was also very welcome. He was asking the membership to give general approval to the approach the LRMB was taking in preparing the Business Plan. He told the meeting that as drafts were updated they would be posted on the London Region website.

On a show of hands the meeting endorsed the draft London Region Business Plan – 2009 and agreed the approach being taken by the London Region Management Board

9. Any Other Business

9.1 CIEH Road Show

The Secretary, Peter Kemp informed the meeting the CIEH top management were repeating the series of Road show visits to the Regions and SIG's which they had first carried out a few years ago when we were still operating as Centre's and Branches.

The Chief Executive and the Directors of the various CIEH departments were due to visits the London Region on the 25th November 2008. It originally intended to be a whole day event commencing at about 10.30 am but on reflection, and in knowledge of the difficulties London members would have getting permission to attend it was likely that the event would be a half-day only and would be held at Chadwick Court if a room was available. No further details had yet been received but these would be circulated to members as soon as they were.

This event is intended to update the membership on developments at the CIEH but the London Region Management Board saw it as a not to be missed opportunity for the rank and file membership to question the Chief Executive and his staff, and to voice any questions or challenge anything the CIEH was doing with which they did not agree or understand. A good level of attendance by the membership was essential.

Responding some members recalled the last Road show visit of the Chief Executive to the then Greater London Centre and the very disappointing number of members who bothered to attend. One member said that she would not be attending as she recalled a conversation she had with the Chief Executive last time where she gained the impression that for some reason he was personally blaming her for the poor numbers of persons there!

A short discussion followed on what tactics could be employed to encourage members to attend meetings such as the Road show. Getting members to attend meetings unless it was an all day CPD events seemed to be a particular problem in London, and Tay Potier the London Region Policy Officer suggested that if the Road show was made shorter as had been mentioned already this might appeal more.

There were no other items raised by the meeting under Any Other Business.

In bringing the Annual General Meeting / Members Forum of the London Region to a close, the Chair, Jenny Douse thanked the members for taking the time to attend the meeting. She also thanked the Management Board for the support it had given during what had been a very busy year. Thanks were also due to Peter Carey, Secretary of the London Region Pollution Study Group for arranging for the meeting to be held at Camden Town Hall and for organising the splendid refreshments.

Finally the Chair thanked Carlene Thomas, who was stepping down as a London Region Trustee, for all her hard work over the past years and in particular for the efforts she has made in building on our relationship with our "twin" organisation, The Jamaican Association of Public Health Inspectors and internationally as Chair of the European Federation of Environmental Health. She wished Carlene every success in the future.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 13.30 pm