



Chartered  
Institute of  
Environmental  
Health

**London  
Region**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE LONDON REGION MANAGEMENT BOARD AND MEMBERS FORUM**

**22nd July 2009  
ISLINGTON TOWN HALL**

### **CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2008**

The Management Board for the London Region was elected during the Annual General Meeting/Members Forum held on May 2008 and it met on five other occasions during that year and so far it has also met twice during 2009.

The Management Board was represented at the twice yearly Region, SIG's, Branch Secretaries and Treasurers Meetings held in April and October 2008 and most recently in June 2009.

In November 2008 the London Region hosted the CIEH Roadshow at which the Chief Executive and Departmental Directors outlined their thoughts on where the professional would be heading in the next 10 years and members had an opportunity to raise issues with Headquarters. The Management Board was also given time to make a presentation outlining the profile of the Region and the difficulties it faced in delivering support to the London membership. The meeting was relatively well attended with over 40 members present. There was a frank exchange of views and the Management Board again raised with the Chief Executive and Headquarters the particular problems it has in communicating with the membership in the absence of the promised IT improvements which are due to be rolled out as part of the overdue CRM project.

The 2008 AGM saw the end of the interim management arrangements regarding the setting up of the new Region, Branch and Special Interest Group membership structures and a move to the election of a substantive Management Board responsible for carrying these new arrangements forward.

2008 has been a year of consolidation, building on the experience gained in 2007 in preparing the Region's Business Plan and Budget proposals for 2009 and beyond, while ensuring that the London Region Study Groups are supported and are able to operate with minimal interference from the centre.

The major task undertaken by the Management Board was again the preparation of the Region's forward Business Plan and Budget as referred to above. The activities and planned events for which funding was requested are 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). We also seek to gather contemporary feedback via the Study Groups.

These have identified no cost / low cost training to maintain professional competence and satisfy CPD requirements and lobbying as the key issues which concern members in the London Region and the 2009 London Region Business Plan again sought to provide a full programme of training and other events either through its Study Group structure or arranged centrally whilst realising that the worsening economic situation was bound to impact on the funding available to the CIEH to support the Regions, Branches and SIG's.

During 2008 and early in 2009 the Secretary represented the London Region at four meetings of "The Forum". This is the CIEH body responsible for overseeing the Region and SIG business planning 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.

Changes to the Forum occurred during the year; a new Chairman, David Purcheon was appointed and a more streamlined system of preparing the business plans and formulating the funding bids and budgets was introduced. Despite these attempts to improve the process the meeting held towards the end of September 2008 to agree the Business Plans and funding bids was deadly with a number of the Regions failing to send representatives and / or business plans and / or budgets.

A few other Regions made submissions but these arrived after the deadline. The London Region was one of the six Regions / SIG's that submitted its Business Plan and Budget by the deadline date of 8th September. As was the position in 2007, the total bids for funding submitted by the Regions and SIG's (£167,143) exceeded the available CIEH funding by over £23,000 (£141,633).

The Forum then proceeded to repeat last years exercise looking for savings and areas where income could be increased and after some hours of debate and argument it was agree that the following would be recommended to the Resources Committee.

All non-specific "contingency" bids would be removed from BP's where these did not directly relate to CPD activities. No "contingency" sums were included in the London Regions BP so we did not lose any money.

Only the base rate of £2,000 of core funding would be given to those six Regions who had not submitted a business plan and/or budget, ie they all lost their "per capita" element. The London Region Business Plan and Budget were delivered on time so we retained our £2,000 and our "per capita" element.

Further savings were offered by a number of the Regions and SIG's represented at the meeting which eventually brought the final total bid for funding by the Regions and SIG's to £130,511, some £11,122 less than the notional "pot." London Region made no offer of savings and when the London Region Business Plan was reviewed comment was made that we might in fact be underfunded for what we wish to deliver in 2009!

After a long day, the meeting decided that the recommendation to the Resources Committee would be that the majority of the available funding should be distributed to those Regions and SIG's that had made the effort to meet the deadline for submitting their Business Plans and budgets while those that had not, would only receive minimal funding.

For a second year running the Resources Committee rejected the recommendations of the Forum, being particularly concerned that the Regions and SIG's who had not submitted their Business Plans and Budgets by the required date were being unduly penalised so we were faced with yet another round of meetings in early January to

begin the process again. Last year in my Chairs Report I reported the view held by a number of Regions that the CIEH appeared to be moving from a membership organisation to one whose primary focus was to make money!

I'm pleased to say that the message appears to have got home and we believe that the needs of the Members and support for the Regions and SIG's is now very near to top of the CIEH's core priorities.

Following meetings in early 2009, Resources found an additional £100,000 funding for Region and SIG support; it approved the Funding bids for 2009 with a £17,000 shortfall being met from the £100,000 additional funding and importantly, it agreed that the annual fiasco of the Forum submitting funding bids only for them to be rejected needed to be replaced by a better system of deciding the funding of the Regions which did not rely on the preparation of wordy Business Plans. It set up a small Working Group to investigate the issue and come up with workable solutions.

This has recently reported and the Region now has a better idea of what it has to do as it looks at 2010 and begins the planning of how it intends to support the London Region membership. The Secretary will speak on this matter later in today's meeting.

So for 2009, the London Region was relatively well placed financially having a better than expected sum in its reserves and other than a small adjustment, it received all the funding it requested for its activities this year. This has allowed us to re-instate the sponsored places to the Joint Regions Study Course, the Best of the Best Conference 2009, to recently sponsor a member to attend a Symposium in Greece to enable her to present a paper, and to offer substantial support to enable a member to attend the Annual Conference of the Jamaican Association of Public Health Inspectors (JAPHI), with whom the London Region is twinned, which this year is being held in Montego Bay in October.

In addition we are making a financial contribution towards the cost of enabling a member of the JAPHI to come to the UK in September so that they may attend, as a delegate, the Best of the Best Conference

Tay Potier, London Region Policy Officer, has continued to establish and build relationships with bodies and organisations where environmental health is poorly represented or had no active voice. She leads on a wide range of important issues of environmental and public health importance including Scores on the Doors, as the Food Standards Agency commences its plan to roll out the London pilot scheme nationally, the Olympics and Para-Olympics 2012, a Food Study around Secondary Schools and Healthy Eating Award Schemes, working with the HSE Local Authority Unit Partnership Project for London, Engagement with the GLA on Environmental and Sustainability issues, London Resilience and Contingency Planning, taking forward the London Student Development Programme and Student Consortium, a whole range of public health issues including overseeing a joint ALEHM / HPA project looking at local authority responses across London to outbreaks of enteric disease.

The above list really only skims the surface of the work undertaken by Tay. In addition she has provided valuable support to the London Region Housing Study Group and she sits on the London Food Co-ordinating Group

It is a long term aim of the London Region Management Board that the importance of the post Tay holds should be recognised and it should enjoy an equal footing to those posts that already exist with respect to Wales and Northern Ireland at Director level. The Management Board recognise that in what continues to be a very difficult year for the CIEH financially and with the prospects for a general improvement in the economic position being unclear, it is perhaps not the best time to press our case but the Board will continue its efforts to bring this about.

The London Region has continued to enjoy good working relations 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.

In addition Tay Potier, London Region Policy Officer is with Steve, a Director / Trustee of ALEHM and London Environmental Health Practitioners, a registered charity which operates as the trading arm of ALEHM. Kath Lewis, London Student Development Officer and currently London Region Executive Officer is also a member of ALEHM's management committee.

In November 2008 we held a joint meeting at Chadwick Court that was planned to coincide with the CIEH / London Region Roadshow. The meeting enabled ALEHM and London Region members to receive information on technical topics as well hear about and provide input into the strategic development of the Chartered Institute.

Both the London Region and ALEHM are involved with the current CIEH initiative to develop effective regional working and are looking forward to see how this develops in the year ahead.

The London Region is twinned with the Jamaican Association of Public Health Inspectors and the Centre for Communicable Disease Control with, Atlanta, USA. I have already mentioned our sponsorship activities this year with the JAPHI and during 2008 we continued to support them by sending to Jamaica CIEH publications, EHN and EHP for their library and we also offered sponsorship 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. Problems in booking flights resulted in the offer not being taken up but the funding was held available to help offset the cost of organising the JAPHI's 2008 Annual Conference.

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 in this respect the London Region International Interests representatives continue to contribute to the work of the International Interests SIG.

The Management Board has not had recent contact with our other "twin", CCDC in the US and during 2009 we intend to re-establish communication with them again.

The London Region does not organise itself into Branches unlike most of the other Regions which are less geographically compact but decided many years ago that its sub-structure of choice were subject specific Study Groups and looking now at our Study Group engagement with members I am pleased to report that these were very active during the year.

Funding has been obtained to enable a full programme of meetings to be organised again during 2009 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 CIEH appear to recognise the important part played by such volunteers in supporting the membership and the fact that at a time of increasing workloads, and pressure to deliver, the time available and any support from employers to enable these tasks to be carried out is fast disappearing.

The CIEH has now acknowledged the importance placed on the role played by the volunteer in supporting the general membership by for this year at least committing a £100,000 of additional funding as mentioned earlier to provide additional administrative support for the Regions and SIG's and to allow better engagement with other agencies active within the Region.

The Management Board would like to express their thanks to the Chairs and Secretaries of the Study Groups 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.

To highlight a few of the CPD opportunities available to members via the Study Groups during 2008 / 2009.

Stephen Potter and Peter Carey stood down as Chair and Secretary of the Pollution Study Group at the end of 2008 to be replaced by Paul Clift and Somayya Yaqub. The Management Board thanks Stephen and Peter for everything they did in making this Study Group such a success. They were hard act to follow but Paul and Somayya have continued to organise excellent very well attended meetings covering a wide range of subjects including road traffic noise and health inequalities, climate change mitigation and energy with guest speakers from Defra, AEA, Kings College and the GLA.

During 2008, the Food and Health and Safety Study Groups combined forces and grasped the difficult area of providing CPD opportunities at which a charge for attendance was required. This development was the result of the CIEH requiring Regions to be more self-financing and to generate more income, a policy that flies in the face of a number of Regions, including London who believe that such CPD activities should be at no cost to the membership.

The first of these was held in June 2008 for which a fee of £30 was charged. This was well attended with over 50 delegates at the event. A second event in November 2008 was not so well supported; the fee had been increased to £40 but it is not known if the increase fee deterred members from attending. The additional administrative burden in collecting fees, issuing receipts etc on the day as the Region does not have any facilities to issues invoices or process credit card payment should not be underestimated.

The Housing Study Group and Regulatory Sub-Group held regular meetings during 2008 and these continue with a full programme of important emerging housing issues in 2009. Subject area's covered included Disabled Facilities Grants, Housing and Health, The London Landlord Accreditation Scheme, The Mayor for London's Housing Strategy, The Rugg Review and Climate Change.

The Joint Regions Study Course which is organised in conjunction with the South-East England Region was held again this year on Thursday, and Friday, April 2009 at the University of Surrey at Guildford. The price per delegate was £240 plus VAT for the whole study course which included overnight accommodation and all meals on the University campus, representing 'good value for money'. Three London members were sponsored to attend this study course by the London Region Management Board.

Fifty people attended this study course, including our President from London, Steve Miller who most entertainingly filled one of the lecture sessions. Those who attended were from various disciplines throughout Environmental Health including technical support staff from local authorities as well as representatives from private industry.

The subjects covered were many and various centred on the major upcoming event for this country, the Olympic Games in London in 2012. It also gave the opportunity for attendees to meet some of the staff from CIEH and discuss matters of concern in an informal, social atmosphere.

Numbers attending this study course have dwindled in recent years primarily as a result of fiscal constraints in local authorities and the world-wide financial crisis, nevertheless the Joint Regions Committee, three of whom are from London Borough of Wandsworth have decided to put together a programme for the Spring of 2010 to keep this valuable source of diverse and informative education active for the benefit of the London membership. It should be noted that a number of similar events held by other Regions have had to be cancelled often at short notice due to a lack of interest. The fact that the Joint Regions Study Course still delivers is due in no small part to the enthusiasm and commitment of its organising committee and we thank them for all their efforts.

The London Region is the largest numerically and includes not only members in London but also those members who work or live overseas. In my recent Chair's reports I have spoken of the fact that the Management Board continues to struggle with the significant problem of being able to communicate effectively with the membership due to the inaccurate and missing email address database held by the CIEH Membership Section which we have to use when circulating information to members via email.

We have been promised that 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, but parts of this project are long overdue so in 2008 the Management Board took positive steps to begin to resolve this matter and appointed Kath Lewis as its first Executive Officer with a specific project brief to update the London Region membership data base including identifying email addresses for nearly 500 members where no record of an address can be found.

Kath has made very good progress in filling in the gaps but the work involved is time consuming and results rely on the CIEH Membership Department programming in the changes and updates that have to be made, an operation which is not always completed in a timely manner. The London Region has distributed several Newsletters and Bulletins to members via email over the last 12 months and I think it worthwhile telling members just what is involved in undertaking this task.

First Nigel Watson our Membership Officer has to obtain an up to date membership list from Chadwick Court. This is supplied as an Excel spreadsheet and cannot be used as an email address database in this form. After scanning the list for obvious errors, Nigel then sends it to his son who is an IT consultant and in the past this has required it to be emailed to the United States and most recently to Australia where it is converted by his son to an executable list which is then emailed back to Nigel. He is then able to use the email address data to send the communication using his work IT system as most domestic ISP's will not allow the volume of traffic that is required to reach every member.

Nigel then has to wait for the bounce-back and undeliverable messages that always result and which the project being undertaken by Kath hope to minimise. Without the generous help of Nigel's son from wherever he might be in the world at the time, we could not easily use email to contact members and I hope Nigel will pass on our thanks to his son for the all the assistance he has given us.

As I draw this report to a close I would like to thank all the members of the Management Board for their support and hard work in the past year in helping run the Region. Gerry McCarthy, the London Region Treasurer and Steve Miller, Peter Brown and Peter Kemp, London Region Trustees will deliver their own reports to you later in the meeting.

I am pleased to tell you that after some delay while we argued with CIEH as to what we wanted, the London Region web pages on the main CIEH website have been re-designed and given a modern up to date look. New side-bar menu's allow easier navigation within the site and give quick access to information relevant to the Region,

including links to the Study Groups, Region Activity, the work of the London Region Policy Officer, Student Development and ALEHM to highlight just a few. Notices, Minutes of the Management Board Meetings, details of forthcoming Study Group meetings and guest speaker's past presentations etc are all posted on the site so please don't forget to look at it to keep up to date on what is going on.

The current economic situation and the future uncertainties faced by our members working in both the public and private sectors present many challenges to both the CIEH as a leading organisation promoting the environmental and public health agenda's and to our members collectively and individually. In what remains of 2009 and into 2010, the London Region Management Board will continue to work to improve its communication with members, to plan and deliver CPD opportunities through its study groups and better engage with our student members and to encourage them to take a full part in the Region' s activities.

However the London Region is not the Management Board alone; the important part is you the 1100 plus members. We need to know your views and suggestions, what you think should be organised, speakers you have heard elsewhere whom you think would be prepared to speak at a study group meeting, we want to hear when we get things right and when we get things wrong, so speak up and help to make the London Region one of, if not the best to belong to in the CIEH.

Jenny Douse MBA, FCIEH