

Officer Meeting with KS Minutes

Date: 25th April 2012

Attendees

Chair: Ben Mason
Vice Chair: Yemi Idowu
Treasurer: Damion Schmacher
Secretary: Richard Reynolds
LBS: Kevin Skinner (LBS TRA Enablement Officer)

Agenda

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations expressed to officers by Kevin Skinner (KS) for setting up a TRA. Reiterated we are a self-managing volunteer group, independent of Southwark Council (SC) but in the process of applying to be recognised by SC. We govern our own affairs in accordance with the constitution.

MANAGING COMPLAINTS

KS shared advice about how to manage complaints and requests for information so it doesn't impede the objectives of the TRA:

- Get familiar with the constitution
- Give equal courtesy to all members
- No one has additional rights or deserves additional attention
- Only deal with issues we feel competent and confident to deal with
- Acknowledge complaints first, deal with them second.
- Potentially defer decisions to committee meetings
- Suggest complainant raises the matter at a general meeting
- Secretary may receive requests (12 signatories) for a special general meeting
- There can be confidential 'closed' discussions as part of or for the whole of committee meetings
- Training is available from SC for conflict resolution and dealing with evidence based problems
- It's legitimate for questions about committee members to be answered but not personal information (e.g. tenancy, sexuality, address).
- Remember there's no official target or quota for leaseholders or tenants to be committee members.
- Our committee acts rather like a 'board of trustees', so officers should use them as a source of empowerment to carry out our responsibilities.
- We have a "disabled unit" at Perronet House. This is unusual, we should pay attention to it and be seen to pay attention to it, e.g. get Southwark Disabilities Forum to come to a meeting and share advice for accessibility issues
- Remember our community room is sufficiently DDA compliant.

KS said he will ask his bosses if he can provide much of the above as official written advice. **Action: KS**

COMMUNICATION

Ben Mason (BM) sought advice about how to minimise officers time being taken up with lots of correspondence about issues that would best be dealt with direct by the housing office. KS provided advice and we discussed and concluded:

- We do not want to micro-manage the building - some TRAs do, we don't expect to have the capacity to do this.
- Remind people of the SC housing repairs number for issues within their flats and communal areas - anyone can register an issue.
- Encourage people to attend the Walk Abouts (6 weekly) with John Bryan (LBS Resident Officer)
- Explore possibilities of a 'drop box' for people to leave notes about issues. **Action: Yemi Idowu (YI)**
- Explore possibilities of a dedicated TRA mobile number. **Action: BM (registered)**
- Free name@perronethouse.com e-mail addresses could be provided to officers and Google apps could be used to sort TRA e-mails and docs, but not needed at present.

MAINTENANCE ISSUES

KS offered advice about how to effectively get repairs done at Perronet House:

- Attend the Walk Abouts with John Bryan. There is no Walk About currently advertised. **Action: Richard Reynolds (RR) (requested, no response from JB)**
- Seek information about previous Walk Abouts and issues raised on them. **Action: RR (requested, no response from JB)**
- We could use TRA money for some repairs, we could also use volunteer labour
- Hold off using the 'heavy hitters' at Southwark Council if you can, focus your attention on John Bryan and Modupe Somoye (LBS resident officers).

OTHER TRAs

YI asked about contact with other TRAs as a source of advice:

- KS informed us we could send a delegate to the Borough and Bankside Area Housing Forum. **Action: YI to find out more about the BBAHF**
- KS informed us we could also attend the Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations
- KS said we will also begin to bump into other TRA members, e.g. if we use the Tenants Resource Centre
- RR has contact with Chris Mead, Chair of the Wansey Street TRA

ACCOUNTS

KS advised that once we have submitted our registration forms we will receive £1100 within about six weeks. He also reminded us of grants we can apply for. BM has these forms and will share with other officers to begin considering opportunities. **Action: BM**

Damion Schmacher (DS) to open a new community bank account at HSBC London Bridge. **Action: DS (enquiries made)**
KS offered training for managing TRA accounts. DS offered to go on the training once information was provided. **Action: KS**

KS advised we can use the money for pretty much anything relevant to the aims of the TRA but not for funding political parties.

INSURANCE

KS advised us to get insurance, particularly if hosting events. He recommended we look into cover from Morton Michel or Tennyson offshoot from Zurich. RR described recent experience getting insurance for a local community garden project **Action: RR to seek quotes**

AGENDA FOR 14 May 2012 Committee Meeting

KS proposed an agenda which was agreed

- The responsibilities of a TRA
- The schedule of meetings
- Community Council funding opportunity - what could we spend it on?
- KS Action Plan
- Training opportunities for TRA committee members

FOLLOW UP FROM 17 April TO TRA MEMBERS

KS advised we communicated with all residents by using a newsletter. KS commended us on the professionalism of our previous newsletter and survey and proposed content:

- Congratulate members for successful TRA creation
- List officers and committee members
- Advertise the role and date of Walk Abouts
- Provide contact details for repairs line
- Promote next committee meeting and include agenda
- Again seek reasons for why people may be unable to attend meetings so barriers are understood and potentially addressed (e.g. disability)
- Seek completed forms from all committee members for use in our TRA application form required by mid May.

Action: BM to write newsletter content, RR to design it, BM to print, RR to co-ordinate distribution together with committee member forms