

HSBC Bank UK Pensioners' Association

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL 2008 AT CANARY WHARF

Debbie Thomas from Savings Dept provided a presentation on how the department marketed their products, the interest rate strategy and its competitiveness in the marketplace. HSBC had a competitive edge, having a positive savings/loan ratio, against competitors with a negative ratio which was a reason why they were in need of Government support. Questions were taken after the presentation.

The Chairman thanked Debbie for sparing the time to talk to the meeting.

APOLOGIES

David Rowley

MINUTES

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 January 2008 were not approved. Amended minutes had been circulated and would be signed off in July.

MATTERS ARISING

Mike Lowe expressed the view that the discussion on the PND election had not been fully reported. The Chairman advised that the matter would be raised again under his report.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

MATTERS REFERRED BY EXECUTIVE

The nomination of a new Trustee for the Benevolent Fund would be taken under the BF Chairman's report

REPORTS

Chairman – The Chairman advised that his meeting with Paul Thurston had been postponed and was re-scheduled for mid June.

Following the result of the recent PND election, Rodney wanted to make it absolutely clear that he took sole responsibility for the letter that appeared in the magazine. It was done at his own volition; therefore no one else was in any way to blame.

2.

It was not intended to cause offence or to denigrate any other candidate. At the time of writing the letter Rodney was not aware of who the other candidates were or how many. The words were carefully chosen so as not to endorse Phil Hargreaves but to give guidance to members who were unsure how to vote.

The result of the election was not published by the Pension Trust board, so most members nor do pensioners know who was elected. It relies on the Association to do so.

The Chairman's actions were referred by Tony Ashford, Chairman of the Pension Trust board, to lawyers to ensure that Rodney did not contravene his duty as a PND. He was completely exonerated.

It was Rodney's firm belief that the Association needed an active representation on the board. The current preference voting system did not ensure a fair result, favouring those names at the top of an alphabetical list.

Tony Ashford agreed to call a meeting for October at which the voting system would be fully examined. At this meeting Rodney would put forward the view, subject to Council's approval, that the Association should select one PND (the Association constituency) and the other PND selected by the whole pensioner population. (the pensioner constituency) That would ensure that the Association would control the selection process for one PND and always have a voice on the board.

Council was asked how they wished to proceed in formulating a fairer electoral system for the future. Council was requested to canvas members and provide suggestions for discussion at the July meeting. Council was asked to route these suggestions through the General Secretary for collation before the meeting

Ken Moss considered the suggestion was a deflection from the issue that the integrity of the Chairman was in question. In his view anyone elected represented the whole pensioner population and the link with the Association could continue by co-opting one of the PND's.

The Chairman re-iterated his point was that it was important that the Association should be represented by one its members. Under the current system, it was possible that neither PND would be a member of the Association. Rodney emphasised that it was his view that the current voting system was flawed but his proposed change was only a suggestion. He was open to other ideas, which if approved by Council, could be taken to the meeting in October.

General Secretary – Council was advised that no correspondence had been received on the possibility of calling an EGM.

Owen would be writing to retiring regional reps. to request names of replacements who would take up their role after the AGM in October.

3.

Council advised that the Bank was still dragging its feet on the production of an up-to-date products and services booklet. The matter was now being referred to Sean O'Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer and would also be raised by the Chairman when he next met with Paul Thurston in mid June. Increasingly, both pensioners and staff in branches were unsure what terms applied to various products and services.

Treasurer – The Association was solvent with credit balances as at the end of March 2009 totalling £72,949.

The work involved by local treasurers in preparing and having audited the annual accounts was underway. Also the preparation of the local VAT returns to Peter Hagger in order to prepare the Association's annual VAT return.

David was also completing the accounts in preparation for sending them to the auditors such that a copy of the draft accounts would be ready for the July meeting and be included in the September edition of Pensioner Today.

Membership Secretary – Current membership as at 21 April was 15,230, a slight increase on last time.

Alan had emailed Keith Brown with a number of complaints concerning Watson Wyatt. As a rule these were dealt with promptly.

In the near future, Watson Wyatt would be sending out application forms inviting retirees to join the Association, which would save Alan administration time.

Returned magazines were still a problem. Alan was endeavouring to obtain access to address information on file to resolve this issue.

No information on deaths had been received since Christmas which meant Alan was unable to follow through associate membership for the surviving spouse.

Ken Moss asked if those retirees on deferred pension could become members. The rule was that they need to be receipt of a pension to be a member.

Social Secretary – Approximately two thirds of tickets had been allocated out of a total of 700. Hopefully, with the May magazine carrying a further advert for the lunch, this would increase in the coming months.

All arrangements were well in hand. Programme details were being finalised.

The venue for 2010 in London would be looked into later in the year.

Editor – A Jubilee issue of the magazine would be out in May and would include an article from Paul Thurston, Chief Executive of the Bank. Archives dept. had contributed with a history of the Association over 60 years.

4.

There remained a good level of contributions from readers. However new ideas were always welcomed. The obit and retirement information from the Bank had improved.

In perusing other Association publications, Ian found that pensioners of these organisations had similar procedures and concerns as us.

Pensioner Visiting Officer – Barbara advised that the scheme was running satisfactorily, although the Bank at times had difficulty disclosing information due to Data Protection Act.

Meetings for visitors would go ahead this year on a reduced basis. Four meetings were planned and visitors may attend whichever was convenient. Dates in June had been selected by HR Connect. Regrettably, Barbara would only be able to attend one of them. She asked for early involvement next time so that she may be free to attend all of them.

The cost of providing speakers was a constraint.

Chairman – Benevolent Fund – The annual election of the Chairman took place recently and Phil Hargreaves was unanimously re-elected for a further term.

The Capital value of the Fund stood at £229k against £176k last August due principally to a large legacy from Mrs. Rider's estate.

No new applications received during last twelve months. Two ongoing commitments have now ceased. The only ongoing commitment remained the annual issue of funds to those on low income. The number of recipients was now 64.

The BBF paid out some £69k during 2008 to HSBC pensioners and overall assisted HSBC members to the extent of £346k during the same period. The BBF continued to accumulate more funds – over £1m – than it paid out in the last financial year.

The Benevolent Fund have produced an article for the Pensioner Today magazine detailing its background, current arrangements with BBF, implications of the Charities Act 2006 and the options available. The Trustees continued to monitor these developments closely and members would be kept informed.

In this regard, the Benevolent Fund wished to contact the whole pensioner population to make sure that both PABF & BBF services were known to all. The cost would be about £2/3k and Phil was hopeful that this could be shared between the two Funds. However, the Executive agreed that, if necessary, the Association would bear the whole cost.

Finally, the Trustees of the Benevolent Fund wished to appoint an additional Trustee. Rob Walker, a former Head of Credit for HSBC Bank plc and who retired some 3 years ago, was recommended by the Executive as a suitable candidate. Mike Lowe questioned what selection process had been undertaken.

5.

It was explained that the Trustees of the Benevolent Fund were responsible for finding a suitable candidate and this process had been gone through. The Council considered his CV and a resolution was passed appointing him as a Trustee.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ken Moss asked what progress had been made with regard to creating an Association website. Chairman advised that the Association was still awaiting the Bank's response to its request that it link into the Bank's Intranet site, thereby securing support in keeping the site up-to-date. The matter would be raised again with Paul Thurston at a meeting set for mid June.

Richard Hunt, who raised the issue four years ago, contended that progress had been too slow, but the Chairman advised that the matter was regularly reviewed with the Bank who was slow to respond.

The effectiveness of a website was still not proven. Although new pensioners might be more enthusiastic, in many areas the idea had not been so embraced. The London region website hit rate was less than 10% of its total membership and could not reach the membership in the way the magazine does.

Richard Hunt asked what the base pension figure was which triggered discretionary payments. This was decided by the Pension Trust board and the Bank at its annual review. There were no longer any new entrants to the discretionary payment scheme.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 23 July 2009 at 2pm at Canary Wharf.