

HSBC Bank UK Pensioners' Association

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 26 JULY 2007 AT CANARY WHARF

APOLOGIES

Jean Marshall, David Rowley, Ian Chapman, Richard Hunt, Ken Blowe, Dan Long, Carole Jones, Brian Sellars, Keith Johnson.

RETIRING REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Having completed their four year term of office, Ernest Gudgeon, David Males, Peter Mitchell, Ken Blowe and Keith Johnson would be standing down. The Association thanked them most warmly for their commitment and trusted that they would continue to be active members at their local centres.

MINUTES

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 April 2007 were approved and signed

MATTERS ARISING

None other than matters that would be covered elsewhere in the report.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE EXECUTIVE

Annual accounts for approval

Appointment of two new trustees of Benevolent Fund.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

All Executive officers offered themselves for re-election at the forthcoming AGM and the Council agreed to put their names forward at the forthcoming AGM

REPORTS

Chairman – Rodney had attended a number of meetings of the Pension Trust board and its committees. Eleven training modules, recommended by the Pensions Regulator, had also been completed.

2.

With the newly constituted board, there were now four pensioner directors, two from the Bank and two from the pensioner community.

An important meeting was planned for the Autumn to cover future governance.

The chairman had attended lunches at two centres, one in the South West and the other at Thames Valley. Both had been well attended and he thanked those who had organised the events. He spoke to the members after the lunches and answered questions.

Rodney then reported on his meeting with Dyfrig John, Chief Executive of HSBC Bank UK. Julie Harding, Head of Human Resources was also present.

It was pleasing that a satisfactory outcome to the BUPA Benefit in Kind tax issue had been achieved thanks to efforts by the Bank and the pensioner community. It had a major effect in changing the Government's decision. The Bank had agreed that those who cancelled their BUPA membership at the time the issue was raised would be offered re-instatement by the Bank.

The recent election for the two pensioner directors to the Pension Trust board was discussed. The Chairman advised the Bank that it confused many having to vote for two positions and proved most unsatisfactory. Hopefully, it would not happen again.

Dyfrig John reported that the issue of travel insurance to GoldMastercard holders over 70 years of age had been resolved and the benefit would continue.

The linkage of pension increases to RPI, although generally welcome, could cause hardship to older pensioners on low income. The Bank was asked to consider a more enlightened approach of a guaranteed minimum pension to those over 75, on low income and with more than 35 years service rather than the frozen and limited ex-gratia payments paid at present. The Bank was sympathetic to this approach and would examine the issue.

The Bank promised to look into the poor quality of information in the obituary and retirements lists which it provided to the magazine for publication..

The Bank was well aware of the very poor standard of service provided by HAFL in dealing with pension matters. The matter was being urgently addressed with sufficient resources provided to sort it out.

Rodney suggested to the Bank that the Association could be of help in harvesting opinions from the pensioner community on products and services via the Today magazine. The Bank would consider the suggestion that they make contributions to the magazine from time to time.

An uplift in the lunch subsidy for pensioners from £5 to £10 was requested. Dyfrig John readily agreed, it would start immediately and be reviewed annually.

3.

Finally, Council was advised that Sean O'Sullivan, soon to be appointed Chief Operating Officer of HSBC Bank UK, would be the principal guest at the annual lunch. He would respond to the toast to the Bank which would be given by Phil Hargreaves.

General Secretary – The publication of a booklet advising pensioner terms for Bank products and services would be completed by the end of the year. The Association would provide a Chairman's message for the booklet with an application for non members to join.

The Banks car insurance scheme restricted personal injury benefit for members and spouses/partners to age 70. Whilst not a large benefit to those under 70, the Bank would asked to highlight the restriction more clearly.

Many were concerned that personal information on pension slips might be mis-used if in the wrong hands. The Bank agreed to restrict the account number to the last four digits and would re-instate the telephone number for enquiries.

Treasurer – David thanked centre treasurers for all their hard work during the year and to Peter Hagger for collating the VAT returns.

The aim of the Association was to break even. This was achieved with a modest surplus on turnover of nearly £120k.

Commenting on the significant differences over last year, David advised that on the income side, subscriptions were slightly up on last year. The donations from HSBC were considerably up due to the increased costs of holding the annual lunch in London. Income from HSBC for obituary and retirement notices showed an increase due to higher postal and printing costs

On the expenditure side, all costs were very similar, the exceptions being a slight increase in magazine costs, postages and the increased cost of the annual lunch in London. Finally, tax had to be paid on interest received following the introduction of the 10% banding for corporation tax.

On the Balance Sheet, cash balances have slightly increased over the year. Debtors and prepayments referred to the deposit paid to the Cutlers' Hall for the Sheffield annual lunch and the final instalment of luncheon subsidies reclaimed from the Bank, would be paid in the normal way.

On the liabilities side, £1350 was an accrual for lunch subsidy not yet claimed by centres. An accrual of £750 was for the accountant's bill and £374 referred to corporation tax already referred to.

The accounts were approved by Council for submission to the AGM.

4.

Council also agreed to give Peter Hagger a £50 book token as a thank you for his work on VAT returns

Membership Secretary – Current membership was 15075. The information from St. Albans was now being satisfactorily received. The number of retirees appeared to be declining.

With thanks to Anne Smith for her hard work, Norfolk centre was active once again and the outlook was promising.

Social Secretary – Jean reported that the Sheffield lunch was proceeding satisfactorily. 438 firm booking received with only 52 tickets still available – an excellent achievement.

In addition to Sean O’Sullivan, principal guest, Julie Harding and Keith Brown would be invited from the Bank.

The Café Royal had been booked for the 2008 lunch and the venue for 2009 was being pursued.

Editor – Ian reported that reactions to the last issue of the magazine was very positive. The September issue was with the printers.

At present, there was no response from the Bank to the suggestion that they might like to contribute “News from the Group” features in the magazine.

Pensioner Visiting Officer – Meetings for pension visitors took place in April & May. Many advised that the meetings were the most useful attended for many years. Currently, there were 260 pensioner visitors.

HR Connect confirmed that each year they would contact those pensioners who had become 75 years of age to enquire whether or not they would like a visitor to call. Also, there would be a five year review of those pensioners who had declined a visit to ask whether they would now like to have one.

Chairman – Benevolent Fund – Phil advised that payments made to widows on low income at Christmas time was to be increased from £85 to £100 each. 80 cheques were sent out last Christmas of which 76 were cashed. As there were no new additions, the number of recipients was declining. Two ongoing monthly payments continue to be made towards care costs.

The capital of the Fund was £200,000 approx. No new claims had been approved in the last six months. The Bankers Benevolent Fund now met most claims – 10 new payments made in the last six months. Phil urged pensioner visitors to flag up any suitable applicants for assistance.

5.

With Roy Heape retiring as a Trustee at the end of the year, two new Trustees – Ann Ballard and John Harper - were proposed. This was seconded by Rodney Bass and approved. This would bring the Trustees up to an ideal working number.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The question was raised as to whether Premier card holders would benefit from the Banks decision to leave travel insurance for Goldmastercard holders undisturbed. Product development was ongoing and it was understood be under review.

In an endeavour to improve communications with the pensioner population, various options were mentioned. A request was made to ask the Bank to re-instate the Group newspaper. This would be done by General Secretary. Also, there was a consideration for the Bank to contribute to the magazine and many centres invited Bank personnel as speakers.

Concern was expressed that data processing being outsourced outside the EU could provide an increased chance of fraud. The Bank advised that there was no perceived problem as the Groups global processing centres are governed by the Groups standards manual.

To the question as to whether there was any further development regarding possible change to the State Deduction (claw back), the Bank advised that there was no likelihood of any change in the current position.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGM – Monday 8 October 2007 at 11.30 am at Cutlers Hall, Sheffield to be followed by the Annual lunch at 1 pm.

Tuesday 15 January 2008 at 2 pm at Canary Wharf

Other dates for 2008 –

Wednesday 9 April and Thursday 24 July, both at 2 pm at Canary Wharf.

Annual lunch and AGM – Monday 6 October 2008 at Café Royal Piccadilly, London