



Helping London Co-ops Work Together

**London Federation of Housing Co-ops  
(Interim)**

**Report for the Annual General Meeting  
Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 10:30am**

(Held by Teleconference – This will be recorded)

(Excluding the inspected financial accounts for 2020)



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## **Introduction**

Our last report recorded a certain amount of frustration as so many events had been cancelled, yet remained positive as many groups were still progressing successfully. As time has gone on, however, so did lockdown and while most services continued, others stalled. This is our interim report as finance and audit services seem to have suffered in a way that maintenance services did not. Included are the budget for this year and some management accounts for 2020. By the AGM we hope to finally have the audited (well, independently inspected) accounts and the report will be updated accordingly.

The rest of the report will give a brief update on some of what has continued to happen in our sector, including how co-ops are raising funds from other co-ops, and how we hope to continue moving forwards into the future.

## Bunker Housing Co-op

Last summer members moved into the first two houses they had built on a disused garage site in Brighton. This was funded by loan stock and a loan from the Ecology building society. This March they received planning permission to build two more very nearby. They have been holding regular open days to showcase what they have achieved and to enthuse and excite others. They have also worked closely with Seasalt Housing Co-operative which has been letting to students on a co-operative basis since this September.



Bunker's vision is of a series of small self-built developments of affordable housing, with an emphasis on self-employed working families – including trades people, artists, key workers and freelancers – providing a safe, economically secure environment for them and their children to grow up in.

## Rising Sun Collective

The Rising Sun was a pub not far from New Cross which was home to a group of musicians and artists. When the owners decided that they wished to sell it, they put together a plan to purchase it as a co-op and provide permanent living accommodation and studio space. They had help from Locality with their business plan and set out to raise £1/4 million in loan stock so they could borrow £3/4 million to purchase it. They achieved this and have exchanged contracts, though there is still more money to be raised for refurbishment of the building.



We are so close! We have just £57k left to raise. We have been working extremely hard raising awareness through releasing music, getting T shirts printed and throwing community events. Anything you can loan us is massively appreciated and going towards creating a lasting legacy for London's low income creatives

## **Young Member Meeting**

The coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown presented my coop with significant challenges, primarily the restrictions that the lockdown imposed on our Management Committee's ability to meet in person. As a younger member of our coop whose election onto the MC coincided with the beginning of the lockdown, there were also personal challenges in trying to learn the basics of the day-to-day tasks involved in the running of a coop while restricted to discussions primarily over zoom. But the patience and time taken by other more experienced members of our MC to explain those basics and to involve me in discussions on the development of coop policy allowed me to play a role and develop my understanding of the coop. The London Federation's young members' network meeting, held over zoom (mentioned in the last LFHC annual report) was also very helpful, by discussing challenges facing other young coop members.

Theo Sharieff, Park Hill Housing Co-op (personal capacity)

## Co-op Awards

This section will be updated with the actual winners of the awards by the actual AGM. This is a copy of the request for nominations that has been sent out.

Dear [housing coop],

Last year, the London Federation of Housing Cooperatives inaugurated its award for outstanding housing coop members in London. Our first 'Cooperative Housing Distinguished Service' awards were presented to Sadik Sadik (a long-standing stalwart of Longlife Housing Coop, in Newham, who sadly passed away last December), and Hillary Ellwood (a founder member of seven West London housing coops and until the start of this year the administrator of LFHC).

LFHC Chair, Mick O'Sullivan, outlined the rationale behind the awards: "Too often our volunteers work for years behind the scenes to keep their co-operative and the housing cooperative movement going. It is fair to say that without these people's selfless labours our sector would have ceased to exist long ago. Many of the projects and initiatives that people in the Housing Co-operative Movement worked on have not only been innovative in their own right – but have since been copied by the wider housing movement".

This year, we are asking coops to send us any nominations they see fit for a Cooperative Housing Distinguished Service Award. Two awards for this category will be presented.

2021 will also see the London Fed's inaugural 'London Young Housing Co-operator Award' (recipients can range from 18-35 years). This award will highlight the important work of younger coop members, which has been particularly challenging during the covid lockdown period. We also hope the award will encourage more participation by younger members in the running of their housing coops, which is vital for the future of our sector. Again, we ask coops to send us nominations in this category (this will be a single award).

If you wish to make nominations for either award, please send us the full name of the person, any position they hold in their housing coop/London coop movement, and in up to 100 words please tell us why you think they deserve the award. The closing date for the nomination is [add date - 2 weeks or one week before AGM?] Please send nominations to [email address]

The LFHC Executive will select the award winners from the nominations. The awards will be presented at our AGM [date], and due to the AGM taking place on zoom, we will make arrangements for the award winners to receive their trophies.

Yours in Cooperation,

These were last year's winners:

**Sadik Sadik from Longlife Co-op** and Hilary Ellwood of Middlesex Co-op and ex-LFHC coordinator.





**LONDON FEDERATION OF HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES**

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**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 10:30am Sat. 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021  
Teleconference**

**Agenda**

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
- 2 **Minutes of the last AGM**
- 3 **Matters arising from the minutes**
- 4 **Annual Officers' Reports on the Federation's activities over the last year**  
These will be available at the meeting and on the website.
- 5 **Recommendations from the Executive**
  - a Subscription levels to remain the same
- 6 **Election of the Executive Committee** - 15 places available. There will be a very short get together of elected members at the end of the AGM to check a date when the new Executive will meet to elect officers and plan dates for future events.
- 7 **Annual Accounts – 2020** - Copies will be available to members in advance through e-mail application to [londonfed@gmail.com](mailto:londonfed@gmail.com) or at the meeting and on the website.
- 8 **Appointment of Auditors for the coming year**  
Including a decision not to require a full audit and to have an independent examination.

**If you would like to be considered for election to the Executive Committee please send your name, contact details and personal statement to us by email by 12 noon on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2021 ( [londonfed@gmail.com](mailto:londonfed@gmail.com) )**

**FOLLOWED BY A DISCUSSION FORUM 'GREEN ISSUES' 11 – 12:30**

**All interested parties are welcome to attend**

**Charlie Baker, Red Co-op** [www.red.coop](http://www.red.coop)

Retrofitting Co-op Properties and Virtual batteries for Communities

**Mick O'Sullivan and Waverley TA Co-op**

Decarbonising the Co-op Housing Stock

**Alex Hartley and Nadia Smith, SELCE & Community Energy London**

Sustainable Energy Options Across London & What Co-ops Can Do

**Rising Sun Collective** – Update on their purchase and loan stock.



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 10:30am Sat. 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020 by teleconference

### Minutes

#### 1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- a. PRESENT: Glyn Thomas (Exec), John Elgey (Unit 11), Niall Mulholland (Exec, Longlife), Greg Robbins (Sec Exec, Dennis), Ruby Almeida (Watermans), Mick O'Sullivan (Chair Exec, Finsbury Park), Chris Hurley (Ealing), Olu Oyenigba (Longlife), Martin Dumont (Exec, Leytonstone), Christine Hurley (Ealing), Ferdinand Lyons (Longlife), Leigh Hughes (Redwood), Brian Rose (Individ) Colin Penn (Exec, Finsbury Park), Mark Allan (Southwark), Sadik Sadik (Longlife) Martin Huber ( ) Wilfried Rimensberger (Treas Exec Millbank EMO) Hilary Ellwood (MHC Admin), Lois Austin (Longlife), Anthony Edwards, Barry Rowan (Longlife), Eilis Mulholland (Longlife)
- b. APOLOGIES: Mike Roberts, Kate Brown (Unit 11), Martin Denyer (Phoenix)

2. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:** The minutes had been circulated. They were agreed as a true record.

3. **MATTERS ARISING:** There were no matters arising

#### 4. ANNUAL OFFICERS REPORTS

- a. The secretary commented that the Federation had made efforts during the year to encourage groups in the development of co-operatives – particularly Bunker and Quaggy HCs in which it had purchased loan stock. It had also reached out to young members. On this subject, Niall reported meetings of young co-op members with several attendees from 4/5 co-ops. Some were officers within their own co-ops. So far they had discussed the history of co-ops and their relevance and responsibilities today. They had been asked to consider how the group should develop.
- b. The Secretary explained the reasons for the decision by the Executive to institute an annual Co-op Award. In future years this will be open to nominations from member co-ops but on this inaugural occasion two co-operators, Sadik Sadik from Longlife Housing Co-op and Hilary Ellwood, who has been associated with the development and support of co-ops since the 1970s, had been chosen. Both thanked the Federation for the recognition.
- c. **CHAIR:** The Chair's report was available in advance. Mick commented that the current Covid situation would result in recession and a drop in people's living standard. The current 'working from home' arrangements seemed likely to continue for many people and may be permanent for some. That and the realisation that basing organisations outside the centre of London might have financial benefits for organisations could lead to the availability of office blocks in the capital for other uses. Co-ops should be open to opportunities. He also raised

the possibility that members could find themselves in financial difficulties and co-ops should be aware of any assistance available.

- d. **SECRETARY:** The Secretary's report was available in advance. Greg highlighted the work done with other tenants' groups. Martin Dumont added some of the work with the LTF. Wilfried added information on work with Just Space. Greg looked to future opportunities and work with other groups. He also pointed members to the section on progress with past targets and future aims.
- e. **FINANCE:** The Treasurer pointed members to the information in the Annual Report.

- 5. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE:** Subscription: No change to subscription levels were proposed
- 6. **ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** The election of the existing Executive members and the addition of Mike Roberts were proposed and agreed unanimously
- 7. **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2019:** Copies of the accounts were available. The accounts were accepted by the members. There was some discussion about reported and future membership levels. It was recognised that effort would be needed to build up support again after the difficulties caused by the Covid lock down. The treasurer had ideas for groups to concentrate on. Development of social media, newsletters and involvement of individual members will be considered for the future programme of activity.
- 8. **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR THE COMING YEAR:** The planned review of possible audit providers had not happened. It was agreed to ensure this in the coming year. The proposal to reappoint Keith Johnson to carry out an independent review was agreed unanimously.

# Secretary's Report, London Federation of Housing Co-ops

## 1) Overview

This last year has seen a malaise spread through many of us as the lockdown and homeworking have dragged on relentlessly. People have still been achieving amazing things, but bringing them together, and getting people to plan for new endeavours, has been draining, so many things we hoped to achieve this year will still be waiting for us in the next. To make matters worse, some of the plots of land councils brought forward for community groups to bid on, it turns out they did not ensure that they were ready to be developed and ongoing problems and consultations will delay those projects, depleting the energy of activists further.

## 2) Covid-19

What is there to be said about Covid-19 that has not been said? Last year the talk was of communities pulling together. This last year the restrictions have been less, so while a minority still needed to shelter, by the end of 2020 the vaccine rollout had begun. Most people are back to work now. Throughout the year, we have not heard of many co-ops where there was a widespread financial impact, or where members fell into real hardship, though there must be some who are in that situation. With the vaccine top-up starting its roll-out, hopefully we are on the way out of this.

## 3) Work of LFHC During the Year

### a) Regular Events

During the year we arranged our usual events, but the AGM was delayed repeatedly, primarily due to audited accounts not being available. We set the date last month, still with no figures in sight, but trust they will be ready in time...

### b) Online

We have reviewed the website, with a new layout and a new server. They may be some teething problems yet, but we hope you like it. During the year we also started a Blog (although it could do with more updates) and we have started a YouTube channel which includes video of these open meetings and forums. The FaceBook group now has 700 users and that is the channel through which much of our immediate news is shared.

## 4) London Housing Panel

LFHC is a member organisation of the London Housing Panel which feeds into the Mayor's housing committee, Homes for Londoners. Through this we have regular meetings with key officers and representatives, including deputy mayor Tom Copley. The panel feeds back on GLA policies and proposals, but also has a number of asks. The panel's remit has again been extended for a further term and new participants have been brought in to represent the needs of young adults. The panel also provides a mechanism for different parts of the voluntary sector to cross-fertilise ideas and provide mutual support.

## 5) Other Developments

The number of opportunities this year has again been reduced, but they are still being pursued

where possible. Where councils have denied co-ops the ability to bid on parcels of land we have challenged this. We have supported community groups rather than bidding against them.

## 6) Progress Towards Targets Set Last Year

- a) Increase both our online engagement and the number of people involved in doing this – there must be at least 2-3 people contributing.

*There is more involvement on FaceBook, but this is often Exec members with others posting only occasionally. Nevertheless it is growing. Hopefully the use of the YouTube channel and the Blog will grow as the amount of material increases.*

- b) Continue seeking a pilot project that can show our ability to develop new housing or, failing that, continue to support existing groups to achieve the same.

*It has not been possible to establish a pilot project, though we continue to lobby the GLA and pursue opportunities. We have given some limited support to fledgling groups, but in some cases the land offered was not as 'ready' as anticipated. The main success has been in seeing that groups seem able to access larger and larger amounts of loan stock as the idea becomes more established.*

- c) Support and promote local networking groups.

*This has simply not been possible during Covid.*

- d) Through our partners and the London Housing Panel, find ways to work with others co-operatively to support housing solutions for Londoners and co-operators in particular.

*Our joint work has focused on the priorities of our partners this year, addressing issues of temporary accommodation and homelessness. Nevertheless we have been trying to develop strategies to support those in Guardian arrangements to transition to more stable short-life accommodation.*

- e) Support the young members' group and consider what other activities could be organised, including a conference.

*This remains a priority, albeit one that will start again once face to face meetings are a practical possibility.*

## 7) Targets for Next Year

- a) Increase the number of Blog articles and YouTube videos to engage with more people.

- b) Continue seeking a pilot project that can show our ability to develop new housing or, failing that, continue to support existing groups to achieve the same.

- c) Continue to develop and publicise the loan stock model.

- d) Support the young members' group and consider what other activities could be organised, including a conference.

**Greg Robbins LFHC Secretary, October 2021**

## Finance Report

Membership income dropped slightly this year. A larger surplus is expected in 2021 as there will be no staffing costs and the exec tends not to claim. Loan stock that has been purchased also does not appear here as it is effectively a movement in reserves, rather than expenditure.

Some elements were included within affiliation fees that should be clarified before the AGM.

<b>BUDGET PROPOSED FOR 2021</b>		Budget 2021	Budget 2020	Actual 2020
<b>INCOME</b>				
Subscriptions		8000	9000	7458
Bank Interest		0	0	0
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
<b>PAID SUPPORT</b>				
Wages and Salaries		0	3,400	2,456
<b>MEETING EXPENSES</b>				
Exec	travel	150	150	0
	room hire	0	0	0
	refreshments	175	175	0
Forum	room hire	0	0	0
	refreshments	50	50	0
	speakers	0	0	0
	joint event contribution	500	500	0
Conference				
	fee	450	450	0
	travel	150	150	0
Social Media and Video		500	500	0
<b>ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES</b>				
	insurance	900	750	2176
	telephone/fax	0	0	0
	postage	200	200	0
	stationery and printing	1065	1065	0
	Affiliation fees	50	50	1040
	Bank charges	0	0	0
	Equipment expenses	100	100	0
	Miscellaneous	100	100	0
<b>LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL FEES</b>				
	Audit and accountancy	1200	700	-423
		<b>5590</b>	<b>8,325.00</b>	<b>5249</b>
Surplus (deficit)		2410	575.00	2209

## Balance Sheet to 31 Dec 2020

### Current Assets

#### Loans to Bunker and Quaggy (Not repayable within 12 months)

<b>Other Debtors</b>	<b>£2,895</b>
<b>Cash</b>	<b><u>£34,007</u></b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£36,901</b>

### Creditors (< 1 year)

<b>Bought Ledger</b>	-	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Accruals</b>	-	<b><u>1,548</u></b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	-	<b>£2,548</b>

**Net Assets** **£34,353**

Share Capital	£1,430
Reserves	£30,174
Surplus for the Year	£2,209
<b>Shareholder Funds</b>	<b><u>£34,353</u></b>