



London Environmental Health Practitioners



ANNUAL REPORT 2008

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INTRODUCTION

London Environmental Health Practitioners was established as an incorporated company during July 2007 and obtained charitable status in January 2008. Members of the Association of London Environmental Health Managers (Alehm) decided that, to enable Alehm better achieve its aims and objectives, a charitable company should be formed. The activities of the charity are undertaken using the name Alehm.

The membership of Alehm is made up of environmental health practitioners who are responsible for the management of London borough Environmental Health services. Alehm has been in existence for over 10 years and has a good reputation in the environmental health community for delivering its action plans and making a positive contribution to improving environmental health in London.

London's environmental health practitioners play a significant role in shaping the lives of communities. They work in all 33 London boroughs and at the London Port Health Authority, delivering services that promote and enforce environmental health provisions. Topics covered include health and safety; food safety; pest control; private sector housing standards; licensing; pollution control; and emergency planning. Over 6 million people and 250,000 businesses are recipients' of these activities.

Alehm provides a policy and strategy forum to support and develop environmental health work in London. Best Value and continuous improvement underpin its work. Alehm provides a link between London borough Environmental Health Managers; professional organisations, such as the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH); and local government bodies including London Councils and Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS). Links have also been developed between government bodies including the Food Standards Agency (FSA); Health and Safety Executive (HSE); Department of Health (DH); and Government Office for London (GOL).

Alehm has specialist topic groups with membership from London boroughs, who meet regularly to develop and take forward coordinated action. The established specialist groups cover food safety and health and safety. Ad hoc groups are also set up to deal with specific issues; most recently, benchmarking services and the co-ordination of enforcement of no smoking provisions. Alehm also has specialist advisers who, in addition to representing the organisation with external bodies such as LACORS and the FSA, also provide technical support and advice at members' meetings.

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION



This Annual Report outlines the work of Alehm during the period January 2008 to December 2008. It shares with our members, professional colleagues and the public not only our organisational development and accomplishments, but also the financing and expenditure that supported our work.

I have had the privilege of being the Chair of Alehm for several years and have great pleasure in seeing the organisation mature with the setting up of an incorporated company which achieved charitable status in January 2008.

The achievements described in this report could not have been attained without the contributions made by many people. Firstly I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for the support they have provided during the year. This is the first year that we have had a Trustee executive and it is providing a range of opinions and expertise that is making a very positive contribution to the direction and delivery of our activities.

From the CIEH I would like to thank Graham Jukes, Chief Executive; Tay Potier the London Region Policy Officer; and all the staff at the CIEH who have supported our activities during the year.

Thanks to Kath Lewis, our student training officer, and Keith Hill who has provided secretarial and coordination support during the year.

This year we have held many of our members and topic group meetings in the conference rooms of the City of London environmental health service. I would like to extend my thanks to Philip Thompson, City Environmental Health Director and staff for their hospitality.

As Trustees, our role is fully supported by the work and contributions of our members. I especially would like to thank colleagues who have taken on roles as Chairs of topic groups, represented Alehm with our partner organisations or made a positive contribution in any way to the working of our charity.

There are also people from partner organisations that have supported Alehm. I would like to thank Janet Francis HSE Partnership Manager who has provided Alehm with unfailing support in helping to deliver a coordinated health and safety service in London. Janet moves to another role in the HSE in spring 2009; I wish her well in her new job and hope that she is able to keep in touch with us.

I feel that it is an honour to be involved with Alehm; I believe that through our joint action we can make a positive contribution to our aim of improving and safeguarding environmental health in London to the benefit of the public and I look forward to continuing to work with you all in 2009.

Steve Miller (Chairman)

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Charity name	London Environmental Health Practitioners
Charity registration number	1122440
Company registration number	6316667
Alternative name	Association of London Environmental Health Managers (Alehm)
Principal address	Chadwick Court 15 Hatfields London SE18DJ
Web address	alehm.gov.uk
Email	alehm.sec@btinternet.com
Telephone	07917025494
Banker Details	HSBC Bank plc, 60 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TR
Trustees	(who are also the executive board)

Steve Miller (Chairman)	<i>Head of Public Protection</i>	London Borough of Newham
Philip K. Thompson	<i>City Environmental Health Director</i>	City of London
Tay Potier	<i>London Region Policy Officer</i>	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
Graham Jukes	<i>Chief Executive</i>	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
David Thrale	<i>Head of Environmental Health</i>	London Borough of Brent
Trevor Williams	<i>Head of Environmental Health</i>	London Borough of Enfield
Paul Morse	<i>Director of Environmental Health</i>	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The charity's purpose is set out in the London Environmental Health Practitioner's Memorandum of Association as follows;

The objectives for which the charity is formed shall be to help to protect and improve the environment and public health in London for the public benefit and to advance public education in environmental and public health matters by:-

Providing a policy and strategy forum for London borough environmental health managers and staff to develop and deliver environmental health services within London;

Developing, delivering and promoting the provision of co-ordinated environmental health across London; and,

Identifying environmental health training needs; developing and delivering such training.

HOW OUR ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR DELIVER OUR ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

At the beginning of the year the executive decided to review the business plan for the year and develop a programme of actions that would support 5 themes of Partnership; Policy and Strategy; Supporting Services; Learning; and, Building Capacity.

Our work during the year is described in the context of our 5 themes as follows-

Partnership

We aim to work with partners to establish and develop alliances that will help us to improve the effectiveness of service delivery.

The charity was re-launched during the year with an event attended by key stakeholders. Stakeholders were advised of the action taken to achieve incorporation and charitable status; provided with details of the work plan; and invited to meet the Trustees and discuss future working to take forward the objectives of the association.

During the year, the charity's aim of developing partnerships has included working with the CIEH, London Councils and participating London borough environmental health services to establish a website displaying the standard of hygiene compliance found in food premises subject to local authority inspection. Another initiative involves partnership working with Thames Water Utilities and participating borough environmental health services to ensure the prioritised treatment of rat infestation in sewers. Working with the HSE local authority liaison officer has been maintained, enabling strategic planning of promotional and health and safety enforcement activities to be coordinated across London.

Policy and Strategy

We aim to provide a policy and strategy forum for London environmental health services.

We arrange a programme of Alehm members' meetings during the year. Managers are responsible for a wide range of activities and by providing themed meetings they are able to receive a comprehensive update on the topic area to help inform their operational and strategic decisions. The topics covered this year included food safety and health and safety regulation; private sector housing regulation; with another session covering the issue of environmental protection. In addition to the themes, each meeting provided an opportunity for feedback from specialist advisors and for managers to brief on generic or management issues.

A bench marking group was established to enable members to gather operational data about their services to allow comparisons between boroughs to be made. This information will help managers develop services that are adequate to meet operational needs but also reflect the character and demands of their boroughs. Members of the group gathered information on topics including food safety and health and safety regulation; pest control; noise; and enforcement of legal provision for houses let in multiple occupation.

During the year a web site has been established at <http://www.alehm.org.uk>. Members are able to access the site for information about activities, minutes and documents connected to association events and initiatives.

Supporting Services

We aim to sustain technical and specialist members groups and help them keep other colleagues advised of their activities and initiatives.

There are two established technical groups, one dealing with food issues, the London Food Coordinating Group, and another, The Health and Safety Liaison Group, which coordinates health and safety at work regulation and promotion by borough Environmental Health Services. At the beginning of the year the executive proposed, supported by the members that both groups should be provided with paid secretarial help to improve the recording of proceedings and the dissemination of information to members. Funding for this activity is by an additional annual fee levied on members.

During the year the Food Standards Agency has given the London Food Coordinating Group a Food Champion 2008 award for the work it has undertaken in delivering the London Boroughs' Safer food, better business project and developing the London Scores on the Doors initiative.

The decision to make the London Boroughs' Consortium a Food Champion recognised the way they had successfully co-ordinated and delivered two high-profile projects across London since 2005. The Safer food, better business (SFBB) initiative involved 28 London authorities and resulted in over 3,000 food businesses receiving face-to-face support and coaching to help improve their food safety management.

The success of the SFBB project led to the London Scores on the Doors scheme, involving 30 authorities, which was also supported by the FSA as a pilot project to develop the Scores on the Doors initiative. This scheme, launched in October 2007, uses a website to display food hygiene information for the public. More than 80,000 businesses are covered, making it the largest scheme in England. The site has had more than 700,000 page views since its launch. At a meeting of the FSA Board in December 2008 they decided to adopt the scheme used in London for national adoption.

Both of these projects need close partnership working, including training for relevant staff across the participating authorities. This has led to a more collaborative and consistent approach across London, benefiting businesses and consumers. Partners in these projects have included: the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health London Region; the FSA; a private hygiene training company; London Councils and many smaller organisations, such as the Asian and Oriental School of Catering.



Receiving the Food Champion Award from Dame Deidre Hutton (right), Chair of the Food Standards Agency is Tay Potier, CIEH, London Region Policy Officer and Rick Mason, Environmental Health Manager, LB Barnet, Chair of the London Food Coordinating Group

A group to deal with the coordination of the enforcement of no smoking provisions continued to meet to review and learn from the effective implementation of the requirement. This group, working with Newham Healthworks (an educational charity), has successfully bid for external funding to undertake work in raising awareness of the health risk from Shisha pipe smoking and to research effective enforcement methods to gain compliance with the law.

Members volunteer to represent the association at meetings of national organisations that have an involvement with environmental health. These organisations include LACORS, FSA and the HSE. Specialist advisors report back to members meetings on developments in their respective topic areas.

Working with the CIEH London Region Policy Officer; staff from the Health Protection Unit (HPU); and Government Office for London; effort has continued to be made to develop support for managers in dealing with emergency events and in the subsequent recovery phase.

An environmental health professional (HPU EH professional) was appointed to develop London wide policies and procedures for the management of infectious disease. The partners involved in this initiative include Alehm, CIEH and the London Unit of the Health Protection Agency. Recruitment to the post took place in December 2008 with the successful candidate starting work in early 2009.

Learning

We aim to enhance the learning and development of London staff and trainees.

The charity operates a student training consortium arrangement with participating boroughs. Students undertaking the Environmental Health degree or masters course at university are invited to apply for places on the scheme. When appointed to the scheme they receive a small annual bursary to help with their expenses but more importantly access to a managed programme of practical training placements at participating boroughs. The placements help them to develop their professional skills and complete their Experiential Learning Portfolio.

In addition to the consortium arrangement, a programme of student practical training opportunities is arranged with all London trainees being able to attend. Sessions cover public health, environmental control, contingency planning and practical food inspection.

The charity has supported the services available from the Positive Action Training Highway (PATH) organisation to assist managers recruit and train staff from ethnic groups. PATH is a Skills Development Agency which seeks to help address the under representation of black and minority ethnic groups in management and professional positions. One borough has employed a student while another has expressed interest. Alehm has been recognised by PATH as an organisation that has worked well to promote diversity in its activities.

Building Capacity

We aim to develop the business capacity to support Alehm's future plans.

Incorporation and charitable status has been achieved for Alehm. With the support from CIEH and the consultant providing secretarial and coordination support, systems and procedures are being put in place to ensure the effective governance of the company.

This annual report, the first to be prepared for the charity, will be placed on the website, copied to members and provided to journalists of the environmental health professional publications produced by the CIEH for national coverage.

HOW OUR ACTIVITIES DELIVER PUBLIC BENEFIT

The users of environmental health services are the public. Effective regulation promotes efficient and productive business and healthier, more sustainable communities. Environmental health services deal with the most fundamental problems these communities face. Environmental health services work to reduce health inequalities; support the vulnerable; improve local opportunities; and delivers benefit to the public. Alehm provides a London centred professional focal point for all 33 boroughs and supports the delivery of consistent and balanced environmental health services.

Specifically in relation to the 5 themes public benefit is delivered by:

Identifying and establishing partnership working maximises the use of resources and improves the effectiveness of service delivery to the benefit of the public;

Supporting members in the development and maintenance of their policy and strategic knowledge – it assists members to design effective services that meet legislative requirements benefiting the public;

Maintaining the technical groups helps to ensure that the details of environmental topics are developed and that staff are properly trained to enable them to deliver a complete service to the benefit of the public;

Helping to maintain adequate numbers of suitably qualified staff that reflect the ethnicity of the Capital are essential to delivering a sustainable service which safeguards the environmental health, benefiting the public;

STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Document

To enable Alehm to better achieve its aims and objectives members agreed that a charitable company should be formed to run parallel with the Alehm. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charity and it is governed under its Articles of Association. Incorporation was achieved during July 2007. A Chair and Board of Directors were elected to manage the new company and an application for charitable status of Alehm was made in November 2007. The application for charitable status was successful and the charity began commenced operations in January 2008.

Recruitment and Appointment of the LEHP Executive

The Trustees of Alehm are members of Alehm and were approved to undertake the role by members of the charity. The Alehm Articles of Association require that one third of the Trustees must apply for re-election each year. As this is a new charity it is hoped the Trustees standing for re-election are reappointed in order to establish a stable membership of the executive in the early years of the company to develop the expertise and effectiveness of the executive.

Trevor Williams and Paul Morse will retire by rotation and being eligible will offer themselves for re-election.

Trustee Training

The effective induction and training of Trustees poses a challenge for new charities. Fortunately three Trustees, including the Chair, currently hold Trustee positions on the boards of other charities and consequently have experience of the role and responsibilities of the role. The board has also benefited from the support provided by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health which is a charity and has many years of experience of operating in this capacity. Trustees new to the role have received the information provided by the Charity Commission. In future years it is anticipated that when training needs are identified suitable training will be identified and arranged.

Risk Management

The executive has undertaken a review of the major risks that the charity is exposed to. The major risks are described below–

The charity has membership from all London borough environmental health managers and could face a major risk to its viability and influence if it lost all borough representation. To control this risk, members are encouraged to take part in the preparation and adoption of the annual action plan and fees structure. By adopting this approach members can develop a plan that meets their needs and agree a fee structure that they can afford.

The performance of the charity will be monitored and reported to the executive on a regular basis during the year. Each year, members will receive a verbal performance report, at the AGM, and a copy of the Annual Report.

Internal control risks are minimised by the support provided by the CIEH and the implementation of procedures, developed by the charity, for the authorisation of all transactions and projects.

As a new charity a major risk is ensuring that all the statutory auditing and reporting requirements are fully and properly complied with. This challenge is being met by the Secretary and the Executive with support from the CIEH. It is proposed that during the year members will be advised of the action taken, lessons learnt and the approach to be taken in future years.

Organisational Structure

Administrative and strategic support for the organisation is provided by a consultant who supplies secretarial and coordination support to Alehm. Another consultant provides support for student training activities. Alehm has a number of technical groups that support members' activities. These groups meet regularly and hold minuted meetings. Minute takers service these meetings and are paid on a fixed fee basis.

Responsibilities of the Executive

The board of Alehm develops and guides the strategic direction and manages the financial activities of the charity. Alehm is governed by the Memorandum and Articles of Association that were drafted for the purpose of incorporation and for charitable status. Trustees are recruited and appointed in accordance with the rules of the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements. The trustees have chosen to prepare the accounts for the charitable company in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare such financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the result for that period and comply with UK GAAP and the Companies Act 1985. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- (a) select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- (b) make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- (c) state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed,
- (d) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Business Planning

The work of Alehm is developed into a business plan with progress being regularly reported to the board. Decisions are taken by the executive, or where this is impracticable, they are delegated to the Chair. The Chair's decisions are reported at the next convenient meeting of the board.

The organisation develops an annual business plan to direct its activities during the year. The Mission Statement, Aims and Objectives are reviewed annually and the Action Plan devised to take them forward. The business plans for 2007 and 2008 can be found at <http://www.alehm.org.uk>.

The Trustees deliberations on the Mission Statement, Aims, Objectives and the development of the Action Plan were influenced by the review of the strategic direction of the charity undertaken by members in December 2006. In summary, members felt that the profile of the charity should be raised; it should be strategic but balanced against the need for more partnership working with other bodies, including the Local Better Regulation Executive (LBRO), and developing uniformity of approach in service planning and delivery. They also wished to see the key themes of Public Health and Wellbeing; Sustainability; Private Sector Housing and the Olympics 2012 included in the work of the charity.

Environmental health is a rapidly developing topic that requires the charity to regularly review its business plan to ensure that it makes the most effective use of the resources it has at its disposal. It is therefore intended that performance will be reported regularly to members.

Principal Funding source

Funding for the year was from subscription fees levied on members. There was an additional sum received from the London HPU to fund a project to be undertaken during 2009.

Investment policy

Funds are placed in a deposit account with the bank and receive a variable interest rate.

Reserves Policy

The policy requires that the organisation maintains a financial reserve of the equivalent of one year of income.

Plans for future period

It is anticipated that during 2009 income will be based on, as normal, on revenue obtained from member's subscriptions. The level of subscription will be agreed at the AGM.

Financial Review

A summary of the financial activities for the year ending 31 December 2008 is provided in this report.

Income

Member's subscription has been maintained at the 2007 amount for the year. An additional charge has been made to cover the cost of providing secretarial support for the technical groups supported by the association. Income was also received during the year to fund the Student training consortium, for the maintenance and development of the London scores on the doors initiative and towards the end of the year from the London HPU to cover the cost of an environmental health professional to develop cross cutting issues in the Capital.

Expenditure

General fund expenditure was similar to 2007. Expenditure of the monies collected for the London scores on the doors initiative has been delayed due to the scheme being adopted by the Food Standard Authority (FSA) as a national scheme. The FSA are currently reviewing the way in which the scheme will be presented nationally and expenditure will be delayed until this approach is known. The HPU initiative has been progressed with the recruitment and appointment of an environmental health professional and expenditure of this element of the budget will take place during 2009.

The effect of these delays in expenditure is that the funds and reserves carried forward into 2009 are greater than in the previous year.

Financial pressures

The charity has an ambitious and challenging work programme. In addition to supporting the profession, London is to be the venue for the Olympic and Paralympics in 2012 which will have a significant impact on the future development of environmental health.

It is essential that adequate financial reserves are maintained and a reserves policy of the equivalent of one year's income has been adopted. The CIEH provides organisational support to the association and it has been agreed by the executive to pay £20,000 for these services during 2009.

Member's subscriptions have been maintained at £995 for two years. In order to meet the demands on the charity finances the level of subscription will have to be reviewed during the year, which will be particularly challenging in the current financial climate.

By order of the Board

Steve Miller, Chair

Keith Hill, Secretary/Coordinator

LONDON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

Financial Summary for the year ended 31 December 2008

Charitable Activities

2008	Student Consortia £	HPU EH Professional £	Supporting Services £	Scores on the doors £	General Funds £	Total Funds £
Income from charitable activities						
Subscriptions	31,500	-	11,220	29,000	33,830	105,550
HPU funding	-	40,000	-	-	-	40,000
Charitable resources expended						
Expenses	7,391	-	9,800	12,436	32,582	62,209
Bursaries	21,570	-	-	-	-	21,570
Governance costs	-	-	-	-	2,200	2,200
Total expended	28,961	-	9,800	12,436	34,782	85,979
Movement in the year	2,539	40,000	1,420	16,564	(952)	59,571
Funds 1 January 2008	78,562	-	-	18,527	39,421	136,510
Funds 31 December 2008	81,101	40,000	1,420	35,091	38,469	196,081

2007	Student Consortia £	Safer food better business £	Supporting Services £	Scores on the doors £	General Funds £	Total Funds £
Income from charitable activities						
Subscriptions	36,000	83,629	-	-	-	119,629
Charitable resources expended						
Expenses	3,010	83,629	-	6,786	18,806	112,231
Bursaries	13,774	-	-	-	-	13,774
Governance costs	-	-	-	-	2,000	2,000
Total expended	16,784	83,629	-	6,786	20,806	128,005
Movement in the year	19,216	-	-	(6,786)	(20,806)	(8,376)
Funds 18 July 2007	59,346	-	-	25,313	60,227	144,886
Funds 31 December 2007	78,562	-	-	18,527	39,421	136,510