

TANT

TENANTS ASSOCIATION OF THE NATIONAL TRUST

TANT Newsletter— Chat from the Chairman

The pace has been pretty lively of late and now that the dust is beginning to settle on the sweeping reorganisation of the way the National Trust is run, we can take stock. Nearly all our old network of contacts at senior level are gone or will be departing soon and we are slowly finding our way amongst their replacements although there are few directly corresponding positions.

The new policy of devolved management; 'going local' is still being put in place. It will have meaning for all of us as Tenant-Custodians because important decision making about our lives, livelihoods and the roof over our heads will be made by the local management teams. Centralised NT governance will consist mainly of a consulting service and policy guidance.

It sounds great, but as the saying goes; 'be careful of what you wish for'. Two things are important; we need to have confidence that NT staff are selected and trained to do the job properly. We are assured of this by The Trust, but we believe Going Local can only really happen when we as tenants have a proper input which is heeded locally. That's where you come in. TANT was structured to deal with a centralised NT governance system, and is expanding its influence in areas like policy making and dispute resolution.

To respond to the changes and continue to

strengthen our influence we also need to change. There is now a greater need to set up a Tenants Association everywhere we can. I urge you not to wait until there's a problem but to seek to influence plans, shape outcomes and encourage new ideas.

The National Trust appreciates our worth, but we need to show the few sceptics that still inhabit the local NT management how we can work with them to get the results that benefit us all. Dialogue is the key. I propose a new 'acorn' version of the regional Tenants Association still affiliated to TANT but easier to start and maintain, with the flexibility to interact with The Trust but not impinge on our volunteers' busy lives.

This Tenant Representative Group or TRG can be very small to start with but may seek to grow and become the full Association with officers, minuted meetings and so on later. Peter Bate, our Development Officer has helped many start-up TRG's. A talk with him is usually all that's needed; the resulting change in the relationship with your landlord can be amazing. Please let us know first so that we can affiliate you, give guidance and perhaps put you in touch with other T-C contacts locally.

As a result of TANT lobbying the Trust has formally recognised our Tenant-Custodian status and every tenant will be offered our

own special free membership of the National Trust. You should all be notified soon about this. With it comes car parking and free admission at attractions, all the literature associated with membership, but alas not yet voting rights. For now voting can only be achieved by 'upgrading' with a payment. Of course you can opt-out of the special membership if you wish.

The effect of Housing Benefit capping on Tenant-Custodians is concerning us. We are making The Trust aware of the problems it will pose for many. They are listening, but we don't yet know how they may respond. The ability to National Trust property swap may be a solution for some and indeed generally among us T-C's. We have in mind a TANT led Tenant Mobility Service to broker this. Peter Bate or I would like to hear from anyone who can help us to set this up.

The AGM is coming up; details are elsewhere in this newsletter. It's a beautiful and homely venue well worth a visit in its own right. We invite 'tenant talent' to join our committee so if you have anything to offer particularly in administration; mediation, law or media management please come along or talk to us beforehand.

I look forward to seeing lots of you there.

Andrew Turner-Cross, Chairman

Development Officers Report

TANT has now been in existence for some 10 years. It started as an informal partnership between a few local groups and has grown to become the formal association for all National Trust Tenants-about 10,000 people spread throughout the country.

It is operated by volunteer members and officers and works with the Trust at local and national levels on all tenant related matters. Our committee members meet regularly with senior National Directors to put forward tenants' views when national policies are being discussed.

There are now some 15 local tenant associations who operate under the umbrella of support and guidance from TANT. If you want to set up a local association where you are or if your current group needs help, please do contact one of our committee members.

One of TANT's most valued functions is the free help and advice given to individual tenants. Constantly and typically over the last weeks we have been in touch with tenants in Wales, Northern Ireland and from the East of England to Cornwall. Subjects involved have been emergency contact numbers, heating, (or lack of it), damp, leaks, burst pipes, water supply, neighbour disputes, types of lease and difficulties over rent levels and payments. If you have a problem, we would always advise you to contact your local National Trust office initially, preferably by phone and in writing but if after a reasonable time matters are not being resolved we are here to try and help.

On the subject of help, as TANT keeps growing we need more volunteers in all sorts of fields so if you have a little time

please do come and speak with us.

A more intense aspect of our work is in dispute resolution. Occasionally there can be a serious breakdown in the relationship between the landlord and the tenant.

Here it has become clear that TANT has a valuable role to play and if you meet such a situation please let us know.

Although much of what we do is about problems, our constitution also says that we aim to develop and promote community.

We are therefore always keen to receive news or ideas for community events and please do contact us with your views.

Peter Bate

TANT AGM

Sunday 10th April 2011

Coffee at 10.30am with the AGM starting at 11.00am.

Buffet lunch to follow afterwards



The location is Philipps House, Dinton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 5HH.

This is a National Trust Property where the Tenant Custodians are Cristina and Andrew George. The house is located 9 miles west of Salisbury on the North side of the B3089.

If you are unable to attend the AGM and have anything you would like to be raised then please email it to Alan Limb at alimb@briuk.co.uk

TANT Contact Details

You may contact TANT Committee members as follows:

- Andrew Turner-Cross, Chairman (07741) 053 764
- Peter Bate, Development Officer (01643) 704 063
- Linda Baharier, Treasurer (07815) 842 133
- Alan Limb, Secretary (07717) 823 101

Cristina George elected to the National Trust Council

It was a historic moment when, in October, I became the first ever tenant-custodian to be elected onto the Council of the National Trust.

It is a great privilege to serve the National Trust in this way and, in particular, I look forward to trying to develop and progress the relationship the Trust has with its many tenant-custodians across the country.

Thank you to those of you who were able to vote for me and I hope in some small way I can make a difference.
