THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES



Annual Report 2008/2009

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce my first Annual report as Chairman of the Commission. The main focus of the Commission's work during the last year has been the continuation of preparations for the Review of the electoral arrangements of principal authorities. This has involved in the main endeavouring to ensure that anomalies in community areas have been addressed prior to the start of the main Review.

In January the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government issued Directions to the Commission for the commencement of the Review of electoral arrangements. This has meant that we now have an exceptionally large workload which will continue until 2011 when we expect to complete this work. The first of these reviews were commenced in Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Denbighshire and Flintshire.

The nature of the reviews conducted are set out in this report, but I must emphasise once again that our overriding objective in every case is to bring forward proposals that are in the interests of effective and convenient local government, which are arrived at objectively and independently and provide a greater democratic balance in respect of electoral arrangements.

A vital part of all our work is our consultation procedures which we try to make as comprehensive as possible and as appropriate as possible to the scale of the review. We are grateful for all the representations that we receive. We consider very carefully every single one of them as we assess evidence before reaching our conclusions, although inevitably some people are sometimes disappointed by our conclusions.

I am grateful to my predecessor and fellow Commissioners for their wise counsel and helpful contributions. I would also like to thank the staff of the Secretariat for their support, loyalty and hard work.

Paul Wood Chairman

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) was established in June 1974 under the terms of Section 53 of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act). The statutory functions of the Commission are specified in Sections 54 to 78 of the 1972 Act as amended by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 (the 1994 Act). Schedule 8 to the 1972 Act makes provision for the Commission's constitution and proceedings.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Commission is:

To review local government areas and electoral arrangements in Wales, with a view to considering whether or not to make proposals to the National Assembly for Wales for effecting changes which appear to the Commission to be desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government.

Membership

1.3 Membership of the Commission during 2008-09 was:

Mrs Susan G Smith OBE LLB [Chair until 31 December 2008]

Mr Paul Wood [Deputy Chair until 31 December 2008 and from 1 January 2009 Chairman]

Mr Dennis Hughes Roberts MBE BSc DMS MBCS MCMI Deputy Chair until May 2008.

Rev Hywel Meredydd Davies BD [Member until 31 December 2008 and Deputy Chairman from 1 January 2009]

John Bader [Member from 1 January 2009]

Commissioners currently hold membership of other public bodies. Mr Paul Wood is a Member of the Boundary Commission for Wales, Non-Executive Director, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University NHS Trust, Member, Association of Chief Police Officers, Member, National Association of Retired Police Officers, Member, Stakeholder Forum, University of Wales Institute, Member, Parochial Church Council, St. Margaret's Church, Crynant, Governor, Crynant Primary School, Member, Friends of the Grand Theatre, Swansea, Member, Glamorgan Health & Racquet Club, Member, The National Trust, Member, The Rambler's Association.

The Rev H M Davies is Chair of Tearfund in Wales and Menter Môn and Vice Chair of the Anglesey Local Health Board. He is also a Member of the Sports Council for Wales, the North Wales Court Board, Energywatch Wales Lay Committee and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action. The Commission must have at least one Welsh speaker and Rev H M Davies fulfils this requirement.

Mr John Bader is Chair, Somer Community Housing Trust, Member, Boundary Commission for Wales, Member, Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, Member, National Trust, Member, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Member, Newport Housing Trust, Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing

Commission meetings are held as often as the programme of work dictates. It is the Commission's normal practice to visit the locality of reviews, especially in respect of area (boundary) reviews. In the interests of efficiency, site inspections are combined with Commission meetings whenever possible. Nine meetings were held during 2008-09.

The Auditor General for Wales is the Commission's external auditor, while contracts exist for the provision of internal audit, legal, accountancy, translation and printing services.

The Secretariat

- 1.4 The Commission's secretariat is located in Caradog House, 1-6 St. Andrews Place, Cardiff. At the beginning of the year there were 8 members of staff. The posts of Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Finance Manager are occupied by direct employees of the Commission. The posts of Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Finance Manager are all full time. The 5 other members of staff are civil servants seconded from the Welsh Assembly Government and Companies House: 3 working full time and 2 working part-time.
- 1.5 From 1 January 2002 the Commission's Secretariat undertook the responsibility of providing a Secretariat to the Boundary Commission for Wales for its Reviews of the Parliamentary constituencies in Wales under a Memorandum of Agreement between the Commission, the National Assembly for Wales, the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions and the Office of National Statistics.

Statutory Duties

1.6 The main duties of the Commission are:

Local Government Areas

- To keep under review all principal areas in Wales for the purpose of considering whether or not to propose to the Welsh Assembly Government changes appearing to the Commission desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government;
- ii) To consider requests for reviews from local authorities;
- iii) To consider reports made by principal councils in respect of community area reviews carried out by them and make recommendations to the Welsh Assembly Government.

Electoral Arrangements

- iv) Under the provisions of the new section 64 inserted into the 1972 Act by Section 6 of the 1994 Act, as soon as practicable after the ordinary election of councillors for any of the Welsh principal areas held in 1995 the Commission was required to:
 - a) Review the electoral arrangements for those areas with a view to considering future electoral arrangements; and

- b) Formulate proposals for those arrangements; and
- v) Not less than ten or more than fifteen years after the completion of the initial review and thereafter, at similar intervals, to review the electoral arrangements for every principal area in Wales.

Directions

vi) The Welsh Assembly Government may direct the Commission to conduct a review of Wales as a whole, or of any one or more local government areas or parts of such areas in Wales.

Review Procedure

- 1.7 Section 60 of the 1972 Act lays down procedural guidelines to be followed when undertaking all reviews. The basic stages of a review are:
 - i) An announcement of the review's commencement in which initial suggestions and comments are invited by a specified date;
 - ii) The publication of the Commission's draft proposals when comments on them are similarly invited by a specified date; and
 - iii) The publication of final proposals after which any further comments must be addressed to the Welsh Assembly Government.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The Commission is sponsored by the Local Government Policy Division of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Commission is subject to periodic Policy Reviews that provide medium term strategic and policy guidelines for the Commission's annual plans. The last strategic planning period began with a Policy Review of the Commission undertaken by the National Assembly for Wales in 2001.

Targets

- 2.2 Directions from the Welsh Assembly Government to the Commission to undertake area reviews contain directed deadlines, which are set following consideration of the complexity of each review. The Commission aims to complete area reviews undertaken at the request of local authorities within twelve months.
- 2.3 The procedures to be followed when undertaking a review are defined by statute, requiring the Commission to inform and consult widely and take into account representations before making any final proposals to the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 2.4 There are no statutory time periods for the consultation or other stages of the procedures, which are left to the discretion of the Commission. The Commission has given careful consideration to the need to provide adequate time for the views of local authorities and other interested persons to be submitted. Targets are set within the twelve months of a review for the stages of publicity and consultation, the production of draft and final reports and the time needed for assessing the issues involved. However, the Commission occasionally finds it necessary to take into consideration particular circumstances and, unless directed deadlines apply, are flexible in adherence to targets.

3. ACTIVITY IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR 2007-08

Community Reviews

- 3.1 The Commission completed the review of the community boundaries in the County Borough of Wrexham, publishing their Report and Proposals in September 2007. The Commission received a Direction from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government dated 15 March 2008 to conduct a further review of specific community boundaries in the County Borough of Wrexham by 30 September 2008. The review began on 27 March 2008.
- 3.2 The Commission published Draft Proposals for their review of communities in the County of Isle of Anglesey in July 2007.
- 3.3 The Commission published Draft Proposals for their reviews of communities in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff in August 2007. Report and Proposals for the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff were published in February 2008.
- 3.4 During 2007-08 the Commission was directed by the Welsh Assembly Government to conduct reviews of communities in the County / County Boroughs of Caerphilly, Conwy, Bridgend and Swansea. The review of communities in Caerphilly commenced in October 2007, Conwy in October 2007, Bridgend in November 2007 and Swansea in January 2008.
- 3.5 Principal councils are responsible for undertaking reviews of community areas and community electoral arrangements. In July 2007 the Commission submitted their Report and Proposals to the Welsh Assembly Government in respect of their review of the recommendations made by Powys County Council following that Council's review of communities in their area.

Community Ward Boundary Project

3.6 The Commission continued to convert the scanned community boundaries into mapping data 'in house' during 2007-08.

4. THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION DURING 2008-09

Principal Area Reviews

4.1 The Commission commenced a review of the boundary between the County of Powys and the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil in July 2007, publishing their Final Proposals in July 2008.

Community Reviews

- 4.2 The Commission completed the review of the community boundaries in the County of Anglesey, publishing their Report and Proposals in April 2008.
- 4.3 The Commission completed a further review of the community boundaries in the County Borough of Wrexham in August 2008 and published their report and final proposals in September 2008.
- 4.4 The Commission published Draft Proposals for their review of community boundaries in the County Borough of Bridgend in September 2008.
- 4.5 The Commission published Draft Proposals for their review of community boundaries in the City and County of Swansea in September 2008.
- 4.6 The Commission published Draft Proposals for their review of community boundaries in the County Borough Conwy in July 2008 and final proposals in February 2009.
- 4.7 The Commission published Draft Proposals for their review of community boundaries in the County Borough of Caerphilly in October 2008.
- 4.8 The Commission published Draft Proposals for their review of community boundaries in the County Borough of the Vale of Glamorgan in February 2009.
- 4.9 The Commission published Proposals for their review of community boundaries in the City and County of Cardiff in February 2009.
- 4.10 The Commission published Draft Proposals for their review of community boundaries in the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent in March 2009.

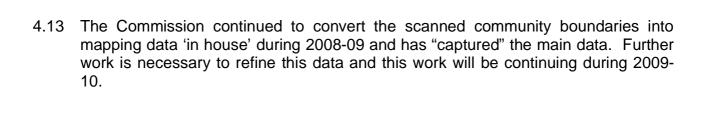
Reviews of Electoral Arrangements

4.11 The Commission announced the commencement of the electoral reviews for Newport, Neath Port Talbot, Denbighshire and Flintshire in February 2009.

Preserved County Reviews

4.12 Following the receipt of a Direction from the Welsh Assembly Government on 27 February 2009, the Commission began a review of part of the boundary between the Preserved Counties of Powys and Mid Glamorgan.

Community Ward Boundary Project



5. CORPORATE MANAGEMENT: POLICIES AND PRACTICE

Management Statement, Financial Memorandum and Codes

- 5.1 A Management Statement and associated Financial Memorandum describe the relationship between the Commission and the Welsh Assembly Government and require the submission of Annual Operational Plans and Annual Reports to the Welsh Assembly Government for the purposes of planning, budgeting and assessing performance. Quarterly liaison meetings and an annual review meeting are held with the sponsor division of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Commission had the annual meeting with the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government of the National Assembly for Wales on 2 October 2008.
- 5.2 A Code of Best Practice for Commissioners has been adopted and a Register of the direct or indirect pecuniary interests of Commissioners is open for public inspection. Access can be arranged by contacting the Secretary at the Commission's offices. There is a similar code in relation to staff.
- 5.3 The Commission meets as an Audit Committee, chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Commission. During the year the Audit Committee met three times.
- 5.4 Working practices have been adopted which accord with the principles of openness, consultation and helpfulness. For example, the Commission gives widespread publicity to their intention to hold each review and write to and visit the local authority concerned to discuss the review and invite their initial comments. For each review the Commission issues press releases on the draft and final proposals and sufficient copies of reports are supplied to enable free distribution to all members of principal and community councils affected by the proposals and to local libraries. A number of copies are also available for local residents on request. The Commission's web site: www.lgbc-wales.gov.uk gives information about the Commission, the progress of reviews and access to previous reports.
- 5.5 In October 2008 the Commission held its eleventh Annual Open Meeting, on this occasion in the St. Georges Hotel, Llandudno, Conwy. The meeting consisted of a workshop led by an external facilitator. Meetings and Workshops were also held at Abergavenny and Carmarthen during November and December. Over 140 people attended these events.

Budget and Audit

- 5.6 The net operating cost for the year amounted to £571,515 with Grant-in-aid received from the Welsh Assembly Government amounting to £556,978, which was within the grant-in-aid allocation for the year of £618,000. The Commission is committed to achieving value for money when purchasing goods and services.
- 5.7 To ensure efficiency and value for money a comprehensive set of desk instructions relating to systems and procedures is in place. The Commission's internal auditors were the Internal Audit Service of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Auditor General for Wales has undertaken the external audit of the Commission's finances.

Welsh Language Scheme

The Commission wishes to make it clear that the public can deal with them in Welsh. In July 1998, the Commission adopted their Welsh Language Scheme in accordance with the provisions of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Schemes (Public Bodies) Order 1996. The Commission has issued its eighth annual report to the Welsh Language Board on the operation of the scheme. In summary, the report confirms that the Commission is complying with the measures, timetable and targets set out in their scheme. Evidence of the commitment to the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, the Commission will treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality is contained in the bilingual publication of all the reports and attendant publicity referred to in this Annual Report. However the scheme also contains many other detailed measures in support of the principle and a copy of the full report will be supplied on request or may be accessed on the Commission's web site.

Training and Information Technology

- 5.9 The Commission is part of the Welsh Assembly Government's MERLIN partnership which has continued to provide the majority of the Commission's IT requirements both hardware and software. This has increased the Commission's IT efficiency and reduced the exposure to the risk of system failure.
- 5.10 Staff development training courses have been attended during the year have included areas such as: Equality & Diversity, Health & Safety, Personal Management Report training, MapInfo Professional Introduction, Sustainable Development, Photoshop training, IFRS Preparing Shadow Accounts, IT Refresher for Microsoft Office 2003, CSP Pension Basics and employment law.

Complaints Procedure

5.11 The Commission has a Complaints Procedure whereby complaints may be made (by letter, e-mail or telephone) by contacting the Commission. Information on how complaints are handled can be found within the Commission's Complaints Procedure document, which can be viewed on the Commission's web site (www.lgbc-wales.gov.uk) or can be obtained from the Commission at the address below:

The Secretary
Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales
Caradog House
1 - 6 St Andrews Place
CARDIFF
CF10 3BE

Phone: 029 20395031 Fax: 029 20395250

E Mail: lgbc.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Web Site: www.lgbc-wales.gov.uk

6. SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES

This Financial Statement provides a summary of the accounts of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) for the financial year ending 31 March 2009. It does not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the results and state of affairs of the Commission. For further information the full annual accounts and auditor's report on those accounts should be consulted. A copy of the audited accounts, which contain the detailed information required by law and under best practice guidelines, can be obtained, free of charge, from the Finance Manager, Caradog House, 1-6 St. Andrews Place, Cardiff, CF10 3BE.

Statutory Background

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) was established under Section 53 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the purposes of keeping under review the areas and electoral arrangements of local government in Wales.

From 1 April 1995 the Commission became an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body funded by Grant-in-aid from the former Welsh Office and after 1 July 1999, an Assembly Sponsored Public Body (ASPB). When the Government of Wales Act 2006 came into effect on 25 May 2007 the Commission became an Assembly Government Sponsored Body (AGSB).

Review of the Year and Future Developments

Community reviews were the major part of the Commission's work during the year. The Commission completed their review of the community boundaries in the County of Isle of Anglesey, publishing their Report and Proposals in April 2008. The Commission published Draft Proposals for their reviews of communities in the City and County of Swansea and the County Borough of Bridgend (which commenced during 2007-08) in September 2008. Draft Proposals for their review of communities in the County Borough of Caerphilly (which commenced during 2007-08) were published in October 2008. The Commission published Draft Proposals for their review of the communities in the County Borough of Conwy in July 2008 and published the Report and Proposals for this review in February 2009. Report and Proposals for the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff were published in February 2008. During 2008-09 the Commission were directed by the Welsh Assembly Government to conduct reviews of communities in the County Boroughs of The Vale of Glamorgan and Blaenau Gwent. The reviews of communities in the County Boroughs of The Vale of Glamorgan and Blaenau Gwent were commenced in May 2008 with the Draft Proposals Reports being published in February 2009.

The Commission received a Direction from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government dated 15 March 2008 to conduct a further review of specific community boundaries in the County Borough of Wrexham by 30 September 2008. The Commission published Draft Proposals for this review in July 2008 and published the Report and Proposals in September 2008 meeting the Minister's deadline.

Principal councils are responsible for undertaking reviews of community areas and community electoral arrangements. In February 2009 the Commission submitted their Report and Proposals to the Welsh Assembly Government in respect of their review of the recommendations made by Cardiff City and County Council following that Council's review of communities in their area.

The Commission also completed a review of the boundary between the County of Powys and the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil publishing their Report and Proposals in July 2008.

The Commission received a Direction from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government dated 27 February 2009 to conduct a review of part of the boundary between the Preserved Counties of Powys and Mid Glamorgan. The Commission commenced this review in March 2009.

The Commission received a Direction from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government dated 13 January 2009 to conduct a review of electoral arrangements for the 22 Welsh unitary authorities to be completed by no later than 30 June 2011. In February 2009 the Commission commenced reviews of the electoral arrangements for the first tranche of unitary authorities which were Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Flintshire County Council, Denbighshire County Council and Newport City Council.

The Commission will be undertaking the work necessary to complete the reviews of electoral arrangements for Welsh unitary authorities by 30 June 2011 as directed by the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government on 13 January 2009. The increase in the Commission's workload resulting from this review work has necessitated an increase in Secretariat staff.

The Commission also have an ongoing obligation to keep under review the areas of principal councils and to give consideration to any recommendations made by principal councils in respect of community area reviews undertaken by them. During 2009-10 the Commission will complete those community reviews which commenced in 2008-09 and it is also expected that the Commission will undertake further work in respect of community reviews for other principal councils.

Commission Membership

The Commission Members throughout 2008-09 were:

April 2008

Mrs Susan G Smith LLB (Chair)

Mr Dennis H Roberts BSc DMS MBCS MCMI (Deputy Chair) (Member)

Rev Hywel Meredydd Davies BD

May to December 2008

Mrs Susan G Smith LLB (Chair)

Mr Paul Wood (Deputy Chair) Rev Hywel Meredydd Davies BD (Member)

January to March 2009

Mr Paul Wood (Chair)

Rev Hywel Meredydd Davies BD (Deputy Chair) Mr John Bader (Member)

Report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales on the Summary Financial Statements

I have examined the summary financial statements of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales statutory financial statements set out below on pages 13 to 16.

Respective responsibilities of the Accounting Officer and auditor

The Accounting Officer is responsible for preparing the Annual Report. My responsibility is to report my opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statements with the statutory financial statements. I also read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider the implications for my report if I become aware of any misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summary financial statements.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my work in accordance with Bulletin 1999/6 'The auditor's statement on the summary financial statements' issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom.

Opinion

In my opinion the summary financial statements are consistent with the statutory financial statements of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales for the year ended 31 March 2009 on which I have issued an unqualified opinion.

Jeremy Colman Auditor General for Wales

July 2009

Wales Audit Office 24 Cathedral Road Cardiff CF11 9LJ

OPERATING COST STATEMENT for the year ended 31 March 2009

	2009	2008
EXPENDITURE	£	£
Staff costs Depreciation Notional cost of capital charge Other operating charges	290,436 7,768 (94) 273,240	209,462 6,464 223 160,385
Gross Operating Costs	571,350	376,534
Interest received	(137)	(273)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	-
Reversal of notional cost of capital charge	94	(223)
Amount surrendered to the Welsh Assembly Government	208	255
Net Operating Costs transferred to the General Reserve	571,515	376,293
All activities are classed as continuing		
STATEMENT OF RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES for the year ended 31 March 2009		
	2009	2008
	£	£
Revaluation of Fixed Assets	-	-
Total recognised losses for the year	-	

Note: The Commission has no gains or losses other than the net operating cost.

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 March 2009

	2009		2008	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Fixed Assets		16,479		17,219
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors and prepayments Cash at bank and in hand	1,796 1,557 3,353	_	1,421 15,587 17,008	
CREDITORS	3,353		17,000	
Amounts falling due within one year	(29,774)	-	(29,632)	
NET CURRENT LIABILITIES		(26,421)		(12,624)
TOTAL NET ASSETS		(9,942)	_	4,595
FINANCED BY:				
General Reserve Government Grant Reserve		(9,942) -		4,595 -
GOVERNMENT FUNDS	_	(9,942)	<u>-</u>	4,595

CASH FLOW STATEMENT for the year ended 31 March 2009

	2009	2008
	£	£
Net cash outflow from operating activities	(565,382)	(362,437)
Returns on investment	137	273
Surrender of bank interest to Welsh Assembly Government	(208)	(255)
Capital expenditure	(5,555)	(9,107)
Financing		
Welsh Assembly Government funding Grant-in-Aid	556,978	372,716
INCREASE IN CASH	(14,030)	1,190
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds		
Increase in cash for the period	(14,030)	1,190
Net funds at 1 April	15,587	14,397
Net funds at 31 March	1,557	15,587

NOTES TO THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. Accounting Conventions

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2008-09 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FReM follow UK generally accepted accounting practice for companies (UK GAAP) to the extent that it is meaningful and appropriate to the public sector. The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention.

2. Financial Results

The net operating cost for the year amounted to £571,515 (2007-08; £376,293) and this has been transferred to the general reserve. Grant-in-aid received from the Welsh Assembly Government amounted to £556,978 (2007-08; £372,716) and this has been credited direct to the general reserve.

3. Staff and Members' Costs

	2009 £	2008 £
Commission Members' Remuneration	18,402	14,324
Salaries Directly employed Inward secondment	123,497 88,142	109,900 40,031
Employers National Insurance Directly employed (including Commission Members) Inward secondment	14,315 4,621	12,420 2,081
Other Pension costs Directly employed Inward secondment	27,441 14,018	23,392 7,314
Total	290,436	209,462
Average number of staff employed during the financial year Directly employed Inward secondment	Number 4 5	Number 3 3

The emolument of the Chair of the Commission was £4,706 (Mrs S Smith, 1 April 2008 to 31 December 2008) (2007-08: £5,782). Mr P Wood (Deputy Chair 1 May 2008 to 31 December 2008, Chair 1 January 2009 to 31 March 2009) received £6,372. Rev. H Davies received £5,588. The other Members received less than £5,000 each.

4. Post Balance Sheet Events

At the date of signing these accounts there were no post balance sheet events to report.

Edward Lewis
Secretary and Accounting Officer
18 June 2009