

## A word from the President

Mr Wan Fook Kong

Welcome to the inaugural issue of our newsletter. We hope through this channel we shall be able to communicate with our members to keep them informed of the Association's activities and also provide an avenue for feedback.

The strength of any organization depends on the enthusiasm and support of its members. This Association is no different. We aspire to represent the property and facility management profession and, in order for us to succeed, we need your continuing support.

Since the Association's formation, we have seen a growing membership base as well as recognition by various government agencies.

We have held dialogue sessions with the Ministry of Environment and are working with the Registrar of Titles and Deeds and the Commissioner of Buildings in reviewing the Land Titles (Strata)



Act which will have a significant impact on many of our members especially those who are in strata-titled management.

The Association is also a member of the Business Resource Group which is assisting the Singapore Tourist Board in the development of Orchard Road into a Great World Road.

For an Association as new as ours, these are important milestones.

However, we must also strive to provide services to our members. One area where we have worked hard is the provision of courses and training which will enable our members to improve their knowledge and skills.

Over the next few months, we shall announce such programmes and we are working closely with institutions of higher learning to bring these to fruition.

The past President and myself have announced that an accreditation programme will be put in place. This has taken a little longer than expected but we believe it is far better to work out all the issues before final implementation.

Finally, I would urge you to continue to support the Association and participate fully in its forthcoming programmes. Remember, the Association is for you.

### members members

In the last ten months, the Council has been actively looking for ways to increase Membership. Council Members have been inviting practitioners from the industry to support and join APFM.

While membership has grown steadily, the Council has deliberated on other forms of membership to strengthen the growth and representation of the Association.

At the present moment, the Association has individual members only in the different categories of Associate (AAPFM), Member (MAPFM) and Fellow (FAPFM).

To gain wider representation, the Council is considering extending its membership to students and corporate bodies.

Student and corporate membership would give us wider representation in the industry.

With strength and support, the Association will be able to work towards elevating the recognition and status of the property management profession in Singapore.

Please give us feedback on the above suggestion.

*Mr Wong Yew Heng,  
Asst Hon Secretary*

## Many professional development courses – if you want them!

One of the key objectives of the Association is to upgrade the profession through continuous training and learning. We are pleased to inform you that the Association, in collaboration with the Department of Building in Ngee Ann Polytechnic, will be running a series of short courses specifically designed for property managers.

These short courses will be conducted

at Ngee Ann Polytechnic and priced very reasonably so as to equip you with the latest skills and knowledge for you to increase your competency, confidence and career prospects.

The Association hopes to start the courses in July. However, much will depend on the response of members to these courses. For the Association to learn the demand for these courses, we

need your feedback on the enclosed survey form. If you know of someone within your organization that may be interested in the courses, please pass on the information to them.

We hope that you will be interested and look forward to you joining the courses.

For any enquiries, please contact Ms Jean Lian at 222 3030.

# The role of neighbourhood committees

presented by Dr Yu Shi Ming, Deputy Head of the NUS School of Building and Real Estate, at an NUS/SISV/APFM joint seminar held at the Marina Mandarin last November

The idea of a Neighbourhood Committee in a private residential estate is not new. Some estates, such as in Moulmein and Nee Soon South, already associations which are run similarly to the RCs in HDB estates.

The formation of NCs was strongly mooted at the Second Triennial Conference for grassroots organizations held last year. The pilot project announced in April will set up 11 NCs in 8 estates: Telok Blangah, Pasir Panjang, Moulmein, Tanglin, Ulu Pandan, Hong Kah West, Bukit Gombak and Paya Lebar.

Like the RCs in HDB estates, the NCs are supposed to promote community bonding, be self-funding and exist under the umbrella of the Peoples' Association.

Given these similarities, it would be useful to elaborate the role of RCs in order to have a better understanding of the role of NCs.

## The role of RCs

Residents' Committees (RCs) are voluntary organizations run by residents living in the same zone. Each zone consists of about 1,500 HDB dwelling units and each electoral division would have on average four to six RC zones.

Under the organizational structure of grassroots organizations, RCs come under the Citizens' Consultative Committee (CCC) of the electoral division. The advisor to the CCC is also the advisor to the various RCs in that division.

Each RC has up to 30 members who are appointed by the Prime Minister's Office. There are about 480 RCs in all the HDB estates with about 10,000 members.

The functions of the RCs are to

- (a) organize wholesome activities to promote neighbourliness, racial harmony and social cohesion among the residents;
- (b) work with Town Councils, the HDB and other authorities to improve the living environment; and
- (c) act as a communication channel between the residents and government.

These distinct functions are well established. RCs have organized activities such as block parties, events celebrating festivals, field trips, tours, courses, talks to promote neighbourliness and

*In April this year, the Minister for Home Affairs announced the setting up of Neighbourhood Committees (NCs) in private residential estates. These NCs are similar to the Residents' Committees (RCs) in the HDB estates but different from the management councils which are mandatory in private strata-titled estates.*

*NCs are supposed to organize social and recreational activities, promote neighbourliness and act as a bridge between residents and government.*

*This paper looks into the role of NCs in general, and how this may include estate management, particularly for the non-strata-titled private estates which do not have management councils to look after their estates.*

*It argues that for NCs to be successful, they should embrace issues relating to the living environment as these have a direct impact on the residents. Residents will support their NCs if they can see the benefits of having a channel to present their views.*

community bonding.

As representatives of the residents, RCs provide feedback to Town Councils and others who directly or indirectly affect the residents' living environment.

In fact, the RCs are, the main avenue for resident participation in Town Councils. They have played an important role in providing feedback to the Town Councils in their routine maintenance work as well, as the cyclical and town improvement projects.

The RCs are consulted on the standard of conservancy contractors, the siting of children's playground and the colour scheme for repairs and redecoration.

In the HDB upgrading programmes,

RCs help Town Councils by organizing the feedback on the proposals as well as getting the residents' support for the upgrading.

The RCs also act as an important channel between the residents and the government particularly in getting feedback from the residents on government policies and in explaining these policies to the residents.

## Role of NCs

In comparison, the stated objectives of the NCs are

- (a) to organize social and recreational activities for residents;
- (b) to promote neighbourliness, harmony and cohesiveness among residents, and
- (c) to act as a bridge between the residents and government by conveying residents' needs and suggestions to the relevant agencies, explaining government policies to the residents and channelling feedback from the residents to the government.

Given these objectives the initial response to the setting up of NCs was not too encouraging as indicated by a poll of 60 people conducted by the Straits Times.

## Your Council

*Term of office:*

*1 July 98 to 30 June 99*

Mr Wan Fook Kong, President  
Mr Jordan Neo B.C, Vice President  
Mrs Theresa Poh, Hon Secretary  
Mr Wong Yew Heng, Asst Hon Secretary  
Mr Jeffrey Chua Leong Chuan, Hon Treasurer  
Mr Alfred Chng, Asst Hon Treasurer  
Mr Hoo Soo Huat, Member  
Mr Reymond Fernandez, Member  
Mr Tan Yew Teck, Member  
Ms Florence Ong, Member  
Ms Evelyn Zeng, Member  
Mr Peter Tan, Immediate Past President

Two-thirds did not support the idea of NCs. Many cited their need for privacy and being too busy to be involved.

Living in private estates, they may belong to the middle- and upper-income strata and can afford membership in private clubs which take care of their social and recreational needs.

Residents in private estates also are less homogeneous than HDB dwellers. Their differing needs would be more difficult to satisfy.

On the other hand, among those who support the setting up of NCs were many HDB upgraders who had seen the benefits of RC activities. To them, the NCs are an avenue to get to know their new neighbours and a channel to present their common views and feedback to the government agencies.

For an NC to be successful, it is important to understand the profile of the residents to be served.

In private landed estates, although the residents may not have the time to join in social and recreational activities, they would appreciate a channel to take up their problems relating to the environment, such as the provision of parks and children's playgrounds.

For residents in private apartments, while they may not see the need for the NCs to look after their living environment since they have their own MCs to deal with estate management, they may see the benefit of social interaction given the close proximity of their apartments.

These observations may be generalizations but it is important that NCs provide a wide range of activities and concern themselves with diverse issues in order to serve the different profiles and needs of residents in private estates.

This paper discusses some of the activities and issues which relate to estate management as these can help to attract greater participation in the new NCs.

## NCs and estate management

Given their roles and objectives, NCs can play a significant part in estate management, improving the environment in private estates.

Just as RCs are the main channel for resident participation in the work of Town Councils, NCs can act as the main channel for residents to communicate with the authorities in the private estates.

At the macro-level, NCs can act for the residents on matters which affect their

neighbourhood. They can organize walk-about sessions with officials from the Ministry of the Environment, for example, to highlight specific problems in their neighbourhood.

Very often, these problems and the inconvenience they cause can only be gauged from the ground. Through such visits, issues can be brought to the attention of the right authority.

An example is the misuse of a residence as a boarding house for foreign workers. Concerns about security and noise were conveyed to the right authority as a result of a visit organized by the Moulmein Residents' Association Coordinating Committee.

Similar matters of local concern would be the routing of bus services, the siting of bus-stops and the construction of overhead bridges, pedestrian crossings and road humps.

Based on feedback from residents, NCs can help to bring greater convenience and security to a neighbourhood.

At the micro-level, NCs could arrange for handy-man services. Residents in private estates are usually charged more for household repairs and services than residents in HDB apartments. NCs could negotiate with service providers willing to charge reasonable pre-fixed rates.

Removal of furniture is another useful service NCs could arrange. It would offer both convenience and savings as a result of the economy of scale.

NCs could also exploit this scale advantage for nearby private condominiums by calling joint tenders. In this, the NCs would need the support of the managing agents in the condominiums.

Managing agents will play an important role in helping the NCs organize activities. From the experience of RCs and Town Councils, there is a close and symbiotic relationship between the RCs and the managing agents.

As a coordinating body, the NC can also help the managing agents for the condominiums in a neighbourhood, by sharing information.

Besides acting as a channel to identify the needs of an estate and coordinating the efforts to answer them, an NC can also help to raise residents' awareness of their environment.

They can participate in the national campaigns, such as crime prevention week; and they can organize things like a



Neighbourhood Watch Zone to promote community bonding at the next-door-neighbour level.

## Conclusion

The role of NCs is to promote neighbourliness, harmony and social cohesiveness through the organization of social and recreational activities. In addition, NCs are to act as a bridge between the residents and the government by conveying the needs of the residents in one direction and explaining government policies in the other.

It is in this second role that the NCs can attract greater resident participation, and hence, become successful. Therefore, they should focus on the provision of services and the discussion of issues, relating to estate management in particular, and the environment in general.

These areas can attract greater resident participation as residents can see the direct benefits.

An NC should not be merely an avenue for neighbours to get together to enjoy each other's company. An NC should try to improve a neighbourhood.

## Want ads

We hope, over time, that our newsletter will pay for itself. Perhaps even pay the Association some money!

Advertising will do that!

### Appointments

We think that everyone in the business would find an "Appointments" column very useful. Clients who want to appoint managing agents could advertise in it and reach all interested in the contract.

Firms who need more staff would be able to reach all the available applicants with one ad.

The other advertisers who will find our pages useful are our suppliers and contractors.

### Low rates

We have fixed our initial rates to make them as attractive as possible:  
A full page will cost \$400.  
A half page will cost \$225.  
A full column will cost \$150.  
A half column will cost \$80.  
Per col cm – just \$10!

Please do what you can to encourage your contacts to use this newsletter for their advertising. And please support our advertisers!

# Accreditation of managing agents

A progress report  
by Jordan Neo,  
Chairman of the APFM  
Accreditation  
Sub-Committee

This year, one of the Association's goals is to put in place a scheme which would elevate the level of professionalism of managing agents in the eyes of the public. Furthermore, this scheme should help to raise the property management consultancy industry's credibility and contribute to the Association's success.

To enable the Association to do this effectively, it was felt that the scheme should gain the support and participation of most major players in the property management consultancy industry. So the Association tried to gather suggestions on accreditation criteria.

Sometime in October last year, the Association organized a dialogue session during which views were sought from various managing firms. We were pleased with the turn-up during which representatives from many firms took the opportunity to share their views on what they consider to be the appropriate criteria and approach for accreditation.

The prime objective was to create a scheme which would not be unduly stringent and would be effective in drawing the maximum participation from both big and small firms. It was decided that the public's confidence is also equally critical to the success of the scheme. A balance must be struck between these two potentially conflicting objectives.

With these broad guidelines, the Accreditation Sub-Committee, consisting of representatives from both large and small firms as well as Ngee Ann Polytechnic and the National University of Singapore, met and brainstormed.

After several meetings, the committee tabled its recommendations to the Council of the Association for consideration. A brief summary of finalized accreditation criteria is printed here.

Taking on the suggestions from the feedback session, the committee has also created a 'standard agreement', which will be made available to the public for their reference.

The standard agreement was drafted to cater to the needs of residential estates for common area management services. If it is well received, modifications will be made where necessary for its use in commercial and industrial estates.

Basically, the agreement sets out the contractual terms between a managing agent and its clients. It would ensure that

## The recommendations

### 1. The minimum professional indemnity

insurance coverage should be S\$300,000 per any one claim. However, it was also recommended that the Association should qualify that is the minimum sum insured and the client or service consumer should ask for additional insurance coverage if deemed necessary.

### 2. Track Record Criteria

#### (i) Existing company:

The Head of the Property Management Department must be a member of APFM, and of which 50% of the directors within the Operational Property Management Department must be a member of APFM.

#### (ii) Newly Set-up Company

(a) The applicant in his/her personal capacity must have at least 5 years or more working experience in property management.

(b) The applicant must have managed at least 100 units of varying development(s) in terms of size.

(c) Onus of proof is on the applicants to fulfill the criteria.

(d) He/she must have held senior position previously in Property Management Company and subject to the Council's approval.

### 3) Definitions

(a) **Existing Company** is deemed to be a Company to have been actively involved in the business of property management for not less than 3 years.

(b) **Newly Set-Up Company** is deemed to be a Company to have been actively involved in the business of property management for not more than 3 years.

the basic legislative requirements are adequately met.

It also covers contractual terms between the management corporation and managing agents which are often unclear or non-existent. To aid clarity, the agreement incorporates a standard set of basic roles and responsibilities for managing agents.

Though the needs of estates differ, it is hoped that such a model form of agreement would help to reduce misunderstandings and conflict.

As it is only meant as a guide, clients and managing agents are free to negotiate and agree on terms appropriate in their circumstances. The Association also preempted the likelihood of conflicts arising out of consumers using the services of Accredited Agents.

It is generally felt that a code of ethics for Accredited Agents would be essential if the Accreditation scheme is to secure full public confidence.

This is being prepared by the Accreditation Sub-Committee. Once completed, it will be presented to the Council for approval.

On this aspect, we will be drawing on the experience of other Associations both locally and overseas. You will be kept posted through this newsletter on further progress.

Finally, on behalf of the Accreditation Sub-Committee and the Council, I would like to thank you for your support in providing feedback and suggestions.

Without your active help and support, the scheme would not have moved this far. Let's continue to work together in helping to raise the level of professionalism in our industry.

Please write to me at: Accreditation Sub-Committee, APFM, c/o Colliers Jardine (Singapore) Pte Ltd, 10 Anson Road #06-11, International Plaza, Singapore 079903.

Alternatively, call me at 320 3501.



# Short Courses - Response Form

organized by the Association of Property and Facility Managers (APFM)  
in collaboration with the Building Department, Ngee Ann Polytechnic

## Important Notes:

All courses are conducted in the evenings from 6:30pm to 9:30pm (3 hours) at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic campus.

Venue and schedule are subject to change without prior notice.

Fees are inclusive of course materials & light refreshments.

Certificate of Attendance will be issued to participants who have achieved at least 75% attendance.

Fees paid are non-refundable and non-transferable except as stated in paragraph 7.

APFM reserves the rights to cancel a course and refund fees to the applicants.

You may photostat the Schedule and Response Form if you need more copies.

Application and payment must reach APFM by closing date of the respective course(s) that you register.

Please tick the box(es) beside the course(s) for which you wish to register and **fax to # 2252453** or mail to c/o **20 Maxwell Road #10-09B Maxwell House, Singapore 069113**. A detailed brochure will be sent to you upon receipt of your Response Form.

**SPECIAL: 10% discount will be given for group application by five from the same company.**

## Personal Particulars

Name (Mr / Ms / Mrs )

Name of Company/Organization

Present Position/Designation

Address

Postal Code

 (Office)

 (Home)

 (Pager)

 (Mobile)

Do you want mail sent to your  Home or  Office

## What courses are you interested in?

(Please tick appropriate boxes)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 699/FSB<br>Fire Safety in Buildings                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 899/VT<br>Vertical Transportation                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 699/BCPM<br>Building Construction for Property Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> 899/LTM<br>Lighting –Type & Maintenance                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 799/ESB<br>Electrical Systems in Building              | <input type="checkbox"/> 899/MCAB<br>Maintenance of Common Areas in Buildings             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 799/PCB<br>Pest Control In Building                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 999/SPMM<br>Swimming Pool Maintenance                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 799/RMIPM<br>Risk Management & Insurance               | <input type="checkbox"/> 999/BSIPM<br>Building Surveys & Inspection for Property Managers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 799/BDR<br>Building Defects and Repairs                | <input type="checkbox"/> 1099/BASS<br>Building Automation & Security Systems              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 799/MNBE<br>Managing Noise in a Built Environment      | <input type="checkbox"/> 1099/ACVEM<br>Air Conditioning/Ventilation & Energy Management   |

# Short Courses - Response Form

organized by the Association of Property and Facility Managers (APFM)  
in collaboration with the Building Department, Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Code	Name of Course	Lecturer	Dates	Duration (Hours)		Closing Date	Course Fee	
				Lecture	Practical		SISV/ APFM	Non- Member
699/FSB	Fire Safety in Buildings	Mr Sathanathan	16, 17 & 18 Jun 99	6	3	26-May-99	\$220.00	\$250.00
699/BCPM	Building Construction for Property Managers	Mr George Yuen	22, 24, 29 Jun & 1 Jul 99	12	-	1-Jun-99	\$220.00	\$250.00
799/ESB	Electrical Systems in Buildings	Mr Subramaniam	6, 13 & 20 Jul 99	6	3	15-Jun-99	\$220.00	\$250.00
799/PCB	Pest Control in Buildings - Cockroaches, Termites, Rats, Mosquitoes, Birds and Flies	Mr Ng Say Kiat	9 Jul 99	3	-	18-Jun-99	\$170.00	\$200.00
799/RMIPM	Risk Management & Insurance for Property Managers	Mr Tan Choi Heng	12 Jul 99	3	-	21-Jun-99	\$170.00	\$200.00
799/BDR	Building Defects and Repairs	Mr Lee How Son	20, 22, 27 & 29 Jul 99	12	-	29-Jun-99	\$220.00	\$250.00
799/MNBE	Managing Noise in a Built Environment	Mr Alfred Tan	26, 27 & 28 Jul 99	9	-	5-Jul-99	\$220.00	\$250.00
899/VT	Vertical Transportation	Mr Subramaniam	3 & 10 Aug 99	3	3	13-Jul-99	\$170.00	\$200.00
899/LTM	Lighting - Type & Maintenance	Mr Wee Keng Loon	4 Aug 99	3	-	14-Jul-99	\$170.00	\$200.00
899/MCAB	Maintenance of Common Areas in Buildings	Mr George Yuen	31 Aug, 2, 7 & 9 Sep 99	12	-	10-Aug-99	\$220.00	\$250.00
999/SPMM	Swimming Pool Maintenance & Management	Mr Teo Teng Kwee & Mr Teh Hong Kia	16, 17 Sep 99 * 18 Sep (2pm-5pm)	6	3	27-Aug-99	\$270.00	\$300.00
999/BSIPM	Building Surveys & Inspection for Property Managers	Mr Lee How Son	21, 23, 28 & 31 Sep 99	12	-	31-Aug-99	\$220.00	\$250.00
1099/BASS	Building Automation & Security Systems	Mr Toh Eng Kheem & Mr Lam Kwok Ho Sam	1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 Oct 99	12	3	10-Sep-99	\$300.00	\$330.00
1099/ACVEM	Air Conditioning/ Ventilation & Energy Management	Mr Lee Fui Joon	19, 22, 26, 29 Oct & 2 Nov 99	12	3	28-Sep-99	\$300.00	\$330.00

All courses are from 6:30pm to 9:30pm except as indicated (\*)  
Please keep this schedule for your reference.