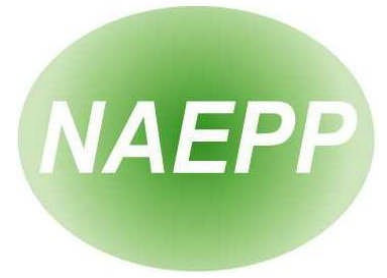


NEWSLETTER

YOUR CONFERENCE SPECIAL



If you want a news item published in "the world's most entertaining newsletter for empty homes practitioners" or on the website please contact admin@naepp.org.uk or phone 0844 736 5 736

Conference date set for May 25th, Birmingham

Get out your diaries because our conference is on the way!

A venue has been booked - just 2 minutes walk from Birmingham New Street Station.

We've got a fantastic selection of speakers - so far. There might even be more. The food will be good. The company will be good.

But true to our traditions as an organization run by practitioners for practitioners we want YOUR input to make it even better.

Your input vital

We've got some simple questions which will help us make the conference match your needs even more closely.

On the website you'll find a questionnaire in the form of an MS Excel spreadsheet. It will only take you a couple of minutes to fill out and when you have done it we'll be able to figure out:

- ✓ the best timing
- ✓ the best split between plenary and workshop sessions
- ✓ whether to hold the AGM as part of the Conference or via the website and email
- ✓ whether to arrange any further sessions

How much will it cost?

Final details will be announced shortly. Full paying members will get a substantial discount and their tickets will **probably** come in at about £125 for early-bird bookings. You'll have to have paid your 2010-11 subscription to qualify and we'll have an option for paying Conference and 2010-11 membership together in one go.

So what's on the programme?

You get the best view from the top of the mountain. And at the top of the empty homes mountain stands **David Ireland**, Chief Executive of the Empty Homes Agency. In his **Keynote Address**, he'll be able to give us an insight into what is going on in the corridors of power as well as providing a sweeping panorama of the empty homes field.

Then we have lined up some really experienced practitioners to lead either workshop or plenary sessions (still to be decided).

We're working on the basis that there'll be a session on **EDMOs**¹ but we want it to be as interactive as possible. We'll have a small panel of experienced practitioners who'll briefly describe the key lessons they've learned - and then there will be ample opportunity for both questions and contributions from the floor. **Mark Siddall** of Norwich (10+ EDMOs to date) has agreed to contribute to this one but there'll be others.

We've got **Andrew Lavender** coming along to give a presentation on all those **enforcement powers** other than EDMOs and CPOs. For those that don't know him, Andrew is a consultant who's one of the most knowledgeable practitioners in the country on this subject (and most others too). No surprise that he's been abducted by **Kent County Council** to advise them on their *No Use Empty* initiative. KCC keeps a jealous eye on him most of the time, but has kindly agreed to allow him out of his dungeon for this. (Andrew will be contributing to other sessions as well).

Andrew Vickers, Nottingham's Empty Property Officer, is an ex-police officer who knows everything - and we mean *everything* - about **tracing owners**. Having seen his riveting presentation on this subject once, I'm keen to see it again, it's that good.

¹ We're flexible enough to switch the programme around if it turns out that EDMOs are yesterday's news after the election.

Councils are increasingly recognizing that **Compulsory Purchase** is a necessary tool when it comes to dealing with anti-social empty properties. But if they struggle with the intricate legalities through lack of practice, **Great Yarmouth Council** can help: they can manage the process for you. **Chris Skinner, Head of Central Services** has around 30 years of experience as a local authority solicitor and will both highlight key issues with CPOs and take away the fear factor.

There's been a quite a lot concern around the country about empty homes being removed from council tax valuation lists. They disappear from the empty homes statistics and no tax gets paid on them. So we're very lucky to have secured the presence of **Justin Giles** from the **Chief Executive's Office of the Valuation Office Agency**. He'll be giving a presentation on the legal framework and the processes and criteria involved in **Removal of Dwellings from Valuation Lists**.

Cross-boundary working is on more and more people's agenda, both within the empty homes world and more generally as a money-saving approach to service delivery. So we have a session lined up featuring a panel of delegates with practical experience - including **Andrew Lavender** from **Kent**, **Mark Siddall** from the **Greater Norwich sub-region** and we are lining up one or two others with cross-boundary responsibilities.

Darryl Lawrence of **Rochdale Housing Initiative** and **Justine Manion** of **Riverside Pennine Housing** are known throughout the western hemisphere as the "**Torvill and Dean of Temporary Social Housing Grant**"². This under-utilised grant option seems to have all but disappeared from the empty homes toolkit - but experts Darryl (as enabler) and Justine (as developer) know how to make it work. Their presentation will tell you how.

In addition to the foregoing there'll be a brief review of NAEPP itself- where we are, where we are going. And there is a fair possibility we'll have one or two further sessions. We've invited **CLG** and **LACORS** and are waiting to hear back.

The other key speakers are YOU. The whole flavour of our conference is interactive. We're confident that not only the questions from the floor but the experiences of other delegates will form a valuable contribution to the day.

The venue holds a maximum of 120 and we'd really like to get it full.

² We made that up. They are actually known as the "Batman and Robin of Temporary Social Housing Grant"

OTHER NEWS

Subscriber Option Now Available

Many practitioners have difficulty getting their local authorities to fund full membership of NAEPP. So they miss out on all the benefits only available to full members, particularly the Information Library which is becoming more and more useful as we build it up.

To address this—and also to help non-practitioners who may benefit from our materials—we've introduced a **Subscriber** option. Subscribers are not full members of NAEPP and cannot vote in NAEPP processes. But they do get full access to the Information Library, which those who use it know can save practitioners hours and hours of work trawling the internet for information, as well as containing NAEPP documents not available anywhere else at all.

Subscriber status costs £75 per annum. We'll be producing some PR material about this shortly. In the meantime, if you want to upgrade from Associate to Subscriber email admin@naepp.org.uk.

Collective Membership the Way to Go

Sussex have done it. **Lincolnshire** have done it. We hope **Cumbria** are going to do it. They all want the benefits of **Collective Membership**.

Collective Membership is available to forums of five or more authorities and their partners joining collectively. Unitary authorities get a 10% discount off the normal fee; districts get a whopping 40% off. That's **£67.50** p.a. for the unitaries and **£45** p.a. for the districts. We calculate up the fee applicable to arrive at a total for the forum and provided you pay that amount all the forum members can belong. (Exactly how the amount is distributed between the members is up to them). Saves a lot bureaucracy at this end too, allowing more time to do something useful.

Please give this some thought if you are part of a forum. It makes sense for everyone.

oOo

FINALLY - if there is any chance that you can come to the May Conference, please remember to fill out our Conference questionnaire (downloadable from the home page of the website) and return it to admin@naepp.org.uk