

## PRESS CUTTING

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#### **UKSA row brews over bank campaigns**

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A bitter row over the future of banking compensation campaigns is threatening to divide the membership of the UK Shareholder's Association (UKSA), the biggest collective forum for private shareholders in the UK.

Former communications director Roger Lawson, who spearheaded high-profile campaigns against Lloyds Bank, Bradford & Bingley and Northern Rock, is calling for an emergency meeting to oust current UKSA chairman, Martin White, plus two board directors, Eric Chalker and Derek Miles.

Mr Lawson resigned from the UKSA board in December due to ill health, from which he says he has now recovered. At his own expense, he has written to all 1,700 UKSA members decrying the current board's "active obstruction" of shareholder action groups, and proposing himself and two fellow campaigners, Chris Hulme and David Blundell, as replacement directors.

In the past UKSA has garnered extensive media exposure through its high-profile campaigns against the banks, but some members have begun to question its relentless pursuit of seemingly lost causes. The Northern Rock campaign, set up in 2007, is still calling for member contributions to mount a legal challenge against the government, seeking compensation under the Human Rights Act.

Lloyds Bank was threatened with a collective legal action last May, Mr Lawson urging its 1.5m private shareholders to join UKSA's fight for compensation following its ill-fated merger with HBOS. Specialist fraud solicitors **PCB Litigation** are still advising the campaign group, although no action has been taken.

Mr Lawson argues that such campaigns are self-financed by member donations, but the board claims the recruitment tactic of handing out free UKSA membership to those who joined individual action groups has negatively affected the group's financial position. Mr Lawson, who must receive requisition notices from 10 per cent of members to call an emergency meeting, said he was "pretty confident" of success. "These campaigns were all approved by the UKSA board before they commenced," he said.

Mr White says UKSA members feel the campaigns have become "over-dominant".

"We are happy to run campaigns on the basis that they're coherent, but we wish to be a respected and influential voice," he said. "Obviously, the banking situation has caused much anger, and people took part in campaigns to vent their frustration, without necessarily feeling they could make back any money."

Pointing to the recent success of UKSA's campaign against fund manager remuneration at Artemis Venture Capital Trust, he added, "That's what we were founded for."