

## Structure of North London LETS Management Group

North London LETS dates from the early nineties. It was founded by Francis Ayley and Bob Seddon, and acquired a rented office early in its existence, which this has always injected an extra factor into the arrangements for managing the LETS, in that there has always been an area that is closed, that employs rotas, requiring some supervision, and is somehow away from the scrutiny of other members of the management group.

Most LETS groups call their organising committee the "Core Group" . Members work from home, managing their own office arrangements, taking responsibility for their own role, and meeting up to share information and joint decision-making. Many groups run quite effectively with a very small team, and if the original volunteers are prepared to continue long-term, there is no need for meetings, let alone AGMs. However, groups with such informal arrangements are vulnerable to organisers suffering illness, or simply moving on in their lives and losing interest.

At first there was no constitution, only Rules, and no democracy in how NLLETS was run. A great deal of development work was done early on by Gilly, who drafted the first Constitution. She had a close association with LETSlink UK and it seemed fairly natural to call on the national and regional organisations for support and supervision, which is why these bodies are named as the first port of call for resolving any disputes. LETSlink enables knowledge to be shared, rather than each group making it up as they go along. We have spent a great deal of time gaining expertise with online systems. Based on our experiences with groups, including this one, we have made it a condition of our installing and hosting systems that groups do follow our recommendations about structure and ethics and we will not spend time with any organisation that is not prepared to conform to certain standards about the way they run LETS.

As recently as 2007, the office worker was invited to attend management group meetings in order to keep them informed of work in progress. The current incumbent has had such a strong influence over a weak group of members that they voted her in as chair and she has led them in targeting those most closely associated with the online consultants, who also happen to be the Intro Team. The current situation has put the system effectively "in administration". Having reviewed the online project, it is now our view, regrettably, that NLLETS should revert to the existing paper-based scheme, which is favoured by most members.

**It is our recommendation that the job description of the Office Co-ordinator focuses on office-based tasks, and that ALL other roles, eg Pledge Accountant, Enrolment Co-ordinator, Directory Editor, Member Support, etc, report independently to the management group. We further recommend that working groups be developed for Admin, Enrolments and Socials, etc, each meeting monthly and reporting to the full management group, on a quarterly basis.**