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North London LETS

MINUTES of meeting held on Tuesday 25th February 2014

1. Present: Elizabeth Hanss (chair), Henu Kalalahti, Helen Berenger, Luciah Kagiso, Mary Herivel, Mary Fee (minutes), Apologies: Irene Grabinski.

2. The meeting began with a “go-round” when members introduced themselves and spoke about how they felt, from which any substantive items are recorded under the relevant agenda heading.

3. MINUTES of the meeting held on 21st January 2014 were read out by Elizabeth, and agreed as an accurate record. Matters arising were dealt with under specific headings below.

4. STERLING ACCOUNTS

4.1 Luciah reported that the balance of account was just over £1,000, and that if NLLETS was to remain viable we needed to think about fund-raising. She was aware that the deadline for applications to work for the Workers Beer Company - there were vacancies for Latitude and Glastonbury - was imminent, and we were running out of time to contact members about it.

5. OFFICE TEAM

5.1 Luciah also brought with her a hand-written list of contact details of individuals who had enquired via Irene's information website (<http://www.nllets.co.uk>), which she would make available to Henu, who is responsible for member enrolment. It was not clear why this information was not already being conveyed to Henu on a regular basis.

5.2 It was noted that Irene was now also managing the CES website (although Helen pointed out that Donna was still listed as the official administrator) and was working with Brenda to create an office manual which would be made available to incoming office workers.

5.3 Elizabeth said she felt uncomfortable about the disconnect with Irene, and Mary Fee agreed that for a key member of the team not to be a member of the committee was an unusual set-up. However, Irene had asked that messages to members should be approved by the committee.

6. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

6.1. Concern had been expressed in relation to Mary Herivel having offering her resignation (due to personal issues) that the committee would no longer be quorate, and therefore the consensus was not to accept this, but to support her more, as she had experienced a lot of pressure due to the workload, and identify roles that we could invite members to fill to strengthen the committee.

6.2 Membership of the committee therefore consisted of Elizabeth (chair), Lucia Kagiso (treasurer), Henu (enrolment), and Mary Herivel (communications). In view of her enthusiasm for NLLETS, it was proposed that Helen, who had formerly managed the office, be invited to join the committee, members unanimously agreed, and Helen accepted.

7. KEYS

7.1. Lucia reported that she had still not met Alex's expense claim for £111 which she was with-holding against the returned of her set of keys, despite the fact that she was reminding her on a regular basis. Everyone felt that this was an unsatisfactory situation, changing locks was again considered, but given Alex's ongoing contact with members of the office team, it was agreed that this would not solve the problem. Mary H undertook to write to Alex about it.

7.2. Meanwhile Helen had cut another set of keys, and a majority of those present agreed that Henu should have them, so that she could have access for the monthly enrolment meetings, and Mary H also gave Henu the security password to the outside door. Lucia had abstained from the vote, she was clearly distressed about the issue, but was unable to say why.

8. ETHICAL PROPERTY COMPANY

8.1 Helen had liaised with Patrick about acting as representative to the landlords. They were also in touch with a member of the Ethical Property Company in relation to the proposal to sell off part of the building, but it appeared this was not imminent. Helen would continue liaising and report back to the next meeting.

9. ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

8.1 In the go-round MaryH had said she was relieved not to be responsible, and pleased at how many people have come tonight, so was feeling hopeful. Henu was concerned about NLLETS, and felt we needed to do some serious thinking - she was determined to keep it going, but was not sure how. Helen

said there was too much exclusivity over access to both websites, and MaryH offered to write to Irene about this. Lucia felt we need to be patient and work as a team, she has not given up yet, and is still fighting.

8.2 MaryF said that the organisation had got itself into a logjam, and the Christmas social she attended felt like a shadow of the past. She reminded members that the system LETSlink had set up, after a full year's consultation with members, had been designed by one of the founders of NLLETS. Donna (who had been appointed straight as office administrator by Rebecca without attending an induction meeting, and was later found to be mentally unstable), had hacked into her account, and when she found her access had been reduced, started a personal vendetta, resulting in the move to CES which ran on a different model of local currency.

8.3 Some of those present felt there was no point looking at what had happened before, whilst others felt that without a clear diagnosis, no cure could be found. Lucia said we could not afford to pay consultants to provide support, MaryF felt that the process we had gone through in 2010 had aroused too many emotions - the scapegoating which took place had tainted those who participated, many of whom had subsequently withdrawn. In the current situation she had not been sure whether or not to recommend enquirers to join NLLETS.

8.4 In the go-round Helen had said very concerned about lack of connections all round, same as Claire Hardiman, who had recently resigned from the office team, had experienced. She had wanted to re-set the office up, so that people can sign in and know what to do, and asked to meet up with Brenda, who had been a committee member and was now in the process of handing over responsibilities in the office, but she had declined, maybe due to personal issues. Helen now felt that the way forward was to connect with the members.

10. MOVING FORWARD

10.1. MaryF pointed out that it was about time for an AGM, which had in the past been held in March, but Helen pointed out that since the last one was in June and the constitution allowed for a period of 14 months between AGMs they could in fact leave it until September. Henu felt that due to lack of progress since the last AGM, having been appointed to manage enrolments not even yet being given access either to the office or to membership applications in a timely fashion, we should meanwhile call an EGM, but it was not clear what reason for this could be put to the membership.

10.2 Helen reminded members of the quarterly socials that NLLETS used to run, with either Alpi or Alex's wonderful catering, and proposed that we focus on running an event which was purely a social, as soon as possible, whilst we still have access to the meeting room.

10.3 This proposal was greeted with enthusiasm by those present, and after discussion it was agreed that the best timing would be 1pm to 5pm on Sunday 4th May 2014. The event would be for paid up members, and also for members of the public, including those who had enquired about joining NLLETS, and Henu could be available towards the end of the event, e.g. from 4pm onwards to carry out enrolments. MaryH said she would be happy to help Helen to organise it.

10.4 This could be a potluck, and a trading day, with a noticeboard for members' offers and wants, and a face-to-face meeting of members, to facilitate trading. Possibly we could also get feedback from members, informally, about how to move forward. MaryH said some wine was left over from a previous event, which could be sold at the event to raise funds, and also suggested that members could be invited to donate unwanted gifts to be sold at a raffle.

10.5 Helen undertook to check availability of the meeting room for the event on 4th May, and also whether it would clash with any significant local event. Once all was clear, she would let MaryH know, and she would ask Irene to put a poster on the website.

11. CONTACTING MEMBERS

11.1 In order to let members know about the opportunity to work for the WBC at Festivals, and the forthcoming social on 4th May, it was agreed that we need to get a mail-out organised as soon as possible.

11.2 As Helen did not have access to the office systems, she was not sure how to get an email list together. Henu thought she could email out of the CES site, and MaryH had a cc list on the office computer. They would both will liaise with Helen, if necessary on separate occasions, to organise the mail-out. Helen also suggested that we could ask people to phone members who were known not to have regular access to email.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 25th March 2014.

MF/mf

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