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North London LETS

MINUTES of meeting held on Tuesday 25th March 2014

held from 7.30pm at 1b Waterlow Rd, London N19 5NJ.

The meeting began late, due to Helen having a delayed pick-up by ComCab, and having to check up something in the office beforehand regarding the room booking, and the normal order of the agenda was therefore reversed:

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

2. ETHICAL PROPERTY COMPANY

2.1 Helen gave a comprehensive update on the situation regarding the forthcoming sale of the office building where NLLETS was based, 1a Waterlow Road. She had met Brian Elliot from Ethical Properties, who had taken her to view a slightly bigger office in Durham Road, the same size as one that might be available in 1b Waterlow Road.

2.2 Whichever property was opted for, it appeared that the bonus of space for socials would be lost, as the meeting room reduced in size by the alterations, and in view of this loss of facilities, Brian had mooted a compensatory arrangement, i.e. three (or even four) bookings per year free of charge of a room for socials at a venue in Holloway Road, in which the Ethical Property Company was a tenant.

2.3 The ambience of the Durham Road venue was much busier than Waterlow Road, and the office-space on offer there, an internal room, behind frosted glass, was not unpleasant. But its location was problematic, being a fair walk from transport links, and taxis would be needed for Helen in particular, and other members in general.

2.4 MaryF wondered, in view of the financial report given at last month's meeting, about the viability of the organisation's continuing to pay rent on an office, because of a much reduced membership pool (less than 50, instead of over 200), and a lower anticipated income from work done at festivals for the Workers Beer Company. Henu wondered if the Ethical Property Company allowed sharing, but Mary felt this would not be feasible as the space was probably all needed for document storage.

2.5 Helen felt, however, that due to the geographical spread of members, an easily accessible office and meeting base was absolutely essential for the organisation to flourish and attract new members.

2.5 Due to the end-of-month deadline for tenants to respond, this was now deemed to be an emergency, and it was agreed that the management committee needed to take a view on the three possible options (i) stay at Waterlow Rd, (ii) move to Durham Rd, (iii) give up running an office altogether, and state their preference firmly to the Ethical Property Company in advance of an EGM.

2.5 The consensus of the meeting was that we should move into 1b if at all possible. Helen was therefore authorised to contact Brian Elliot with the committee's request to be allocated a room in 1b Waterlow Road, and negotiate about the loss of the meeting room, and also to report to members in a follow-up email the background to the EGM to be held on Sunday 30th March, at which the MC would ask members to endorse their decision.

3. MINUTES of the meeting held on 25th February 2014 had been circulated. MaryH began reading them out, but only got as far as the item about the Office Team, which gave rise to some discussion. In relation to minute "5.2 It was noted that Irene was now also managing the CES website", members felt that this did not accurately reflect what had been said, and it was agreed that the minute should be corrected to: "It was noted that Irene felt it was necessary to oversee Henu's working on the CES website."

4. STERLING ACCOUNTS

4.1 No update since last time, when the balance of accounts was just over £1000, as Luciah could not make the meeting.

5. OFFICE TEAM & ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

5.1 In response to the updated minute about working on the CES, MaryF added that it might not in fact be necessary for Henu to work on the CES, as her forte was her outgoing nature and welcoming personality, qualities which were ideal for hosting new member socials. (Under the previous regime, Henu had handed in completed application forms, and the work of creating accounts on the system was carried out by members of the office team.)

5.2 Helen conceded that a new team was needed to run the organisation. MaryF emphasised the need for clear roles, which were in keeping with members' aptitude and computer access.

5.3. No progress had been made about getting keys back from Alex. One view was that given the impending changes, the problem would resolve itself. Another view was that action should still be taken, as a matter of principle, to recover the missing keys, especially as Helen felt that someone had been in the office.

5.4 Helen was concerned by the fact that she had made a booking on the meeting room system for Sunday 30th March, but when she checked just before the meeting, it appeared to have been unbooked, she did not know by whom, and she had had to rebook it.

5.5 At the last meeting, MaryH had offered to write to Irene about issues of access to the CES and the Office, but we did not get to hear a report about this because of the emergency about the office space.

5.6 Nor had we received any progress report from Brenda, about the handover process. Due to the importance of considering the issues over the future location of the office, there had been insufficient time to discuss these issues adequately

6. MOVING FORWARD

6.1. It was agreed that Helen would draft a message to members including mention of the social planned for 1pm to 5pm on Sunday 4th May 2014, as well as reiterating the invitation to the EGM, with the correct date, Sunday being 30th, not 31st March, and MaryH would forward it to Irene to include as a notice on the wordpress site.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 22nd or 29th April 2014, tbc.

MF/mf

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