

## **North London LETS MINUTES of Extraordinary General Meeting held on Sunday 30th March 2014**

from 2-5.30pm at 1b Waterlow Rd, London N19 5NJ

*Whilst waiting for more members to arrive, we enjoyed a shared meal contributed by those who attended - many thanks for the super snacks, and the meeting began at about 3pm.*

**1. PRESENT:** Elizabeth Hanss (chair), Luciah Kagiso (treasurer), Helen Berenger (office rep), Henu Kalalahti (committee member), Claire Hardiman (former office worker), Zbigniew (former technical support), Michael Cosgrove (former committee member), Sue Penny (former committee member, Rick Ferry (member), Mary Fee (LETSlInk/ minutes). Apologies: Irene Grabinski (wordpress website editor).

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

2.1 As Elizabeth had not yet arrived, Henu took the chair, and set out the task of the meeting, which was to reach a decision on three questions: (i) whether North London LETS should continue to have an office or not, and if so (ii) whether it should stay with Ethical Properties or not, and if staying with EP, (iii) which of their premises we would prefer.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Helen set out the background, that 1a Waterlow Road, where our office is based, is going to be sold, and the committee had not been given long to respond.

3.2 The original plan had been to create more offices in 1b to accommodate some of the organisations who had been in 1a, by losing the large room we used for socials, but with improvements in wheelchair access along the corridor, and as a longer-term tenant we had been offered a slightly larger office there for the same rent.

3.3 Helen had met up with EP's representative, Brian Elliot, who had shown her a similarly-sized "inner" room in alternative premises in Durham Road, a less convenient location, and to compensate for the loss of the meeting room in either location, had offered the use of a meeting rooms in Holloway Road, three times a year. Helen had asked him if they could cover quarterly socials, but also suggested they keep the meeting room in 1b and rent it out to other organisations, which he said they would consider.

3.4 In response to EP's request for a decision by the end of March, the management committee had already indicated its preference, subject to endorsement by the EGM, and as priority was being given to long-term tenants, there was a good prospect of being allocated space in 1b.

### **4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 Mary and Penny both asked about the financial situation. Luciah said that the office rent is currently £155 per month = £1860 per year.

4.2 Helen says the phone co-op is no longer competitive, and although some members still use it, the income is going down. Lucia said it was still producing £7 per month, i.e. £84 per year.

4.2 Much of our income has come from the Workers Beer Company, with members earning pledges and donating their sterling wages, but due to problems getting mailings out, the deadline may have been missed this year. Helen said she would ask Alan Newman, our contact with the WBC if anyone had enrolled, and if people can still enrol.

4.3 Subscriptions: Helen says she forwarded enquiries to the office, but thought they had been responded to, and it was not clear if renewals were being processed. In response to this, some members present paid their renewal fees. 60 @ £10 approx = £600.

4.4 Michael said another income stream is events. About £40 had been raised at the last one, another is scheduled for May. So over a year if better attended, this could amount to £200.

4.5 Bank balance at the last report was < £1000. Projected annual income £80+£600+£200 = £880. Total < £1880. Other expenses “unknown”. The financial projection was therefore that if we continue paying rent, we could run out of money within a year.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 At this point, Henu had to depart due to an emergency, and Elizabeth took over as chair. Before she left, Henu asked what the contract involved, i.e. if we signed up for a new lease, could we withdraw? Luciah said as far as she knew, we had a yearly lease from April, and if we stayed with EP, this would continue.

5.2 Michael wondered who will be held accountable for paying the rent if the organisation ran out of money.

5.3 *Both Helen and Sue had contacts with some legal expertise, who they could ask to look over the proposed new lease, and Helen agreed to ask for a copy of it from Brian, and forward it to them.*

5.4 *It was suggested that Helen could ask for a six-monthly contract, to cover us if the financial situation could not be turned around.*

5.5 Helen alluded to a complaint emailed to her by Lesley of EP about a member arriving for a meeting in advance of the key holder and being turned out into the street by another tenant who wanted to lock up. She had been briefed by the member involved, *and was going to reply to Lesley, hoping this would not affect our good name with the landlord.*

## 6. ORGANISATIONAL PROBLEMS

6.1 The discussion revealed ongoing structural and communications issues, which were severely impacting on the running of the office.

6.2 Claire had resigned, due to an altercation with Irene over her bringing in technical support, that she experienced as bullying, and was astonished to hear that in her absence Irene had not passed on the password to anyone else, so nobody had been able to access the system and office-work had ceased. Helen said the February MC meeting had authorised Irene to give password of CES website to Henu so that she could enrol members, but apparently this had not happened.

6.3 Luciah reported that Brenda, who had resigned as office co-ordinator some months before Claire, was working on an office manual, *which they would hand over at the AGM.*

6.4 Elizabeth said she wished that women could work together better, and wondered what it would take to overcome the problems that had been described, and wondered why they were still using the CES since it was so problematic. She added that membership of the organisation had given her the opportunity to play music, which she very much appreciated. When she first joined people were doing things in a hands-on way, and more older people were involved, and she felt that socials were an essential factor in bringing people together.

## 7. MOVING FORWARD

*The meeting authorised the MC to continue along the lines it had proposed, i.e. to take up the opportunity to move to 1b, to report to members on progress, and to call another EGM if further support from members was needed.*

LLL/MF/mf  
draft at 4/4/2014

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**Circulation:** EMAIL: Elizabeth Hanss <elisabeth.h@talktalk.net>, Henu Kalalahti <hkalalahti@yahoo.co.uk>, Helen Berenger <helenberenger@btinternet.com>, Luciah Kagiso <ksesame@yahoo.co.uk>, Mary Herivel <mary\_herivel@yahoo.com>, Claire <hardma@blueyonder.co.uk>, Michael <michcosg@yahoo.co.uk>, Sue Penny <suepenny@phonecoop.coop>, Irene Grabinski <irenelondon@hotmail.co.uk>, Mary Fee <mary@letslink.org>, POST: Rick Ferry (Flat 1, 44 Holmesdale Road, N6 5TQ)