

Book of Proceedings



LETS 2011
National Conference
September 9-11 2011
Lesmurdie, Western Australia

A new LETS? Let's find out!

Can we create, sustain & grow healthy LETS systems?

An Open Space Technology Event

LETS 2011

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DISCUSSION ITEM			
Alternative/s to our Lets Committee			
Convenor:	Roni	Scribe:	Dee
Attendees:			
Sunny, Roni, Jenny, Dee, Sue, Tina, Gerald, Annie, Peter			
Discussion:			
<p>Swan Hills Lets having a committee meeting is too structured, same people and after meeting there is still more work to be done by Secretary, Treasurer, etc. Members get burnt out. Their website very cumbersome. </p> <p>Adelaide Lets, committee members attending are paid via a transaction. If you are not on the committee you get levied. Being on CES the system runs itself and the Committee doesn't get burnt out.</p> <p>Adelaide don't have meetings they have a market once per month.</p> <p>The Administrator keeps an eye on the system to ensure everything is above board.</p>			
Conclusions (if any):			
<p>CES sounds like it is the way to go. Those that are computer illiterate could go to the Library or a Community Centre where they could be taught how to use the system.</p> <p>So the same people are not the same ones on the Committee year in year when joining it could be a stipulation that you will go on a Committee on a rotation basis even if it is only for 6 months and you could have held down all positions only for a period of 2 years.</p> <p>Before an AGM those members that do not intend to stand again advise all members what they will or will not be doing and if members are not happy with the outcome they should put their hand up to be on a committee.</p> <p>Having Trustees that are multitalented seems like it could be the way to go.</p> <p>Being able to meet at a Café or room somewhere once per week or fortnight to get all the work done necessary to keep the system working could work.</p>			
Additional notes:			

DISCUSSION ITEM			
How to get people to ask for help			
Convenor:	Mary Ann	Scribe:	Mary Ann
Attendees:			
Various lovely people generously shared			
Discussion:			
<p>There are people who work hard yet do not ask for things/help</p> <p>There are new members who do not ask for help and therefore fall away from being part of the system</p> <p>Eventually the self regulation of the system does work out</p> <p>Who's problem is it?</p>			
Conclusions (if any):			
<p>Conclusions as suggestions</p> <p>Have a co-ordinator who in the form of someone wanting a busy bee then the co-ordinator phones people and organise these</p> <p>In the newsletter put what is offered and wanted into categories and especially encourage obscure things as we never know what is needed</p> <p>In the newsletter put an article re a trade i.e. a story tracing a trade</p> <p>For new members it is important to trade so it is seen that a person elected at the AGM be appointed to do a welcome job and facilitate a trade even if it is concockded</p> <p>Give each new member 25 units of the currency for them to trade so that they do not have the feeling that they need to go into debit</p> <p>A telephone tree could be used to keep the social network in the group alive</p> <p>Teach the language of LETS</p> <p>Have a speaker come to a meeting to explain the concept</p>			
Additional notes:			

DISCUSSION ITEM	
Local versus global / regional – expanding scope	
Convenor:	Ann Jupp
Scribe:	Kate Cook
Attendees:	
Ann, Kate, Claire, Adrian, Jordan, Bridget, Anne-Marie, Carol, Annette, Angie M, Kristina, Jeff, a couple of late arrivals (not sure of names sorry).	
Discussion:	
<p>Local – I this too restrictive?</p> <p>Global – exchange of ideas</p> <p>Intertrading – reciprocal trading, ie: retaining a balance within the system without losing energy, can it be done?</p> <p>Someone said that interlets is complicated because of the imbalances of individual systems.</p> <p>Simplicity – universal currency, ease of trading with other LETS communities. Trading is a negotiated trust arrangement. Each trade has its own value. Local systems need to be healthy. Is it necessary to trade globally or nationally? Having a healthy local system is a necessary platform to begin intertrading with other healthy local systems.</p> <p>CES – needs to be more simple & streamlined. Local aspect is important. Value of currency is valued on products & services offered to the community.</p> <p>Karel spoke about WIR (Switzerland) (german for “we”). Combines local & national, including cash & WIRs. Big in Switzerland, centralised, WIRs can be purchased (but not sold) with francs. Local communities can decide how they want to trade. Academics have done studies & found when economies are down, WIR goes up, so buffers the economy, it’s a complementary currency (as Linton described in the LETS design manual). WIR has been kept local, not global, hard to find information because nothing is published in English. Even though WIR francs are bought with Swiss francs, it works because Central Bank hasn’t squashed it (Karel’s opinion is that so much foreign money (secrecy money) is coming in to Switzerland, even though WIR bank is a small bank, ie: like Bendigo, it’s not a big deal (even though in comparison to Oz banks it’s big), because the central bank are not worried about losing control. A couple of members of the central bank board see the local benefits of helping local communities, especially during downturns – dash – Swiss culture).</p> <p>About caps on hours (ie: limiting the amount you can charge per hour for your services). Because Michael Linton specified that the unit of trading should be equivalent to the dollar, a cap on hours means that the currency is not equivalent, and perhaps not in keeping with the conventional idea of a LETS system. Arbitrary rules re caps on service units create conflict and debate, and complicate intertrading.</p> <p>Karel raised the idea of expiring credits. This encourages circulation and is called “Demorage” (not sure of spelling), in some LETS-like systems including a system used in Bristol (more info needed).</p> <p>Discussion about the cap, which is perhaps a “collectivism” type of idea rather than a “free market” idea, Jeff described a “Libertarian” theory. Libertarians survive as collectivism will sink by limiting creativity.</p> <p>About trading, relationships are mutual, support & trust and mutual dependency.</p> <p>LETS groups need to be free to grow organically and independently, to support change.</p> <p>Karel threw in another idea - that Individuals (Canada) have their own currency & create their own individual exchange rates within a system.</p> <p>CES (accounting system) brings cohesion between groups.</p> <p>Maleny LETS has had 22 interlets accounts within their system. Logic – LETS groups should be able to trade interstate. Allows people to go further afield to procure services.</p> <p>CES – can access freely other members in other LETS groups.</p> <p>Local communities – believe that LETS communities should be healthy locally first, before trading globally, and have more than 1 immediate neighbour.</p> <p>CES needs a mechanism within it which can red flag unhealthy systems.</p>	

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To get more intertrading happening, we need more networking between groups to help other organisations to get better and improve their trading.

Separate accounts are possible, and a system not on CES might consider running a parallel CES system for a while.

CES – who runs it? Tim Jenkins.

CES is not open source, alternatives are available and no reason not to encourage them. One is “community forge” , run by Matthew ?, free, small, 30 exchanges in Europe.

Claire from SWLETS offering time, expertise (runs a web application to record trades & notices) and is willing to make the system more intertrading friendly.

Karel Boele (Sydney LETS) runs ecodirectory. Wants to be able to trade in LETS in his business. Hopes to connect with Community forge & community currencies.

Jeff – concerned about the effect on Dept Social services, default of currencies (Greece), If we grow big, the tax office could become involved, accounts need to be kept. Ref 1992 ruling IT6223 (?). Hobbies don't matter, businesses add GST, but at present the ATO aren't worried. Related story about someone who claimed a million units in deductions!!!s

Local versus Global – to enable intertrading, more automatic like CES, interconnectedness.

Conclusions (if any):

Additional notes:

DISCUSSION ITEM			
How to meet more members			
Convenor:	MARINA BISTRIN, dvns lets, Melbourne	Scribe:	TRISH HAMILTON
Attendees:			
GILLIAN, SHARRYN, CHERYL, MAY, SUNNY, SYLVIA			
Discussion:			
<p>Follow up new members - possibly one on one. Find out age, special interests and abilities. Meet new members face to face. Find out what they offer and what they are looking for.</p> <p>Make it easy to trade straight off – e.g. give points from community chest or sinking fund</p> <p>Male and female ‘hosts’ for new members as in a buddy system</p> <p>Offer to car pool with new members meetings and trades or places of interest.</p> <p>Appoint a suburb or topic ‘ask’ person who can answer questions and suggest who they can trade with, as not all talents are listed in the directory, some people are on holidays etc.</p> <p>Make a personal gesture like a phone call.</p> <p>Spontaneous personal invitation to a mini gathering in a private space (someone’s home) or a public space (park etc.) - building communities. Can suggest that members are invited to organise/host a little gathering each if they like.... For instance, if a group meets regularly, you can invite the newcomer and see if they or the regulars want to host next meeting.</p> <p>Re-establishing getting to know neighbours as in street party - either spontaneous or planned – candle and sand in brown paper bag (stops wind blowing out candle and sand is for stability and fire safety). Can just sit on verge with drink or snack and talk to passers by. Cul de sacs are great for this.</p> <p>Network between alternative and similar groups always talking about LETS (e.g. lots of permaculture people join lets, and many young families from permi groups have joined (getting younger people in)).</p> <p>Talk about LETS to anyone, anywhere</p> <p>Have a LETS booth at community festivals, but have 2 or 3 people in manning the stall in shifts so there is lots of interaction between members and also meeting the public. One person on their own is not much fun, but the public is attracted to people engaged in stimulating conversation.</p> <p>Help does not always have to be traded – it can be free</p> <p>LETS picnic with banner or signage and info – “LETS barter, swap, exchange” banner or similar self-explanatory banner for what LETS is</p> <p>For AGMs – send out agendas - combine with a fun social happening, food, trading etc. If u feel your committee needs alteration or change, can do it by getting more people to agm and comittee meetings and promote discussion. Invite new members to say something about themselves and introduce them to the group, also to say what they will trade and what they need.</p> <p>Guest speakers at meetings – write report in next newsletter, and also invite general public thru local paper, and posters, leaflets at public spaces.</p> <p>‘Memories’ column in newsletters about long standing members or members with special abilities</p> <p>New members details in newsletters and can also ask new members to write an article about themselves...nice to see your own name in print and feel part of the group.</p> <p>Can do a little newsletter with interesting articles to leave at community houses and libraries etc. This can also include meetings where the public are also invited to attend and trade if they like. One LETS runs a monthly trading day in a public sustainability park (Ceres) – if people aren’t lets members, they pay/play with money – what a novel idea!!! Newsletter articles can include ideas for unusual trading too. The weirder and whackier and funny, the better.</p> <p>Sub groups in lets with special interests; do survey and then have get-togethers e.g. permaculture gps, gardening</p>			

bees, knitting, playing cards.

If you are willing to host a regular gathering such as a knitter's circle, you could charge points for providing the space/tea and coffee and charge extra if you are teaching knitting too. You do what you like and get paid for it, and create a social circle.

Hardcopy vs online. Members who are not on the internet or not computer literate often miss out on email bulletins and notices. May need someone to phone them and update them on what's happening.

Conclusions (if any):

Follow up on new members/buddy or phone calls.

Invite people to have small social groups or similar interest groups.

Introduce new members to LETS gp via email bulletin, or a personal introduction at a swap-meet or similar.

Do things in public spaces sometimes – don't exclude non-lets members.

Additional notes:

TOPICS TO FOLLOW UP..... Revolt against over regulation (pink elastic vs red tape). Maybe campaign against being over-regulated. How to hang on to members and keep them involved. How to attract younger members. Lets presence/involvement at other places such as "children's forest", sustainable living festivals, volunteering at special places to build community such as rockingham, (public education on sustainability and community gardens). Maybe possibility of paying lets points for doing this work, it may not have to be a volunteer position.

DISCUSSION ITEM	
Regular social day for trading/meetings	
Convenor:	Annie
Scribe:	
Attendees:	
May Sharryn, Trish, Gillian, Christina, Annie	
Discussion:	
<p>Some members can't be bothered</p> <p>Every 2 months groups have a get together and rotate</p> <p>Brunch, lunch, late lunch</p> <p>Cash payments for non-members</p> <p>Maybe have small busy-bee as payments</p> <p>Make meetings/days 3-4 maximum</p> <p>Suggestions: Kings Park, Pines restaurant lunch, beach, Gravity Gingin, Observatory, History village, Movies at Midland, Open gardens, other events from anywhere</p> <p>Ask members to contribute any ideas they have of places to visit</p> <p>Rules/guidelines for car pooling</p>	
Conclusions (if any):	
Additional notes:	

DISCUSSION ITEM			
LETS + equal currency – is my time worth the same as yours?			
Convenor:	Kate	Scribe:	Ann
Attendees:			
Cheryl, Sunny, Jenny, Roni, Annette, Jordan, Bridget, Karel.			
Discussion:			
<p>Is time spent = to value? Some people think that “intellectual” work is worth more than physical. Different value placed on them. Skills that require university “piece of paper” seen as more than housework/labour.</p> <p>Negotiation is the key – don’t make assumptions. Exclusive services are usually in more demand. Then prices go up. We feel that the community of trading is just as important. We shouldn’t see it as just \$\$\$worth but the social value of the trade. Feeling the energy is also a factor. We tend to undervalue life learning in favour of the “bit of paper”.</p> <p>Prices are set in the \$\$ world. More freedom in LETS, and social interaction is part of it.</p> <p>In some cultures giving of hospitality (food, drink) is a cultural imperative and part of finding out who the other person is. Time is not important in these cultures, but we’re fixated on time/clocks. Humans doing vs humans being. Need to create the ability for generosity. It’s also not in our culture to haggle, or to complain if things aren’t right or are too expensive. If you want something badly enough you’ll pay.</p> <p>With LETS the more you put in the more you get back. Could you have some system based entirely on trust?</p> <p>Discussion of country vs city lifestyle.</p> <p>LETS is working towards a better life/thinking style, but not there yet. Doing our best towards “being it” (the ideal)</p> <p>Perpetuating the “village” ethic of caring. Everyone is dependent on each other. This co-dependency is important part of social fabric.</p> <p>Belief – action – achieve.</p> <p>FIXED HOURLY RATES VERSUS “MARKET” RATES.</p> <p>Fixed – seen as making for efficiency OR for cutting corners/quality (lowest denominator)</p> <p>Disadvantages: Forfeits the ability to negotiate and individualise the transaction. Could restrict/stop trading. An alternative – suggested rate with possibility of negotiation. Values between LETS systems should match, not be disparate if you want to intertrade.</p> <p>Disadvantages of free market pricing: people can charge ridiculous prices. It’s important for the buyer to agree or not. The value of the social in LETS is that members can gossip about each other, tell others of overcharging or bad work. “Bad apples” are shunned in some societies. Does this change their behaviour?</p> <p>Generosity is “making merit” (Hindu/Buddhist belief). You can give what you think the goods/service is worth, especially if some people charge too little. Buyers can be encouraged to give more. Generosity of spirit is an important part of human learning.</p> <p>We then had a discussion of “over the top” gift giving in our society – giving because we think we have to, people getting gifts they don’t want, re-gifting, other options</p>			
Conclusions (if any):			
Additional notes:			

DISCUSSION ITEM			
Keeping in touch without a computer.			
Convenor:	May	Scribe:	May
Attendees:			
May, Annie, Adrian, Tina.			
Discussion:			
<p>Reasons. Those with outa computer don't wish to be excluded from LETS trading and need to be kept informed.</p> <p>Solutions. Hold regular meetings with a buddy system 1 on 1 in local library. Hold LETS meetings where a computer is available. Break down instructions step by step by step in simple language. Hold weekly meeting with buddy for follow up. Maintain regular input and output with members on the computer. Hands on for the person learning.</p>			
Conclusions (if any):			
Additional notes:			

DISCUSSION ITEM			
Free and low cost marketing to gain new members			
Convenor:	Mary ann	Scribe:	Mary ann
Attendees:			
A few, who all had input sufficiently to create a worthwhile discussion			
Discussion:			
<p>Various suggestions were made of how to promote LETS with little money however will require enthusiasm and time</p> <p>Community radio, ask to have an interview or send off a bullet presentation of what LETS is so it can be read over the air</p> <p>Send a pre-emptive written taster and photograph (the press want colourful and close ups) to the local/other newspapers. Feed the press with even your own written story</p> <p>Place items in the community notices of the local paper and the online version</p> <p>At Festivals and community events have a stall and have a few people at the stall at the one time to give a carnival atmosphere</p> <p>Put Fliers up at the libraries, community centre and notice boards</p> <p>If a community organisation phones LETS and wants something from LETS, which you do not offer, take the opportunity to ask if LETS can come and give a talk to their staff.</p> <p>Develop a power point presentation in readiness for talks to groups</p> <p>Pay the LETS person who presents promotional talks in units</p> <p>Have a web site</p> <p>Develop face-book and twitter e.g "Remember the meeting tomorrow"</p> <p>Where badges to events</p> <p>Be in the Community Directory which is usually organised by the local council</p> <p>Create a public event eg. A seed swap, swap meet</p> <p>Have signs ready for any public event</p> <p>Exchange newsletters with other LETS groups so that ideas are shared</p> <p>Have a good way of describing LETS in readiness for when you speak to people</p> <p>Make appointments with social securityetc to speak at their staff meetings</p>			
Conclusions (if any):			
<p>Think positively despite negative things that have happened in the past. Get to know the words that will explain LETS and let you speak to others confidently about your personal experience and that of the organisation</p> <p>Use energy to get the word out</p> <p>LETS DO IT WITHOUT MONEY</p>			
Additional notes:			

DISCUSSION ITEM			
Making a Space – a central centre for Lets group – office/meetings/trading/markets/social/storage/etc.			
Convenor:	Roni Pidgeon	Scribe:	Roni Pidgeon
Attendees:			
Sharryn (SwanHills) Ann M (Rocky) Mary Ann (Rocky) Jenny (SwnHills) Roni (SHLs) Dee (Rocky) Angela T (Rocky) Jeff (Armadale) Krystyna (Arm), Caren (Armadale) Peter (SWHS)			
Discussion:			
<p>Approach - café idea/community centres/libraries/ RockyLets activities in parks/environment centre venue/Shires for free/nominal payment venues (halls, etc), "men's sheds" (Kalamunda's moving to Scouts Hall Forrestfield) church halls (Swanview Uniting), sports halls, schools, schools closed down eg. Parkerville school, privately owned large shed, granny flat, etc. for hiring or currency/trading volunteering.</p> <p>A permanent set-up rather held at private lets members' home/s. Acquire more than one venue to use on rotation basis if a large- area Lets. Idea of café unanimously agreed ideal – a hub/a home fm home. Lions & Rotary have lock-up trailers to transport all to venue. If Lets group obtained a lock-up trailer – versatility for meeting sites.</p> <p>Advertise requests to fulfil above ideas on websites, etc.</p> <p><u>Storage of records at one venue</u> – Jeff pointed out members who take over facilitator/chair roles want an alternative to store all Lets records. A permanent centre would be the ideal. Can be taken to historical departments of State or National Library/ies.</p>			
Conclusions (if any):			
Action plans to bring about searching and such venue/s and other ideas for a Lets group centre to be put in place.			
Additional notes:			
A great interchange of ideas in a spirit of sharing and respect.			

DISCUSSION ITEM			
Too much or too little trading?			
Convenor:	Sunny	Scribe:	Claire
Attendees:			
Sunny, Julie, Jordan, Susan, Bridget, Marina, Trish, Claire, Cheryl, Arda			
Discussion:			
<p>The topic could possibly be entitled too much or too little “units”.</p> <p>Is it appropriate to limit the amount you earn or owe? Can you ever have enough?</p> <p>Sunny – when we joined LETS we met a lot of so-called “living smarties”, ie: conservationists etc.</p> <p>Susan – acknowledge crossover with people who care about the environment etc.</p> <p>Sunny – initially there was a lot of tradesmen, and a lot of people with soft skills that didn’t seem to be valued. Eg: Leatherworker who got a lot of work & accumulated a large credit, had too much. Other’s skills weren’t valued or in demand.</p> <p>Susan – can you ever contribute too much?</p> <p>The discussion centred around how to help people who aren’t trading or offering.</p> <p>Kate – trustees can help, come up with ideas for people to offer skills they hadn’t thought of. Eg: busy bees & all the different skills involved in that, eg: catering, organising as well as gardening etc.</p> <p>Susan – Warrenwood LETS has a gardening “sub-group”; members are expected to contribute if they receive help, but no obligation to attend every event.</p> <p>Susan – list of suggestions to new members – what can I offer?</p> <p>Social involvement: Older (been in the system longer) members sometimes buy goods & services they don’t really need to start new members off.</p> <p>Often, more than what is asked is offered in compensation – this makes people feel good.</p> <p>If you are seen as a generous contributor you’ll get more trading.</p> <p>Some people donate units if they have too many (to the admin fund or similar). This can stimulate trading on a personal level. This shows a love of LETS and a desire to make it work.</p> <p>Some systems give new members a credit to start but these credits have to come from somewhere so maybe better to just give a personal follow-up (buddy) and/or effort to get them involved.</p> <p>Not many young families see the benefits of LETS.</p> <p>Kate – Attract younger people by holding public events, introduce children’s activities which can feed through to parents.</p> <p>Two younger participants (permaculture students) very enthusiastic about LETS but had never heard of it be ore the permaculture teacher told them about it.</p> <p>In Melbourne, newly joined members are invited to work in the office to get them started and learn networking.</p> <p>Groups vary in how much they expect people to donate, time rather than being paid from the admin acct.</p> <p>Fees; annual fees or per trade?</p> <p>Buddying happens not only in LETS, but also in other communitis (e.g. Schools, tribes)</p> <p>Having a regular market where FOOD is cooked and sold can really draw people in.</p> <p>Keeping in touch, accepting that LETS is not everyone’s thing.</p> <p>It’s important to point out to interested people that LETS is not a one-to-one barter scheme. One doesn’t have to deal only with someone who needs what one has to offer.</p>			

DISCUSSION ITEM			
The Big Insurance Game			
Convenor:	Cheryl	Scribe:	Angela Mulgrew
Attendees:			
Cheryl, Peter, Angela T, Angela M, Gillian, Julie			
Discussion:			
<p>Headings for discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Public Liability – Groups -Insurance companies/bodies for alternative groups – private -LETS, Woofers, volunteers? (Meetings; activities; work) -The Fear Game/the Risk Factor <p>Cheryl shared her concerns about the loss of insurance when the company closed down due to the impact of the recent big flooding and other disasters. She lives on a coop property without an actual house for household insurance coverage, therefore no liability insurance.</p> <p>Working Bee coverage at a rented home with no liability insurance is a concern. Or what about at Public Housing if there is an accident – who would cover someone: the resident or Public Housing?</p> <p>Angie noted that the Natl LETS Conference 2010 had an insurance broker do a presentation on options and opportunities but to date there has not been a conference report with the information and direction that came from that session. Angie to check with Ann Jupp regarding this matter. (Followup: Ann reported that she did not support the fear factor of insurance discussions, as Maleny is not Incorporated, does not have insurance etc, therefore she did not attend the session and even though on the conference organising committee had no information to share.)</p> <p>How do we get insurance and who with?</p> <p>Angie provided information on Household Workers' Insurance (Qld).</p> <p>www.workcoverqld.com.au/insurance/insurancehome 1 300 362 128 (as posted on Caboolture LETS CES site Announcements)</p> <p>LETS members need to check their household insurance policy and know what coverage is provided.</p> <p>Options for further information include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding out if there is an Insurance Ombudsman. Perhaps check with the WA State Govt Insurance Office SGIO for information. - Ask Jeff (Armadale) about Constitutional Law & Insurance. - Ask if there is an Insurance Aid to advise groups, like there are Mortgage Brokers there are Insurance Brokers – which brings us back to the presentation at National 2010 Conference - Ask what the Govt's role is in supporting volunteers and community Groups. Ask the MLA, MP - Ask at the Citizen's Advice Bureau - Ask at a Cooperative organisation about insurance even though LETS is not an coop group. 			
Conclusions (if any)			
<p>Insurance coverage is an outstanding issue with little reliable consistent information available.</p> <p>The suggested Options for further information above would be a good starting point to follow up on.</p> <p>The information and conclusions from the 2010 National Conference needs to be provided to LETS groups.</p>			

DISCUSSION ITEM			
Incorporation or not for LETS systems			
Convenor:	Jeff Green	Scribe:	Adrian Doesburg
Attendees:			
Sylvia Spencer			
Discussion:			
<p>Armadale LETS started as an unincorporated body in 1990 then became incorporated in 1998 and has this week become unincorporated again. When we started we were under the umbrella of Armadale Kelmscott Job Link but when we moved to the Armadale Community Family Centre (ACFC) it was recommended that we become incorporated. Now that there have been changes to the Associations Incorporation laws and the need to pull our constitution into line with it and also the need for the ACFC to ensure all associated bodies upgrade their insurances, Armadale LETS held meetings to decide if they would continue with Incorporation and pay their insurances (approximately \$1500 per year) or un-incorporate. The latter was chosen at a Special Meeting and AGM on the 21.8.2011.</p> <p>What we were seeking was advice on the way to go for our LETS and LETSystems in general. If liability is the issue, then what other cheaper insurances are available and is there a possibility for Australia wide group discounts for non-incorporated bodies. In all the time we have operated Armadale LETS I don't think that a grant has been applied for, so the advantage of Incorporation to attract grants is not required.</p>			
Conclusions (if any):			
It would good to know what the 'state of the art' is, with respect to running a LETSystem as an unincorporated body and what advantages have we missed out on by dropping the Incorporation.			
Additional notes:			

DISCUSSION ITEM			
Advantages of networking – how to make it work?			
Convenor:	Kate	Scribe:	Kate
Attendees:			
Kate, Anne Jupp, May Upe, Ann Miller, Krystyna, Susan (Adelaide)			
Discussion:			
<p>Networking three levels</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within the system 2. Regional nearby LETSsystems 3. State level 4. National – all important. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within the system – Covered in other sessions (social activities, busy bees, trading days etc) 2. Regional- finding closest systems, Email contact, Invite to LETS activities, AGMs, socials. <p>Ann Jupp from Maleny, Queensland said their close ties were CABOOLTURE, WOODFORD, SUNSHINE COASTand BRISBANE.</p> <p>They joined up for markets, trading days, AGM's,swapped newsletters and kept in touch. Cross fertilization of ideas was vital. Maleny LETS had been networking since inception in 1992. Exchanging ideas works well. Melbourne also networks between Moreland, Diamond valley, Northern Suburbs and Borderlands. Improved communication also takes place as a result of conferences.</p> <p>3.State level. – further afield- other LETS groups.</p> <p>Ann gave short history of her LETS system Maleny, which operates very successfully and is very active. She also started up QLETS in 1992 which fell apart as no real need for it. QLETS was set up to make connections between all LETSsystems on East coast.</p> <p>Ann stated that succession plans within own LETSsystems i.e passing on skills and information about their LETS was valuable as it made sure others know what needs doing, how their LETSystem runs etc. If people don't volunteer target or groom them for a position that you think they may be good at.</p> <p>Julie from Armadale LETS suggested national exchange of newsletters. Valuable information gets shared esp new ideas. Requests web-site access so that anyone can source newsletters or CES can be accessible for those who use it. There are 60 LETsystems on CES in Australia.</p> <p>First conference ever held in Australia was organised by Maleny and was attended by John Crofts, Michael Linton,and Paul Felix.</p> <p>Oz LETS was set up as a Nat peak body but didn't get off the ground.</p> <p>Ozlets – national currency didn't eventuate.</p>			

Ozlets magazine ran a quarterly newsletter for about 18 months but folded due to lack of energy.

4.National networking can work by keeping updated. Communicating with each other.

How to do it?

Keep contacts current and regular.

Have a generic EMail address.

Other issues raised re conference planning.

Web-site needs to be used for participants to access to receive updated information, especially re others attending who they may know and may be able to share accommodation, transport etc.

Conference analysis afterwards should be used for next conference to assist in running of it and should be shared with all groups.

OST – if using again give participants more idea of what it is all about. Few people have experienced it.

Newsletters – are they necessary?

Just announcements generally all that is necessary and are now used by several LETS..

Conclusions (if any):

Additional notes:

DISCUSSION ITEM			
Energy leaving the system – what to do!			
Convenor:	Claire (Swan Hill)	Scribe:	Caren (Armadale)
Attendees:			
Jeff (Armadale), Roderic (Visitor), Claire (Swan Hills), Caren (Armadale), Annie (Swan Hills), Shirley (Swan Hills), Mary Ann (Rockingham), Julie (Armadale).			
Discussion:			
<p>The main issue discussed was that people left the system in debit. This massive concern affects the community and the members who are left behind. It was felt that debits to the system meant that there was an outstanding debt to the community which leaves negative energy and negatively influences the community, but the same vice versa – credits help the community. It was felt that even though it is hard to talk to members who are leaving with a debt they need to be advised that they are removing energy from the community and leaving members with no one to trade. Limits of debt was discussed but is not currently practiced by any of the groups present. Most members felt that it was unreasonable to ban members from joining new LETS groups in new areas if they owed debits to their old LETS system.</p> <p>Causes for leaving were discussed and included busy lives, leaving the area, not intergenerational (so family members do not stay with LETS).</p> <p>Does any system currently follow up with a questionnaire? Suggestions included a letter asking why are you leaving? Do you know that you owe a debt to your community? Tick boxes could be provided.</p> <p>Julie (Armadale) discussed LETS groups sharing newsletter – through email etc. It was thought that if the Perth LETS groups got together every 2 months in each others areas and traded, busy-bee-ed, etc with each other this would increase positive energy in our individual LETS groups. It was thought vital to keep in touch with other LETS systems to find out what works and what doesn't and how they are trying to solve various problems with keeping and trading.</p> <p>General discussion on how to trade, meet and greet and busy bees and keep it effective and simple and sustainable was made. Also possibility of getting involved in local schools – both primary and high with gardening would help introduce LETS to the newer generations. It was firmly believed that Intergenerational communication is vital to keeping LETS alive in the community.</p> <p>Another issue discussed was how to attract members – the issues with providing credits upon joining was discussed, but many felt that this did not attract trading to occur. What appeared to work was finding out what new members wanted and helping them get in touch with people who could trade with them. Once they were trading it became easier to continue trading. Touching base with a special member's person also worked well, but the person has to want to do this type of work. It is important that new members are asked to state what they like doing and then write this down as something to trade in.</p> <p>Next generation interests were discussed about what younger people would want a LETS system for and this moved into Networking and socialising issues such as what are younger people interested in and how can they help each other in a LETS system.</p> <p>Bartercard.com and Bartercard system was discussed and how they approached LETS after the episode on "Today Tonight" was talked about. This discussion led to how can businesses trade in LETS with tax and GST issues. It was thought that a theoretical model would be helpful for this.</p>			
Conclusions (if any):			
<p>Letter or contact to people leaving system that they owe to their community and continue trading so they end up with a zero balance.</p> <p>One of the main issues seems to be that as members leave the remaining members have no one to trade with.</p>			
Additional notes:			

Succinctly put the big problem of people leaving in debit is directionally proportional to how many people are in the system. This means that the lower number of members = high problems and a higher number of members = a dilute problem. The best way to minimise the issue of energy leaving the system is to increase membership!

DISCUSSION ITEM			
How can we bring together strong local communities and create a strong and effective national network?			
Convenor:	Karel Boele	Scribe:	Maria Bakas
Attendees:			
12 people			
Discussion:			
<p>If we just have small local groups there is no need for a national network. However, if we want 30% of everyone's basic needs in society to be fulfilled through community currency system then there needs to be a national network.</p> <p>What makes strong local communities?</p> <p>Co-operation, care, love, empathy, physical engagement, community cohesion, community well-being rather than the individual level, support, authentic, generosity, honestly, TRUST, value, credibility, sharing, social interaction, more about relation less about stuff, more about / continuity of relationships, conscience,</p> <p>Value is based on what you provide to the community, focus on community/local, trust and belonging.</p> <p>What makes a strong national network?</p> <p>Simple, convenient, inexpensive and fast platform to facilitate equitable (potentially supply and demand based) exchange between local communities.</p> <p>Other features the platform needs:</p> <p>Newsletter, facilitate conference and expos / regional and national, facilitate local and national government involvement / recognition, facilitate events, facilitate education / advocacy, facilitate community engagement / participatory democracy (snap send resolve), facilitate connection with other community groups, part of sustainability / environmental / social responsibility movement.</p> <p>The platform needs to have:</p> <p>Good management, professionalism, resources, efficiency (without contamination), effectiveness, value based what you provide to the community, focus on community/local, trust and belonging.</p>			
Conclusions (if any):			
<p>National association and platform or only platform?</p> <p>Next national LETS conference, debate about whether to set up a national association.</p> <p>In meantime explore platform possibilities.</p> <p>Possibilities include:</p> <p>Improving CES</p> <p>New system</p> <p>Linking with other ethical platforms.</p> <p>Consult Community Forge</p> <p>Research other possibilities</p> <p>Other possible actions in the next year.</p> <p>Consult Pig Face Farm</p> <p>Other</p> <p>National LETS 2013 conference to endorse platform.</p>			

Action Plan for Trading – How to start and how to continue

General discussion was made by Caren (Armadale), Adrian (Armadale), Gillian (Rockingham), Jenni (Swan Hills), Les (Visitor), Anne-Marie (Swan Hills), Sylvia (Armadale) and Allen (Armadale).

From various discussions about what the problem was, what to do and how to do it our group came up with two Action Plans that we intend to honour:

Action Plan One

Aimed at starting or re-starting trading:

1. Write out what you individually want done.
2. Put it into a newsletter, email it to someone or phone a buddy/liaison person with your ideas.
3. The liaison person (for a small unit fee) will find someone who can do the job for you- arrange it and let you know what is happening.
4. Then it is simply do the trading and pay for the trading.

Action Plan Two

Aimed at regular WA trading amongst other LETS systems:

1. Friendly regular get togethers
2. Brainstorm what works
3. This will be at a café and we will talk over coffee

ACTION ITEM			
SOURCING A LETSCENTRE/VENUE FOR MEETINGS ETC.			
Convenor:	Roni Pidgeon (SWLS Lets)	Scribe:	Roni
Attendees:			
Debra Searle, Sylvie Spencer (Armadale); Tina Ross, Peter Scarfe, Roni Pidgeon (SwanHills) Angela Mulgrew (Carbooture)			
Discussion:			
<p>ENQUIRIES – New Cultural Centre Kalamunda – Kalamunda Community Learning Centre (The Cottage rented fm Shire) - Rivervale Community Centre model (Debra) - Locate a shed/building through outlets eg SWHLS website, Kalamunda Shire, ads shop etc. notice boards, explore all alternatives eg. Place in Bickley Valley Scouts Hall Kalamunda - Roni investigating for feedback, Men’s shed Forrestfield Shire Secretary/CEO Govt Lands? Peter as Treasurer Bendigo Bank Forrestfield to secretary Noreen Townsend re Kalamunda Lesmurdie areas – Falls Farm Lesmurdie - Govt. Community Support Info Services may supply info.</p> <p>Non Inc Insurance for market stalls/trading -(AMMI Festivals & Markets Insurance section) (Karel Boele)</p> <p>Angela’s info re Woodford Qld Cherie & Gary have own inc. company insured & renting Bush House Woodford “Community Inspiration Centre - as café, Lets gatherings, etc.</p> <p>Ann Jupp Melany Angela’s info re Up Front Club part of commercial co-op/restaurant/entertainment Lets Melany & neighbouring Lets.</p>			
Conclusions and Action			
<p>Above to be discussed at next SWHLS Lets committee mtg and follow up investigation/plans put in place.</p> <p>Sourcing a Centre input very useful. A base to launch from.</p>			

NETWORKING BETWEEN LETS FOLLOW UP ACTION PLAN AND CONCLUSIONS.

ATTENDEES: Karel, Ann Jupp, Claire, Kate, Annie, Marina, Dee, Jordan, Bridget, Susan.

All agreed importance of keeping in touch with other LETS locally, nationally and globally.

A need to exchange web-sites, generic EMAIL addresses, phone numbers etc.

Ways of doing this include - joining CES. Accessing newsletters between groups regularly with invitations to events, updated information re other LETS, conferences. Have links to CES and others on own web-site home page. Start a blog - dated journal (Claire SHLets) with address on CES -link to dummy account. CES - as membership grows - more access via Google.

Karel Boele - Sydney LETS put forward following actions. To be put on Agenda at next conference to be held in Melbourne 2012.

- 1. Before next conference research on-line platforms. CES, CYCLOS (Social trade organisation) COMMUNITY FORGE, LETSNET (not till in 2012).**
- 2. Next conference - Debate re whether on-line platform like CES is only national tool needed to bring LETS together or if a national peak body is also needed - mechanism definitely needed on line.**
- 3. To be discussed and debated at Melbourne in 2012 in preparation for vote in 2013 for consensus for a particular on-line platform and which platform works best.**

Further discussion and action.

Contact Annette Loudon who is working on updating Australian web-site - LETs page www.lets.org.au (Claire SHLets). Ability to promote LETS nationally. Good place to post documents of conference. All Lets groups and their link to CES and SHLets web-site.

Marina - Melbourne LETS.

Said feedback from this conference would be good - what worked and what didn't. Prep format for conference to help others. More information on OST (Open Space Technology). Suggested each LETS group had one representative and funds raised by their group to meet their expenses so that the person could attend conferences interstate, go to important events to do with LETS etc.

Cheryl - from Eastern States suggested donations made to interlets accounts.

Other ideas

If CES had facility allowing LETS members to create campaigns and advocacy together - collaborative advocate type function.

National LETS Day for example - CES had function to post it then everyone able to assist.

Facebook - auto feed to facebook. Set up page to get out to mainstream i.e participatory democracy which is a function that allows LETS members to collaborate and develop proposals and/or solutions to problems and vote on them. Exposing conferences publicly would be vehicle to make it happen.

Open Space allows communication.

Have talks to schools and gardening clubs etc.

Personal Action plan – Adrian (Armadale LETS)

1. Report to my nearest and dearest on the Conference;
2. Report to my customers and suggest transactions in CC ("Complementary Currency": Karel's handy term);
3. Check my status in the Perth Community Exchange;
4. Compile a list my Offers;
5. Compile a list of my "Wanted";
6. Become active in Armadale LETS:
 - Face-to-face
 - Screen-to-screen
 - Telephone

Action Item:

“Use them or lose them” – explore the idea of expiring units to stimulate trading & solve the problem of lost energy.

Convenor:

Claire

Attendees:

Adrian, Caralyn, Krystyna, Peter, Shirley, Les, Sharryn, Claire, Kate, Gerald, Annie, Roni, Ann, Marina, Susan, Karel, Angela

Action:

Quick explanation:

Swan Hills LETS has a number of members with stale credits that aren't being spent, the flow of energy is a bit stagnant. This is partly due to an overall excess of credits in the system due to members leaving the system in debit without returning their account to zero. A few years ago we added a “sinking fund” account to our system which is an inactive account to which credits are transferred, it has an ever increasing credit balance which tries to compensate for energy lost from the system when people leave before repaying their debt to the community. By removing credits from the system we hope to stimulate trading by bringing the system closer to balance. The credits come from an annual contribution of 20 units per member plus any donations & any credits that leaving members leave behind.

The proposal is to stimulate trading by time stamping units earned & expiring them after a given time period (say 1 or 2 years). The expired credits could either be transferred to the admin account, the sinking fund (in Swan Hills case) or a “community assistance” account (Maleney has one)

A similar concept is “demurrage”. This is an idea that was touched on at one of the sessions by Karel. It's unknown how other complementary currencies are trying this.

Discussion:

There's nothing wrong with keeping money in the bank. What about LETS units?

Concern about penalising members, the member concerned should be reminded in advance & offered options: use, give or trade to another member. Intertrading is another option.

People leaving the system in credit or people who have ceased trading & aren't really members any more shouldn't mind.

We're talking about penalising stockpiling, this is one of the basic principles of LETS, there's no point in stockpiling. Stockpiling isn't always deliberate, sometimes members just can't find anyone to meet their needs.

Suggestion to allow members to put their membership on hold for travel or other reasons. Should be a limit on how long.

Another suggestion that a private transaction could be made swapping dollars for units. Might be unusual but could still work if it suits both parties. This is just a normal trade but it's dollars being traded rather than goods/services.

Trustees should assist members with finding goods/services to spend their units on, especially with members in debit.

Question: Isn't it the responsibility of the members in debit to trade back up? Response from some in the group, “yes, but it doesn't work”.

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If implemented, it would have to be part of the member agreement. What about existing members?
Some discussion about how to introduce it to existing members.

Other suggestions:

1. Close member accounts if no trading in a certain time period (a year or 2). Could be argued that the member has broken the member agreement by not trading (but that depends on the member agreement)
2. Instead of expiring the units based on age, remove a percentage if no trading in a certain time period. Or, do both. To work well, it should be part of the software & happen automatically, and the simpler the better. (KISS principle)
3. Members should be required to have as many requests as offers.

Discussion broke down, no conclusions reached.

Action: Discuss further & report progress to anyone interested.

In summary, options for using units near expiry:

1. Buy something
2. Buy something from another LETS system (intertrade)
3. Transfer to a friend
4. Donate to admin, sinking fund or community assistance
5. Donate to a member in need.

Fair trading, questions to ask & insurance

Convenor: Cheryl

Attendees: Cheryl, Jeff, Dee, Karel, Claire and others bumble beeing.

Actions

- 1:- Read the WA Dept of Commerce folder on "The LETS System training Pack"
Jeff will try to find the digital update and send it around.
- 2:- Revisit or revise the starter info packs that are available to new LETS people.
Perhaps we can all work on making a good generic one.
- 3:- For fair and equitable trading do we need to revisit the original core LETS values. Some being having good intentions, making sure we do a fair trade ourselves and renegotiate the trade if it is felt to be inequitable. eg some work will take longer than expected, some shorter time. Some will need more or less travel as a component. Is a petrol cost to be covered in dollars and the task as a LETS unit payment? Building community is also a core value.
- 4:- Seek comments from John Croft -- Jeff to try and contact him.
- 5:- Explore the insurance avenues group insurance umbrellas. eg the Australian Garden Club approach (Australia wide coverage.) Permaculture, transition town, etc. Speak to your local member to see if there is anything local that may umbrella your LETS group for insurance coverage, Volunteers insurance packs from a broker. suggested AAMI \$195 festival and meeting insurance as long as you do a trade at the gathering. Always check the FINE PRINT and ask questions.
- 6:- Become a religion --- -- a lot of these admin bits will disappear
- 7:- Need contacts to ask who are involved in commerce or insurance at uni level or in the industry so that we as lay persons can understand the lingo and legislative needs of insurance.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Rockingham LETS

Dee Bunker
Ann & Sonny Miller

legallyblondee50@yahoo.com.au
a.caire@hotmail.com
sunnymiller@hotmail.com

Gillian Stoll
MaryAnn Rath
Angela Taylor

maryannrath@rocketmail.com
ang_tay@hotmail.com

Armadale LETS

Jeff Green & Sylvia Spencer
Debra & Allen Searle
Caren Pollacchi
Adrian Doesburg
Caralyn La Grange
Krystyna Keberling
Julie Woodman

jeffgreen20@live.com.au

gorgon@bigpond.net.au
bravocomms@yahoo.com.au
agardenpath@bedfordale.com

julwood@primus.com.au

Swan Hills LETS

Peter Scarfe
Les & Shirley Stratton
Sharryn Turell
Annette Westhoff
Jenny Pohl
Claire Botman
Kate & Gerald Cook
Joy Thom
Christina Ross
Annie Mitchell
May Upe
Anne-Marie Sternheim
Roni Pidgeon
Anu Borchardt
Patricia Hamilton

peterns@westnet.com.au
leshirl1@gmail.com
sharyn.turrell@gmail.com

jennykirby13@westnet.com.au
marshy@zeta.com.au
kandgcook@bigpond.com
joythom@bigpond.com
amica@tpg.com.au
annie033@acnrep.com.au

sterline@iinet.net.au
romish12@bigpond.com
borcherdt@iinet.net.au

Not With LETS

Maria Bakas-Booker
Roderic Pitty
Arda Martin
Bridget Lyons
Jordan Mulroney
Regan Bleechmore

mariabakas@gmail.com
rodericpitty@uwa.edu.au
armila@bigpond.com.au
bridgetemily@hotmail.com
jordan-mulzy@hotmail.com
bleecr01@gmail.com

Interstate Members

Ann Jupp
Marina Bistrin
Susan Lloyd
Karel Boele
Angela Mulgrew
Cheryl Boston

annjupp@westnet.com.au
marinabistrin@optusnet.com.au
sanddl@adam.com.au
karel@ecodirectory.com.au
lets.amqld@hotmail.com
moreland_lets@yahoo.com.au

Queensland
Victoria
Adelaide
Sydney
Queensland
Victoria

Open Space Facilitator

Mike Fuller

blissus@tpg.com.au