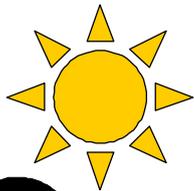


NEWSLETTER
Autumn 2010

Ealing LETS



Local Exchange Trading Scheme

WELCOME!

...to the first newsletter of the relaunched Ealing Local Exchange Trading Scheme - a way for people and organisations to exchange their time, skills or goods with each other using a local currency (Ealing LETS uses 'Eals') instead of conventional money. It encourages mutual help in the community and the possibility of creating an 'alternative economy' based on need.

Ealing LETS started in the early 1990s, slipped into the doldrums in the mid-noughties but was relaunched in March this year by a steering group with support from Letslink London (part of a UK network which supports the LETS movement) and Ealing Volunteer Centre.

Where are we now? Membership - over 50 new in addition to returning previous members, bringing it to over 100 . The Committee has been concentrating on getting basic policies into place, systems up and running, and organising stalls and events including our first...

Annual General Meeting
Monday 6th December 7.30pm
at St John's Church, Mattock Lane W13

Members will receive full details shortly, but there will be speakers from a long-established LETS sharing their experiences, the main business will be review of the constitution (adopted as a 'working document' at the relaunch), and election of a new Committee - we urgently need people who can spare a few hours each month to work together on the next phase of development and serious expansion. Please phone or email if you are interested and would like to discuss.

If you are not already a member, how does LETS work? Very briefly: Members list skills they wish to offer and their requirements for goods and services via the LETS web site or a printed directory. You then contact each other directly, arrange a 'trade' and agree a price in LETS credits known as 'Eals' which are transferred online. For more information, visit the website or contact us.

SUN SHINES ON TRADING DAY

The garden of Hanwell's famous thatched cottage 'The Hermitage' was the venue for a Trading Day on 28th August, thanks to Helen & Dorothy Tyler.

Members offered bric-a-brac, fresh fruit and herbs, crafts, refreshments and a home made wine tasting in exchange for Eals.

A warm, sunny afternoon was enjoyed by guests, recent members and some from the very early 1990's! We experimented with Eals vouchers purchased for cash, an idea which needs to be explored further.



A LETS event on YOUR patch?

Could you organise a neighbourhood event? Socials hosted by members help people get to know each other, build trust and discover new opportunities for trading. Contact the Committee to volunteer.

SEEING THROUGH THE SYSTEM

Unlike the unloved world banking and financial system, whose machinations are opaque to ordinary mortals, LETS aims to be **TRANSPARENT**. Members can see all transactions and minutes of meetings are available to all.

CONTACT US...

www.ealing.letslink.org/members
Email: ealing@letslink.org
Phone: Alan 020 8997 3017 or
Andree 020 8567 3446

Postal address:
93 Oaklands Road, Hanwell W7

SUBSCRIPTION WARNING!

Prospective members will be pleased to learn that we are not requesting a Sterling subscription to join as we wanted to avoid the admin complications of collecting and do not want to put off people on limited incomes. Instead, it is to be paid in our own currency at the rate of 1(one) Eal per month and the first round will be deducted directly from your account in January, up to six months in arrears (i.e. from July 2010 if you had joined by then).

LETS still, unfortunately, needs traditional money for expenses - postage, copying, room hire, etc. - but aims to gain this through fundraising, donations and possibly some form of limited 'cash for Eals' opportunities.

GET TRADING!

Membership has regrown but you are still a bit shy about actually trading - and that is what it's all about. What is on offer? Here is a selection, current at time of writing:

OFFERS •Dog walking •Cooking •Event catering •Garden help •General handiwork •Hairdressing •Herbs •ironing •lifts •Personal ceremonies •Proofreading •Short term counselling •Study space •Reiki •Upholstery •VHS to DVD copying •Writing a letter of complaint. Perhaps the oddest offer so far was compost worms!

NEEDS include •changing a tap washer •English teaching •foot and leg massage •mending a fence •running a charity... and more.

Strangely, it is not always easy to decide what we have to offer. We may think "It's a nice idea but what could I possibly do?" . Well, you could visit the [Inspiration List](#) on the How to Join page of the website or call one of our member support team, Alan and Andree.

No Internet?

The website offers great advantages over the old paper system, but we do not want to disadvantage non-web users so Ealing LETS will pair you with a 'buddy' who will access it on your behalf, or organise basic web training if you are interested but lack knowledge or confidence.

We are also producing, initially as a one-off, a paper mini-Directory of offers and wants on request for members (only).

If you've got it, spend it!

LETS discourages accumulation of large surpluses. If you have over 500 Eals sitting around and little 'buying', going on, the scheme will advise you how to spend it, including considering a donation to the system account - LETS needs Eals too! Similarly with large 'commitment', as debt is known in LETS - see *Get Trading* above.

LETS AT THE CARNIVAL

The first public appearance of post-revival Ealing LETS was at Hanwell Carnival in Elthorne Park on 19th June. Despite rather a blustery day the turnout was good and quite a number of people were interested in finding out more about us. Those who visited the stall read our displays which gave information about what LETS is and how it works. We had a large board giving lots of ideas for trading. Three former members re-enrolled, new applications were received, our leaflets were popular and very interested noises were made by a number of people new to Ealing LETS or the LETS movement in general. The on-line system was in operation with a mobile broadband connection, so that we could demonstrate to visitors how it works. A big thanks to all involved!



Holidays prevented us participating in the Brentford Festival in September, but another group kindly made leaflets available on their stall.

TRANSITION

www.ealingtransition.org.uk aims to spread awareness of 'peak oil' and climate change, and motivate people to change - building Ealing's self-reliance in areas such as food, energy, jobs, community and economy. LETS could have a part to play, as a Transition speaker said at our relaunch, and we look forward to exploring this further through links with the network.

PR CORNER

Articles about revived Ealing LETS appeared in *Evolve* (the magazine of Ealing Community & Voluntary Services) and *Neighbours Paper* (Ealing's volunteer-run 'alternative press').

Word is gradually getting around various networks and, having pretty well got the 'nuts and bolts' together, it is time for a big promotion. The more members, the greater the chances of anyone getting a trade - we need to reach a critical mass for the chain reaction to really kick off! 'Big Society' from the bottom up?