

A special newsletter to former members and interested people

July 2009

## IS THERE LIFE IN EALING LETS?



Local Exchange Trading System

This will be a blast from the past for former members and perhaps a long-awaited encouragement to people who have been frustrated in their enquiries about LETS in Ealing over the last 4 or 5 years.

Ealing LETS had been running for many years, with the ebb and flow of membership and ups and downs of activity that any organisation experiences. Around 2004/2005, it was on a bit of a down with the number of members seemingly sliding below 'critical mass' and only three people coming forward (Astra, David and Naz) to join the Core Group (organising committee).

We three unfortunately found that subsequent pressures in each of our lives meant we could not put as much time and thought into pushing the scheme forward as we hoped, and one of us has now moved out of the area. Our apologies for this, but at the same time demands from the remaining membership seemed to have dried up and no more volunteers were coming forward, so Ealing LETS became moribund.

However, discussions with Letslink London [www.letslinkuk.net/london](http://www.letslinkuk.net/london) and Ealing Volunteer Centre [www.ealingcvcs.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.ealingcvcs.org.uk/volunteering) have occasionally taken place since, about prospects for revival. Some nearby LETS also appeared to be struggling and a wider West London scheme was considered, but thinking has switched back towards local ones that can trade on local knowledge, identity and geographical accessibility.

We are a formally constituted group; we have not officially wound up and our systems and bank account are still in place. The tools are there, so see over for how we might move forward together...

### What are LETS (in case you have forgotten...)?

Local Exchange Trading Systems are a way for people to exchange their time and skills with each other using a local currency. It encourages mutual help in the community. A directory of members' offers, wants and contact details enables members to contact others to request help and negotiate a 'price'. Ealing LETS uses 'Eals' - as a rough guide, one Eal = £1 Sterling and a suggested guideline rate is 10 Eals per hour. Payment is made with an Eals chequebook and the cheques returned to the scheme's 'trading accountant' to debit and credit against member accounts. Individual statements are provided and member's trading balances are also published within the membership. A small Sterling membership fee is charged and fundraising activities run to cover external costs such as postage and printing and **social events** (see over) are organised to enable people to get to know each other before trading, often hosted by individual members.



## CALL TO ACTION – would YOU like to see Ealing LETS running again?

To revive and survive needs several key roles to be covered: publicity and member recruitment, trading accounts, Sterling accounts, social organising, directory editing, newsletter editing, liaison with local organisations, etc. If enough people are prepared to come forward and cover these between them, there is a chance that Ealing LETS could arise from the ashes. There are other possibilities to add to the mix, such as involving voluntary groups, small businesses, etc.

Technology has also moved on and it is now possible to link members of local systems via the Internet using a template developed by Letslink, who promote and support LETS and complementary activities. This has been offered to Ealing and Letslink proposes to add basic, existing member details to the secure database on the system. It is also proposed that, if Ealing LETS is revived, former members be allowed to carry forward their *Eals* balances into the renewed system.

Please contact David at [ealinglets@live.com](mailto:ealinglets@live.com) (note new email address, supersedes old Hotmail) or 020 8575 2449 if you would be interested in (re)joining and if you can get involved in organisation. IF enough people come forward, we propose to call a meeting in September/October.

### LETS be the Mayor!

Genevieve Hibbs, hard-working community activist and member of Ealing LETS, served as Mayor of Hounslow in the 2008-2009 Council year.

### IN MEMORIAM

Older Ealing LETS members may remember Francis House, one of our founder members often called on or his gardening skills. Francis sadly died in February 2009, only in his fifties

### AN INVITATION

Harrow LETS kindly invite Ealing LETS members and interested people to join them at their social on **19<sup>th</sup> July**, details below. Do consider dropping in – there will be introductions and 'icebreakers', you will gain some insight into LETS as well as an opportunity to see Jenny's delightfully lush garden! There is often crossover of membership around borough boundaries and it is possible to trade between members of different LETS.

*Harrow LETS*

## **GRANDE 'BRING AND SHARE' SUMMER PARTY!**

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July**

Drop in between 12.30 and 4.00

Bring food or drink to share



35 Salisbury Road, Harrow HA1 1NU 020 8863 7180



#### **Directions**

- From South Harrow station: cross Northolt Road opposite, from stop on left choice of 3 buses to Harrow Bus Station itself or 285 to its side. From Harrow on the Hill station: take College Road exit (is next to Bus Station).
- From Harrow Bus Station: bus H14 to Hindes Road (first stop) or about 10 minutes walk up Headstone Road past St George's Shopping Centre, left at crossroads into Hindes Road then first right into Salisbury Road.

**PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO ANYONE WHO MAY BE INTERESTED**