



LETSlink UK: www.letslinkuk.net
From Mary Fee: admin@letslink.org

MESSAGE
Sept 29th 2018

To members of Sheffield LETS for the Extraordinary General Meeting 29/9/2018

Dear Sheffield LETS members:

Greetings for your AGM, which is to be held today. I had planned to attend, but maintaining my own schedule of meetings during the conference season has meant that I needed to decide where best to put my energy today, and having spoke to your Coordinator, I offer the following thoughts:

Since I became responsible for LETSlink UK in the year 2000, I've been maintaining the central website which links to all known groups. We installed a system, on a page for each county which forwards email enquiries to the organisers there: <http://www.letslinkuk.net/regions/uk-map.htm> • <http://letslinkuk.net/north/southyorkshire.htm>. Despite its old-fashioned appearance, this still works as long as there are schemes to refer enquirers to - we display the official phone contact number and also link to the websites on this page.

I believe the original contact to LETSlink, on behalf of Sheffield LETS was from Rosie Bahr, then I mainly corresponded with Catherine, who is ably assisted on the technical side by Mark. We duly set up a website for Sheffield LETS, customized from a standard copy of a system called Local Exchange which was written especially to support LETS. It reproduces all the operations that were being done on individual computers and paper-based communications. Members can maintain their own profiles, create and update Offers & Wants, and do transactions, and organisers can create pages and message the members through the system: <http://www.sheffieldlets.org.uk>

Setting up the online system was a lengthy process involving a transfer of the domain name, before hosting it to include the software with a database behind it to manage the accounts, and customizing the design so that it looks like your very own project. I did come up and visit, which was interesting for me, as I went to University in Sheffield a long time ago, and had some familiarity with the city. From the outset, I was aware that creating this new website was a "last throw of the dice" to save a project which the current organisers had bravely kept going, without much support from elsewhere for about two decades, and I understand that they need to pass on responsibility to a new team.

Catherine and Mark have always been careful to follow due process. They are good administrators, but this is not the only skill involved in running a community project such as LETS. Other skills are needed, as part of a co-operated team and a flourishing scheme which is going to survive without external funding needs to include a variety of talented individuals, each offering something that they are good at to add to the mix, and this also includes creativity, the ability to network socially, to organise events, and where necessary support isolated individuals. I've tried to describe this here: <http://www.letslinkuk.net/practice/LETSdoIT.htm>

To move forward: Firstly if any members are willing to offer your own skills as part of a team, please do come forward. Secondly, since Sheffield LETS is the last known community currency in South Yorkshire, and we are now forming supportive county networks to take the LETS project to a new phase, my own positive proposal, for members willing to stay on board, however occasional your engagement may be as part of your busy lives, is that we posit this as an expansion and become Sheffield & South Yorkshire Local Exchange. This re-branding, which can incorporate your current balances (we will ask everyone to positively engage) will also enable us to gather in the "lost folk" from elsewhere in the county, who have no local groups to join. One option is re-naming the bank account with new signatories; another is becoming a branch of LETSlink UK. Either way, we are happy to do the necessary background work of rehosting the website and supporting a new team.

Best wishes for a positive outcome from your meeting: **Mary Fee 020 7607 7852 • 07966 216891**