
LETS Community NEWS © 2006

(Incorporating LETS REVIEW & LCNZ Newsletter)

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WINGS

I've been a member of our local 'green dollar' trading group for 11+ years now and last month I discovered that the Committee had got us on to a computerised accounts system. WOW! I had been asking if we could get onto something like this for about 5 years now and was so pleased when I went in for the first time to use the LETS link this month. It's simple but clear to use, and I believe holds huge potential for easier trading when each group finally gets fully set up.

Well done to the LETS Committee for following through with this idea and pass my thanks on to them, or whoever brought this computerised system together for the benefit of us all in New Zealand.

Mike Stoneley

WINGS (Blenheim)

Christoph and the LETS Connect Committee set this up for all NZ Groups. Ed.

The Future of LETS Connect

In less than two months we will all be meeting again at our yearly Conference in New Plymouth. This past year has been one of great changes for LETS Connect. In keeping with our mandate that was given to the committee, LETS Connect researched and adopted an online trading platform and software: the South African developed Community Exchange System (CES). This decision was not entirely without controversy, however, of the now 13 member exchanges eleven are now online, with only one likely to vote against CES. (The 13th, CAPS Wellington doesn't seem to have any traders any more).

CES is a simple yet versatile online trading platform that has been made available to us for free. The software is under constant development. The provider and developer, Tim Jenkin from the South African New Economics Network, has been very helpful in accommodating our needs and incorporating new features.

This, in actual fact, makes the intertrading mechanism that has been provided by LETS Connect for that last few years, redundant. As all Intertrading is now going through CES, the committee has decided to close the current intertrading mechanism by 28 February 2006 and to transfer the balances via CES to each exchange.

With this, LETS Connect has entered a phase of transition and is debating its new role. There have been discussions in the committee about the purpose and direction of LETS Connect.

The new role of LETS Connect

This is what is proposed: From being a pure intertrading mechanism, LETS Connect evolves into what could be called an 'association' for the different exchanges across New Zealand. This association, being/becoming an incorporated body in its own right, keeps the current exchanges as its members and would take on following purposes and activities:

a) To set up a national system that is open to any individual, organisation and business across the country who would like to trade using LETS but does not have a local system available.

b) To help newly forming local groups to get started and to provide them and also existing exchanges with technical support where needed. That includes helping them get signed up and started on CES.

c) To undertake members education, production of materials and courses, organise events and to publish a monthly newsletter for the benefit for all LETS members of all groups in New Zealand, with the explicit goal of taking our understanding of LETS further than just "how to run a system".

d) To educate the general public of the benefits of LET Systems, and to work with local and national authorities, and in partnership with other Non Government Organisation's and large diversity of players in all sectors, government, business and the community sector.

The committee would set up sub-committees with co-opted members to undertake all the above activities.

It needs to be well understood that LETS Connect in those roles by no means restricts the independence and freedom of any of the local exchanges to run their affairs the way they want to. LCNZ would also by no means restrict any activities or fund raising efforts of the local exchanges. The role that is envisioned here in relation to its member exchanges is purely one of support and advocacy.

LETS – Green Dollars – used to be a wide spread movement in New Zealand. It has slowly shrivelled away during the last few years. Correspondingly, the surviving exchanges have mostly become inward looking. In the meantime, economic pressure on individuals might have eased a bit since the 80's and 90's, but is hasn't gone away. Similarly, ecological problems are only increasing, and issues like globalisation and the anticipated 'peak oil' will have a major impact on our economic lives.

It is time now to change our perspective from just preserving whatever little is left of our LETS exchanges to becoming more outward looking again. LETS has something to offer. LETS is part of the solution – not the problem. But – we have to take an active role to promote it. LETS Connect is in a natural phase of

In This Issue

WINGS.....	1
The Future of LETS Connect	1
WELCOME.....	2
PLEBS status report.....	2
WAIRARAPA REPORT.....	2
LCNZ Members and their Balances	2
NOTICE.....	3
National LETS 2006 Conference Agenda.....	3
EXCHANGE VOUCHERS (EVs).....	3
Trading Totals & LCNZ Balances.....	3

transition – lets use this opportunity and fashion LETS Connect into a useful body for all, now!

Christoph Hensch
Chair LCNZ

WELCOME

This month we welcome HANDS Golden Bay to membership of LCNZ, they have a wide range of offers available and members of all other CES users can now trade with them. Just remember their paper money cannot be used outside their System.

Elsewhere there are some interesting developments going on and we may see some new faces joining us soon.

Editor.

PLEBS status report

It has now been 2 months since PLEBS went online with CES. 20% of our membership have since accessed their accounts (that is 9 out of 45!). There is still some way to go before we achieve widespread use of this fabulous online facility.

The committee has also decided to change the approach to account limits. Until now, PLEBS practised a 500 debit limit and unlimited credit balances. This resulted in some very high credit balances.

By 1 March, a new system of 'thresholds' will be put into force. In this system, accounts that pass certain thresholds will trigger certain actions. Plus/minus 500 (Range 1) will be considered normal trading range. Plus/minus 1000 (Range 2) will attract the scrutiny of the administrator, who will determine if such a high balance is any cause of concern. If an account goes into the range of plus/minus 1000-1500 (Range 3), then the person is given 3 to 6 months to bring the balance back to within normal acceptable limits. Balances above 1500 (Range 4) will incur trading restrictions and if in credit, a circulation incentive. That means that all accounts above 1500 must show a 2.5% lower balance by the end of the month. This may be achieved through trading, or if trading is insufficient, through a demurrage fee (if in credit). People who do not bring their balances back to below 1000 within the given time frame will also incur the same restrictions as imposed in Range 4. There may also be an assortment of other measures, like one-way trading only, etc.

A member may apply for a special dispensation for either a loan (larger debit balance) or a savings project (higher credit limit). If approved by the committee, there will be no penalties. This system is experimental and we will review it after 6 months.

Christoph Hensch

WAIRARAPA REPORT

The most exciting news from us is the move to the on line CES system, which we are still familiarising ourselves with. All of our transactions are now processed on-line either by members themselves, or by another member on behalf. "The Green Pages" aka our Goods and Services Directory is also on line. Prospective members can apply to join on the internet also. Soon our newsletter and fortnightly email noticeboard will be online too. You can check us out online at:
<http://letsnewzealand.org.nz/tiki-index.php?page=Lets+Wairarapa>

This year should see us holding nine markets, with the first one having been on the 11th of February. We move our markets around the Wairarapa towns of Masterton, Greytown and Carterton. The last two markets of 2005 were very successful, with good weather playing a major part in bringing in stallholders, members and the public. We generally manage to get a small article (and sometimes a photo) in our local free rag "The Midweek" promoting our upcoming market. Our local tourism board "Go Wairarapa", of which we are members, publishes a quarterly glossy, which we have also managed to get our markets into as of late last year. This is a high quality publication, and is well-circulated. Photos are usually published alongside events promotions.

Our co-ordinator continues to be successful in securing grants for us, the most recent being a donation from the Eastern and Central Trust, which will be used to complete the refurbishment of our office in the Wairarapa Community Centre. Having an office here is a real bonus for our Exchange – it gives us a public profile, and keeps us in touch with other community groups who are also tenants.

Membership of our Exchange continues to be steady, with new members regularly coming on board, but others also leaving. We once again have a motivated committee, which works well together and are looking forward to a prosperous 2006!

Hettie Arends, Secretary/Acting Co-ordinator

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LETS Connect NZ Members and their Balances.

LCNZ0100. Management .	+23.00	LCNZ0112. Taranaki LETS	+982.80 y	LCNZ0118 Nelson CELTS	+261.66 y
C/- 48 Mountain View Rd., TIMARU		P.O. Box 5015 NEW PLYMOUTH		27 Boundary Road NELSON	
LCNZ0105. Thames	-3,268.40 y	LCNZ0113. PLEBS	-1,246.30 y	LCNZ0119. REBS	-2,025.99 y
P.O. Box 229 THAMES		PO Box 21 102, CHRISTCHURCH		C/- 147a Ikitara Rd, WANGANUI	
LCNZ0106. TATS	+2,502.85 y	LCNZ0115. MOSS	+1023.400 y	LCNZ0120 WEST	+2,088.05 n
C/- 40 Heaton St., TIMARU		P. O. Box 350 MOTUEKA		2 Tui St., Kumara, WESTLAND.	
LCNZ0108. Wairarapa	+959.90 y	LCNZ0116. WINGS	+555.50 y	HANDS	00.00 y
108 Bannister St., MASTERTON		121 Charles St., BLENHEIM		P.O. Box 156 Takaka.	
LCNZ 0109. CAPS Wellington	-2,459.40 n	LCNZ0117. IBES	+441.55 y	Y equals sub paid N equals sub not paid	
C/- 6 Beauchamp St., WELLINGTON		P.O. Box 7087, INVERCARGILL			

NOTICE

All Member Groups should now be selecting their Delegate for the A.G.M. at the Conference. In the past we have had more than one person claiming to be a Delegate for a Group. To avoid this, all Groups must advise me by e-mail of the name of their Delegate. If this is not done your group may lose its vote. Verbal claims to be a Delegate may not be accepted.

Groups unable to send a Delegate may appoint a Proxy, who can be a member of any financial member Group or you can ask the LCNZ Committee to appoint one.

Jim McCaughan <jpmc@paradise.net.nz>

All Groups attending Conference are expected to have a System Report to read out. Please bring this typed and hand it in so that it can become part of the Conference Record. Groups not attending Conference can e-mail a report to me and I will see that it is read out.

Apart from the usual details you report should contain the distribution details for the LETS Community NEWS on your System.

National LETS 2006 Conference Agenda

The public are invited to an Open day Saturday 8th April.. Camp open for registration, Friday 7th April 3pm catch up with a cuppa and folks from all over NZ .Set up your stalls. Set up halls.

5pm Welcome and chat.

6pm BBQ dinner with heaps of salads and pumpkin soup.

7pm. LET System reports.

Films with Helen Dew –The greening of Cuba and money. Set up Stalls.

Saturday 8th. Breakfast early with stalls open from 8am.

9am Stalls open to the public. Open day to the public to learn about us.

10am LETS panel discussion on LETS subjects with the experts!! Christoph Hensch [LETS NZ & CES] Christchurch. Jim McCaughan [LETS connect NZ] Timaru.

Helen Dew [Living Economies] Carterton.

Bryan Duxfield [Taranaki sustainable communities Trust] Bellblock

12noon lunch.

1pm Funding, presentation with Elaine Gill [NPDC] New Plymouth.

2pm Peak oil, presentation and discussion with Stanley Sands who has researched peak oil for over 2 years. Port Waikato.

3.20pm How is the Green party preparing for peak oil?? Stuart Bramhall

3.40pm. How is government preparing for peak oil? Harry Duynhoven [MP for New Plymouth] to be confirmed.

4pm Sustainable Communities with Grifen Hope [Taranaki Environment Centre]

5pm Relax with Lyndal from Taranaki LETS.

6pm Dinner.

7pm Quick Fire mystery auction.

7.30pm Deirdre Kent [Healthy money-Healthy Planet]Otaki. Book Followed by a film Wal-mart and audio Ted Trainer with Helen.

Sunday 9th Early breakfast with LETS meeting at 9am. 2007 venue.

10am AGM of LETS connect.

12noon lunch.

1pm Finish off any business and close 2006 conference. Clean up!!!!

See you all there, a great venue with bush walks and a pond to cool off in.

Refreshments available at all times.

Saturday open to the public and \$5 for a main meal for non members.

Everyone welcome. Bring a friend to learn about the NZ LETS System.

Phone 06 754 6166 or email taranaki_letsnz@yahoo.co.nz for more information.

EXCHANGE VOUCHERS (EVs)

There are now four ways to trade in HANDS: transaction slips, online, contact the HANDy messenger, and directly using EVs. This is the only trading method that's not track able. Prior to EVs the Committee was aware of every trade, except at markets. The Committee would very much like to know how much members are trading with EVs, and we're asking members for feedback on their use. We do know that we printed twice as many 20s as any other denomination and they are the least used!

Exchange vouchers obtained from H.A.N.D.S. admin are debited from the member's account. EVs returned to HANDS admin are credited to the member's account. These are best done at a market or during office hours. Credit & debit limits continue to apply. Trading with EVs is not also recorded within the system. Anyone can use EVs, but only members can withdraw and credit them against their accounts. As at 14 Feb, 3217 HANDS of our new EVs were in circulation.

The Committee also suggests that, to introduce the concept of a complementary local currency to more people in our Community, wherever members are shopping in Golden Bay, they show the EVs in their wallet or pocket at point of sale and say a few words about them and the GB H.A.N.D.S system.

Joanna

Trading Totals & LCNZ Balances

There are no transactions for the last month.

On the 1st of March the LCNZ Balances of CES users will be "Transferred" and therefore zeroed. LCNZ will no longer be recording Intertrading. All Intertrading and the Balances are now the full responsibility of the Groups concerned.

Jim McCaughan

Editor.