
LETS Community NEWS © 2006

Issue No. 06/06

15th June 2006

I.B.E.S.

Sympathy goes out down south to Judy Haywood and family who lost their husband/father in the tragic accident while coming back from the Mutton Bird Islands. Shorty was one of our good members of our exchange. Also to Lorraine our President and her brother Lew who were related to the Topi's who also lost family members.

Dave Robbie, I.B.E.S.

PLEBS Christchurch



Christchurch saw one of the busiest LETS markets for a long time. On Sunday 4 June, traders from the Westcoast (WEST) and Timaru (TATS) joined PLEBS for a first regional inter-trading market. 21 stalls offered a wide variety of items and services, including some yummy Indian cuisine. Advertising and offering free first year membership showed results: We had 3 new members join, which is about the same as over the last one and a half years.

TATS Timaru

On Sunday 4th June 7 members travelled up to Christchurch to a combined Market with TATS, WEST and PLEBS, there were 14 stalls with everything from bee pollen to Turkish delight, this was a very successful market.

The next one will be in Timaru sometime in August, apart from the 7 members who went to Christchurch we met Con and Evelyn O'Connor and Joy and Peter Leonard, making TATS members total to 11. They were involved in

83 trades for a total of TT1099.08. Considerably reducing the Intertrading balance.

This months Committee meeting is on 21st June at our place 85 Main South Road, St Andrews at 2pm, so come along and see us.

Geoff Rutland, President

WINGS 2006 AGM Report

14 members attended our Annual General meeting on Sunday 28 May 2006 so we had no problem obtaining our quorum thanks to our MemberCare person telephoning most members. Our President Neville Miller and Secretary/Treasurer Maxine Wain were re-elected again along with a nine member committee.

Neville reported that we have done more trading since having a sales table at our six-weekly committee meetings. Joining CES has been our greatest achievement and about half the membership does their own trades on line and our transaction recorder does the rest.

Members went to the Motueka regional meeting and to the New Plymouth conference; we successfully obtained a Lion Foundation grant for ferry fares. We also had a COGS grant of \$343 for administration expenses; we have been reassured that it will be much easier to apply on-line this year.

One member commented that Green Dollars are not so popular as the economy is buoyant at the moment; this means that there is not a huge need for G\$ just now but as petrol prices have risen the economy may not be so buoyant so G\$ would be seen as being more desirable.

Maxine Wain

Upcoming Events

- 24 June: Taranaki LETS market
- 12 July: PLEBS Market, Christchurch
- 22-24 Sept: S.I. Regional Meeting, Golden Bay
- 23 Sept: HANDS market

(If you like to have your events listed, please inform the editor of the NEWS.)

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Inter-trading Balances

All inter-trading balances are now available online on CES. Please consult the 'Group Balance' report.

Exchanges that need to buy (as of 14 June):

WEST Westcoast:	+2,421.90	(n)
WAIS Wairarapa:	+2,198.40	(y)
TATS Timaru:	+2,181.70	(y)
MOSS Motueka:	+1,762.45	(y)
TSCT Taranaki LETS:	+1,712.30	(n)
IBES Invercargill:	+764.71	(n)
WINGS Blenheim:	+288.75	(y)

Exchanges that need to sell (as of 14 June):

Thames GDE:	-4,074.90	(n)
REBS Wanganui:	-2,969.99	(y)
PLEBS Christchurch:	-1,069.25	(n)
H.A.N.D.S. Golden Bay:	-903.45	(y)
WTE Wellington:	-420.90	--

Exchanges that haven't traded (as of 14 June):

WEBS Wanaka	(y)
NZCE NZ Community Exchange	--

(y' and 'n' refers to who has paid yearly sub to LCNZ)

Using CES

How to print a simple and handy members list?

1. after login, go to the 'Members' menu at the top
2. click on 'All Active'
3. on the top right, click on 'Print/View all'
4. This will return an alphabetical list with phone numbers and emails of all active members.
5. If you click on 'A/C' at the top of the list, you can sort it according to account numbers. (to sort according location, click on 'Area')



What is a healthy exchange?

Last month there was an article suggesting what needed to be done to have a successful exchange. Here, in turn, is now an article suggesting indicators of what would constitute a healthy exchange.

Statistics Indicating Health of a System

- * Administration account should be near zero.
- * Combined balance of all other members should be near zero.
- * Balance with other exchanges should be near zero.
- * Balance report
The number of members in credit should be fairly equal to those in debit.
At least 50% of members trade within a three-month period.
- * Membership growth
Number of members is steady or going up.

* Trading statistics

Check the number of trades and the amount of Green \$ each month, and come up with a subjective analysis, keeping in mind these figures include trades with administration.

* Trader statistics

The higher the percentage closest to 100 for both traders who have bought and who have sold the better, keeping in mind this may again include trading with administration.

* Members' balances

Make a bell-shaped curve from a graph based on the number of members' balances between 50+ and 50-, 150+ and 150- and then continue by increments of 100. The indicator of health will be if it is symmetrical to the vertical axis going through zero and also if the highest point is along that axis tapering down as one goes away from it. This may be time consuming but valuable information.

Members balances are available on the CES website and can be sorted by amount. Of course having vouchers interferes with accurate balance statistics and also overall it brings members' balances more into debit.

The overall percentage of trades locally should be well over 90%. I'm not sure how you obtain that information.

Summary

Remember these are just indicators, and statistics for that matter. Other indicators are social and are not easily quantified. I feel that if the ingredients for a successful exchange (see LETS Connect article) are used, the higher the possibility the statistics will follow.

Murray Rogers, H.A.N.D.S.



New Zealand LETS and the Community Exchange System (CES) : How can NZ exchanges benefit from CES?

This is the last part of a document by Tim Jenkin of CES and SANE that was originally intended to be presented at the conference. .

New Zealand LETS exchanges can use CES as no more than a new software package and continue operating in much the same way as they have always done. They will slowly sign up new members, with older ones slipping away at the bottom. Few will grow to more than a hundred members and most will record no more than a handful of trades per month. In short, traditional LETS is not going to turn into a major social or economic phenomenon and it is not even going to achieve the modest aims set by its founders in the 1980s. Certainly the kind of LETS currently operating in NZ is not going to save us when the financial crash comes or serve as a model for the new, healthy money system that we all dream of.

CES too, is not going to save the world but it is a step in the right direction. It is an evolving system and together we can turn it into something meaningful that can serve as the basis for a new money movement.

Those exchanges that have adopted CES should look at it again and try to understand that it is whole new way of doing LETS, not just a tool for running accounts more efficiently. By embracing the CES philosophy LETS can move out of the sleepy rut that it finds itself in and become mainstream. It can develop into a unified movement and become a meaningful factor on the economic landscape.

The first and most important thing is to adopt the CES grand vision that LETS needs to go big time. While the noble ideas that LETS is about having fun, getting to know our neighbours and helping one another without using money should be retained, we have to adopt a wider vision.

We need to turn LETS/CES or whatever it finally gets called into the social and economic phenomenon of the decade. It needs to become the new way of doing money at the top level, not something that is practiced behind the scenes by some old hippies of the alternative movement.

Those groups that have adopted CES should start to use it in the way it was intended to be used:

1. Exchanges should embrace modern technology. If we are to challenge the prevailing money system we can't do it with paper ledgers or single PCs. The conventional money and banking system is thoroughly computerised and networked; we need to do the same.
2. The default interface should be the computerised, internet interface, not the traditional telephone and postbox.
3. Administrators should stop running their exchanges in the traditional way. The role of the administrator in CES is minimal and quite different to LETS. The chief functions are:
 - a. Adding new users to the exchange (even this can be performed by a separate membership co-ordinator using the special membership interface)
 - b. Responding to user queries
 - c. Sending notices and newsletters
 - d. Sending offerings and wants lists
 - e. Sending statements of account
 - f. Managing others to perform the crucial functions of running the exchange
 - g. Settling disputes
 - h. Generally promoting the growth of the system
4. Users should be encouraged to manage their own accounts:
 - a. They should enter their own transactions
 - b. They should update their own contact and other personal information
 - c. They should enter their own offerings, wants, recommendations and announcements
 - d. They should view their own statements

- and balances
- e. They should regularly consult the Offerings and Wants Lists to see what is available (i.e. no more offering directories need be printed)
5. Exchanges covering a large area should be carved up into sub-groups
 - a. At least one co-ordinator per sub-group should be appointed and given co-ordinator status.
 - b. Co-ordinators should be set up as 'branches' to assist those who do not have computers or who prefer to have someone do their 'banking' on their behalf
 - c. Those who require paper directories, statements, newsletters etc. should be able to purchase these from their co-ordinator
 - d. Co-ordinators should charge for whatever they do
 6. Exchanges should stop running as clubs. They should stop having members and start having users. Being a user means you don't join and resign – you register as a user for life, as you do with the regular money system. If you decide not to participate that is your own business
 - a. Users should no longer join an exchange but become users of the system, registered with a particular exchange
 - b. Membership fees should be abolished and the levy system should be adopted
 - c. An exchange operating in a particular area should be seen as the local node of a broader system. Users use the system, but through a local interface
 7. Administrations should as far as possible draw on the resources of the users and try to avoid using the national currency. Where this is difficult efforts should rather be devoted to recruiting the provider than to finding the money.
 8. Those in charge of an exchange should promote it actively and recruit widely. Promote the exchange as the local branch of a new money network, or even as the local instance of the 'new economy'. Ensure that new users understand how conventional money is destroying our planet and that you are promoting a new, healthy money system. Abandon the idea that LETS is just a fun way to buy and sell without money. LETS is about money – a new kind of money that will change our world if it is widely adopted.
 9. Most importantly, **Think Big**. The CES sets no limits for the size of a group and as there is so little work for an administrator to do it makes no difference if the exchange is 100 or 100,000. If there is a worry that it will become impersonal then create many sub-areas and encourage them to operate as autonomous entities. The loss of a little

of the cosiness of traditional LETS is a small price to pay for a new, healthy money system. Weigh up the overall benefits against what might be lost by giving up the notion of belonging to a small club of close friends.

LET US WORK TOGETHER

The CES did start out as a new software package for a single trading group in Cape Town, South Africa. Its success soon attracted the attention of others and similar groups were set up all over South Africa. Later it got adopted in New Zealand and now it is operating in seven countries worldwide.

Our vision is that CES should become a co-operative project and that it should do what its users want it to do. Although I have prescribed above how LETS groups that have adopted CES should operate, there are no rules. CES can be used as a software package to run a single group in the traditional way, or we can develop it together to create a really effective, new money system.

This document is meant as an appeal to those attending this conference to adopt the grand vision of the founders of CES. That is, we are doing this because we believe the present global money system is at the root of most of the social, economic, political and environmental problems that confront us today. We can only begin to tackle these problems if we have a money system that places the 'money power' in the hands of the people who use it.

We can build this new money system if we work together and share resources. That way we will ensure that we build something adaptable and scalable, that caters for all our needs and achieves the ultimate goal of creating a new, healthy money system.

Tim Jenkin, CES

