



## A brief guide to the Bright Exchange

The Bright Exchange began in 1991 as a LETS (Local Exchange Trading Scheme). It is not widely advertised, and most people join as a result of knowing someone who is already a member.

### Important information for new members

To be a member of the Bright Exchange it is essential that you fill in a Membership Joining Form and return it to Amendments as soon as possible (address on the form). Without the form, we cannot open an account, put you on our mailing list to receive directories, or print your Offers and Needs in the next directory. There is no need to put your name, phone number or area code in the boxes with your entries, only once in the top right hand side of the form. We will add those details to your entries.

### How it works

What makes a LETS system work is peoples' willingness to trade. Only offer things you really want to share with the community, and please say yes to telephone enquiries whenever possible. Let people know what else you offer and be open to suggestions. You can offer any amount of things not entered in the directory, as long as it's legal. It is space that is limited in the directory, not your imagination and creativity! Trading is the responsibility of each member. We do not vet anyone and it is up to you to check people out yourself. Before trading with a new person it is recommended that you ask them for names of other members they have traded with. This is advisable before handing over children or having a massage.

### The Core Group

The Core Group exists to oversee the administration of the Bright Exchange, and to make suggestions regarding direction and development. It is not responsible for discrepancies between members. It may help you sort out any problem, but the responsibility is yours. The names and numbers of the Core Group members are on the inside front cover of the directory. The people who deal with the internal workings of the Bright Exchange are paid only in Brights. These come from the Bright account, and are paid for automatically from everyone's account at a rate of 7 Brights per directory. If you would like to become part of the Core Group, these posts become available from time to time. Also, assistants are sometimes required for some of the key positions. Vacancies are advertised in the Newsletter, and inside the front cover of the directory. Contact any Core Group member if you would like to attend a meeting (these are held about once per month).

### The Newsletter

The Newsletter is sent out with every directory. Members can write articles for inclusion, or place an advertisement for a social event or items for sale.

### Your Account

You will receive a detailed statement of your Bright account with each directory. It will list your transactions in much the same way as a sterling based account. Please send your cheques to the Accountant as soon as possible, or take them to Infinity Foods, who will send them on your behalf. If you require a new cheque book, please send an SAE to the Accountant.

New members can start trading right away, and they will probably incur a debit initially. This is perfectly acceptable provided that it doesn't get out of hand. If any member is worried about being in debt, Brights can be earned by offering to help with admin (long or short term).

### Social Events/Social Committee

Use your LETS scheme to the full and organise your own social events, exhibitions, classes, concerts, anything you like. You can advertise your event in the newsletter. Maybe you could accept Brights at your sterling paying events, or half and half.

### Filling in the forms - Joining, Amendment, and Renewal

Entries in the directory are limited to 5 offers and 5 needs. The Needs section is used if you cannot find what you want already in the directory. Needs are automatically deleted after every directory. If you still need it, you have to enter it again. Please fit your entries into the boxes, one line per entry, allowing a box for

each letter, and a space between words and punctuation.

The computer only allows 40 characters, so if your entry overruns we will have to make it fit.

If you want to charge more than 6 Brights an hour this must be included in the 40 boxes, otherwise it is assumed you charge only the standard rate. It is assumed that any genuine sterling costs accrued whilst trading, (materials, petrol etc.) will be passed on to the receiving member. These should be agreed before the trade takes place, as should the amount of Brights.

You will find a list of categories on the inside front cover of the directory. Please put the category number required in the box provided in front of the entry. You may have more than one entry per category. The Amendment forms also have boxes for Add or Delete, and whether the entry is an Offer or a Need. Please fill these in as well to ensure your entry is how and where you want it.

#### Area codes

The 2 letters after each entry show the area where a member lives. A key to these letters is inside the back cover of the directory, with a map defining these areas.

#### Changing an entry

If you want to change an entry, you need to fill in an Amendment form, writing out the current entry as it appears in the directory, marking the box 'delete'. Then write it out as you would like it to appear, marking the box 'add'. If you don't do this, the original entry will still be there as well.

#### Renewals

You pay £7.50 subscription a year. This covers production of the directory, cheque books, stationary, stamps, equipment and software. You will be sent a renewal form yearly when your subscription is due. Please follow the instructions on the form because any more than 5 entries in total will have to be deleted from the existing ones. These forms are sent out before the next directory is printed, and will therefore have a deadline date on them. **If you don't return your form and subscription fee by this date, we cannot put you in the following directory, and your membership will lapse. This means that you cannot trade or spend your Brights unless you rejoin.**

#### Late renewals

Anyone who renews late will still have the same renewal date as the one on the renewal form. If you think you will be away when your renewal is due, or you intend to send your form in after the due date, please contact Amendments, who can make a note of this.

#### Delaying renewals

If you cannot, or don't want to trade for a while (e.g. new baby, ill health, travelling etc.) and you would like to rejoin later, you may do this. Please let Amendments know and we can re-open your account when it's convenient for you. You will not lose any Brights in your account, and your renewal date will be a year from the time you rejoin. **You cannot trade in either direction during the time you take a break from membership.**

#### Rejoining

You will need to complete an amendment form with all the entries you want included in the directory. When a member lapses or takes a break, the account remains the same, but all directory entries are deleted automatically. The form should be sent to Amendments with a cheque or postal order for £7.50 made payable to the Bright Exchange. **Make the most of your LETS scheme, keep your eye on the Newsletter to see what is going on in the community, and keep trading. Please spare a thought for the people who work hard producing the directory as often as it's possible to do so. It is, after all, voluntary work. It is the members who make the Bright Exchange what it is.**

\* The Bright Exchange is currently looking into the problems that are associated with the software that is used for directory production etc. The software is now becoming increasingly incompatible with modern computers. This is a problem that LETS groups are experiencing world-wide, and we hope to find a solution in the not-too-distant future. In the meantime, please be assured that we are all doing the best that we can.