

Bright Exchange

Annual General Meeting on 29 September 2018

Present: Deborah Knowles (Membership Secretary),
Maggie Chamberlain (Administrator), Suzi Conway (Treasurer),
Pat White, Barry Fairburn, Liz Quelch, Fiona Mainstone

Apologies: Wayne Bryant, David Edwards, Attilio Brunelli, Hazel Fairchild, Bob Murphy, Monica Willis, Judy Lewis, Lucy Oliver

Venue: Goldstone Club, Shirley Street, Hove

This is the first AGM for a long time so there were no minutes of the last meeting to be approved.

1. REPORTS

• **Membership Report – Deborah Knowles/Membership Secretary**

Deborah reported on membership with a printed report – numbers of active and logged in members and some non-active or never logged in. This report included exchange balances.

There are some members with high credits and some with high debt but it was noted that most of these were historical rather than in the last year and this was not tackled in the past. There have not been many active exchanges in the last year and with so few members there is not a great variety of skills on offer for those with high credits to spend. Debtors have been contacted and asked to offer their skills and not receive so get into credit. New members are encouraged to contribute.

It was asked is it possible to block a member getting into further debt. Yes, now we have the website we can run member reports regularly to monitor the accounts so we can see who is offering and receiving exchanges. At Core group we will discuss these reports and contact members if necessary and can block any member who is not trading in line with our guidelines.

Exchange balances can be viewed on the website on Member page so you can check this if you are contacting or being contacted by another member prior to doing an exchange.

We have some new members but there has been no promotion of the Bright Exchange to increase the membership. Over the last year we have been working on the website and procedures etc. but are now in a position to start promotion.

Resources – More people are needed to help with the active running of the Exchange and with promotion. New Core group roles have been advertised with no take up and this has made it difficult for the current small Core group to take on more active tasks.

- **Administrator - Maggie Chamberlain**

Updated on the last year and where we are with the website.

The website has been running for a year now and a lot of work had to be done initially and ongoing. The website is a bespoke one based on the Lets link website model. It does not have the functionality that we ideally would have wanted. It is possible further improvements could be made. There are some things that still require manual inputting which could be done automatically, for example, the membership applications – a prospective member completes the online application form and when they join we have to manually input their details on to the profile rather than it being done automatically. We could also set up online payments for new member donations.

Core group have been busy in their roles but the general membership has not shown interest in helping out. If no one comes forward to sit on Core group it is likely to fold.

There are now several other social media sites and skills exchange sites that as well as being competition they are free to use and have more user friendly websites but they are professionally run and better financed.

- **Treasurer**

Accounts up to date were presented and approved with current balance on account. The accounts are available to view by any member on request.

2. Proposal to disaffiliate from Lets Link

Voted on and all in agreement to do this in the future. (although not quorate it was later decided this does not need to be put to general membership)

3. Future of the Bright exchange – General Discussion

We are the last remaining Lets group in the South-east. Need research on what Lets groups are still around and which ones are thriving, looking at their websites and asking what have they done to increase membership would be helpful.

Should the Bright Exchange continue or not?

Discussion about the website and hosting or looking into the possibility of more user-friendly alternatives.

The Bright Exchange does not have a social media presence and we are getting left behind so this is something we can look at, perhaps by setting up a Facebook page with a link to our website. This could be a closed member only group. Meet up site could also be used.

Liz offered to help with this and will get together with Suzi. Needs some research and work for this area. We need to modernise if we are going to continue and compete in the current climate.

Role of social media and competition with other websites doing similar things but in a different way. We discussed whether or not we want to do something different, what do we offer that the other websites exchange does not?

Trading is low and there are not enough members to provide a wide range of services. Should we change the principles of the way we operate?

We discussed the brights credit system and should we change this? Do we need a points system or currency or would it work without? Is it necessary, what is the benefit of a points system as opposed to just swapping or offering skills for goodwill only. Do all members need to trade regularly? Skills exchange at one level is just an energy exchange so if there is a large amount of people with some just offering a skill once it can still work.

People are losing a sense of community and we all need this which has been an important part of Lets groups.

Could we transform the Exchange into something more current?

What is our identity, aims, how can we develop?

Fiona offered to help with research.