

August 2008

[www.yorklets.org.uk](http://www.yorklets.org.uk)

EDITOR: David Bellis  
email: [dwbfbells@tiscall.co.uk](mailto:dwbfbells@tiscall.co.uk)



## Community Newsletter



### YorkLETS - A change behind the scenes by Ben Weaver

There's some exciting changes in store for YorkLETS. We're planning a major update to the day-to-day administration of the group.

Currently the administration (that is, the way in which transactions and information are dealt with) happens in quite a quirky, uncoordinated way. The system we have for dealing with coordination and production of the member directory, for example, is completely separate from the system that runs the Yorky bank. Not only can this lead to difficulties keeping multiple systems synchronized and up-to-date, but each system has its own quirks and shortcomings that can make the job of the YorkLETS core group, er... quirky!

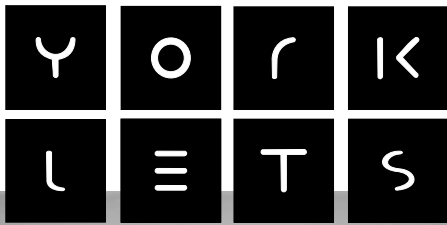
In recent years, a number of LETS groups over the UK, including Bath, Liverpool and Norwich, have adopted a new web-based administration system called "Local Exchange". This is a piece of software that offers a unified system for keeping the group ticking. It's custom-written especially for LETS groups, and is extremely well thought out. For example, if a member moves house, or maybe changes their email address, then this change can be fed in once, and will be altered in every relevant instance - the member directory, the mailing lists, and the Yorky accounts. This is in stark contrast to the present scheme of information manually filtering down through a number of core group secretaries and (hopefully) being recorded in many different lists. And that's just an example - there are many more where that came from. All in all, we feel that the "Local Exchange" system will

improve the way in which the group is run, and offer a faster, more reliable, more "sensible" service for YorkLETS members.

That's great news, but we must remember the horror stories we all hear about whizzy new computer systems for the NHS, energy companies, and government departments: they have a horrible habit of going overbudget, charging you £100 to boil a kettle, or losing all records of your shirt size (okay - I admit I made that last one up). Well, we're very aware of this. And we're taking care not to fall in to any traps. You'll be pleased to know that we're not going to spend millions of pounds on the new system. In fact, the actual Local Exchange software is "open source", or in other words free, although we will be spending a little bit of money in setting it all up initially.

We're also going to take things nice and steadily. At first, we won't rely on the new system until the core group secretaries are happy with the way it works. In fact, once it's up and running, you probably won't notice that anything much has changed (apart from maybe the group operating a little quicker than before).

Further down the line, however, there are going to be some very exciting additions to the way the group operates. Being "web-based", the Local Exchange system will eventually offer each member the facility, if they wish, to securely log-in to the YorkLETS website to perform day-to-day tasks such as checking your Yorky balance, viewing the latest "offers" and "wants" listings, and



[www.yorklets.org.uk](http://www.yorklets.org.uk)

### Core Group

**Yorky Accountant**

**Will Miles**

01904 679003

[mathsdancer@googlemail.com](mailto:mathsdancer@googlemail.com)

**Membership Secretary**

**Stephen Jennison Smith**

[atrekkie@yahoo.com](mailto:atrekkie@yahoo.com)

**Sterling Accountant**

**Liz Sibthorpe**

01904 624454

[lizsib@fish.co.uk](mailto:lizsib@fish.co.uk)

**Publicity**

**John Cossham**

01904 422344

[johncossham@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:johncossham@tiscali.co.uk)

**Social Secretary**

Vacant

**Newsletter Editor**

**David Bellis**

01904 643452

[dwfbellis@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:dwfbellis@tiscali.co.uk)

**Mailout Coordinator**

**Adrian Lovett**

01904 656504

[alovett151@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alovett151@yahoo.co.uk)

**Website Administrator**

**Ben Weaver**

01904 438750

[ben@benweaver.info](mailto:ben@benweaver.info)

**Directory Compiler &**

**Helen Mitchell**

[hmhelenmitchell@googlemail.com](mailto:hmhelenmitchell@googlemail.com)

01904 624755

**Minutes Secretary**

Vacant

even submitting your own listings online. It's exciting stuff..

So, what's next? Well, we're still carefully planning out the transition. The change-over period will probably last about a year, and you can be sure that we'll keep everyone up to date about any interesting developemnts. Watch this space!



Screen shot of the Norlets web-based administration system.



# YorkLETS



## Christmas Party

**Saturday 13 December 2008  
from 8pm at The House, The  
Veterinary Surgery, Salisbury  
Road, York.**

Please bring food / drink to share,  
musical instruments / games to  
play, items to trade.

Any queries, please ring Helen on  
**01904 624755** or email  
[hmhelenmitchell@googlemail.com](mailto:hmhelenmitchell@googlemail.com)



### The New Directory

As you may know, we've had a thorough overhaul of the directory recently and have asked everyone to resubmit their details to correct errors and get everything completely up to date. Every effort has been made to contact members and remind everyone to send in their information. We apologise to anyone who's information is missing.