MINUTES

GROUP: Women's Place Workers & Co-op Members.

DATE: 26th July, 1988

PRESENT: Jo & Ger - Arthur, Mels, Rionach,

APOLOGIES: Scotlyn & Phil

AGENDA:

Co-op

1. Future of Co-op
2. Future of S.E.S.
3. Relationships.

Women's Place

1. Notice Board
2. Telephone System
3. Use of Office
4. Paint?
5. Relationships.

DISCUSSION/AGREEMENTS	PERSON RESP.(Init)

Ger handed out reports from Women's Place Workers.

Arthur explained about the kind of building work that was envisaged. As a condition of the Co-op obtaining a 35 year lease on the building, the owner had to bring the building up to fire standard. This entails ripping out the entire back of the premises (a) up to the Cafe floor only (b) including office. In the first case (a) The Women's Place /Office would have a lobby built with door to stairs - to Office - to Women's Place. Ceilings would be ripped out and redone and windows fixed. In the case of (b) Women's Place and Office would become one large area, open plan to be divided up as Women's Place and Resouce agree between them. The cost of the work would be £25,000.00p. to be repaid withing 5 years. Rents for Co-op would go up by three and a half times. The Co-op would have to become a very efficient commercial operation to sustain this kind of rental (£12,000.00p. per annum)

It was pointed out by the Women's Place Workers that no way could the Women's Place in its present positions, even refurbished, become a commerical proposition. That we are a service was also pointed out. We could not hope to pay the rents envisaged, as we can barely pay the rent and overheads as they stand.

This raised the question: Could the Co-op see itself carrying a non-profit making service as part of its scheme? Mels said she could not see the Co-op doing so.

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DISCUSSION/AGREEMENTS	PERSON RESP. (Init

Riognach said she agreed that the Women's Place could not be expected to be a commercial part of Co-op, that its input was of a different nature. Arthur said that there had always been non-profit making areas in the shop and cafe (Discounts, etc.)

Arthur kept saying we would plan for the worst possible Scenario, i.e. The Co-op having to move and the Schemes not being renewed. Does the Women's Place see itself
(a) Staying with the Co-op with an increased rental; or
(b) As a service supported by the more commerical parts of the Co-op? With/Without S.E.S. Workers? or
(c) Moving with the Co-op to other premises, With/Without S.E.S. Workers? or
(d) Moving as a Separate Unit?

Options available through FAS

(1) Could refuse to renew the Scheme in September. or
(2) Renew it with a reduced number of workers. or
(3) Renew at existing level (4 Workers Ongoing) or
(4) Renew with an increase in Workers. or
(5) Just let us tail off.

Negotiations re the building are ongoing. Nothing has been decided yet. We have 3/4 months on present system.

The Women's Place Workers/Co-op/W.A.G. - Relationships.

The Women's Place Workers stressed the fact that they attended the meeting as Workers and Employees of Co-op, on short term renewable (or not!) schemes. W.A.G. directed policy. We assessed ideas, studied feasabilty, contacts, funding etc and reported back to W.A.G who authorised whether they could/should be carried out or not.

Question raised: What is W.A.G? It is a group of women committed to the idea of the Women's Place as a working entity formed of people who give and have given their time voluntarily to it (and the Co-op in the past). They make sure the Women's Place remains the Women's Place with its own policy and ideals. These may or may not coincide with the Co-op's. Any negotiations on Autonomy are to be with W.A.G. Co-op Members requested that we report back to W.A.G. and set up meeting soon with representative of same. The Workers agreed to outline the possible options to W.A.G. and get responses and set up meeting.

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DISCUSSION/AGREEMENTS	PERSON RESP. (Init

All members of the Co-op admitted they did not know what went on in Women's Place and took very little trouble to find out. They suggested further and more frequent meetings with the workers and with W.A.G. Workers agreed in principle.

It was felt by Co-op that monthly reports were not enough, Workers felt full length reports every two weeks pointless and time consuming. However, workers agreed to supply short synopsis type reports every two weeks and full report monthly.

Aurther suggested some sort of "Quantifiable Goal" for various projects, though he admitted this is easier for a commercial venture than for us (you either make a profit or a loss), with reports on how near we are to attaining said goal. Workers said it would not be easy to state goals that clearly, but we could try. (e.g. by increasing Library Membership by X%)

Women's Place Agenda.

Notice Board: Original suppliers are out of same. Arthur will provide trellis for same in mean time.

Telephone System: No decision yet.

Use of Office: for layout of Newsletter agreed, some notice may be necessary.

Paint: Arthur will provide us with paint.

Computer: may be going into office.

Relationship of Co-op to Women's Place: Technically Women's Place Workers are employees of the Co-op, to work in Women's Place, but are responsible to Co-op and W.A.G. To create better input (100% increase etc.)-Women's Place needs more input from Co-op to improve visibility, comfort, facilites etc.

Women's Place Relationship with Co-op: a hard working group , non profitmaking asset and service that the Co-op could not provide without us. Arthur complimented the high calibre and expertise of present workers.

Workers felt the meeting had been well worth the time and trouble. Everybody now has a clear picture of the situation.

Signed:

Date:

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