Dear

You are probably well aware of how desperately Cork has needed a new lesbian and gay disco/social venue in recent years. Since the 'Club' on MacCurtin Street closed the quality of all our lives has suffered. The real cost of not having a place to meet on a regular basis has been paid by everyone but particularly by young people who have had little chance to develop any social life. Given that our needs will not be met on a purely 'commercial' basis we will have to find a way of doing it ourselves.

Over the past few years discos have been run at the Quay Co-op and elsewhere by Josephine O'Halloran, John Calnan, Joanie Barron, Helen Slattery, Mick Quinlan, Arthur Leahy and Donal Sheehan. We set aside the profits from these discos to get a more permanent venue together.

It has taken us a lot of work and a long time to locate a premises where we can develop a long-term project within the limits of planning, licensing, insurance etc. Also, given that the disco would run on just one or two nights a week, we had to look at other possible uses for the building outside those times. Just recently we negotiated a favourable lease on a building which fits the main needs outlined. The lease we have negotiated is for twenty-one years and a stable business structure will be required in order to manage the project over that length of time.

We gave a lot of thought to how best to finance and organise the project. We think it would be best for the project to be taken on and managed by the Quay Co-op. The Co-op would be able to use the building throughout the week as a general resource centre, can hire new workers to manage and develop the project, is in a position to avail of state grants for new employment and has a track record in trying to cater for the needs of lesbians and gays. The Co-op can also give the building a more open character so that it is not seen as simlpy a lesbian/gay disco. Four of us are already currently employed by the Co-op.

We propose to set up a Trust to raise part of the initial capital for the development of the project. Our aim in this is to provide funding for lesbian and gay services while ensuring that the disco is effectively managed from a business point of view. The money raised by the Trust would be lent to the Co-op. The Co-op would pay interest on the loan and a share of the profits to the Trust. The Trust would then use this money to fund services like the phone lines etc. The loan agreement with the Co-op will contain terms to guarantee that the project is managed in the interests of the lesbian and gay communities.

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We need to raise £10,000 at this stage to launch the project. This is a large sum but is the minimum with which the development of the disco can realistically be undertaken. We are asking people to give money to the Trust in the form of a long-term, interest-free loan. The loan would be for an initial period of three years. Thereafter the money can be withdrawn by giving three months notice to the the Trustees. In this way the cost of giving the money is simply the cost of the interest that has been foregone. There is, of course, also an element of risk involved since, if either the project or the Quay Co-op should become insolvent, the full amount of the loan might not be repaid. However the track record of the Co-op over the past decade and the good financial prospects for the project itself make us confident that monies invested in the Trust will be secure.

£3,500 has already been raised by those immediately involved in the project and we hope to raise the balance from the Lesbian and Gay Communities. We are therefore writing to ask you to consider lending money to the trust. I am sure you will have a lot of questions to ask about the project and we can let you have more detailed information on any aspect you require.

I will give you a ring in the next week or so to explain it further and bring you up to date on developments. I look forward to talking to you.

Yours sincerely,

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