

SUMMARY NOTES FROM CONVERSATION WITH TONY KIRKHOPE 10th MARCH

Tony explain that he had a discussion with Wilf and Ian in Berlin and that he was asked if he could help with the Circles and COW problem.

Nothing specific has been proposed other than office space at the Metro premises and consultancy advise. If anything, he saw his role as a negotiator / intermediary.

Tony felt this suggestion of consultancy help from the Institute was largely due to the difficult position it finds itself in with Circles and COW both financially and politically. He understood, Ian Christie has found himself under a great deal of pressure, not to fund Circles and COW and many would not be too upset if the whole merger project completely collapsed.

I asked Tony if he felt Ian Christie really understood what Womens distribution was all about and that a proportion of the work would always be none profit making.

Tony said, Ian understood and fully supported it, however, he had found it very hard to justify the existence of both group in the light of current funding cuts which are effecting the whole sector.

I asked Tony if he felt it was appropriate for him, a commercial distributor / potential competitor, working with a feminist non profit making organisations as a consultant. He felt it was only acceptable if the groups wanted his help. He said his gut instinct was to steer well clear of the situation but recognises he is in a position to help. He categorically stated that he does NOT want to take us over and realises we would run in the opposite direction if we even suspected this was on his agenda and that the situation needs to be handled delicately.

I asked about the costs of the Wardour Street office space . Approximately 12.000 inc UBR . This office has been offered to somebody else but he would give us priority if we made a decision quickly.

I pointed out the difference between the rent we pay at the Roman Road office and what was being asked for the Wardour St office. Although the Metro rental costs are 8.000 higher. However, through discussion, it was agreed that this would be offset by the fact, the new location would raise our profile, make us more accessible to our users and bring us into closer contact with other groups in the sector. In this context, funding from the Institute to cover the initial cost could be negotiated.

Tony asked some questions about the staff numbers we were proposing, stating we only really needed two people and the

films could be placed with Glenbuck. I explain that we don't have a problem with the concept of another company doing our distribution. However, Glenbuck had refused to re-negotiate their costs and had effectively out price themselves. As soon as the merged organisation is formed we would be seeking a distributor to handle this aspect of our work.

In the absence of any clear proposal, (other than the offer of help) I said it might be best if I first put the suggestion of help to the Council of Management and if they agreed, a brief and agenda could then be worked out.