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## 1. Board of Directors report: Short overview of main activities and milestones

### 1.1 BeWelcome website

- New website has been released, after much hard work by developers and testers, during the night of 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> April 2019.
- Some of the major novelties are the introduction of dedicated hosting requests, search surroundings (on map search), having a mobile (friendly) version, add a map on the "text" search and remove the separate "map" search (these features have been on the TO-DO of the 2016/7 BoD). Hosting eagerness (voted by GA2018) has been introduced, but with much controversy and possible revision on this GA 2019. Still has not been implemented (from the 2016/7 BoD list): Improve "Trips" to make searching active members possible , Reply to Personal Messages via Email
- The website currently runs on the server lion (main website) and lynx (backup/development versions).
- Prior to the release we faced issues of notifications from the website being classified as spam by some of the email providers (namely gmail), which has been resolved around the time of the website release. Most serious bugs were discovered and fixed prior to the release, and fixing them caused a delay in the release from planned December 2018 (agreed on at GA 2018) to April 2019 (date set by the technical people involved in the website migration -- sysadmin, hostadmin, webmaster -- and approved by the BoD). Some bugs were discovered only after the release, and are being fixed continuously.
- The website desperately needs an updated FAQ section to introduce and explain new features, and update the explanations of the existing ones.
- In September we suffered and recovered from a malware attack called Lilu. No personal data was breached or lost, and members were informed via social channels and on the website itself. The website was restored within two days but some updates (avatars, posts, and similar) made within a specific time frame were lost. Perhaps a manual for such an emergency situation (who to alert and what to do) would be a good thing to have and would ensure an even faster response.

### 1.2. BeWelcome members and activity

Membership is compared roughly on basis of the Annual Report period, which ends in October of the year that the Annual Report is compiled. As of end of October 2019, be Welcome had roughly 123,000<sup>1</sup> members. This is a net increase of 7,500 members compared to last year.

Activity of the members (compiled on 1st Nov 2019 for the GA 2019, using BW statistics (<https://www.bewelcome.org/stats> )

- During the last 4 weeks only 2.2% of members did log in (~2,700 members). Last Login before October, 1st: 120,220<sup>1</sup>. 86% of members did not log in during the last 12 months.
- Same statistics for the last years - (<https://web.archive.org/web/20181114150652/http://www.bewelcome.org/stats> )
  - Nov 19: **2%** log in during last 4 weeks, **86%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 18: **4%** log in during last 4 weeks, **85%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 17: **6%** log in during last 4 weeks, **76%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 16: **7%** log in during last 4 weeks, **70%** did not log in during last 12 months

<sup>1</sup> Some parts of the <https://www.bewelcome.org/stats> are not being updated properly on the new website - for example Weekly average and Daily statistics currently display ~5,000 fewer members.

- Nov 15: **9%** log in during last 4 weeks, **63%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 14: **9%** log in during last 4 weeks, **63%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 13: **13%** log in during last 4 weeks, **38%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 12: **9%** log in during last 4 weeks, **69%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 11: **11%** log in during last 4 weeks, **67%** did not log in during last 12 months
- Members with comments (November 2019): 8560 (7%)
  - Preliminary results of the hosting requests functionality (snaphots in June, October, and November) indicates that between 73-75% of the requests do not get a reply, and roughly 10% of all sent requests get (tentatively) accepted - this makes roughly 1/3 of those requests that get a reply. A very small proportion of the requests get cancelled by guests. These stats will be interesting to follow as we get more data. Also it would be good to know the acceptance rates by gender of the requester, and number of accepted requests vs. hosting comments.

### 1.3. BeVolunteer organization

Changes in the organization:

- Policy documents for BeWelcome were updated: Terms of Use (ToU), and Privacy policy (PP), including GDPR compliance

#### 1.3.1. Board of Directors

- The new Board of Directors (BoD) started with much enthusiasm. The roles and tasks were divided amongst the seven new board members: executive, treasurer, secretary, vice-secretary, volunteer-coordinator, tech, BV strategy.
- Meetings: The BoD organized 11 meeting with at least 4 members present.
- The BoD started a new donation campaign on 18 March 2019 . See 2.1 Financial report for more detailed information.
- The BoD tried to include more BeVolunteer members by actively searching for new members. There is 1 new member since last GA.

#### • **ACTIVITES OF THE 2018--2019 BoD**

- main hope of the 2018-2019 board was to increase activity on BW, and it was agreed on GA 2018 that a BV strategy should be developed and implemented.

A STRATEGY FOR BEWELCOME -- The General Assembly held in November 2018 decided:

*“This General Assembly recognises that BeWelcome is facing some serious challenges in the support of its core activity of hospitality exchange. The GA therefore mandates the BoD to give addressing these challenges their highest priority in the coming year.*

*Specifically, the BoD should:*

*a) convene/set up a process (group/forum/workshops as needed) to identify the possible components to this problem, and to propose and prioritise potential solutions; and*  
*b) prioritise and monitor the work of all the volunteer teams to ensure that the focus on this critical issue for the future of BeWelcome is maintained.*

*For this purpose, the BoD will invite all BV members and all interested BW members.”*

During most of this year, it has not been possible to do much to implement this decision, as everyone’s focus has been (rightly) on the new site. Work has now started on gathering ideas, both new suggestions and re-visiting past discussions.

The challenges facing BeWelcome have not reduced over the past year, and we face these challenges with reduced resources. Finding ways to meet them has to be the central task for the BoD in the coming year.

- **Actions taken:**
- Involvement in the new website release -- members of the board were involved in testing of the new website, and tried prioritizing work on the functions necessary for the usability of the website
- Supporting activities for BW events - the BoD approved in February financial support for Seek the Duck event in May 2019 in Toulouse
- Finding more developers -- We have been continuously failing in attracting more developers to volunteer for BW. Large part of that was possibly due to the outdated code, which could now hopefully change. In September 2019 the BoD agreed to have a **stand** and a representative at FOSDEM 2020 (February 2020)
- In April we have discovered, and reported to the UK police and UK hosting server, a mirror website (<http://ycke.org/>) which was possibly a fishing website
- Change in Terms of Use and Privacy policy - documents prepared for ratification at the GA
- The communication between the BoD and BV/BW -- The minutes of the meetings were often published very late, and meetings were not announced much in advance. This will hopefully change in the next BoD.
- Preparation for the General Assembly: This year the GA2019 was announced and prepared late compared to previous years. Having the organization start earlier would allow for better preparation and more constructive discussions. All documents (financial statement, annual report, team reports) were done on time (before the GA started).
- **Suggestions for the next BoD:** Study the annual report from last year at the beginning of the term, to set clear goals and milestones for your term. Appoint a person responsible for updating all public and internal (BW) pages with info on the board, ombudsperson, who does what, publish new documents approved at the GA (ToU, PP), update the page with financial statements (perhaps also for the past few years); more prompt communication with the community.

### 1.3.2. BeVolunteer members

Between November 2018 and October 2019, 1 new member joined BeVolunteer. No honorary members resigned.

#### Statistics on General Assemblies and members eligible to vote

Year	BV members	Members eligible to vote	BoD candidates
GA 2019	48	23*	5*
GA 2018	48	20	7
eGA 2017	48	36	--
GA 2017	48	37	3
GA 2016	66	47	5
GA 2015	63	23	6
GA 2014	60	22	6
eGA 2014	60	34	3

\* numbers might change up until the GA, or the end of if (for BoD candidates)

GA 2013	50	23	7
GA 2012	45	16	4
GA 2011	43	21	5

## 2. Finances

### 2.1. Financial Report

- The financial year of BeVolunteer was from October 1st, 2018 until September 30th, 2019. The full financial report with incomes and expenses is a separate document.
- The donation campaign officially started on 18 March 2019 and is currently still running. The donation goal of € 2,000 was not reached

At the closing of the financial year (30/09/2019) we had received 93% of our goal

- Reason for not reaching our goal are most likely :
  - the late start (normally a donation campaign already starts at the end of the previous year)
  - a different donation bar that is more discrete
  - previous years we were lucky to receive several large donations early on the campaign

- We received 59 donations

The largest donation was € 500, and several members donated € 100

Most donations came from Germany, followed by Belgium and France

- A significant trend was that we received almost 75% of our donations through a bank transfer, and only 25% through paypal. That is completely the opposite from last year, when Paypal accounted for the vast majority of donations.
- At the end of the term, we had a net gain of 806,75 euro. This was mainly due to the fact that part of the server costs had already been prepaid, there were no legal expense, no local event needed sponsoring, and only part of the promotional material budget was used .

### 2.2.. Budget 2019-2020

Specifications of the budget are in a separate document.

We have currently more than 9,000 euro on our bank account, of which 7,000 is readily available.

At the 2019 GA we will discuss whether we need a donation campaign.

## 3. Team Status Reports

### 3.1. Communication Team status report

As of November 2019 the team officially has 26 members – with about one third active in comments and suggestions. However, each member is at the moment more or less a lone operator when it comes to creating initiatives.

The workload system is poor and relies on a person coming up with an idea, promoting it and gaining support. Often ideas come and go without completion if there is a lack of motivation and

action. There is no real team/project management system to initiate tasks and allocate tasks to members. A few members (2-4 members) take the initiative of taking care of specific tasks which works quite well, albeit in a limited way.

- Create a work flow/project management system, to show project ideas and enable people to join sub-teams within groups.
- Develop one or several BW/BV Spokesperson(s) or face(s) for BW/BV.
- The communication team is not working to any clear objectives, or isn't communicating any big idea, vision or narrative. It is important that the BoD / BV create direction, but not interfere. The team needs creative freedom to create content with BoD/MoD interference.
- The team need google analytics or similiar to ensure we understand who is visiting BeWelcome and whether adwords is working for us (keyword effectiveness). If we already have AdWords and Analytics linked together, we'll be able to see what keywords are producing what results.

### 3.1.1. Internal Communications

Most communication remains internal with the aim of motivating existing members to use the site for hospitality related activities. While it is a necessary and important task, there is little external communications or a budget to do so. The primary means of internal communication is through the newsletter. None were sent in 2018-2019. Only 1 newsletter was sent in 2017-2018. This compared to one in 2016-2017, to 2 in 2016, two in 2015, one in 2014 and four in 2013. None were sent for a number of reasons.

- Lack of news/ original content to engage readers. No pictures from members. No competitions to engage readers.
- Lack of analytical tools to check if anyone reads it, clicks through to BW.org.
- The main news is the redesign, but was postponed as we dealt with the hack. The next newsletter will focus on the GA and the site resdesign, new features etc. However, this will have to be expressed in a vivid engaging way.

#### Community News

The BoD took care of the front-page 'community news' which is only seen if members log in to the site. There were only 8 news stories between October 2018-2019, compared to 24 news messages between October 2017-October 2018. For comparison: There were 22 messages between October 2016 and October 2017. In the year before there were 8 messages.

### 3.1.2. External Communications

The communication team works together to push consistent messages through internal tools such as the BW newsletter, and external tools such as Facebook and Twitter.

#### Facebook

- 2013 GA - 1,777 'likes'
- 2014 GA - 2,600
- 2015 GA - 3,576
- 2016 GA - 4,225
- 2017 GA - 4,751
- 2018 GA - 6,050
- 2019 GA - 6,171

The team uses the page to motivate BW users in their everyday life to engage more with bewelcome.org (i.e. fundraising drives on the main site, building awareness of new site developments, calls to action). Due to a BoD strategic decision, Facebook posts do not contain 'general' information related to travel, tourism, hospitality. BW doesn't use Facebook in any commercial sense, since we are not driving users from BeWelcome to Facebook, but vice-versa. There is no host-guest interaction on the Facebook page. The communication team is constantly looking for more interesting input and it is a task for the team to encourage members to let the team know about their stories if they want them published.

new

There is a public BeWelcome group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BeWelcome/>).

- 2,000 members in December 2015
- 1,937 members in 2018.
- 1,931 members in 2019.

It has little activity. It is linked to the official the BW page. Many organizations do this to encourage discussion around their brands.

- We need more Facebook friendly/Social Media friendly content (video, pictures) to push through online platforms. We created a short video slideshow - <https://vimeo.com/371413839> in November 2019, which was well received.

#### Twitter

The @BeWelcome account had:

- 450 subscribers in 2013
- 535 in 2014
- 727 in 2015
- 805 in 2016
- 836 in 2017
- 850 in 2018
- 925 in 2019

Like the Facebook account, 'tweets' reflect readers back to bewelcome.org. Followers and readers 'retweet' positive messages like hospitality experiences or stories related to BeWelcome. The communication team is constantly looking for more interesting input and it is a task for the team to encourage members to let the team know about their stories if they want them published.

#### **Spreadshirt**

The BeWelcome shop at Spreadshirt has two pages (one for the US and one for the European market). It didn't have any sales in 2018-2019. It would be good to have more designs - so far no designer stepped forward and it is a task to organize this. The amount generated in sales was € 18.46 (paid out in 7.05.2016) and € 21.52 (paid out in 20.02.2017). These sales came from the European store at <https://shop.spreadshirt.de/bewelcome/>. No sales came from the American store at <https://shop.spreadshirt.com/bewelcome/>

#### **Conferences/Talks/Events**

BeWelcome has not been asked to take part in conferences during this year.

#### **Media requests**

Interviews and requests for information were handled by the former BoD member duesseldorf who is also member of the Communications Team. The BoD asked duesseldorf to act as

spokesperson for this year. The Communication Team as such does not receive or manage media requests.

### **Suggestion**

As there are media requests looking for BW members in their country/region or asking for radio interviews in their language it would be good to create a list of "official" BW/BV members which duesseldorf (or any other spokesperson / BoD member) can consult to answer media needs. Maybe from major language groups (one English speaker, French, Spanish) or different countries/regions.

The BeWelcome Video Channel at <https://vimeo.com/bewelcomevideo> still has 4 videos. <https://vimeo.com/bewelcomevideo> still has 4 videos.

### **Google Ads**

Google Ad Grants is a program that credits non-profits \$10,000 every month to advertise on Google.com. It is also open to French non-profits. After the 2016 General Assembly BeWelcome joined the Google for non-profits program. This program gives the ability for non-profits to advertise on the Google Search network up to an equivalent of 10.000 \$ in ad costs. Since then BeVolunteer has experimented with certain keywords, not yet with differentiated advertisements, target groups or redirection URLs.

The main impressions we are getting in the last 12 months are from Russia 3,246 clicks, South America, 2,242 clicks and Arabic countries - Arabic 1,519 clicks.

Google no longer allows single keywords. Therefore, some of the best performing keywords have gone. They have been replaced with keywords such as couch surfing or couchsurfing login. Keywords like "BeWelcome Hospitality" etc. get little traction. As the keyword couchsurfing itself declines (less people are searching that keyword), less people may find BeWelcome via Google Adwords.

### **Press Releases**

We developed and posted a redesign press release. These are important, as they are official markers, and can be used by journalists, and in Wikipedia updates.

<https://www.pr.com/press-release/783855>

<https://clickpress.com/releases/Detailed/794839005cp.shtml>

## **3.2. Safety Team and Spam Checkers status report**

The Spam Checkers consist of 9 volunteers, who check the daily signups, the forum and activities for spammers.

Currently 3 spam checkers take on the largest part of the work.

They have prepared a wish-list that they will present to the developers

The Safety Team consists of 6 volunteers.

This term we did not have any serious incidents to deal with. The few actions we had to take revolved around cultural misunderstandings, creation of dating profiles and misuse of the messaging system.



### 3.3. Technical Teams status report

#### 3.3.1. Development (and Redesign) Team

- After years of development, the development team finally managed to provide a working version of the new website. It was launched in the night of 23<sup>rd</sup> /24<sup>th</sup> of April 2019. Between November 2018 and November 2019 seven volunteers (+4 since last year) have committed +/- 390 times (+130), adding ~73.000 lines of code (- 419.000) and removing ~236.000 lines of code (- 464.000).
- The development is still very much dependent on the work of one volunteer: shevek.
- Github link:  
<https://github.com/BeWelcome/rox/graphs/contributors?from=2018-11-01&to=2019-10-27&type=c> )
- Bugs are reported in several ways and this could need some attention in the future. Members can either mail or message the lead developer personally, write an e-mail to support, write it in one of the groups or in a specific thread in the forum, or they can write an 'issue' on GitHub. The latter one gives most transparency as developers can pick it up and report progress.
- On GitHub there are 28 open issues. 11 issues have been closed in the last year, while 14 (out of the total 28) have been opened and are still open. Some issues are more crucial and significant as others.

#### 3.3.2 Testing Team

- A group of approximately 10 members has been testing the new website before it was launched. They gave valuable feedback to the most significant bugs and issues in the new website. After the launch a higher number of members, some who rarely post anything on BeWelcome, has given its feedback on the implementation of the new website. Most of this feedback has been processed and has led to improvements of the new website. Most bigger issues have been solved.

#### 3.3.3 Sysadmin Team

- The sysadmin team consists of one member with the occasional support. There is not one main system administrator who holds all keys to all servers. To share the control of tech “power” The Sysadmins have always formed an atypical team. Three more members are dormant and do not take over day to day tasks. But if there are serious server issues they immediately step in. Those sysadmins have set up a backup in case they are not available immediately.
- In September 2019 the servers were hit by malware called 'Lilu'. It took 3 days for the system admin and lead developer to get the site running again with minimal loss of information due to regular backups. The cause for this infection was a delay in updating some system software due to the concurrent server migrations. The software is now updated and continues to be updated regularly to prevent future infections.
- In October 2019 server space was increased from 500GB to 2TB to allow more frequent backups to be stored.

### 3.4. Support Team status report

With the launch of the new website and the migration of servers, the system to manage incoming emails (OTRS) has been updated, migrated and reset as well.

Since the migration mainly two volunteers were actively handling tickets. Member amnesiac84 has admin rights to OTRS.

Most incoming mails are spam. Most heard problems in the last months were:

- problems signing up
- not receiving an activation mail
- not able to login / request a new password

The biggest problem of the last years where newly generated passwords are not accepted seems to be fixed.

### 3.5. Forum Moderators Team status report

The mod team has had a stable membership over the year (thorgal67, Frauenschuh, lososs, mountx & sammiekong).

Most of the posts reported to the mods since November 2018 related to spam or inappropriate posts. Forum disputes are now rare (probably reflecting a fall in forum activity generally) and most of the mod actions have been administrative. No warnings have been issued during the year. As with other users, the mods suffered some disruption following the implementation of the new site and then the malware attack. Most of these issues have now been resolved, though there is some further work needed on the new tool for administering the group application process.

One main change for the mods during this year has been the introduction of the application process for starting new groups and 81 applications have been made (to 13 November). The group admin tool still needs some work, but it has enabled the mods to filter out around 66% of applications, the majority of which were commercial spam. (The remainder were incomplete or duplicates.) Alongside this, as time permits, the mods have continued to clear 'dead' groups from the groups list.

The mods are concerned that the Activities function has become a target for spam. Action is needed to set up some guidelines and a method of spam removal.

### 3.6. Translators Team status report

#### The team

Currently, **245** (compared to 242 in 2018) members have been assigned with translation rights, of those, **138** (compared to 130 in 2018) still have an active status on 2018-11-08, **63** (compared to 69 in 2018) of them logged in in the last 3 months (since 2019-08-01) and **107** (compared to 112 in 2018) were set inactive. There are also many cases of members with translation rights for convenience or administrative purposes but don't actually do translation.

Last login of inactive translator dated as early as 2007-7-11, the cleanup has not been carried out yet, and needs to be done. Translation group has 277 members and needs a cleanup as well, so that not to give an illusion that the team has a lot of members while few are actually volunteering. On the other hand, we still have the problem of some members with translation rights who are not

in the translation group, and some group members have no translation rights. This can be sorted out by the cleanups as well.

Less translation tasks were given to Translation Team since the last report at previous General Assembly (GA). Translation jobs were nearly stopped a few months before the release of the new website, as working on 2 sites at the same time without knowing which wordcodes would be used finally wasn't inviting. And it took time for translators to learn and get used to the new translation tools on the new website. Generally speaking, there are fewer translations done compared to previous years and the over all activity of the team is low. On the other hand, there's hardly any real teamwork as each member is working alone on their own language, and translators of the same language are working alone on different codes. It's difficult to know who are active and who are working in the team.

### **Languages**

The statistics of languages and percentage of translation done has been removed. But no new language has been added since last GA, so BW has been (partly) translated into 42 languages as of last year's statistics. But it's not possible to see percentages of translation done anymore.

### **Wish list**

- - There is still no tool for coordinators to see how the activity is spread, i.e. how much each member with translation rights has translated and over what time period. (listed in "Difficulties" since 2 years but no tool is created yet)
- - When multiple translators of the same language translate texts, it's difficult to find out how certain returning words are translated exactly. (listed in "Difficulties" since 2 years but no tool is created yet)
- - Working from the volunteer pages, when translating, more context is required. A link to the page(s) where the code can be found would be of great help.
- - Sometimes small changes are made to very big texts – when this happens it's not easy to pinpoint where the changes were made and the translators have to review the whole text again. (listed in "Difficulties" since 2 years but no tool is created yet)
- - Certain fragments of texts are repeated over and over again (for example, the newsletter signatures or mails sent regularly to members). It would be less frustrating if those texts could be translated only once and then reused on other strings.
- - Many languages are abandoned before they reach even 10% (which should amount for a big percentage of the website being translated since newsletters and mails aren't as visible but do count a lot towards the final percentage). It is not easy to track if there is any recent progress in a certain language or not. (listed in "Difficulties" since 2 years but no tool is created yet)
- - Keep a log of the evolution of the translations to access which ones are still actively translated and which ones have reached a standstill. (Listed in "Suggestions" since 2 years but no tool is created yet)
- - Automatic notification about new translations being added (limited to once per day). This might help bring back some inactive translators.

### 3.7. New Member BeWelcome Team status report

Currently the team consists of 14 members, of which 5 may be considered active, but in reality only one or two volunteers are currently greeting on a regular basis.

The main concern is that it is a very labour-intensive task, and the feedback from the contacted members is minimal.

### 3.8. Status Report Ombudsman

The Ombudsman is currently Pietshah.

During this term he did not receive any requests for mediation.

He has agreed to continue for another year.

## ----- Appendix A: The BeWelcome website -----

A release of a new website has been a long-term goal and project for the past several years.

There were several reasons for releasing a new website, some of them being:

- The old site was "old fashioned"
- The old site was not mobile friendly
- The old site was missing some features
- The developers began to have difficulties to work on the old code
- Support for old runtime compiler was expected to be dropped in relatively near future

Even though there was not a clear consensus on any individual reason, there was an agreement that a change should be made.

Work on the new website lasted much longer than anticipated. After several postponements during 2018, at the GA2018 (November) it was agreed that we should go ahead with the release as soon as possible. The release was again postponed until April, due to serious problems identified during testing in December, and due to limited availability of the key people involved in the website release. Urgency to release was emphasized by the state of the old software (it had reached a point where with increased usage the system was unresponsive) and announcements that the software security support for the old software interpreters would have ceased in May 2019. A newsletter, announcing the new website, was sent mid-April. After the new website release in April, we posted about it in the community news and the forum. Some additional bugs were/are being identified and fixed. In September, we suffered and recovered from an attack by a malware called Liliu.

*Testing:* Testing has been performed by the testing team during the whole process of new website development, but intensified with a dedicated call for testers (also on the main forum) at the beginning of 2019. Testing was focused on the new hosting request feature, and we agreed to give a lower priority to admin features. A problem identified in the testing phase was that notifications from the new website (hosted on a new server) were classified as spam by Gmail and possibly some other email providers.

Problem has been reported and discussed by many testers, but no clear solution has been identified. Information about 'solutions' was often contradicting and had no guarantee of a clear outcome. We (BW members involved in testing) set up a group to cope with the problem, and also tried to involve other BW members by sending direct messages. We do not have specific

results from end of April (time of migration) but by then the testers 'trained' their email providers to not treat the notifications as spam. Since the new website release, we have not received complaints from regular members that their notifications are being classified as spam.

The BoD decided to 'approve' the release because the responsibility of bewelcome.org functioning lies ultimately on the BoD. Should something go wrong with the release, the BoD would be responsible. To try to minimize the possibility of things going very wrong, the board tried to summarize a list of key features (mostly related to hosting) that had to work at least the same way than in the previous version. The biggest problem was the still unresolved issue with notifications being classified as spam, which caused a few BV members to question if the new website should be released or not, and the board was also not unanimous with the decision to release (6:1 for release on 23rd April). The involvement (official approval) of BoD resulted in surprisingly many protests from the sysadmin (who is also a member of the BoD), who insisted that the teams should assess themselves the readiness of the site, without (the need to) inform the board about it. The ongoing discussions about whether or not the teams handling critical parts of the website (also represented by the board members in this term) should or should not report about the functioning of the website to the board to assess the readiness for the release distracted the testing, and could have been avoided. Throughout the process, the information flow between the development team and the board seemed a bit patchy at times, with contradicting information about spam solutions, but other than that updates were promptly received from the developers whenever asked directly.

#### *Timing of the release:*

- The migration had to be made in a period trying to avoid peak period of use, since this would have meant at least a few hours shutdown and this had to be announced with a minimal advance
- The migration had to be made on a day when sysadmin [leoalone], hostadmin [tobixen] and webmaster [shevek] were all available at the same time, and in case of problem even next day
- The migration had to be made prior to 30th April, when old server (fox) software was about to be terminated (announcements started in August 2018 but were only brought to the attention of the board late March 2019). Proceeding with the migration after 30th April would mean a change in the migration process (which would require additional resources that we do not have), because the original strategy involved all three servers (fox, lynx, lion) being 'alive'
- The BoD had no say in choosing the timing, but asked to receive an overview/evaluation of the site a few days prior to the planned release, so that it can officially approve it.

To get a date where the three people involved were all available restricted the dates to few ones some months apart. The only reasonable date was around 23 april, and on the night between 23 and 24 april the new site was launched.

#### *After the release*

The problem that some people had feared a lot, that is the risk that notification went in spam, in effect after a few days was fixed; rather were found a series of bugs that during the testing had not been observed, mostly because they happened in situations that no one anticipated or tested, or were linked to functionalities not thoroughly tested, or because certain functions show their effects only after a certain time of use. The most severe problem was located in an error in the implementation of one parameter in the search function. Another problem was slowness on certain functions spotted only when the activity on new server rose again. This error needed more time to be spotted, since sources of slowness were in many points, and not all were decisive.

*Lilu malware attack*

On September 19th we became aware that **BeWelcome.org had become the target of an attack**, like many other Linux-based sites, by the malware "Lilu".

In an attempt to extort ransom money, the malware encrypted the site and member data, making it unusable. **Our volunteers immediately started the process of restoring as much of the site and data as possible** with the help of backups. We also informed members about the problem on Facebook and Twitter, and published an advisory on the site itself as soon as it was possible.

The site was available again a couple of days later, without us paying any ransom money. Unfortunately, **data submitted to the site during the two days prior to the attack seems to be lost**, including updates to the accounts, posts in the groups and forums, and profiles created by new members. Also, images and avatars uploaded between August 27th and September 19th could not be restored.

The process of restoration produced duplicates of some older email notifications.

To the best of our knowledge, **no personal data has been accessed or compromised** in any way, and we have taken additional measures to keep the site and your data safe. The server remained for some days without security updates due to the low availability of one of the people involved in migration, and during that period malware had been introduced into our server and activated itself 18 days later. Now we have all security patches applied.

*Current status of the website*

Currently the website runs on lion. The migration from lynx to lion was done mid-September, and was perhaps hastened by the Lilu attack. It was decided by the dev/sysadmin team to move back the main server from lynx (first deployment) to lion in August, because keeping the website on lynx would have impaired other administrative functions present on that server.

Some more bugs had been introduced since the new version of the code was deployed. Luckily there bugs were promptly fixed and more important, allowed us to spot some other malfunctioning that had not been noticed, or that we did not manage to insulate in the other server, among them the slowness of the system under even a medium load and the loss of some avatars in the backup-resore process (this latter one has not yet completely fixed since it is extremely rare and there is another way to prevent it).

Currently the major problems not yet fixed are the malfunctioning of the persistent login, some group admin features (things given lower priority prior to the release of the new website). In addition, the implementation of some features (mainly the Hosting Eagerness Slider voted by the GA2018) has been discussed on the forum and will be discussed at GA 2019.

The new website still needs an updated FAQ section.