



PRINCIPLES AND DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES

A. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Our vision

Our vision is to create a cohousing community that realises the following principles:

- Good neighbourliness – in supporting each other within the cohousing community and in making a positive contribution to the social, economic and cultural life of our locality.
- Active ageing – as a way of encouraging participation, health, independence and environmental awareness.
- Eco Awareness, exemplified by low energy design, shared resources and more integrated living arrangements.

1. Principles of equality, inclusion, diversity and democracy

We do not have any particular religious, spiritual or political ideology as a group, but do try to be aware of the impact our activities have on the environment and our neighbours. Our approach is generally pragmatic and concerned with making the cohousing project work.

We want all of the cohousing group to participate in the project on an equitable basis. No member should feel excluded from participating in decisions which impinge on their household or involve the organisation of the shared facilities. We wish to be a diverse and lively community that respects differences and resolves difficulties in a democratic and sympathetic way.

B. PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR DECISION MAKING

1. The Group's decision making process is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Timely – made in time to meet opportunities, requirements and/or the Group's own milestones
 - Well informed and where appropriate made by those most competent to judge
 - Take account of each others' points of view
 - Involve the consultation and consent of all those most affected by the decision
 - Involve the ownership of those responsible for implementing the decision
 - Based on consensus whenever possible, and resort to majority decision making only when required by the need to make a timely decision
 - Take account of the diversity of Members needs, preferences, attitudes and lifestyles, including by avoiding decisions that regulate members in matters that do not significantly affect other members.
2. To ensure that decisions are timely whilst at the same time meeting the other objectives, Members will put forward ideas, proposals and resolutions as long in advance as possible. Members will also elect honorary officers and delegate to them the authority to make minor and urgent decisions on their behalf.
 3. To ensure that decisions are well informed, Members will make decisions on the basis of well researched reports and where appropriate the advice of professionals and other experts.
 4. To ensure that each others' views are taken into account, Members must have read the written submissions and participated in the discussion to vote.
 5. To ensure that those most affected by a decision consent to it, they must either be invited to actively participate in the meeting discussing the issue or they must have been consulted and their views relayed to the meeting. To ensure the ownership of those responsible for implementing the decision, the decision should not be made in their absence without consulting them. No member will be volunteered for implementing a decision without their consent.
 6. To ensure that wherever possible all decisions are made by consensus, whilst simultaneously avoiding lengthy periods of indecision, all important decisions will be made by quorate meetings of the members. When a resolution or proposal is first discussed agreement will have only been reached if all members present support or accept it. If any do not, they should have the

opportunity to meet with each other, and/or with a named mediator, to develop an alternative proposal. This would be discussed with nominees from the assenting group, to see if both sides can make compromises which would move towards a consensus. This alternative proposal should be put to a second Board meeting.

- If a consensus can still not be reached at the second Board meeting, following the negotiations between Board meetings, the Board may instruct both parties to try to reach a consensus in the light of the second Board discussion. If a consensus can still not be reached at a third Board meeting, the matter will be decided by a simple majority of Board members.
 - Alternatively, the Board may decide that no second round of negotiations is appropriate and may decide to take a simple majority decision at the second Board meeting at which the matter is discussed.
7. Our rules allow proxy voting. However, we would normally want to reserve this for matters where a clear resolution circulated in advance is being voted upon eg formal processes at AGM. In other situations there will be further discussion about the matter at the meeting and so proxy voting would not be fully informed. Views on a matter can be conveyed by other members, but proxy voting is discouraged.
8. To ensure that the Group respects the diversity of needs and preferences of its members, the Group shall only decide upon and regulate matters that affect all members. Individual members shall have the right to live as they wish in their own home, unless what they are doing negatively affects other members to an extent that cannot be reasonably tolerated. The Group shall also recognise that not all members will be equally able or motivated at all times to contribute to the Group. Members shall avoid being judgemental, and seek to understand causes and find solutions rather than allocating blame.