

## PRINCIPLES AND DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES

### A. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

#### **Our vision**

Our vision is for a community based on co-housing principles (set out below) which seeks to jointly own and democratically control our living environment, working towards implementing the following principles ::

- Self sufficiency in energy resources
- Self sufficiency in fresh food production as far as possible
- Recycling of resources and waste products wherever possible
- Minimum carbon footprint
- Work on principles of equality, inclusion, diversity and democracy (see paragraph 1 below)
- Contribute to, and integrate with, the local community (see paragraph 2 below)
- Behave in all aspects of activity with respect and support to our neighbours
- Be active participants in, and contribute to, the wider co-housing movement (see paragraph 3 below)
- Work on principles of basic human rights, as set out in the 1998 Human Rights Act and incorporating, among others, the following considerations: the right to privacy and respect for family life; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of expression (with regard to other legislation in relation to incitement); freedom of assembly and association; prohibition of discrimination.

## 1. **Principles of equality, inclusion, diversity and democracy**

**Equality** – we believe that no-one should be discriminated against for any reason and we believe that support should be provided according to need to enable everyone associated with the co-housing group to participate in the project on an equal basis.

**Inclusion** - that no members should feel or be excluded from participating in any decisions which affect the success of the co-housing project.

**Diversity** – we seek to establish a diverse community in terms of age, ethnicity, wealth/poverty

**Democracy** – we seek to establish a community based on active democratic principles in which people contribute some of their time and skills for the benefit of the co-housing community. We will seek consensus decision making and will seek to resolve disputes through mediation in line with our constitution. We will establish a core group of people to drive the project forward through devolved responsibilities to working groups, with the view to increase the size of the group over time in line with our project plan.

## 2. **Contribute to, and integrate with, the local community**

Our group members have previously been involved in voluntary and community activities, including charitable, educational and artistic participation. We would aim to continue this approach in a new setting, developing new friendships and being sensitive to local factors.

## 3. **Be part of a wider movement and contribute to that movement**

We see ourselves as part of a wider movement for social change and seek to contribute constructively to that movement. We will ensure that we develop the project as a real life example of our contribution to the wider movement. This means embodying the ideas of mutual support, sharing of skills, developing educational opportunities for ourselves and being open to contributing to the furtherance of these ideals beyond our own community where appropriate (e.g. receiving visits from other interested groups).

## 4. **The development of the co-housing project**

We want our activities as members of the co-housing project to work to improve and develop the property, particularly the land. We are fundamentally committed to the social, communal and material development of the co-housing project.

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 co-housing project work.

[Originally adopted by the founding members on 16 February 2008]

## PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR DECISION MAKING

1. The Groups decision making process is designed to meet the following objectives:
  - Timely – made in time to meet opportunities, requirements and/or the Groups 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 effected 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 life styles, 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. .

6. 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.
7. 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, discussions should continue outside the meeting and members should take time to reflect. A decision can then be taken at subsequent meetings by consensus or as referred in 2 above.
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.
9. In the event of the Memorandum and Articles of Association specifying decision-making procedures that conflict with those specified in this Schedule, the procedures specified in the Memorandum and Articles of Association shall take precedence.

*[All of section B, except section 9, has been extracted from the Constitution of the Group that founded the Co Ltd by Guarantee]*