

Chapelton Cohousing
115-117 Spencer Place
Leeds
LS7 4DU

07474 873791

info@chapeltoncohousing.org.uk

www.chapeltoncohousing.org.uk

Chapelton Cohousing Membership policy

including Allocations policy

April 2015



Membership policy

A. Guiding Principles:

The project aims to create cohousing that is:

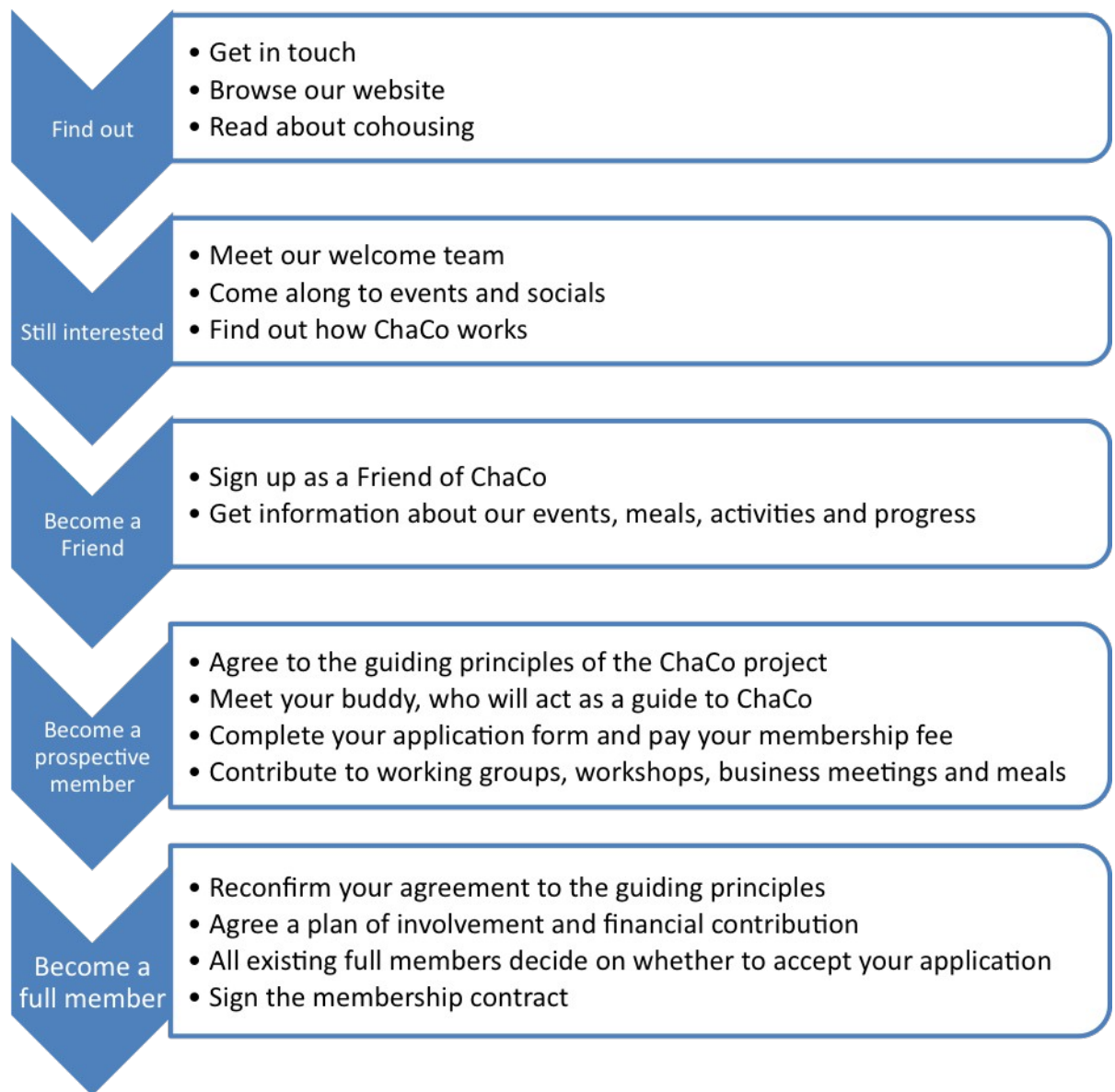
1. **Inclusive and open minded** –actively participating in the local community.
2. **Sharing and supportive** – helping each other to create a great community, with common facilities like the common house, car- sharing, a laundry, and food-growing space.
3. **Personal/private** – each person/family has their own front door and private space but also benefits from shared space and shared resources.
4. **Diverse** – includes a wide range of people, for example of different ages, backgrounds and incomes. We want it to include affordable housing.
5. **Environmentally friendly** – supporting and promoting sustainable living. Homes built with good insulation, with eco/green features.
6. **Empowering** – each member having an equal say in decisions and in the ownership of shared resources and facilities.

This policy has a lot of words to read!
If you prefer, please talk to us instead.
We can also help you fill in the forms.

B. Introduction.

1. The aim of ChaCo is to establish a co-housing community in Chapeltown. The project will have strong ties to the surrounding neighbourhood so you may still be involved even if you do not intend to live in the site.
2. The maximum number of full members depends on the size of the households wanting to join the community. The maximum number of households is currently 30, although this may change as our plans develop.
3. All adult members of a household must become members and must be committed to the guiding principles of our community and willing to participate.
4. We aim to ensure a mixed and inter-generational community that reflects the local neighbourhood. We will therefore prioritise units for particular categories of people such as Chapeltown residents, different age groups, disabled people and people on low income. See our *Allocations Policy* for details.
5. We plan to offer different types of tenancy from ownership to rented self-contained units and accommodation in a shared house so vacancies for Full Membership will depend on what type of tenancy is available.
6. We have 3 levels of membership: Full Members, Prospective Members and Friends.

7. How to join



C. Full Members

1. Full Members are people who
 - a. join the community and plan to live in the co-housing community
 - b. actively and fully support the principles of the co-housing project
 - c. meet the criteria set out below
 - d. have been accepted into membership, paid the fee and signed a membership agreement with ChaCo.
 - e. participate in making decisions about the running and funding of the project.
2. They have a guaranteed place in the project, provided they can meet the financial criteria for their chosen type of property and tenancy and contribute to the completion and running of the community.
3. Full Members will normally have been Prospective Members for at least 6 months, but this may be less in some circumstances. During this time they will have been involved as agreed, which may include:
 - a. Fully acquainting themselves with all aspects of the project and understand the underlying principles of the co-housing project, the obligations and commitments of members.
 - b. Visiting an existing cohousing development
 - c. Participating in a working group
 - d. Attending ChaCo business meetings
 - e. Attending and contributing to ChaCo meals
 - f. Attending special planning meetings and workshops
 - g. Actively participating in promoting the project and building support for it in the neighbourhood
4. Full members commit to the guiding principles, the current policies and working practices of the project and to our chosen consensus decision- making processes.
5. Full members commit to contributing to the success of the project and to dedicating their time, skills and resources to this as necessary and agreed by the group, as the project develops.
6. Where someone cannot meet the normal time commitments for health or family reasons, an appropriate contribution will be agreed with the *Needs and Wants group* to enable the member to participate as fully as possible.

7. To become a full member and therefore to be entitled to a unit in the project they should:
 - a. Normally pay an annual non-refundable fee of between £500 and £100 per adult (sum agreed with the *Needs and Wants group* based on income and wealth)
 - b. Demonstrate that they can finance their chosen unit and chosen type of tenancy (rental, ownership etc.) and commit to providing the appropriate funding for their chosen unit on time.

D. Prospective Members

1. Prospective Members are people who are seriously interested in living in the ChaCo community. They have an opportunity to be involved in order to decide if it is suitable for them. Once they have met the conditions, they may be considered for full membership.
2. Before becoming Prospective Members people will normally join up as Friends of ChaCo.
3. Only Prospective Members can become Full Members.
4. If the Full Membership group is full, then Prospective Members can apply to be approved and go on a reserve list to automatically become Full Members and have first choice for their chosen housing unit when one becomes available, subject to any prioritisation process for specific categories as outlined elsewhere.
5. Prospective Members will usually be welcome to participate in ChaCo business meetings and working groups, subject to the agreement of the facilitator(s), but they may not block proposals. There may be occasions when it is not appropriate for prospective members to attend.
6. Prospective Members agree to the guiding principles of the ChaCo project.
7. Prospective Members pay a non-refundable fee of £50 per annum (or sum agreed with the *Needs and Wants group* based on income and wealth).
8. Prospective Membership will be reviewed after one year with the expectation that full membership is applied for. Prospective Membership may be extended by agreement with full members.

E. Friends of ChaCo

1. Friends of ChaCo are people who are interested in the ChaCo community housing project and want to find out more about it or want to support the project even though they may not want to live there.
2. Friends of ChaCo will be entitled to receive emails and information about the project.
3. They will be invited to events and meals.
4. They may be invited to attend business meetings as an observer.
5. There is no charge for being a Friend of ChaCo. However we may invite Friends of ChaCo to make a donation to help cover administration costs.

F. Ceasing Membership:

1. If you decide to stop being a Friend of ChaCo or terminate your Prospective Membership, please let us know.
2. If any Prospective Member is not complying with the ChaCo principles, this will be discussed with the Prospective Member and ChaCo reserves the right to ask them to leave.
3. The terms on which a Full Member may withdraw or be required to leave the community will be covered in the membership contract.

Friends of ChaCo – application form

As a friend of ChaCo you get information about our events, meals, activities, and progress.

A bit about you...

First name: _____ Last name: _____

*Postcode: _____ so we know if you're in the area

How to contact you...

Email: _____

(By giving us your email address you are agreeing to us sending you occasional email updates – usually no more than one per month.)

The rest is optional...

Phone: _____

Street address: _____

Town: _____

Your response...

I'm interested because....

I might be able to help by....

Becoming a Prospective Member of ChaCo

How to join

1. Talk to us about what you are thinking and feeling about the project.
2. We are only able to accept a limited number of new prospective members at any one time.
3. We will assign a buddy to offer you support and act as a guide to ChaCo.
4. We will agree an initial plan of involvement with you/your household taking into account your interests and any specific needs or constraints you have.
5. Provide a short statement about yourself and your household, why you want to become a prospective Member, and indicate what sort of housing you are interested in: unit size, renting or buying.
6. At this stage we will also ask for some general information about your ability to finance your chosen option to help us in our planning assumptions.
7. Pay the prospective member fee of £50 (or sum agreed with the Needs and Wants group based on income and wealth)
8. The above process is designed to help us and you to be clear about why you are interested in the project, and the commitment involved, so that you and we can plan the best way for you to be involved in, support and learn about the project. If you have any questions about the process, or if you would like help filling in forms, your Chaco buddy can help.
9. We will agree requirements on confidentiality of information with you.
10. Agree to the guiding principles of the ChaCo project.

Becoming a Full Member of ChaCo

1. Once you have been a Prospective Member (usually for 6 months) you can apply to become a Full Member and secure a unit in the project (subject to availability and prioritisation).
2. At the point when you are accepted as a Full Member you will sign a formal contract. The procedure leading to Full Membership involves a combination of formal and informal processes. Where the application involves a household with more than one person, there will be a joint application form and process involving each adult member of the household who will be residing in the unit.
3. Becoming a Full Member involves a significant financial and personal commitment on your part.
4. It is a legal commitment and a commitment to a new way of living and a community.
5. We will also go through the guiding principles and current policies and ask you to reconfirm your agreement to these.
6. We will have a discussion with you about your application. We will seek to answer any outstanding queries and explore your commitment, interests, strengths and skills in contributing to the success of the project.
7. Where needed we will arrange more than one conversation or meeting to explore any concerns.
8. We will agree an initial plan of involvement with you/your household, taking into account your interests and any specific needs or constraints you have.
9. Once you and we are satisfied that we have fully explored the implications of membership and that all queries have been answered, as far as they can be, the membership group will then discuss your application and will make a recommendation to the whole group.
10. We believe children should, where possible and appropriate, be involved in the process and will agree with parents an appropriate process for engaging the younger members of the family (10-18 years old) in an age appropriate discussion about living in the community and their participation.
11. All existing Full Members will decide on whether to accept you/your household as a member based on their understanding of your commitment to the project and the guiding principles.
12. If the group accepts you/your household as a full member we will sign a contract with you, covering the liabilities and responsibilities of each of you and of the ChaCo project to you.
13. This process is intended to help you clarify your decision and help us ensure that you will be able to afford your chosen option as we will need to meet strict deadlines for

providing finance for this project. The end result of the process is a legally binding agreement covering your right to purchase or rent a property, and be part of this co-housing community. It will include your rights to participate in the decision-making process of the community, to share in the other benefits of the community, your financial obligations, your contribution to the project, your rights to the use of communal facilities and the commitments of all parties.

APPENDIX: Allocations Policy

1. We aim to ensure a mixed and inter-generational community that reflects the culture and diversity of the local neighbourhood. We will therefore prioritise units for particular categories of people such as Chapeltown residents, different age groups, disabled people and people on low income.
2. Two-thirds of the housing will be reserved in the first instance for households with at least one member who currently lives in Chapeltown or has a close connection with it.
3. We will aim for a mix of ages:
 - o 15% (minimum) of households with at least one person under 18
 - o 15% (minimum) of households with at least one member aged 18 -34
 - o 15% (minimum) of households with at least one member aged 35 – 64
 - o 15% (minimum) of households with at least one member aged 65 or over
4. Using the four broad ethnic groups defined on our website (“Multicultural Chapeltown” page), we will aim to have:
 - o 15% (minimum) of households with at least one member from the “African-Caribbean” group
 - o 15% (minimum) of households with at least one member from the “Asian” group
 - o 15% (minimum) of households with at least one member from the “Other BME” group
 - o 15% (minimum) of households with at least one member from the “White” group
5. We will aim for at least 15% of households to include at least one member who identifies as LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and related communities).
6. We will aim for at least 10% of households to include at least one member who has a physical or mental disability
7. We will aim for at least 15% of households to have low incomes.

8. Many households will meet more than one of these aims.
9. We will usually only accept new Full Members if they do not block these aspirations.
10. These aims are aspirational and we reserve the right to change these allocations if the success of the project depends on it.