



CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Mutual respect and care for each other provides an essential underpinning for life in a Cohousing community. Kindness, generosity and tolerance help to keep it a positive experience.

However, imperfect communication, personal stress and inevitable personality differences can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts between the best motivated people.

The key feature of a Cohousing group is a genuine collective willingness to address and resolve such conflict. Issues and problems not dealt with satisfactorily and as soon as possible, can become entrenched, but it may be that some conflicts cannot be resolved and that differences have to be accepted or at least tolerated,

We anticipate that problems may arise at two levels; between individual OWCH members and within the group as a whole. Difficulties between individuals need not, and should not, become a matter for the whole group.

INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

- Go and speak directly to the woman with whom you have a difficulty. Be honest, upfront; use moderate language and explain the issues that you have with her.
- If necessary, have a meeting, setting out the parameters of the meeting including timing. This requires a genuine desire to resolve the differences.
- Each of you may ask a woman whom you believe can be objective, to support, clarify and help to disentangle muddled feelings.
- The possibility of obtaining the services of a trained external mediator offers a further option. OWCH will maintain a small fund for such purposes and the management group will be responsible for approving its use.

CONFLICT WITHIN THE GROUP

- OWCH members have a collective responsibility for addressing and taking swift action to resolve conflicts between different bodies of opinion within the group. In such cases OWCH rules regarding consensus decision making should be put into practice immediately.
- If any individual member of OWCH is aware that there is a potential or real situation that is causing conflict within the group, it is her responsibility to approach the Chair of The Management Committee.

- The Management Committee needs to devise a plan to address the situation urgently. This may involve calling an extra ordinary meeting where again, the consensus decision making process is put into practice.
- All members have a responsibility to attend such a meeting if at all possible.
- Once consensus has been reached, it is essential that members accept the outcome.
- Again, if consensus cannot be reached, the possibility of obtaining the services of a trained external mediator offers a further option using the small fund provided.

Adopted by consensus January 2019