

New Longsight Housing Co-op

What Do People Do?

Committee, Officer Roles Subgroups and Groups

There is training and other support for anyone interested in being part of a group or taking on a role.

All roles are for one year, but people can put themselves forward to carry on for more years after.

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Committee

The Committee meets most months and must have a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

It is difficult to say how much time it will take each month. Allow for an average of 4 - 6 hours each month. This will increase if you take on an extra role.

The Committee co-ordinates the running of our Co-op, and must make sure:

- Every decision is made for the benefit of our Co-op, not individual members.
- Our Co-op is well run, follows all our Rules and policies and all laws and regulations for social landlords.
- Our Co-op's money is spent well, and that there continues to be enough money.
- Our Co-op has a secure future. Looking forward to how we improve our properties and keep to or exceed the Decent Homes Standards.
- How our Co-op is run (governance) is regularly reviewed to make sure it is being done correctly. For example, by following the Code of Governance of the Confederation of Co-operative Housing (CCH).
- Committee members attend training to help understand the responsibilities of the Committee and how our Co-op should be run correctly.
- Our Co-op gives equal opportunities to all.

The Committee will report to our Co-op members at general meetings on the decisions and actions that have been taken.

The Committee is answerable to our Co-op and has responsibility for:

- responding to complaints from Co-op members;
- dealing with issues raised by Co-op members.

Chair of Committee

The Chair will need to give more time to the Co-op each month compared to a Committee member who does not have any added role. Maybe 2 – 4 hours a week.

The Chair of the Committee links in and works with everyone to make sure the worker, Committee and Subgroups can effectively support the running of our Co-op. They may:

- Set Committee meeting agendas with the Secretary. Chair Committee meetings. Make sure all have a chance to speak and no one dominates.
- With the Secretary, worker and others, make sure general meetings are correctly organised.
- Chair Committee, Annual General Meetings and other general meetings, or make sure there is another person who can chair the meetings.
- Either work with a management agency to make sure workers are managed, or line manage workers themselves. Help workers with difficult matters or find another person who can.
- If needed, make decisions that cannot wait until the next Committee meeting. If possible, make the decisions with another Committee member.
- Be a spokesperson for the Co-op, and be a good example when representing the co-op at external events.

Treasurer

This role will need more time, especially 4 times a year when quarterly budgets are to be checked.

If there is a Finance Group, the Treasurer will work with its members.

The Treasurer will meet with the worker responsible for our Co-op Finances at least four times a year. The meeting is to:

- Review the quarterly cash flow reports and finances of our Co-op
- Make recommendations to the Committee when needed
- Look in detail at the annual budget and quarterly financial statements. See if any revisions are needed.

The Treasurer will:

- Attend training to help in understanding the role.
- Check the reconciliation of our Co-op's current, deposit and rent accounts.
- Review the Finance Policy each year and make sure our Co-op is working within its policy.

Secretary

The Secretary will need to give more time to the Co-op in the two weeks before a Committee meeting if they pull the paperwork together and take notes at meetings.

A Secretary does not do all these tasks, but needs to make sure they are done.

- Make sure all Committee meetings, Annual General Meeting and general meetings are organised correctly.
- Attend all Committee and general meetings, or as many as possible.
- With the Chair and others, make sure agendas for all meetings are created and all information needed is given. Make sure minutes of meetings are kept correctly.
- Make sure the registers of Members, Officers and Conflict of Interest are kept up to date and correctly.

- Make sure use of the Co-op Seal (stamp) is properly recorded, all returns are made to regulatory bodies and all legal aspects of the co-ops work are carried out.

Complaints Lead / Officer

The Housing Ombudsman has recently said all social landlords must have a Complaints Officer. Our Co-op has had one in the past, but not for a few years.

What this person does needs to be agreed. This is a rough outline.

This person will work with Shared Habitat and the Co-op Committee. Shared Habitat now deal with complaints for our Co-op.

Regulations say the Complaints Officer / Lead should:

- be able to act sensitively and fairly;
- be trained to receive complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents;
- have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints;
- have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly.

Our Complaints Officer / Lead may:

- Be in regular contact with Shared Habitat about complaints and attend Committee meetings when complaints are discussed.
- Make sure Shared Habitat are keeping the Committee regularly informed of complaints.
- Have an overview of complaints through the year. Make sure the Committee is given quarterly reports and a report is written for the Annual Report.
- Deal with any complaints that relate to Shared Habitat
- Attend training about dealing with complaints and be comfortable seeking legal advice.

They need to act fairly

Health and Safety Lead

This is a new role so it is unclear yet how it will work.

Our Worker, will be responsible for making sure we are following health and safety regulations and giving the Committee the information it needs.

The Committee still legally has responsibility for making sure we follow health and safety regulations. It cannot just assume everything is correct.

So there needs to be a Co-op member who will link with our Worker to make sure that the Committee has all the information it needs on how health and safety regulations are being followed by our Co-op.

Membership Secretary

The Membership Secretary will:

- Be the link between the Committee and Membership Group.
- Provide reports to the Committee and attend Committee meetings when Membership Group reports and recommendations are discussed.
- Organise Membership Group meetings.
- Make sure all minutes and other records for the Membership Group are kept securely, and kept up to date.

Internal Auditor

The role of the Internal Auditor is to be an independent person, not in any of the Subgroups or on the Committee, who can check that our Co-op is being run as it should be. It sounds daunting, but it is not as difficult as it sounds.

It may take 2 – 3 hours a month, with a little more time in January.

The internal Auditor will advise, and make recommendations to the committee by giving a written report to the committee in February. This will be included in the Annual Report. The Internal Auditor is to:

- Make sure our Co-op acts within Co-op policy and Regulator of Social Housing guidelines
- Report on internal control systems.
- Safeguard against errors, fraud and mismanagement.
- Assess efficiency and minimise waste.
- Be in contact with and assess proposals made by external auditors.

Subgroups and Groups

Finance Subgroup

Being part of this Subgroup may take around 4 hours a quarter, with extra time in May or June to attend some training.

The Finance Group and Treasurer will meet with the Co-op worker responsible for Co-op Finances at least four times a year. The meeting is to:

- Review the quarterly cash flow reports and finances of our Co-op.
- Make recommendations to the committee if needed.
- Look in detail at the annual budget and quarterly financial statements. See if any revisions are needed.

Membership Group

The Group will meet when needed. One member will be the Membership Secretary.

It is difficult to say how much time this group will take because if it is not reviewing policies, it only meets when there is work to do. So, there may be a month or two with no time needed, then a month needing a few hours.

The Group will make recommendations on:

- Any policies that need setting up or changing.
- Who should be offered a property.
- Requests for transfers and exchanges.

The Group will:

- Keep the waiting list and other records accurate and up to date.
- Regularly review the information published about membership by our Co-op.

Group members cannot be part of any tasks, discussions or decisions where they may be directly involved. For example, visiting possible members they know personally or allocation decisions when they know an applicant.

HR (Human Resources) - JNC

This group has not existed for a while but is needed.

There may be some months when there is no time needed for this group, but others when quite a few hours are needed.

This group looks at everything related to employing workers, including:

- Terms and conditions of employment, adjustments in salary levels and re-grading of posts
- Hours of work. Compliance to the Working Time Regulations. Holiday, sickness, maternity, paternity, parenting arrangements.
- Health and Safety in the workplace, including risk assessments and health surveillance of staff, to make sure that workers are provided with a safe system of work.
- Making sure staff are offered training they need and opportunities for development.
- Appraisal, recruitment and redundancy.

Support is available from Coops UK HR service.

Rent Arrears Sub-Group

The list of what this group does has not been changed since Shared Habitat started dealing with rent collection and arrears for our Co-op.

So, what this group does may change. The group has not existed for a few years because people did not want to be in it. The group used to:

- Monitor, control and try to prevent and reduce rent arrears.
- Look in detail at the current rent arrears of existing and former tenants.
- Make recommendations to the Committee on action to be taken in specific arrears cases.
- Review existing policies and procedures and make recommendations to the Committee on any changes needed.
- Look at and make recommendations to the Committee on new initiatives that may prevent, control or reduce rent arrears.

Repair Group

This is another group that may change now Shared Habitat are organising our Co-op's repairs. This is what the list is from before this time:

- Monitor repairs spending and try to make sure our Co-op is getting value for money.
- Look at reports from Shared Habitat. Review performance of contractors.
- Make recommendations to the committee on prioritising improvements and replacements.
- Monitor all questionnaires completed by contractors who wish to be added to our Co-op's list of approved contractors. Particular attention will be paid to Equal Opportunities and Health & Safety policies. The Group will decide which contractors should have references followed up.
- Make recommendations to the committee regarding adding/removing contractors from the approved list.
- If an urgent repair is reported between meetings, a repair group member can make decisions up to £500.

Planning Group

The Planning Group is there to support the Committee with the planning of the co-op's long-term future. The Group will meet at least 6 times a year. Currently it meets monthly.

- Most members would like to see the co-op expand
- We also need to improve the quality of our homes
- Planning Group is there to help make these things happen

The group shares tasks, including: arranging meetings, setting agendas chairing meetings, taking notes; looking after the group's email and record keeping. Inviting new people to join.

Member Engagement Group

This is a new group proposed at a general meeting in November 2023. It will include member engagement, communication, Social Group and newsletter team.

A group of members are currently working out what this group will do. It will include:

- Making sure members are kept informed about what is happening within our Co-op on a website, by Facebook, What's App, email, post, and other ways members say suits us best.
- Make sure our Co-op is following our Member Engagement Strategy.
- Making sure members know what events and activities the Social Group are organising.

Social Group

This group organises the social side of our Co-op. There have been coffee mornings, trips out to Blackpool, events with activities and food, and, of course, our Co-op 40th birthday celebration.

Some of the roles in this group may be:

- Promoting events;
- Setting up the room;
- Helping serve refreshments;
- Chatting to other Co-op members;
- Making people welcome.

Newsletter Group

This is a group of people who create the Co-op's newsletter.

Code of Conduct - How People Behave

Everyone who is on our Committee, in a subgroup or does any work for our Co-op must think about our actions.

Summary of our Code of Conduct

1. Co-op members must be sure that our private and personal interests do not influence our decisions. We must not use positions in our Co-op to personally gain in any way that does not apply equally to all members.
2. Co-op meetings are informal, but all members must recognise the role of the Chair. All should respect other members' views and encourage all members to express ourselves.
3. People should not talk about topics in a meeting that are not linked to that meeting.
4. All members should follow our Co-op's Equal Opportunities policy at meetings. All should make sure no comments are made that could be offensive.
5. Members should not behave in a way that could be considered aggressive (e.g. swearing, name calling, shouting, finger pointing).
6. Members should follow the agenda for the meeting. If members wish to raise other issues, we should bring these up under 'Any Other Business'. The Chair should be told about these before the meeting. Repairs must be reported in the usual way and not at a meeting.
7. Notes (minutes) should be taken at all Co-op meetings. These include main points and decisions. These minutes should be to members.
8. Members should not attend meetings under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs.

Not Sharing What Is Talked About – Confidentiality

9. Generally, our Committee meetings are open to all members. Any members can find out about discussions or decisions. Some items are confidential and must not be discussed outside of the committee.

10. Members should not discuss or share with others any items the chair of a meeting says should be confidential. This will include any discussions that name individual tenants.
11. All sub groups will make sure that members' personal information is reported anonymously at general or Committee meetings.

Declaring Personal Interest

12. All Co-op members should tell the Secretary any interests that may lead to a conflict of interest. For example, working for a building company that the co-op may employ as a contractor.
13. Co-op members should tell the Chair about any personal interest in an issue on the agenda before it is discussed. We may need to leave the meeting while it is discussed. We should not try to influence another member on an issue for which we have a conflict of interest.

Breaking This Policy

14. Where a co-op member has broken this policy, the Committee will decide what action needs to be taken. Members of the Committee involved in breaking this policy will need to leave the meeting when it is discussed.
15. If a Co-op member believes the Committee has broken this policy, they should follow our Co-op's Management and Service Complaints Procedure. An independent person may be asked to consider and decide on the case.