



RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP POLICY AND JOINING PROCESS

Gŵyr Community Land Trust (Gŵyr CLT) look forward to welcoming new households to the membership. We want the process of applying to be fair, transparent, and accessible for people. The process is in line with our allocations policy and manifesto, which reflects: the values of Gŵyr CLT; the living environment we want to create; and local and national policy. A household could be an individual, couple, family or 2 unrelated individuals.

1. Local-needs Criteria for resident members

The allocations criteria and process which applies to all residents members, whether they are current members, joining as self-builders or purchasing a property after completion, is outlined in our allocations policy. Broadly as a minimum, all resident members must meet the following criteria:

1.1 Affordability – Resident members must be unable to afford to buy a home on the open market, and be able to afford to buy an affordable home at levels offered by Gŵyr CLT housing.

1.2 Local Connection – Resident members must demonstrate that they have a local connection, either living, working or caring for or requiring care from a relative in the area .

1.3 Supportive of the values of Gŵyr CLT - All occupants must become members of the Residents Co-operative and Gŵyr CLT, and therefore must agree to support the values and aims of Gŵyr CLT, outlined in this membership policy and manifesto. This includes things like attending monthly meetings, respecting and maintaining common spaces, creating an inclusive, supportive living environment, and agreeing to ensure that houses are affordable for future occupiers.

2. Additional resident membership agreements

To reflect the community-led and community-built nature of this project, in which all of the decision making and much of the organisational burden is taken on by members, Gŵyr CLT must ensure there is enough capacity within the membership to carry out these duties. As a result, there are specific criteria which apply to those joining as residents at each of the *pre-build*, *construction* and *occupation* stages.

2.1 Pre-build stage (current phase as of Sept 2023): from the forming of Gŵyr CLT to the beginning of on-site construction (including detailed design).

Households must agree to:

- contribute at least 6 hours per household per week
- attend monthly membership meetings
- One adult household member to become a member of either the steering group or a working group, and attend the relevant meetings
- Where reasonably possible take part in quarterly visioning days.
- Pay a monthly contribution of £5 per household

2.2 Construction stage (anticipated 2024-25): From practical start of construction to completion

Households must agree to:

- A contribution of between 15 & 30 hours per household per week
- To be repaid through equity in a person's home on completion of the development, referred to as 'sweat equity' (outlined in our affordability policy)
- This contribution could be either physically building the homes, or in an administrative or organisational role.
- No prior skills are required but a willingness to learn and engage with the process is essential.

2.3 Occupation stage (anticipated 2025-onwards): on occupation of any or all of the homes

To reflect the ambition of Gŵyr CLT to create a mutually supportive and resilient living environment embodying co-housing values, resident members are required to commit to the following membership criteria:

- To buy or rent a property, all adults must become a member of the Residents Co-operative and Gŵyr CLT.
- All adult members must be willing to agree to our manifesto, detailing the aims and vision of Gŵyr CLT.
- All adult members must be willing to commit to and support the co-housing principles (see section 7 on co-housing)
- All adult members and provisional members must agree to the decision making & conflict resolution process (currently using sociocracy principles).
- All adult members must agree to abide by co-operative principles (eg. one person one vote), listed below.
- New partners or family members joining households who are already resident members must commit to the membership criteria (ie. selling a house if they currently own one).
- All adult members are expected to attend a monthly meeting where collective decisions are made about the management of the site and shared spaces. Non-attendance without apologies will be regarded as an abstention and non-attending members will be unable to vote on any decisions taken at that meeting.
- We understand that life is busy for many people and that sometimes it will not be possible to attend meetings, however after 3 meetings have been missed, the member or household would be contacted by an appointed member of the group to discuss what provision could be made to allow them to attend meetings.
- Members are encouraged to join a monthly half work day, and actively participate by cooking dinner, gardening or helping with site maintenance on that day.

3. Affordability and resale agreements

To reflect Gŵyr CLTs commitment to providing permanently and genuinely affordable housing for local people in housing need, members must agree to follow the procedure outlined in the Allocations Policy, as well as restrictions on the amount of equity of the leasehold they can purchase specified below:

- Members are able to purchase a percentage between 15% & 65% of the leasehold of their homes.
- Members agree to restrict the percentage of the leasehold which they own to a maximum of 65%.
- Upon resale, members agree to abide by the allocations policy, and will only sell the home to a qualifying person nominated or approved by Gŵyr CLT and the Members Co-operative, unless the 16 week process outlined in the Allocations Policy has been followed.
- Members agree that when they decide to sell their home, they will allow Gŵyr CLT and the Residents Co-operative to carry out all due process to bring the house to market, and find a suitable qualifying purchaser. This includes allowing entry for necessary surveys, valuations and viewings.
- Members agree not to in any other way hinder Gŵyr CLT or the Residents Co-operative in the process of finding a suitable qualifying buyer.
- Members must agree to occupy their home as their only and principal home. An 'Only or Principal Home' is a dwelling house that is occupied continuously for a minimum period of six months in every twelve month period. For the avoidance of doubt the dwelling shall not be occupied as a holiday home, second home or for short term let accommodation.

3.1 Lease agreements

These affordability and resale agreements are contained in the lease agreement on all properties leased by Gŵyr CLT, and contravening these would constitute a breach in the lease agreement and would lead to the termination of the lease. In this case, unless the situation was rectified, members would be forced to sell their equity in the property, and would be dismissed from the membership of both Gŵyr CLT and the Residents Co-operative.

4. Conflict resolution

Conflict can be defined as any disagreement or tension between two or more people, where one or more of those people have a negative emotional response to the disagreement.

We recognise that conflicts will arise between members of any organisation and it is a natural part of life. Conflict can be constructive and allow us to learn and grow through the input of multiple diverse voices. It can however lead to ill feeling and resentment, and can significantly impact on people's lives and lived experience. We therefore require all members to commit to go through a conflict resolution process when conflict arises.

This process is currently in development and we encourage all members to participate in the creation, review and alteration of this procedure.

5. Decision making

Gŵyr CLT is committed to ensuring decisions are made in a fair and transparent way. All members are actively encouraged to take part in decision making. Gŵyr CLT has a two-stage decision making process:

5.1 Consensus - In the first instance, to ensure as best as possible that decisions meet the needs of all members, Gŵyr CLT aims to reach a consensus or 'consent' amongst all members using the governance system 'sociocracy', outlined below.

5.2 Co-operative voting - Gŵyr CLT acknowledges that difficult decisions must sometimes be made which cannot be reached through consensus and therefore if a decision cannot be made within three meetings, a vote will be carried out in line with the cooperative principle of one vote per adult member.

5.3 Sociocracy

Sociocracy is a system of governance and a decision making tool which promotes working through problems or challenges in a collaborative way to make sure all voices are heard. Sociocracy uses smaller working groups to carry out day to day organisation of specific areas, and a larger central steering group which makes strategic decisions. Significant decisions are made by the entire membership. Any member can become a member of the steering group or any working group. Working groups and the membership make policy decisions by consent. There is consent to a proposal when no member of the group has an objection. By definition, objecting requires that a member has reason to assume that the organisation cannot achieve its aim adequately if the membership approves the proposal. Sociocracy is used in many cooperatives and cohousing groups. More information can be found through www.sociocracyforall.org.

6. The membership joining process

6.1 Registering an interest in GCLT

- As and when people find out about our project, they can express interest by emailing gowerlandtrust@gmail.com Their names will be kept on the interest list and they will be contacted and updated via email with updates on the project and openings for new members.
- In line with GDPR this list will be reviewed regularly. We will contact those on the list yearly to check their position, making sure the list is updated and new people are able to join.
- Everyone on the list will be notified when the membership application process opens and given time to apply.
- Being on the list does not guarantee becoming a resident member, and does not differentiate them from other applicants during the recruitment process.

6.2 Application/recruitment process

1. **Advertising openings** - When either a recruitment period is undertaken (in the pre-build stage), or when a property becomes vacant (in the occupation stage), openings for new members/residents will be shared widely via; Gŵyr CLT's website and social media, via the community council for the relevant qualifying areas, local social media pages, the parish magazine and posters for a period of four weeks.
2. **Applications** - Interested persons complete an online or paper application form available on Gŵyr CLTs website.
3. **Shortlisting** - Applicants will be shortlisted based on whether they meet the affordability and local connection criteria (see Allocations Policy). This process will be carried out by at least three members of either Gŵyr CLT (for those joining in the pre-build stage) or the Residents Cooperative (in the occupancy stage).
4. **Interview, detailed application and submission evidence** - An interview will be conducted with at least four members of Gŵyr CLT (for those joining in the pre-build phase) or the Residents Cooperative (in the occupancy phase) and a detailed application form submitted, along with evidence to show how the applicant meets the three allocations criteria. This is assessed based on the five weighted criteria detailed in our allocations policy.
5. **Financial checks** - carried out on selected applicants for shared ownership housing to ensure applicants are able to secure a mortgage and that they can afford monthly mortgage payments.

7. Co-housing

Gŵyr CLT are developing a co-housing neighbourhood, which uses design and organisational principles to promote the creation of a mutually supportive and sociable living environment, recreating some of the neighbourliness of traditional villages which we believe are lost in many contemporary developer-led housing developments. We encourage all new members to carry out research and ask questions about co-housing, to establish whether this type of living environment is right for them.

Co-housing neighbourhoods are created and run by their residents, which aim to create a strong, resilient and mutually supportive living environment. Each household has a self-contained, private home as well as shared community space, such as a meeting room, laundry facilities and shared home-working space. Residents come together to manage their neighbourhood, share activities and make decisions. Co-housing is a way of resolving the isolation many people experience today, recreating the neighbourly support of the past. We are proud to be part of a growing global movement of co-housing groups who have created successful co-housing neighbourhoods all over the world.

7.1 Five principles of co-housing

Co-housing communities are formed on the basis of a set of five primary principles (taken from cohousing.org.uk):

1. Co-housing is co-designed with residents and the wider community

The initial group contributes significantly to the design of the co-housing community and take an active role in creating the community.

2. Co-housing includes both the provision of private and common facilities providing a balance between privacy and community

Most co-housing communities have a common house, with shared facilities such as cooking and dining spaces, meeting and playing areas, laundries and guest rooms. This may mean that the private dwellings are smaller as residents also have the benefit of the common facilities. Shared outside space for gardens, childrens' play, parties and food growing often feature in a co-housing project.

3. The size and scale of co-housing is appropriate to support community dynamics for easy informal communal contact; this is usually between 10-40 households.

Where possible, design is used to encourage social interaction, for example by keeping cars to the periphery and putting a common house in the centre of the site. Many communities eat together regularly, and so the common house is designed with dining facilities.

4. Co-housing embeds collective resident control and stewardship into its legal form and decision making

Residents manage their own community, looking after the maintenance and development of it, running the finances, tending the gardens, organising shared activities. The community is governed in a non-hierarchical way, often using consensus decision making. All adult residents are encouraged to take part in decision making; some communities also require residents to undertake a set number of hours work for the community.

5. Co-housing communities are inclusive and part of the wider community

Co-housing communities actively encourage open membership. People wishing to join a group will need to work out if co-housing is right for them.

8. Co-operative Principles

Gŵyr CLT is an incorporated company which is constituted to abide by the following 7 co-operative principles::

8.1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

8.2. Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

8.3. Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

8.4. Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

8.5. Education, Training and Information

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

8.6. Co-operation among Co-operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

8.7. Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.