

Springhill Cohousing



Welcome Handbook for New Residents

*Whether you are one person, or several – permanent or temporary, a
tenant, a property owner, or a lodger...*

Whoever you are, this Handbook is for YOU!

Welcome to Springhill Cohousing!

This document has been prepared by a group of us in the hope that it will enable you to feel welcome by giving you some basic information about living in Springhill Cohousing. It contains things you may want to know today (such as where to put out the rubbish) as well as sections you may not need immediately but will be useful for future reference. In alphabetical order, there is information on:

- The Common House
- Common Land
- Communal Meals
- Communal Tasks
- Communication - email, wifi, notices
- Consensus Decision-Making
- Disputes, conflict and upset
- Fire risk
- Maintenance of our wooden houses
- The Lease and Building Insurance
- Having tenants or lodgers
- Parking
- Pets
- Recycling, Rubbish, Wood and Compost
- Residents' Association
- Structural alterations to dwellings
- Suma wholefoods online ordering
- Sunny Boy (PV cells on the roof)
- Being a tenant or lodger
- Visitors
- Workshop

At the back, there are APPENDICES on:

- I. Guidelines for use of the Common House
- II. Food Policy
- III. Getting Involved: a personal perspective
- IV. 'Not On Your Own' (NOYO)
- V. Registration of lodgers and tenants
- VI. List of residents
- VII. Treasurer's Page
- VIII. Pets' Policy
- IX. Visitor parking booking system
- X. Standing orders of Residents' Meetings
- XI. List of regular activities at Springhill
- XII. Extracts from Springhill Timber Survey (2012)
- XIII. Extracts from consensus decision-making booklet (Rhizome 2013)
- XIV. Possible approaches to resolving issues at Springhill
- XV. Compost and wormeries
- XVI. Illustration of consensus cards for use in meetings

However comprehensive, this handbook is no substitute for talking to fellow cohousers – asking a question is a good way of getting to know someone!

Although the person who has chosen to be your “befriender” may be your first point of contact for help, information, or guidance, please feel free to stop any one of us and ask anything which will help you in the process of coming to feel truly “at home”.

This handbook was first prepared in February 2007 by Neil and Jane (28), Paula (30), Alex and Gabriel (8), and Jonathan (33). General update by Neil Feb 2013 including consensus, fire risk, maintenance of wood, email etiquette, cards. Update with new tenant registration and use of CH guidelines Sept 2013. Wormeries and compost 09.2013 Jan 14 new internal email address. Sept 14 new bank details, new bike shed, Katherine laundry. Oct 14 meeting procedure. April 15: wifi, NOYO, suma, compost. August 15 tidy up.

The Common House

The Common House is what makes co-housing special and unusual. Residents' popular notion is that the Common House is "the extension of my front room", which means in practice that activities in the Common House should be open to all Springhill residents, and therefore it is not suitable for private events to which residents are not invited. We have agreed a policy for what sort of events can take place and there is a set procedure for booking a space. Please see Appendix I.

Ideas for the use, development and upkeep of the Common House are still evolving. Some of the regular events that have happened so far include communal meals (see below), a textiles and dyeing group, singing, circle dancing, scrabble, and meditation; more occasionally, we have had wedding breakfasts, mid-winter plays, Christmas Carols, birthday parties, cabaret evenings, film shows and quiz evenings.



The top floor contains a lobby, lift and fully accessible toilet. Here you will find the Common House diary, various rotas and lists, and notice boards. The main area is the community's kitchen and dining room (more about cooking and communal meals below). Only vegetarian food can be cooked or stored in the kitchen and in kitchen containers. See 'Food Policy' at Appendix II. There are great views from here but beware: the window sills are low, so it is best not to open the windows fully, especially if there are young children about.

In the glass cupboard beside the door there are various folders of interest to the whole community, including an archive of previous minutes of Residents' Association meetings and a 'Recommendations Book' which lists local services recommended by co-housers, e.g. window cleaners, car mechanics or homeopaths: helpful, we hope, but obviously not infallible. (By the way, when cooking, ask others to show you where the key to the store cupboard is kept).

The middle floor is an (almost) circular space that has some chairs and settees, a piano and a small sink/tea-making corner. It is used for events such as meetings, dancing, parties,

meditation, singing etc. For special occasions we bring down extra chairs and tables from the dining room.

The bottom floor is the least developed of the floors. Currently (August 2015) it comprises a central space for games (including table football, pool and table tennis) plus two small side rooms: one, facing the street, is set aside for an emerging workshop with work benches, the other a semi-enclosed mini-laundrette. You are welcome to use any of these, although you might need your own bats, balls, tools etc. There is also a fully accessible toilet.



The tiny 'laundrette' has two washing machines and a condenser drier for communal use on an unbookable 'first come, first served' basis. You are welcome to use the machines but there is a small charge to cover the cost of water and electricity. For current rates, see laundrette noticeboard. Briefly, load a machine and record your use of the machine in the book provided. Katherine (no. 33) is the 'treasurer' and she sends out quarterly bills by email. If there is any problem with the machines, Lee or Symon may be able to help.

We are responsible for maintaining the lift, so we try to use it as little as possible on the principle that small usage results in small cost of upkeep, as well as on energy-saving grounds (i.e. it should not be used by able-bodied people without luggage/furniture etc.).

You will need a key for the Common House and the code number of the combination lock (your befriender will help with these). Do not give the code number to non-residents. If you have children, please make sure that they know that they should not give the number to anyone. The Common House is usually locked from about 10 p.m. to 10 a.m. There is a rota for locking it at night; everyone does so for about two weeks per year (more on rotas and responsibilities below). Please look at the notice board in the lobby to see when you will be on locking-up duty.

The timber decking around the common house and at the entrance to several houses and flats can be slippery in wet weather and even more so after frost or a big freeze. Chicken wire has been stapled to the decking make it less slippery but, nevertheless, TAKE CARE

Common land – the grounds and garden

As well as private gardens for which individual home owners are responsible, there are areas of ‘common land’ such as footpaths, flower beds, the central green, the pond by the Common House and the ‘Secret Garden’ (see below). These are the responsibility of the whole community - including the trees on the boundary which cause problems of overbearing and overshadowing but are all protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

Obviously all these areas need managing and this is done by capable individuals, enthusiastic gardeners, work parties and, occasionally, paid professionals (e.g. specialist tree work). Help with gardening is welcome. There is a ‘garden group’ with an agreed planting scheme for the whole site. Some areas are as yet unallocated.



The Green is the area in front of the common house with a central dip. It is primarily a play area though the dip (and the stone gabions by the side which were partly turfed over in November 2009) is an integral part of the SUDS drainage system (see below). The Green has been host to small bonfires, camping, story-telling etc. Like the Common House, it is a communal area and you should check by email, poster in the Common House, or in a Residents’ Meeting if you want to use it for something special.

Some features, e.g. the water rills alongside the street, the ‘tiled waterfall’, the ‘porous’ rows of bricks in the car park and the gabions in the Green, are part of the ‘sustainable urban drainage system’ (SUDS). Sustainable drainage systems are an alternative approach to traditional drainage that aims to detain water run-off and release it slowly into watercourses or to ground. Because surface water and groundwater does not drain into the *public* sewer, households can pay a lower sewerage charge to Severn Trent Water but claiming this is a very bureaucratic process. Try contacting Sarah Yates at Severn Trent on 01332 686056.

The “Secret Garden” is the area of land at the eastern end of the site behind the garages on Uplands Road. There are communal compost heaps here (observe the instructions and see Appendix XV about the wormeries and compost), an open-sided bike shed and an enclosed area of communal raised beds. Look out for emails and on the notice-board for details of availability of crops. You can also get involved in growing!

Madi and Simon (No. 9) look after the hens, and sell us surplus eggs when available. If you want to feed the chickens, please remember that they will only eat, (1) Salad and green leaves only (no hard, woody cabbage leaves etc), (2) Cooked carbs such as rice, pasta and potatoes. Please put 'donations' in the small metal tray. If in any doubt, don't feed to the chickens but put in the cooked food wormery/composter.

There is another “compost opportunity” (a green hexagonal plastic lidded bin) up by the Springfield Road entrance to the carpark/play area, near the top of Park Gardens. This is often more convenient for those living in the studios and nearby flats and houses, and the Common House Kitchen compost buckets but it is occasionally full.

There are three electricity/water points on site. Please use sparingly as, at the moment, the bill is paid by the Residents' Association.



Communal meals - eating together

Thanks to the continuing hard work of a core of people who plan meals, make bulk orders and receive deliveries, we have (optional) communal meals most Wednesdays (6.30), Thursdays (6.30) and Fridays (7 o'clock), and occasional Saturdays. Meal nights are generally confined to term time but, out of term time, there may be a special meal arranged by a small group of cooks (keep an eye on the notice board). Meals are vegetarian and ingredients are organic whenever possible, delivered on a Wednesday morning by Global Organics and Suma Wholefoods. Friends are always welcome but, like all of us, must be booked in beforehand.

Booking a meal (which makes estimating quantities and accurate ordering of ingredients possible) is done via a sign-up list. There is a list of menus posted on a notice board in the lobby. Beside this is a list on which to sign up when you want to eat and how many mouths want feeding (e.g. Thursday, one adult and one child). Ask a resident about the current cost of a meal – about £3 for an adult. If you've booked a meal and know you are going to be late, write 'late' on the booking sheet and the cooks will put your meal to one side for collection (they will do this even if you just don't appear at the meal). Subject to availability, there is also opportunity for last minute meals – ask the team leader (be gentle: if it's 6.29 p.m. and the rice is burning they may not be in the mood to talk!).

Meals do not appear by magic! One of the essential responsibilities of living here is that every adult in the community takes a turn on the cooking rota about once a month. This involves preparing, cooking, and serving the meal, and clearing up thoroughly afterwards. It usually takes four people from about 4 p.m. till 8 p.m. to fulfil their duties. Each team of four has a leader: check with him or her as to when you will be needed, what to do and when to leave. Cooking together is a good way to get to know people. When and if you are confident, do volunteer to be a team leader.



A cooking rota is organised and posted on the notice board. If you cannot do your allotted afternoon, it is your responsibility to do a swop with someone who can, and amend the rota accordingly. This frequently happens, either by email or by approaching people direct. Although it can be difficult, something can usually be arranged. In a crisis, you must tell the team leader, giving them as much warning as you can. If you are prepared to be on a list of “last minute emergency cooks”, able to be asked at short notice, please tell Anne C. (No. 17).

Rosie (No. 2) looks after payment – usually by prepayment for a number of meals, preferably by Direct Debit. Rosie keeps a tally and publishes a monthly balance sheet.

On Saturday evenings, there is occasionally a bring-and-share meal, sometimes signalled by an email on Saturday afternoon. No booking is necessary. Turn up with a dish and see who and what else arrives: sometimes two people, sometimes ten, maybe more.

Communal tasks – working together

There are very many tasks that are the responsibility of the whole community. They include chairing a meeting, mowing the grass, locking the Common House at night, gardening, cleaning and building maintenance.

After much discussion about how and when to get important and necessary community jobs done, the Residents' Association resolved that all those on the cooking rota would spend 20 hours minimum each year towards “maintenance, upkeep and repair of communal areas and running of community facilities” of which 10 hours should be spent as part of a ‘communal workday’.



Eligible hours covers almost any task for the well-being of the community and might include, for example, cleaning part of the Common House, working in the garden, showing round visitors, book-keeping, food ordering or fixing a fence. It is your personal responsibility to make sure you fulfil the required contribution to communal tasks.

Communal workdays, held bi-monthly on either a Saturday or Sunday 10 till 4 (with lunch!), are an opportunity for a group of residents to work together on large projects where, for example, five people working all day can make a big difference. A co-ordinator compiles a list of tasks and this is posted on the notice board by the upstairs lift shortly before the workday. If available and willing, you should sign up and then you can choose your job on the day. In order to accommodate all abilities and capabilities the day is made up of a mix of heavy/light and skilled/unskilled tasks e.g. digging, preparing lunch, chain sawing, vacuum cleaning, weeding.

The dates of workdays are posted on a notice board in the lobby of the Common House where rotas for regular tasks (cooking, lawn-mowing, locking up, chairing/minuting meetings) can also be found.

It might be helpful to summarise here the minimum responsibilities and expectations we have of each other and ourselves. At present, it is a condition of living here that all residents take part in the cooking rota and do 20 hours' communal work per year:

Once a fortnight, if possible: Residents' Meeting;

Once a month: Cooking;

Once every six months or so: Do your turn on the following rotas: Common House locking up* at night; lawn mowing**, Chairing/Minuting for Residents' Meetings;

Annually: 20 hours each year for the community of which 10 hours should be spent during communal workdays.



*Locking the Common House: This week-long responsibility starts on a Monday night and ends on a Sunday. Two people are together on the rota and it is up to them to decide who will lock up on which nights. The people doing it the week before you are responsible for reminding you before you start, and showing you exactly what is involved (mainly securing all Common House doors and windows, checking that all lights and radiators are off, and doing a general security check). Jane (no. 28) co-ordinates the locking up list. (As with other rotas, you are responsible for arranging any swop if you cannot do a particular date).

** Lawn Mowing The person before you on the rota should let you know where the mower is currently kept and give you instructions on its use. There is also a strimmer on site. Simon (No. 9) is in charge of this rota. As it is heavy work, you can choose not to be on this rota. Being a voluntary task, time spent can count towards your '20 hours'.

We are very lucky that David (No. 16) and Lee (No. 14) have volunteered to do ongoing site maintenance jobs. If you notice something on site that needs attention and it isn't a job you can easily do yourself (e.g. a Fire Exit light not working or a problem with the lift), please let David or Lee know by email and they will do their best to fix it - obviously this doesn't apply to jobs in your home! Major site maintenance jobs may be left until a workday.

As you become more familiar with Springhill you will probably see many areas beyond these which need attention and to which you might bring your own gifts. Wanting to start a homework club, and running a tango workshop were two ideas recently put forward by a newly joined resident! Your involvement in any area will be warmly welcomed. See Appendix III ("Getting Involved: a personal perspective") for a further note on this.

Communicating – email, website, wifi, notice boards

Email: As well as talking to each other (!), a lot of information, suggestions, queries etc. are communicated within the community via two thriving internal email groups which were set up by Nicky since well before the houses were built. Vince (no. 10), backed up by Nicky, is the current owner/moderator of the lists and can advise how to join. There are very few people on site who are not joined up.

springhillresidents@googlegroups.com

is the list for Residents Association business and all items which directly affect Springhill residents, including events to be held in the common house, car parking etc.

springhill-chat@googlegroups.com

is for chat, selling cakes, telling us about events in town, good films, politics etc.

springhill-own@googlegroups.com

is the list for owners of property at Springhill and includes non-residents - rarely used but important.

Emails can be informative, discursive and light-hearted but on occasion heated and combative! We try to watch our tone but sometimes misread or misunderstand each other's best intentions. Lack of response to an email does not necessarily denote a lack of interest.

The following email etiquette was adopted in November 2007.

1. To be encouraged to say one's truth and speak or write it clearly.
2. Try to use I statements (not speak for others), to "own" the feelings around an issue and resist the temptation to blame.
3. Not to make judgements or allegations about others, rather try to express it in terms of how it makes us feel and being sensitive to what effect it has on others.
4. If someone expresses hurt feelings, saying "that's not my experience" can sometimes tend to invalidate the first person's statement.
5. To state clearly and kindly if and when anyone breaks the etiquette."

If anyone feels that our email etiquette has been breached or any of the lists misused in any way they should report it immediately to the owners/moderators. A note to this effect appears on the bottom of every email for now. Please report it rather than replying in a way which may increase the heat. The best and most reliable way of doing this is to use this URL:

Residents: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!contactowner/springhillresidents>

Chat: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!contactowner/springhill-chat>

Website: Nicky (No. 10) edits the 'public' Springhill Cohousing website at <http://www.springhillcohousing.com>.

The website has some interesting photographs of the site under construction.

Wifi: There is a wifi extender in the middle floor, installed in March 2015. The extender can be switched on and off using the white "light switch" type switch just to the left of the sink. It is clearly labelled Wifi. There is no need for anyone to touch the extender itself which is out of reach. You will see that if you use the white switch then all current is turned off to the wifi extender. When you turn it back on again it will take maybe 3 minutes to start working again.

The router for the internet connection and wifi is in the larder on the top floor. This should not be turned off as it takes 2-3 days to re-establish full speed connection with the exchange. There are possibilities for using a cable (ethernet) connection on either floor, but the wifi should be fine for streaming, web use, emails etc.

The wifi extender on the middle floor is called imaginatively 'middle floor' and the wifi on the top floor is called 'common house'. The password for both is 'consensus'.

Please be careful with whom you share the password. In time, we may get a more richly featured router which would allow us to have a "guests" network. For now, please go ahead and use the wifi as much as you like on both floors and feedback to David or Nicky any technical problems or problems with connections.

Noticeboards: There are notice boards for rotas and internal and external events in the lobby in the top floor of the Common House. As not everyone is on email, all important notices should also be posted on a notice board. Please add your name to any notice that you put up.

Consensus decision-making

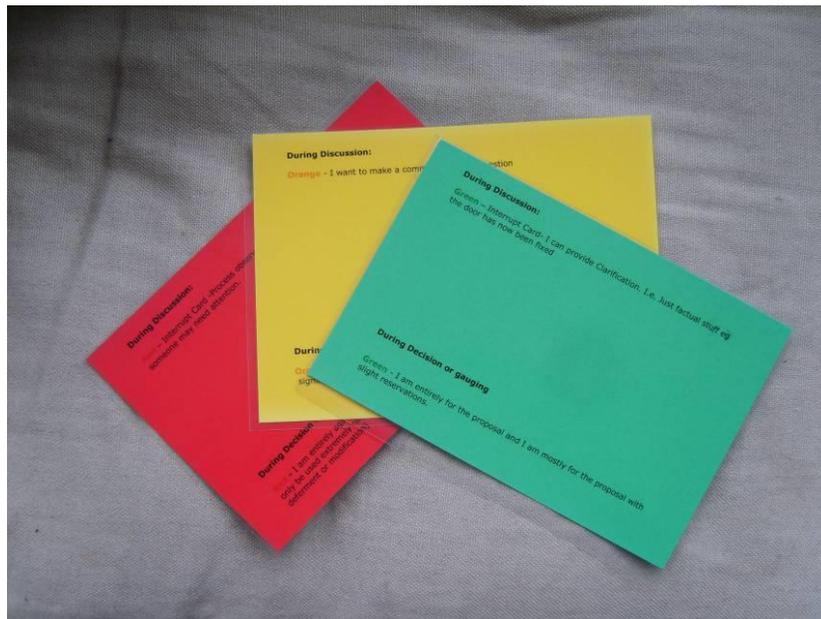
We have agreed to make decisions by group consensus rather than the more conventional system of one-person-one-vote in which decisions are taken by a simple majority.

Consensus can be a difficult concept to understand. After 10 years of practice we were still able to learn from a consensus decision-making training workshop held at Springhill in 2013! The training facilitators' booklet on that day describes consensus thus:

“Consensus is a decision-making process that, when used with a co-operative state of mind, allows groups to come together and take inspired and creative decisions. It supports individuals to pool their power and work together as equals to produce results far better than they could produce alone...Our experience is that without the right *state of mind*, consensus cannot fulfil its potential for delivering high quality decisions that have the genuine support of a group.”

The booklet, highly recommended by many residents, is available from Neil (no.28) and online at www.rhizome.coop. Extracts are included at Appendix XIII.

To aid our consensus process during a meeting, we have agreed to use coloured cards (pictured below) to make a point during a discussion and, towards the end of discussion, to gauge the level of consensus. The wording on each card is written at Appendix XV. Ask and observe how these are used.



For more information about meetings, please refer to the section on ‘Springhill Residents’ Association’ later in this booklet.

Disputes, conflict, and upset

Residents are encouraged to use some form of dispute resolution process even for minor disputes or conflicts for two reasons: firstly, so that minor issues don't fester and become big ones, and secondly, so that residents get to practise the disputes process. A page of some possible approaches to resolving issues in Springhill can be found at Appendix XIV

In the past, a formal 'Disputes Committee' has been used to resolve difficult disputes between residents. This committee is now dormant.

A number of disagreements have been eased by using the 'buddy process' whereby each disputant gets themselves a mediator, sometimes called a buddy, and the four people concerned then choose from a number of options as to how to proceed together to resolve the upset. Katherine or Neil can explain this.

Recently (2015), a pool of residents got together to form 'Not On Your Own' (NOYO). NOYO is a collection of Springhill volunteers who are willing to listen to any resident's concerns, so you are 'not on your own'. The purpose of NOYO is to assist anyone at Springhill in dealing with any upsets, disturbances, disagreements etc. that happen here by offering a safe, confidential, non-judgmental place to talk. If you have an upset or concern – however large or small – you are welcome to approach any of the NOYO volunteers to arrange to talk to two volunteers about your issue.

Brief details of NOYO and its volunteers is at Appendix IV.

Fire risk

Springhill is a dense development in which timber is a predominant building material. As well as the need for careful maintenance (see Appendix XII), wood can be a potential fire hazard. The guidelines below should be observed:

- Fire alarms and smoke detectors, in private houses and C/H, should be kept in good working order.
- Rubbish and kindling wood or other combustibles should not be stored near houses and under communal stairs.
- Internal and external accesses and fire routes should not be obstructed, particularly around flats and the Common House.
- Items liable to cause a trip hazard, especially when dark, icy and smoky, should not be placed in fire escape routes.
- Front vehicular entrance and 'the street' should be kept clear to enable easy access for fire engines, in particular there should be no parking alongside the site's main vehicular access.

Maintenance of our wooden houses

The buildings at Springhill are constructed with a high proportion of wood, e.g. cladding, decking, balconies, window frames, external stairs etc. Careful maintenance is required in order to avoid unnecessary rot and decay. See also the section on Fire Risk.

In 2012 Greenheart Sustainable Construction surveyed the site and made recommendations about existing problems and ongoing maintenance. The report's summary and proposed maintenance schedule are included at Appendix XII. Greenheart's full report is available from Neil (no. 28).

The lease and building insurance

Any purchaser will have signed the co-housing lease and must comply with the requirements in the lease.

The whole site is covered by a single insurance policy so you do not necessarily need building insurance for your individual property. Check with your befriender about this. The premium is paid via the monthly service charge (see section on Residents' Association and Appendix VII).

Contents insurance is the responsibility of the home-owner. If you are a tenant, please clarify the position with your landlord.



Having a tenant, lodger or long-term visitor

If you are planning to have a short- or long-term lodger, there are guidelines for registration in Appendix V. Registration involves a fee payable to the Residents Association and the lodger agreeing to “to abide by the rules and understand and agree with the principles of cohousing, e.g. partaking in cooking and cleaning rotas if required.”

Whilst this may appear bureaucratic, registration is partly to keep track of who is living in Springhill, and partly to ensure that all those who are thinking about coming to live within the community, including renting a room, are made aware of the ethos of the place, the principles of co-housing and the responsibilities of living here. Long-term full time lodgers staying at Springhill for more than 30 nights per year will be expected to take part in the cooking rota.

Parking

Car parking on site is beside the Common House and underneath the Studios (the building with the long first floor balcony on the northern boundary) thereby leaving a car-free pedestrian street (known as “The Street”) fronted by 19 houses and flats, down below. The separation of people from cars, like the Common House, is one of the defining features of co-housing.

In the summer, people sit at tables and play in the car park (bicycles, football...even badminton) and the car-free area outside the Common House entrance becomes more of a ‘piazza’. Think of the tarmac area as a relaxation and play area in which cars are parked, rather than a car park in which children play.



All of the parking spaces are allocated and, as it happens, some houses/flats have dedicated parking spaces but others do not. If you do not have a parking space on site, you will have to park on one of the surrounding streets. Springfield Road, Folly Lane and Thompson Road are the closest. Please do not park along the entrance drive. Neighbours in Springfield Road have requested that we do not park under the trees to the east of the site.

Springhill residents own more cars than there are ‘off-road’ parking spaces and the same may be true of the residents of Springfield Road. Parking nearby can thus be difficult after 6 p.m. Indeed, parking is a bit of an ongoing issue, onsite and off. Please park carefully and considerately.

There is one on-site parking space that is dedicated for visitors. It is to the right of the Common House and is marked VISITOR PARKING. In the winter, when the area is less used by pedestrians, there is an additional ‘spare’ parking space adjacent to the dedicated visitor space, making two available spaces.

Residents can book these spaces by signing in the Diary which is found on the table in the lobby of the Common House. The booking system is pasted inside the front cover and is attached here as Appendix IX. Be aware that the system is fragile and not foolproof but has been set up after frequent and lengthy discussions. If you can think of a better way, we'd love to hear it! If you've booked a space in the diary, it is up to you to amend the sign beside the space, e.g. “BOOKED by ___ for ___ from ____”. If there is no sign, people think the space is vacant.



If the visitor space is not available, your visitors must park elsewhere – whether here professionally (e.g. plumber) or socially. Alternatively you can vacate your own space (if you have one), or make some other arrangement with a neighbour.

If you have a space and are going to be away for a day or two, it is common to announce its availability by email or on a Common House notice board so that someone else can use it (e.g. “I’m away until Tuesday, please use my space until then but vacate by 5 o’clock”).

There have been discussions about a co-housing car sharing scheme. Until that becomes reality, the Stroud Valleys Car Club (www.svccc.co.uk) is a local scheme with a vehicle parked 5 minutes’ walk away.

Pets

Pets in such a dense residential site can be problematic. There is a Pet Committee (currently Liz, Madi, Stephen, Felicity, Karen) and, after much discussion, an agreed policy about household pets (see Appendix VIII). All residents must inform a member of the Pet Committee if they want to acquire a new pet. Any resident owning a cat is expected to help with picking up cat poo particularly from the area outside the middle floor – there is a Council bin for animal faeces at the top of the park (by Springhill’s main entrance).

Recycling, rubbish, scrap wood and compost

Wednesday, very early in the morning, is the day rubbish is collected, with recycling added every other week. Most people put out their rubbish on Tuesday evening. Stroud District Council (01453 754424) are responsible for collection. Up-to-date information is on their website.

Rubbish

Take your rubbish, in its black bag, up to the left-hand kerb inside our property which leads to the Springfield Road entrance to the car park/play area. Please put your black bag against the kerb in one of the large builders merchants’ plastic storage bags, in an effort to deter the badgers who rip and forage into the bags overnight, spilling their contents over the road. If you are going to be away, and wish to leave your bag out some days early, please arrange with a neighbour to deliver it, or hide it in one of the huge bags, rather than putting it up by the entrance on its own. A wad of black bin liners for all of us to use is usually left nearby, which ends up under the sink in the Common House kitchen, from which you can take yours.



Recycling

On a recycling collection week, take your green recycling box and/or bag, correctly sorted, up to the kerbside area. Please pick up your box/bag and take it back home the next day. Sylvia (No. 24) oversees recycling. New recycling bags and boxes may be

available from Stroud District Council but there should be one at your property left by the previous tenant or owner.

Compost

There are communal wormery/compost heaps in the 'Secret Garden' – please observe the instructions and see Appendix XV for full details about the wormeries and compost. In brief, please remember not to put any 'food' into the open compost bins. The simple question to ask is "would a rat like this?" if the answer is yes then don't put in the open compost heaps - break it into little pieces and put it into the closed and rat-proof wormery/composters. Bread, cakes, crisps, biscuits, meat, fish and cheese are attractive to rats. Anyone with any garden waste which includes brambles or branches or twigs thicker than a pencil please put them under the trees at the west end of the site not on the compost heaps! If in doubt, ask.



Building wood, scrap wood and firewood

As you walk eastwards up the path behind 9-14 Springhill you come to the green Play House. The pile of wood next to the play house is good for building, it has been sorted and selected. You may use it for building projects. Don't dump anything in this space without getting permission from Simon, Lee or Nicky.

You will also find some long lengths of pressure-treated decking behind the wood piles on the southern border. Feel free to use these for building projects too, but PLEASE be careful as there are lots of little holly, hawthorn and other saplings planted there. They have a hard enough time with the badgers without being trampled by humans too!

The next bay along (behind no 10) is a firewood bay. Firewood is often available there at £5 a barrow. Note that the logs have run out so the firewood currently there has been cut up from waste timber and you should presume it has nails or screws in it.

Please don't dump wood or wooden furniture here (or anywhere on site!) without talking to Nicky, Lee or Simon first - even if you think it would be great for firewood.

Springhill Residents' Association

By becoming a resident here, you have automatically become a member of Springhill Residents' Association. It is the body (made up of all the residents) that collectively runs the day-to-day life of the community, holding fortnightly meetings to discuss and make decisions on issues which affect us all (e.g. policies on using common facilities, or prioritising the spending of communal finances).

Residents' Meetings, which you should attend if possible, are held about once a fortnight usually on either a Monday (6.30 p.m.), Tuesday (7.30 p.m.) or Wednesday (7.45pm) in the Common House. There is a (voluntary) rota for chair/convenor/facilitator, minute-taker or child care duty. Child care is no longer provided but could be re-instated if there is a demand. You will find the rota showing who will be chairing and taking minutes on a notice board in the Common House lobby. Minutes are posted by email (see section on Communication). Hard copies of past minutes are held in a file in the kitchen.

The meetings alternate between decision-making meetings with an agenda, and "single issue" meetings which are focussed discussions, sometimes in small groups, about a particular topic (e.g. car parking or use of the Common House).

To put something on the agenda, you will need to inform the chair/convenor at least three days before the meeting. The 'standing orders' of Springhill Residents' Association are attached (Appendix X). Decisions are made using consensus (see previous section above on 'consensus decision-making'). Making decisions by consensus does not necessarily mean that everyone is in complete agreement - but rather that a solution is found to which all participants can give their consent. If you are not familiar with consensus decision-making, ask Neil (no. 28) for an informative, concise booklet about consensus (extracts at Appendix XIII). Coloured cards (red, yellow, green – like traffic lights!) are sometimes used to facilitate the consensus process (see Appendix IV).

It will almost always be useful to air an agenda item in an email, or notice, well before a meeting. This enables pre-meeting discussion/chat about the issues thereby aiding the process of consensus.

The money which pays for the sort of items which might be prioritised at a Residents' Meeting (e.g. plants for the garden, building maintenance and repair, furniture for the Common House, kitchen equipment etc.) comes from a fund that accumulates from a mandatory monthly subscription from each household. The amount of monthly payment is fixed according to a sliding scale related to house size and includes an amount towards building insurance. Stephen B. (No. 13) is the treasurer and he will be in touch about bank account numbers, standing orders etc. See Appendix VII

Structural alterations to your house, flat or studio

If you are proposing to make an internal or external structural alteration to your dwelling, you must, in accordance with the co-housing lease, follow certain procedures before the work commences. Check with an existing resident about how to do this.

Briefly, you must inform two places at least two weeks before the work starts, in writing attaching any drawings or plans: (1) David Michael (no. 16), as Company Secretary, and (2) all residents and Directors by means of email and notice on CH noticeboard. If you are in doubt as to whether or not your proposed alteration needs prior notification, ask David Michael.

Planning permission and building regulations is a separate matter dealt with by Stroud District Council.



Suma wholefoods online order

Suma is a specialist wholesale supplier of vegetarian, fairtrade and organic food. We use many of their products in the communal kitchen. A delivery is made on the first Thursday of every month. If you want to place a personal order for home use, you can join a joint online order which Suma who will then deliver to the Common House (at wholesale prices). Contact Peter (ex-resident) for details about online ordering (you'll need a password) and how to pay.

A new idea is an email list for the specific purpose of communicating about the Suma order. To join, go to: <https://groups.google.com/d/forum/springhill-wholefood>

The purpose of the email group is so that people can exchange information about orders we are making - e.g. "I have just ordered 12 jars of artichokes anyone want to split with me?" etc. Hopefully this will make it easier to buy small quantities, share our enthusiasms, avoid having too many things stashed away and broaden our horizons for good eating! If you want to post to the new group then send an email to: springhill-wholefood@googlegroups.com

‘Sunny boy’ – the photo-voltaic cells on the roof

Some houses have solar photovoltaic (PV) rooftiles on their south-facing roofslope. The PV tiles produce electricity according to the amount of sunlight that falls on their surface, and therefore does so only during the daytime. More electricity is produced in summer than in winter. It makes sense to operate electrical devices which require a lot of power (e.g. washing machines) when the solar system is supplying plenty of power.

The PV system is connected to the grid. If the system is generating more power than needed by a particular home, then the excess is sold back to the electricity company and you receive a small annual cheque. If your system is not providing enough to meet the electrical energy demand in your house the utility provides the difference. In effect, the grid acts as an energy storage system, which means the PV system does not need to include battery storage.

The device that converts the output of the solar array into 240V AC mains is known as the inverter. It is the red contraption in the roofspace and is known as ‘Sunny Boy’! The inverter can be enclosed, but ample space must be left for the circulation of air to prevent over-heating.

There is also an array of PV tiles on the roof of the Common House paid for communally by the Residents Association in 2012. Monies raised from the tariff are placed in the RA account.



Being a tenant or lodger

Tenants and lodgers are welcome as full members of the community and are expected to take their share of common duties and responsibilities.

Your landlord or landlady, who may be absent, should have made you aware of life at Springhill so that you, as tenant, are absolutely clear about what kind of set-up you are entering.

If you are considering accepting tenants, lodgers or long-term visitors, you may be required to complete a registration form and pay a small fee to the Residents Association. See Appendix V. Do ask for clarification.

If your landlord/landlady does not live on site, they will either have experience of Springhill through having lived here in the past or have a resident 'buddy' on site. The buddy keeps the landlord/landlady updated on changes and developments and the responsibilities of living at Springhill Cohousing. The buddy does not deal with tenancy matters such as rent, building maintenance etc - these should be discussed directly with your landlord/landlady.

Visitors to Springhill

Visitors are, of course, welcome. Informal notice of all visitors and their pets would be courteous and for those staying more than seven days is expected. It's helpful to know that the person taking photographs of the Common House is actually someone's cousin!

As co-housing is of national interest, we get many enquiries from people who want to visit. These might be people who one day want to live here, landscape or architecture students, groups setting up their own co-housing scheme or those who are curious.

A volunteer, currently Neil and Jane (no. 28), co-ordinates these enquiries and directs people towards formal 'Visitor Days' which take place about seven times a year on a Saturday afternoon (2.00 till 4.30 pm). We are all invited to help, either by briefly showing visitors around our house, flat or studio or by joining the visitors for tea in the Common House at about 4 p.m. New resident or old, it is still a good way to find out more about Springhill. The next visitors' day is announced a couple of weeks before, on the email, which is when we offer to help.

Workshop

There is a small communal workshop on the ground floor of the Common House. It contains a workbench, a sink and a small selection of tools. Power tools are kept away from children in a locked cupboard. Nuno (no.3) has the code and can tell you all about using the workshop.

Young People

Adults in each household are ultimately responsible for the behaviour of their children, and their children's guests, while anywhere on the Springhill site. If a problem does occur, it has been agreed that any Springhill resident may speak directly to the Springhill under-18 concerned – and/or to that child's 'responsible adult/s', if they prefer.

APPENDICES

Appendix I - Guidelines for use of Common House

At a Residents Meeting in July 2013 it was agreed that: “The proposed guidelines [below] be accepted as they are, but new/revised paragraphs can be brought forward to future meetings, rather than they be all fixed in stone for the next few years.

Purpose of the common house

The common house provides:

- a social space for the community to meet and spend time together
- a space in which to prepare and share meals
- a meeting space for our residents’ meetings and other meetings hosted by a Springhill resident
- a performance space for plays and concerts that we might put on
- workshops for personal use, shared craft times, maintenance of the Estate
- laundry facilities for people who need them
- games area and equipment for general fun use
- a space for events such as film nights, fitness sessions, cabaret evenings, training sessions, choirs, focus groups and the like, for the benefit of the cohousing community, but also reaching out to the wider local community

Guidelines

- Events are mainly for the benefit of the Springhill community, who built the common house and pays for its on-going maintenance and running costs
 - Events are inclusive; since all residents have equal right to be in the common house
 - However we are respectful of the needs of others, when an event is in progress it may seem tactless or inappropriate to enter the space and we respect that and expect all residents and visitors to be respectful of others’ needs
 - As hosts of our visitors and parents of our children we are responsible for their behaviour and remind them that when sharing a space it helps to be respectful of each other’s’ needs in terms of noise level and treatment of furniture and other property. Activities in the common house are encouraged, as this keeps Springhill a vibrant and interesting place to live
 - We don't conduct any activity that may be upsetting or disturbing to others in the community or those living close to the common house
 - Activities may clash, so booking is necessary for an organised event to avoid disappointment
-continued

- Ad-Hoc activities can happen if these do not interfere with another activity. Common sense and courtesy will tell you if your activity is compatible with any others happening at the same time.

Restrictions

Any booking for a new event or a new type of use of the common house should be notified by email to the residents a minimum of two weeks before the event. If no one requests that it be discussed at a meeting then it can go ahead. If there is a request for discussion, then it must go to the next Residents' Association meeting for a decision. Booking is on a 1st come basis or by negotiation. The request for discussion need not be an objection. Similarly any resident is free to request discussion on any existing, previously agreed use of the common house.

- The common house is a private space and cannot be used for any public events. Public events are those that are advertised publicly, rather than by personal invitation.
- As a private, shared space we do not charge people to enter the space. If an event is organised that requires a fee to the leader or performer (such as a concert, or a training session) the fee cost may be shared between those attending, or a collection of donations may be made, or separate arrangement made to fund the event – e.g. a benefactor, or someone paying for a band to play at their party.
- As a private, shared space, the common house cannot be used for any commercial purposes. A commercial purpose is one where an individual or organisation uses the space for their, or its, financial gain. Infrequent (not more than fortnightly) small meetings may be held with clients but no space may be booked for these and the space must be relinquished if other residents need to use it. The residents' association has also allowed community theatre rehearsals to take place from time to time which might otherwise be seen to breach these rules; any similar exceptions will need to be approved on a case by case basis.
- Nothing must take place in the common house that would invalidate, or not be covered by the insurance policy in force. Examples include use of fire or incendiary devices, excessive vibration, water or other liquids, toxins, volatile or explosive substances.

Appendix II - Common House Food Policy

Non-Vegetarian Food in the Common House *(Guidelines agreed at Residents' Committee Meeting on 17.06.08)*

On the Special Occasions when meat and/or fish are allowed in the Common House (for example, a party), the organisers are responsible for ensuring the following:

- NO MEAT OR FISH DISHES ARE TO BE PREPARED OR COOKED IN THE COMMON HOUSE.
- Any meat or fish dishes brought in must be clearly labelled NON-VEGETARIAN, and placed on a separate table.
- Although Common House cutlery and crockery may be used for non-vegetarian food on these special occasions, they must be washed up in the dishwasher. The following day, the organiser must clear out the filter, and dispose of any debris elsewhere.
- All non-vegetarian scraps of food, and packaging, are to be put in a clearly marked receptacle (e.g. black bag) which the organiser takes out of the Common House at the end of the event.
- If several people are organising the event, they must appoint one person who takes total responsibility for implementing these guidelines.

Please be fully aware and considerate at all times of those among us who are committed vegetarians.

Thank you!

Appendix III - Getting involved: a personal perspective: from “Who’s Responsible?” to “I’m Responsible” – a leap

When I first arrived at Springhill, in the hot summer of 2005 when the Common House windows were wide open, I was very concerned at the sickening drop down to “The Street”, and the almost-too-awful-to-contemplate possibility of a young child leaning over the sill, waving to friends below and falling.

I said to someone nearby, “Somebody ought to do something about those windows.” The answer came promptly. “In Springhill, you can’t say, *Someone should do something about....* You can say, *I am concerned about the safety of young children near those windows. I am prepared to be here next Monday morning to get the views of a safety officer whom I’ll contact, perhaps together with others who are concerned. I’ll then bring any recommendations to a Residents’ Meeting, and will then try to find people who will help me to implement whatever we vote on.*”

I took the point – there is a leap, from “Who’s responsible?” to, “This environment belongs to me – I’m responsible.” Not quite John F Kennedy on his inaugural speech to the nation (“Ask not what your country can do for you, but rather what you can do for your country....”) – but perhaps not dissimilar! And although there are some issues I have taken responsibility for and “seen through”, there are others – like the windows – that I haven’t, which I can still see need doing, and which still remain outstanding.

As you come to feel at home here, you will notice things that you can see need doing. If you have the energy and the spare time, please raise it with others, and, using the consultation methods we have (speaking together; email; residents’ meetings) bring it to everyone’s attention, then “hold” it, carrying it forward. All of us here are pretty busy – nobody has masses of spare time. And all of us here know how long, and how much effort it takes to move forward a communal matter, and will deeply appreciate you for doing it. (Jane S., No. 28 – March 2007)

Appendix IV – 'Not On Your Own' (NOYO)

NOYO is a collection of Springhill volunteers who are willing to listen to any resident's concerns, so you are 'not on your own'.

The current NOYO volunteers are: Alex, Anne H, David H, Felicity, Jane, Jenni, Jo B, Katherine, Liz, Malcolm, Neil, Philip, Rosie, Tree

If you have an upset or concern – however large or small – you are welcome to approach any of the NOYO volunteers to arrange to talk about your issue with any two volunteers of your choosing. We ask you to talk to two volunteers rather than one, as this offers more balanced support for all.

Volunteers are fellow residents who are willing to act as a sounding board – listening, asking helpful questions and offering feedback as appropriate; they are not trained and will not offer counselling, therapy or arbitration.

All meetings between you and the volunteers will be kept entirely confidential to those meetings, unless you wish it to be otherwise, and will not be referred to outside of the meetings.

Any resident can be a NOYO volunteer. If you are interested please contact Neil or Katherin

Appendix V - Registration of lodgers and tenants

With regard to registration of lodgers, tenants and visitors, the Residents Meeting of July 2013 agreed that: “Wording [as below] was approved, subject to the existing current fee of £30.00 being retained and that, the decision on the registration fees will be deferred to a future meeting.”

Short-term guests, visiting friends, bed and breakfast: Informal notice of all visitors is welcome and for those staying more than 7 days is expected. “Short term” is anything less than 30 days. An explanation must be given to all visitors about cohousing.

Longer term visitors, friends, family: Any additional members of the household e.g. family, partners or sharers acting as family must be registered (after 30 days) as part of that household, by notifying the Company Secretary of the name of the additional resident, who will be invited to become a member of the residents association. The householder is responsible for explaining the principles of cohousing to the additional resident.

Paying Guests - Lodgers and Tenants: Any household that takes in a lodger or tenant should register them using the appropriate written agreement which must be presented to the Company Secretary 7 days beforehand. This is to comply with section 18 of the lease. If 7 days is not achievable, registration should occur as soon as practically possible.

Paying Guests - lodgers staying multiple short-terms: Any paying guests who stay for more than 50 days in a 12 month period must be registered using the appropriate written agreement on the 50th day of their accommodation, which must then be presented to the Company Secretary.

Appropriate agreements: There is a Lodger agreement and a tenant agreement on record, obtainable from the company secretary. These are standard agreements that contain an additional agreed cohousing clause and must be used. If an alternative agreement has to be used, the cohousing clause must be present in the new agreement. When signed, make two copies: Original: Lodger/tenant; Copy 1: Householder; Copy 2: Company Secretary.

Appendix VI - List of Residents Separate attachment – you may not yet be on it!

Appendix VII - Treasurer's Page

We have a bank account in the name of **Springhill Residents Association**: it's with the Lloyds, sort-code is 30-98-29 and account number 56558760

Current Treasurer: Stephen, No.13, 01453 750655, stephenlbryden@hotmail.com

Service charges are to be paid into this account by Standing Order on the first of each month. The relative amount is determined by the lease. Contact Stephen for current monthly rates.

Appendix VIII - Pets' Policy

Pets Policy - (agreed 7 March 2011, amended with dog interview 5 April 2011)

The Pets Policy at Springhill aims to balance two sets of priorities. On the one hand, to protect the wildlife on our site and to keep the outside spaces clean and safe for our children to play in, and for our adults to enjoy. On the other hand, not to impose unreasonable restrictions on those for whom a pet is an important member of the family.

Current policy sets a recommended limit for the number of cats living on site, and asks each household to consider its own need for a cat in relation to the impact on the site as a whole. Over time, we hope that the overall number of cats at Springhill can be reduced. Currently there is only one dog on site, but we would consider limiting dog numbers in the future if the need arose, though we recognise their impact is less.

However, the existing pets of new arrivals at Springhill will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as we respect the role that established pets play in a household. In the case of dogs, this consideration will involve meeting at least one member of the Pet Committee."

How the Pet Committee works

The Pet Committee, currently comprising Liz C (coordinator), Madi, Stephen, Felicity and Karen will continue to act to accept pets according to the Lease under the following code:

- To make any new arrivals or prospective owner of a new pet aware of existing pet guidelines, which are also stated on the website.
 - To help any prospective owner of a new pet understand, and agree to follow the pet guidelines.
3. Pet Committee meetings will be publicised and are open to any other resident. Any resident may formally join the Committee at any time.
 4. The approvals process is as follows:
 - o All residents must inform a member of the Pet Committee if they want to acquire a new pet.
 - o The Pet Committee will then give the community two weeks notice, by email to the Cocreidents, to raise any objections.
 - o If any objections are raised then the decision as to whether the pet will be approved is then brought to the next Residents Association meeting, whose decision is final.
 - o If no objections are raised then the Pet Committee will inform the resident of their pet's approval.
 5. To keep a record of all pets that have been approved.

Pet Guidelines

1. Pet owners to be sensitive to other residents' needs and anxieties, and not allow their pet to cause disturbance to other residents. Any dispute over pets to be arbitrated by the Pets committee. In the event of any unresolved conflict or issue over pets, then that issue to go to a Residents Association meeting, whose decision is final, including the potential eviction of any problem pet.
2. All pets should be well cared for and not neglected.
3. No pets allowed in Common House.

Dogs

1. Dogs must be accompanied and to be kept under proper control at all times when on communal land.
2. Owners to ensure dogs do not poo in communal areas. Any accidents to be cleared up by owner.

Cats

1. Cats should be discouraged where possible from pooing in communal areas i.e. by the provision of litter trays. Cat owners to collectively be responsible for regular clearing up of any contaminated areas.
2. All cats should be sterilized.

Limit on Cat numbers

1. Total cat numbers on site to be limited to 14, bar any increase above that caused by the acceptance of any existing cats owned by new arrivals, whereupon no new cats will be approved until that number once again falls below 14.
2. Existing cat owners can replace a cat when it dies but only in one cat households.

Appendix IX - Visitor parking booking system

Booking system for the two visitor car parking spaces (no charge)

Space 2 only available 1 November to 1 April [in practice the change is made when the clocks go back/forward].

...as revised November 2010:

(a) Daytime until 5pm: booking by residents for use only by visitors (inc.tradespeople)

1. A space can be booked for a visitor by any resident, using the book now available on the table in the lobby of the Common House.
2. As early as possible on the day of the booking, the resident completes and displays a notice in the parking space, showing day, time and house number as a minimum
3. If there is no booking and therefore no 'reserved' sign in the space, the space is available on an ad hoc basis for tradespeople or visitors, or for residents dropping off shopping and so on (i.e. drop-offs, **not** permanent parking). This use is restricted to one hour. If your visitor needs more than an hour it is your responsibility to go and book the space.
4. Any visitor will be entitled to park in the space if you have not physically displayed the booking notice, writing in the book is not enough.
5. If you book the space so late that there is already someone parking in it, you can't tell them to move until their hour is up
6. You must remove the reservation notice once it is no longer needed.
7. Any household is allowed to book up to 175 daytime hours in a calendar year.

(b) After 5pm and overnight: use by residents or their visitors.

1. Residents may book an overnight space by using the book in the Common House and placing a 'reserved for the night of....' sign in the space on the day concerned..
2. When the space is used overnight, whether booked or ad hoc, the vehicle must be moved by 9am (or by 10am on Sundays), unless daytime parking starting at that time has been specifically booked using the procedure in (a) above
3. If there is no booking and therefore no 'reserved' sign in the space, the space is available on an ad hoc basis.
4. Anyone will be entitled to park in the space if you have not physically displayed your booking notice. Writing in the book is not enough.
5. If you book the space so late that there is already someone parking in it, you can't tell them to move!
6. Any household is allowed to make up to 30 overnight bookings in a calendar year. (whether for our own or our visitors' use).
7. You should remove the reservation notice once it is no longer needed.
8. In order to allow a fair chance for residents who may need to book the space occasionally for overnight visitors, we ask residents not to block-book for their own overnight personal usage many weeks in advance.

Appendix X - Organisation of Residents' Meetings:

The following standing orders for Residents' Association meetings were approved:

1. The residents' association has been mandated to take decisions on behalf of the freeholder; however it is recognised that on rare occasions there may be issues upon which the interests of the freeholder and those of the residents do not coincide. In such cases a company meeting will be held (i.e. Springhill Cohousing Community Ltd).

2. General meetings are held monthly. Single Issue meetings are held monthly, usually a couple of weeks later than the General ones. If there is no Single Issue to discuss, there is no meeting. In order for a single issue meeting to be agreed someone must agree to chair it and to drive the process. This should usually be decided at the General meeting prior to the suggested date. General meetings are always decision making meetings, single issue meetings are always advisory only unless a prior General meeting has mandated the single issue meeting to take decisions on a particular issue or issues.

3. The organisers of General meetings (chair and minute taker) must publicise the next meeting, with a copy of the agenda posted on the noticeboard, and circulate the agenda at least 69 hours ahead otherwise decisions cannot be taken. Agenda items only should be displayed on the notice board with background notes for the meeting placed in a file in the kitchen store-cupboard.

4. The quorum for a decision taking meeting is ten households

5. Decisions are reached by consensus; votes by coloured cards may be taken to indicate the feeling of the meeting at any time during the meeting at the discretion of the chair. In exceptional circumstances, where consensus fails and there is an emergency need for a decision, a decision making vote, needing a 70% majority in order to be carried, may be taken.

6. The default method of running General meetings is to use the coloured cards. If the cards are not to be used then this must be decided by consensus at the beginning of the meeting. Single issue meetings can be organised in any way the organisers see fit, but if the meeting has decision making powers then the coloured cards should be used for the decision making or a consensus decision taken to not use them at the beginning of the meeting.

7. Voting, where it occurs, by one present adult representative of each household

8. Agenda items must be clear if they are for decision or just for discussion/information. Only those down as decisions, or emergencies, can be decided.

Organisers to ensure prompt production of minutes of meetings. Minutes must, at a minimum, list separately the decisions taken. Additional notes of the discussion are welcome and useful for non-attenders but the decisions (minutes) should be listed separately in addition to any such notes. Decisions which include action items should make clear the specific people who have agreed to take the action.

Appendix XI – Current List of Regular Activities held at Springhill

Beware! This list changes often and regularly. For up to date information see the diary in the foyer of the Common House.

- Monday 8-8.30 a.m. T'ai chi based exercises in the park (all year)
- Tuesday Morning 'stitch-and-dye' on the top floor
12.30 – 1.30 Individual yoga/pilates practice
6.30-7.30 Singing Group
- Wednesday 8-8.30 Morning exercises as Monday
12.30 – 1.30 Individual yoga/pilates practice
- Thursday 12.30 – 1.30 Individual yoga/pilates practice
- Friday 8-8.30 Morning exercises as Monday
8.30-9.00 am Silent half hour
9.30-11.00 Housekeeping Group meet to be together and to clean CH
12.30 – 1.30 Individual yoga/pilates practice
- Saturday 7.00 Bring and share meal (occasional) Kid's meal (occasional)
- Sunday 7.00 Womens Group (fortnightly)

Residents' Meeting: Either Monday (6.30pm), Tuesday (7.40pm) or Wednesday (7.45pm), monthly:

Communal meals in dining room: Weds 6.30, Thursday 6.30, Friday 7.00, occasional Saturdays. There are also occasional Music Club evening concerts (to which people from outside are invited), the annual New Year Pantomime in which almost every household takes part (3 performances for family and friends), and a monthly Book Group on site which meets in people's houses.

Appendix XII – Extract from Springhill Timber Survey (2012)

Maintenance schedule:

Task	How Often	Reason
Move plant pots	Annually	Allow decking to be cleaned and to dry.
Clean decking jet wash or water and stiff broom/brush	Annually	Remove debris that traps moisture. Remove debris between boards that limits drying air flow. Remove algae that makes boards slippery.
Clean out gutters	Annually	Reduces drain blockage and gutter overflow that can lead to damp walls.
General visual check for rot	Annually	Be aware of up coming issues and find a problem before it becomes dangerous eg hand rails becoming loose or stairs breaking.
PV tiles cleaning	Annually	Improve performance, tricky access. Long pole and a tower scaffold.?
Level threshold entrance decking inspect	Annually	With very little ability to dry out this is very vulnerable to decay and collapse.
Decorate Hand rail/any flat external timber	Biennially	Prolong life of timber and improve aesthetic. Rain, frost and UV from all that sun will damage flat surfaces very quickly.
Treat decking with oil	Biennially	Reduces growth of slippery algae etc
Clean under decking where sitting above glass fibre roof	Biennially	Debris trapped on the roof will stop the sub structure drying out and accelerate decay. These timbers are very vulnerable to decay.
Check external steps and stairs for rot/weakness	Biennially	Clearly a potential hazard if they fail. Any very bouncy stair should be improved/repared/replaced.
Check there are no areas where soil or decking is up against render or timber clad walls.	Biennially	Green render, black cladding or simply no gap between the ground and the wall is a sign this needs to be addressed. Imagine that air flowing around your house keeping it healthy!
Paint exposed timbers	5 years	Outside timbers that get a lot of sun and rain will need redecorating after 5 years if you want to keep them in top condition.
Decorate windows and doors	10 years	Most external timbers such as windows and doors, fascias and soffits will need redecorating about every 10 years.
Replace timbers where decay is advanced or aesthetically unacceptable	10 years	The time to replace comes down to what you are happy to live with in terms of the look of the timber, but clearly a hand rail needs to be safe and secure at the very least.
Inspect timber retaining wall to car park	10 years	50 yr design life, but worth checking areas that are hidden by planting and have less air getting to them.

The above table is a guide to best practice, however different householders will have differing ideas as to the acceptable aesthetic state of their timber work. This comes down to personal preference, assuming the structure is still sound enough to be safe.

Durable timbers (see TRADA timber classification), softwoods such as larch or western Red Cedar, native hardwoods such as Sweet Chestnut, Oak and many tropical hardwoods such as Mahogany and Iroko will last for many years outside without decoration. Regular painting or staining will lengthen their life a little, but it is more about appearance. If you prefer the painted or stained look then it must be done regularly to keep it looking good.

Timber Survey 2012 - General Comments

- The houses, flats and communal areas are generally in good condition, as would be expected of buildings that are only approximately 10 years old.
- The key areas of concern are the balconies and some other external timber details. Some buildings show some signs of movement, generally this is not serious, though in a couple of cases it may be. See section on this.
- As a rule, timber does not like being wet. However it will cope with getting wet as long as it dries out again reasonably quickly. If it is wet for more than a certain amount of time the typical green staining will appear (this in itself is not a problem). If its moisture content is higher still for prolonged periods rot will set in either 'dry rot' or 'wet rot' depending on the moisture content.(obviously damp and white, black, yellow or orange).
- In order to facilitate rapid drying, a number of things can help. Stopping the rain with a roof is great and maximising sun exposure also helps, (although the increase in UV from direct sunlight will also breakdown the timber!). The most important issue is getting good air flow around the timber allowing the moisture to be carried away.
- Thus always try to leave gaps between timbers and do not block air flow around decking and structures, or at least accept that if you build decking with no air flow under it or allow climbing plants to thickly cover your balcony rails that this is likely to reduce their lifespan.
- For example where decking boards are cut tight to the balcony structure there is little air flow, once this small gap is filled with dirt there is the double problem of the dirt trapping the moisture and stopping any air flow.
- So always think 'gap' when working with timber externally.

Appendix XIII

Extracts from the 'Rhizome Guide to Consensus Decision-Making'

[available from Neil (no.28) and www.rhizome.coop]

Consensus is a decision-making process that, when used with a co-operative state of mind, allows groups to come together and take inspired and creative decisions. It supports individuals to pool their power and work together as equals to produce results far better than they could produce alone.

Consensus decision-making is:

- An acknowledgement that we can achieve more together than we can alone.
- A way of finding the best decision for a diverse group of people who all share some common ground - often shared values. Consensus works because the common ground is stronger than the difference within the group. With strong common values or aims groups can be diverse and see that diversity as a strength.
- A way of agreeing to disagree. Consensus isn't unanimous agreement. It's unanimous consent. Everyone consents to the decision even if they disagree...it allows for people to stand aside from implementing a decision they are lukewarm about whilst giving their blessing to the rest of the group to go ahead (consenting without agreeing).
- A pulling together of ideas to build the strongest available decision.
- A commitment to challenge domineering and self-centred behaviour in ourselves and others, working for the common good over personal benefit.
- A process that asks us to put aside our personal certainty and create a group certainty. This can deepen trust and foster better group working skills along the way, rather than weakening groups as majority-based decision systems often can.

The **states of mind** referred to include...a genuine willingness to:

- Work co-operatively as part of a group, and trust others in the group to be doing the same.
- Recognise that there may be many opinions all of equal value to your own.
- Listen to, and hear those opinions, and work to ensure the group knows that they are valued.
- Look for solutions that work for the wider group and not just yourself, paying special attention to those at the margins of the group.
- Supportively challenge prejudice and abuses of power, and have our own behaviour challenged because we acknowledge that none of us are free of unwelcome social conditioning.

Appendix XIV – Possible Approaches to Resolving Issues in Springhill:

Do Nothing

Having looked at the issue and all possible options, you could decide that for now, your best approach is to do nothing. Doing nothing might be the most valid response at this time, however you can monitor the situation, and check from time to time whether it's still best to do nothing.

Change Self

On examining the situation, you may decide that the best option is to make some change in your own behaviour, attitude, opinions or way of looking at things, without involving anyone else.

Contact Other Direct

It may become clear that your best option is to contact the other person, or people, who are directly involved in your issue. This could be by email, phone or in person. How you contact the other person and how you express the matter to them will affect their response and may have an effect on how quickly and easily the issue can be resolved.

Use Go-Between

You may decide that rather than communicating directly with the other person, you would prefer to use a go-between to carry messages back and forth between you. This would need to be someone who both parties can trust and accept in this role.

Initiate Buddy Process

You may feel that the buddy process would be most helpful, and ask the other person whether they would be willing to participate in this. If the other is willing, you would both choose your buddies and take it forward from there.

Take Issue to a Group

Your issue might be best addressed in an already existing group, who you could approach for help e.g. kitchen group, pets committee, garden group, laundry group.

Contact Residents, Set Up a New Meeting or Group

You may want to find out whether others share your concern about your issue, in which case you could ask whether anyone else is interested in this issue, or call a meeting about it, or schedule a Single Issue meeting on the topic, or ask if anyone would like to form a new group around your issue.

Take Issue to RA Meeting

If your issue is something that you feel needs to be looked at by the whole community, you could put it on the agenda for either discussion or decision at a RA meeting.

Find Outside Help

Some assistance from outside Springhill might be helpful with your issue. You could call on the services of someone with knowledge in the relevant area e.g. an outside trainer, educator, facilitator, counsellor, mediator etc. Or friends or family.

Something Else

After considering all the options, something could emerge that isn't on this list - perhaps something unique, individual, unusual, creative. (NOYO 2015)

Appendix XV - Wormeries and compost

Nicky Ferguson (no. 11) has written this summary of what you can do in your home and what you can do in the Common House to make the system work:

The key is that the wormeries are enclosed and rat proof so ALL cooked food and eggshells must go into the wormeries (the ones with lids). Otherwise we have loads of rats running around the secret garden which is unpleasant and unhealthy.

1. In the Common House

There are two buckets:

* a black one for the cooked food (think "black=burnt"). It is important that all egg shells go into the black bucket because rats love eggs.

* the white bucket for the uncooked vegetables (think "white=raw"). Citrus fruit including the lemons from the drinks must go in the white bucket.

If you can't decide, then ask yourself "would a rat like this?" If the answer is "yes", it goes into the black bucket. Bread, cakes, flour, sugar, chocolate, cereals, rice etc all count as cooked foods. Think "Black rats"!

The black bucket gets emptied into the rat-proof bins (the wormeries). You can use either wormery as long as it isn't completely full.

The white bucket goes onto the open compost heaps. Please empty the buckets regularly.

If you find someone has forgotten what to do and has mixed the uncooked and cooked stuff together then try to separate them. If it's too far gone then it will all have to go into the wormeries. But if this happens too much the system will fall apart as the wormeries will get overwhelmed.

2. In your house

If you can keep your cooked waste and eggshells separate from the rest then that's great - please do and use the same system as the common house, i.e. put the cooked food, cereals and eggshells into the wormeries and the uncooked on to the compost heaps. No need to read further.

If you don't want to separate your cooked food from your other waste then it is OK to put all your food waste together into the rat-proof bins with the lids (the wormeries). In composting the aim is to mix the 'greens' with the 'browns' in equal volumes. They can be mixed into the food waste in the kitchen caddy (this keeps it drier and cleaner) or at the composters in the garden. The greens (high in nitrogen and water):

- Raw vegetable and fruit peelings*
- Cereal based food: pasta, rice, bread*
- Coffee grinds
- Tea bags, loose tea
- Plate scrapings (small amounts of animal products are OK, such as cheese)
- Surplus cooked food

* But no solid lumps more than 1 inch in size !

The browns (high in carbon):

- Scrunched-up or torn-newspaper, shiny magazines are OK if shredded

- Shredded paper
- Torn up cardboard
- Egg boxes
- Torn up card boxes e.g. cereal packets (but not if they have a plastic laminate)
- Pet (herbivores) bedding, straw, hay and saw dust
- Autumn leaves

Additional tasks for compost managers:

- Spreading it thinly (otherwise it can get deep in one area; and become unpleasant);
- Mixing in more 'browns'
- Covering with garden waste/finished compost
- Add a sprinkle of soil

The moisture mats (actually they are door mats from Homebase!) retain moisture.

If this is not acceptable to people, then the layer of garden waste will be even more important for retaining moisture.

The layer of garden waste/finished compost:

- forms a barrier to flies
- retains moisture
- acts as an 'activator' from the nitrogen it contains. Some compost from where the chickens go, is especially good for this, as their dung is high in nitrogen. This is also why it is good to pee on compost heaps!"

Appendix XVI - Consensus decision-making cards
(laminated, coloured cards 9' x 5')

Use top line of text during discussion, use bottom line during decision.

During discussion:

Red – interrupt card – process observation e.g. we are off the subject or someone may need attention

Red

During decision or gauging:

Red – I am entirely against the proposal and wish to block consensus (should only be used extremely rarely – a good discussion should result in a deferment or modification)

During discussion:

Orange – I want to make a comment or ask a question

Orange

During decision or gauging:

Orange – I have serious reservations and will only wish to block if there are a significant number of orange cards.

During discussion:

Green – interrupt card – I can provide clarification, i.e. just factual stuff e.g. the door has now been fixed

Green

During decision or gauging:

Green – I am entirely for the proposal and I am mostly for the proposal with slight reservations

