

# **POLICIES OF AFFINITY WOODLAND WORKERS CO-OP LTD**

## **March 2016**

### **VISION STATEMENT**

We are a community of people living and working together on the land. We value open, honest communication, wisdom and group cohesion. We are committed to environmental awareness, sustainable and innovative solutions. We enjoy sharing our skills and knowledge and value learning from others.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

- Our community is based on the ethics of love, friendship, co-operation, earth care, people care, and resources for need not greed.
- We are managing the woods and our lives using permaculture principles.
- We are creating cyclical systems which are less reliant on fossil fuels.
- We are increasing our self-reliance concerning food and medicine.
- We are working towards financial sustainability within the context of our ethics.
- We are using materials from the wood and reused/recycled materials.
- We are reducing dependency on fossil fuels and exploring alternatives.
- We are educating our children with the aim of fostering wholeness, balance and empowerment.
- We are living together in community, respecting all life.
- We are connecting with the wider community with honesty and clarity.
- We are learning from all around us and passing on our knowledge, skills and experience.

### **AIMS OF STEWARD COMMUNITY WOODLAND**

- \* To generate much of our own food and medicine by growing organically, raising livestock, hunting and gathering.
- \* To encourage healthy, happy and empowered individuals.
- \* To generate enough income for our needs (subsistence and financial income) predominately from the projects activities and otherwise from other ethically based work.
- \* To build our own homes from timber from Steward Wood and re-used materials.
- \* To manage the land using traditional woodland management techniques together with the principles of permaculture, forest gardening, and continuous cover forestry.

- \* To explore and promote innovative, sustainable practices and ways of living.
- \* To manage the woodland primarily for the creation and protection of wildlife habitat, whilst also providing fuel and timber for ourselves and producing some materials for sale.
- \* To reduce waste as much as possible, such as plastic packaging and plastic bags.

## **MEMBERSHIP POLICY**

### **LIVING ON SITE**

- \* Members are required to be living on site for at least 9 months of every calendar year.

### **MEETINGS**

- \* Each adult is a member of at least two circles including the Members Circle and attends the relevant meetings on a regular basis.
- \* Members must inform their circle if they are unable to attend.
- \* It is the responsibility of each member to keep up to date on communal issues (meeting agendas, proposed policies etc) through the Members Wall or otherwise.
- \* If any member is unable to attend a meeting, any suggested additions or arguments to improve a proposed policy that the member wishes to be known, must be put to the relevant circle representative or posted on the Members Wall in good time prior to the meeting (ie. at least three days in advance). In such a case, the member is invited to be proactive with the proposer(s) in good time prior to a circle meeting s/he is unable to attend, to discuss any objections in order that the proposer has the opportunity to amend the proposal to accommodate his/her argument.
- \* A member's absence at a circle meeting, and/or no comment/objection, may be taken to equal his/her consent.

### **COMMUNAL WORK**

- \* Each member gives an average of at least 4 days per week (equal to 28 hours) to work on site for the benefit of the project.

### **STRUCTURES**

- \* Members are responsible for keeping the external appearance of their structure and communal structures, tidy and safe, at all times.

### **LEAVING THE COMMUNITY**

- \* All monies owing to the cooperative/community must be paid before a member leaves the cooperative or arrangements made for their payment with the Members Circle.
- \* If a member leaves the cooperative and does not intend to remove their structure, it will be returned to the community. If the person leaving wishes to claim money back for materials for their structure (not including contents) the amount is to be decided and agreed by the Members Circle with a cap of £500, to be paid when the individual has removed all of their possessions from site.

## ANNUAL EVALUATION

\* All members are required to attend an annual evaluation/review of progress in relation to the Vision, Mission Statement, and Aims of the community.

## EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

\* Any extenuating circumstances relating to this the Membership Policy to be brought to the Members Circle, discussed and agreed on a case by case basis with a time frame for review (eg. 1-3 months).

## CONTRIBUTIONS

It is the obligation of every member of the co-operative to pay a weekly sum ("contribution") into the Affinity account during the entire year (whether on or off site at any time), the amount of such weekly sum to be decided from time to time by the members at a Members Circle meeting.

## CONTRIBUTIONS RATE

The rate of weekly contribution for each member is £20.

## THE FIFTEEN CRITERIA

The "Fifteen Criteria for developments associated with sustainable land-based rural activities" are adopted and shall be applied.

## NUMBER OF RESIDENTS

No more than 18 adults and their dependent children shall be permanently resident on the land at any one time. Any visitors are to leave site or become a member of the co-op after 18 months occupancy of the site.

## OWNERSHIP OF STRUCTURES

All structures belong to the community. All buildings and infrastructure including the houses are owned by the Co-op and used by the community as the need arises.

## LONG TERM VOLUNTEERS & VISITORS

\* In arranging whether it's appropriate for someone to come as a long term volunteer/visitor, s/he will be given a brief description of sociocracy with links to further information and asked for their consent to that method of organisation. Without that consent, it would not be appropriate to proceed.

\* WWOOFers live on site on an exchange basis of 5 days work per week, 6 hours per day.

\* Long term visitors pay each week by standing order a contribution equal to the member's contribution.

\* Long term visitors have a communal work commitment of one day per week (two days during WWOOF weeks).

\* All long term volunteers and visitors must take part in sociocracy training before attending

Members Circle meetings or any other circle meetings.

\* There will be a feedback and check-in session for each long term volunteer/visitor at every Members Circle meeting.

\* When a long term volunteer/visitor has received sociocracy training and is attending circle meetings, s/he cannot object/consent on policy proposals or policy reviews. However, their input and comments are welcomed. NB. The members always have discretion to discuss any matters in private if they wish.

\* Usually, the first review of the stay of a long term volunteer/visitor will be at the end of one month.

## **TRIAL MEMBERSHIP POLICY**

(1) The Trial Period for a prospective new member of the co-operative is 6 months. This period is only to run for the time that the person is on site, and the 6 month Trial Period must be undertaken within a 8 month calendar period.

(2) During the Trial Period, there is to be a weekly check-in between members and the prospective member.

(3) It is the obligation of the prospective new member of the co-operative to pay a weekly sum ("contribution") into the "general kitty" account during the Trial Period (and therefore there's no obligation to do so when living off site).

## **ROLES AT MEETINGS**

The review date for roles (facilitator, secretary, operations leader or representative) shall be no more than four weeks from the date of role adoption or re-adoption.

## **ADVERTISING & CIRCULATING PROPOSED POLICIES**

All policy proposals must be advertised and circulated to all members at least 6 days prior to the meeting at which they are to be considered.

## **DECISIONS AFFECTING MEMBERS**

Any decision made that will significantly affect members of the community must be advertised and circulated to all members at least 6 days prior to the meeting at which they are to be considered with the exception of urgent matters where a decision needs to be made instantly. In this case the decision is to be revisited at the next meeting and advertised as above.

## **NON-ADHERENCE TO POLICY**

If a co-op member is not adhering to a policy and the matter is referred to the Members Circle, the members present will discuss the matter and decide how to proceed on a case-by-case basis.

## **TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

If a member is absent from site for 3 months or more without having consent from the Members Circle based on their 'extenuating circumstances' (as per the Membership Policy), then the other members can cancel his/her membership.

## **FOSSIL FUEL POLICY**

- \* No petrol or diesel generators are to be used on site.
- \* Aspen is only to be used as a chainsaw fuel and vegetable oil as a lubricant.
- \* Concerning vehicle use, see separate policy.

## **OFF GRID POLICY**

- \* All electricity used on site is to be produced on site without the use of a petrol or diesel generator.
- \* We will not be connected to the main electricity, gas, water, and sewage supplies.
- \* All human waste is to be composted on site.
- \* All water use on site is to be from the spring and streams on site.
- \* All heating fuel is to be harvested from on site or from waste (eg. cardboard, timber offcuts).

## **VEHICLE USE**

We are committed to reducing vehicle usage with the following objectives:

- \* Continue to increase levels of self-sufficiency on the land thus reducing the need to travel.
  - \* Encourage walking, cycling and public transport use among ourselves and our visitors.
- Now  
community path and cycleway along the route of the disused railway track between Moretonhampstead and Bovey Tracey which makes it easier and safer to make journeys by  
foot or bicycle.
- \* Use sustainable bio-fuels (eg reused veg oil) when possible.
  - \* No petrol cars.
  - \* Co-ordinating and sharing journeys.

## **FELLING SEASON**

The Felling Season runs from 1st October to 28/29th February each year.

## **WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

All biodegradable waste will be composted on site or burnt as fuel (eg. paper and cardboard). Any other waste products will be reused or recycled where appropriate.

## **DRAINAGE**

Composting toilets will not be sited within 10 metres of a natural watercourse. There is to be no release of grey water within 10 metres of a natural watercourse unless adequately treated by a sand/gravel/charcoal or reed bed system. Biodegradable soaps, toiletries and similar products are only to be used.

## **EXTERNAL LIGHTING**

There is to be no external lighting except temporarily for events in the interests of safety.

## **MATERIALS STORAGE**

Materials for future use are to be stored sensitively and in particular not in view from outside the woodland and from the main paths within the woodland.

## **COURSE SITE FEES**

There shall be a course fee paid for every course held on site with a minimum of 10% of total income.

## **LIVE-IN VEHICLES IN CARPARK BY CYCLEWAY**

No-one shall stay overnight in a vehicle parked in the parking spaces at the bottom of Steward Wood adjacent to the cycle-path unless expressly agreed in advance at a Members Circle meeting with prior notice of the proposal having been given to the members in accordance with the policy 'Decisions Affecting Members'.

## **CHAINSAW USE AND VOLUNTEERS**

Chainsaws are not to be used in any group work involving volunteers – the minimum safe distance is 32m.

## **COPPICING WITH CHAINSAWS**

It is acceptable to coppice with a chainsaw. Anyone coppicing with a chainsaw stems of 12cm diameter and above are to follow the same safety guidelines as felling with chainsaws, namely to have:

- (1) another person watching for health & safety;
- (2) appropriate safety kit worn;
- (3) a first aid kit to hand;
- (4) tree felling signs appropriately placed.

## **FELLING WITH CHAINSAWS**

It is OK to fell trees with a chainsaw (for personal use only) as long as it's done with:

- (1) another person watching for health & safety;
- (2) appropriate safety kit worn;
- (3) a first aid kit to hand;
- (4) tree felling signs appropriately placed.

## **FIRE SAFETY**

Each structure containing a wood burning stove shall, as a minimum, contain a 9 litre water fire extinguisher. The Longhouse & Kitchen shall also contain fire blankets. Smoke alarms shall be installed in all communal structures containing wood burning stoves and in individual/family structures as people see fit. All open fires will have a prominent fire point nearby with a fire bucket, fire extinguisher and fire blanket. The procedure in the event of fire will be posted in prominent places in the Kitchen & Longhouse and all visitors and

volunteers will be made aware of it. The assembly point in the event of fire is in the Glade. A Fire Safety Officer will be appointed from time to time to look into all aspects of fire safety.

## **TIDYING SITE**

All members will collectively tidy site both in communal and personal areas and remove all rubbish/recycling over a week in mid-February and again in mid-September each year.

## **PLASTIC PRODUCTS**

We will not buy new plastic products for our structures, infrastructure etc unless unavoidable.