

NEIGHBOURLY LIVING DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Intention

This process offers a 3 stage stepped route to resolving difficulties between individual members, or between one or more members and the company. Our aspiration is to maximise the opportunities for kindness, growth and deepening our relationships, and to minimise the risk of causing avoidable suffering to individuals and damage to the community.

Note: If the difficulty relates to the impact of a policy or decision on an individual, an alternative process - Weeds and Knots - enables a member to ask to be considered an exception to a decision.

Process

If a member feels that s/he has an issue that could affect their capacity for neighbourly living, they should take responsibility for resolving the issue. It's the responsibility of the community to offer resources and processes that may be helpful, if needed. This process is offered as part of that resource: people can work through as many of the stages as appropriate.

Stage 1

If you have an issue with another member, then it's your responsibility to raise it with the other person and attempt to resolve it.

You may be able to talk to them directly, but if that feels too difficult, or you really need to have a rant first, try asking a trusted friend to listen to you. Sometimes we need to get things off our chest, in order to think more clearly and see the issue in perspective. This can help the encounter with the person who you have the issue with to go more smoothly whether you use it before you talk to them the first time, or before you have another try.

If you still can't reach a resolution, you can move on to Stage 2.

Stage 2

Approach members of the Conflict Resolution Team to help you. This team would be made up of people who have listening skills from training, therapy or life experience in advanced listening and intervention skills. The team will reflect the diversity of the community in the expectation that each person in the dispute can find someone they will feel fully supported by.

Step 1

As a first step you can ask one member of the team to talk to on a one-to-one basis, or you can go straight to step 2. Some things you might cover are:

- What are your feelings?
- What has happened?
- What outcome do you want?

Step 2

When each of the people in dispute are ready, the Conflict Resolution Team will help to arrange a meeting to resolve the conflict. This will include those in conflict, each with a support person or ally if they wish (who may or may not be a member of the team), and 2 neutral members of the Team, who will organise the process. Before the meeting is convened, the list of participants should be circulated, and agreement reached that all these people come with the intention of working for a constructive outcome.

This meeting will be based on mutual respect and will cover:

- What are the feelings of the disputing parties?
- What has happened? Both/all sides tell their story and hear the other side's
- What do you each want in order to resolve the problem?
- What are you willing to do about it? This must be specific, not general

- Look for areas of agreement/shared principles.
- Look for a specific agreement to resolve the problem
- Check whether everyone is satisfied that everything relevant has been covered
- Check if a written agreement is needed. If so, write and sign it
- Agree a time for review

Review the outcome after an agreed time to ensure it's been effective.

If the dispute is between a member and the company, then a member or director will be chosen to represent the company.

Stage 3

If you still can't reach resolution, you could consider raising it formally with the whole community.

First, you need to find 5 members from other households to agree that it's appropriate to raise the issue formally. (Note: these people can include the person you have an issue with. They do not have to agree with either of you, simply that the most constructive way forward is for the issue to be laid in front of the community.)

Then write to the Process Group, explaining the issue from your perspective, what steps you have taken so far, why you want to take it to General Meeting now, and what you want to achieve by doing so.

The Process Group will appoint 3 'neutral' people to consider the issue, including its impact on individuals and the community as a whole, and how it may best be resolved at a General Meeting (taking account of workload and commitments).