

Welcome to



Cohousing Exeter

Independent lives, shared community

What is Cohousing?

Cohousing is a community-led form of housing where residents own the site together and make collective decisions on how it runs. Eco-responsibility is always a key feature both in design and resource-usage. There are established successful examples across the UK, USA and Europe.

Whilst each household has its own private home, varying in price and size, there are also facilities shared and potentially used by everyone. These include indoor space used for activities, occasional shared meals and meetings of all sorts; also outdoor space for socialising, relaxing and gardening.

The over-dominance of cars in many developments is generally reduced by cohousing communities developing car-sharing arrangements and choosing sites such as ours which is well-served by public transport.

Cohousing has particular benefits for people in the second half of their lives: opportunities to be active, companionship with autonomy, a sense of belonging, and cheaper living through sharing costs and mutual support. Having their homes in such a community provides a solution to the isolation older people can experience. It has also been demonstrated to reduce older people's use of GP, social care and hospital services, thereby making savings to the public purse.

Residents are committed to look out for one another rather than looking after one another. They care about one another but do not become one another's carers. But, more than that, they make plans together, share tasks and celebrations, and laugh a lot together.

Our Vision:

We are a developing community of supportive neighbours in the second half of our lives, coming together in a beautiful, eco-friendly and accessible environment. We aim to create a diverse mix of residents, enjoying some shared spaces both indoors and out, whilst balancing privacy and independence with responsible interdependent living - and actually having a lot of fun together too!



Our Values are our bedrock and guide all that we do. All members commit to them.

(Adapted from Still Green Cohousing with our thanks).

- **Respect for each other**
Promoting goodwill and trust, treating each other with consideration as equals, and accepting each other as we are.
- **Personal responsibility**
With everyone contributing in different ways at different times, according to our gifts and experience and in different amounts according to individual circumstances.
- **Fostering good relationships**
Seeking ways to be considerately truthful, to listen hard and communicate gently.
- **Decision-making**
Everyone having a voice, being heard and respected. We are developing a decision-making process which will be transparent and clear, take into account everyone's view and get things done. We do not want to spend our time in endless meetings.
- **Integration**
Aiming to make a positive contribution socially and culturally to the life of the wider community: both as individuals engaging in local activities and as a group welcoming others to enjoy our shared facilities.

- **Sustainability**

Wanting our way of life to be eco-friendly with low energy homes, as much natural light as possible and sharing of resources. Some of us may want to grow our own food.

- **Diversity**

Welcoming people from all backgrounds and supporting principles of equality and inclusion.



Getting Involved With Us

Welcome!

You may have come to our website <https://cohousingexeter.my.canva.site/> via social media, heard about us from a friend or on the grapevine, explored the UK Cohousing Network or learned about us through some of our other publicity.

We are planning around thirty-five new homes on a spacious plot of land in Exeter and are in the process of expanding our group. If you are interested in becoming part of this community, we'd love to hear from you.

Questions to ask yourself

- Firstly, here are some things to think about before enquiring, as we think it's important that everyone's expectations of community life are realistic.
- *What would you enjoy about living in community - working collaboratively and sharing time, space and resources?? What would you find challenging?*
- *What skills or interests could you contribute to the community?*
- *How do you feel about taking a full part in a (sometimes lengthy) decision making process and being committed to finding solutions that everyone can live with, even if they are not necessarily always the best for you personally?*

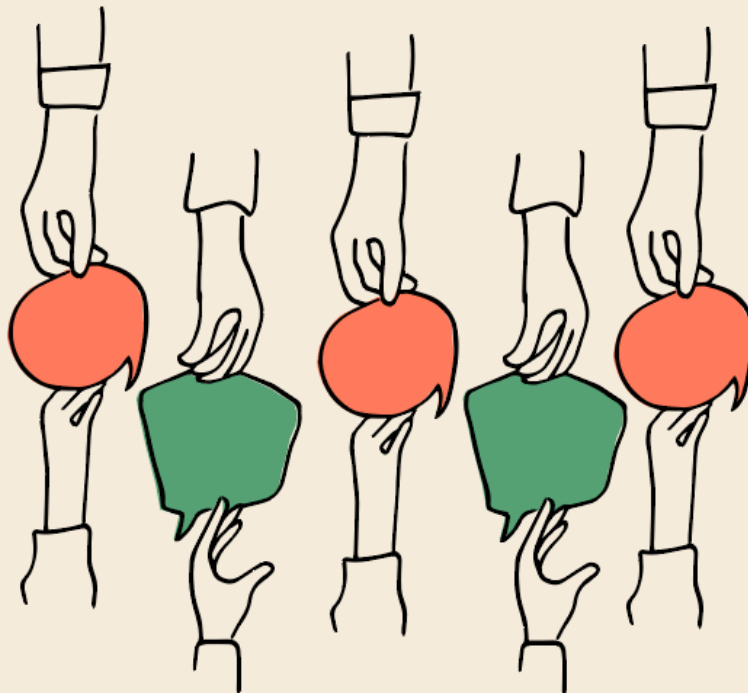
(Thanks to Cannock Mill Cohousing for the basis of these questions)

Interested to find out more?

If you might like to join us, please also look at our Vision and Values and ask yourself – can you commit to these?

Having thought this through, here are the steps to take if you decide that you would like to find out more:

Contact us through our email cohousingexeter@gmail.com – or go to our website <https://cohousingexeter.my.canva.site/latest> and complete the Expression of Interest form.



How can you be involved?

At this stage in our development there are three levels of involvement:

1) A Friend - you're interested and want to remain in contact, but don't attend meetings or vote. You can keep up to date with developments through our website and facebook page.

2) An Explorer - you attend and contribute to meetings and are on our WhatsApp and email groups for regular correspondence and communication.

3) A Member - you attend meetings as above and also have full voting rights, should decisions need to come down to a vote.

Coming along

Once we have received your completed Expression of Interest form, unless you wish simply to be a 'Friend' (at least for the moment), you will be invited to come to one of our in-person meet-ups as an 'Explorer'. After that you will be invited to attend further meetings, both on-line and in-person.

We will link you to a couple of people who you can refer to for any questions you might have about us. They will also help get you up to speed with our progress to date and our expectations of members.

N.B. As membership grows we may decide to pause new invitations to become Explorers in order to seek greater diversity of age or background across the group as a whole.

Joining us more formally

Once you feel familiar enough with the group, its plans and its processes as an Explorer you may decide that you'd like to become a full part of it and seek to become a Member of Cohousing Exeter.

Normally this would be after you have attended at least two in-person meetings and at least two on-line meetings.

We will set up a '*membership meeting*' for you, probably with the two people with whom you were originally linked as a new Explorer. The three of us will discuss how you see your involvement and contribution to the wider group and your particular vision for your housing and community. We will share with you our hopes for how the community will thrive and develop. This is very much a two-way process to ensure that we are the right place for you to invest in as much as ensuring that you are the right fit for us.



Responsibilities and benefits of membership

You will need to share our commitment to the following:

- Living out our Vision and Values.
- Sharing responsibilities and practical tasks with the rest of the group as far as individual circumstances may allow.
- Developing knowledge and skills in consensual decision-making and constructive conflict management.
- Looking out for the well-being of other residents once living on site but not becoming a formal carer for them; nor expecting formal care from other residents.

Members have voting rights and share equal responsibility for making and upholding the group's decisions.

Members will have priority in securing a home in our cohousing development.

Unless for particular agreed individual circumstances, prior to moving into their home each member is expected to come regularly to at least 50% of meetings. If attendance falls below this over any four-month period, a Member may be required to revert to being an Explorer or Friend - and thereby lose their right to vote on decisions and lose their household's priority for securing a home until 50% attendance is again achieved.

Process after you have had your ‘membership meeting’ about formally joining us

- You may decide that you do not wish to remain involved at all.
- You may decide that you do not wish to be actively involved further at present but would like to keep in touch with our progress as a Friend, checking our website and facebook page periodically for updates.
- You and/or our two representatives at your ‘*membership meeting*’ may decide that more time is needed as an Explorer before making a decision about membership.
- If you confirm your wish to become a Member your request will be considered by the full membership.
- In considering a request to become a Member the existing membership group will hear from our two representatives at your ‘*membership meeting*’ as described above. Other members’ views will also be taken into account as we reach a decision on whether you feel like a good fit for the community in light of our Vision and Values.

Membership fee

On being welcomed into membership each Member pays an initial membership fee of £50 towards the routine expenses of running the group. The date of this payment is the date on which your membership begins.

Project Timescale

This is aspirational and necessarily subject to delay rather than being fixed.

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|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sept 2025 | Commitment Point 1: initial members |
| Sept 2025 | Design starts |
| Sept - March | Group and design workshop |
| May 2026 | Commitment Point 2: Reservations |
| May 2026 | Planning submission |
| Nov 2026 | Planning Decision |
| May 2027 | Commitment 3: Agreement to Purchase |
| May 2027 | Start of Construction |
| Nov 2028 | Complete purchases, move in |

For further detail on the timeline, please go to *[please add link to more detailed timeline on website]*

