

CoHUT Recruitment Pack.



CoHUT is now recruiting on a rolling basis for expressions of interest from anyone who would like to live in one of our homes once they are built.

This pack will:

- Provide a brief introduction to CoHUT & our current position
- Explain the financial model we are working towards and provide links to further information
- Outline the next stages of the project
- Provide information about expressions of interest
- Detail the application process
- Tell you how to find out about recruitment events

Please note: this pack contains a lot of important information. If you are considering an application to CoHUT please take the time to read it through.



A brief introduction to CoHUT & our current position.

CoHUT came together in 2013, following a series of public community housing events. All our members share the joys and responsibilities of formulating a vision for a cohousing community in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Our shared vision includes:

- individual living space with common areas and shared facilities (laundry, bike shed, guest accommodation, workshop, gardens)
- connected living, with regular communal meals and celebrations in our common house
- respect of each other's personal life and privacy
- becoming active members of our wider surrounding community
- a respectful approach to the environment with a focus on low impact living (including the reduction of personal car use)
- building a community run by all members, with the expectation that everyone contributes to the community and being responsible custodians of our homes.

You can find out a bit more about us on the Members page of our website.

MEMBERS

In 2018 we started working with our enabling developer TOWN, who have a wealth of experience in delivering sustainable and community-led housing. TOWN introduced us to Newcastle-based architects MawsonKerr in 2019 and we have been working as a team ever since. Newcastle City Council is supportive of our project; in early 2020 they generously offered us a site in Benwell, to the west of the city centre, just under 2 miles from Newcastle Central Station.

In December 2021 we were granted planning permission for our scheme of 25 homes, common house and communal gardens. The scheme is designed to Passivhaus standards intended to provide low impact living for generations to come. The scheme design allows for three categories of 'lifetime homes' accessibility, with an emphasis on adaptability to residents' needs. You can view an extract from our Design & Access Statement on our website.

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



Financial model.

CoHUT is committed to developing affordable housing, and for that housing to remain affordable for the future.

Clearly affordable is a relative term, and because of the high design specifications, in particular, the high energy efficiency (passive house) of the homes, and the increasing cost of materials and labour, they are not as affordable as we would ideally like. We need to find people who can afford them to make the scheme financially viable, but, if you are interested in living here but can't afford the monthly payments or the deposit, please still put in an application. We will keep your application on file and if we find a way to make some units more affordable, for example, through partnering with a housing association, then we will be in touch.

At least one of the houses will be organised as a house share house. People in the house share will buy a share of equity in the project that relates to the cost of their share of the house. This will mean people can save up equity while living in a house share.

Our ultimate aim is to provide long-term homes and community, rather than homes as "investments". We are working on a financial model based on the principle of Mutual Home Ownership Societies (MHOS). MHOS disconnects the occupation of properties from the underlying value of the land, protecting the scheme from fluctuations in the property market. This will ensure that homes remain permanently affordable for successive members of our cooperative society.

With the help of a mortgage, CoHUT will own all the homes. Members are allocated the number of equity shares that relates to the home they wish to live in, and agree to pay for some (a deposit) or all of those equity shares. Members also agree to pay a monthly 'rent' that covers:

- an agreed instalment towards any remaining equity shares relating to your home
- the community levy (to enable CoHUT to insure, repair and maintain homes and shared areas as well as cover the running of the common house)

See below for Community Led Housing London's introduction to MHOS.

INTRODUCTION TO MUTUAL HOME OWNERSHIP SOCIETIES

Building to Passivhaus standards isn't cheap – but many current building practices represent a greater cost to our planet. Living costs at CoHUT will be low. Passivhaus standards ensure that energy use will be a fraction of that of a conventional house. Building maintenance and many internal repairs and renovations will be the financial responsibility of the cooperative society, meaning that individual households won't have the risk of unexpected bills when a roof leaks or a boiler needs replacing. Access to shared facilities (such as laundry and workshops, cars and cargo bikes) will reduce the expense of individual ownership.

TOWN are currently helping CoHUT prepare estimated costs for individual homes throughout our scheme. These estimates form part of the application form.

Next stages.

We enjoy welcoming new members to our group.

In addition to finalising details of our financial model, the following tasks are among those ahead of us:

- securing funding to complete the final predevelopment work
- tendering for the lead contractor
- building links with our surrounding community
- designing the interiors of our houses
- working with landscape architects to design the communal groups

Join us! And help make this happen.



Joining us.

New member requirements.

New Members, having made an application to join, will be invited to attend our fortnightly meetings and will form part of the group helping make CoHUT a reality. You will have the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process, working alongside our team of professionals to help shape the project.

CoHUT Members pay monthly subs of £5.

You will see that the application form asks you to indicate your housing preference and your household's ability to meet the stated financial requirements. CoHUT Members will get preferences on property choice.

Formal expression of interest requirements.

This is an option for those who are unable to commit to joining our working group at this time but would like to be CoHUT Members at a later date, and live at CoHUT once it is built.

(We have found that some people submit an expression of interest, and then once they have come to a couple of induction meetings decide that they like meeting up once a fortnight and want to be part of the group. This option is open to people putting in an expression of interest.)

Those making a formal expression of interest are also asked to pay monthly subs of £5.

You will be asked to indicate your housing preference as well as your household's ability to meet the financial requirements detailed within the application form. CoHUT Member preferences on property choice will be prioritised above those submitting a formal expression of interest.



Application process.

What you need to know:

- Applications for New Members and Expressions of Interest are always welcome, and should be submitted by email to cohousingupontyne@gmail.com
- Subject line: CoHUT Membership Application or Expression of Interest
- Application forms are available to download on our website

Prospective Members and Expressions of Interest will be notified of the outcome of their application within a period of 8 weeks from date of application.

Prospective Members will be invited to join the group and attend our fortnightly meetings. There will be a trial period of 3 months to give everyone a chance to get to know each other and for Prospective Members to get a feel for the meeting process. Prospective Members will take part in looking in detail at our financial model and ongoing design processes.

Expressions of Interest will also be invited to join a couple of meetings to see if they would like to become prospective members. We may organise induction events to which everyone who applies is invited depending on our capacity.

At the end of the trial period, existing Members and Prospective Members will discuss how this period has been and whether the Prospective Members wish to continue in the group. Dependent on the content of this conversation, Prospective Members will be invited to join the group and become Members.

During the trial period we will operate a twin track decision making process, with Members taking decisions to ensure the project continues to move forward, with Prospective Members taking part in discussions.



We look forward to getting to know you!

