

## **Application Process for New Members**

Feb '18 (including 15/10/17 - version 3)

Thanks for being interested in applying, or inviting someone else to apply, to join our community land project.

This document outlines the process we have in place to support new people to join our group in a way that is good for all.

This is the most recent iteration of the process and has been designed with the intention of good will. While it may not be perfect, we feel what we've come up with is 'good enough for now, safe enough to try'.

Before you or your friend applies, it is essential that you take some time to read through the following documents, which will give you a clearer idea of the project:

- [What we know so far](#)
- [Project Plan](#) (a working document)

Please then have a look at the criteria below that someone would need to meet to join our group:

### Essential Criteria

- Someone who wants to be proposed.
- Someone who, having read [What we know so far](#) and [Project Plan](#), has significant desire and enthusiasm to make this communal rural land project happen.  
(Project Plan is a working document)
- Someone who is interested and excited in collaborating with the people involved so far. (see below for list)
- Someone with skills and experiences that actively contribute to the creation of the community.
- Someone who assumes goodwill and critiques constructively where necessary.
- To have been proposed and seconded by two existing members of the group who have been to at least one gathering themselves and that have known the applicant well for at least a year and ideally much longer.
- Someone not blocked by the existing participants.

### Desirable Criteria:

- Committed organisers.
- Someone who can work on the project in between gatherings.
- Has expertise in finance, legal, food growing or renewable energies

If you meet the above criteria, then follow the process outlined below to apply.

## **Numbers**

We have 12 spaces for new members. There are currently 38 members of the group, some of whom have been to between 1 or all of the gatherings, some who have not been to any. These people are currently the gatekeepers who can invite other people to join. Most members spend time between gatherings in working groups developing the project.

At this stage of the project there is a limit of 50 members. If this limit is reached then the membership working group and/or the buzzard(bird) eye crew will have a conversation with members who have not come to 3 gatherings in a row or more. Together with them we may conclude that at this point it is not a good time for them to be involved. They would be very welcome to return at a later date, and re-apply.

## **Layers of commitment**

It's important for you to know that an invitation to join the group doesn't necessarily mean that you'll be guaranteed membership of the community long term. There is a staged process for involvement in the project, currently with two layers of commitment:

- 1) people who are interested in being involved in the project, and commit to the group's overarching aims;
- 2) once we have in place a clear vision and project plan (probably by May 2018), people will be invited to commit to the content and execution of that vision and plan.

Whilst we would aim to accommodate everyone, people who commit to making the project happen at this second stage will be prioritised early on in order to get the project off the ground. As a group we recognise the variety of ways in which people are able, and have capacity to contribute. Commitment at this second stage also allows us to continue organising by consensus with a group of engaged and active members.

If you are invited to one of our gatherings, then it may also be the case that you come and realise this isn't the project for you, or that the current group or individual members feel that the dynamic does not work. We're working on a written process to support those potentially sensitive conversations happening in a good way. For now, what we have is an already established culture of open and honest communication, the assumption that everyone is acting from a place of goodwill, and heartfelt care for each other. For now, Anna, Amy and Paddy are the interim go-to people for support with these sensitive conversations.

If your application is successful, you'll be supported before, during and after your first gathering by the new members anchor.

## **Dependants and Partners**

We recognise that some people come with dependents; children, or adults with specific care needs who are dependent upon the potential member. Dependents will not need to go through the application process. The current group, with the potential members, will together consider how any dependents can be supported by and integrated into the community.

Some people may have significant others who they may want to invite to join the community; this is for them to decide. Partners are not considered the same as

'dependents' - that is; they are not automatically considered invited to the community. They will need to go through the same invitation process as everyone else.

### **Current Members**

Current members are: Andrew Butler, Anna Rudd, Amy Downing, Bea Patrick, Bilal Nasim, Gabs Brent, Giedre Miksyte, Hannah Hughes, Jacob Wills, Joe McGahan, Joey Whitfield, Josh Solnick, Lily Sequoia, Lucy Mellor, Matt Linares, Matt King, May MacKeith, Molly Hopkinshaw, Joy Rose Schlageter, Oli Sumerling, Oscar Cooper, Paddy Gillett, Pete Sequoia, Phillida Cheetham, Robbie Gillett, Rose Music, Sara Moon, Theo Middleton

People who are haven't made it to a gathering yet: Aimee Lormond, Alice Freedman, Emer Mary Morris, Lynda Benham, Margot Henderson, Matt King, Matt Megarry, Nina Scott, Rebecca Lee, Tree Rooney.

We also have four dependants involved: Solara (4yr old daughter of Lily and Pete), Raven (4yr old son of Tree and Matt), Iris (daughter of Anna) and Pete (Robbie and Paddy's father).

### **The process itself - how you or a friend of yours can apply**

NB: If you need any help with this process, then drop Paddy, Amy or Anna a line and they'll talk you through.

Gathering -7 weeks: deadline to receive applications on huddl.

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Gathering -6 weeks: Whole membership invited to respond to new application huddl. Publish hard deadline of G-4 weeks for responses.

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Gathering -4 weeks: Deadline for proposals, support or blocks to new applications. All applications will either be accepted or put into stage 1 of the the block process at this point.

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Gathering -3 weeks: If stage one has not resolved the block it will be put into stage 2 of the block process. If the block has been resolved then the applicant will be invited to the gathering.

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Gathering -2 weeks: If stage two has not resolved the block then the block will go to stage 3 to be resolved at the gathering. If it has been resolved then the applicant will be invited to the gathering.

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Gathering happens!

### **1. Fill out the application form on Autop (formerly Huddl)**

If there is someone in your life whose involvement would make it more exciting for you to be involved, and they meet the criteria, then ask them to [follow this link](#) and fill in the easy peasy application form. If you propose someone, you and your fellow proposer will be

guiding your mate all the way through the process. Make sure you feel confident they meet the criteria before encouraging them to apply. It is crucial that they have read three documents - this one, the [‘What we know so far’](#) and the [project plan](#) before they apply. NB: you can only propose someone if you are a member yourself *and* have been to a gathering. **Please do this at least 8 weeks before a gathering if you wish to attend that gathering.**

## **2. Propose your mate on Autopo**

Once they’ve applied, you’ll then propose them. To do this, go to [the application section of our Autopo page](#) and click ‘propose’ next to their application. Please include the reasons that you’re proposing them including how well and for how long you’ve known them, and any information that adds to their application. A successful applicant needs two proposers both of whom have known the applicant very well for at least a year, ideally longer. So you might want to check in with other folk who know the applicant as well as you do so they can also propose them. **Please do this no later than 4 weeks before a gathering.**

## **3. Support other applications**

All current members will automatically be emailed when there is a new application. We encourage everyone to take a look at applications as they come in and support if they feel moved so that everyone is fully informed and happy with the new invitees. If you’re satisfied that an applicant meets all the criteria and you’d like to add the weight of your support to their application, then you can become one of their supporters which will help in the event of us having too many applications. You can do this on [the application page](#). **Please do this no later than 4 weeks before a gathering.**

## **4. Clarifying Questions**

Having read the applications, if you have some questions you’d like to ask the applicant or proposer to clarify then please email them direct. Their email address is on the application page underneath their profile picture.

## **5. Then what?**

At the latest, four weeks before the next gathering, the process working group will make sure that all applications have either been accepted or put into the block process. If there are more the number of current spaces who meet all the criteria then the people with the most number of proposers and supporters will be invited. Consensus of the whole group is assumed as long as there are no blocks.

## **Blocking applications - how it works**

You can block someone up to 3 weeks before a gathering in the case of a person being proposed whose involvement would mean you would step out of the project .

Our intention is to find the balance between protecting sensitive information (especially given our overlapping social circles) and being transparent and accountable. Although there are many deep connections between individuals, at this stage of our project, we don’t yet

have a robust and well-tested shared culture of trust and collective deep connection. As our culture becomes more formed, we expect that the blocking process will evolve.

We have created a process that allows the blocker to choose the level of disclosure that they feel is appropriate in relation to the sensitivity of their reason for blocking.

### **To block an application**

Email someone from the buzzard eye/bird's eye crew or the membership crew and summarise your reasons unless they are too sensitive for the whole group to know. Currently you can email Amy ([passitonfromthemill@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:passitonfromthemill@yahoo.co.uk)) or Paddy ([paddygillett@googlemail.com](mailto:paddygillett@googlemail.com)). They will support you through the process below.

Once you've raised a block then there is a 3 tier process. Everyone starts on tier one. If consensus isn't found at this tier, then the next tier is moved to and so on.

#### **1. Blocker and proposers consider block**

You (the blocker) and proposers contact each other to talk through the reasons for the block. The proposers will withdraw their proposal if they agree with the reasons for the block. If the proposers don't agree with the block then the block is passed to a selection of 5 people (see below). You, (the blocker) can withdraw your block if you change your mind.

#### **2. Blocker, proposers and circle of five consider block**

You (the blocker) choose five people from the wider collective who you feel comfortable to share the reason for your block with. Five is the number that we felt sufficient to entrust with decision. This choice process can be supported by Amy, Paddy or Anna. You (the blocker), the proposers and the circle of five meet and they hear your reasons for your block. This group (including you the blocker and the proposers) then consider whether the block should still stand for the good of the whole collective. If the circle of five, the proposers and you (the blockers) can't find consensus on whether the block should stand or not, then the block stands until the next big gathering where it'll be discussed by the whole group in order to find consensus. You, (the blocker) can withdraw your block if you change your mind.

#### **3. Whole group consider block**

Tell everyone reason for block during the gathering and let the whole group decide.

Ultimately if the group decides to accept the application whilst ignoring the block then this can have big ramifications such as the blocker deciding to leave the group, which may in itself have knock on impacts to the group dynamic.

### **Timings of membership process**

Membership is technically always open - but we'll only be able to guarantee processing of membership applications in a timely way when we have a deadline of a big gathering to work backwards from. At the moment our intentions is to allow 6-8 weeks from time

applications are in to the date of the gathering: 4 weeks for the current membership to take part in the application process and 2-4 weeks for the applicant to book cheaper travel etc.

### **Collection of information**

In order to make sure we're doing what we can to tend to members individual needs, as well as the needs of the whole group, the buzzard crew (who have a birds eye view on the whole project) and the membership working group using a simple spreadsheet. In it we track everyone's contact details, involvement over time, membership status, what their current capacity and connection to the project is etc. All members have access to this document.

### **Final Word**

We know there is a lot of information to take in here! If you'd like to talk the process through with anyone or need any tech support, please do get in touch with either Amy, Paddy, Anna or Lucy, who are tending to new members. This is a working document that is still evolving. Any tune ups are most welcome.