

# **Bridport Cohousing**

# **Communications Policy**

**Last Updated April 2023**

## **The principles which inform this policy:**

1. We want to promote clear and open communication between all members.
2. We want all members to be able to participate as fully as possible in meetings, discussions, and events, and to be able to express their views safely and effectively within the group.
3. We want all members to have equal access to relevant information by employing effective methods to share that information.
4. We are guided by the principles of non-violent communication\* in every aspect of our work and as a community.
5. We respect the privacy of all members and do not share other people's contact details or personal information outside of BC.

## **The aims of this policy:**

1. To outline best practices across the different forms of communication used in Bridport Cohousing.
2. To signpost more detailed processes where necessary.

## **Therefore, our current agreement is that:**

1. Members take responsibility to keep themselves informed about meetings, events, decisions, etc.
2. Members have access to communications relevant to them stored on our Google Drive.
3. Email forms a significant part of how we communicate our work, therefore please:
  - keep emails to a minimum
  - be respectful and courteous - remember, it is very easy to misconstrue language and an email written 'in anger' could be very upsetting for the recipient
  - reflect on what you've written before sending
  - only send emails to the people or individuals for whom the content is relevant or useful, and be considerate of the use of 'Reply All'
  - send anything that is not directly BC work-related privately, rather than to the whole membership.
4. All internal and external communications made on behalf of BC should be free from the promotion of any cause – political, personal or otherwise.
5. We will not misuse the BC contact list by emailing or adding members to WhatsApp groups without their consent or for non-BC related communications.
6. Members are encouraged to engage with BC's online presence (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.); we should always get permission from BC members before sharing photos of them on social media channels.
7. For ease of access, we will use standard formats and templates for meeting agendas and minutes.

8. We will make use of the Virtual Noticeboard for community glue, and for sharing information or articles relating to our common values that might interest BC members; this content might also be shared beyond BC on our social media channels.
9. Communication within meetings is guided by the principles of Sociocracy, which actively invites members to express their views (e.g., by the use of 'rounds' so everyone has an opportunity and obligation to speak or pass).
10. If there are situations where members need to resolve conflict and misunderstandings, they are advised to refer to the Dispute Guidance policy.

\* The basics of Nonviolent Communication involve **expressing ourselves with clarity, compassion, self-responsibility, empathy, and the common good in mind**, which is the exact opposite of what violent communication is. Through its emphasis on deep listening – to ourselves as well as others – NVC can help us to move from automatic reactions to conscious responses and reflection.