



Eco-communities and shared living: Autonomy through egalitarianism

Penny Clark, October 2020

www.ConsciousColiving.com

My background



Our vision is a future living paradigm where people are consciously connected to themselves, each other & nature.





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We work with operators and developers

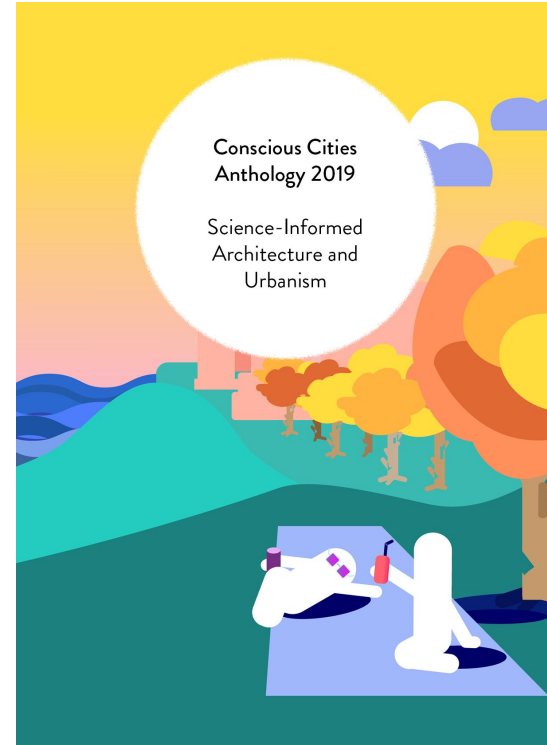


Renders by Wellstudio and Tinto Architects



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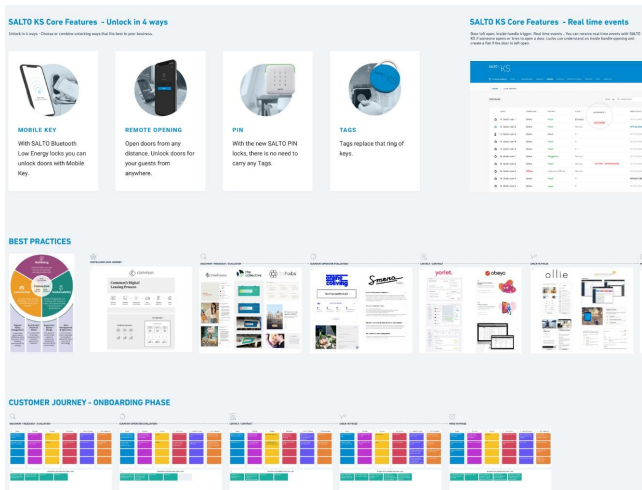
We conduct R&D and create content





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We host events and workshops





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We partner with coliving experts

Cutwork

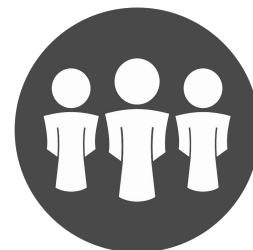


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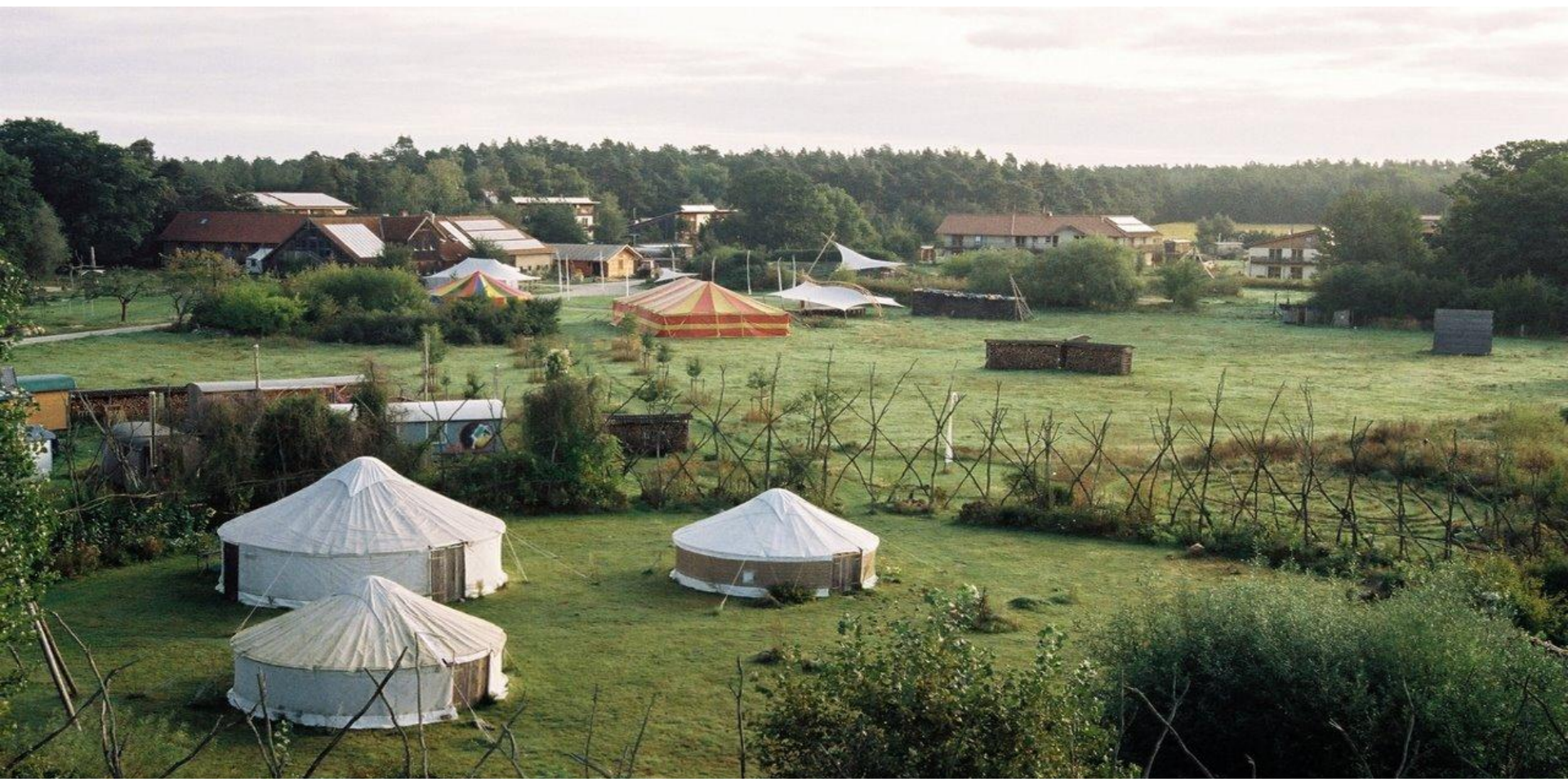


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Defining eco-communities and shared living



Is this what
you think of?





Cohousing



Coliving



Commune

Ecovillage

Eco-community

Kibbutz

Housing cooperative

Intentional community

Retreat

Shelter

Squat

Flatshare

Eco-communities: a type of intentional community that has an ecological focus.

Intentional communities are a group of five or more people, including some not related by blood, marriage or adoption (Ergas, 2010, p.34), who have 'chosen to live together with a common purpose, working cooperatively to create a lifestyle that reflects their shared core values' (Kozeny, 1995).



Landmatters Permaculture Community, Devon, UK



‘An ecovillage can be defined as an intentional, traditional or urban community of between 50 – 500 people (Kasper, 2008) using local participatory processes to integrate ecological, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of sustainability in order to regenerate social and natural environments’ (Global Ecovillage Network, 2020).

Lammas Ecovillage, Wales, UK



How many?

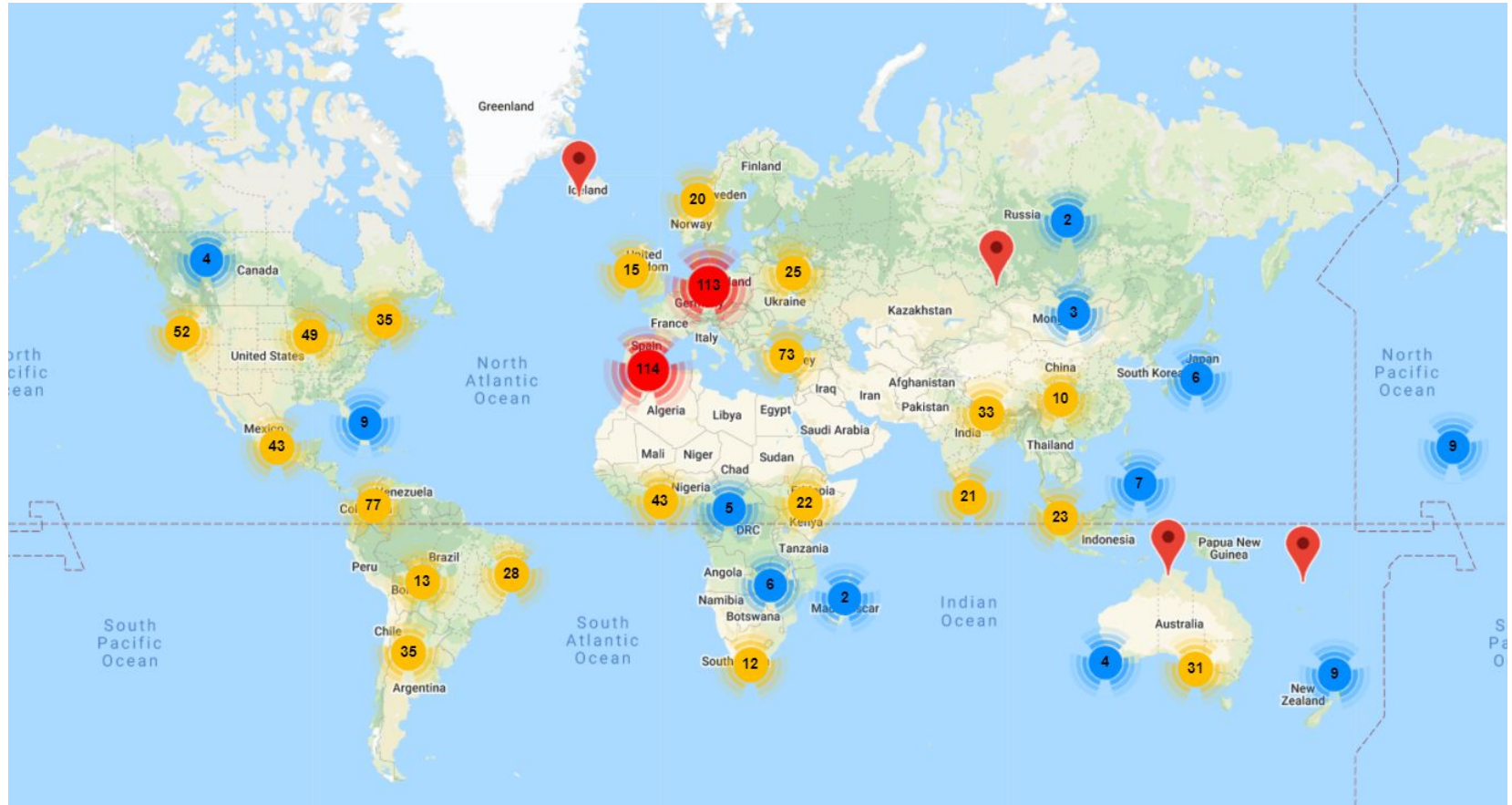
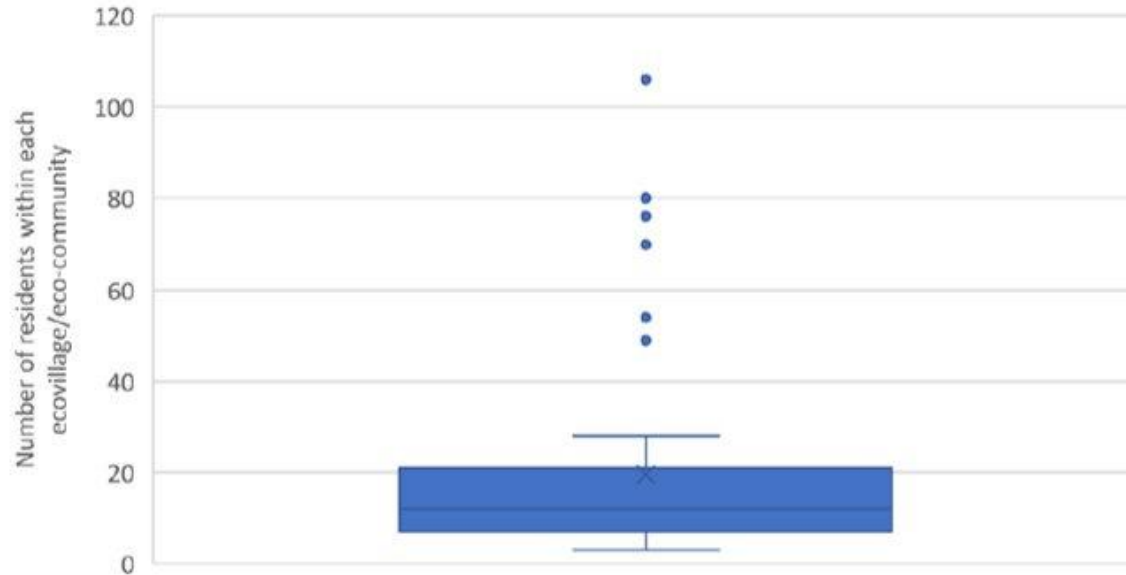


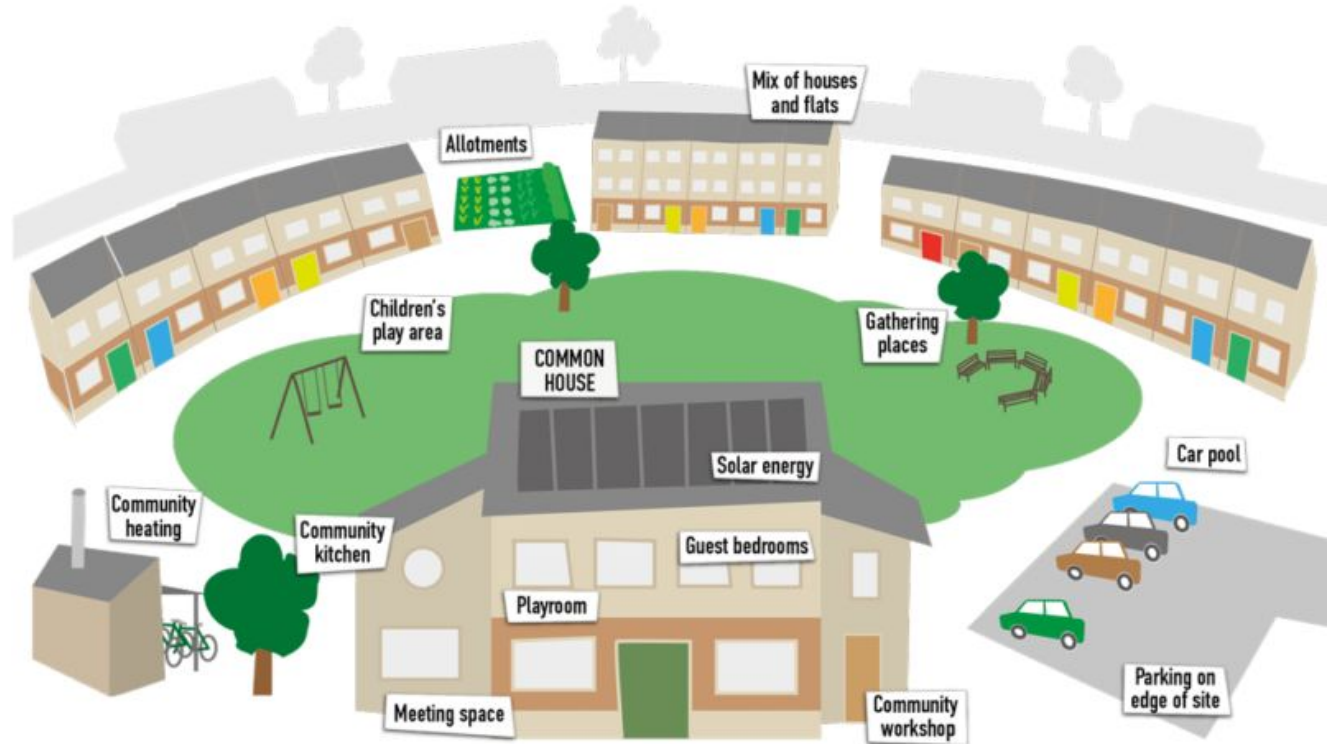


Figure 2: UK Ecovillages/Eco-communities: Number of Residents (as of 2017)



Cohousing communities are 'intentional communities, created and run by their residents' where each household has a 'self-contained, private home as well as shared community space' and residents come together to 'manage their community, share activities, and regularly eat together'.

(The UK Cohousing Network, 2020)





‘a modern form of housing where residents share living space and a set of interests, values, and/or intentions’

(OpenDoor, 2020)

Communication tools



Cleaning



Cooking



Projects



Events



Decision-making



Security



Communications



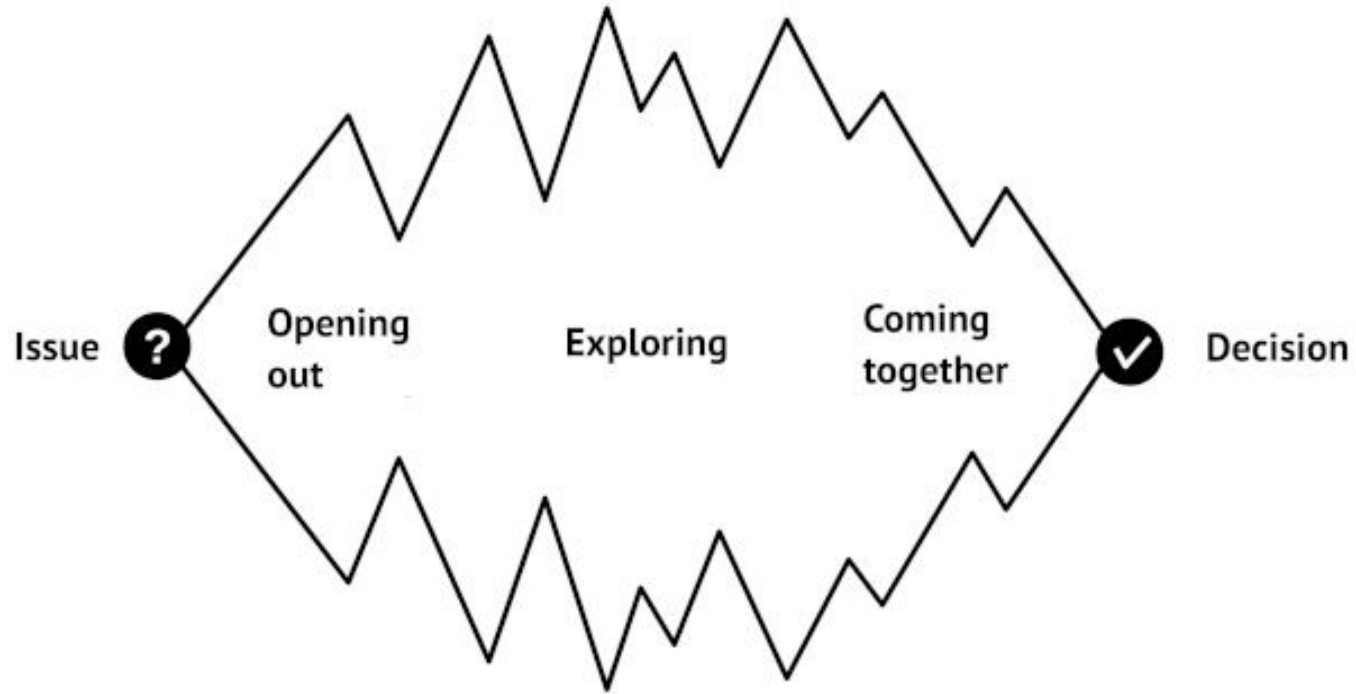
Conflict
resolution



'in consensus no decision is made against the will of an individual or a minority. If significant concerns remain unresolved, a proposal can be blocked and prevented from going ahead. This means that the whole group has to work hard to find win-win solutions that address everyone's needs.'

(Seeds For Change)







Consensus: slow, but worth it?

Interviewee M: the original radiators in this room were very small and they did not heat up the room that well [...] a proposal was made to replace them, um, now that should be fairly straightforward get yourself a number of estimates choose a decent one and bring that to the meeting... which is exactly what happened, but... it must have been... how long did it take? A couple of years before they actually were put in...

Interviewee J: And it was partly because, um, there were sort of yellow cards put up, which means I have an objection [...] at the very last minute when we all thought oh yes excellent...

Interviewee M: all of a sudden...

Interviewee J: and they were really good extra proposals, like, why are we paying out more money for bigger radiators when we haven't even got sort of stoppers for stopping the heat going out of the doors? Or we haven't lined the curtains and, you know, so in the end you know somebody said 'Oh I'll do the door stoppers' and someone else said 'I'll do the curtains' and we did in the end... because it took a long time and went through all those consensus things get a better, um, result... but it just took ages to do!



Springhill Cohousing, Stroud, UK



Canon Frome Court, Herefordshire, UK

Interviewee D: all our decision processes are are built around consensus, and they always worked [...] until the issue of the boiler [...] reared its ugly head [...] one person within a community who didn't like something could kind of block that [...]

Everybody has a view on something, um, and often, that's fine... at times people have strongly held views and somebody else has a polarised view and that can be kind of quite difficult... if people are accepting, 'Ah OK that's fine I'll go with it, I don't agree with it but I'll go with it because most of you want to' - fine...

I think what happened with that scarring experience revealed to people that actually [...] the tyranny of the individual [...] an individual completely derailed the overall objectives of the rest of the community.

Consensus needs shared values

In 2017 Members were asked what they liked most about Canon Frome Court. We grouped our answers by the lifestyle it offered, the farm we worked and the community we created although these should be considered as one.





A communication technique, often used to manage potential conflict.

Some key principles

- All people have it in them to give...
- But you must not force people to give
- We all have needs



Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, founder of nonviolent communication





Interviewee H: [...] there's someone who has like lots of difficulties sleeping. And so really needed like doors to be closed very quietly after a certain time, and then some of us would forget, and [...] that stuff that's like slightly annoying like oh I don't want to close door quietly it's just, you know, it's ten o'clock. But, really, NVC [*nonviolent communication*] really allowed us to like hear or allowed me to really hear [...] why it was really important for this person and it wasn't just a little thing was actually like quite a, you know, connected to quite a lot of different things in that person's life and, um, and that you know helped me change my behavior.

[...] the tendency in the culture is to kind of like, kind of keep the harmony [...] But I think it has been really useful [...] it helps people like use that as a tool to, to, to change their behavior or to appreciate a person's perspective, or their reality.





Understanding the perspectives of
others



Self-reflection and understanding your
own needs



- Enabling connectedness on three levels
- Radiating out: practicing caring about something bigger than yourself
- Radiating in: knowing yourself through the eyes of others



Shared living and autonomy

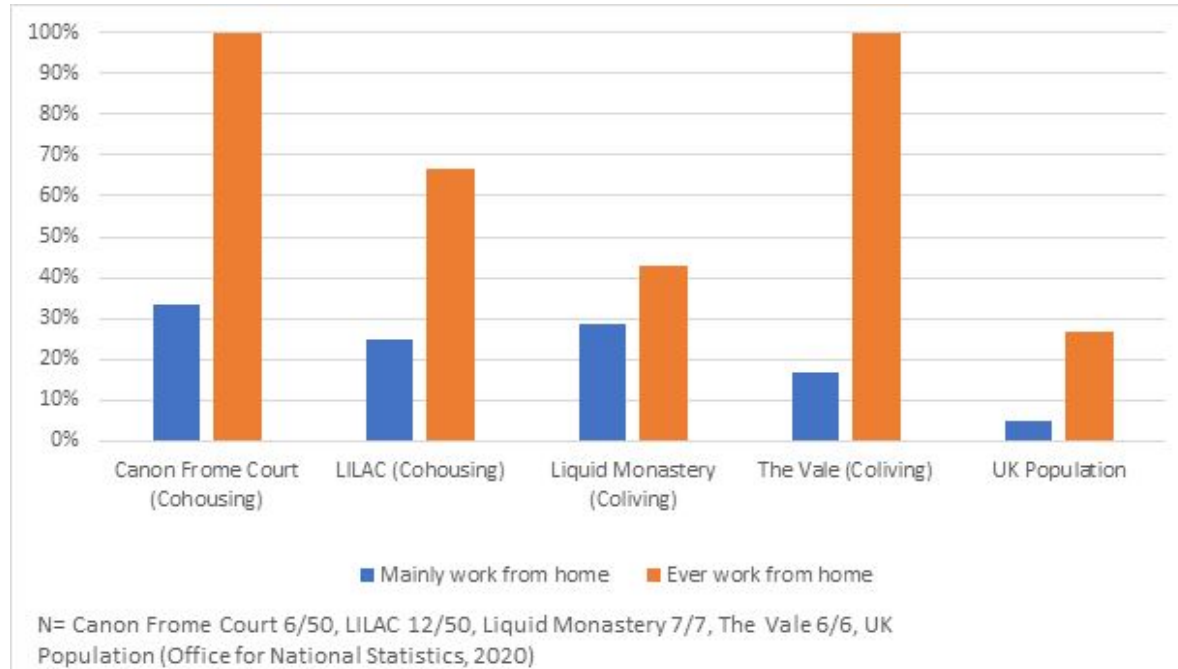


Life costs less, because residents share resources, and more of their needs are met at home.



Apple picking at Canon Frome Court Cohousing

Amount of working from home, average



People work less, work more flexibly, and work from home more.



People have more time to devote to the community.

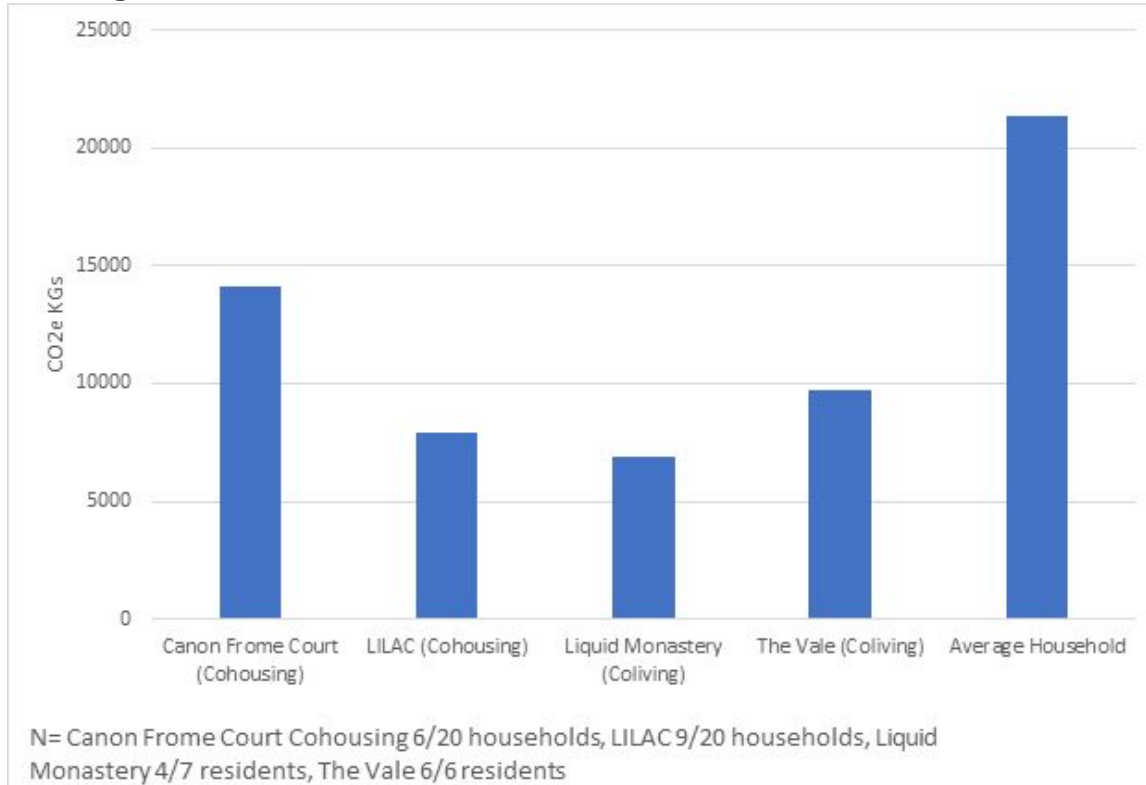
Social norms within the community grow stronger.



Building the new barn Canon Frome Court Cohousing

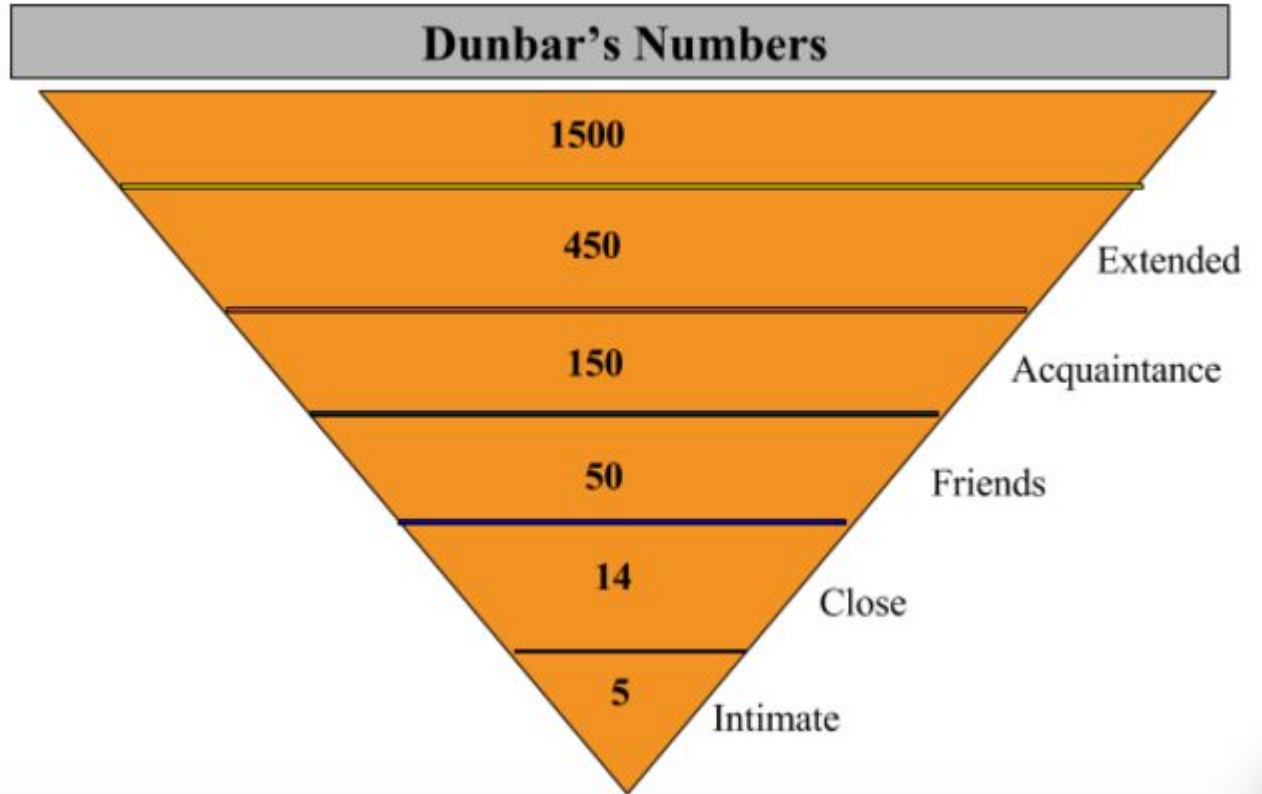


A comparison of cohousing/coliving communities and UK average household CO₂e emissions per year



These case study shared living communities generate between 32 and 66 percent of greenhouse gas emissions when compared with an average UK household

Designing for shared living





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Clusters









Nooks and buffer zones









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Thank you!
Any questions?

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