



CODE OF CONDUCT

Based on National CLT network model policy
Approved by the board on 22nd September 2019
To be reviewed by 1 September 2022

National CLT network principle

One of the underlying drivers of community land trusts (CLTs) is that local people have an ethos of public service and the skills to create solutions to local problems. CLTs are fundamentally agents of local communities and are not directly accountable to other outside organisations. This code sets out the main standards that people in a CLT's community and others might expect. It is then for CLTs to govern themselves and to introduce other techniques, such as external assessment and audit, if they so wish. As the sponsor of this code, the National CLT Network will intervene as a last resort where a CLT was infringing the code. It could also decide to publish the fact that a CLT was not meeting the relevant standard of good practice in the code.

Note: This code should be read in conjunction with START policies, which are available on its website.

1. START Community Trust is clear about the purpose of its work.

1. START has been formed for the benefit of the community to operate as a CLT in the parishes of Rogate, Stedham-with-Iping and Trotton-with-Chithurst. As started in its FCA-registered Rules, its objects are to carry on with the express purpose of furthering the social, economic and environmental interests of the community (see our website policies page for the full version).
2. START is clear that it provides its asset base (land, buildings, money and other resources) for the benefit of its community. It is also clear that it provides these benefits in perpetuity. START publicises these objectives widely. It will build and hold its asset base, to enhance a sense of solidarity within its community, and to undertake further projects in future if it so wishes.
3. Where practicable, START works in the interest of everyone in its community, irrespective of the backgrounds of individuals and whether or not they are members of START.
4. As well as promoting specific projects involving asset ownership, START aims more generally to maximise the skills, social linkages and economic capacity of people in its community.
5. START will ensure that any profits are reinvested to finance further work that meets its objects.

2. The community and membership of START

6. START encourages all members of its community to become members and to play an active part in its work. It will review its membership once a year and regularly encourage people in the community to become members. START will publish an annual report and distributes it to people in its community. It will welcome suggestions for action from people in the community throughout the year, and will provide feedback.
7. Once it owns property, START will hold a meeting every year and invite all individuals or households in the community to that meeting. It will encourage people at the meeting to highlight emerging local needs and to suggest solutions to these needs that START might pursue. It will also take account of the views of people unable to attend the meeting. Notes of such meetings will be publicised.

3. The work of START

8. START will assess the needs of its community – where possible based on objective evidence and community support - and will develop proposals for projects that provide solutions to these needs. It aims to buy and provide land and buildings for a wide spectrum of uses and services in its community. It may only be able to promote projects that meet one or two needs at a time, but it will remain open to meeting a variety of needs in its projects over the years.
9. START aims to achieve a balance between standards and costs - undertaking projects to good standards of design and specification while ensuring its projects are completed at reasonable cost and represent good value for money.
10. START ensures that access for members of the community to its projects is fair and that any selection processes are open and transparent. At the appropriate stage it will invite members to join a panel to comment on sites and designs.
11. START will do its best to operate an active policy on equality of opportunity and diversity, and another on environmental sustainability.
12. START will be open to suggestions of collaboration with other CLTs.

4. Money and resources

13. START will seek to engage a wide spectrum of people in its communities to provide funds for its schemes, and other resources such as professional skills, labour, land and buildings.
14. START aims to raise loans and grants on terms that enable it to give priority to meeting the interests of its local community. For example, the terms of funding for housing schemes should enable it to give first priority in allocating homes to those in its community, ahead of nominees of housing authorities.
15. START has a robust asset lock in its Rules and its profits are not distributed as dividends or other payments to its members, although it can pay members for direct benefits such as interest on loans they have made to it, or rent on land they have leased to it.

5. Board of directors

16. START's directors work for public, rather than personal, benefit. Their meetings will normally be open to the public. It will seek to ensure that members of its committee are drawn from a wide cross section of its community and that no individual or group unduly influences the committee.

6. Reputation, behaviour and probity

17. START seeks to enhance the reputation of all CLTs and do nothing to harm it. It will try to avoid any suggestion of impropriety, remaining conscious that matters such as conflicts of interest and the acceptance of gifts and hospitality are particularly sensitive. Its directors and any committee members will be expected to act solely in a voluntary capacity in the best interest of START and receive no payment except the reimbursement of reasonable expenses in line with their rules.
18. START will account for its activities in an open manner and provide members of the local community with reasonable access to information. It will maintain a register of interests for all directors and any committee members. Where there is an actual or possible conflict of interest, directors will decide whether this makes board or committee membership untenable for the individual concerned, whether the individual shall have no involvement in the matter or whether the matter can be managed by ensuring that his/her interests are declared and registered.
19. START is aware that a conflict of interest arises if a committee member, his/her family members or close associates are connected with any organisation or person that can gain financially from a contract awarded by START. The same applies to services and benefits in kind provided by START (such as allocation of housing). START's directors and committee members will only receive benefits in kind (eg services offered by a community shop or sports field) from START's work that are available to all members of the community.
20. START has a robust system for dealing with complaints that is publicly available.