



Edward Carpenter Community

Guidelines

*A summary of who we are, how we make decisions
and our experience to date, in the form of guidelines*

November 2014 Update

The content of this booklet is the property of the Edward Carpenter Community

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to ECC Guidelines

The Edward Carpenter Community (ECC) is a supportive network of gay men committed to caring, trusting, sharing, personal growth, creativity and other principles and intentions aimed at nurturing 'community'. We are non-profit making and seek to share work, skills and decision-making and avoid hierarchy. We have evolved a loose administrative structure to enable us to make decisions and plan and hold activities and events. *ECC Guidelines* (formerly called "*How We Do Things*") brings together and sets out, as guidelines:

- * How we make decisions
- * How we organise and run our activities and events, and
- * What we do to help our community flourish

We share a mutual responsibility for each other and for the many tasks involved. We keep in touch and share information and ideas via e-mail, our website: www.edwardcarpentercommunity.org.uk and our online magazine *Rainbow*. The Community's business activities (legal and contractual obligations, finances, etc) are carried out under the umbrella of Edward Carpenter Community Limited, a non-profit company governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association.

1.2 Guidelines not rules

We emphasise that these guidelines are not tablets of stone, but a distillation of our experience to date, which is constantly evolving as the community develops. In no way are they intended to inhibit new ideas or restrain experimentation. On the contrary, they provide a framework so that new ideas can be tried safely.

These guidelines are to be applied for the benefit of the community. Should the application of a guideline not be of benefit to the community, then it should not be applied.

1.3 History of the Edward Carpenter Community

In 1980 a group of gay men living in Leeds with ideals of nurturing each other and living co-operatively in the country formed the Wild Lavender Housing Co-operative. In 1984 they decided to bring their vision and ideals to the wider community by organising a Gay Men's Week at Laurieston Hall in Scotland. A second week that year focusing on health helped establish a larger network of gay men who went on to become the Edward Carpenter Community (ECC). We chose the name to honour Edward Carpenter, a utopian gay man who lived for much of his life (1844 - 1929) in a rural setting near Sheffield amongst a group of his friends and lovers. E. M. Forster described him as "a poet, a prose writer, a prophet, a socialist, a mystic, a manual labourer, an anti-vivisectionist, an art critic, etcetera".

Initially, ECC's focus was around setting up a rural community and holistic centre where our experience of personal growth and intimacy could be shared as a resource for the wider gay community. By 1987 it was clear that ECC had become much more than a group of prospective rural dwellers and was developing in several directions. People's changing energies and interests have emphasised different aspects of ECC from time to time. Gay Men's Weeks at Laurieston grew impressively and are now an established part of the gay calendar. Weeks and weekends covering a whole range of topics have also been held at other venues in Britain and once in France. Several attempts to set up a rural centre have come to nothing, largely through lack of money. In June 1994 we became incorporated as a non-profit making company limited by guarantee.

1.4 Principles and Intentions

The Principles and Intentions (P&Is) are the foundation of our community by which we regulate all our activities. They are incorporated into the Memorandum and Articles of Association of ECC Ltd. We reviewed and updated them in 2009.

Principles

We are committed to:

- * Personal growth
- * Achieving greater trust and intimacy amongst ourselves and amongst all gay men
- * Creating and maintaining a supportive network of gay men
- * Living in a way that is not exploitative of our fellow creatures, our environment, or its resources, and exploring non-exploitative alternatives to the current economic and social system
- * Welcoming gay men from disadvantaged and oppressed groups and doing what we can to reduce the impact of all forms of oppression
- * Overcoming the effects of our own oppression as gay men
- * Sharing skills and living and working co-operatively rather than competitively
- * Acting as a resource for each other, other interested gay people and individuals and groups that share our concerns and objectives

Intentions

We intend to:

- * Encourage an atmosphere of trust, mutual support and sharing in each other's lives
- * Encourage creativity in our lives
- * Make a personal commitment to each other and to the Community; to acknowledge a responsibility to the Community and make decisions by consensus
- * Promote activities for emotional, physical and spiritual development and well-being, and encourage a healthy lifestyle; and continue to provide healthy vegetarian food at our events
- * Welcome gay men from all backgrounds and encourage and support men with disabilities, black, older and younger men to become involved in our community
- * Encourage opportunities for living and working together
- * Introduce people to new ideas and new ways of living

1.5 Vision and Values

As part of our many discussions before agreeing updated P&Is in 2009, we also put together a simpler three point Vision and Values statement (V&Vs) to help with explaining what the community is about and with marketing our activities:

"As members of the Edward Carpenter Community we are committed to:

1. **Becoming fully ourselves as gay men** by being creative, courageous, open, truthful, loving and fully responsible for ourselves. We will pursue personal growth and engage in activities that increase our self-awareness, self-worth and well-being.
2. **Creating community** by being welcoming, inclusive, safe, empowering, encouraging, allowing, accepting, co-operative, challenging, forgiving and fun. We will do this through friendship that builds trust and intimacy, and formal and informal gatherings and events. We will embrace diversity. We will make decisions by consensus, support each other and share skills and knowledge.
3. **Living respectfully and holistically within the wider world** by engaging, inspiring, questioning, pioneering, sharing our lives and gifts. We will build relationships with others, and be aware of the impact of our thoughts, intentions and actions on our communities and planet."

1.6 Joining our activities and becoming a member

Anyone who identifies as a gay man and shares our principles and intentions is welcome to take part in our activities. With the incorporation of ECC as a non-profit making limited company, there are now two forms of membership in addition to joining our mailing list:

Mailing List

Anyone who identifies as a gay man and agrees with our Principles and Intentions can ask to be on our mailing list (now handled electronically via MailChimp). Everyone on the mailing list is entitled to:

- * Receive *Rainbow* and other mail-outs and publicity material
- * Receive notice of, attend and take part in our annual business gathering (AG)

Community Member

Anyone who attends a national residential event automatically becomes a Community Member. Community Members are entitled to:

- * Receive *Rainbow* and other mail-outs and publicity material
- * Receive notice of, attend and take part in our annual business gathering (AG)
- * Join our various e-mail discussion forums

Member of Edward Carpenter Community Ltd

To qualify as a member of ECC Ltd, a person has to identify as a gay man and:

- * Agree with the Principles and Intentions of ECC
- * Agree to a maximum liability of £1 should the company wind up with unpaid debts, and
- * Complete and sign an application form.

Members of ECC Ltd are entitled to vote at the company's meetings.

Subscriptions

We do not have a separate subscription system for membership.

Ceasing to be a member of Edward Carpenter Community and the ECC E-mail List

A person ceases to be a Community Member and will no longer receive mailings or be a member of the e-mail list if:

- * The person asks to be removed from the mailing list, or
- * The Autumn Gathering (our annual business meeting) decides that community membership should be suspended or cancelled.

Ceasing to be a member of Edward Carpenter Community Ltd

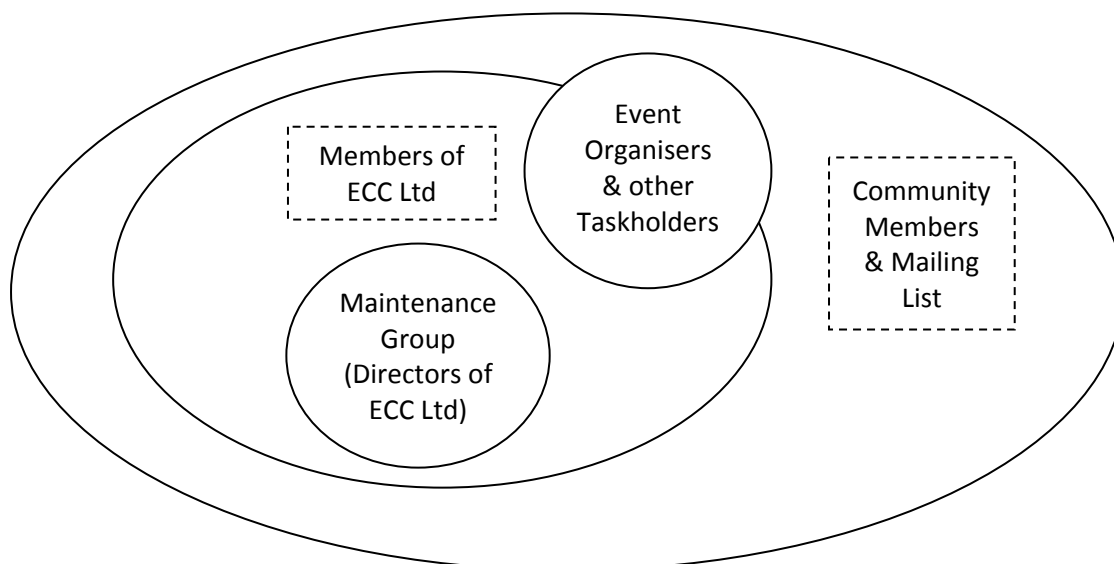
A person ceases to be a Community Member and will no longer receive mailings or be a member of the e-mail list if:

- * The person asks to resign their membership in writing, or
- * The Autumn Gathering (our annual business meeting) decides that community membership should be suspended or cancelled.
- * The person dies.

2. HOW WE GOVERN OURSELVES

2.1 An outline of our structure & constitution

Edward Carpenter Community is a network of gay men who share a mutual commitment to our principles and intentions. To enable the community to take on legal and contractual obligations, and avoid placing an undue burden on members who fulfil roles within the community, ECC is constituted as a company limited by guarantee. The diagram below illustrates the structure.



The largest group represents the mailing list, currently about 1000 people. The members of ECC Limited accept a responsibility to pay up to £1 should the company go into liquidation with debts.

2.2 Autumn Gathering (AG)

We hold a members' gathering each autumn to make decisions – the Autumn Gathering. We invite everyone on the mailing list to attend, and those who do make the decisions on behalf of the whole community. We try to have meetings in which there is equal power, responsibility, knowledge and opportunity to participate, and have evolved guidelines to help us achieve this (see "Meetings" in **Error! Reference source not found.**).

The Maintenance Group plans each AG. This involves choosing and booking the venue, listing the issues, thinking about how these can best be discussed and asking people to facilitate different sections of the gathering. We often split into smaller working groups to look at particular issues and devise recommendations, which are then reported back to the whole group to make a decision.

We strive for consensus wherever possible. If consensus cannot be reached and the decision can be postponed, we do so. Where a decision cannot be postponed we take a vote. In these circumstances a proposal needs the support of 75% of those voting to be agreed.

2.3 Annual General Meeting of ECC Ltd

During the AG we hold the AGM of ECC Ltd. This is the essential legal business of the company, which includes approving the minutes of the last meeting, treasurer's report, and election of directors, treasurer, and company secretary. Only members of ECC Ltd can make decisions at an AGM, in a legal company sense, but non-members are welcome to attend and participate.

2.4 Quorum for AGM of ECC Ltd

At least 15 members of ECC Ltd must be present at the AGM for the meeting to be quorate.

2.5 Maintenance Group

The Maintenance Group (MG) is responsible for ECC's affairs between AGs. The MG usually consists of three to five members including the Treasurer and Company Secretary. The MG's role is to:

- * Make sure that key AG decisions are implemented
- * Take any decisions which have to be made between AG meetings, as far as possible in line with previous AG decisions
- * Call the AG and plan the agenda
- * Look after our finances
- * Liaise with event organisers
- * Act as the Directors of ECC Ltd and ensure that the company complies with legal requirements

The Maintenance Group is essentially reactive (rather than proactive), interpreting and implementing the decisions of previous AGs, but can take such essential decisions as are necessary from time to time. In effect, the MG are the stewards of the community between Autumn Gatherings, maintaining the continuity of ECC's spirit. A record of decisions taken will be presented to the next AG. It should be noted that the Maintenance Group is not in charge of events, which are set up and run by the individuals who offer to organise them.

2.6 Treasurer and Secretary

The **Treasurer's** role is to:

- * Be the steward of the community's financial resources
- * Prepare an administration budget each year for approval by the MG
- * Approve expenditure in line with the budget
- * Set guidelines for and give advice to event organisers
- * Agree bursaries
- * Maintain accurate records of our income and expenditure
- * Prepare an annual statement of income and expenditure for approval by the AG
- * Submit accounts to Companies House

The **Secretary's** role is to:

- * Co-ordinate the work of the MG
- * Act as ECC Ltd's company secretary and ensure that ECC Ltd meets its legal obligations

Sometimes one person fulfils the role of Secretary; sometimes the role is shared between Maintenance Group members.

2.7 Other roles within the community

At each AG, members also take on various tasks. These include:

- * Contact Person(s)
- * Newsletter Editor(s)
- * Website Manager / Publicity Co-ordinator
- * Mailing List Database Keeper
- * Email List Manager
- * Community E-mail Router
- * Archivist
- * Event Organisers (as decided)

2.8 Nomination and appointment of the Maintenance Group and other task holders

Nomination

We share a mutual responsibility for the many tasks that have to be carried out and rely on the collective effort of many individuals who give of their time and skills. Anyone can be put forward or can put themselves forward for a job, either before the AG or at the AG. We try to give advance notice when a job has to be filled and encourage everyone to consider volunteering, and to approach the Secretary or current taskholders if they would like to know more about what a job entails.

Appointment

The AG appoints the Maintenance Group and other taskholder for the coming year. The AGM (the legal business part of the AG) also appoints the Maintenance Group members as directors of ECC Ltd. Where necessary, the Maintenance Group fills casual vacancies between AGs.

2.9 Duration of service

We recognise that it is highly desirable that roles, functions and activities in the community change at reasonable intervals to retain freshness and give newcomers a chance. Equally, we have to balance this with the problem of finding members who are willing, have the ability and can spare the necessary time – all in the same person. To this end, our guidelines are that:

- ★ Members of the MG should serve no more than 3 continuous years, extendible to 5 years at the discretion of the AG.
- ★ The position of Treasurer should run for 5 years, provided the incumbent is willing and suitable. Efforts should be made to arrange for a smooth hand-over in the last year by appointing a deputy treasurer.
- ★ After organising 5 events or for 3 consecutive years, whichever is sooner, organisers should take at least a year off.
- ★ The principle of serving for no more than 3 continuous years also applies to all other members undertaking roles on behalf of the community, including Rainbow Editor, contact person, etc.

We recognise that for some roles, including that of treasurer, a phased hand-over is important.

2.10 Composition of event organising teams and responsibilities during events

Sizes of organising teams vary depending on the nature of the event, the expected number of participants, the strength/ experience of team members etc. As a general principle, there should be at least two organisers and at least one should have previous experience of organising an ECC event. It is not necessary that everyone is experienced, and desirable that there is always someone new to organising on the team. Organisers get funded places on weeks (see Section 3.7 for guidelines on numbers of funded places).

Event organisers are responsible for events and make all other decisions about the event, both before it takes place and during the event, sometimes in conjunction with a wider group of facilitators.

2.11 Deciding which events or weeks to run

Anyone who wishes to organise an event, be it a Gay Men's Week or another event, presents a 'bid' to the AG, which decides whether or not to accept the bid. In making this decision, the AG considers the resources required and available. Such resource limitations may include:

- ★ The availability of a 'slot' at Laurieston or another venue
- ★ The extent of funding required
- ★ The experience of the organisers
- ★ Past experience of similar events
- ★ Desirability of holding a particular event (eg: encouraging something new or experimental)

- * Risk of the event not being a success and the possible loss to the community in money and/or reputation.

2.12 Vision Gatherings

From time to time we hold a Vision Gathering to generate ideas on fresh directions for the community to develop. Our last Vision Gathering was in 2013.

2.13 Regional Groups

One of our aims is to create and maintain a supportive network within the reach of every gay man in the United Kingdom. In some areas we have regional groups who are affiliated to ECC. Groups have their own individual ways of organising and maintain their own membership and mailing lists. To be affiliated to ECC, a group should:

- * Agree with ECC's principles and intentions
- * Have a facilitator who has been on a Gay Men's Week and is approved by the MG
- * Use 'ECC' in the group's title and publicity, and
- * Make a report about their activities and finances to each AG

Affiliated groups:

- * Have access to the main mailing list (subject to the guidelines below)
- * May receive a grant from ECC as a whole but there is no expectation of financial contributions from the group to ECC nationally
- * Decide how to use their own funds, and how to dispose of any remaining group funds if they wind up
- * May ask the ECC Treasurer to hold monies on their behalf in a ring-fenced budget

2.14 Complaints and grievances

We encourage people to resolve disagreements amicably and speedily wherever possible. However, we do recognise that from time to time people may feel aggrieved about the way something has been handled. Our procedure for dealing with grievances is as follows:

Step 1

Raise your concern with an event organiser on the spot. Explain the problem and try to suggest a solution or way of doing things better next time. The event organisers will try to resolve the matter in a way that is acceptable to you.

Step 2

If you remain unhappy about the way the matter has been dealt with, write to the Maintenance Group (MG). Explain the problem and try to suggest a solution or way of doing things better next time.

Please remember that ECC is not a bureaucracy and the MG does not 'control' events. They look after ECC's affairs between AGs. If the matter is serious or difficult to resolve, they may ask a member or small group of members to help mediate.

Step 3

If you are unhappy with the MG's response, raise the matter with the AG. Write to the MG and ask them to ensure that your grievance is placed on the agenda for the next AG meeting. The AG will decide how the matter is to be resolved.

2.15 ECC Archives

One of our members has taken on the role of archivist, looking after and organising the archives of the history of the ECC. He now holds a fair sized collection of newsletters & records from various gatherings since the early days of the community.

3. OUR FINANCES

3.1 Introduction

We want our activities to be accessible to as many gay men as possible and keep costs as low as we can. Equally, our events are ECC's only source of income and have to cover general administration costs, Rainbow, insurance, etc as well. Our guidelines seek to fulfil the principles and intentions of the ECC, while minimising calls on central funds.

3.2 Stewarding our finances (who and how)

We rely on everyone involved with stewarding our financial resources to look after them and use them imaginatively and always for the best interests of the community. The methods we use are:

- * **Setting the scale of charges:** The MG agrees the sliding scales for the coming year's events, taking into consideration the views of the Treasurer, Event Organisers, and other members. These scales include provision for bursaries for people who have difficulty paying.
- * **Agreeing a budget and authorising expenditure:** The Maintenance Group is responsible for agreeing an administration budget for each year according to the decisions made by the AG, and for authorising expenditure and monitoring income and expenditure.
- * **Administering our finances:** The Treasurer administers the finances. He authorises spending in accordance with the budget, and accounts for income and expenditure to the Maintenance Group and, for each year, to the next AG.
- * **Event income and expenditure:** Responsibility for the finances for each event rests with the event organisers. They agree a budget in advance with the Maintenance Group, keep an eye on income and expenditure and take any corrective action that is necessary (in conjunction with the MG if necessary), and account to the Treasurer for event income and expenditure.
- * **Ensuring event expenditure does not exceed income:** We budget for each event by making assumptions about what people will pay, based on our experience of past events. If, when all the bookings are in, the forecast outcome (forecast income less forecast expenditure) is less than budgeted, event organisers in conjunction with the MG take the following action:
 - Try to reduce expenditure to match the projected shortfall in income
 - Explore ways to increase income, for instance by encouraging more high payers to attend or by seeking donations
 - Cover the shortfall from central funds or cancel the event

3.3 Operating the bank account

We have a number of bank accounts operated by the Treasurer, usually with other MG members as additional signatories:

- * Current account
- * High Interest account
- * Business Savings accounts

All cheques require two signatories.

3.4 Subscriptions

We do not have a separate annual subscription. Instead, we use part of the amount people pay on events to cover the cost of general administration.

3.5 Entitlement to funded places on events

We rely on the collective effort of many individuals who give of their skills and time to fulfil the many tasks which have to be carried out to enable ECC to function. No one receives any financial remuneration. While we seek to share work and skills, some jobs take a disproportionate amount of time and cannot easily be shared. In recognition of the effort involved, people fulfilling the following jobs are entitled to one fully funded place a year on an ECC event:

- * Treasurer and Maintenance Group Members
- * Contact Person(s) – one place shared if the job is shared
- * Mailing List Database Keeper
- * Newsletter Editor(s) – one place shared if the job is shared
- * Website Manager / Publicity Co-ordinator
- * Event Organisers (see guidelines below)

3.6 Scale of charges for events, bursaries and deposits

We want our events to be affordable for everyone and for no one to feel unable to come on grounds of cost. We have a sliding scale according to income, and bursaries are available for anyone who finds it difficult to pay the lowest band.

Sliding scales

There are strong feelings about what constitutes a fair amount for people with different incomes to pay. Some of the concerns are:

- * The top rates are expensive for what our events offer
- * People who know the system ignore the scales and pay what they think is appropriate
- * New people who are unfamiliar with ECC may decide not to book if they feel the rate suggested for their income is too high for them
- * People who need a bursary should not have to feel as though it is charity
- * High earners can afford to pay more than the top rate

We now have a structure similar to Laurieston's approach, based on % of the breakeven costs:

Income Level	% of breakeven
High income (£30,000 or more)	135%
Average income (£20,000 - £29,999)	120%
Low income (up to £19,999)	100%
Concessionary rate (for people living at benefit levels)	50%
Bursary rate (for people who cannot afford the concessionary rate)	25%

Guidance about the amount to pay

The events publicity will show the level on the scale of charges where the contribution covers the average cost of the week, including the contribution to central funds, so as to encourage participants to contribute at that level or above. We encourage everyone to be honest about their circumstances. We ask people to tell us what they will pay and take what they tell us about their circumstances on trust. We dislike turning anyone away for lack of money – wherever people are on the income scale. We encourage anyone who feels that they cannot afford the amount suggested for their income level to contact the event organisers to discuss their situation. People can pay by instalments by prior arrangement with the Treasurer.

Bursaries

We recognise that some people find it hard to afford the lowest rate on the scale. Equally, we recognise that whenever someone pays a lot less than the actual cost, or nothing at all, someone else has to pay a lot more. We have therefore developed a bursary system to enable everyone to come

to at least one event a year. For many years we budgeted for 5% of places on most events to be at the bursary rate, but from 2014 we have established a ring-fenced bursary fund which is used to subsidise all bursary places.

- * Bursaries are seen primarily as a way to help men living on very low incomes to attend an ECC event which they would otherwise not be able to afford for lack of funds. They are not intended to assist with short-term cash flow problems.
- * People who feel unable to pay the lowest rate are asked to write to the organisers to explain their circumstances and to ask for a bursary.
- * We value mutual trust and accept what people tell us about their circumstances without asking for proof. Whilst we will not generally refuse reasonable requests, members should be encouraged to consider the amount of subsidy they are requesting, and to offer additional contributions if their circumstances change.
- * Except in special circumstances, we expect everyone to pay something (usually £70 - £80) and to only apply for bursary help for one event per year.
- * The Treasurer manages the bursary fund and approves all bursary applications in consultation with event organisers.
- * The bursary fund is topped-up from a levy which forms part of the contribution to central funds charged on every event place. It can also be supplemented by fundraising events and additional donations. Details of the fund are published as part of the Treasurer's Report to the AG each year.

Deposits

To discourage casual cancellation, we ask participants to pay a 25% deposit to reserve their place on an event, of which the first £25 is usually non-refundable. Additionally, we reserve the right to retain all money paid if someone cancels a booking within two weeks of the start of an event without good reason such as illness or work commitments.

Payment of outstanding balances

We generally expect participants to pay any outstanding balance no later than one month before the event is due to begin. Increasingly, venues require payment in full before the event has begun, sometimes up to two months in advance. Consequently we sometime have to adjust payment terms for individual events, or even ask for payment in full at the time of booking.

3.7 Event and organiser expenses (how much and on what)

Event Organisers' funded places

For a general week, the guideline is one funded place per 15 participants at the rate of the break-even cost for that event (ie: 1 for a 15-29 person event, 2 for 30-44 people, 3 for 45-59 and so on). Themed events may require more organiser input and facilitation and more funded places, and organisers may request additional funded places when bidding for a week. Funded places are available for event organisers to award as they see fit (traditionally to themselves). Organising teams are often larger than the number of funded places available and agree how to share the funded places between themselves (eg: each person pays half).

Organisers are not duty bound to take up their funded place and are invited to consider making a contribution to the cost of their week. However, the budget should make provision for maximum take-up of funded places.

Event Organisers' expenses

Organisers may generally claim for: -

- * Travel to pre-meetings and associated refreshment
- * B&B for the night before, if it is not possible to stay at the venue, but
- * NOT for travel to and from the venue.

3.8 Contribution to central funds

All our administration is 'free' in the sense that it is unpaid. Nevertheless, the central administration costs for insurance and other overheads currently run at about £25 per person attending an event. Since 2014 this has been supplemented by an additional bursary levy of £10 per person bringing the total contribution to £35. Although this increases the breakeven cost of events slightly, it is offset by reduced charges at the lower end of the income scale.

It is helpful if each event makes a surplus at least equivalent to the amount needed to cover these central administration costs. At the very least they should break even, except for the AG and Vision Gatherings which are subsidised, as those coming do a lot of work! The extent of the contribution is agreed with the Treasurer at the time the event budget is drawn up and agreed. The Maintenance Group must approve exceptions.

3.9 Managing financial risk

It was agreed at the 2012 Autumn Gathering that provided the accumulated reserve exceeds £22,000, the AG or MG may authorise up to 2 events in the following year that may expose the community to a potential loss of **no more than £2,500 each**.

Event organisers should take all reasonable steps to negotiate with venue providers, consider self-catering arrangements etc. to minimise the potential loss to which the community is exposed, and to ensure it falls below this level. The event must add value to the community to justify the risk (eg: a new venue, marketing an event to people on low income rates, or some other positive benefit to the community in the opinion of the AG/MG).

The Treasurer will review the desired minimum accumulated reserves figure and permitted individual potential loss figure, and make recommendations annually to the AG of the new levels based on any changes in underlying working capital levels and other relevant factors. Any event budgets predicting a loss of more than £2,500 must be separately authorised by the AG, and not by the MG alone.

4. COMMUNITY MATTERS

4.1 Guidelines for *Rainbow* Editors

Why are guidelines needed?

The Editor(s) have to make lots of judgements: How do we put together a magazine that represents the full range of members' creativity, abilities and views within the space available and yet still produce something that is good to look at and read? There is a temptation to produce a polished magazine. Yet, in the spirit of cabaret, we also see a role for providing a safe space for items from all members. How do we manage the balance between these two? The following guidelines are designed to help editorial decision-making to be more transparent.

Guidelines for *Rainbow* Editors

The aim of *Rainbow* is to further ECC's Principles and Intentions. Our main objective is 'to keep people in touch and act as a forum for ideas'. One of our Intentions is to 'encourage creativity in our lives'. Creative writing, pictures and photographs in *Rainbow* will help ECC to achieve this.

The Editors welcome contributions from all ECC members. They sometimes commission articles. Sometimes items are produced as a result of discussions on the ECC Email List. When there is a large volume of contributions to *Rainbow*, the Editors will choose between them. Items submitted to *Rainbow* usually fall into one of the categories listed below in priority order:

1. Essential ECC business (e.g. AG, contact details)
2. Promotional material for forthcoming ECC events
3. Articles on ECC directions, debates and issues
4. Reports from ECC events
5. New ventures in the ECC spirit of community
6. Obituaries of ECC members
7. News about ECC members that challenges traditional stereotypes about gay men
8. ECC members' stories, poems etc. about their experience of ECC
9. Promotional material for non-ECC events that are in the spirit of the ECC and paying advertisements that are in the spirit of the ECC
10. Creative items submitted by ECC members that do not fall into the above categories

Subjects and items in the categories higher up the list will normally have priority for inclusion in *Rainbow*. Ultimately the Editors will use their judgement about which items to include. ECC acknowledges that the Editors may not always make choices with which everyone will agree.

Where there are many contributions covering the same subject the Editors will aim to choose a mix of material that:

- * Is topical
- * Avoids repetition
- * Reflects the full range of views expressed
- * Preserves the authentic voices of the authors
- * Is brief, concise, clear and accessible
- * Is action-focused
- * Where possible includes contributions from those who have not had anything published recently, and
- * The Editors believe will give most value to most members

Some creative work may be complex, challenging or obscure by design, in order to make the reader/observer think. Here the emphasis will be on including work that can, in the Editors' judgement, be made accessible to the widest number of readers.

Items on ECC business and issues, on the other hand, should be clear and easy to read. Where such an item provides a unique view or perspective, but is unclear or inaccessible in some way, then the Editors will work with the contributor to improve the clarity and accessibility. Rainbow will endeavour over time to reflect the full range of voices and views expressed by members about the ECC.

Because of the constant pressure on space, the Editors will often suggest changes to items that reduce the length while retaining the meaning. The Editors will aim to discuss items that might be excluded with the contributor before making a final decision. The Editors will normally check suggested changes in items with the contributors before publication.

The Editors will encourage authors of items that are not published in Rainbow to join the ECC Email List and submit the item there and/or to submit the item to the webmaster for publication on the ECC website.

Rainbow will not host attacks on individuals, nor items that seem to be intentionally offensive, nor items that seek to undermine the principles and ethos of ECC.

4.2 Membership and Mailing List Database

ECC has a computerised mailing list to keep records of:

- * Contact details of people who have attended events
- * The last event attended
- * Membership of ECC Limited

There are also paper records of membership application forms, renewals, etc. The AG agrees the person who holds the mailing list and database. The Mailing List Database Keeper controls access and maintains the confidentiality of names and addresses.

Mailing List Database Keeper's Job

The Mailing List Database Keeper's job is to:

- * Keep the database and paper records confidential and up to date:
 - Contact details of people who attend events
 - Contact details of new enquirers
 - Changes of address, removals etc
 - Membership of ECC Limited
- * Manage the MailChimp Mailing List
- * Supply addresses, labels or envelopes for any mail outs
- * Keep back-up copies of the database and circulate copies to other keepers from time to time

The job interrelates with:

- * Event organisers – who provide event mailing lists for inputting
- * Rainbow Editors – who set the timetable for mailings
- * Contact person(s) – who deals with enquiries and changes of address arriving by phone, post or email
- * MG members – who have occasional enquiries about members

4.3 ECC mailings

Anyone can subscribe to ECC's MailChimp electronic mailing list. ECC no longer sends paper copies of *Rainbow* to the very small number of community members who do not have easy access to a computer or the internet. Members are instead encouraged to find a 'buddy' who will print off and forward copies of mailings of interest.

4.4 Email Group

ECC has a number of email groups and discussion groups to help members communicate with each other on-line. These currently include Yahoo Groups, Facebook and Twitter, and sometimes groups created on these systems to support individual events.

Yahoo Groups currently hosts a group open to all members, plus another for taskholders and one for the MG. Facilities include:

- * Email list – which automatically distributes messages to everyone in the group
- * Document store and archive – copies of ECC Guidelines, newsletters, etc
- * Photograph albums – shared by community members

Membership of the group is open only to members of ECC. In practice this means anyone who has attended an ECC event. The members of the group are not intended to form a separate or exclusive community within the wider membership of ECC. The group should be considered a resource accessible to any ECC member, including those without email access. Further guidelines about the group are available at Yahoo Groups.

4.5 Contacting ECC by phone, mail and email

We advertise several ways for people to make contact with ECC:

- * By post c/o Laurieston Hall, Castle Douglas DG7 2NB
- * By phone 0870 321 5121 (National rate)
- * By email contact_ecc@edwardcarpentercommunity.org.uk
- * By online message via the 'Contact Us' page on the website

Contact Person(s)' job

The Contact Person is responsible for dealing with enquiries that come in by phone, mail and email, including sending out welcome packs to enquirers. Sometimes this role is shared.

4.6 Website and Website Manager

Our website aims to be an attractive "shop window" for ECC and a source of information for members and others by offering:

- * Information about ECC that paints a good and accurate impression of the community
- * Up-to-date details about our events and downloadable application forms
- * Online booking facilities

Website Manager's job

The Website Manager's task is to maintain and develop the website.

4.7 Publicity

We would like to assemble a collection of photographs for use in publicity.

5. GUIDELINES FOR EVENT ORGANISERS

5.1 Introduction

These guidelines are the result of a widespread and ongoing process of discussion and agreement. They are intended to be applied flexibly as it is important that organisers use their creativity and imagination to ensure that our events flourish and grow. Teams generally find it extremely useful to have a copy of these guidelines to hand during events.

Note about liability to pay damages if sued for negligence

ECC operates in an increasingly litigious society. We have extensive insurance cover to help protect the company directors (the MG) and officers (event organisers). Nevertheless, all organisers are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the wellbeing and safety of their participants and to be mindful of the risks associated with all ECC activities. However be aware.

If a person is injured as a result of an (arguably) preventable accident or hazard on an ECC event, they could decide to sue for damages. This could be the organiser of a workshop, or of a GMW, or the owners of the venue, or members of the MG. In such circumstances, the limited liability of ECC Ltd would not extend to protecting people who might be found liable against a claim for damages on grounds of negligence. Please be mindful of this and explain regularly, that members are at all times, responsible for their own actions.

5.2 Preparing a bid

Bids for events are normally considered at the Autumn Gathering, and potential organising teams are asked to submit their bids to the MG for inclusion in the AG agenda. Bids for events over the winter are considered separately by the MG. Bids are usually in the form of a written proposal, complete with a draft budget, preferably submitted at least a month before the AG itself. A sample bid, a worksheet for preparing a budget, and further guidance notes are included in 0.

Dates at regular venues such as Laurieston or Wasdale are usually offered to us in the Autumn or re-booked immediately after the previous event. In recent years, it's become much more difficult to secure suitable dates at other venues less than a year in advance. The timing of the AG and the bid process isn't ideal, so you might like to think about preparing your bid well in advance – by proposing an event for the year-after-next, or you can seek approval from the MG to confirm a booking with a venue much sooner in the year.

The normal timescales for the event bidding/planning process are as follows

	Summer events	Winter events
Submit bid to MG	Early October	End May
Bid approved	End October	End June
Event description ready for website/mailings	Mid December	Early August
Budget finalised, scales of charges set	Mid December	Early August
Bookings open	Jan – Apr as desired	End August

Considerations regarding the venue

Before you prepare your bid, you should contact the venue to confirm availability of dates, costs etc. If it's at Laurieston, it's usually easier to get this information from the MG or the treasurer.

If you're considering a new venue, you might also want to arrange a visit to ensure it's suitable for our purposes, including suitable communal space, workshop spaces, and spaces for base groups. Also consider its suitability in wet weather or in winter. You might also want to consider preparing an Access Audit at this stage (see section 5.4).

Booking terms and conditions specified by the venue can play a significant part in assessing its viability, and you should consider these carefully to assess, for example, the risk of financial loss in the event of low booking numbers. In many cases, much of this information is documented on venues' websites, but if in any doubt, speak to the venue, or discuss this with the Treasurer first. Further guidance on this is included in 0.

Considerations regarding the event

You will probably already have decided whether the event will be themed and structured, requiring strong facilitation of workshops etc, or a 'traditional' week where participants take a greater role in the running. Even traditional weeks sometimes benefit from a loose theme, and you might consider suggesting a few workshops to get things going. For structured events, your bid should introduce the theme and indicate the type of workshops you intend to run. Will participants be expected to attend all the sessions, or can people dip in and out?

Your bid should indicate the maximum number of participants you want to have. This may be venue-dependent, and should be appropriate to the type of event. Themed weeks usually work better with smaller numbers. Bear in mind that numbers tend to be lower than in the past, so be realistic. Although it may be possible to increase the numbers later if demand is high, bear in mind this may alter the appeal of the event for some participants.

Consider how long the event should run. We normally organise 7-day events, but there is an appetite for weekend events – something which hasn't happened so much in recent years. Short events tend to work better if based around a specific activity such as music and dance, creative arts, yoga, tai-chi etc.

You will need an organising team, and the number of organisers is up to you, though you should have at least one person who's organised ECC events before, and ideally someone new to organising. A minimum of 3 is advisable but you might require 4 or 5 if the event is highly facilitated, has large numbers or is self-catering.

Bear in mind that funded organiser places are limited (one per 15 places) and may be reduced if booking numbers are low, regardless of the numbers on your organising team.

Self-catering events are becoming more popular, and offer greater opportunities for community-building and a sense of involvement. They often cost us less so we can offer places at lower rates. It's a good idea to have a kitchen organiser on the team, who will co-ordinate any offers to cook, pre-order and buy in food and supplies, and supervise food preparation, wash-ups etc. If catering for a whole week is too daunting, you may wish to use outside caterers for some or all of the meals.

Filling places on the event can be a challenge. ECC taskholders can help you publish your event description on the website, and will send out periodic mailings. Consider what other measures the organising team might make to help promote and advertise the event.

ECC is encouraging designated alcohol-free events, and you may wish to opt for this. However, bear in mind that some venues rely on the sale of alcohol to visitors to help subsidise their costs, and it may be inappropriate to use these venues for alcohol-free events. If in doubt, negotiate with the venue first.

5.3 Budgeting

Ideally we like you to prepare as fully detailed a budget as you can when you submit your bid, but we recognise this isn't always possible. A budget is a 'best estimate', containing a lot of subjective judgments, it isn't meant to be rigidly adhered to. Some costs will be known in advance because they have to be negotiated, and others will have to be estimated. The trick is to anticipate what will need to be paid for, even if the actual cost is uncertain.

Organisers are responsible for ensuring that event are financially sound, and that they cover their costs from the money raised from participants. Section 3.6 explains how our sliding scale of charges works. We don't expect you to set the scale of charges as part of your bid, but you should at least aim to calculate a breakeven cost using the budget worksheet provided in APPENDIX I. If the event is at Laurieston, a sketchy budget may be sufficient. For other venues, a fully costed budget is required.

Later on, the Treasurer will use your figures and any other information available to refine the break-even if necessary, and set the scale of charges. This will take into account other events during the same year and you will be able to participate in this process, and to approve the final budget and charges before bookings open.

At the bid stage, you need to try to identify all likely costs. You can set whatever level of expenditure you consider appropriate, but bear in mind that the amount you spend will affect the breakeven cost, and the affordability of the event for participants, so if you don't allow sufficient expenses now, you won't be able to increase the budget later on.

APPENDIX I includes a list of possible items of expenditure you might consider, and a worksheet to help you calculate a breakeven for the event. When you've calculated your breakeven cost, it's a good idea to compare it with the values set for other recent events, to be sure it looks reasonable.

Budgets usually allow for a fixed contribution per place to central ECC funds to cover our overheads including administration costs, insurances and the AG etc. We subsidise bursary places from a separate bursary fund, and a further contribution per place is included, known as the bursary levy. These are included in the budget worksheet.

5.4 Access Audit

It is important to be clear and realistic with participants with disabilities about how accessible a venue is. It is better to tell a participant that a venue is unsuitable, rather than hope for the best and then have to deal with the resultant problems.

ECC does not own any of the venues it uses. Therefore, it is difficult for ECC to physically adapt places so that everyone can make full use of the facilities available. However, we can assess the venue and give appropriate guidance to participants and future organisers. We therefore ask event organisers to pass on to the MG useful information about the venue, in the form of a very simple 'Access Audit' which is included as part of the Organisers' Post Event Report (see APPENDIX VII). The purpose of this audit is to:

- ★ Give a meaningful assessment to all those coming to a venue of the physical constraints they are likely to encounter
- ★ Give guidance to people thinking of using the venue in the future
- ★ Give information to the venue operators so that they can improve their venue and allow more people to make use of it.

5.5 Initial planning

Congratulations! Now the serious work starts. There are many tasks to be carried out before an event starts. The main roles are: planning the programme, dealing with enquiries and bookings, liaising with the venue, co-ordinating travel and lifts, and recruiting base group facilitators.

Description of your event

The Website and other publicity advertising our events explains what a Gay Men's Week is, but organisers need to write something specific about their event. You will need to liaise with the MG, the website manager and newsletter editor. Each event should, as far as possible, be consistent with the pre-event publicity so that there are no surprises for event participants. Remember to get your publicity information to the taskholders responsible for the website and newsletter in plenty of time.

Liaising with the venue

You need to find out the layout of the venue, number and size of rooms, availability of special needs/small rooms, disabled access, private space outside, catering for special diets and the availability of a local gay-friendly doctor. If the venue has already been audited for accessibility, check whether there have been any changes. If not, consider whether you should do an audit rather than having to declare that there has been no accessibility audit of your venue.

Catering and cleaning

If your event will be self-catering and/or self-maintaining, you will need to carefully plan these activities well in advance. It is a good idea to enlist the help of someone with catering experience. Sometimes a (paid) cook takes responsibility for all food preparation, helped by participants. Things to consider include:

- * Availability of all the necessary catering and cleaning equipment and utensils
- * Meal planning and preparation (menu planning, buying ingredients, food storage, food preparation, etc)
- * Kitchen hygiene (food handling, washing up, appliance cleaning, floor mopping, etc)
- * Venue cleaning (toilets, showers, bedrooms, lounges, hallways and other common areas, etc)
- * Rotas and signing up for duties

5.6 Handling bookings

We do not accept block bookings, and we will require an explicit indication on every booking that the person is aware of and accepts the principles and intentions of ECC and agrees to abide by them, and that they fully accept the conditions of booking. On a paper booking form, a signature is required. If booking online, the person should have to explicitly tick a box to accept the conditions. The standard conditions include a disclaimer about personal safety and acceptance of the refunds policy. If anyone is unable to sign a form or book online, some other arrangement will be made.

The booking process should allow for people to declare any disability that may result in special needs.

Bookings

You should normally aim to reserve one third of places for newcomers and one third for people who've been before, leaving one third for either, but re-consider the position nearer the start of the event. You may also wish to reserve a few places for people whose health causes them to be uncertain whether they can book up months in advance.

Consider bookings in the order in which they are received, and do not confirm any booking until a deposit has been paid. From time to time, let the ECC contact person and Website Manager know how bookings are going so they can tell enquirers which weeks still have places available.

At present we are using an online booking system which is integrated with the website, manages the booking process and allows organisers and the MG to see the current state of bookings and payments received at all times. Full details about the system are available in a separate document *Booking System Notes for Organisers*.

Participants are normally expected to pay a deposit of 25% of the amount they are offering to pay, but your event may have different conditions which you will have agreed with the Treasurer. Refunds are made at the discretion of the organising team and should be referred to the Treasurer in line with our published policy. We normally retain the first £25 of every deposit unless a person cancels with good reason such as illness or work commitments. During the final two weeks before the event, we will usually return all money paid by anyone whose place we manage to fill, but retain the right to retain all money paid, even if a person simply doesn't turn up.

When the event is full you may wish to keep a waiting list of around five to ten people, letting them know they are on a waiting list until a place becomes available for them. We require everyone to pay a deposit when they join the waiting list, and their position on the list should be prioritised in order of when this was paid. Although they still happen, fewer event run waiting lists than in the past.

The organisers of an ECC event can refuse any booking from a person due, for example, to past behaviour or special needs. Any refusal must be a team decision, and the MG can advise in cases of known individuals who have been barred from future events. The AG trusts that organisers will act with integrity. A grievance procedure exists in case a person wishes to appeal.

Bursaries

People who ask for bursaries must be asked to write and explain why they cannot pay the minimum level. Organisers should discuss all bursary requests with the Treasurer who will advise whether funds are available.

Special Needs Rooms

On the booking form people can specify that they need single, quiet or ground floor rooms for health reasons. Most venues will have a few such rooms, but sometimes not enough, which can be a problem. Organisers sometimes put people with health problems in a small room together. You may need to tax your imagination for other solutions. We cannot always meet everyone's needs. Be clear with people as early as possible if you may not be able to promise what they have requested.

5.7 Other advance planning & tasks

Travel arrangements and lifts

Find someone to organise lifts. Sometimes a coach or minibus can be hired to advantage if there is enough interest. Public transport details should be sent out well in advance as some kinds of cheaper fares have to be booked several weeks ahead.

Other tasks to attend to well before the event begins

Tasks which organisers need to attend to before the event:

- ★ Planning the overall timetable
- ★ Arranging an email list for participants to communicate in advance of the event
- ★ At Laurieston, when to have the ceilidh/circle dancing evening with live band
- ★ When (if) to have a cabaret, soirée or *sharing* and someone or people to organise it

- * Whether to hold a fundraising event during the week, sending out advance notice in the joining information, and people to organise it
- * Whether to have a party night in the middle of the week, and someone to organise it
- * Approaches to personal space, touching and permission
- * Whether to have quiet/no sex rooms on your week
- * Setting aside a bookable private space
- * Ground rules for smoking, cameras and videos, and alcohol
- * Agreeing someone or people to do HIV/AIDS support time on the week
- * Choosing a system for getting people into base groups. It is a very good idea to have a definite proposal for this!
- * Deciding how people will choose beds (sometimes newcomers have first pick)
- * Appointing people to be Welcomers at the beginning of the week
- * Nominating people to make opening announcements
- * Queen bees for the week
- * Agreeing on someone to draw the large version of the workshop timetable
- * Nominating someone to obtain the Principles and Intentions (plasticised posters)
- * Arrangements for feedback of participants' views (make sure you have sufficient copies of the End of Event Survey – template in APPENDIX VI)
- * Taking/ensuring a supply of condoms/lubes and earplugs!

It is very healthy to share out tasks widely among facilitators and others.

5.8 About a month before the event begins

Final joining information

Nearer the week you need to send out a “How to get there” letter which includes a map, time of arrival, and more information about the week. Although organisers are free to word the ‘How to get there’ letter as they wish, it must include the standard ECC disclaimer about personal safety. APPENDIX II gives an example of a letter, including the safety disclaimer.

Each event should, as far as possible, be consistent with the pre-event publicity so that there are no surprises for participants on a week, for instance regarding video and photography.

Base Group Facilitators

We normally ask people when they book if they wish to offer themselves as a base group facilitator. When all the bookings are in you may wish to select potential facilitators from those offers, and contact them to ask them if they will accept this task. APPENDIX III contains sample Guidance Notes for Base Group Facilitators. Sometimes base group facilitators meet before the week and play a larger role in the organisation of the week.

Guardian Angels

Events sometimes choose to buddy-up newcomers with an existing member who is already familiar with ECC and with the venue. The buddy's role is to support the new person before arrival and for the first few days. Ideally someone who lives locally would be chosen so they can meet beforehand or travel together.

Bits and pieces

Don't forget to buy paper, felt-tips, Blu-Tack, drawing pins, and so on. Venues sometimes provide these for a small fee – check out in advance. ECC owns a number of props, such as lamps, cables, material, and so on. Check this out with the MG.

Keyboard, Music system, Hearing Loop etc

ECC owns an electronic keyboard. If you wish to have it at your event, check where it is and if necessary arrange transport. This may involve encouraging a participant to bring it. Note it is heavy and bulky so can't be taken by public transport and may be too big for small cars! It's no longer necessary to take the keyboard to Laurieston as there are numerous other keyboards there which we are welcome to use.

ECC also has a music system which is kept at Wasdale. We also have a hearing loop system which is occasionally used and is normally kept at Laurieston.

The MG will usually know where these items are currently located, and can advise you about participants attending consecutive events who may be able to help with transport.

5.9 Arrival and first 24 hours

Arrival time

Most venues specify an arrival time before which participants are not welcome. Arranging for first timers to arrive half-an-hour or an hour before returners helps to make them feel welcome as they can be shown around and given first pick of the beds.

Welcomers

It is a good idea to have welcomers to show people around and tick them off a list as they arrive. It may be necessary to advise welcomers of people with special needs, but be aware that people often do not want knowledge of their disability widely publicised.

Newcomers meeting

Sometimes organisers have a meeting specifically for newcomers, before the evening meal, to explain about the event. This could be open to all. Remember that newcomers can be very apprehensive.

Base Group facilitators

Base Group facilitators can work alone but they also work well in pairs, preferably people who already know each other or have done it before. Make sure everyone is familiar with the *Guidance Notes for Base Group Facilitators* (see APPENDIX III). There are alternative ways of getting people into base groups, and it is important to be clear before your week begins which system you are going to use.

After the evening meal, it is useful to have a short facilitators meeting to iron out which rooms the groups are going to meet in and any other pressing matters, like the arrangements for liaison, support and holding the week eg: a brief base-group facilitators meeting each day.

Initial Introductory Meeting (first evening)

The purpose of the initial introductory meeting is to give participants enough information to get them through the night; and possibly also to get people into base groups, followed by a short meeting of base groups.

Main Introductory Meeting and Big Go Round (following morning)

The main introductory meeting usually starts with some announcements. Although it is important to pass on essential information, if announcements go on too long participants will start to get restless. A partial checklist might be (see APPENDIX IV for another example checklist):

- * Introduce week organisers
- * Announcements from the venue hosts

- * Tasks rota, if this applies
- * The self-organising nature of the week, with particular reference to the workshop timetable
- * Ageism, racism, sexism and HIV/AIDS awareness
- * Respect for the limitations of others, such as disabilities, shyness, or apprehension
- * Touching, intimacy and permission
- * Joining and changing base groups
- * Queen Bees
- * Smoking, no-smoking areas and alcohol/drugs
- * Late night noise
- * The cabaret
- * Photography only with permission and usually no video recorders

Big Go-Round, following the announcements

Questions we have used are: (1) What is your name? (2) Where do you come from? (3) How are you feeling? (4) What are you hoping to get from the week? (5) One thing I like about myself is ... People are encouraged to mention any workshops they plan to run. At Laurieston you need to arrange in advance that no one has to miss the Big Go Round in order to cook.

Workshop on the first afternoon

Some people feel that a workshop, pre-arranged with someone skilled at running workshops, on the first afternoon helps get the week going. It is worth being aware when planning this at Laurieston that someone usually offers a tour of the house and grounds on the first afternoon.

5.10 On the Week

Display of Principles and Intentions

ECC's Principles and Intentions should be displayed on the event as a wall poster.

Touching and permission

Following on from the announcements in the Second Big Meeting about personal space, touching and permission, facilitators need to be aware that this may be an issue for members of their groups.

Your relationship with other participants

It is important to be aware that as an organiser you will be seen to be in a position of some power, and participants may look to you for guidance and leadership. You will be balancing the need to empower and encourage people to contribute energy to the week with the need to hold the event structure together. Remember this is primarily a community event – try to avoid using your position to exercise undue control or to get your own way whenever there is conflict.

You're very much 'on show' as an organiser, and you should be mindful of how your behaviour may be perceived by others, and how it may affect your approachability, particularly in relation to alcohol consumption, drugs or respecting personal boundaries. If the issue of sex and intimacy with other participants should arise, think carefully about the implications and if necessary discuss this with your fellow organisers.

Queen Bee

Some weeks have found the Queen Bee system useful. For each 24-hour period, one person is on call to the participants and the venue hosts to sort out whatever might crop up. It can be useful to ask base group facilitators and other responsible types to do this beforehand or at least very early on during the week. Obviously participants need to know who the queen bee is each day and where they are. Queen bees can change over at the base group facilitators' meeting.

Cameras, videos, phones and other technology

Organisers need to decide some ground rules. It is a good idea to encourage people to respect communal space by using technology (in which we include cameras, phones, PCs, sound equipment) sensitively so that it does not intrude on the consciousness or wellbeing of others on the event.

Photographers should always ask for permission first. There should be no taking, copying or distribution of images without the express permission of the people in the photographs. Video recorders are normally discouraged, being seen as an invasion of privacy and people are generally asked not to bring them. For some it is about anonymity; for others it is about invasion of personal space. It is OK to use video in a video workshop. On booking forms, we ask participants to sign up to:

"I agree to use technology (eg: cameras, mobile phones, computers, video games, sound equipment, projectors) sensitively and undertake not to take, publish or allow anyone else to publish, in print or online, any images or written accounts arising from this event without first obtaining the permission of the people represented within them."

Alcohol and drugs

In the same way as there is sensitivity in community about touch and photography, alcohol in excess has a negative effect on communities. We ask members of the community to be mindful of the effect alcohol may have on others and on the whole group, and to be aware that some men have issues with the consumption of alcohol.

ECC as a community does not supply alcohol on any of its events. However participants may bring their own alcohol or buy alcohol from the venue if available, this is with the exception of events which have been explicitly designated alcohol-free.

Many of the same issues apply to recreational drugs, and as they're illegal, ECC has to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to drugs.

Smoking is only permitted in designated places at most venues, but occasionally it may be allowed in communal indoor spaces. It may be necessary for the community to discuss whether it wants to allow smoking in these spaces, even if smokers then feel rejected when the consensus is against.

Base Groups

It is not a good idea for two halves of a couple to be in the same base group. Many weeks have a pre-arranged but informal dropout or fireside base group, but you need someone to initiate it. Think about, and get ideas from facilitators about, what to do if a group member wants to change groups or if a group falls apart. We generally allow people to ask to change after one full meeting. Anyone wanting to do this should approach their facilitator, or if they don't want to, another facilitator, to arrange this. This should be explained at the same time as the base groups are explained.

Future Events and encouraging participation in ECC

Each organising team is expected to provide a space within the week which encourages participants to learn more about ECC and the running of a GMW, to think about future events and to consider getting more involved and taking on various aspects of organisation. This is most likely achieved by organising a Workshop to discuss ECC and how it works. It is often a good idea to distribute the current copy of the ECC Guidelines document and use this as a template for discussion.

If during the discussion comments or expressions of interest are raised it is helpful to feed these back to the MG if they are not present.

Care and support for people with HIV or AIDS, their friends and lovers

Although in recent times HIV and AIDS does not seem to have been as great an issue as in the past, organisers need to be sensitive to it. Mentioning HIV/AIDS awareness as part of the organisers'

planned opening announcements (along with racism, ageism, sexism, etc) – lets participants on the week know that the issue is not off limits.

It may be appropriate to offer some support for people with HIV/AIDS outside of base-group time. This is best done by approaching someone appropriate who is going on the week who is HIV positive week and who has the required skills, and asking them to offer a meeting. Anonymity can be an issue here, so it is helpful to include details on the timetable and maybe the week's opening announcements to let people know.

Fundraising during events

Organisers are encouraged to consider holding a fundraising auction or other activity during their event. Not only do they raise funds, they can help to promote a strong community spirit on events. The money raised can be donated to the bursary fund, to general funds, or to some other cause as the organisers or participants see fit. The purpose of the fundraising should be made clear, and experience suggests that emphasising the bursary fund tends to promote generosity.

In the joining instructions, you will need to invite participants to bring suitable donations with them, such as items of clothing, pictures, DVDs or maybe promises for services such as massage or healing. It's a good idea to hold such an activity a little before midweek, once people have settled in, but to give enough time for promises to be fulfilled.

Mid-Week Happening

You may want to consider a big workshop in the middle of the week to check out how people are feeling and give an opportunity to input suggestions and ideas for keeping the momentum going.

Resolving conflict on a GMW

In the event of a conflict on a GMW, the responsibility lies with that week's organising team. The following procedure is to be followed to arrive at a solution: See Appendix X

- * Attempt reconciliation or resolution of the conflict by offering, where desired or possible, equal support to those concerned.
- * Those directly involved in the conflict to be encouraged to take their grievances to either the Base Group Facilitators, Queen Bee, the Organisers or to someone else on the week whom they trust to support and empower them to take the matter further.
- * If the conflict cannot be resolved and the people concerned cannot live together in the Community with the conflict, people may be invited or required to leave the event.

If the conflict remains unresolved, or the organisers feel that further action may be appropriate (eg setting conditions before a person comes on a week again), the organising team should send a written record of what happened to the MG as soon as possible. Unresolved issues should not normally be brought to an AG.

The MG may appoint a team to help resolve the issue. The resolution process should keep both complainants and perpetrators fully involved and informed at all times – discussions or decisions made in their absence are unlikely to produce a satisfactory outcome. If for any reason it is felt necessary to discuss an issue at an AG, all parties involved must be contacted first and invited to take part. This should be done not less than 8 weeks before the AG. If there is insufficient time to make preparations, the matter should be delayed until a subsequent meeting.

Crises at events and subsequent grievance procedure

The MG is not capable of offering an 'emergency rescue service' during an event, and does not have excessive powers to intervene in an event. While an event is in progress, the organisers or others (e.g. base group facilitators, queen bee) are expected to deal with any crises. This does not preclude

event organisers contacting the MG before, during or after an event for advice with problems. If participants have a grievance which they feel has not been dealt with, they should be made aware of the Grievance Procedure.

Serious Misbehaviour

Allegations of serious misbehaviour must be brought to the organisers/facilitators' meeting and individuals must not take any action without the support of this meeting. An emergency meeting can be called if necessary. The person involved must be clearly informed that their action is considered unacceptable and why, or written to if they have left suddenly. If the organisers/ facilitators decide that the person should leave the week, the person should be told why. Their name and an explanation for the action taken should be passed on to the Maintenance Group for a decision, on whether to bar the person from attending future events.

Passing on 'Bad News'

In the (unlikely, but possible) event of a serious accident, or illness on a week, it may be thought appropriate to pass on news to someone outside the week, such as a partner, friend, or relatives. We normally ask for an emergency contact person as part of the booking process, so these details should be readily available. It is usually best to leave passing on any potentially shocking news to the emergency services who are trained and experienced at sensitively breaking news in person to, say, a relative of someone who is seriously ill or has died.

It may be appropriate to give a clear statement to the community about what has happened, and about how this information is to be relayed, so as to prevent uninformed rumours circulating within and without the community. At the earliest appropriate opportunity, inform a member of the Maintenance Group of the situation.

Address List

Ask participants whether they want their home addresses, email addresses or phone numbers left off the list, or whether they may want to be left off the list altogether. Pin up a draft so that participants can correct any inaccuracies. Wherever possible, duplicate and distribute the amended list before the end of the week, or else send it by email or post soon afterwards. Always ensure that your master booking records are updated with any amendments. The list should not contain the word "gay" in case it goes astray. Include details of how to subscribe to the ECC email list. If a reunion has been planned, you may wish to include the details with the address list.

5.11 End of the Week

Paying for the week

All places should have been paid in full before arrival, but if there are any outstanding payments, you should ensure you collect them from participants before the end of the week. The treasurer will usually contact you beforehand to discuss how to handle this. If anyone has still not paid after the event ends, the Treasurer will usually take the matter up with the person directly.

Cabaret

It is usual to have a cabaret, in which anyone can perform, on the last or next to last night. Acts should be in accordance with the principles and intentions. This means that racist, misogynist acts, or jokes at the expense of an ethnic group are inappropriate.

Unless it is decided to opt for an informal *soirée* or *sharing* style, the cabaret will need an organiser and a compere and will involve some planning. It is a good idea for cabaret organisers to check out in advance what people want to do, to encourage contributions to be short, and try to balance the programme between different levels of skill, experience and type of act. Compering needs to be sensitive in order to avoid upstaging performers.

A short meeting fairly early on in the week of those who are interested in helping in any way should get the ball rolling. APPENDIX V contains helpful hints and tips for organising and compering cabarets. Event organisers will need to ensure that cabaret organisers are familiar with these guidelines. An easy way is to make copies available to people attending the initial planning meeting.

Closing Go Round

Usually happens on the morning or the afternoon or the evening of the last full day. The traditional questions are (1) What is your name? (2) Where are you going back to? (3) How are you feeling? (4) What's your highlight of the week? You may want to choose other questions.

Feedback from participants

It is important to provide an opportunity for participants to give feedback. ECC has a template for an End of Event Survey (APPENDIX VI). The purpose of this form is to capture valuable data from the event's participants for two reasons:

- ★ To give you feedback on your event and help you write your end-of-event report for the AG
- ★ To pass this feedback on to the organising team for the following year's event, so it can be acted upon where appropriate. (There is a perception that feedback tends to disappear into a black hole and it would be great if we could turn this perception around)

Please make enough copies to distribute to all the participants on your event, then collect them back in before people leave. The questions are generic so that they apply to all our events. Several of us spent some time wording them carefully to avoid yes/no answers and instead to encourage people to comment and give opinions.

5.12 After the event

There are usually a few loose ends that need tidying up after the event:

Accounts

The treasurer will usually help you prepare the final accounts for the event. The most important thing immediately after the event is to gather all outstanding expenses and forward them to the treasurer using an expenses claim form so he can arrange prompt reimbursement. Include receipts wherever possible. If the venue host gives you a final invoice, be sure to pass it to the treasurer for payment. Once all the figures are available, the treasurer will prepare a statement of accounts indicating the final surplus and summarising receipts and expenses, plus a statement about contributions to the bursary fund and any other donations.

Post week final meeting and event report

Organisers often find a post-week meeting a useful opportunity to debrief, agree the accounts, and prepare an event report for the AG. See the next section for more information about the report contents. The report should be sent to the MG in plenty of time to be included in the AG papers, ideally compiled within a few weeks of the event itself while it's still fresh in the mind.

Address List

Please remember to send the address list to the mailing list database holder. This should include all contact details including those which people asked not to be shared with other participants. The current online booking system provides a facility for doing this very easily, see the separate document about the system for further details.

Reunions

Quite often, either organisers or participants will organise some form of reunion some time after the event. Many people find that this provides a continuity of the feeling of fellowship and support, and helps to overcome the very common syndrome of 'post GMW blues'.

5.13 Feedback to next Autumn Gathering

Organisers should provide a written report on their event, preferably including feedback gathered from participants. To be of most use, the report should be kept brief and to the point, provide some simple statistics and answer a couple of key questions, and also include a report on accessibility. APPENDIX VII contains a template for our Organisers Post Event Report. We like one member of the team to be present at the AG if possible, and for them to be prepared to discuss the week.

APPENDIX I GUIDELINES ON PREPARING AN EVENT BID

Considerations regarding the venue

When considering the costs, and the terms and conditions of booking a venue, and when assessing the financial risk, the following questions may be useful, and should be addressed in your bid where relevant.

- ★ Is there a minimum number of participants, or a minimum charge based on participant numbers?
- ★ Is there a significantly different cost for different accommodation, for example a camping discount, and would you want to set alternative sliding scales so we can pass these on?
- ★ Are places charged at different rates depending on numbers booking? Does the venue offer better rates for block bookings rather than per-person?
- ★ What deposit is charged to secure the booking, and when will it be required?
- ★ When will the final balance be due for payment?
- ★ What are the cancellation charges if we don't achieve sufficient numbers, and when are the deadlines we need to consider?
- ★ Are there additional charges such as bed linen, firewood, tent hire etc?

The following standard charges apply at Laurieston (2014 figures)

- ★ Places are charged at £239 per person per week.
- ★ Fully inclusive cost covers all meals, refreshments and one band night.
- ★ Any bedlinen charges are paid directly by participants and don't need to be considered.
- ★ There is a £26 discount for campers, but we don't usually pass this on to participants.
- ★ If required, NVH (no volunteer help for lunch prep) is available at extra cost depending on numbers: 15-24: £165 25-39: £186 40-54: £207 55-69: £228. This may be useful for themed weeks with morning workshops.
- ★ Minimum number of participants is 15 and LH will consider cancellation if this figure isn't reached by 3 weeks prior to start. There is a cancellation charge of £600.
- ★ No deposit required, and the total amount is invoiced at the end of the event.
- ★ Further band nights may be available at extra cost (£100).
- ★ B&B the night before at Ian Buckley's house (bottom of the drive) £25/person.

Considerations regarding the event

When preparing your bid, consider the following questions, and ensure the appropriate ones are included in your proposal wording.

- ★ The maximum number of participants including organisers.
- ★ A description of the theme for the week, the likely workshop structure and content.
- ★ The number and names of organisers. Remember at least one organiser must be experienced in organising ECC weeks, and ideally one will be new to organising.
- ★ It's best to have only one bookings organiser, and they should ideally be experienced in organising ECC weeks as they'll inevitably field many of the enquiries. They will also need internet access at home and be prepared to have their contact details and home address advertised online.
- ★ Bear in mind that funded organiser places are limited (one per 15 places) and may be reduced if booking numbers are low. Unfunded organiser places are charged at breakeven rate. The take-up of the funding is optional but must be factored into the budget regardless.
- ★ A more generous allocation of funded places can be requested, eg for facilitated or self-catering weeks.
- ★ Provide information about how you intend to promote the event beyond the standard ECC website and mailings.
- ★ Will the event be designated alcohol-free?

Considerations regarding the budget

You must include venue costs in the bid, and should expect to have negotiated these with the venue. If self-catering, estimate how much you want to allow per person per day for food and supplies. We have found that £8-10 is usually more than enough. Include any other venue expenses such as tent hire, firewood as regular expenses.

You must include a contribution to ECC funds for each paying participant and a bursary levy contribution. These are currently £25 and £10 per person per week respectively, and may be adjusted on a pro-rata basis for shorter events.

Expenses aren't always easy to anticipate at this early stage. As a rule of thumb, we usually allow up to £10 per participant which is usually sufficient. Although you can simply request this amount as part of your bid, it's better if you can break down and estimate individual costs. The following list is not exhaustive, but it includes many of the items you might want to consider. Estimated figures are sufficient.

- ★ For self-catering, food costs. We usually find £8-10 per person per day is sufficient.
- ★ Allow for domestic sundries such as detergent, cling film, tea towels, toilet rolls etc if not provided by the venue.
- ★ Cost of meals catered by the venue if not inclusive, or by external caterers.
- ★ Workshop materials: paper, pens, blu-tack, fabric, tea lights, matches etc.
- ★ Condoms, lube, earplugs.

- ★ For planning meetings, consider train fares and (if necessary) accommodation costs. If you're driving, allow 15p per mile or estimate fuel cost. Allow for meals and refreshments (but not alcohol).
- ★ Admin costs such as phone calls, postage, stationery.
- ★ Advertising and promotional costs.
- ★ Bed and Breakfast at or near the venue the night before the event starts.
- ★ Tent or Yurt hire.
- ★ Extra band nights at Laurieston, or other entertainments.
- ★ Firewood or coal.

Budgeting Worksheet

Once all the known costs have been identified, you can use the worksheet to help calculate the total cost of the event, and produce a figure for the breakeven cost. The scale of charges will be based on the breakeven figure later.

Total num participants		_____	[a]
Num funded places	<i>(usually [a] ÷ 15, rounded down)</i>	_____	[b]
Num paying participants	<i>[a] minus [b]</i>	_____	[c]
Contribution to ECC funds	<i>(usually £25)</i> £_____ x [c]	£_____	[d]
Bursary levy	<i>(usually £10)</i> £_____ x [c]	£_____	[e]

Venue fixed cost		£_____	[f]
or Venue cost per person	£_____ x [a]	£_____	[g]
Outside catering per person	£_____ x [a] x days/meals	£_____	[h]
Food allowance	<i>(usually £8-10)</i> £_____ x [a] x num days	£_____	[i]
TOTAL VENUE/OVERHEADS	Add up all items [d] to [i]	£_____	[j]

EXPENSES			
Materials & workshop expenses		£_____	[k]
Planning meeting travel/subsistence (at cost)		£_____	[l]
Administration and advertising		£_____	[m]
B&B night before event		£_____	[n]
All other expenses		£_____	[o]
TOTAL EXPENSES	Add up all items [k] to [o]	£_____	[p]
Expenses per person	[p] ÷ [a] <i>(usually £10 max)</i>	£_____	

TOTAL COST OF EVENT [j] + [p] £_____ [q]

BREAKEVEN COST [q] ÷ [c] £_____

Sample Bid

The following fictitious example shows an ideal layout for a simple bid document, and indicates the kind of information we're looking for. You can include more detail if you wish. The budget calculation example is sufficient for most events. You can propose a scale of charges if you wish, but this is unnecessary as the Treasurer will discuss this with you later anyway. Compare your calculated breakeven with other recent events to check it seems reasonable.

Proposal for a Gay Men's Week, 20-27 December 2014

Venue

Lower Loxley Hall, near Ambridge, Dorsetshire. This is a small Georgian mansion, which runs residential courses throughout the year as well as being a wedding/conference venue, and offers exclusive occupancy to private groups. It offers spaces for workshops, a well equipped kitchen, beds for about 45, and the possibility of catered or self-catered meals.

The Christmas/Midwinter week there last year was much appreciated by all participants, most of whom expressed an interest in returning this year. A particular point in its favour, especially in winter is its location, in the Midlands, with ease of access by public and private transport. It is also a cosy and welcoming environment. It should be noted, however, that unfortunately because of the layout it is not suitable for anyone who is unable to manage stairs.

Numbers and organising team

The organising team comprises Adam Macy and Ian Craig at present. We intend taking a maximum of 22 men, to minimise the use of top bunks, and to ensure plenty of individual space. We would therefore be looking for one funded place for organisers. We also intend to recruit a kitchen co-ordinator to look after the purchase of food and to organise the day-to-day catering, and we would like a second funded place to cover this role also.

Planned Activities

The overall aim of the week is to give men a chance to spend the midwinter / Christmas week away from the hype of consumerism, advertising, the commercial scene, etc. We are aware that some may want a quiet, reflective space, while others may wish to celebrate, or at least acknowledge the turning of the year in some way, and we will try to accommodate differing priorities for the week.

We have negotiated two catered meals by venue staff, but we expect to self-cater for the remainder of the week. All cooking will be vegetarian. Participants will take a hand in the preparation and clearing of meals, based on a rota.

Before the week, participants will be asked about any workshops they may wish to offer, whether they wish to facilitate a base group, be given suggestions about things they may wish to bring, etc. It is our expectation that individuals will come up with ideas, and organisers will also offer workshops according to their personal interests, as well as plugging gaps in the programme as and if necessary.

We intend holding a fundraising promise auction during the week, and will encourage participants to think about services they wish to offer, or articles that can be sold.

We intend to promote the event with some paid advertising in Midlands Zone Magazine, and we have some contacts in BBC Radio Dorsetshire who are offering to work with us to put together a 'featurette' for broadcast in the Autumn, at no cost.

Proposed Budget

22 participants, 20 paying

Venue Hire (fixed cost)	£3,700
Catered meals (2)	£500
Food & supplies @£6.50 per person/day	£1,000
Planning meetings	£150
Paid Advertising	£65
B&B for 3 at <i>The Bull</i> the night before arrival	£75
Workshop materials	£100
Contribution to funds/bursary levy @£35/paying person	£700
Total	£6,290
 Breakeven cost	 £315

APPENDIX II SAMPLE EVENT JOINING NOTES

<p>EDWARD CARPENTER COMMUNITY - GAY MEN'S WEEK AT LAURIESTON HALL SATURDAY 19 JULY TO SATURDAY 26 JULY 2014</p>
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Only a few weeks to go before we all meet at Laurieston Hall. Here is some additional information about Laurieston and the week to add to what is in our Events Booklet, plus some travel information.

Please take time to read this information, especially if you are a newcomer to Laurieston. Please bear in mind that the Laurieston Hall community are welcoming us to their home, and that the people who help us with the organisation and other work around the house and grounds are our hosts.

ARRIVAL

Arrival is between 5pm and 6pm. PLEASE DON'T ARRIVE BEFORE 5pm. The first half hour of arrival (5 – 5.30pm) will be set aside for newcomers to Laurieston. If you are a newcomer, we will show you around and let you choose a bed, sign up for chores and generally get your bearings. If you are a returner to Laurieston, you are welcome to mill around meeting friends while this happens, and can then choose beds and sign up for chores from 5.30pm. Dinner will be at 6.30pm.

If you know you are going to be late, please phone and tell us so that supper can be saved for you. Before Saturday afternoon, phone [name & tel no] and leave a brief message on the answer machine. After 3pm, please call 01644 450263.

WHAT TO BRING

- * Two single sheets (or one sheet & a single duvet cover) or a double duvet cover and a double sheet if you know you will have a double bed.
- * A towel (preferably as distinguishable as possible!)
- * Enough clothes for the whole week (there are no clothes washing facilities for guests) – and be ready for both sunshine and wet weather.

And the following could prove useful, even invaluable:

- * Midge repellent, ear-plugs (if snoring bothers you), condoms, sun screen and a torch.

You might also want to bring the following to enhance, enrich and embroider your stay:

- * Musical instruments, music, songs, CDs, books, poems, juggling balls, dressing up clothes, or even your favourite origami.

DO NOT BRING pets as these may disturb the animals already resident at Laurieston, candles which can be a fire hazard, or a video camera – which some see as an intrusion into privacy. Still cameras are fine. If you forget anything, there are banks and shops in Castle Douglas.

Beds are mostly in shared rooms for 5 to 8 people, with a very limited number of smaller rooms for people with special needs. You are welcome to bring a tent or a camper if you want more privacy.

SHARING THE WORKLOAD

All visitors are asked to share in some of the domestic tasks like food preparation and washing up. There will be a large rota sheet in the main hall where you can sign up at the beginning of the week.

EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

The week depends on the energy, ideas, skills and initiative of all of us – newcomers as well as re-turners. The range of workshops and activities is usually very wide. Some participants like to organise activities like early morning swimming in the loch, walks, singing and dancing, or discussion groups or challenging workshops on relationships, body image, etc. Others share their talents and skills, for instance meditation, massage, tai chi.

“Workshop” is actually a very loose term for any activity on the week involving two or more people. Some are planned in advance and others arise spontaneously. If you have skills/interests that you’d like to share – don’t be shy. There is plenty of support available. Near the end of the week, there will be an opportunity to perform and share something with the group. So bring costumes, musical instruments, make up and anything else that may be useful. The Hall has three pianos and a dressing up cupboard!

BASE GROUPS

Living with sixty gay men in a communal setting for a week can be a challenging experience for any of us. At the beginning of the week, we will have the opportunity to form ourselves into small ‘base groups’ that meet every day and give everyone a chance to get to know a smaller group of men really well, share how the week is going and support each other. Some base groups will be facilitated by men who have been on a week before, others will be self-supporting. There will also be an opportunity for a regular heart circle.

HEALTH AWARENESS (HIV, AIDS and other chronic conditions)

There may be men living with HIV, AIDS, ME or other chronic conditions on the week who may have special needs. For example, someone in your bedroom may have extra need of rest and quiet.

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted anywhere indoors. Smokers are asked to use facilities outside the venue where they are available failing this please smoke away from the building and not just standing in a porch outside the front door. So please bring a brolly or suitable warm clothes to shelter in the event of poor weather.

SEX AND INTIMACY

One of the nice things about the week is the opportunity to be physical with each other, whether that’s holding hands as we walk through the fields to the loch or exchanging hugs as we pass on the stairs. Sex sometimes becomes an issue. Some people have lots of sexual partners, some have an intense one to one relationship while others are too busy doing other things/or are not interested in getting around to sex. We acknowledge that some of us bring to the event issues around touch, body image, intimacy and sex - and that some of these issues may arise from past abuse. We also acknowledge that some of us wish to take risks and have our boundaries challenged as we explore our feelings around sex and intimacy. We ask participants to behave as responsible adults and to ensure that all sexual behaviour is consensual and to respect one another’s’ boundaries.

CAMERAS, VIDEOS, PHONES & OTHER TECHNOLOGY

We encourage people to respect communal space by using technology (in which we include cameras, phones, PCs, sound equipment) sensitively so that it does not intrude on the consciousness or wellbeing of others on the event.

If you are taking photographs of people, please ask for permission first. There should be no copying or distribution of images without express permission of the people in the photographs. Video recorders are normally discouraged being seen as an invasion of privacy and people are generally asked not to bring them. For some people it is about anonymity; for others it is about invasion of personal space. It is okay to use video in a video workshop.

SAFETY

Please note that while the organisers of this event will take reasonable care to provide a safe environment for you, the nature of the event is such that people often try out new activities and take risks which the event organisers can't foresee. All participants need to assume responsibility for their own safety and exercise due care. Organisers cannot be held responsible for personal injury or loss as a result of any activity.

TRAVEL

Here is a brief synopsis of the travel options:

GROUP TRAVEL FROM LONDON TO LAURIESTON

A group will be travelling by train from Euston to Carlisle and onward by coach from Carlisle to Laurieston. Everyone who indicated an interest in group travel on their booking form has been sent details. Some participants coming from other parts of the country are joining the coach at Carlisle. Contact [name & tel no] for seat availability. Those with confirmed tickets will receive final details separately.

TRAINS

The nearest station is Dumfries, about 25 miles from Laurieston. The group from London will be catching the 10.30am from Euston arriving Carlisle at 14.11, where the coach will meet the train. If you wish to continue by train instead, you'll need to change to the 14.23 Scotrail service which will whisk you into Dumfries by 14.58pm. You can get a Virgin Value return ticket just on Virgin routes, ie Euston to Carlisle. From Carlisle, get a single or return to Dumfries. Buying a separate ticket as far as Carlisle is much cheaper than any through Euston to Dumfries ticket. Virgin Trains booking line 08457 222 333.

From Dumfries you need to take the bus to Castle Douglas (see below). Alternatively, 4 or 5 people sharing a taxi to the Hall should work out at around £8 each. Let [name & tel no] know if you would like to share a pre-booked people carrier.

For the return journey, trains leave Dumfries at 10.15am (departing Carlisle 11.00 and arriving Euston 15.03pm) and 11.45am (departing Carlisle 13.06pm and arriving 17.20pm). To catch these trains, you will need to leave the Hall 45 minutes – 1 hour beforehand. The coach/train group will be catching the 13.06pm from Carlisle. During the week, we will co-ordinate lifts or shared taxis for the return journey. Phone 08457 484950 for local train times.

COACH – the National Express Coach from London leaves Victoria Coach Station at 8.00am, arriving at Castle Douglas at 17.35pm. For the return, there is a coach leaving Castle Douglas at 11am and arriving in London at 19.30pm. National Express phone: 08705 808080.

BUSES - there are regular buses from Edinburgh to Dumfries and from Glasgow to Dumfries or Castle Douglas via Ayr. The buses from Dumfries to Castle Douglas leave from Whitesands (a 10/15 minute walk from the station) at 15.35, 16.05, 16.10, 16.35 and 17.05. Phone 0870 608 2608 for local bus times.

LIFT from Castle Douglas - if you would like a lift please phone 01644 450263 when you arrive in Castle Douglas - preferably after 5pm.

TRAVELLING BY CAR

From the South: take the M6 to just north of Carlisle. Turn left onto and continue along the A75 marked 'Stranraer'. Two miles before Castle Douglas, turn right onto the B795 marked 'Laurieston' (the turn off to the right is just past a blue Scottish National Trust sign mentioning 'Threave Gardens'). Follow signs to Laurieston. Turn right in Laurieston village onto A762 signposted 'New Gal-loway'. Laurieston Hall is on the left after a mile and has a sign at the end of the drive.

From the North: either take the M74 and turn off at Junction 15, the A701 to Dumfries, and then along the A75 to Castle Douglas or come the pretty route via Ayr (A762) in which case the Hall is 9 miles south of New Galloway on the right, a mile before Laurieston Village.

PARKING - Park near the main front door, but if you need wheelchair access, drive to the right of the building to the side door.

LIFTS ALL THE WAY – if you asked for a lift, we will be in contact within the next few days IF we've been able to fix you up with one. Lifts are in very short supply so you may have to make other plans. If in doubt, please contact [name & tel no].

DEPARTURE

The Hall needs to do a massive tidy up ready for a new group arriving soon after we leave, so we all need to be out of our bedrooms by 10am and away by 11am. Lunch is not provided.

The name, address, phone number and e-mail address you gave when you booked will be circulated to all other GMW participants. Let [name] know if you do not wish to be included on this list. Please keep this address list for your personal use only and don't circulate it further. If you are not yet on the ECC mailing list, you will automatically be added to it so you will receive our newsletter *Rainbow* and information about regional events and other Gay Men's Weeks.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions, give us a call:

- * About your booking: [name & tel no]
- * About lifts: [name & tel no]
- * About group travel (train to Carlisle, then coach to Laurieston): [name & tel no]
- * About base groups: [name & tel no]
- * About workshops: [name & tel no]
- * For lifts from Castle Douglas (after 4pm on Wednesday 30 July): Laurieston Hall on 01644 450263 – ask for [names] and we'll get someone to come and pick you up.

If you need to be contacted while at Laurieston, the address is:

ECC GMW
Laurieston Hall
Laurieston
Castle Douglas
DG7 2NB
(tel) 01644 450263

Mobile phones do not work in the house, but some do if you take a walk down the drive! We look forward to meeting and greeting you all soon. In the meantime, give us a call if you have any questions.

[names of organisers]

APPENDIX III GUIDELINES FOR BASE GROUP FACILITATORS

Introduction

This briefing brings together our experience from previous weeks and is designed to guide facilitators in carrying out their task.

Purpose of Base Groups

Being on a GMW can be a very emotional experience for all sorts of reasons. Base groups provide a structured opportunity to:

- * Spend time getting to know a small group of people rather better.
- * Reflect on and share thoughts, feelings and experiences of the previous 24 hours.
- * Receive support from other group members.

The task is to provide support for members whilst on the week. As such, base groups are not therapy groups. Members may wish to put what is happening to them on the week into context by referring to their lives outside of the week, but it is not the group's responsibility to try and resolve difficulties outside the GMW.

Base Group Facilitator's role

The main function of base group facilitator is to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to participate, to be heard and to receive support. The facilitator is there to make sure that at least two people are focusing on what is being said!

There may be times when it is necessary to draw quieter members out, or at least to give them an opportunity to speak. It may also be necessary to 'sit' on more talkative members, to give space to digest and reflect on what has already been said, as well as to give opportunities for others to raise issues. Facilitators are not responsible for trying to provide answers to problems, to 'make it all right' for someone who is having a bad time, or to give everyone a good time.

The facilitators are also responsible to the group for arriving on time and in a fit condition to pay attention to their task, and for ending on time or as close to time as possible (after negotiation with the group). Facilitators also act as a link between the base group, the group of facilitators as a whole, the week organisers and Laurieston Hall.

How much of my own experience do I reveal?

It is important to be human and to share your own feelings and experiences with the group, but without using them as a captive audience for your own personal therapy. It is unreasonable to expect you not to have any difficulties yourself during the week and patronising to group members not to share any of yourself with them. Appearing all strong and competent may alienate you from other group members and make them feel pretty inadequate. Equally, if you are pre-occupied with problems of your own, then you may find it hard to pay attention to other group members.

If something 'big' is going on for you, it may be helpful to talk things through with one of the other facilitators rather than taking up large amounts of your base group's time. It can feel pretty scary as a member if the facilitator is falling to pieces! Constructive feedback from your co-facilitator can help to ensure you are getting the balance right.

Working with a co-facilitator

Having a co-facilitator enables one to take the key role of actively supporting and listening to members, while the other takes a more passive role watching the group dynamics, mood and emotional temperature. If someone is talking a lot, if people are looking restless, bored, angry, or withdrawn, ask about this and offer them an opportunity to talk. If you are doing quite a bit of active facilitation, it can be difficult to watch the process overall and you may miss things. You can choose to swap

roles from meeting to meeting, or decide to stay with one role. It's up to you. It can also be helpful to share what you are doing with the group. They might like to help with facilitating and not have to rely on you alone.

Setting ground rules

It is always helpful to discuss a few ground rules for the group. Our suggestions are:

- * **Confidentiality** - clarify what people understand by this. Generally, it means not repeating outside the group any personal information shared inside the group. It also means making sure not to identify what an individual said or did in the group when talking about your group.
- * **Time keeping** - encourage the group to start and finish on time. It is unfair on those who are there on time to be kept waiting for others to arrive, and it is unhelpful for groups to run on beyond their finishing time, unless by agreement.
- * **Commitment** - people are free to decide to leave or join the group until the end of the second meeting, and should then make a commitment to the group for the remainder of the week. If someone chooses to miss a meeting, they should send their apologies with someone so that the group doesn't spend time worrying where they are.
- * **Respect** - ask members to try to respect each other's differences and right to hold different opinions, and to opt out of any activity that the group might decide upon.
- * **Power, touch and sex** - remind members that there will be men on the week who are sexual abuse survivors, or who have issues around touch, body image, intimacy and sex. Encourage members to think about the implications of personal and group power.
- * **Any others?** Ask if there are any other ground rules that members might want to help them to feel safe and get the most out of the group.

Getting things started

At the first meeting, it can be helpful to have a way of breaking the ice and getting people talking. This need only be suggesting that everyone go around and say how he's feeling right now, and what his hopes and fears are for the week ahead. You may like to start by playing a game, but there is no need for things to be complicated, or too time consuming. However, whilst games are good ice-breakers, it may be inappropriate for facilitators to spend lots of time using techniques or playing games unless this is what the group wants. Check your suggestions out with them first.

Sex with group members

It is important to remember that as a base group facilitator you will be seen to be in a position of some power. Do not use this power (whether real or perceived) either consciously or unconsciously to get your own way. This raises the question of having or not having sex with members of your group. While we would not wish to say facilitators should never have sex with any member of their base group, we do think it is important that a facilitator who wants to have sex with a group member should think seriously about the implications and discuss the matter with someone, such as his co-facilitator. If a facilitator is reluctant to mention it to someone else, he should also examine his motives for this reluctance.

Attending the organisers' meeting

Base group facilitators meet together with the week organisers daily to co-ordinate the week and deal with any issues that arise as the week progresses. This helps cohesion, provides support and an opportunity to share or pass on information. It is helpful if one of the co-facilitators from each base group attends.

[names of organisers], with thanks to many previous facilitators

APPENDIX IV CHECKLIST FOR MEETINGS ON AN ECC EVENT

Participants, and organisers, can find the first day or so rather stressful. Imparting useful information, including some ground rules, can reduce stress and help people settle in. Too little information can leave people wondering where they stand. Too much information can create overload, and then simply be forgotten or disregarded. It is sometimes hard for organisers to get the balance right. Some organisers have found it useful to have checklists of items that might be covered in each meeting. An example from High Close follows.

Organisers pre-meeting for organisers only

This is a list of things that organisers might want to consider once they have arrived at the venue, but before the event starts. In many cases, it is simply a matter of ensuring you all agree what the answers to questions about these items will be. In others, it is a matter of making sure that what needs to be done has been done.

- ☐ Tea, Coffee, Bread - do we have them
- ☐ Sheet sleeping bags or other bedding needs - do we know the arrangements
- ☐ Fire, candles and night lights - do we have them, do we know where they can be used
- ☐ Photographs - what are we going to say about them
- ☐ Video cameras - policy for use of
- ☐ Decorating team - who is going to tart the place up?
- ☐ Special needs requests - what have been received? How will they be met?
- ☐ Entrances - when and how they can be used.
- ☐ Timings - breakfast, supper, base groups, last day changes
- ☐ Welcoming group - who is on it and what will they be doing?
- ☐ Hello meeting (e.g. tea party prior to first evening supper)
- ☐ Newcomers meeting - who is facilitating it.
- ☐ Big go round - what questions will we suggest they answer? Who is facilitating?
- ☐ Rest of first day - what needs arranging – eg: first workshops if no suggestions come forward.
- ☐ Auction or fundraising event. Who will facilitate. Who will collect money?
- ☐ Mid week event - is it all planned or are there still things to do?
- ☐ Last day meeting - who will facilitate? What form will it take?
- ☐ Feedback meeting
- ☐ Cabaret - when will it be? How will it be facilitated?
- ☐ Food - are the arrangements understood?
- ☐ Special needs food - have there been any requests? Have they been dealt with?
- ☐ Other special needs - have there been any requests? Have they been dealt with?
- ☐ When will the access audit workshop take place? Who will be running it?
- ☐ Sorting dining tables - do they need re-arranging? Who is doing it?
- ☐ Serving food - will there be arrangements to serve food or will people collect their own?
- ☐ The warden/residents - what are the arrangements for liaison?

- ☐ Queen bees - who will be doing this if there is no one forthcoming from the participants?
- ☐ Support people - who will be providing support if any participant feels lost or distressed.
- ☐ Facilitators (base groups) - are there enough to go round.
- ☐ Base groups - Will there be any themed groups? How will people be allocated to groups?
- ☐ Changing base groups - how will this be managed?
- ☐ Latecomers - are there any? How will they be allocated to base groups and brought into the overall group?
- ☐ Money - what is outstanding? Do we have any money needs and can they be met?
- ☐ Address list - who will be preparing it?

Newcomers' meeting *for people who are new to GMWs*

The main purpose is to introduce the following things so that the main meeting will make sense.

- ☐ ECC community
- ☐ Sharing rooms
- ☐ Who is in charge, and who gets paid
- ☐ Workshops – how to participate, how to facilitate
- ☐ Base groups – what they are and arrangements for changing base groups
- ☐ Members Kitchen
- ☐ Special food
- ☐ Bookable space
- ☐ Queen bee, support people
- ☐ Piano
- ☐ Lost property
- ☐ Touch, intimacy and sex – being clear about what you do and don't want. Respecting other people's wishes. Taking responsibility for your own safety.
- ☐ Photographs – making sure subjects are happy for it to be taken. Distribution of photographs that include participants.
- ☐ Cabaret – what it is and what it isn't.

First evening meeting *For all participants*

This is just a short meeting on the first evening just to make sure everyone has a bed and knows fire procedures etc.

- ☐ Welcome
- ☐ Sleeping arrangements (sheet sleeping bags etc)
- ☐ Loud sleepers and provision for them
- ☐ Times for breakfast
- ☐ Times for the 'big go-round' meeting the next day
- ☐ How to avoid fire and what to do if it happens. Completing the list of who is sleeping where.

First big meeting, immediately prior to 'Big Go Round' Everyone

- ☐ Welcome again
- ☐ Introduce the organisers
- ☐ Programme
- ☐ Negotiating for workshop space & materials for workshops
- ☐ Base group arrangements
- ☐ Washing up and other jobs – how these are allocated & which ones we have to do.
- ☐ Members' kitchen - where it is, how it can be used.
- ☐ Where you can store food. What food is communal and what is private.
- ☐ Food serving
- ☐ Candles/night lights
- ☐ Fixing things to walls and avoiding damage
- ☐ Use and securing of entrances
- ☐ Car owner's list
- ☐ Telephone - taking, leaving and finding messages.
- ☐ Lost property - what to do if you see any. What to do if you lose any.
- ☐ Condoms - where to find them.
- ☐ Private bookable space – where it is, when it is available
- ☐ Outsiders - if welcome, then where they are welcome.
- ☐ Photographs – reminder about guidelines and asking permission first
- ☐ Organised trips, if any - packed lunch list, etc
- ☐ Queen bees
- ☐ Community. Respect
- ☐ HIV, ME etc.
- ☐ Address list
- ☐ Alcohol, drugs
- ☐ Feedback meeting – purpose and when it will happen
- ☐ Who to turn to if you feel lost or alone
- ☐ Introduce warden or residents' representative

Final meeting, immediately prior to 'Final Big Go Round' Everyone

- ☐ End of Event Survey Forms
- ☐ Lifts
- ☐ Thanks

APPENDIX V CABARET GUIDELINES

It is usual to have a cabaret, in which anyone can perform, on the last or next to last night. Acts should be in accordance with the principles and intentions. This means that racist, misogynist acts, or jokes at the expense of an ethnic group are inappropriate.

Even if it is decided to opt for an informal 'soiree' style, the cabaret will need an Organiser and a Comperer and will involve some planning. It is a good idea for cabaret organisers to check out in advance what people want to do, to encourage contributions to be short, and to try to balance the programme between different levels of skill, experience and type of act. Compering needs to be sensitive in order to avoid upstaging performers.

A short meeting fairly early on in the week of those who are interested in helping in any way should get the ball rolling. This meeting could decide a number of things:

- * Where/when the cabaret will take place.
- * Who will organise the cabaret / coordinate the team.
- * Who will Comperer (role could be shared)
- * Who will help: prepare the room, stage, lights, music, props, musical accompaniment, arranging seating.
- * Are residents/staff to be invited?

Event organisers will need to ensure that cabaret organisers are familiar with these Guidelines. An easy way is to make copies available to people attending the initial planning meeting.

HELPFUL HINTS & PROMPTS FOR ORGANISING A CABARET

- * **Find out who wants to perform:** Remember to ask everyone so that no one feels left out (a list on the notice board, and announcements at meal times, may work, but some people usually miss these). Encourage those who seem reticent, shy or nervous, without putting undue pressure to perform.
- * **Gather (& keep a note of) information about each act:** Ask: Who is in the act? What type of act? Does the act have a name? How does the act want to be introduced by the Comperer? How long is the act (to nearest minute)? Does the act need music or props? If so, who will make sure that props are ready and that music starts on time?
- * **Check that all the acts can fit in to the agreed time for the show:** You will also need to leave time spare for introducing each act, for any spontaneous acts, and for thanking everyone at the end. You may have to diplomatically ask any acts that are too long to make it a bit shorter.
- * **Create a running order for the show:** If possible, let each act know before the show when they are on and who they are following. Include a time for interval(s).
- * **An hour or so before the show is due to start:**
 - Check that someone has arranged the seating well, so that each audience member has a good view
 - Make a list of everyone who has contributed, so that the Comperer will know who to thank at the end of the show (& make sure the Comperer has this list, and can read it)
 - Make sure that the Comperer has a copy of the running order, along with any notes on how each act would like to be introduced.
- * **Give everyone ten minute warning** before show time, and then another reminder at five minutes to go. Encourage everyone to be in their seats by show time.

- ★ **During the show:** Provide 'behind the scenes' support for performers, helpers, and Compere.

HELPFUL HINTS & PROMPTS FOR COMPERING A CABARET

BEFORE THE SHOW:

- ★ Check often with the show organiser.
- ★ Make sure that you have the list of performers, the running order, and notes on how each act would like to be introduced.
- ★ Make sure that you can read all the notes (if necessary, double-check with the organiser and/or performer).
- ★ In any event, try to speak with each act and get a clear idea of what they want to do, and how they would like to be introduced.
- ★ Think about and (possibly) rehearse how you are going to start and finish the show.

DURING THE SHOW:

- ★ Keep everything running on stage.
- ★ Welcome the audience.
- ★ Introduce each act & then leave the stage, unless performer has requested otherwise ie if they specifically wish you to be included in their act. Some performers and audience members find it quite distracting, irritating, and unnerving when the Compere remains in view of the audience.
- ★ Encourage applause after each act.
- ★ Make it clear that there will be a space for spontaneous offerings (perhaps from those who didn't feel brave enough beforehand, but have now plucked up courage) and when this will happen. Could be towards the end of the first half, and then again towards the end of the second half (but not after the final act). Ensure that this happens as promised.
- ★ After the last act, let everyone know that it is the end of the show. Thank everyone, including:
 - The audience
 - People who helped put the chairs out
 - People who helped backstage, with props, music etc
 - Check your list so that no one gets forgotten.

APPENDIX VI END OF EVENT SURVEY

Event:

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your feedback gives us useful information when planning future events. We welcome helpful suggestions for improvement.

Arrival experience: Please comment on your arrival experience (eg: group coach, welcome reception, finding a bed, first night events, settling in)

Go-Rounds: The go rounds have two purposes: 1) to deliver necessary information and 2) to give the participants a chance to share themselves with the group and get a 'flavour' of others. Please comment on your experience on both counts.

Workshops: If you ran a workshop, how did it go? If you wanted to run a workshop but didn't, what stopped you? Please also comment on your experience of the workshops you attended.

Organised events: Please comment on any organised events that come to mind (eg ceilidh, cabaret, soiree etc)

Communication: Was there enough communication throughout the week from the organisers? What worked particularly well, and what could have better?

Food: Please comment on the food this week (eg variety, presentation, quality, amount, any special events)

Accommodation: Please comment on accommodation (eg beds, bathrooms, other facilities)

Base Groups/Heart circles: The base group/ heart circle is intended to be a supportive and useful space. What was your experience? Do you have any suggestions for improvement? If you decided not to join a base group or heart circle, can you say why?

Shape and structure of the event: What worked well? What could be improved upon?

Any further comments you wish to make:

APPENDIX VII ORGANISERS POST EVENT REPORT

Event:

Organising Team:

Surplus on event to ECC funds: £

Number of participants paying in each payment band			
	No		No
Bursary		Average income	
Concessionary		High income	
Low income			

What was so successful you would definitely do it again?

What was so unsuccessful you would not do it again?

Did any of your participants have special needs?

Were they well catered for and if so, how?

How accessible is the venue for wheelchair users & other people with mobility problems? Please tick most appropriate box:

Spaces / accessibility	Fully accessible	Accessible with difficulty	Accessible with assistance	Would present major challenges
Main group areas				
Bedrooms				
Toilets				
Bathrooms				
Ground floor bedrooms				
Ground floor toilets				
Ground floor bathrooms				
Grounds				

APPENDIX VIII HEART CIRCLE GUIDELINES

A heart circle is group-sharing process, drawn from personal growth processes that many of us in ECC are familiar with. It is in essence a continuous 'turn taking' process. Over the past few years heart circles have become popular as an addition to, and sometimes an alternative to, base groups.

Participants gather together at a pre-arranged time and place (or it may happen more spontaneously), sit in a circle (possibly maintaining some physical contact with the people to either side throughout the meeting so that there is an unbroken physical connection), and take turns. Sometimes there is a 'talisman' which is passed around (the equivalent of a talking/listening stick). The person holding the talisman "speaks from the heart" sharing whatever they want or need to share with the circle. The other members of the circle pay attention to the speaker, and listen with respect (from their heart).

One person starts. It is often useful if the person who convened the heart circle speaks first, explaining for newcomers, and reminding everyone of the basic format (including clarifying the finishing time and any breaks).

In some traditions, if the speaker says something which others strongly agree with, then they make some sound. In some Native American traditions for example people say "ho" to acknowledge agreement or affinity. In the radical faerie tradition circle members. However, sometimes the use of these signs of approval can be counterproductive, as those who don't get a 'ho' or a 'hiss' can feel less valued by the group.

When the first person has finished speaking they pass the talisman to the next person (clockwise or anticlockwise depending on your tradition). In Native American tradition, it would pass clockwise, and the speaker may signify that they have finished speaking by saying "I have spoken!" (Our tribe are known for doing things 'the other way'). It is often useful if the first round of sharing is kept brief, and fairly light, (perhaps just checking in) as this then builds up the foundation of trust and safety for those who may want to share at a deeper level.

On your turn, it is fine to say a little or a lot, or to hold the talisman in silence and pass it on when you are ready. Sharings may be light or deep, serious or humorous. On your turn, you could even sing a song, or initiate a short game. The turn-taking carries on around the circle, perhaps many times, until everyone has said what they want to say or until the agreed time is up.

In the Native American tradition it carries on until it reaches a point where every member of the circle on their turn says nothing other than "I have spoken!" Another variation: When the speaker finishes, the talisman is put in the centre, and whoever feels moved to speak picks it up. Sometimes this can be useful when the group is sharing thoughts on a specific topic. One disadvantage with this method is that less confident participants are less likely take a turn, and those with more confidence / experience with the process can tend to dominate the group.

Heart circles work better with clear starting and finishing times which are agreed in advance, and some formal closing ritual, which could be simply sitting in silence, or a group hug, or song or dance.

APPENDIX IX HOW WE RUN MEETINGS

We try to have meetings where there is equal power, responsibility, knowledge and opportunity to participate. These guidelines help remind us how to have positive meetings.

We sit in a circle and agree a facilitator, a note taker and sometimes a mood watcher. Someone may be asked in advance to act as facilitator. We generally begin with a go round to hear from everyone, and often break into small groups to make it easier to share feelings and have a focused discussion.

Beforehand

A clear **aim** helps people to know why they are there. At the AG, the aim is usually to share information and make decisions, but there may be others.

Clear **issues** are easier to deal with. It sometimes helps if people come with a clearly worded proposal so everyone has something to get their teeth into. A proposal may need explanation and development; and possibly a background paper presented a few days in advance, with the proposer encouraging feedback before the meeting to give them a chance to amend it beforehand.

Facilitator

The facilitator's role is to help us to have smooth meetings and make good decisions. The facilitator is the observer/helper/encourager of the process. He is the servant of the group (not its boss) and follows the aims and direction of the meeting. In this role, personal involvement and opinions are left to one side and not expressed unless he steps out of his role.

Jobs before the meeting (or session)

- * Make sure the meeting space is warm and comfortable, with an agenda prepared and everyone knows the time and place.
- * Assemble any reports, papers, paper and pens, etc.
- * Ensure other special roles are filled (may be done at start or prior to the meeting).
- * Go through the agenda, checking that someone is responsible for introducing each item. It can be good to start with short easy matters to boost morale, but don't leave the hardest to last when everyone is tired.
- * Start on time - don't wait for latecomers unless there are special circumstances - fill them in as non-disruptively as possible.
- * Agree a finishing time and stick to it! It may be wise to put a time limit on every item. Also fix a time for a break.

During the Meeting

- * Encourage everyone to express his viewpoint, usually by starting with a "go-round".
- * Ask for relevant information. A good process for looking at issues is: what is the present situation; what's good about it; what needs to be changed; and what needs to happen so that change can take place.
- * Be aware of conflicts! Polarities generate energy and create wholeness. After the poles have been clearly expressed, we can usually move towards agreeing solutions.
- * Keep the meeting to the point, intervening when necessary.
- * Summarise suggestions; pose questions; clarify confusions; ensure everyone has understood. Don't let ideas fall into a pit of silence – acknowledge what is happening.
- * Draw out agreements and disagreements.
- * Encourage the expression of feelings as well as thoughts; encourage humour and fun to lighten and balance serious concentration; perhaps a game, having a break, a song, a period of silence, people changing their positions etc.
- * Watch the emotional content of the meeting - tension, boredom, frustration, anger and energy level. Be light but confident in making your observations so as not to arouse defensiveness or

guilt. Remember your role is to facilitate and ease tensions (a Mood Watcher may take this role).

- * Watch for appropriate moments to make decisions and suggest them to the group, without hurrying people. Make sure everyone has taken part.
- * Make sure the note-taker has recorded the decision and reads it back to the group.
- * Make sure that someone takes on any tasks arising from the decisions.
- * Allow time for announcements.
- * Allow five minutes for evaluation of the meeting and a closing circle maybe holding hands. Thank everyone especially the note taker.

Co-Facilitator

- * Shares the Facilitator's duties.
- * Offers support during the meeting.
- * Shares feedback on the facilitator's performance after the meeting.

Note/Minute Taker

The Note Taker makes a record of decisions taken by the meeting. The role is demanding and limits the holder's participation in the meeting, and should be rotated frequently.

Small Groups

Breaking into small groups of two to six people can help us deal with a difficult issue. The more difficult the discussion, the more trust it requires and the smaller the groups should be. This way everyone gets a chance to voice their feelings and ideas. Each small group sifts what has been expressed and reports back to the meeting.

The facilitator (and everyone else) should consider small groups when feelings are running high and need space for a detailed discussion. In this case, the aims need to be clear: is the group to bring back a list of ideas or a single recommendation? Decide how long the groups are to meet for and a selection process, eg at random or those who share a special interest or a combination of different views and the need to share them.

If it has been a heavy meeting, the end of the small group session may be a good time for a tea break before reporting back. Keep reports back brief. The Facilitator needs to pay attention to the ongoing direction of the meeting.

Working Groups

Sometimes we choose to divide into small Working Groups to enable us to work on a number of different issues at the same time, particularly when issues need detailed discussion.

Working Groups are a variation on small groups and broadly work towards identifying key decision areas and producing recommendations for action which are then reported back to the full group for a decision to be made.

Achieving Consensus

We strive for consensus wherever possible. If consensus cannot be reached, the decision may be postponed. Where it cannot be postponed, we take a vote. In these circumstances a proposal needs the support of 75% of those voting. Consensus takes time and sensitivity to everyone's point of view. Some suggestions for helping the group to arrive at consensus are:

- * Make a tentative proposal and ask if there are any objections.
- * If there are, seek a modification or counter-proposal from the objector(s). Seek objections to that.
- * If one or two people are blocking consensus, ask if they are prepared to stand aside, and if they are try to make sure that they will not have to carry out the decision.

- ★ If objections continue, break for reflection; divide into small groups; or try a game. If no consensus emerges, seek to postpone the issue. If that is not appropriate, take a vote.
- ★ It is important to be clear that it's okay to object and modify. No one is expected to agree to anything they cannot live with.

For a more detailed insight on consensus decision making, see APPENDIX XII

APPENDIX X RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Conflict is a natural occurrence - an integral part of the change process and a way in which groups and individuals grow. Different viewpoints struggle with each other and then merge to form new ideas. Conflicts arise either because people believe their wants and goals are incompatible or because of poor quality relationships. Resolution may require changes in behaviour or attitudes. Conflicts should never be glossed over or allowed to build up, and it is important that we respond as creatively as possible.

Conflicts have predictable patterns and when they arise we try to minimise damage both to individuals and to the group, and maximise the growth of all concerned. Feelings are always present, either because of irritation, frustration, anger, hurt or fear in relation to the issue, or because of past unresolved situations and feelings. Feelings cannot be solved, only felt, whereas issues and problem behaviour can be creatively challenged and explored.

A good solution depends on a clear recognition and identification of the goals, issues, needs and feelings of the people involved. Firstly, look at what led to the present difficulty. What are the issues? Who is involved? What are their needs, goals, feelings and behaviour? Is the conflict sporadic or always present? Who brought it out into the open? Resolution will often involve conciliation and negotiation. Conciliation helps people to change their relationship towards one another by acknowledging feelings and building trust by affirming the positive aspects of the people involved, identifying points which people hold in common and affirming the relationship itself. Negotiation involves clarifying what happened and each side's issues, goals and needs – as opening statements, not final words. As each side hears the other's needs, goals may change.

Dividing the problem into smaller parts and solving a small issue will provide encouragement to continue and validation to the people involved. People in the conflict often need time to think about solutions and see how well they fit their needs and goals. Selecting a solution is like making a consensus decision in a large group. Attempt to synthesise and build on each other's ideas rather than choosing one idea over another.

Finish by re-stating agreement – the long-range goals for the relationship as well as the short term ones. A decision should be consistent with both sets of goals; otherwise more conflict is likely to surface in the future.

APPENDIX XI CENSUS DECISION MAKING

What is consensus?

Consensus is a process for group decision-making. It is a method by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement. The input and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesised to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. Consensus can help to achieve better solutions, and promote the growth of community and trust.

Consensus vs voting

Voting is a means by which we choose one alternative from several. Consensus, on the other hand, is a process of synthesising many diverse elements together. Voting is a win or lose model, in which people are more often concerned with the numbers it takes to "win" than with the issue itself. Voting does not take into account individual feelings or needs. In essence, it is a quantitative, rather than qualitative, method of decision making.

With consensus, people can and should work through differences and reach a mutually satisfactory position. It is possible for one person's insights or strongly held beliefs to sway the whole group. No ideas are lost, each member's input is valued as part of the solution.

A group committed to consensus may utilise other forms of decision-making (individual, compromise, majority rules) when appropriate. However, a group that has adopted a consensus model will use that process for any item that brings up a lot of emotions, is something that concerns people's ethics, politics, morals or other areas where there is much investment.

What does consensus mean?

Consensus does not mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is necessarily the best one possible, or even that they are sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that her/his position on the matter was misunderstood or that it wasn't given a proper hearing. Hopefully, everyone will think it is the best decision; this often happens because, when it works, collective intelligence does come up with better solutions than could individuals.

Consensus takes more time and member skill, but uses lots of resources before a decision is made, creates commitment to the decision and often facilitates creative decision making. It gives everyone some experience with new processes of interaction and conflict resolution, which is basic but important skill building. For consensus to be a positive experience, it is best if the group has:

- * Common values.
- * Some skill in group process and conflict resolution, and/or a commitment to let these be facilitated.
- * Members with commitment and responsibility to the group, willingness to contribute their views and discuss their reasons.
- * Commitment and effort to develop an atmosphere of honesty and openness in the group, and a willingness to confront and resolve controversy and conflict.
- * Sufficient time to explore all the information and opinions, and for everyone to participate in the process.

Forming the consensus proposals

During discussion, a proposal for resolution is put forward. It is amended and modified through more discussion, or withdrawn if it seems to be a dead end. During this discussion period it is important to articulate differences clearly. It is the responsibility of those who are having trouble with a proposal to put forth alternative suggestions.

The fundamental right of consensus is for all people to be able to express themselves in their own words and of their own will. The fundamental responsibility of consensus is to assure others of their right to speak and be heard. Coercion and trade-offs are replaced with creative alternatives, and compromise with synthesis.

People have widely differing understanding of what consensus means. Until they can agree on what consensus is, they really can't expect to reach it. Here's a definition and way to test for consensus. Consensus exists within a group when each member of the group can say:

- * I have had the opportunity to voice my opinions.
- * I believe the group has heard me.
- * I can actively support the group's decision as the best possible at this time, even if it is not my first choice.

When a proposal seems to be well understood by everyone, and there are no new changes asked for, the facilitator(s) can ask if there are any objections or reservations to it. If there are no objections, there can be a call for consensus. Each member of the group could ask themselves if they are able to make these three statements. If each answers "yes", consensus exists and the group can move on. Once consensus does appear to have been reached, it really helps to have someone repeat the decision to the group so everyone is clear on what has been decided.

It isn't easy to meet this test. If just one person cannot agree with the three test statements, consensus does not exist. The group must then decide whether to continue discussing the issue with the expectation of reaching a consensus. If not, the group would move to an alternative method for deciding. Yes, it's okay to decide in other ways, but these other ways don't have all the benefits of consensus (nor do they take as much time and effort). Of course, moving to an alternative works best if the group has agreed on an alternative before a consensus-blocking impasse occurs.

Within ECC we strive for consensus wherever possible. If consensus cannot be reached and a decision can be postponed, we do so. Where the decision cannot be postponed, we take a vote. In these circumstances, a proposal needs the support of 75% of those voting, to be agreed.

Any member of the group can block consensus. This is precisely why consensus decisions are both more difficult and more effective than other methods. Consensus decision-making forces the group to consider more aspects of a problem and more consequences of possible courses of action. Well-made consensual decisions are thus based on broader and deeper consideration.

The members of a group must realise that their own behaviour is critical. The following are examples of behaviours that help the group reach consensus:

- * Involve everyone in the discussion and decision-making process.
- * Listen and pay attention to what others have to say.
- * Be cautious of early, quick, easy agreements.
- * Avoid compromising.
- * Avoid competing, arguing and trying to "win."
- * Don't "give in" just to "go along."
- * Use different opinions to enhance the decision's quality.
- * Avoid voting.
- * Take action to reduce tension.
- * Work on the most important or controversial considerations.
- * Use a blend of information, logic, emotion and intuition.

Difficulties in reaching consensus

If a decision has been reached, or is on the verge of being reached, that you cannot support, there are several ways to express your objections:

- ★ **Non-support** ("I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along.")
- ★ **Reservations** ("I think this may be a mistake but I can live with it.")
- ★ **Standing aside** ("I personally can't do this, but I won't stop others from doing it. ")
- ★ **Blocking** ("I cannot support this or allow the group to support this. It is immoral." If a final decision violates someone's fundamental moral values they are obligated to block consensus.)
- ★ **Withdrawing from the group** Obviously, if many people express non-support or reservations or stand aside or leave the group, it may not be a viable decision even if no one directly blocks it. This is what is known as a "lukewarm" consensus and it is just as desirable as a lukewarm beer or a lukewarm bath.

If consensus is blocked and no new consensus can be reached, the group stays with whatever the previous decision was on the subject, or does nothing if that is applicable.

Roles in a consensus meeting

There are several roles which can help consensus decision making run smoothly:

- ★ **The facilitator(s)** aids the group in defining decisions that need to be made, helps them through the stages of reaching an agreement, keeps the meeting moving, focuses discussion to the point at hand, makes sure everyone has the opportunity to participate, formulates and tests to see if consensus has been reached. Facilitators help to direct the process of the meeting, not the content. They never make decisions for the group. If a facilitator feels too emotionally involved in an issue or discussion and cannot remain neutral in behaviour, if not in attitude, then s/he should ask someone to take over the task of facilitation for that agenda item.
- ★ **A mood-watcher** is someone besides the facilitator who watches and comments on individual and group feelings and patterns of participation.
- ★ **A note-taker** can take notes on the meeting, especially of decisions made and means of implementation.
- ★ **A timekeeper** keeps things on course, by occasionally reminding the group of the time elapsed, or remaining in a session.

Even though individuals take on these roles, all participants in a meeting should be aware of and involved in the issues, process, and feelings of the group, and should share their individual expertise in helping the group run smoothly and reach a decision. This is especially true when it comes to finding compromise agreements to seemingly contradictory positions.

APPENDIX XII GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This is a brief explanation of some of the acronyms and terms used in this document and within ECC generally, which may require a little explanation.

AAFBG	Annual Autumn Faerie Business Gathering. The former name for the <i>Autumn Gathering</i> .
AG	Autumn Gathering (sometimes also referred to as <i>Annual Gathering</i>). This is the primary decision-making event for ECC business. It is held once a year over a weekend in late October/early November and is open to all community members. It's where decisions are made about events for the coming year, and taskholders are appointed.
AGM	Annual General Meeting of Edward Carpenter Community Ltd. A legal requirement which is held as part of the <i>Autumn Gathering</i> .
ECC	Edward Carpenter Community.
ECC Ltd	Edward Carpenter Community Limited, the legal body which represents the community.
GMW	Gay men's week. This term is sometimes used to refer to the big 'traditional' weeks such as those at Laurieston, in contrast to themed or facilitated weeks.
LH	Laurieston Hall, our principal venue near Castle Douglas in South West Scotland.
LHPC	Laurieston Hall People Centre, the trading name of our hosts at Laurieston Hall.
MailChimp	A third-party mailing system used to send out electronic communications to community members via Email. See www.mailchimp.com . There are currently about 1,000 people on the mailing list. Every person with an email address who attends an event is added automatically, and people can also sign up via the website. Individuals can opt out of receiving mailings at any time via the unsubscribe links in the emails.
MG	Maintenance Group. 3 to 5 members appointed by the AG each year to look after the running of ECC affairs in between events. Although they are Directors of ECC Ltd, their role is primarily reactive rather than pro-active. Sometimes incorrectly known as the <i>management group</i> – which is to be discouraged.
P&Is	Principles and Intentions. The founding principles of ECC. See section 1.4 for details.
Rainbow	ECC's newsletter circulated to community members and people who ask to join our mailing list. Formerly published quarterly in print format, and later as a PDF download, it is now sent as an occasional mailing via MailChimp.
SVG	Spring Vision Gathering. An occasional weekend where we look more deeply at the development of the community than is possible at an AG. Usually held in the Spring, these Vision Gatherings generally happen every 6 or 7 years.
Vision & Values	A recent addition to the P&Is. A kind of mission statement explaining to the wider world what the community is about. See section 1.5.