

Shrub Co-op Working Groups Policy

Introduction

1. Working Groups enable members and volunteers to get involved in the activities of the Shrub Co-op. They are where day-to-day stuff gets sorted and ideas are shaped for bringing to meetings of the wider membership or to the attention of the Board of Directors (**Board**) for guidance, assistance or endorsement.
2. Working Groups allow everyone to share in the role of making decisions, taking action and ensuring the future of the Shrub Co-op. The intention of the Shrub Co-op is to operate a “hub and spokes” model with a free flow of information about decisions and ideas flowing from Working Groups to the wider membership and the Board.
3. Please read this policy for the creation, running and reporting of Working Groups alongside the [Shrub Constitution](#), the [International Co-operative Principles](#) and any other relevant policies (on welfare, organising meetings, resolving disputes etc).
4. A list of the current Working Groups can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Types of Working Groups

Working Groups

5. **Working Groups** drive forward well-established strands of the Shrub Co-op’s activities and allow for day-to-day discussion and policy formulation for that activity. For example, there are Working Groups to look after finances (Administration & Finance Working Group) and to provide support for members and staff (Welfare Working Group).
6. Other Working Groups focus on the core activities of the Shrub Co-op like the Wee Spoke Hub Working Group and the Swapshop Working Group.

Task Groups

7. **Task Groups** enable a focused group approach to a particular issue needing special attention. They operate for a set period of time in order to research, discuss and reach a resolution on a particular task or issue. This could be a completely new issue or where a particular issue touches on the responsibilities of several of the Working Groups.
8. For example, there might be a need to conduct a review of the legal structure of the Shrub Co-Op or to focus resources on a study or grant proposal.

Setting up, merging and closing Working Groups

9. Where members identify a possible need for a new Working Group they should draft a short statement of its purposes, its areas of responsibility and suggested membership and bring this to a meeting of the wider membership

or the Board for ratification. Ideally a Board member should be involved in this formation process to provide guidance and assistance.

10. If meetings of a Working Group are occurring less than once a month then it may be worth considering winding up the Working Group or merging it with another.
11. In the case of the closing or merger of a Working Group or its merger, this should only be done with the active support of the members of that Group and they should be invited to present their views to the wider membership or the Board for that purpose.

How Working Groups Work

12. Working Groups are generally free to decide on their own ways of working but there are certain minimum requirements which, in the interests of transparency and the successful functioning of the Shrub Co-op need to be followed.

Purpose and remit

13. Each Working Group should create a brief (one paragraph) statement of its purposes and the topics it deals with. This should be reviewed at least every six months. Each Working Group should bear these purposes in mind when identifying their priorities.

Membership

14. Where possible, each Working Group should include a Board member and a staff member. Each Working Group should be open to new members and encourage the involvement of any interested members. Meeting dates and opportunities to serve on any Working Group should be widely promoted in inductions, on social media and on the Shrub Co-op's website.
15. Working Groups should also identify at least two members of the Working Group who can act as contact persons. These do not need to be the staff or Board members of the Working Group, other members are encouraged to act as contact persons and take responsibility for the healthy functioning of their Working Group.

Meetings

16. Working Groups should respect the co-operative, non-hierarchical and consensus-based decision making processes of the Shrub Co-op. All major decisions of the Working Group must be taken by consensus at a meeting.
17. Working Groups may wish to organise their own smaller teams to deal with particular issues or tasks. However, each Working Group should meet as a whole at least once a month to review its activities, welcome new members and identify any matters that may need to be raised with the wider

membership or the Board.

Record-keeping

18. Agendas and minutes (including action points) should be taken for each meeting of each Working Group (whether monthly or more frequent). Minutes should include a list of active members of the Working Group and those in attendance at that meeting.
19. Agendas and minutes should, in general, be kept in a location accessible to all members of the Shrub Co-op so that there is an understanding of the Working Group's activities.
20. Each Working Group will be provided with a Google Drive folder in which to store their agendas and minutes as well as any other documents they wish such as purpose statements.
21. A Working Group may, exceptionally, deal with an issue as a closed or private item where there is some overriding confidentiality interest (commercial, personal etc). Appropriate steps should be taken to safeguard this confidentiality.
22. A list of Working Groups (and their relevant contact people) will be maintained by the Shrub Co-op and published via the Shrub Co-op's communication channels.

Communicating with everyone

23. Working Groups are free to bring any issue to the attention of the wider membership or the Board at any time.
24. Working Groups should identify a spokesperson to provide a brief monthly update of their activities, and any matters which require wider discussion or guidance to the wider membership or to the Board. This will be done on to a schedule to be agreed. This keeps the rest of the members aware of what is happening and feeds information back to the Working Group on what others are doing.
25. Working Groups should communicate any issues, reports or proposals for discussion in advance so these can be included in meeting agendas.
26. The Shrub Co-op's yearly AGM will also include a summary of the active Working Groups and their activities for that year.

Reviewing this policy

27. This policy will be reviewed in six months from the date that it is adopted by the Shrub Co-op with feedback from members and the Working Groups.

Appendix 1:

Current Working Groups

1. Current Working Groups:
 - a. Wee Spoke Hub;
 - b. Foodsharing;
 - c. Swapshop;
 - d. Workshops and events;
 - e. Administration and Finance;
 - f. IT and Maintenance;
 - g. Communications & Outreach;
 - h. Internal Communications;
 - i. Welfare;
 - j. Volunteering and Staffing; and
 - k. Governance and Policy.

2. Current task groups:
 - a. Zero Waste Town Feasibility Study Task Group; and
 - b. Legal Structures Task Group.

Document revision history

Version	Date	Changes
0.01	19/3/2017	Substantially revised draft picking up parts of various previous discussion documents
0.02	20/3/2017	Edited by David to remove redundant wording and shorten
0.03	20/3/2017	Edited by Fergus to bring in a number of David's changes
0.04	22/3/2017	Edited by Fergus following Board meeting feedback
1.0	29/03/2017	Adopted by the Shrub Co-op Board