

The Big House Project

Document: Decision Making Process

Version: 1.0—20/02/2022

This document forms part of a package of ratified policy documents, that are intended to be read in conjunction with the "Associate Membership Agreement". The documents may be updated from time to time by the project's Decision Making Process. The full set of supporting documents includes, but is not limited to: the "Membership Process", "Decision Making Process", "Meeting Procedure", "Minutes Template" and the "Spending Policy". We wish to credit Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood for the basis of these documents, adapted under Creative Commons 4.0 BY NC SA, and these documents are released on the same terms.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Interpretation

- In this document, unless otherwise stated, "Member" means Associate or Full Member.
- Full Circle means the collective of Members named in the Associate Member Agreement.

Sub-circles

Member sub-circles are where the majority of the project work is carried out. Sub-circles meet between Full Circle meetings to research and analyse issues, and prepare proposals for the Full Circle. The sub-circle then implements the proposals once approved by the Full Circle. While the Full Circle may delegate some minor level of decision making to the sub-circles, in general the Full Circle is the Project's primary decision making body.

Full Circle Meetings

The Project will make decisions by the consensus of Members present at Full Circle meetings. Full Circle meetings are to occur on a regular calendared basis, not less than monthly. A quorum of 50% of Members is required to make decisions. It may be possible to attend via video conferencing technology, but members understand that they are not able to send written carding "votes". Any member unable to attend a Full Circle meeting will send apologies to the facilitator in advance.

Decision Making

While creating proposals, the Full Circle will endeavour to seek agreement on the issues and solutions. All decisions are to be passed using the Coloured Cards Method, and the verbatim wording of each proposal, along with the number and colours of cards, are to be recorded in the minutes.

Coloured Cards Method

Each proposal is first recorded in the minutes and read out, before proceeding to a show of cards. A green card denotes support for the proposal, and a blue card denotes support for the proposal with a slight reservation. An orange card denotes non support of the proposal but without blocking. Whereas a red card denotes: I am blocking this proposal because it does not serve the objectives of the Project.

If the carding yields only green or blue cards, the proposal is considered passed. If any orange or red cards are raised, those members get to summarise their concerns if they have not done so already. At this point the proposal may be amended to address these concerns, and then a second show of cards takes place. On the second carding a proposal is considered passed unless any red cards are still present. If consensus is not reached, the proposal is sent back to the appropriate sub-circle for more work.

Fall Back Vote

If consensus is not reached after two regular Full Circle meetings, or if the meeting considers that time constraints require, then a decision may be taken at a subsequent meeting by a 75% majority vote of Full Members.

At least 72 hours notice of the meeting to hold a fallback vote must be given to all Members. The determination that "time constraints require" is to be made using a 75% majority vote of Members present. Sending an email to the Member's email address constitutes notice.

Any fall back vote shall be on the basis of one vote per Full Member in attendance (if there exist less than five Full Members, then by all Members). A proxy vote for fallback votes, submitted in advance, in writing to the facilitator is acceptable.

Revisiting Process

A Member absent from a meeting may request to revisit a decision made at that meeting, at the next meeting only. Otherwise decisions may only be reopened with the prior agreement of 50% of Members.

Minutes

The minute taker should endeavour to make a fair record of the meeting. Any personal comments from the minute taker should be prefaced as such. Include the full wording and card counts of each proposal plus a brief summary of the context of the decision and range of sentiment of the circle. Use the Minutes Template as a guide.

Minutes to be ideally distributed within 48 hours of the meeting end in the case of Full Circle meetings, and for sub-circle minutes at least 24 hours prior to the next Full Circle meeting. If the minute taker is unclear about what to write, they should consult with other Members. Once distributed to the members, avoid sending updated versions, because this can cause confusion about which is the correct copy.

The minutes from the previous meeting are to be approved by a carding at the next meeting, and any corrections noted in the latter minutes. A complete sequentially ordered set of minutes of both the Full Circle and Sub-circle minutes are to be kept in a specified accessible location.