

Closer Neighbours



Facilitation Guide



Introduction

This guide is designed to assist local people to be able to initiate and sustain a successful Closer Neighbours Team that educates, motivates and empowers members to be able to plan and implement individual, group and community-wide actions which helps address the increasingly important issue of climate change.

The guide is supposed to work alongside the Closer Neighbours toolkit providing helpful tips on how you may wish to organise and conduct your team.

What is a Closer Neighbours Team?

Closer Neighbours Teams are small community action groups of 5-10 people who meet on a flexible basis to learn about sustainability issues, share ideas and resources and to discuss changes we can make at the individual, group and community levels to address climate change. The Closer Neighbours network is part of the Manor House PACT project, which is supporting local people explore how we can connect as neighbours to prepare and adapt to a changing climate.

Core Principles for Closer Neighbours Teams

- To support the development of a dynamic social group, which provides a meaningful experience for each member.
- To build a more connected community through establishing a peer support network, which helps others to adapt by sharing knowledge and looking out for vulnerable neighbours
- To provide an open and safe forum where group members can understand the impacts of climate change and extreme weather on their community and what individual and collective actions can be taken in response.
- Members will better understand how their actions can influence decisions in our community.

What will Closer Neighbours Team Members Do?

Most Closer Neighbours Teams will meet 5-6 times over a period of about 2 to 4 months but the exact timeframe can be decided by each group.

A toolkit has been prepared to help your group explore learn about climate change, reducing energy use, smarter travel options, growing and sourcing local food and reducing waste. Whilst these are the core topics we actively encourage groups to select further topics which teams are passionate about if you wish to have more than these five.

The PACT project will also provide guest speakers to come to speak at closer neighbours meetings and we will also have opportunities to celebrate the accomplishments of our Closer Neighbours Teams throughout the year to provide a space to share learning and experiences with participants.

How to get started

What a Closer Neighbours Team looks like is really flexible. It may be an existing tenants association that wants to undertake a project on 'greening' their estate, it might be an informal faith group wanting to improve neighbourliness or even a group of family and/or friends wanting to do their bit to address climate change or it could be a facilitated group thorough local schools.

If you want to bring a group of like-minded individuals together as a team rather than an existing group its worth bearing in mind that the easier you make it for individuals to get involved, the more likely it is that they will. Advertising the fact that community ownership is at the heart of this project is perhaps one of the most important benefits to highlight, since the more it feels like a shared community initiative, the greater buy in you will get and hopefully sustain in the long run. We have prepared a simple leaflet you can print out and distribute to help get people interested in joining your team (See [Appendix 4](#)).

Come up with a name for your team!

A team name is a powerful way to say why your group is special and to say what identifies and inspires you as a team. It can also make you feel part of a unique group which you own. Why not pool a few ideas together and let the group adapt and decide what works.

Organising when your team will meet

Once you have your group recruited, agree a date time and location for your first meeting. This might be at a community centre, a local café or at one of your group's home (if you have enough space!).

How often you decide the frequency, the venue and the most convenient day that best fits the needs of your group. Whether you meet weekly, monthly or intermittently it really is up to you. As a guide most Closer Neighbours Teams will meet 5-6 times in someone's home, a church, cafe or other location and meetings usually last about 1-2 hours but you need to define what works for your team.

Team Meeting Programme

A typical first meeting of a Closer Neighbours Team might be a short introductory meet just to get to know your team mates and finding out a little bit about your common interests and what you are hoping to get out of being part of the group. Or if you are a more established group who know each other already you might be able to head straight in to the first session on climate change. An Ice breaker is a helpful way to help people relax and gets the conversation flowing. An example is attached at [Appendix 5](#).

Either way it is going to be useful to plan ahead to agree the order of the subjects that your group will work on together along with dates, times and venues to try and fit dates around when people can attend.

It would also be useful to identify if any members of your group would like to lead discussion on particular subjects or to take responsibility for identifying resources like films that you could watch to aid your discussions.

This course schedule below might be useful to complete together and then to share with the group, so that everybody can keep track of meeting dates and who will lead discussion on particular sessions.

	Climate Change	Energy	Smarter Travel	Grow and Eat	Reducing Waste
Date:					
Venue:					
Who is leading discussion?					

Whilst we want each group to cover the core topics of Climate Change, Energy, Smarter Travel, Growing and Eating local Food and Reducing waste we encourage teams to also explore additional topics such as water consumption or local resilience if that is what you have a passion for! The concept is entirely flexible to allow participants to respond to the issues that concern and affect them to continue to work together as an ongoing legacy of the project.

Making a successful start

A well organised first meeting will help you get off to a flying start, so here are some tips to make your inaugural meeting a successful one

1. Nominate a named person to be the principal contact for the group. Manor House PACT can support that person to get the group started and will correspond with that person throughout the programme. This person can also be responsible for managing the expenses for the group.
2. Make sure you have any equipment you need like paper, tables, chairs, and power if you are using IT. Also ensure you have enough copies of the toolkit, folders for each team member and enough evaluation forms. You can get all of these posted to you by contacting Gloria on 0203 8195614.

3. Make it clear to Closer Neighbours Team members that they needn't do any major preparation in advance of meetings as this can sometimes put people off. However, they are encouraged to bring along any readings, videos and other resources that they think are relevant and they want to discuss and be prepared to update on what they have been up to if they agreed to take action at a previous meeting
4. Prepare an agenda of what you will discuss and indicate how long each section will last for. An example agenda which you can amend to your requirements is attached at [Appendix 1](#)
5. Provide refreshments, if desired. Manor House PACT is providing each group with funding of £30 for each of the core sessions to cover things like expenses. This must be invoiced for and must be paid into a bank account for the closer neighbours group. An example invoice which you can use is attached at [Appendix 6](#). To help keep track of how much you spend an example of a simple expenses log is provided at [Appendix 7](#).
6. Organise for somebody to be responsible for sending meeting reminders by text, email etc and getting confirmations from attendees.

Discussion Leader Responsibilities

Who facilitates discussion at each meeting is up to the group to decide. It can all be done by the same person or divided in different ways between 2 or more people based on interest and time availability. As each of the meetings in the programme will explore a different topic related to living sustainably, check to see if a particular session might engage the interest or expertise of one of your group members.

Whoever is agreed will lead discussion should ensure the following steps are completed in preparation for each meeting:

1. Prepare the agenda and materials for the meeting and invite guest speakers, if desired.

2. Ensure each member attending has completed the sign in sheet and record and summarise any key discussion points and actions agreed at each session. A template to do this is attached at [Appendix 2](#). It is best if this is typed and emailed to your Team members and the Closer Neighbours Coordinator at manorhousepact@mhdt.org.uk
3. Ensure you have collected in any evaluation questionnaires and sent these to the closer neighbours coordinator.
4. Call or email anyone who misses a meeting to highlight what they missed and encourage them to come to the next meeting.

At the conclusion of the closer neighbours programme

Manor House PACT is keen to understand what each closer neighbour participant has managed to get out of the project once it finishes, to understand if there have been any changes for you and whether there are any lessons learned which we can use to improve the Closer Neighbours Team experience. Therefore we ask that each group member completes a short evaluation form at the first session and following the conclusion of the final meeting

Ideas for further topics to explore as a group

If you decide to continue as a group beyond the five core sessions there are many other ways your group can continue to act to respond to climate change.

Suggested topics that you may wish to explore include:

- Creating a local economy
- Reducing water waste
- Preparing for Heatwaves and drought
- Increasing Biodiversity

We have not prepared specific materials for these topics but as the project progresses we hope to be able to pool the experiences from all the closer neighbours groups to develop further resources as required



Appendix 1

Example agenda for your first meeting

Agenda Item	Approximate times
Introduce the Closer Neighbours Team concept, the benefits of working together and how the programme works.	10 mins
Ask the members to briefly introduce themselves and what they hope to gain from Closer Neighbours Team participation.	10 mins
Agree the dates of your meetings, times and locations. Decide on what frequency: is suitable e.g. weekly, bi-monthly, monthly or based on member availability and how long each session should last e.g. 1, 1.5 or 2 hour sessions and who will lead discussion.	20mins
Discuss the climate change session in the Toolkit, why it is important and what this means for members, their family and their local community. The group can also discuss their insights from personal knowledge, experience	45 mins
Summarise what actions team members have agreed to undertake and confirm next meeting dates	5 mins

Example agenda for subsequent meetings

Agenda Items	Approximate times
Members to update on any actions from the last meeting, to share what they have achieved and what their plan for additional activities are. Also discuss any challenges to action and how they have been overcome.	20 minutes
Discuss the issues or any readings, watch any optional videos and explore how your group can take action for the relevant session e.g. energy, Smarter Travel, Grow and Eat or Reducing Waste	45 minutes
Consider/discuss personal action plan for the upcoming period	10 minutes
Confirm arrangements for next meeting	5 minutes



Appendix 2

Closer Neighbours project - Sign in Sheet

Team Name:

Date:

	Name	Signature
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Summary of any actions agreed

Appendix 3 – Action plan template



Become a Closer Neighbour!

Would you like to have more of a sense of community in your street? Would you like to learn about how you can take action with your neighbours to help the environment?



If so there is a friendly group of your neighbours who are looking for local people who want to work together to learn about how we can act to improve our homes, the environment and the local area - get in touch.

Contact:

Name:

Tel no:

Email:



Appendix 5 – Example Ice breaker

Example ice icebreaker

Once you have agreed your schedule of meeting dates, make these available to all members and to the closer neighbour coordinator by sending them through to manorhousepact@mhdtd.org.uk

Before getting stuck into the detail take a couple of minutes to consider the following statements and complete the missing part of the sentence.

- Today I wish I were _____
- The main reason I am here is to _____
- I know _____ about climate change
- I chose friends who are _____
- I think my best quality is _____
- Training sessions like this are usually _____
- A pet hate of mine is _____
- Living Sustainably means _____

Either as one group or in pairs discuss your answers to the sentences above and feedback to the group.



Appendix 6 - Example invoice

INVOICE

Invoice Number: Insert your reference number can go here e.g. Invoice 01/14.

Invoice Date: Insert date

From:

Insert your name and postal address

To:

Manor House Development Trust
The Redmond Community Centre
Kayani Avenue
London N4 2HF

For: Insert what payment is for (e.g. facilitating closer neighbours group on energy

In the sum of: £ 30.00

Payment method:

Name of account holder: Insert name account is held in

Account number: Insert Bank/building society account number for payment to be made to

Sort Code: Insert bank/building society sort code for payment to be made to



Appendix 7 - Example income and expenditure log

Amount of Income	Amount of expenditure	Balance
e.g. £30 from Manor House PACT		£30
	e.g. Tea and Biscuits £5	£25