



A greener, more neighbourly way to live in Sheffield

Our Current Members *MAY 2022*

The Olivers



Hello, we're Morven, Jon and Jackson.

We (Morven and Jon) have lived together in various shared houses in Manchester and London, and have been dreaming up ways to live cooperatively that are a bit more sustainable and secure than private rentals, for almost a decade now. We've been doing this dreaming and planning with our old housemates, Ruth and Dan, who are also Five Rivers members.

Last year, we were joined by our son Jackson. We want to put down roots and stay in one place with him, and we want him to grow up in a community he feels connected to and safe in.

A bit more about us: Morven is a campaigner who works on issues like environment and poverty. She's into thinking about how to best do social change work. She also dabbled in documentary filmmaking for a bit, and likes good food, and the great outdoors. Valuing listening to people's stories led Jon on a journey to becoming a trainee psychologist, and nowadays he's a big believer in community psychology and co-production. Jon loves nothing more than scrambling around The Roaches, playing football, and all different kinds of board games. And Jackson is into watching the washing machine spin, pressing buttons, and putting just about anything into his mouth.

Jo Mills

I'm interested in cohousing because to me it makes sense to share responsibility for housing, gardens, etc. and enjoy the interaction that brings. I feel most comfortable in groups, maybe because I'm from a large family and love cooking for lots of people and evolving new recipes... I'm definitely a sourdough nerd!

Also I'm a bridge addict and living with three other keen players would be marvellous; other games players are very welcome too. I'm an ex-rock climber, but still happy to pop up an apple tree.





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Ruth Holtom and Daniel Mackenzie

I have lived with my partner Dan for almost ten years in various communal households, all of which have given us a lot of joy. We are thinking ahead to the way we want to live in the future, possibly with children in tow, and the prospect of a cohousing project seems very appealing. I love sharing space, possessions, decisions and delicious food with other people in an intentional way! And I am also drawn to the level of privacy and autonomy that this project will offer. I have recently moved to Sheffield after spending a few years living and working down in London. I am originally from West Yorkshire, and I'm excited to be back in the North! I am enjoying spending time in the Peaks and with family, especially my twin sister who has also recently moved to the city.



I currently work for a legal and campaigning charity which helps refugees access safe routes to sanctuary. Despite the challenges that it brings, my job brings me a lot of joy and stimulation, as I get to work with an inspiring group of young refugee campaigners here in the UK. A few things I love are: singing with others; watching live music; festivals; camping and hiking; travelling; languages (I speak French and Spanish); cooking and eating with others; sitting round a fire and wiling away an evening with friends.

Hello! I'm Daniel. My partner Ruth and I have lived in a number of communal house shares throughout the years and have always valued sharing and seeing our home as part of a community. I'm originally from Leamington Spa but have lived in a few places in the UK and seen some nice parts of the wider world.



I'm looking forward to living in Five Rivers for a number of reasons - decent quality housing, a nice part of Sheffield and the chance to live in a community. The site has great access to the countryside and nearby woodland, and I'm excited to see what can be done with the Common House.

I'm currently studying to be a Landscape Architect and will soon be embarking on a career of (hopefully) designing and planning beautiful public spaces. Before that, I worked in the charity sector for a number of years. I like long walks, swimming, climbing, cooking and eating with people (as company, not as ingredients), dancing by speakers and chatting with new people or delving into a deep chat. When I'm tired out by all of that, I'll be watching films or YouTube videos, listening to a comedy or politics podcast, or staring blankly at a wall. It's nice to have found Five Rivers; somewhere that most of these things can happen in the same place.



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Teri Connolly and Nigel Wright

We have lived together for 30 years. We have two sons who are grown up, one living in Berlin and



one in London. We are both now retired. Teri used to manage a counselling service for young people, and Nigel was a self-employed antique furniture restorer. We're idealists. We'd like to live in a socialist world, but failing that, we'd like to live in a mini-community where people share things together – not just things (e.g. cars), but time and support. We lived for years in a large shared household in London. We liked that, but it's not quite what we want now.

What we want now is the possibility of retreating into our own private space, having a balance between privacy and community. We like singing, bird watching, gardening, walking, cinema, music, (and a few more things). Nigel is a vegetarian. We like children. Not so keen on dogs. We currently live in Hillsborough and are very fond of the nearby countryside of the Rivelin and Loxley valleys and beyond. We like the idea of being within easy reach of the countryside but also easily linked with amenities such as coffee shops, library, theatre and cinema.





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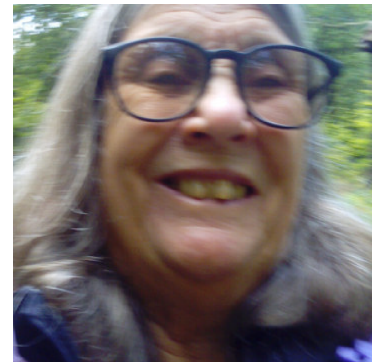
Chris Pyke and Jill Angood



Chris: *I've lived with Jill Angood in Sharrow for many years now after we met and had our daughter in a commune between Sheffield and Huddersfield. My interest and involvement in collective work and living goes back to the early 1970s. I retired from my final job, as training manager in the Woodcraft Folk, in 2011 and have been using some of my spare time (?!) and experience to foster cohousing with the intention of becoming a resident of a scheme in easy reach of Sheffield city centre.*

Activities I enjoy include swimming, jogging, walking and dance (5Rhythms, etc.) to keep physically fit, reading, including being part of a men's book group, visiting galleries, the theatre and cinema to keep my mind lively. I maintain a few strong friendships that involve travel, which I also enjoy. This includes regular visits to our daughter and her family in Geneva. I dabble a bit with drawing and writing, mainly poetry. The current interest in cohousing excites me and a multi-generational development with a significant affordable element is my ideal.

Jill: *I enjoy living with my partner Chris Pyke in our terraced house with all the liveliness and diversity of Sharrow around us. However, I got involved in Five Rivers Cohousing because of cohousing's basis in cooperation and the potential it gives to live in a more eco sensitive way.*



I have experience of living cooperatively, but this time round I would like my own front door, with some of the emotional security that represents, alongside sharing resources like a laundry, growing spaces and so on. I have always enjoyed growing things and recently have been focussing on attracting pollinators and other wildlife rather than the production of edibles.

I love activities which involve me working with others such as singing in choirs, creative activism and being a volunteer. I also enjoy more private activities like walking, writing poetry and reading. I am especially looking forward to meeting anyone interested in making small steps to a more neighbourly and green way of living and building this new community together.



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Dilys Candler



I've lived about half of my life in a couple but am living alone now. The idea of living with a 'bigger than just family' group of people has appealed for a long time. I lived in an intentional community in London for a short while and before that I used to enjoy visiting communes via WWOOF (look it up if you need to). More recently I've been inspired by enjoyable weeks spent at the 40-year old Laurieston Hall community in Scotland, and by two cohousing projects in Sheffield – which made me think “why not do something like that”.

I'd like to live among others, at least some of whom share some of my values, but all committed at least to living as good neighbours and, when it matters, looking out for each other. At the same time, privacy (mine and everyone else's) is important to me.

I like the way cohousing can reduce our impact on the environment, probably save money, and (especially) make for a satisfying way of living around other people – hopefully with a diverse range of ideas, abilities and interests. I'm retired. Among other things, I like singing, playing recorders, cycling, walking, cinema, being a Quaker and a Samaritans volunteer, other people ... And, just so you know, I'm a transwoman.

Celia Mather

I'm very happy where I live now, in my own Victorian terrace house backing onto Meersbrook Park. It suits the private side of me. But the idea of living with my own front door and yet also cheek-by-jowl with like-minded friends (some old, some new), sharing some space, indoors and outdoors (I'm a veggie-grower by nature), providing mutual support, etc., suits my social side. I never had kids, and would be happy to be an 'auntie' to some living close by. I might also like a dog, with neighbours who would look after it when I'm away. Things like that... So, co-housing could well fit the bill.

I'm keen on new eco-build; have never quite seen myself in a flat in an old building for some reason. On a bus route, not too far out of town. Also I would like our community to be multi-generational and multi-affordable – to find ways of including those without the capital to get a home in this crazy housing market in the UK...



I like dancing, singing, going to hear live music, sewing, walking in t'hills. I'm a very-very-nearly-retired professional writer, and a traveller by nature.



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Rachel Hope *I'm living on my own at the moment but, through co-housing, would like to have the opportunity to live in close proximity with like-minded people. I am interested in other people's ideas, beliefs, hopes and day-to-day lives. I want to live with individuals for whom the sharing of many aspects of living, along with the notion of caring, for and about, each other, is central. I am open-minded about location -so long as there is some easily accessible green space.*



I would want my community of individuals to share my view that we should share resources and consume less, thus benefiting ourselves and the planet. My interest and engagement would ideally extend to people of all ages, but this is not essential to me. More important is having accommodation affordable to people with a range of incomes and means. I would want it to be possible for friends and family to be welcomed and to be able to stay for short periods in a communal guest room.

I have a number of interests which include the countryside , gardening, walking, cycling, playing the piano, reading, talking, cinema....

Nicola Gilkes *I have long been attracted to living more communally in ways which respect our natural environment. I believe most living situations in the West are conducive to isolation and wasteful of the earth's resources. We need to support and care for each other and nature in order to survive and thrive - now more important than ever as we enter a climate emergency. I enjoy living in Walkley, which has a good community, but wished to be part of creating an intentional,*



ecologically-sound community. So I was delighted to join with 5 Rivers folk who shared similar ideals and whom I find decent and cooperative.

I have had a varied career and study journey and now am very happy to be working as a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist. This does demand significant energy but I strive to a healthy work/life balance. I love being in green spaces, the wilder the better. I'm a keen walker and wild swimmer. I love camping and travelling when I get the chance. I'm also pretty sociable and relish time with friends and family, and am usually up for parties and festivals (now Covid limited).

I'm very excited about the development and equally daunted by the complexity of the process. It seems incredible that the dream is now becoming reality 😊



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Felicity Reed *I moved to Sheffield in 2010 to be nearer my daughter, her partner and two of my*



grandchildren. My son and his two small children live in Singapore, while his eldest son lives in Surrey. I have lived in different situations, as a student in a shared house, with my family, on my own, in a large community, and a small house co-op - and also in different parts of the country, from Southampton, to the Tyne valley, to Buckinghamshire, and now Sheffield.

I enjoy singing, walking, gardening, spending time with my family and friends, and dancing (when I do it). I am still getting to grips with cycling in Sheffield, which is a challenge.

I think it is beneficial to the city and the various communities in it to have a range of housing for people in different situations and stages of their lives. I like it that cohousing combines some elements of communal living such as sharing facilities, contact with others and mutual support, working, eating and having fun together, while having a separate living space.

I became a member of Five Rivers because I agree with the group's aims to live in an as energy-efficient and eco-friendly way as possible. I also applaud its aims to have properties for sale and rent, which is more inclusive than most cohousing schemes.

At present I live alone in a comfortable council flat. However, I miss the communal aspects of my more recent homes and wish to have that in the future as part of a Five Rivers cohousing scheme.

Adam Howard *I currently live in a housing co-operative in Sheffield, and I have experiences of several different shared living arrangements. I think co-housing has the potential to combine many positive aspects of shared living, whilst also providing personal space – the “own front door” aspect.*



I have worked in a variety of fields including community finance and community regeneration, and I am now working in the care sector. I have a long-standing interest in sustainability. I recently completed a diploma course in renewable energy at the Centre for Alternative Technology, and co-ordinated the production of a guide about pathways to zero carbon in higher education. The challenge of de-carbonising the housing sector is a fascinating one, I find, and connects with the need for wider housing reform. Co-housing is surely part of the solution.

I enjoy walking, singing, badminton, making and mending things - and my most recent passion is kayaking: nothing too dramatic, usually on canals... a lovely way to spend a fine summer's day.



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Jan McNally

I became interested in the Five Rivers Co-housing Project a few years ago when it was recommended to me by a contact of the Sheffield Socialist Choir which I had just joined. I attended a few meetings but got a bit disheartened when some of the financial projections were outside my reach.

The solid and unremitting work done by the remaining members in pursuing possible development opportunities and funding of same is impressive, and the current proposal for Wisewood is exciting (and also within my budget).



I have lived on my own in a stone-built terraced house in Thorpe Hesley since my partner died five years ago. It has many open spaces in the vicinity (which is great for walks with my black Labrador dog) but is also short of ready access via public transport into Sheffield. I have no children but maintain friendly contact with step-children who are scattered around the country. My closest blood relation (brother, Mark) lives in Hampshire. So the prospect of joining a community of like-minded people would be wonderful for extending my social contacts and pursuing mutual objectives such as high ecological standards and shared activities and support.

After a working life in admin/clerical work for public and private bodies, I retired two years ago. I continue to participate in the choir; volunteer at Wortley Hall walled organic garden regularly and enjoy that very much – it was particularly welcome during the lockdown to be able to meet with other volunteers as we were counted as “essential workers”. I enjoy yoga sessions twice a week (currently via zoom); I love being outdoors and taking my dog for walks. I am particularly excited about the prospect of working in a communal garden; I enjoy reading; crosswords/quizzes; watching team sports such as cricket, hockey and football (especially women’s sections); cinema; theatre; a good laugh.



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Jenny Patient

I am part of a fully mutual housing co-op, Share Instead, in Nether Edge, which is collaborating with Five Rivers to provide accommodation to rent.

Having some savings and pension eligibility, I am looking to buy a home here in Sheffield, to give a base with reduced outgoings, allowing more flexibility to travel and work less. I can see many advantages of a new, eco-sensitive flat in Wisewood, in a community of people who want to share more, so I want to explore it further. But I will remain involved with Share Instead at least until the co-op moves into Five Rivers so as to help hand it over.



For me an important factor of ecological living is to challenge the existing ownership and decision-making structures, and my concern about the ecological and climate impacts of our current consumer-based, material growth-oriented society was a major factor in setting up Share Instead. As a co-op we have happily housed 10+ people over 10+ years, but I am now seeking more privacy and less intensity of responsibility for organising and for domestic relationships (e.g. the emotional rollercoaster of recruiting new housemates), while still having the joys of sharing and making the most of precious resources.

I have developed my own responses to life through many forms of community including co-counselling, Active Hope, Five Rhythms dancing, and singing. I have a love of being in nature, growing things, singing, dancing and generally larking about, by myself and with others! I would like to be able to focus more on my own needs and relationships, hopefully in a home that is future-proofed, accessible and low-maintenance.

I am happy to help run an organisation that enables wider sharing, such as vehicles, garden space, sociability, creativity, tools, Lembas orders, projects, etc. I'm not sure yet what exact role I would want to play in 5R but I bring many useful skills and positive attitudes developed through working and volunteering in horizontally-run organisations, as well as in the big bad world. Particular aspects are:

Knowledge of sustainability and permaculture and the co-operative movement.

Project management and admin skills

Listening skills and abilities in working with people.