

# GHA Charter



The Wintles, Shropshire: Living Villages



North wing, Great Bow Yard: ECOS Homes Limited

House building and renovation in the UK is an essential activity which, though an economic and market driven process, should also be undertaken for the **common good**.

The common good refers to the **well being of all individuals** and **all communities** both present and future. This well being is about security (physical, economic and environmental), health, social cohesion, pleasure and meaning. It is about our human needs and desires, and about our relationships with others and with our environment.

Consequently, well being in house building and renovation must take account not only of the relationship of **people** to the built environment, but of the relationship of the **built environment** to the **natural environment** both nationally and globally.

It is considered that an active commitment to the common good in house building and renovation in both policy and activity is necessary to avoid serious short and long term problems in terms of environmental impact, human health, community cohesion, quality of life, and national economics. In this way house building can help to transform our society for the better and reduce the very real and imminent threats to our world.

The members of the Good Homes Alliance therefore commit to working to substantially reduce the negative impacts of housing and renovation, and to substantially increase the factors that make for well being. In particular they commit to the principles opposite.

In all these principles there is an absolute requirement for rigorous, frank and self critical analysis of aims and the means of achieving these aims, for monitoring of developments in practice and for reassessment of aims and means in the light of this experience. Codes will be developed as part of this process to ensure that this knowledge is transferred into practice in a measurable way. The Good Homes Alliance is therefore a learning process which requires the openness and integrity of all its members for it to achieve its aim of transforming housebuilding and renovation in the UK for the better.

1. **The minimisation of negative impacts on the environment** wherever possible, particularly as regards global warming, resource use, pollution of land, sea or air, habitat destruction, and waste creation and disposal. This refers to both construction activity and building use over the long term.
2. On the other hand the re-establishment of **a positive long term link between housing/construction and the natural environment**, for example through designs which increase interaction with nature and local agriculture, and through natural, local and sustainable materials in construction.
3. The development and construction of **healthy buildings**, ensuring healthy internal environments by good building design and materials.
4. The development and construction of **future proof buildings**, which are simple to build, maintain, and alter, and which are adaptable for changing environmental and social conditions.
5. The development and construction of both **beautiful and practical buildings** and landscapes, which contribute positively and measurably to individual and social well being.
6. The development of **well being on site** by fair and healthy working practices, proper training and education of workforce. We believe that happy workers produce better buildings.
7. The positive encouragement of **sustainable individual lifestyles** (ie minimising travel, local industry and food production, low waste and energy use) through education, good planning and design.
8. The positive encouragement of **community activity and cohesion** (ie social amenities, mutual support networks, inclusivity and diversity) through the location of and access to community facilities such as shops, healthcare facilities, workplaces and open spaces, through good planning and design.