

Beaconview Housing Co-operative



38 homes
Shared ownership & affordable rented

For further information:
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Beaconview Housing Co-operative was set up on the Charlemont Farm estate in Sandwell from 2013 to 2015. Beaconview is a fully mutual housing co-operative development consisting of 38 homes, including 10 shared ownership homes and 28 affordable rented properties.

Beaconview developed through initiatives led by the local Charlemont Farm Residents Association from 2000 onwards. A traditional council housing estate situated to the west of where the M6 meets the M5, the Charlemont Farm estate had suffered major problems, firstly during the 1990s when failed regeneration programmes had left large derelict blocks in the centre of the estate and more latterly in poor quality maisonette blocks which developed a notorious reputation for anti-social behaviour in the 2000s as they also became empty. With the support of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, the Residents Association approached Accord Housing Group with a view to developing a housing co-op on one of the maisonette

block sites. Accord had developed a particular reputation for working with housing co-ops from the 1990s onwards due to its long term relationship with the West Midlands housing co-op service provider, Birmingham Co-operative Housing Services, and its support for the development of Redditch Co-operative Homes.

The Charlemont Farm Residents Association were keen to provide an alternative community-led housing option on the estate and particularly wanted to ensure that people from off the estate were housed in the new scheme. Planning permission for the scheme was granted in 2013 and this led to a lengthy process to recruit the founder members of the scheme from the local authority's waiting lists. Those recruited went through a *co-operability* test to encourage active involvement in the development of the co-op, and then started to participate in the design process for the scheme in a local church.



Most of the founder members were coming from a traditional top down council housing relationship, and so the co-op development programme has been a process of cultural change for them where the co-op is gradually understanding what it means to have the power to make decisions about their homes.

Carl Taylor - Accord Housing Group Director



The Co-op has a 7 year lease from Accord which enables them to make choices about how their homes are managed and a management relationship with Birmingham Co-operative Housing Services. With the

founder members moving in from Spring to Summer 2015, the co-op's committee consisting of 14 residents has so far made choices to change their grounds maintenance and cleaning contractors and has organised social events.



It's been incredible that we have been given the opportunity to set up the co-op and it's a great local community, but it's been a big learning curve for us and a little daunting taking on responsibilities. But we are getting there, and we are expecting that we will find our feet more as we come out of the defects period.

Rebecca Taylor – Beaconview Housing Co-operative