

Toolkit:

How to get the most out of your group and your meetings

Getting the most out of your event committee

Have one overall Event Co-ordinator, although insist on sharing up aspects of the event planning. Over controlling event chairs or co-ordinators may need support to do this. Overall however, stress will reduce and everyone will feel involved if tasks are divided up.

The Event Co-ordinator should maintain an event folder. This should contain copies of quotes, invoices and contact details for suppliers or other organisations involved. It should also contain bits and pieces reflecting the progress of the planning, including copies of paperwork associated with insurance, licensing and budgets. The folder should be able to be picked up and used by a new member of the committee, in the event of the Event Co-ordinator needing to hand over the project

Use the interest of your group members as a guide when trying to divide aspects of the event. Play to their strengths; ask a confident person to approach businesses for sponsorship rather than a shy individual.

Give individuals responsibility as Zone Co-ordinators, or similar, having divided different aspects of your event by themes, such as children's zone, wildlife zone, heritage zone. This way they take ownership and progress the action points of their zone. Ensure key group members attend meetings regularly. Be clear on responsibilities.

Identify upcoming commitments amongst your group members, such as exams, house moving, birth of new children or holidays.

Work with your local authority's support. Ideally have an officer attend your meetings. They will be able to access various services across the council to help host your event, including offering Public Liability Cover for most activities and help drawing up Risk Assessments.

Plan with the volunteers you can be sure of – be hopeful of gaining others, but endeavour not to rely on unknowns.

Ideally identify a designated press/publicity officer from within your group to contact local media and newspapers.

Allow plenty of time if hoping to involve young people in your event planning. Give them responsibility for an aspect of the event to increase confidence and motivation.

Support one another. If you think someone is stressed or overcommitted – approach them about it. This can help keep things in perspective and avoid your group losing valuable volunteers.

Getting the most out of your planning meetings

If you have a large number of people at planning meetings progress can be slow. Hold smaller sub committee meetings, with each zone co-ordinator, leading the discussions, then feedback to whole group at regularly monthly meeting. This way your main meetings will avoid being bogged down in detail, or delayed through a lack of consensus on decisions.

Invite other local organisations to attend a planning meeting – as they may be able to offer an activity, volunteers or support for your event.

At large meetings, you'll benefit from an agenda and your Event Co-ordinator as Chair. Make sure one person is recording action points and begin the meeting by going over action points from the previous meeting. Agendas can be very simple, with rolling items, such as:

- Actions from last meeting
- New activities
- Key infrastructure
- Budget
- Publicity
- Site Plan
- Any other business

If your usual Chair is particularly stressed ahead of a meeting, arrange for someone else to act as Chair for the meeting, as this can lead to new volunteers for tasks.

Book and budget for key infrastructure early. If there are no toilets on site, hiring chemical loos will be necessary and generally cost around £75 a loo. If you plan to have a stage and/or PA system, marquees and/or gazebos, these will generally eat into your budget. A friendly bit of haggling with suppliers can sometimes help to strike a good deal. An offer of a prominent display board with the company name can also work wonders with a local firm.

Have a copy of your up-to-date budget at each meeting. Keep a record of actual costs versus quotes and remove any costs that have been cancelled. Name one member of your committee Event Treasurer if you don't already have one.

Write confirmation letters to your suppliers, outlining when and where you need them to be, if you are expecting them to supply their own equipment (ie gazebo, table and chairs). Follow up this letter with a telephone call to avoid last minute problems on the event day, as very often people do not read letters fully.

Allow for extra time to work practically with young people – ie go outside and physically measure out a basic site plan on the grass.

Reflect your themed zones on your site map if helpful.

Written by Holly Rosenegk, GreenSpace 2008

Tel: 0118 946 9060 Email: info@green-space.org.uk Website: www.green-space.org.uk

GreenSpace is a Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in England and Wales, number: 03741111
Registered office: Caversham Court, Church Road, Reading, RG4 7AD.

GreenSpace is a registered Charity with the Charities Commission in the UK. Registered Charity number: 1108803