

# Starting a New Group



*working for the voluntary & community sector in our area*

## Starting a New Community Group

### First steps

Most community groups are set up by local people or communities of interest who have identified a need for an activity or service in their area and are committed to doing something about it. The best way to start is to bring together a small number of people who share your interest and talk with them about what you could do. At this stage, you want people to contribute their ideas and experiences, so as a group, you can decide what you want to focus your attention on.

### How to find other people

- Ask people you know have an interest in the subject – friends, neighbours, community members, etc
- Use the local 'grapevines' – advertise in community centres, on community noticeboards.
- Use social media to spread the word

You need to tell people what you are trying to do and ask interested people to contact you (so make sure you include some way of getting in touch!)

### Setting Aims and objectives

Once you have a few people interested, you need to discuss what it is your group will do - in other words, set your aims and objectives. At this stage, people may have very different ideas, so you need to be open and listen to other people's viewpoints. Discuss their ideas and see if you can come to an agreement about what it is you want to focus on.

A good place to start is to think about what issue or problem you want to tackle. Don't be surprised if people see the issue in different ways to you – explore all the options!

### Investigate Other Organisations

Once you have all agreed on your aims and objectives, it is important to see whether there are any other local groups are doing a similar thing. If you have a very similar project to someone else, perhaps think about working together to share resources and experience, or perhaps simply joining their group instead of setting up a new one.

### Form your management committee

The role of the committee is to make the overall decisions about the group and its work, and to act as the accountable people for the group. The management committee normally consists of a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, plus a few general committee members.

You can find out more about the roles of the committee in our other information sheets.

## Drawing up your Constitution

A constitution is a set of rules that all members of the group agree to abide by. CVABV have simple templates you can use which can be easily altered them to suit the needs of your group. – or you can download a simple constitution from the Charity Commission website:-

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/586358/GD4.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/586358/GD4.pdf) (also available as a word document)

Your governing document will detail your aims and powers, how your management committee and membership will work, and how decisions will be made. It is important to have a governing document as it shows you are democratic and accountable, and can be referred to if there are any disagreements within the group or if decisions need to be made.

Once you have agreed the content, the governing document is signed by committee members and 'adopted' (agreed on) by people entering your group.

## Opening a bank account

You will need to set up an account in the name of your group – this is a must if you intend to apply for funding. Most high-street banks and financial institutions offer group bank accounts (although they are often called different things by different banks). There are also specialist voluntary sector bank account providers. It is up to you to investigate each option and make the best decision for your group.

It needs to be the kind of account that needs 2 signatures on each cheque. These signatories should not be related or from the same household.

## Funding and managing money

Even at this early stage, you may need to think about finding funding to allow you to run your activities. There are lots of different ways to raise funds, from do-it-yourself fundraising to applying for grants.

Email our development team for more help – [info@cvabv.org.uk](mailto:info@cvabv.org.uk) or call us on 01670 353623.

You could also sign up for our free ezine which contains lots of up to date funding opportunities.

**CVA Blyth Valley can help you set up a group and help you to secure funding for your activities.**

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