

## How to start a new group

If you're just starting out, here are a few ideas for how you can take your project forward. We can also put you in touch with Climate and Nature Friendly Communities Network groups in your area, so that you can share ideas and develop new partnerships – explore our [list of groups](#) or check out our [online map](#).

### Step 1: Establish a group

Form a group and decide on a name (e.g. Kingston Road Community Garden). Establish a leadership structure and ensure you have the key roles filled (i.e. Secretary, Chairman, Treasurer). It is important that there are a few key people willing to get the group going. You don't have to sign up all potential volunteers, but you should at least have some to help get you started.

### Step 2: Identify a project

What is your group going to do? Please bear in mind that even though the final aim of your project may be quite ambitious (e.g. creating a community garden from a derelict plot of land) it is not an expectation that you complete the project in the first year or even the first three years. Assessors don't expect to see only finished projects; they also look to help guide you along the way and support you in developing your project further. It is as much about the journey as the end goal.

### Step 3: Put together a constitution/action plan

Most groups will start out by drawing up a governing document or constitution, setting out what they hope to do and how. This document will help everyone to stay clear about the group's aims. It is also required when applying for funds. You can find lots of model constitution templates online, which can be amended to suit the objectives of your group.

Once you have this in place, you may also wish to put together an action plan. This will be more of a practical list of the activities you will need to do to achieve the objectives laid out in your constitution. This plan will help you decide what projects you want to do and how you will go about implementing and maintaining them.

### Step 4: Let your local community know what is happening and ask them for support

There are a number of ways to start the process of raising local awareness and support, and this should be maintained as your project develops. Some ideas to get you started:

- Inform your community council or local authority, let them know about your intentions and ask them how they might get involved. Your local councillors are good people to have on board; they will be able to talk about your project to a wide audience within the community.
- Make a big announcement! Consider sending information to your local paper; sending out a leaflet to all homes in the area; giving a talk to other community or residents' groups and local schools; putting up posters in your local shops, supermarkets, libraries, leisure/ community centres, places of worship and village hall notice-boards. Check out our [media support and top tips for showcasing your group](#) and our [guide to taking good photos](#).
- Seek the community's input; hold an open meeting where people can share ideas for things that they would like to see and sign up to your volunteers list.

- If your group works on land owned by a housing association, ask them for support, either financially or in-kind (perhaps they could provide you with tools or services to help you achieve your aims).

### **Step 5: Develop a fundraising plan**

There are a number of ways you can raise funds for your project, including:

- Organising your own fundraising events, such as open garden days, raffles, cake sales and car boot sales;
- Securing sponsorship or benefits in-kind from local businesses;
- Applying for grants; and
- Approaching the local authority - some may have funds available to support community groups in their area. It should be clear from the council's website who you should contact for further information.