

Why organise a community event?

Community events are an amazing way to meet new people, build friendships and achieve some great things for nature. They are also a fantastic way to raise the profile of your group and the activities you organise and encourage.

Depending on what you want to achieve you can run events to:

- notice nature, like guided walks and talks
- practical activities, like pond dips and photography sessions
- workshops to help wildlife, like bird box building and tree planting days
- creative sharing sessions, like storytelling and art-focused sessions.

Community events can also take place online, for example talks, discussions and Q&As.

One of the simplest ways to maximising the value of an event, and often cut down on the amount of work needed to organise it, is to work together. Could you join in with an existing fete or green fair? Or organise a new event alongside other groups? Share your audiences, knowledge, resources and effort.

Creating a safe and accessible event

Since the government introduced restrictions on public behaviour, to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, people's attitudes and expectations of events have changed. It is worth bearing in mind that for many people, large gatherings continue to be a source of anxiety and people may not have the confidence to attend. A few ways to help boost people's confidence include providing hand sanitiser, having a clear policy on wearing face coverings and holding events outside and virtually where possible, including making this clear in your promotion.

Creating a safe event also relies on creating a risk assessment, and having procedures in place like a sign-in sheet. You can find out more about health and safety in [this quick guide](#), and access our template [risk assessment](#) and [sign-in sheet](#) on the Naturehood website. If your event is likely to attract children, or vulnerable adults, considering their wellbeing is an important step. Find out more with our [quick guide to safeguarding](#).

Create a safe and accessible event (continued)

Access is another important part of all events. The first step is thinking about the audience you expect to join your event and if the activities you have planned are suitable. Please read through our [quick guide to equality, diversity and inclusion](#) to help guide your thinking around reducing any physical, intellectual and cultural barriers to participation.

Choosing a suitable venue

Finding a suitable venue is one of the most important steps in event planning, as this decision affects many of the other aspects of the event and can be a real 'make it or break it' factor. When you are choosing a venue it is worth asking:

- Who owns the venue? If it isn't you then you will need permission to use it. Even if it is an outside space like a public park it is good practice to speak to the site managers. The venue owners may also have questions for you, like seeing a copy of your risk assessment.
- How many people do you expect to come? This is vital for choosing a venue that has enough space. It is also worth checking what facilities are available and if they meet your needs. If not, you can advise your participants ahead of time and also look for alternatives nearby just in case.
- Will the venue be open to the public? If it is, but you want to limit numbers, then you may need to have a plan for dealing with surprise arrivals and potential conflict over things like space or noise.
- How accessible is your venue? This applies in two ways. In terms of choosing an inclusive space ([more on that in this quick guide](#)) and how easy the venue is to get to for people traveling in different ways. It may help to look for nearby car parking options, cycle racks and bus stops to share in any promotional materials.

Event promotion

There are lots of ways of letting people know about your event. A great place to start is by putting the news out through your group social media. Trying to feature your event on other platforms popular locally, like other people's Facebook pages, apps like Nextdoor or on community noticeboards, are all avenues worth exploring. Check out our guidance for [reaching out to your community](#).

Event promotion (continued)

When you share the information about your event it is important to include details about the who (including a way to get in touch with you in advance), what, when, where and why. Having a poster or block of summary text that captures all this information is a great tool to use. You can try creating your own poster using the freely accessible design software [Canva](#). Find the Naturehood logos and other supporting material in the [Naturehood branding pack](#).

Capturing your event

Creating a record of your event is an amazing thing to do. You can share reflections and outputs with your attendees, as well as your wider group. Plus use these materials to help you promote future events too.

Photographs are a brilliant way to capture what happened at your event. As the saying goes: 'a picture is worth a thousand words'. If you plan ahead, you can make sure to bring along a camera, or a phone with a good camera lens. We recommend that you collect signed consent from anyone that appears in these pictures, especially for children. You can find our [template photo consent form here](#).

Although they are a great way to capture what happened at an event, photos aren't the only option. There are plenty of creative ways to show what you got up to, like the GPS track of a nature walk, or a copy of the artwork that you created together. Capturing a few numbers can also be a good idea, such as the number of people that came along (adults and children), or the number of trees you planted. It can also be helpful to collect your attendees' feedback, you can do this simply using our [template feedback slip](#).

Contingency planning

There can be a need to cancel or postpone events. For example due to a speaker cancelling or because of bad weather. Consider having backups for any eventualities that you think are relatively likely, alongside a plan to let people know that an event is cancelled, postponed or has relocated elsewhere.