XR LOCAL GROUP GUIDE:

LOCAL GROUP ESSENTIALS

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Introduction

Local Groups bring a feeling of togetherness and shared purpose to local people and a great way to connect a local area to the wider XR community. Local groups also provide a crucial mechanism for planning and implementing actions, growing XR, and building links with other sympathetic groups to create a movement of movements. This guide covers the essential elements of a local group, whether it is just starting up or has been running a while or is anywhere between tiny and huge!

If you have questions about this guide, please contact: localgroupsupport@protonmail.com.

Starting or Restarting a Local Group

Anyone can start a local group, as long as it keeps to the XR Principles and Values. You can check to see if a local group exists by using the XR UK Local Group Map. If you want to start or restart a local group, it is worth contacting the Regional XR team for assistance. There is a group of experienced people called Gardeners whose role is to help start or restart local groups and help them grow.

XR UK is split into 11 nations and regions. Within each of these, there will be a coordinator and working groups to help support the local groups in the area. To get in touch with your regional or national teams you can contact your **Gardener** or your regional or national co-ordinator at:

Bristol: xrbristol.regional@protonmail.com
Cymru (Wales): xrcymru@protonmail.com
East of England: xr.eastengland@protonmail.com
London: xrlondoncoord@gmail.com, xrlondongardeners@protonmail.com
Midlands: XRMidlands@protonmail.com
North East & Cumbria: xrne@protonmail.com
North (NW & Yorkshire): support@xrnorth.org
Northern Ireland: xrni@rebellion.earth
Scotland: xrscotland@gmail.com
South East: XR-SouthEastRegionalTeam@protonmail.com
South West: xr.regional.sw@protonmail.com

What is needed for a local group to function?

Supporters

Extinction Rebellion needs a large base of supporters, and local groups are important in connecting supporters to a geographic area and local community. Local Group supporters help in a number of ways. Ideally, we need to have people willing to protest in London since that is where the main seat of political power exists. But we also need people to put pressure on institutions in the local area, and to spread the word locally. Those who cannot travel to London can support online [digital rebellions](#) from home, by doing outreach locally, or by doing remote roles such as back-office support.

One of our theories of change is based on the work done by Erica Chenoweth, who found that nonviolent campaigns involving around 3.5% of the population actively participating in protests are needed to ensure serious political change. Therefore, we need to grow a large supporter base who are willing to be active, since it would be difficult to ignore 2 million people on the streets of London.

Note that we often call our supporters "rebels". However, people early on in their rebellious journey may be put off by that term, hence our use here of the word "supporters".

Covid has taught us how important it is to connect as humans. So as well as the important XR work local groups undertake, it is valuable to arrange sociable activities such as walks, meals, picnics and drinks.

Coordination

If you have a small group or are just starting one, you'll need a few people who are doing the basic planning for the group. This doesn't mean the co-ordinators should do all the work! There are just some things it is easier to do with a small number of people. At a very basic level, a Coordinating group would:

- Plan dates and venues for local group meetings and agree who will facilitate the meetings and take notes if needed.
- Contact the wider county or region.
- Understand the [Principles and Values](#), our [demands](#), and have a basic understanding of the [Self-Organising System](#) within XR.

- Maintain the list of local group supporters, using Action Network, so that it complies with data protection laws. See the later section [Managing Supporter Information](#).

When a group becomes larger, there is a need to have more structure. We'll talk about Working Groups, external and internal co-ordinators, and integrators later.

XR Principles and Values, Strategy, Vision, Theories of Change

The following are useful references for local groups, and are the main aspects of XR to understand early in the setting up of a local group:

- 🌍 [Principles and Values](#)
- 🌍 [XR UK Demands](#)
- 🌍 [XR UK Strategy 2022](#)
- 🌍 [Rebel Starter Pack](#)

For those wanting to dig deeper into XR, there are additional more detailed resources. It is not necessary for everyone to understand these details, but it is good to know that XR is founded on robust structures. See [XR DNA, our Vision and Theories of Change (Rebel Toolkit)](#). The Self Organising System structure as adopted by XR UK is described in the [XR UK Constitution](#).

Supporters who step-up

Finding small tasks for people to do is a good way to increase involvement since it is less onerous than taking on a whole portfolio of work at the outset. Putting out a "jobs that need doing" section in an email or on social media can be effective. More success is likely by asking for volunteers at a face-to-face meeting or approaching people who seem capable of the task. People also may be willing to do an activity if they know it is for a fixed period, such as six months, rather than an ongoing commitment.

It is best if supporters take on activities that best suit their personality and skills while giving people opportunities for personal growth.

Training

One of XR's great strengths is its range of [training resources](#). For those taking part in Actions, these courses are essential:

- Non-violent Direct Action (NVDA) - in person or online
- Know your rights – online

For those wanting to explore more about community, regenerative culture and the better world we know is possible, examples of great courses are:

- Roots of regenerative culture
- Oppression, movement building and our relationship as activists

Also, there are specific courses on essential activities for the movement, for example:

- Social media training
- Press release training
- Stewarding

And for anyone who would like a thorough grounding in who we are, how we work, the Foundation Programme is a 4 week part-time course with key zoom trainings (2-4 hours/week), selected reading and e-learning (2-3 hours/week) and support, help and guidance from the course directors. Course dates can be found on the [Events page of the website](#).

You may not be able to attend these courses at the times needed, or may like refresher courses on certain things, or perhaps would just prefer to learn at your own pace. [Rebellion Academy](#) has all the above courses available as interactive learning that you can complete any time you like, or use to refresh your knowledge.

Managing Supporter Information

XR uses a supporter database called [Action Network](#) to store details, which allows the sending of emails to large lists of emails e.g. your local group. Action Network is a powerful tool for XR as it stores supporter information at the local group, county, region and national level. A person joining the local group will then also receive regional and national email updates, so they can feel part of the wider movement. It is data protection regulation (GDPR) compliant.

Everyone handling XR personal data must sign the [Volunteer Agreement](#).

Useful Links:

[Online sign-up form for new supporters](#). If you click on the map it allows a person to sign up to the local group. You can use that link to sign people up to your group. Contact the [Action Network Data Team](#) if you'd like a tailored short link that looks like joinxr.uk/localgroupnamehere, or for Action Network training and support. You may also [request training by using this form](#).

If you need to use a paper sign-up form, please use the [Printable Sign-up form](#) which contains the data protection statement.

Communication

There are numerous online communication platforms, each with their own advantages and disadvantages for local groups. Having some external communications is good for outreach and keeping some communications internal to known supporters provides a safe space for discussion. Local groups don't need to provide all these forms of communication!

External Communication outside of XR

Facebook pages are good for external communications and the events listings are useful for publicising meetings and training.

Instagram and **Twitter** accounts are good for external communications and have a wide user base.

A local group **website** is useful for being a place where new supporters can join. It can list upcoming events and blog posts can be made to publicise recent and upcoming activities of the group. A website can be time consuming so it may be something that the group can do without. One option is to have a local group page on a regional website instead.

Trolls are likely to use your external social media presence to undermine our messages. Also people may genuinely be mis-informed about our purpose. There are good resources for dealing with **online responses** here: [Rebel Troll Patrol](#).

For Social Media graphics you can use the [Visuals Generator](#).

Internal Communication within the local group

Facebook Groups are good for internal discussions and posts can be approved by moderators but have the disadvantage that not everyone has or wants a Facebook profile. Facebook Groups are now visible to everyone on Facebook so are not as private as they once were. They should not be used for secure messages.

Telegram groups are good for internal communications and should be created as "private" groups (which is the default). Telegram is available on smart phones and laptops. It has many friendly features for encouraging discussions such as polls. Invitation links can be generated, and they can also be set so that admins of the group approve new members. A Telegram broadcast channel can be created for sending out important messages to the local group.

Signal groups are similar to **Telegram groups** but are generally preferred for highly secure communications. Messages can be set to disappear after a certain length of time.

Mattermost is part of the **The XR Hub** suite of tools and is available for local group communications. Supporters need to have a Hub account for access. See [The XR Hub](#) page on the Rebel Toolkit for more information.

Cryptpad is useful for secure documents. The XR Hub instance is https://cryptpad.organise.earth.

If people don't have access to any of these via smart phones or laptops, it is good to buddy up with someone who has, so that they can pass on the information.

Outreach

The local group's outreach activities are aimed at growing the local group to achieve mass mobilisation and raising awareness amongst the local population so that longer term they will become mobilised to support our demands.

The basic role of outreach is to:

- Run stalls, events, phoning and flyering sessions
- Support local group actions with leafleting and having conversations with members of the public
- Keep contact with other local groups and community networks

There are many resources to help supporters feel comfortable talking to members of the public about the climate and ecological emergency and the need for nonviolent civil disobedience.

Project 3.5 is designed to rapidly grow Extinction Rebellion by engaging at the local community level and talking to people on their doorstep. For more information, see [Project 3.5](#) and the [Local Group Project 3.5 Signup form](#).

See [How to talk to people about Extinction Rebellion (pdf)](#).

For more information, see the [Mass Mobilisation](#) web page.

Integration

Before you start recruiting or doing outreach, think about how you will look after people when they arrive. New supporters will need extra care and attention at the start (typically for a month or two). It is best that coordinating this work falls to someone who is not frazzled from doing a ton

of other things. People doing this work are known as integrators. (There's an Integrator Handbook containing all the information your integrator will need and Integrator Trainings are listed on the Events page of the website when available).

This does not mean it is the integrator's job alone to make new people feel welcome! This is a job for everyone in the local group.

Of course, no one can guarantee that your new supporters will stick with you, but there are some things you can do to make it more likely. Research into why people stayed was done after a People's Assembly. These answers came up the most:

- we felt appreciated
- we felt part of a community
- we thought XR was effective

And we really felt part of XR when:

- we got to know people
- we worked together on something
- we got to know XR
- we gained a role in our team

So, drawing from this, the kinds of things which encourage people to keep coming back include:

- a friendly, non-cliquey environment where group members avoid XR jargon, take the time to explain things, check understanding and listen to the views and experiences of the new person;
- a named 'buddy' who will look after the new person, answer questions and help them settle in;
- asking if the new person has anything they need to take part or feel comfortable and trying to meet their needs wherever possible (see Supporting your New Rebels and How do we genuinely welcome everyone?);
- a tangible project the whole group can work together on;
- a role, or maybe some simple tasks to start with, for the new person;
- connections to people, projects or training you know the new person will find interesting; and
- evidence of the impact of the things you are doing (e.g., getting your local council to declare a climate and ecological emergency, getting good press coverage, having a successful event where you bring in more people etc).

If you can provide these things, then you will have gone a long way to making a supportive and welcoming environment for the new people who arrive in your group.

Also, we have specific tools which we refer to as 'integration' tools - really they are designed to help people understand the movement. In order of complexity, we offer:

- [Rebel Starter Pack](), [Welcome to XR]() zoom (demands, Ps&Vs, why NVDA, how to get involved)
- [Foundation Programme 'light']() (above, plus a bit more detail)
- [Foundation Programme 'full']() (all above, plus more depth and specific skills training)

If you have any questions about integration, please contact the Rebel Pathway Team at [integration@rebellion.earth]() or via the Integrator Support channel on Mattermost (with a link in the header for our weekly drop-in sessions).

And finally, here is a useful Flowchart for [Onboarding and Integrating new supporters]().

Meetings

The aim is to have inspiring meetings where people connect and feel a sense of community amongst those who really understand the criticality of the climate and ecological emergency, and that together we can take positive action. A mix of in person and online meetings may be useful for those who do not want to travel or those who prefer not to attend online meetings.

Some meetings should be focussed on attracting new members. So, this could be by having a guest speaker, a film night, a presentation of the Heading for Extinction talk or an outreach talk (such as the 3.5 talk). It is useful to have an accessible venue where people feel safe and to provide refreshments. A prepared list of simple jobs people can undertake afterwards will help new members feel engaged with the group.

Some meetings may be more focussed on existing supporters, such as a meeting to decide the next six months' worth of activities.

It is important that every voice is heard at meetings. The XR hand signals help ensure everyone gets a turn (see the diagram in the [Rebel Starter Pack]()). Splitting into smaller groups to discuss a topic and then feeding back to the larger group is a good way to engage people who do not like speaking in big meetings. [People's Assemblies]() are a more formal way to achieve this.

It is worth avoiding 'council' style formal meetings. Fine detailed planning of who is doing what and where is best done in smaller groups, such as Working Groups or a group set up to work on a project (e.g. putting together a stall).

Facilitation, helping to guide and hold the meeting, really helps to make sure that we are working well together. Facilitators help to make sure that no one dominates the conversation and that the meeting ends on time.

A typical agenda of an XR meetings is:

- Welcome new members and share refreshments
- Check-ins – usually each person takes it in turn and passes on to the next person. A good topic is one thing you're grateful for, how are you feeling, and what would make it easier for you to be present in this meeting today? [This helps to enrich the culture, build trust and deepen relationships]
- In order to carry forward the respectful community based nature of meetings, a Regenerative Culture reminder should be read by one of the meeting attendees, or a grounding exercise performed.
- Actions from previous meetings
- This meeting's agenda items. Do include a break if a meeting is more than an hour.
- Check out - how you are feeling now
- Meeting close (on time!)

Occasionally, especially if you have many new supporters joining, you should go through the Local Group Agreement. Here is an example Local Group Agreement. This will help everyone be on board with the culture of XR.

For formal minuted meetings, such as coordination meetings:

- How to take minutes (video - 6 mins)
- Meeting template for minutes
- How to use the XR meeting template

It is vitally important that when organising meetings, we are inclusive. XR Principles of Inclusivity contains advice on how to do this. For example, try to avoid having meetings in pubs as they will not be inclusive to all.

Actions

An empowering aspect of XR local groups is that you are free to design and execute an action independently, so long as the action fits within our

[Principles and Values](#) and is aligned to our [Demands](#). Locally designed actions may then be taken up regionally or nationally. Equally the local group can decide to execute actions designed regionally or nationally. Some aspects to think about when putting an action together are:

- What is the message?
- Who is the target?
- Is there a low or high risk of arrest, and is it riskier for some participants than others?
- What do you want people to do who are motivated by your action (join the local group? Come to London?)
- How do you make it newsworthy to local media or national media
- Recce the location beforehand
- Produce visually interesting materials such as banners and placards
- Pre-prepare a press release
- How will Regenerative Culture be incorporated to avoid burnout and retain supporters
- Is it useful to set up one or more [Affinity Groups](#) for the action?

Don't trust that your local group supporter list has not been infiltrated by police informants! For actions where it is critical to keep date, time and location secret it is best to set up a separate Signal group and only add known trusted people.

It is good to get advice from the XR Legal Support team as the boundary between legal and illegal activities is not always clear.

For some legal guidance see some useful information on https://informeddissent.info. For information on Action Design, see [Action Design Notes](#) and [Action Design Training (Rebel Toolkit)](#).

Extinction Rebellion is committed to equality and to enabling people who have been marginalised by systemic oppression to act now and give their message in solidarity. You can make sure events/actions remain accessible as possible by following this guide on [XR Principles on Diversity, Inclusivity & Accessibility actions.](#)

Finance

There are often essential items that need purchasing, which makes it useful for local groups to have a bank account. These include room hire, buying arts materials such as paints, producing posters and leaflets, and providing

financial support to those attending a rebellion who could not otherwise afford to.

To help a new group start-up it is possible to share an existing account with an established group.

Banks do frequently change the accounts that they offer and so it is worthwhile checking the best options to see what is available. Typically, it is best to go for a "Treasurer's Account" or "Community Group Account" as these are unlikely to charge fees and allow a number of people as registered users of the account. It is sometimes not possible to open such accounts with the best ethical providers so it may be necessary to choose the least bad option. As the amounts of money are small it is unlikely a bank will make any money out of a local group account. Ethical Consumer has the best information on the rating of banks, but a subscription is required, or you can do an internet search for "ethical banks".

A minimum of two people should be signatories on a bank account. It is a long process to change signatories so it is best if people taking on this role will be able to do this for a reasonable length of time.

Some easy ways of fundraising are a collecting jar at local group meetings or a stall, a crowd funder for a specific event or just for starting a local group. Supporters who can't help directly may be willing to offer financial support in the form of a monthly standing order to the local group.

It's worth making an agreement as a group about how to handle expense claims and what can be claimed against: e.g., do you want to cover some travel and accommodation costs as a local group (if not met by regional or national funds)? Will Working Groups have budgets? It's always better to think through this at the start rather than have people spend and not be able to claim later because they didn't know.

Also, obviously be careful with money, but please do trust each other and don't let distrust and suspicion cause issues. Most people aren't likely to want to steal from a local group.

Arts and Materials

The visual creativity of XR actions and outreach has been instrumental in the rise of the movement. There are many ready-made art resources as well as guidance on creating your own.

On the run up to rebellions, a design pack is produced with the design theme for the rebellion. There is an order form available to order leaflets and stickers, but it may not always be available.

The XR UK website has links to many resources including pre-prepared artwork and design packs for rebellions. See [Art Group](#).

Block printing onto pieces of material or clothing is a popular activity that can bring people to a stall or as part of an "arts day". These can often be borrowed from other local groups.

For block and screen-printing information, see [Art Blockers (Rebel Toolkit)](#).

Fonts

The XR standard font for banners and headlines needs to be installed on personal computers as it is a special font, and can be downloaded from this link: [Fucxed Caps Latin v4](#). Click on the link then select the download arrow. Once downloaded, on Windows, open your Downloads folder, right click on the ttf file and select Install. If you need a smaller typeface for body copy, use Crimson Pro. For accessibility and readability, you may wish to use the standard Verdana font.

Rebellions

National rebellions are a great way to gain new members and encourage existing supporters to step up into more active roles. Being connected to a local group helps new people to have the confidence to attend and being together at a rebellion gives a good sense of connection. It can also be positive to have a homecoming celebration.

While a rebellion is happening, those at home could be engaging with the local media about what is happening as a local interest story (e.g., "people from town X have felt they needed to act by travelling to London to be involved in the rebellion"). Supporters not at rebellion could also help by doing remote roles such as back-office support. Leafleting and holding stalls and talks at home is a good way of gaining supporters. Typically, a good number of new supporters sign up during rebellions.

See the [XR Local Group guide to preparing for a rebellion](#) and the [Post-rebellion handbook](#).

Movement of movements

It is important that we maintain focus on our principles and values and our demands as Extinction Rebellion, and retain our unique identity, while recognising the similarities with many other organisations who we can work together with.

Contact other local groups and networks

Can we reach out to the thousands of people already in other community projects? Collaboration is a powerful tool in movement building and will help to expand your group. You can ask to do the "Heading for Extinction" talk or to do a call out (5-minute slots to tell people about the movement/its actions etc) in their meetings.

Good groups to contact are the Quakers, religious centres, local environmental pressure groups, local green groups, community garden projects, university societies, parent's groups, yoga/health/sports groups, educational groups, residents' associations, community organisations, young people's groups/networks, gigs/music venues and events.

From our Principle and Value "We welcome everyone and every part of everyone": It is our goal that every individual is welcomed regardless of ethnicity, race, class, gender, gender identity, gender presentation, sexuality, age, income, ability, education, appearance, immigration status, belief or non-belief and activist experience.

Fully Powered-Up Local Groups

Checklist for Local Groups

This checklist is useful to see if all the basics are covered for new or small groups, and how far along the journey the group is towards mass mobilisation: Local Group Checklist.

Working Groups

When a local group has grown, it is useful to subdivide activities into Working Groups. These groups have a brief (or 'mandate') and can make decisions within the group so long as it fits within XR's Principles and Values. The groups can work independently. They can also work towards the same project or campaign: e.g., a local group-wide initiative could be agreed, such as putting together an effective march. This would require all working groups coming together to plan and make the event a success.

The main working groups are described below. There is a more detailed description of working groups here: Local Group Working Groups.

Communities and Outreach

For full details of outreach, see the previous Outreach section. The Communities and Outreach Working Group engages with the local

community and members of the public to join the XR movement, ensuring they are signposted to introduction sessions and help them settle into the Local group with the help of a "buddy system" (see later section). Get support from the regional or national outreach teams where required. Adding new supporters to the Action Network system. Gaining new active supporters using Rebel Ringing.

See How to set up a local Communities working group.

Actions

Create & Plan actions, from original concept to designing the action including logistics, equipment, and props (working closely with the Arts group) and coordinating the action when it takes place.

Arts

Create visual, sound-tech elements and arts materials for actions (working closely with the Actions group). Assist the local group with activities such as "Paint the streets" or samba etc.

Media & Messaging

Run social media channels, write press releases, liaise with local press and media, create leaflets and posters, create group newsletters and manage mailing lists.

Regenerative Culture

Assist rebels with wellbeing support & arrestee support. Work with Actions group to ensure actions take place with Regenerative Culture in mind (i.e., what to have in place before, during and after an action). Create opportunities for rebels to reflect and avoid burnout.

Other Useful Roles

Other roles could be done by a small number of people:

Finance and Fundraising

Holding the bank account, fundraising, managing cash flow.

Technical Support

To provide technical support to members of the XR local group on how to use XRs preferred technology, such as Action Network, The XR Hub, Signal and Telegram.

Secretary

Assist with Agendas and Minutes for local group meetings. Alternatively, people can take it in turns to do this role.

Projects / Campaigns

It may be appropriate for a sub-group to be set up to work on a particularly big or long-running project or campaign, such as putting pressure on a council, or planning a pilgrimage. This can have a similar structure to a working group in that you can have an internal coordinator and an external co-ordinator who joins the local group coordinators meetings.

You can find a list of XR's centrally initiated campaigns [here](). There may also be regional or county campaigns to get involved in.

Local Group Internal and External Coordinators and Integrator

Internal coordinator

The internal coordinator role can be shared between a number of people in the group. The main responsibilities are:

- Setting priorities in collaboration with the local group
- Inviting new members to join the group and making sure they agree with XR's [Principles and Values]() and our [Demands]().
- Adding new members to any communications platforms as required e.g. The XR Hub, Telegram, Mattermost etc
- Keeping list of group members up to date so it's clear who is in the group and who isn't
- Managing information flow within the group as needed
- Listening to feedback from group members and guiding them into the right role within the group.

External coordinator

The local group external coordinator communicates information to and from the local group to the county, region or nation depending on where the local group resides in the XR structure. Normally the external coordinator would attend a regular county, region or nation meeting or would find another local group member to attend. To communicate with other groups the external coordinator should be able to use Mattermost - see [The XR Hub]() page on the Rebel Toolkit for more information.

Integrator

An integrator's role is to welcome new supporters and make sure that existing supporters are finding their way on their journey through XR. Not got an Integrator yet? Then this is the first role to recruit for! You may think this person would need to know your group inside out in order to welcome others; but really the most important thing is for them to be friendly, empathetic and willing to learn as they go along. Sometimes, it even helps for the integrator to be recently new so that they can use their own experience to help others. And as discussed earlier, there are lots of 'integration tools' to help them.

Coordination Group

In the Self-Organising System, the coordination group is made up of the external coordinator of each Working Group. However, local groups are made up of volunteers who have varying amounts of time to give, so some people may be able to take on a specific activity, such as organising meeting rooms, and it would be useful for them to be part of the Coordination Group. Equally some Working Group coordinators may not wish to be involved in activities such as planning or facilitating local group meetings as they can contribute their skills in other ways.

So, it is best to think of the coordinating group as being made up of individuals who wish to help with the running of the group, including working group external coordinators, the local group internal coordinator and the integrator(s).

There are two [trainings](#) that you will benefit from particularly as a local group coordinator if you want to go beyond the basics.

One is **Meeting Facilitation Training** - coordinators don't have to facilitate meetings but it certainly helps to have a trained facilitator in any local group. The second one is training in the **Self-Organising System** - it is extremely hard to coordinate a local group when you don't have some group agreement on how your group will be structured and how decisions will be made.

Buddying new supporters

The idea of assigning an experienced XR supporter to a newly interested person is to make them feel comfortable with XR so that they become more involved. We realise it is a big journey from initial concern about climate and nature to joining us on the streets of London!

The Buddy role/responsibility

- To make initial contact in the form of a friendly email, introducing yourself, possibly offering to meet for coffee or have a call
- To properly welcome them into XR by answering their questions, and allaying any fears they might have about getting more involved
- To generally be a friendly voice on the end of a phone and support them in finding their own place in XR

Some ideas for how to support a new XR supporter
- General meetups in a café to chat about their interests in XR, ask how they would like to be involved
- Inviting your buddy to a meeting that you are going to; you'll be the friendly person already there, so they won't have to go into a room of strangers
- Introducing your buddy to other XR people who are in areas that your buddy is interested in (art, media, outreach, performance actions)
- If they are ready to become involved, invite your buddy onto your local telegram group

It is worth thinking about how the local group will keep track of who is buddying whom.

Inreach

Often the number of supporters on the local group's email list or Facebook Group far exceeds the number of people willing to plan activities or come along to meetings.

One idea is to have an event planned well in advance, such as a meeting with a guest speaker, a straightforward march or procession or a family arts workshop, and for people who haven't been seen for a while, contact them directly via phone or email to invite them. This contact will also help in understanding why they are not more actively involved. At the event try to give everyone a simple task so that they become more engaged.

Affinity Groups

An Affinity Group (AG) is a group of people who support each other to take action. AGs are a useful organising structure for actions. They are made up of 8-20 rebels who all have some form of affinity (whether that be a willingness to get arrested or not, or a belief about what constitutes nonviolence, etc), and are there to support each other. The important part

is that AGs stay the same for the duration of the 'Action Cycle', i.e., from beginning to end of any action.

Local Groups should consider the benefits of setting up Affinity Groups when planning an action. Individual supporters in a local group may also join already existing Affinity Groups. AGs can be made up of XR supporters from any group so long as they all know each other and have agreed a plan prior to the action commencing.

The Affinity Group Support Network (AGSN) is a regional support group to help any AG at any time. (xraffinitysupport@protonmail.com).

AGs are autonomous, non-hierarchical structures with equal voices (everyone is crew, everyone is important), to make last-minute decisions during actions. The most important thing is to stay connected, to communicate any changes, and to support each other. AGs should hold collective awareness of people's different levels of comfort. There are different roles in an Affinity Group such as coordinator, wellbeing, arrest support and media.

For more information, see [Forming an Affinity Group (Rebel Toolkit)](#) and the [Affinity Group Formation Guide](#).

Supporters involved in other XR roles

Some local group supporters may decide to be involved in XR at the regional or national level or take on specific roles at a rebellion. In this way, skills and knowledge can flow in and out of the local group and through XR in its entirety.

Resilience

Throughout the process of developing a local group, it is important to bear in mind that the group may not work out as you pictured it or as is given in the guidelines. You may find that people want to work on specific projects rather than Working Groups, or you may struggle to find coordinators. That is okay. Different local groups will also work better with different structures that are more suited to them and that's fine. This is just a set of guidelines to help groups along the way. Self-organising systems are new to most of us. There will be bumps along the way and sometimes it will feel chaotic but through this decentralising we are reconnecting more communities and giving a voice to the voiceless.

Related Resources
- [XR Resilience Statement](#)

- Tips on [How to Give and Receive feedback](#)

Handover and Avoiding Burnout

Stress and burnout can hopefully be avoided by sharing demanding roles and training up replacements so that people can step down when they need to. It is much better for an active member of the group to be able to step back and take time off than feel that they are the only one who can do particular tasks. Keeping a list of jobs and who can do them is a good way to identify where a group is reliant on only one person, and person to person training can help widen knowledge and spread the load. For people needing to step back for a while or permanently, there is an [Exit Process](#).

Next Steps

We hope this guide has been helpful in being a central place for basic guidance for XR local groups and wish you every success in starting, re-starting or growing your local group! Remember we are here if you need support, do reach out to other local groups, your region, or the Gardeners. If you have questions specifically about this guide, please contact: localgroupsupport@protonmail.com. We wish you all the best.

References

Digital Rebellion: [Telegram Group](#), email: [digitreb@extinctionrebellion.uk](#)

The XR Hub and Mattermost: See [The XR Hub](#) page on the Rebel Toolkit for more information.