How to organise a Community Assembly

This manual outlines the various steps that you can take to run an assembly in your local community.

• How to plan and organise your assembly
• What to think about before launching your assembly
• How to decide on an assembly question
• What training and support is available
• How to follow up an assembly

- What key decisions does your community need to make?
- Creating a Team
- Budget & Funding
- Connecting with the Community and Allies
- Framing & Scope
- Planning & Promotion
- Structure of a Community Assembly
- Training & Support

What key decisions does your community need to make?

Before kicking off your Community Assembly, consider what you want to achieve.



Wondering Whether to Run a Community Assembly With Your Local Extinction Rebellion Group, or to Collaborate with Others?

Running an assembly as a Local Group is easier and faster to organise, but it means that the question you will be discussing will only be relevant to your XR members; there will not necessarily be community support for your recommendations and decisions.

If you invite potential ally organisations and reach out to new ones to **co-create your question** for deliberation, you will get wider participation and better representation of the wider community, which is the best possible outcome.

An added benefit of co-creation is that other groups can share the workload involved, helping organise.

Also promoting your assembly to their member meetings and followers of their newsletters and social media gives you wider **reach**.

Remember that choosing to be collaborative from the outset means you're likely to attract a more diverse audience and participant numbers can give greater weight to decisions made when bringing recommendations to eg your local authority, etc.

The most powerful outcome of an assembly is that **people with opposite opinions can come together, have a reasonable conversation together and enjoy the magic of the process**.

By reaching out to the wider community you are working on two levels; firstly, you are building a consensus on issues that matter to local people and secondly you are giving them a feeling of how a different kind of democracy can work for them.



Do We Run a Community Assembly on a Local Question, or a Wider Issue?

Here are some example questions below. Any variation of these will open up the discussion, because it invites all voices with an open question:

- How can we do something about climate change together in our community?
- How might we reduce our energy bills collectively?
- How can we nurture nature in (community / village / town, etc.)?
- How can (name of locality / town / county) make sure that everyone in our community can access healthy, affordable food for the long term?
- How might we rely less on fossil fuels in (named local area)?
- How might we as a local community respond to our colonial past?
- How can we make sure that our community is represented well by our politicians?

Trust the People recommend you begin your question for discussion with, e.g. “How can we…”

You might find that it is easier to get community members or local organisations excited about discussing a topics that matter to them; this also helps maximise your numbers taking part. This doesn’t have to be a local issue, but could be, e.g. sewage pollution, locally and in general. If your organising group is committed to running an assembly follow-up, you should consider that a strong question will make follow up easier.

The benefit of these questions is that they draw local communities closer to action. They can also lead to discussion around XR’s third demand, in particular, why a citizens assembly on climate and ecological justice could provide a template for wider democratic involvement of the people in decision making processes.

Assemblies can also attract the attention of local politicians; some organisers make a point of inviting local politicians to participate on an equal footing with their constituents. Building those relationships can help open wider conversations too, including the concept of citizens assemblies.



Will The Assembly Be A One-Off Or The Start Of A Campaign?

Many organising groups can be quite small, so organisers might feel like setting up and promoting a one-off Community Assembly is a pretty big challenge, let alone running a series of follow-ons. This is why it is important to think about your goals from your assembly, such as recruiting for the next one!

It is completely fine to organise one Community Assembly, then take a regenerative break to think about your next steps. Do try to share the outputs from your assembly with those who took part, however. This should be a giving back to the community, keeping them in the loop and incentivised to support the next assembly.

Alternatively, a Community Assembly can be a great way of kicking off a local campaign, or building networks. You can collate all suggestions and ideas from participants in your assembly, then commit to following them up with those present and anyone else interested. For instance:

- if local flooding is a concern, an action the community can take, without relying on the council to work on mitigation, is to organise a tree planting afternoon;
- if food poverty is an issue, set up a community fridge;
- if you are unhappy about services offered by your local authority, run a small rally outside your local council offices that engage officers and the public.

Follow on actions will take more consistent effort, but:

- will strengthen your networks;
- make your assemblies feel much more meaningful and effective to the whole community;'.
- show people what democracy can achieve.



Do You Want To Facilitate Local Action Or Influence Local Politicians?

If you want to follow up your Community Assembly with a **campaign**, there are three possible approaches.

Some believe that the whole point of Community Assemblies is to **take power into our own hands**. Acting locally to address local problems helps build resilience in our communities; this equips us to deal with what lies ahead. As all of our local authorities and councillors are failing us, strengthening our community will be needed more than ever in the future.

Others say that in a climate and ecological emergency, it is most important to **pressurise politicians to resource large-scale positive action**. Seeing that their community is ready to take bold and urgent action will spur others and our politicians on. This is potentially powerful, given politicians' power to enact legislative change; they can take recommendations from your assembly to your local council or unitary authority to implement them.

If MPs (English Parliament) / AMs (in the Senedd) / MSPs (Scottish MPs) attend your assembly, it will be easier to pressurise your local representative to back certain legislation in your nation's legislative chamber. For instance, you can engage them in discussions around the Climate and Nature Bill, a Citizen's Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice, or a House of Citizens.

The third option combines both approaches and will take more effort to organise. It would engage people in follow up activities and future assemblies if you add refreshments and a get together at the end.

Creating a Team

> *“I can’t change the world on my own, it’ll take at least three of us.”*
> - Bill Mollison

Below, we have listed a few working groups that may help you get a community assembly off the ground. They constitute best practice, not a minimum requirement. Your local group may feel that so many working groups are well beyond your capacity so don’t let this guidance discourage you! It doesn’t take an army of volunteers to put on an assembly!

Alliance Building

Importance: Essential
Timing: From project start

This is the role that you need to establish very early on in your project. At least one person in your local group should lead communications with other organisations. While it will be helpful to brainstorm in your local group around potential assembly topics and locations, you will need to discuss all of these things early on with other organisations and be open to their suggestions if you want to collaborate with them. Unless you have a political or lobbying team, this will also be the role that contacts local politicians and invites them to the assembly. On Rebel Toolkit, you can find resources for local alliance building to inform this work.

Fundraising

Importance: Nice to have
Timing: From project start

If you end up up working together with other organisations, you can explore sharing certain costs.

Outreach and Integration

Importance: Essential
Timing: From middle of project

Just like you would do outreach to promote a Heading for Extinction talk, we will do outreach to spread the word about our assemblies. At the end of your assembly, you can invite attendants to join your local group or get involved in a local campaign in which case this team will have to prepare how people can join and what tasks they can take on. You will need an outreach and integration crew later in the project once you are clear on assembly time, location, topic, etc.

More information about Outreach and Integration.

Media and Messaging Crew

Importance: Nice to have
Timing: Middle to end of project

The role of this group is to promote the assembly through the media. That could involve your local group's own online channels and newsletter, but you could also try local press outlets or ask allied organisations to promote the event in their newsletters and social media. On top of that, this team will coordinate taking pictures of the assembly and capturing them on your social media.

If you would appreciate any support with your local media work, feel free to contact media@rebellion.earth and they can put you in touch with your regional/national Media & Messaging rep.

Facilitators

Importance: Super essential
Timing: End of project

For each Community Assembly, you will need **at least one facilitator, ideally two**. Facilitators maintain **radical inclusivity, active listening,** and **trust** so that all voices are heard and valued equally. They keep the discussion focused and structured and prevent it from becoming unwieldy which is absolutely crucial for a successful assembly.

Recommendations:

Make sure that your facilitators don't have entrenched political bias or other strong prejudice, in accordance with inclusion principles. Party-political neutrality in facilitators ensures more effective assemblies. Ideally, a female facilitator is one of the assembly leads. It has been shown that this will greatly increase the level of engagement of female participants and the uptake of facilitation roles of women in general. The rate of engagement and uptake for males isn't affected in the same way. Lead Facilitators would benefit from completing facilitation training. See our Community Assembly Facilitation Guide for more information.

Budget & Funding

Example Budget

Below is an example of a budget to help your planning. This is only a simple guideline, e.g. you might not have to book a venue for an outdoors assembly, translation, or other resources.

Category	Unit Price	Notes
Venue Hire	£300	Book your venue for at least four hours to allow for set up, the process, socialising and clearing up.
Food	£200	Invest in anything else that will make your event more appealing and fun.
Outreach Materials	£100	Leaflets and posters are essential. There are templates for leaflets on the Rebel Toolkit, or find inspiration for other outreach methods.
Flip Charts, Stationery	£25	Taking notes during the Assembly that can be seen and read by everyone is essential to highlight the outcomes of the discussion. Markers, biros, post-it notes, egg timers all help to have ready.
BSL Interpretation / Language Translation	£160	You may want to create a registration page for your Assembly, where people can flag their accessibility needs. There's no point in paying for an interpreter if no one will need them, but radical inclusivity is a pillar of assembly success in being representative.
Hearing Loops	£80	Consider creating a registration page for your Assembly, where people can flag accessibility needs. There's no point in paying for a hearing loop if no one will need this.
Creche Provision	£250	Your volunteers may be able to provide this, without paying for professionals. However, you should consider safeguarding protections. Arts materials for kids, while their parents participate in the Assembly

Arts / Entertainment	£350	Supporting local arts projects brings a different dimension to deliberation and makes people feel part of something fun.

Potential Sources of Funds

There are now a number of players in the deliberative democracy space, some of which are either planning to access funding, or can help your organising group to raise funds or match fund. Check out:

- People Powered Democracy Project Funding, as they "Provide spaces and support for joint fundraising. Coordinate paid technical assistance services."
- ISWE Foundation
- Your local council for voluntary organisations (check name for your location, e.g. WCVO, GAVO, WCVA)
- Your group can also fundraise and collaborate alongside other organisations to cover the costs.

We recommend that local groups wanting to raise funds check out the Rebel Toolkit's general fundraising guidance.

What did we miss?

If you come across a funder of community assemblies, please tell us about your successes in what you asked for, from whom and how. Share a link if you can via our Telegram Chat.

Connecting with the Community and Allies

Relevant teams: Alliance Building, Outreach and Integration

Before you attempt to bring a community together in Assembly, you need to actually familiarise yourself with that community. This will help you to select an assembly question that matters to the people around you, and to design an assembly event that is appealing to your local community.

Think: Who makes up the community in question? Where are they? Who are the obvious future participants? Who are the less obvious ones? Which communities are hidden from you? Where are the community connections that already exist happening? Are those connections deliberate or organic/cultural? Who are the influencers, the stakeholders, or the 'Elders' within this community?

Whilst we are connecting with the community, we need to connect with ourselves as well. We need to ask ourselves what assumptions we carry about the community we are trying to reach. We must challenge our own blind spots and prejudices at every opportunity, and continue to do so throughout the process.

It is also vital to develop active listening skills, so that when you are engaging with others in your community, you are taking time to understand them, their needs and their wants, rather than trying to push your own agenda.

To help you better connect with your community, take a look at the following modules (downloadable as Google docs) in the Trust The People programme:

- Personal Processing - This module encourages you to think about your identity, your biases, and your relationship to society.
  - Deep Reflection: Understanding Ourselves and Understanding Others
- Engaging Communities - This module supports you in reaching out to others and forming relationships founded on trust.
  - Deep Hanging Out Guide
  - Active Listening Guide
  - Door to Door Listening Guide

To help boost your ability to connect with those in your community, consider the following:

- Hold meetings in open and oft-frequented places (e.g. a local pub or cafe), so that many can easily participate.
- Be visible and open to conversations – find ways to bring those around you in.
- Attend existing community events – if relevant, you might run a stall.
- Contact existing community groups and connect to their issues and experiences.
- Organise events such as seed swaps, ‘free’ markets, community meals, music evenings, Empathy Circles or Cafes.

In the same phase of your assembly planning process, you want to put your feelers out to local organisations and see if any of them are up for organising an assembly together with you. Working together with other organisations will not only increase the diversity of your audience but will also bring new ideas to the event organising process that you might never have thought of on your own.

Dare yourself to reach out to a group that you have never been in touch with before. XR groups are most commonly in touch with unions, environmental and faith groups or unions. How about getting in touch with a local racial justice or LGBTIQ+ group?

Framing & Scope

Relevant teams: Your local group and ally organisations

The exact framing and scope for the assembly need to be agreed upon before any promotional work can occur. The destination and legitimacy of the results of the assembly should be discussed and decided upon prior to convening the assembly, and it is important that all assembly participants are made aware of this information before the assembly begins.

An Assembly for Sharing and Community Building

If, for example, you are planning to host an assembly designed to bring community members together to discuss issues that are important to them in the spirit of creating community bonds and finding common ground, then the framing and scope are as follows:

Framing: The event is open to all members of the community to provide space for discussion around local issues.

Scope: No decisions are being made, so the scope is limited and does not extend beyond the sharing of ideas and feelings. The ideas and issues generated in the assembly should be fed back to the community through social media and serve as a starting point for future conversations.

An Assembly for Discussing a Specific Topic and Generating Ideas

If you are convening an assembly which focuses on specific issues and where what is discussed will be shared beyond the local community with an external body, such as a council, then the scope would be broader. Say, for example, a local sustainability group advertises an open assembly on their social media channels to discuss how the local council can act after declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency, then the framing and scope would be as follows:

Framing: The event is open to anyone who chooses to participate to share their ideas on what the council can do.

Scope: The ideas and issues generated in the assembly could be published on the local group’s communication channels (e.g. their Facebook page or their newsletter), and also be emailed to the local Councillors asking them to take the suggestions to the next Council meeting.

An Assembly for Making Decisions and Proposals

Assemblies can also be convened to ask for the opinions of members of a group and to make decisions. Say, for example, a local group calls an assembly to discuss whether they join with a

larger group for a day of action or create their own one locally, and they advertise it to all members through every channel of communication, then the framing and scope are as follows:

Framing: The event is open to the members of the group so they can share their ideas on what they would like their group to do in the action.

Scope: The assembly has the legitimacy to make the decision on behalf of that group, and the decision made during that assembly will be reported to the group and acted upon. The assembly, however, would not have the scope to make decisions beyond their own group. If, for example, that same group holds an assembly to decide if they, as a region, should combine with another region in the same manner, then the results of that assembly would be fed into a larger decision-making process that would affect other groups within the region as well.

Lead with the Topic

Once you have decided on your assembly question or topic, make sure to display it clearly on your promotions materials and the assembly itself for all to see.

A good question is worded such that it is:

- in everyday language,
- not too long,
- broad enough to allow for free discussion, but not so broad that a structured conversation around it is difficult.

Planning & Promotion

Advance Preparation

Choose the venue

- Assemblies are usually held in public spaces, like community hubs, town squares, outside prominent places like a city or town hall. They need to be as open and accessible as possible, so that as many members of the public can easily join in.
- Assemblies can be located somewhere that may link to the issue being addressed by the assembly. For example, if the assembly is looking at the effects of climate and biodiversity breakdown on the agricultural industry, an assembly outside the local National Farmers Union, for which the process working group has invited the key members, is a way of pushing for a response.
- All assemblies should be held in venues that are fully wheelchair accessible - including toilets - and ideally have hearing loops installed. If there is budget available, ideally, a professional signer should support accessibility for people with hearing difficulties.

Online Assemblies

Holding your Community Assembly online is potentially a good way to be more inclusive, especially in rural areas, where face to face assemblies could potentially mean tricky travel to an assembly venue, or it might be easier to attend an online assembly for carers and parents.

The process of running an online Community Assembly is pretty much the same as one that you would use for an in-person assembly. Breakout rooms can be used for the deliberation phase.

Please find more information in the Structure section of this manual. We also have a page about Using Zoom for Community Assemblies, the popular video meeting tool.

Communications

There's lots to do in advance and afterwards (especially to support any funding bid). We've got your back... If you need support on organising press releases, getting your assembly on XR's Events Map, or getting broadcasts out, if you can get your support request in as early as possible, you have the best chance of getting support. Go here to request Comms Support.

Working with the Press

An important part of your communications plan for the assembly will be sharing your event with the press. This will include writing one or more press releases, and identifying the press contacts to share those with. To help with this please see the following resources:

- Press Release Workshop, recording of the workshop on XR tube
- Press release PowerPoint used in the workshop
- Workshop notes

Inclusion

In the spirit of ‘radical inclusivity’ pillar of assemblies and in accordance with Extinction Rebellion Principles and Values, check the Extinction Rebellion Principles of Inclusivity to ensure the assembly is optimising access across diverse needs.

Planning and Scheduled Tasks

One Month To Go:

- Agree time, date and venue.
- Book venue and any necessary equipment such as a PA system or kitchen equipment.
- Think about back-up venues in case of any issues nearer the day, especially if it is being hosted outdoors.
- Create an event page, e.g. on Eventbrite, so you get an idea of what attendance to expect. Ideally, it would allow people to express if they need British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation or childcare so you know if it’s worth investing in those things.
- Organise hosts and facilitators, along with others to take appropriate roles such as:
  - Organising play area
  - Refreshments
  - Meet and greet team
  - Media and messaging (to document and share during and after the event)
  - BSL interpreter (if needed)
- Identify and invite stakeholders and influencers in the community.
- Invite your MP and local councillors.
- Print posters, leaflets, etc.
- Think about advertising:
  - Make a list ahead of time of all those relevant to your area and decide which are worth pursuing.
  - Ask people where they look for events.
  - Try a few places and get feedback on where people see the information.
  - Many people read their community newsletter or free paper but not the local paper.
  - Find out where the important information such as local bin days and recycling is routinely published and try those first!

Two Weeks to Go:

- Re-share on all social media platforms, and be prepared to check for questions and comments. Be responsive.
- Put up posters. Think about points of contact such as libraries, cafes, noticeboards, supermarkets etc. Think of the less obvious places such as Youth Centres, Homeless Shelters, Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Door knocking and flyering.
- Hand out flyers in prominent places such as high streets or any other community events.
- Follow up with local councillors or your MP if they haven't got back to you yet.
- Check there are no issues with the venue that might affect the event such as road works etc.

One Week to Go:

- Check in with all crew - Make sure you know who is responsible for:
  - Bringing equipment for the play area
  - Refreshments supplies
  - Ways to capture contact details for future events
  - PA equipment etc
- Check all roles are still covered.
- Agree a running order with the host and facilitation team, and circulate it to all crew.
- Reshare on social media.
- Ask interested parties to share within their own networks, perhaps challenge everyone already wanting to attend to bring one or two people along with them on the day.
- Ask people to share with those they think should be involved.
- Ask people to identify places where the information should be shared to reach those less likely to see it.
- Re-check there are no issues with the venue that might affect the event such as road works etc.

One Day to Go:

Last shout-out reminder on social media. Send reminder emails or messages to anyone who registered on your event page. Re-check there are no issues with the venue that might affect the event such as road works etc. Check in with anyone holding a role that they are all good to go and agree to meet an hour before the start time to set up. Send a reminder email to your local councillors and MP.

One Hour to Go:

All crew meet at the venue at least one hour before the advertised start time. Host, facilitators and the media and messaging crew run through the assembly plan together. Set up and test any PA equipment being used. Set up food and hot drinks, and any information that is being displayed. Ideally all the crew should wear something to identify them as being part of the organising team- this will make it easier for people to ask questions about the event or the process. Set up the

children’s area. Circulate pictures of the assembly being set up through social media channels to generate interest.

During the Assembly:

Be available to greet anyone coming in and make them feel welcome/explain the process to them. Be aware of tensions and needs. Be available to support anyone. Many people may find themselves moved by the experience of listening to others or having their own voices heard, and some may need space or support.

After the Assembly:

Be available to answer people’s immediate questions about the assembly process or what happens next. Collect emails and contact details to ensure that people can be kept in touch with, making sure that your process for doing this is GDPR compliant. Pack away all the equipment and tidy up the venue. Plan for a feedback and reflection meeting with facilitators and crew, ideally following the assembly. This can be scheduled for another day, but don’t leave it too long. Have a party with everyone remaining!

Structure of a Community Assembly

There are three main phases of a community assembly, these are the input phase, the deliberation phase, and the integration/feedback phase.

Input Phase

This phase can be broken down further into the introduction and input, the latter of which can be of varying lengths according to the purpose of the Assembly.

Ideally, the input phase should be around 30 mins in total. However, if a speaker is attending or it is important for those present to learn about a subject, then the input phase may take longer.

Introduction

1. Start on time.
2. Lead facilitators introduce and explain the hand signals, so that they can be used throughout all parts of the assembly.
3. They then introduce the assembly agenda, including where the results of this assembly will go.
4. They then talk through the three pillars (radical inclusivity, active listening and trust) and ask for help from the crowd to remove any barriers to engagement that may be identified, before reading out the Inclusivity Statement:

> “We value all voices equally in the assembly, as the aim is to hear the wisdom of the crowd gathered here and not to have the assembly dominated by individual voices or groups. We recognise that confident speakers are not always right and that those who are not confident speakers will often have the most useful ideas or opinions to put into the discussion. This is why we value all voices equally and we ask you to do the same. We do not tolerate any calling out, abuse or shaming and should conflicts arise in this way. We welcome all people but not all behaviours.”

Input

This can be as simple as the lead facilitators framing the question for discussion and explaining why the assembly has been convened.

Or it can involve a longer and more in-depth input section such as a live panel of experts, or a video input.

The Input should be balanced and factual – if research is being done to provide context, consider how you will keep it impartial.

A badly planned input can skew a deliberation and deliver unwise answers.

Testify

Invite people to take the microphone for two minutes maximum and share their feelings about what has brought them to join the assembly or action that day.

In an open public assembly, this section can be drawn out as long as people volunteer to speak.

It opens the space for people to connect emotionally, but be carful to ensure it is not used as a ‘soap box’ on the issues about to be discussed.

Ideally ask for a woman to speak on the microphone first (It has been shown that this will greatly increase the level of engagement of female participants. The rate of engagement and uptake for males isn’t affected in the same way), and allow as much dead air as is necessary for people to build up the courage to come and talk.

Be strict with timing but ensure that the people speaking are supported and made completely safe in their sharing.

Ideally work with two facilitators so that one facilitator ‘guards’ mic and keeps stack, whilst one sits in front of the speaker with timer and gives ‘round up’ hand signal as they approach 2 mins.

Deliberation Phase

Main Deliberation

- Before people go into groups a lead facilitator clarifies the discussion topic or question, including making clear how many points are to be fed back from each ‘breakout group’ (usually 3-5 points depending on the size of the assembly – the larger the assembly, the fewer the points).
- Lead Facilitators then divide the assembly into ‘breakout groups’, ideally of eight. Facilitators need to try and ensure this is roughly the size of each group and encourage people to sit in groups with people they don’t already know.
- Each breakout group has one facilitator and one notetaker as explained above.
- Clarify the duration of the deliberation (discussion in breakout groups) phase, and stick to timings throughout the assembly as many people who are attending have work or family responsibilities that have to be respected.
- A deliberation phase should last around 30 minutes (5 minutes can be allocated to introducing the phase, and groups should have 25 minutes to discuss their ideas).

- Recap the hand signals before putting groups in breakout groups.

Breakout Groups

In the breakout groups, it is good practice for the facilitator to restate the discussion topic or question and for the note taker to write it down. This enables people in the group to refer back to the original point for discussion to make sure the group stays focused and on subject.

It is also good to start by going around the group and stating names, and making space for anyone to highlight any barriers to engagement that they may have that the small group can work together to try to work around.

The breakout groups will have a set amount of time to discuss the topic, as outlined by the lead assembly facilitators beforehand – a good amount of time is 25 mins.

10 minutes before the end of the deliberation phase, the lead facilitators should notify the breakout groups that they have ten minutes left, and should request that the breakout group note takers feed back their summary of the discussion to their groups, so that they can identify which key points they will be feeding back to the main discussion. It is also a good idea for the lead facilitators to remind the breakout groups how many points they will be feeding back.

Integration Phase

Feeding Back

- The lead facilitator calls the breakout group note takers to the front of the assembly (they should ask the name of each note taker before they feedback so that they can thank them at the end).
- The lead facilitator should request that as the note takers feedback their key points, the crowds use wavy hands to signal their support for the points raised.
- Each note taker then feeds back the key points as the main assembly note taker records the points as they are fed back, noting down which ones get the most approval from the entire assembly. It’s nice to do this on a whiteboard or a large piece of paper so that the assembly participants can see it.
- The assembly note taker then feeds results of the assembly to wherever they are destined to go (e.g. sending them to the local council to demand action, or posting them on a community online organising platform etc.). This destination is determined prior to the assembly and will have formed part of the framing of the process in the Input phase.

Finishing Up

- The lead facilitators express gratitude for the breakout group facilitators and note-takers, and for everyone who participated.
- If there is a need to vote on the results of the assembly, you can do a ‘Temperature Check’. The lead facilitators read out the different options to be voted on and the members of the assembly cast their ‘vote’ using ‘wavy hands’ for the option they like the

best. The assembly note taker and lead facilitators watch for the most wavy hands and that gets taken forward.

- ‘Shout Outs’ are an invitation for those gathered to call out brief notifications such as upcoming actions or events. These should be short and arranged with the facilitators beforehand if possible. This should take no more than 10 minutes.
- The lead facilitator summarises the results of the assembly if necessary, and thanks everyone for participating.

Training & Support

We highly recommend that in the run up to your assembly, you pull together volunteers who want to help facilitate and/or note-take and run practice sessions face-to-face, or even online. Offer practice sessions in the run up to the community assembly to help your facilitation and note-taker team feel confident.

Recorded Trainings & Open Calls

- How to set up and run a Community Assembly. YouTube October 2023: Running an Assembly training
- Assemblies Facilitation Training. YouTube November 2023: Community Assemblies Facilitation Training
- Introductory Open Call on Community Assemblies YouTube Open Call June 2023: Introduction to Assemblies
- Introduction to the Community Assembly Escalation Plan. YouTube October 2023: Open Call - Escalation from Assemblies

Trust the People

THE expert trainers inspiring and empowering people everywhere to really bring democracy home, Trust the People run excellent training sessions to give people the knowledge and resources, try out new skills, and feel confident in their ability to organise and run an effective Community Assembly. We highly recommend their training.

- The Course: Enjoy 8 weeks worth of fun, in-depth training to equip your local community in how to organise and run an effective magical experience in deliberative democracy. And it's totally **free**, twice per year from the experts in building deliberative democracy.

Talking To Local Politicians

If considering involving politicians and officers in your community assembly or escalation plans check out the Local & Regional Authorities Map.

Also, check out Hope For the Future's website. They run regular trainings, which are very informative.

If you are contacting a Member of UK Parliament (MP), XRUK's Political Advisor can provide general guidance to help you find out the most effective approach. Contact political@extinctionrebellion.uk.

Let Us Know

We'd love to know if you are planning a Community Assembly in your local area so that we can support you with any questions you have, help obtain expert advice and possibly help provide facilitation. Please:

- Get in touch via our UK Asssembly Telegram chat,
- email us at assemblies@extinctionrebellion.uk, or
- message us via the UK Assemblies Reception Mattermost channel

Further Training and Support

- **Involve**: public participation charity, on a mission to put people at the heart of decision-making.
- **Humanity Project**: an NGO offering practical support to local groups wanting to set up what they call a 'Pop', i.e. a popular assembly. NB their immediate goals of popularising assemblies is shared with XR, but they do not share XR's Third Demand. At the time of this update (August 2024), their volunteers may recommend organisers not refer to XR support in organising.
- **Assemble Video Course** NB This is geared towards upcoming elections and influencing Parliamentary or other regional government candidates
- 2025-2027 Strategic Plan - **Hope For The Future**
- **People Powered Democracy Accelerator** 6 month training course.
- **Egin**- unlocking "...the collective power of communities in **Wales** to take their first steps towards tackling climate change and living more sustainably..."

More and more trainings are popping up regularly. If we are missing some great training resources, please message us to request adding links here.

Just Go For It!

While we hope that everything you need to know is here, it is worthwhile remembering that every assembly is different because it reflects your community's particular needs.

Deliberative democracy is a learning curve for all of us. Don't let perfection be the enemy of progress. Just give it a go, do your best, then enjoy the process. Your effort will really be appreciated by participants who are not used to being listened to and who enjoy getting to meet like minds in their community.

You may find that there is demand for more assemblies. Trust the process and go for it!