Community Building

Beautiful Resources for you and your group! Practice the art of curiosity and connection and build resilient communities where you are!

- □□□□□Zines Zines Zines!!!□□□□□
- Why Community Building? □□
- Frequently Asked Questions□
- Request a Workshop!□□□□
- About Community Building ℹ
    - □□ Processes of Community Building We Do Well! □□
    - □□ Community Building / Mobilisation / Alliance Building □□
- Community Building Tools □□
    - □□ Community Maps □□ - To Understand our Communities
    - □□□□□ Group Activities □□□□□ - To Build Our Own Community
    - □□ Community Activities □□ - To Share with Our Wider Communities
    - □ Pre-Action Activities □ - To Weave Community Building into Actions
    - □□ Zines/Handouts □□ - To Share and Play with!
- Glossary □□

□□□□□Zines Zines Zines!!!

□□□□□

> “ **Don't Miss! More Printable Resources Here** ❤□□□

Zines are little pamphlets filled with information. As a format they have a rich history in activism and the use of printed media like this opens our resources up to a much wider audience in a really fun and accessible way!

Consider where you could put a zine like this:

- Maybe pin one to your local notice board?
- Does your library or cafe have a table of leaflets you can add them to?
- Are there any community organisations in your area you could share them with?
- Keep some in your bag as a gift for anyone you start an interesting conversation with.

To fold the zine formats check out this guide.

XR Zines!

We fully believe in a culture of play, experimentation and joyous mistake making. Our Zines will forever be imperfect and scrappy, this is an intentional mirroring of Community Building.

With new information, learnings, a changing world, and different perspectives as our team grows, we will continue to update our Zines to reflect our growing understanding of this work.

Community Building will never be clean and perfect - it is about trying things, learning, and trying again!

-- Latest Update April 2026

If you are interested where we have come from in our thinking the originals are stored HERE.

□□□□□ Community Building Zine Set □□□□□

Interested in Community Building? Start here! Discover what it's all about, and what your first steps could be starting from where you are right now!

XR CB Set.png

View Full Sized	Download
Introduction to Community Building	Print & Fold
Community Building Myths	Print & Fold
Community Mapping	Print & Fold
Stepping into Community	Print & Fold
Turning a Group into a Community	Print & Fold
Building Resilient Communities	Print & Fold

□□□□□ Strength Spotting Zine Set □□□□□

Want to go deeper? Discover what is already strong in your communities, and discover the power you can generate in them through being a connector!

XR SS Set.png

View Full Sized	Download
Identifying Our Strengths	Print & Fold
Taking Action Together	Print & Fold
Community Curiousity	Print & Fold
From Scarcity to Abundance	Print & Fold
The Power of Being Known	Print & Fold
Becoming a Community Connector	Print & Fold

Each of our zines has a pair to it. We would recommend printing these back to back on A4 sheets! This will allow you to fold your zine forward or backward and share 2 beautiful resources with each sheet of paper!

Pairing	Download
Intro & Myths	Print & Fold
Mapping & Agenda	Print & Fold
Resilience & Groups	Print & Fold
Strengths & Action	Print & Fold
Curiosity & Abundance	Print & Fold
Known & Connector	Print & Fold

Zine Photo.jpeg

Unbranded Zines

And for when it is not appropriate or suitable to step into spaces as XR, we have provided some unbranded versions for you to play with!

□□□□□ Community Building Zine Set □□□□□

Interested in Community Building? Start here! Discover what it's all about, and what your first steps could be starting from where you are right now!

Unbranded SS Set.png

View Full Sized	Download
Introduction to Community Building	Print & Fold
Community Building Myths	Print & Fold
Community Mapping	Print & Fold
Stepping into Community	Print & Fold

View Full Sized	Download
Turning a Group into a Community	Print & Fold
Building Resilient Communities	Print & Fold

□□□□□ Strength Spotting Zine Set □□□□□

Want to go deeper? Discover what is already strong in your communities, and discover the power you can generate in them through being a connector!

Unbranded CB Set.png

View Full Sized	Download
Identifying Our Strengths	Print & Fold
Taking Action Together	Print & Fold
Community Curiosity	Print & Fold
From Scarcity to Abundance	Print & Fold
The Power of Being Known	Print & Fold
Becoming a Community Connector	Print & Fold

Each of our zines has a pair to it. We would recommend printing these back to back on A4 sheets! This will allow you to fold your zine forward or backward and share 2 beautiful resources with each sheet of paper!

Pairing	Download
Intro & Myths	Print & Fold
Mapping & Agenda	Print & Fold
Resilience & Groups	Print & Fold
Strengths & Action	Print & Fold
Curiosity & Abundance	Print & Fold
Known & Connector	Print & Fold

Zine Photo.jpeg

We would love to hear your feedback on these resources, and if you have any requests for additional resources please let us know!

To contact the Community Building Team please email us at: CommunityConnectors@proton.me.

Why Community Building? □□

Communities are so important in life, bringing us joy and support. They can also powerful tools in the times we are in!

There are three main reasons why community building is so important, especially for Extinction Rebellion at this moment:

1. Communities create change in ways that matter to them.
2. Stronger communities mean healthier rebels and a stronger movement.
3. Community building generates cultural momentum and empowers rebels to take action.

Communities Are Strong Forces For Change

When looking at changing the system to mitigate and adapt to the climate and ecological crises there are often two camps: individual change and governmental change. In the middle of these is community change - often overlooked but extremely powerful.

Strong communities disempower institutions that do not serve them simply by existing!

- Consider the street that reclaimed its public space by planting boxes of flowers and edible plants where cars used to park.
- Imagine a world where our local communities met the majority of our food needs. Would we need big supermarkets and long supply chains?
- In a world where those with power are not meeting our basic needs and in many cases working against them, why not do it ourselves? Nothing scares them more than us not being dependent on them!

Thriving communities are known to care more for their local environments, have better health outcomes, mitigate the negative effects of poverty, and be better prepared for disasters such as floods or fires.

Communities challenge the underlying systems that drive climate and ecological breakdown, and actively set up alternatives.

> **Questions to Ask:**

> - What has your local community organised to achieve?
> - What are the success stories?
> - What would your vision for the future be?
> - How would you include more people and different types of people in that vision?

Strong Communities Create Healthier Rebels and a Stronger Movement

Extinction Rebellion has existed for over seven years! We know this work is a marathon and not a sprint. So we must take care to take meaningful action when we can and find joy and rest ahead of burnout.

Part of what makes us so resilient in this work is that we have fun while we do it! Creating spaces people want to be in and want to stay in is a big part of this. Building trust, finding ways to be creative, celebrating each other and looking after each other.

A lot of the tools we use to build community are essentially tools for building a safety network for ourselves and those around us. Isolation is a key factor in burnout and building connections and networks is a powerful way to mitigate this.

It is also important to note that through community we co-create safety for each other. This is especially important in trying times. We know that in extreme weather events it is the quality of the connections not the access to services that ensures survival.

> **Questions to Ask:**
>
> - When have you felt most connected to community?
> - Who do you lean on in challenging times?
> - Who enables you to take meaningful action?
> - What does a thriving XR community look like?

Through Community Building We Generate Cultural Momentum To Meet Our Demands

We know that those in power are most afraid of us when they cannot spin our actions into a niche issue. When those on the street cannot be labelled as 'activists' but look like a cross section of society, that's when the government starts to get nervous.

Extinction Rebellion is at its core a community of action and hands down our strongest asset to empower people to take meaningful action is the community behind them.

This includes:

- Our Action Support teams that create safer spaces for actions to take place in and looks after those taking action.
- Our Arrestee and Legal teams and the wider community of support including CASP and RIPS who provide massive amounts of support for people taking action.
- Our Local Groups, Community Groups and any smaller networks of rebels who support each other through the network.

This is what community means for us.

> **Questions to Ask:**
>
> - What makes you feel resourced and supported to take meaningful action?
> - How do we create space in the movement for many types of people acting in many different ways?
> - How do we create space where other communities can act in ways that matter to them?

Frequently Asked Questions



- Does Community Building mean we’re not doing Actions?
- What does Community Building and Action look like?
- How does Community Building get us closer to our demands being met?
- What is a Community?
- What does Community Building mean in an XR context?
- What does Community Building ask us to do?
- I cannot engage with “Community Building” because of XYZ.
- How do I do this when I experience barriers to community?
- I don't see myself as a part of communities...

Does Community Building mean we’re not doing Actions?

Community Building fuels our ability to take action and talking action strengthens our community. They support each other, not as separate things but as a positive feedback loop.

AND

Community building is in itself a tool for change. By forging connections, identifying strengths and cultivating curiosity in our communities we create and grow power on our own terms. We divest from the pillars of power through communities withdrawing consent and coming up with ideas for the world we want.

What does Community Building and Action look like?

Our Actions are one of our strongest tools in building community! They bring us together in one place, with a shared purpose. We tell stories about our actions which define our community.

Community Building is one of our strongest tools for creating actions! Wider community support helps create inclusive and well supported actions. The insight, interests and issues local communities face bring new ideas and perspectives into our action planning, design and messaging spaces. Our local communities have shared causes that motivate them. By being part of these communities, as rebels, we can enhance our collective capacity to safely engage in more contentious action.

AND

The efforts of community citizens generate their own power and pressure which, through the addition of our assets, can amplify the impact and really drive change. Remember, it is the multiplicative effect of different groups (beyond the activist identity) that is a threat to the pillars of power, not many people joining one group.

How does Community Building get us closer to our demands being met?

Community Building is a tool to create change, it doesn't just sit alongside NVDA, it fuels and powers it, and in turn NVDA strengthens and empowers our communities.

To build the cultural momentum needed to meet our demands we need strong bases of community power and this means meeting, joining and building the communities we exist in. Community support can come from surprising places but we only uncover it if we start the conversation.

AND

Through communities we are able to create change for ourselves. Stepping into the power we can generate ourselves to meet the challenges we face. Instead of asking the government to meet our needs, we meet them ourselves.

What is a Community?

Community can mean a group of people who share aspects of identity, purpose, interest or experience. This could be a Local Group or a Circle within XR, a group that meet locally such as a sports club or allotment group, or it could be a group such as the wider LGBTQIA+ community or faith based communities.

Community can mean the space between individual change and governmental change where people collectively make change that matters to them. This could be a litter-picking group looking after their local environment, a tenant association supporting each other on an estate, or a group of friends hosting rent parties to support each other financially.

Community can be a verb, the things people do that build trust, connection, and collective action. This could be the sharing of food, the act of making inclusive decisions, or the process of sharing skills.

What does Community Building mean in an XR context?

Community Building is both an internal and an external practice for XR. We build community for ourselves really effectively through action and support. We can build on these skills and turn them

out into our wider communities.

Through identifying the strengths we have in our groups we can share those with confidence and humility. There are some spaces where we are welcomed as an XR unit, and others where we are better stepping in as community members with something to offer.

This can look like having a local band who drums at strikes, rallies and marches when asked for. It can look like holding banner making workshops for local actions to create space for the community to come together even when some of those people cannot be on the streets. Your Local Group may have strengths in face-painting, infrastructure like PA systems, storage space, poets and gardeners and musicians, all of which can be shared.

Once we know what strengths and assets we have in our Local Groups we can turn those from being focused on our work alone to being assets for the whole community.

What does Community Building ask us to do?

The current ask comes in three parts:

1. Recognise and Celebrate what we are already doing!
2. Get even more confident in what we do well.
3. Connect with opportunities to use those strengths to amplify the work of your wider community.

This can look like:

- Telling stories about what your local group has achieved, e.g. using block printing ahead of a banner drop.
- Finding out who and what skills made those achievements happen, e.g. who made the banner, how was it done.
- Nurture those assets by teaching others, e.g. open block printing trainings to the wider community using your experience.
- Discover ways to amplify the efforts of the local community using the assets of your local group. Step into the interconnectedness of justice, e.g. making connections with other groups and ask how they might value print blocks.

I cannot engage with “Community Building” because of XYZ.

This is a statement that many of us have heard or said ourselves. Although it may sound and feel like a “No” it can instead be treated as an opportunity.

We propose the following questions:

1. **Can you widen your definition of Community Building?**

Community Building is not a narrow ask requiring people to engage with people who make them feel unsafe or having to push beyond your limits to organise events and do everything yourself.

Community building can be small, it can be light, it can happen from your couch. It can revive rather than drain you, it can be the difference between feeling isolated in a sea of strangers and having true supporting and caring people around you to help in times of crisis.

2. **Is this barrier self made or self imposed?**

The knee-jerk reaction to say “Nope, I cannot do that, it's too much” is a common one. Whilst holding respect for our boundaries we should question this when it pops up. We often build narratives of cannot when the reality is that we don’t know how.

Community building can be scary, it often means stepping into vulnerability, but with tools like the Gift Circle and Personal Community Mapping we can make that step from a position of strength.

3. **Given this barrier, what assets to I have to work around or with it?**

There is no disputing that community building can be challenging, especially so if you have disabilities, negative experiences, and limitations on your capacity. There will be times where you will have to confront barriers and problem solve around them in order to show up. We’re not here to dispute or minimise the difficulty and frustration of adapting to a new set of circumstances. You are best placed to understand what you can and cannot do.

For Example

One of our rebels has an energy limiting condition which severely impacts her ability to leave the house. But she is still present and active in her communities:

- “I am very open about what I can and cannot do, and when attending things in physical space I will often act as a “basecamp” of sorts, holding space for people, starting conversations and linking people together while other activities happen around me. You will often find me at big actions, in my chair with tea and snacks and a group around me where people come and go”
- “When I am unable to leave the house, I am very active in group chats and focus on how I can best support people in doing whatever it is they are holding. I am quick to offer help where I can often through hype and encouragement, listening to people and distilling often overwhelming ideas into written plans, or just acting as a sounding board.”

4. **If the barrier is immovable, how can you support others in this work?**

Not every part of community building is for everyone, and that is okay, we need a diversity of tactics in this work. There will be some things you can get involved with, some things that you can adapt to contribute too, and there are some things you cannot do. Here, you can find those who are doing this work to support. Maybe your contribution to Community Building is in hyping and

supporting your friends in their efforts?

How do I do this when I experience barriers to community?

It’s very easy to fall into the trap of defining yourself by what you struggle to do. Given that we’ve explored the diverse nature of what community building can be, there is so much scope to adapt community building to something you can do!

This is not to say your struggle is your superpower, nor is it dismissing that community building is going to be that extra bit of a challenge for some people. What we are saying is you’ve got this!

Why are we so confident that rebels can contribute to community building?

- Your experience meeting challenges in a world not designed for you means you will have developed a set of skills perfect for bringing to community work.
- Similarly, you’re a natural problem solver!
- The fact that you have found this Rebel Toolkit page means that you are connected to the XR Community, a space where lots of people grappling questions such as these.This not only means you’re already great and finding community but there’s also an opportunity to learn from and collaborate with others who have a wealth of experiences. Feel free to reach out to our Community Building Reception Channel on Mattermost.
- You do not have to do this work perfectly. Nor does everything need to happen at once. People won’t forget you if you need to rest for a few days or weeks, and even a little bit of connecting with people goes a long way!
- Technology can be a boon. With a laptop and a mobile phone, community building can be done from the comfort (or discomfort) of your own bed.

I don't see myself as a part of communities...

A lot of our community connections are hiding in plain sight. We often don’t highlight them for what they are. A large part of Community Building is making the invisible visible and highlighting the strengths and connections we have.

Consider:

- Is XR your community? How many different communities within XR are you in or on the edges of?
- Do you have digital communities? Not all our support comes from our locations, maybe you have online groups, long distance friends, digital interests you engage in with people.
- Are you on the edge of communities? You don’t have to be the organiser or instigator of a community to be a part of it. And you don't have to be a regular to be valued by it.

Once you have identified the communities you are in, you can work to build and strengthen them with intentionality.

Remember that in times of hardship and crisis it is our community connections that predicate our survival. Who knows to check in on you and make sure you are okay, who can you lean on.

Request a Workshop!□□□□

We have 4 workshops, each overlap in different ways but the activities are repeatable and participants will have a different experience based on the group they are with and where they are in their community building journey.

Each workshop has an accompanying Zine pair which complement the content. The Zine providing highlights and reminders for those who have taken the workshop, and the workshops go deeper into the material introduced in the Zines!

Introduction to Community Building

Covers the basics of Community Building and how we use curiosity to create connection.

Session Notes:

This isn't a lecture on community building! The learnings here come from the experience not from the information given

Outline:

- **Introduction** (What is Community / Curiosity → Action Pathway)
- **Curiosity** (Best Memory & Positive/Negative Question Framing)
- **Connection at the Speed of Trust** (Gift Circle)
- **Action on Shared Points of Caring** (Build an Activity)
- **Round Up** (Reflect on the Why / Offer Resources)

Relevant Worksheets:

- Curiosity Questions
- Gift Circle
- Action on Shared Points of Caring

Key Takeaways:

- Start with curiosity to discover what is already there. And there is so much there!
- The way we frame questions is so important fo how we wish people to feel
- No one is a blank slate! Each person and community have strengths if you ask Planning activities from our strengths mean we are less reliant on outside help.

Intro.jpg

Community Mapping: The Basics

Discover what is happening in your communities through curiosity and mapping.

Session Notes:

Well balanced workshop with some self reflection, some whole group work and an outdoor mission. (Will need to take the weather into account)

Outline:

- **Introduction** (Be intentional & Curious)
- **Self Curiosity** (Personal Maps)
- **Community Curiosity** (Asset Mapping)
- **Round Up** (Get Playing / Offer Resources)

Relevant Worksheets:

- Personal Maps
- Asset Maps

Key Takeaways:

- No one is a blank slate & no area has nothing going on.
- Asking questions and listening are powerful tools to discover the strengths of an area or community.
- There are many different kinds of community maps each of which serve a different purpose - experiment and play!

Mapping.jpg

Turning Strengths into Action

Guides us through spotting our own strengths and mapping our community connections.

Session Notes:

This is the most speaker heavy workshop of the collection as most of the activities are guided reflection. To balance the energy we use the Gift Circle and break to build connections between participants and the Action activity to bring them together to use what they have discovered If you have more time, lengthen the Action activity and really challenge them to design something they can follow through on.

Outline:

- **Introduction** (Starting with Curiosity)
- **Strength Spotting** (Identity Mapping & Gift Circle)
- **Community Curiosity** (Personal Community Mapping)
- **Bringing it Together** (Action on Shared Points of Caring)
- **Round Up** (Sharing the Skills / Offer Resources)

Relevant Worksheets:

- Identity Mapping

- Gift Circle
- Personal Maps
- Action on Shared Points of Caring

Key Takeaways:

- No one is a blank slate!
- Starting with curiosity lets us discover what is already in the space!
- Planning activities from our strengths mean we are less reliant on outside help!

Strengths to Action.jpg

Community Curiosity

Invites groups to reflect on their community building practices through curiosity and learn to develop their own curiosity practice.

Session Notes:

This session works best when help with people who are already in community with each other but works just as well as a self reflection and then identifying the commonalities across different communities

Outline:

- **Intro** (Starting with Curiosity)
- **Community Curiosity** (Curiosity Questions)
- **Building Curiosity Questions** (Positive/Negative Question Framing)
- **Round Up** (Offer Resources)

Relevant Worksheets:

- Community Curiosity
- Curiosity Questions

Key Takeaways:

- Reflecting on what makes a positive community experience, which allows up to create those experiences for others
- How to craft positively framed curiosity questions
- That the “helper” hat worn in community work prompts us to define by deficit and creates a power imbalance. That it can lead to us serving communities as opposed to being in community.

Curiosity.jpg

To request a workshop drop into our Reception Channel on Mattermost, or email us at: CommunityConnectors@protonmail.me.

These workshops are available to any group interested - Local Groups, Community Groups, Regions, Nations etc.

We are open to travelling to you, or hosting online! We will work with you to make these workshops what you need!

About Community Building ℹ

Want to learn more about Community Building? Check out these pages!

□□ Processes of Community Building We Do Well! □□

Community Building is something each of us already does, in our teams, our Local Groups and beyond. You should be able to recognise yourself and those you know in the processes laid out here.

Key Processes of Community Building

The following 13 Processes of Community Building were identified in the research stage of the 2025 Strategy Process. Each can be clearly seen across a variety of spaces in XR and all of them come together to create our collective community.

1. Trust Building & Mending
2. Clear Communication
3. Connection Building
4. Creating Permeable Boundaries
5. Shared Purpose
6. Creating Safe Spaces
7. Inclusive Decision Making
8. Creative Expression
9. Sharing Ideas and Skills
10. Building Common Culture
11. Wellbeing and Rest
12. Negotiating Effectiveness
13. Celebration and Acknowledgement

We will look at these processes each in turn, exploring where we do them for ourselves within XR, where we do them to bridge and build community externally, and what we can do to strengthen that which we already do.

---

1. Trust Building & Mending

We build trust between each other, within our structure, between XR and our allies, and we build an external sense of trust in the movement. Communities are built at the speed of trust!

This Can Look Like:

- Upholding our Principles & Values and creating Group Agreements **and sticking to them** .
- Our consistent style of facilitation, creating space for everyone to be heard.
- Trust in stewards when in stressful action situations.
- Taking the time to develop friendships with those you are taking action with.
- Debriefs, feedback loops, and acting on that feedback.

And Externally:

- Relationship building with other groups, forging connections and taking action together.
- Community Assemblies demonstrate ways of being that trust everyone with decision making power.

When we are in community with people there are always going to be mistakes made and moments where trust is broken. How we come together after these missteps is so important, suggestions below:

- Active listening spaces
- Short feedback loops
- Avoiding blaming and shaming
- Concrete action to avoid repeating mistakes

> **Questions**
>
> - What do you and your groups currently do to build trust?
> - How do you approach each other when trust is broken?

---

2. Clear Communication

Figuring out how to communicate clearly is challenging, especially in large, diverse groups, especially in spaces where participation and membership fluctuates.

Too many methods of communication creates confusion and with too few people don't know what is going on.

XR uses a variety of structures and processes to communicate internally and externally. When these work well the work of activism is easier. However, when these miss the mark trust erodes

and confusion/misinformation spreads.

It's a balance! We need enough clear communication channels but not too many as to overwhelm people!

This Can Look Like:

- Group Agreements for the use of Group Chats so that important information isn't lost in the noise.
- Reliable information carriers through the movement such as Regional Coordinators in the Hive or Gardeners.
- Meeting Facilitation when done well enables clear and effective communication between groups.
- Being open to altering communication processes and styles to meet a diversity of needs.

And Externally:

- A very clear visual identity and message.
- Outreach stands and leaflets creating opportunities for conversations.

Remember listening is also a part of clear communication.

> **Questions**
>
> - How does your group communicate in person and digitally? Does this change on actions?
> - How does your group address misunderstandings? Do these happen often?
> - As a group, how do you communicate with the wider world?

---

3. Connection Building

Connection to people, an organisation, or an idea comes before trust. This happens person to person and at a human scale.

Connection is also how people maintain trust between each other and this works best through face to face time spent together and shared experience. Connection can also be the practical links between circles and out to the wider world.

It all starts with **curiosity**!

This Can Look Like:

- Welcoming and integrating new group members.

- Spending social time together such as sharing meals, going for walks or celebrating birthdays.
- Finding new contexts to meet people in. Stepping out of "work friend" and "XR friend" labels and blurring those lines.
- Taking collective action on what the group cares about.

And Externally:

- Solidarity with other groups' protests.
- Building relationships with other groups through intentional cooperation and co-creation.
- Identifying the Community Connectors in your local area - Who do you ask if you need help locally?
- Your friends and other relationships! All our personal connections exist on the edge of our XR communities.

A good starting place is to hold a Gift Circle.

> **Questions**
>
> - How do you build friendship networks outside of activism?
> - What does being connected to a broader community outside of your group look like?

---

4. Creating Permeable Boundaries

The boundary of any group or community should be permeable, that is it should be easy to join, leave, and return. This creates a welcoming space for new people, acknowledges the complexities in our lives, and allows the sharing of skills, experiences and talents. Also, the boundaries that create the group identity should be clear, that is if there are reasons for denying access or behaviours the group will not accept that needs to be well communicated. We welcome everyone, and every part of everyone, but not every behaviour.

Considering group boundaries, and how people experience them, is key to creating an accessible and welcoming space. Some people may have more barriers to participation than others and if a group is homogeneous then someone entering who does not fit that description will face challenges the group cannot see.

This Can Look Like:

- Welcoming your friends and connections into XR spaces and deliberately building connections beyond our friendship networks.

- Having varying settings where someone can engage with the group, that may be Drumming, Banner Making, Action Planning, Community Meals, Workshops, Actions.
- Intentional Access and Inclusion work opens our spaces to more potential members.
- Intro to XR talks, our integrators, and trainings create a springboard for new people to get stuck in.
- The Volunteer Role Board creates pathways to enter XRUK spaces.

And Externally:

- Our group members typically are not *just* in XR, they are in a host of other organisations also, blurring those lines and varying commitments through the year.
- Through solidarity actions we blur the boundaries between groups and show up with more collective strength as a larger community of place and purpose.

By opening our arms wide and building connection and trust with our local communities and other communities of Identity, Interest, Practice, Place and Action we start to create that cultural momentum!

> **Questions**
>
> - How do you welcome people into the group? How do you welcome people back if they leave?
> - Who is the group visible to? How do people find you physically or digitally?

---

5. Shared Purpose

Our communities are typically Communities of Action, it is our shared sense of purpose that ties us together. This shared purpose is held between our Demands, Principles & Values and Strategy, and the details shift with campaigns, localities and time. Purpose can also be smaller and more goal focused and co-created by a group.

In XRUK circles this shared purpose is consensually distributed by mandates through the organism using our Self Organising System. This allows rebels working in seemingly distant parts of the movement to know that they are all pushing in the same direction.

We can see the same distribution of roles towards a common goal in our Local Groups, although this is usually more fluid as local campaigns ebb and flow.

This Can Look Like:

- Sharing our Demands and P&Vs through intro talks and welcoming others to share our purpose.
- Our decentralised network which allows groups to work towards common goals in ways that matter to them.
- Big Rebellions where we show our collective power, showing each other we are not acting alone but in tandem with thousands.
- Taking time to come together to vision the future we want to co-create.

And Externally:

- Local Campaigns such as river or road campaigns where XR doesn't always lead but brings valuable skills.
- Our messaging being clear allows us to share our mission and goals with the wider world.

By finding where purpose overlaps we can find fertile ground to build community and co-create actions with other groups.

> **Questions**
>
> - What are the specific aims and goals of your group?
> - What moments have felt most purposeful to your group?
> - How are the group goals decided? What opportunities are there to make that process more inclusive?

---

6. Creating Safe Spaces

Different people have different ideas of what a Safe Space looks like. The process of negotiating, adapting, and creating such spaces generates understanding of each other and community care.

We aim to create spaces where it is safe to share our ideas, to be authentic, and also to disagree with each other. We also interact in various different spaces: In meetings, socially, online, in action etc. In each of these contexts safety can mean different things.

This Can Look Like:

- Creating and updating Group Agreements so everyone is working from the same understanding.
- Acting on issues quickly and carefully as they arise.
- Meeting access needs, held collectively, with everyone taking responsibility.
- Actively listening to each other’s experiences with an aim to break down barriers to inclusion in ways that matter to individuals.

And Externally:

- When we take space at actions we create vibrant and welcoming spaces for people to explore and exist in.
- When those of us less marginalised use our relative proximity to power to stand between our siblings and the disproportionate violence of the state.

Noting also that safety doesn't mean free from discomfort. We look to challenge but to do so with kindness, compassion and understanding.

> **Questions**
>
> - Who is most at home in your spaces and who might struggle?
> - What do group members need from each other to feel safe in a meeting / action / social environment or digital space?
> - If a space becomes unsafe for someone how does the group change it?

---

7. Inclusive Decision Making

Communities and individuals within them make decisions all the time, about what they care about and how they act. These can be made in hundreds of different ways.

For a community to be inclusive, decision making processes need to be too. Being part of a community with strong inclusive decision making practices supports individuals to make more communal and less individualised decisions in general.

How our decision making processes adapt and change to the needs of the community participating in them is important.

This Can Look Like:

- By using consent and consensus appropriately we create pathways forward that everyone feel are safe to try without getting caught in arguing for what may feel best for each person.
- Listening to quieter voices and being aware of unintentional hierarchies in the space.
- Through careful facilitation and the IDM process we are able to make challenging decisions in a way that hears everyone's voice and finds a safe enough way forward.
- Finding ways to make group decisions transparent and clearly communicated especially to those who weren't in the room when they were made.

And Externally:

- Holding People's Assemblies in local areas can share the experience of collective decision making.
- Building active listening into Assembly spaces brings everyone's voice into the mix.

Decision making in the everyday life of a community can be seen as co-creating democracy for each other all the time.

> **Questions**
>
> - How does your group make simple / challenging decisions?
> - How does your group include new people in decision making?
> - What is an example of a decision your group made well? What made it a good process?

---

8. Creative Expression

The ability to be creative is important for any community. Creativity is integral to expressing culture, generating ideas, interest and engagement, as well as self expression and imagining the future.

Creativity is not just about artistic expression but creativity in expression of views and ways of thinking. Creativity can be found in how we plan, how we choose targets, and how inventive we are with our tactics.

Part of creative expression is self expression too. Holding a variety of ways to express creativity can make a community more inclusive and allow space for sharing and experimenting with ideas.

This Can Look Like:

- Red Rebels and Rhythms are creative activities with a low barrier to entry.
- Action design and diversity of tactics are nothing if not inventive!
- Creative activities in preparation for action such as banner making, flag printing or creating extravagant costumes.
- Using creativity to make our spaces fun, playful and a place people want to stay in.

And Externally:

- Print Blocking as Outreach and Engagement.
- Paint the Streets and Subvertising.
- The strong artistic identity of XR in every action we take.

It is only through our creativity that we will survive.

> **Questions**
>
> - How does your group express itself creatively?

> - What forms of creativity are present already in your group?
> - How could your group encourage creative thinking?

---

9. Sharing Ideas and Skills

When someone joins a community they bring their skills and ideas with them whether they choose to share them or not. People do not arrive as blank slates to be moulded into rebels.

Sharing skills and ideas is a form of power sharing in communities. The ability to do so with respect and trust that they will not be misused is important in mitigating power. The more our skills, tasks and knowledge is shared between people the stronger and more resilient our communities become.

An essential part of skill and idea sharing is having a safe space to share and learn.

This Can Look Like:

- Our many workshops including: Action Planning, Media Training, Block Printing, Red Rebels, NVDA, De-escalation, Stewarding & Wellbeing.
- Creating spaces at actions, events and gatherings for people to upskill themselves in ways that interest them.
- Our culture of DIY scrappiness allows us to experiment with new things, giving each other permission to do things imperfectly.

And Externally:

- Community Assemblies as places to share ideas.
- Platforms like the Rebellion Academy and Rebel Toolkit are bountiful resources which are not gatekept by the movement.
- Other communities have valuable skills and experiences we can also learn from, don't be afraid to ask!

To build power in our communities sharing skills is vital, if only one person knows how something is done that is a clear vulnerability to address.

> **Questions**
>
> - Are there people in the group who easily share their skills and knowledge?
> - Do members of your group have unexpected skills?
> - Who in the wider community can you ask for help from?

---

10. Building Common Culture

Our culture is the stories we tell, the visual and musical language we share, the behaviours we endorse and exclude, the actions we take, and the visions of the future we share. Belonging is hard to quantify but it is an experience born of participating in and co-creating shared culture. A key part of this are the stories we tell!

These stories can be a shared mythology or memory as well as expectations for behaviour and imagining about the future. The visual, verbal, musical languages a community uses are as important as the stories themselves.

Who has the ability to tell the stories and build them says a lot about the community. As does how people are able to express their individual identity as part of the whole community.

This Can Look Like:

- Our meeting style builds our culture and is so different to what we find elsewhere.
- Defining the boundaries of our communities and being explicit in the behaviors we accept into our spaces.
- Our Principles & Values underpin all the activities we do together.
- Constantly telling our stories of Rebellion! Sharing our experiences of finding the movement, telling stories of actions and campaigns, building that shared memory.

And Externally:

- Our strong visual (and musical) language adds to our story and speaks to a clear culture within our spaces.
- Our messaging is the story we tell to the communities that interact with us either on social media, in news coverage or in our other communities.
- We share our culture every time we claim space and can be seen through conversation, music, art, action and ambition.

Everyone in our community is involved in creating our common culture and generating a sense of belonging.

> **Questions**
>
> - Are there ways of doing things that are unique to this group?
> - How long did it take you to feel a sense of belonging with this group?
> - What is the "Most XR" thing you have ever seen and what made it so?

---

11. Wellbeing and Rest

In extreme weather events such as heatwaves it is the quality of connections that a person has, not their access to services that ensures survival[1]. Joining and being a valued member of a community is not limited to moments of crisis, and communities can in fact build alternatives to crises.

For a community of climate activists the role that communities play in enabling wellbeing and rest for its members has to be taken very seriously. Burnout is a major issue in activism and the activities activism demands of individuals can be very extractive. Being intentional as a community to value wellbeing and rest of members is key.

This Can Look Like:

- Simply checking in with each other.
- The importance with which we hold Action Wellbeing which sets us apart from other groups.
- Socialising as a group (not *just* taking action together) builds on those relationships and creates the trust to lean on each other in our down time and not just in high intensity moments.
- Taking the time to nest Actions within a more regenerative cycle of rest, planning, debrief and learning.
- The trust we build in our communities allows us to take a step back and knowing things will continue to be held.
- Finding ways to take intentional breaks from the work of activism whilst also holding on to the supportive community aspects of the group.

And Externally:

- Action Support and Wellbeing are always visible when we are on the street, demonstrating how we prioritise our physical and psychological safety on actions.
- We model our community care, person-to-person, when we step out of the individualistic mindset and lean on each other in times of need.

So much of activism can be framed around sacrifice and heroism, but is this what we want? We can also frame it around joy and rest and giving each other the permission to do things differently, sustainably and regeneratively.

> **Questions**
>
> - How does this group look out for the wellbeing of its members?
> - Rest can take many forms for different people; what is the best way for you to rest in different circumstances?
> - How does the group make room for grief and all the emotions that come with caring about the climate and ecological emergency?

---

12. Negotiating Effectiveness

Communities create measures of success for themselves: long and short term goals against which their efforts are measured - **success in stories not just numbers**.

An action might be considered effective if there is a marked change in activities of the target, or because loads of people turned up, or because it got a lot of press attention, which measure do we choose as the most effective? And who gets to choose which successes are shouted about?

All these measures of effectiveness are negotiated all the time without even realising it.

This Can Look Like:

- Well-facilitated meetings to create the space for negotiating effectiveness.
- Hearing and gathering various potential measures of success.
- Being clear on the purpose of an action to be able to pull out the most relevant success measures.
- Being intentional with the metrics of success we use, making space for the qualitative.
- Choosing a success case that your group can actually influence.
- Avoiding All-or-nothing thinking by using frameworks such as the Good-Better-Best Model.

And Externally:

- Telling our own stories of success through our media channels.
- Our past press coverage really showed the effectiveness of the movement in starting and changing the conversation on Climate.
- The declaration of Climate Emergencies and the changing of laws show the effectiveness of Climate Activism and Communities of Action.

As communities we get to define what success and effectiveness mean to us. It will look different across the movement but with us all taking positive steps in our shared purpose we will continue to create change toward our collective vision.

> **Questions**
>
> - Who decides whether an activity is effective or not?
> - What is the most effective action your group has taken part in or organised?
> - How does your group share its successes, and learn from its failures?

---

13. Celebration and Acknowledgement

Celebrating and acknowledging the work of members of a group, not just the wins, is an easy way to build community in every circle or group. And beyond this, celebrating the existence of group

members regardless of the work they offer.

In doing so people learn from each other and understand each other's strengths, not just the issues they face. This is important as it is often the failures that stick in the mind and define a group. A smooth running experience or process is one that can go unnoticed and therefore it is most important to recognise it: it does so due to the work of others!

This works similarly when connecting with other people and groups outside of XR, appreciating their work or seeking understanding of it is a great way to build connection and community with others.

This Can Look Like:

- Sharing the successes of your group both within your group and with the wider community.
- Acknowledging the work done and not just the wins.
- Post Action Socials! Groups may go out for a drink or meal, or be welcomed back from larger actions by those who couldn't go.
- Remembering and celebrating birthdays in the group.
- Many of our actions themselves have celebration built into them!

And Externally:

- Acknowledging and celebrating the wins of groups we are in community and solidarity with.
- Highlighting any positive steps forward in our media feeds and reminding each other that progress is rarely perfect but it is worth celebrating.

Each and every one of us on this journey is worth celebrating.

> **Questions**
>
> - Who does the work of keeping your community together?
> - How do you celebrate each other in your group?
> - Is there someone you want to thank for the work that they do?

---

[1]: "Fatal Isolation: The Devastating Paris Heat Wave of 2003" by Richard C. Keller.

□□ Community Building / Mobilisation / Alliance Building □□

Community Building is one set of tools we can use to engage with people. It is not the only set of tools, it is simply one we have not foregrounded in XR before.

There are different ways for people to make change in the world. Sometimes these seem like they are competing with each other but multiple approaches exist in our society at any one time. These are three approaches that are often present at the same time.

There are a lot of similarities between these approaches but this table is focused on their differences and at the extreme of those differences.

Community Building	Mobilising	Alliance Building
How do we get people to step into their power to make change together?	How do we get as many people on the street as possible for an event?	How do we get as many organisations working on this as possible?
How do we get people to act in ways that matter to them?	How do we get people to be part of us?	How do we get organisations working on the same cause?
Everyone has power to make change when we act together that is amplified.	Power and the ability to make change lies with people who have power over us and and we must take it from them to have any of our own.	Power is organisational, organisations have power to make change people don’t.
Everyone has answers to this we want to hear yours.	We have the answers come with us.	Organisations not individuals have the answers.
This issue is really big and scary. How can you help in your own way?	This issue is really big and scary we all need to do this thing	This issue is really big and scary how do organisations all work on it in their ways?
People act in lots of ways to make a difference on this issue, not all with us. How do we connect.	People not acting with us are not taking this issue seriously so must be persuaded to do so.	Organisations not acting on this issue do not care how can more organisations take action together to make a difference.
We are co-creators of change.	Change happens to us but we can influence it.	Change happens to us but organisations can influence it.

Community Building	Mobilising	Alliance Building
Abundance - people have the skills knowledge and experience to make change.	Scarcity - why don’t we have enough people to make change.	Institutionalisation - institutions have the skills, knowledge and influence to make change.
Be curious about the outsider.	Be attractive to the outsider.	Be an organisation.
How do we share compelling stories?	How do we tell a compelling story?	How do organisations tell compelling stories?
How do we share our skills to act in ways that matter to us?	How do we upskill people to act?	How do we get organisations to act?
How do we build networks?	How do we build members?	How do we build strong alliances between organisations?
People care about the things that matter to them.	People need to be made to care about this issue.	Organisations need to care about this issue.
We generate our own power we need to share it to make more.	Power is finite and must be taken from others.	Organisations hold power to influence bigger institutions.
Start with what’s strong.	Start with the problem.	Start with structures.
We must go to where people are.	People must come to us.	It is the known names that count.
How do we care for each other.	How do we extract what we can from people.	How do we extract from organisations.
Measure of success = connections.	Measure of succes = numbers.	Measure of success = structure.
Looks for connectors to build connections.	Looks for leaders to bring followers.	Looks to organisations to build structures.
People in connection = change	People = mass = change	People in organisations = power = change
People co-create change, democracy, justice, safety and care.	Institutions make change and create democracy, justice, safety and care.	organisations make change and create democracy, justice, safety and care.
Ecosystem.	Our system.	Organisational systems.
Local and everywhere.	National importance top down.	Top down organisation to organisation.

Community Building Tools □□

Tools and Resources! Things to print and share, events to organise, and tools to play with! Get creative with them and let us know what works well!

□□ Community Maps □□ - To Understand our Communities

What are Community Maps?

Community Maps are ways for us to understand what is happening in our communities. Here we will demonstrate the following maps:

1. **Personal Maps** - to understand how we interact with our communities.
2. **Associational Maps** - to understand who is doing things in our communities.
3. **Physical Maps** - to understand our local landscapes.
4. **Action Maps** - to understand how we take action in our local landscapes.
5. **Community Portraits** - to understand who holds your local communities together.

Community Mapping is a tool which guides us in identifying the strengths, assets and resources within our Local Areas.

For us this means knowing who we are talking to, what is already happening, how to reach people, and how to be as effective as we can.

---

1. Personal Maps

How is your community life?

□ **Activity** □

- Put a dot in the middle of a page, this is you.
- Draw a line off it for every group you are part of - write what that group is. Can be vague here if you want to be.
- Think of all the roles you hold, personal, professional - does this add more lines?
- Think of the hobbies you have - does this add more lines?
- Think of all the interaction you have in a week, are you a regular at a coffee shop? Do you chat to shop assistant ever saturday? can you add more lines?

Personal Map.jpg

---

2. The Life of a Neighborhood

A neighbourhood is made up of many associations, both formal and informal. An association is any group of people who gather to do things. It could be a chess club, a group of friends who go to the pub on a Friday night, or a local Scouts or Guides group.

- What associations exist in your Local Area?
- What brings people together?
- Don't forget the informal associations!

Consider:

- Communities of Interest
- Communities of Place
- Communities of Identity
- Communities of Practice
- Communities of Action

Associational Life

---

3. Physical Maps

Physical Maps look not at the connections between people but at the geography of the local area. The way communities interact is connected to their place. Some of our towns have lots of potential meeting spaces and promote connection whereas others have a lack of third space where groups of people can meet to talk.

Notice Boards

- Where are they?
- Who looks after them?
- Who is using them and why?
- Are your posters on them?
- Are there any informal boards?

Notice Boards

Meeting Places

Where do people actually meet?

- Free Places
- Bumping Spaces
- Third Spaces
- Spaces for specific Communities

How do you interact with these spaces? Do your actions interact with them?

Meeting Places

Neighborhood Assets

The assets of your neighbourhood are anything that exists there which enriches the experience of being in that space. They could be as simple as having wildflowers planted on the verge for pollinators or as complex as regular Community Assemblies where the neighbourhood discusses how to spend money.

Consider the following assets:

- Associations
- Places
- People
- Institutions
- Exchanges
- Stories

Below is an example of the Neighbourhood Assest identified by locals on King Street, Norwich.

Asset	Description	Examples
Associations	Any group of people coming together to do a thing	- King Street Neighbourhood Association - Wild King Street - Book Club - Save Wensum Lodge Adult Learning Centre Group - Carrow House Artist Studios - Clubs at the Wensum Sport Centre
Places	Locations where people can meet	- Skate Park - Wensum Sport Centre - St Julian’s Church - The Last Pub Standing - Butterfly Cafe - St Peter’s Churchyard

Asset	Description	Examples
People	All the gifts people bring to the neighbourhood such as skills, knowledge, talents and experiences	- Creative window displays in houses - The existence of the associations - Whatsapp Group - Litter pickers - People who adopt the planter boxes - Gardeners who plant the planter boxes - Friendly local business owners/employees
Institutions	- Organisations that provide services for the neighbourhood	- Kings Centre (Methodist Church) - National Writing Centre - St Julian’s Church - Wensum Sport Centre - St John’s Ambulance Training Centre
Exchanges	Any time something is exchanged such as skills, ideas, objects, money or alternative currencies. (Noting that if a monetary exchange is not a local business it becomes extractive rather than a local asset)	- The Last Pub Standing - Yoga Studio - Corner Shop - Butterfly Cafe - Bicycle Links (skills/training) - Book Club - Neighbours making Planters - Whatsapp Group - Noticeboards
Stories	Things people say about the neighbourhood	- Blue Plaques - Built Heritage - medieval buildings - Generational stories about Waterfront - St Julien shrine and stories - Marking of old rivers in pavement - Artwork in windows - Noticeboard

---

4. Action Maps

Where do local actions happen - why?

- City Centre
- Target
- Seat of Power

Consider:

- How do the locations change with the type of action?
- How have locations changed with time?
- Where might they be in the future?

Action Map of Cambridge

5. Community Portraits

People are the unit of Community

- What is strong?
- Who connects people?
- Who would you ask for help?
- Who do they know?
- Who tells the best stories?

Are you a part of these networks?

I run an afteer school club.png

Lets Get Mapping!

- Know your People and be Known
- Know who to ask
- Know where to put a Poster
- Know your Local Place

> **□□ Remember □□**
>
> The Legal System takes our community seriously. **So should we!**

□□□□□ Group Activities □□□ □□ - To Build Our Own Community

Community is something we build and create for each other.

Here we have outlined a few examples of what you could do in your group to intentionally build the Community.

- The Gift Circle
- Campfire Stories
- Local Imagery
- Posters!

---

1. The Gift Circle

What is it?

A tool to better understand the individuals in your group, what they are interested in and the skills and experiences they bring to the group. It can be used online although works best in physical space right before a break, which then allows participants to approach each other with curiosity.

Outline:

Four questions to be asked to the group in rounds, quick enough that people cannot elaborate too much.

1. What could you teach someone?
2. What could you show someone?

3. What do you know a lot about?
4. What are you passionate about?

Then invite the group to take a break so people can approach each other to ask follow up questions on anything they picked up on.

How does this Build Community

It is a great starter activity for new groups looking to build community, making visible the strengths, skills and interests already within the group. It can also be used when people from different communities are coming together to work on a project.

Even with established groups it helps to build connection between group members who may only interact with each other in one context. By continually coming back to our passions and what is strong in our community we can start to plan activities and action from a place of strength.

The Gift Circle is also a good starting point when looking to share skills with each other. Knowing what you could possibly learn from those you are already connected to.

An Example

1. **What could you teach someone?**
- I can teach you to mend your trousers
2. **What could you show someone?**
- I can show you where to get the best gluten free and vegan banana bread in Norwich
3. **What do you know a lot about?**
- I know a lot about native plants
4. **What are you passionate about?**
- I am passionate about Zine making as art and protest

---

2. Campfire Stories

What is it?

An invitation to tell our stories.

This can be structured or unstructured, it can be around a literal campfire or at a community meal, or any other way you can imagine!

Outline:

Sometimes storytelling emerges naturally when you create the environment for it. Sometimes asking people outright to tell their stories helps.

Some potential spring boards:

- How did you join Extinction Rebellion?
- What is your best XR memory?
- What is your proudest XR moment?

How does this Build Community

As communities, we are the stories we tell about ourselves. Through storytelling we share what it means to be a part of this community and what connects us together.

We build our common culture through the art of storytelling. It is the overlap in our stories, the shared experiences and how we remember them that build our sense of community.

---

3. Local Imagery

What is it?

Flexing our creativity and individuality by designing visuals that are unique to our groups. Every XR group is unique in place, style and what matters most to them. Local imagery may focus on local campaigns, landmarks, or artistic flair and style. When we come together in big actions it is wonderful to see the diversity in our creative visions!

Local Visuals

Here are some examples including:

- XR Grenoble featuring a cable car,
- XR East of England with the sun rising in the East
- XR Marseille with the skyline

Outline:

Consider where the artistic and creative energy is in your group. This may be with an Arts Working Group or it may be shared between everyone.

Create time and space to play with visuals, materials and designs. Don't be afraid to experiment!

Here are some more examples of the really creative directions Local Groups have taken:

Local Imagery Photos

How does this Build Community

How we express ourselves creatively is a huge part of building our XR community. Simply the process of getting out the art materials and sitting together to create builds community whether it is painting placards or designing local print blocks.

Coming together as a group to design visuals that are unique to you, your place, and what matters to your group helps to bind you together as a group. In creating group imagery and identity we create a common culture for the group. This creates a real sense of belonging.

To be able to adorn our drums and jackets with patches and stickers that mark us as part of the group ties us together.

To go on large marches and rebellions as a group with a clear visual identity such as the Oxford Bees or the Hedgehogs in the North really demonstrates our diversity as a wider community all working towards a shared purpose in ways that matter to us.

---

4. Create Local Posters

What is it?

Designing, printing, and displaying physical posters is a great tool to build our communities. We can use them to share our message in a clear and striking way. We can use them to invite new people into our spaces. We can use them to tell stories and inspire action.

Outline:

First, consider the purpose of the poster. Is it to invite people to your group's meetings? Is it to advertise an event? Is it a call to action such as switching banks?

How are you going to make the ask as simple as possible? Can you put a map to your meeting space on the poster? Can you add a QR code to scan? Is it clear what the ask is?

- What's the Ask?
- Is there a Location?
- When is it? Date & Time
- How do people find out more?

Now, where are you going to put the posters so people can see them? Do you have a map of your local Notice Boards? You want to make the most of your printing costs so where do people stop to look at posters? Think about where we stop moving - bus stops, bathroom stalls, traffic lights.

Local Posters

How does this Build Community

Posters allow us to share our work with the wider community inviting them in and including them in our events, action and meetings. They also clearly communicate what is going on, allowing people to step in and out of interaction with the group, you may notice the same faces popping up!

Poster making can be a creative opportunity, to make something that catches the eye! There is scope to share artistic skills as well!

Make it Super Simple!

Poster making can have a very low barrier to entry.
Collect:
- A4 Paper
- Coloured Pens & Pencils or Paints!
- A Photocopier
- Some enthusiastic Rebels

You can spend an evening together around a table with some snacks and everyone makes their own version of a poster advertising the meeting, how to get there, and why they love to go.

With the photocopier everyone can leave that session with 50 posters to put up in town!

Some of our best community building tools are simple, scrappy and inexpensive!

Does your group do something that belongs on this list? Let your Regional Gardener know and it may end up here!

□□ Community Activities □□ - To Share with Our Wider Communities

Community building asks us to identify the strengths we have in our group and share them with the wider community. This can look like holding events for the community to attend such as banner making workshops, or responding to asks from other groups such as bringing drums to a rally.

Think about what you as a group can offer and make those offerings visible! Here we have a few examples:

- Pop-Up Spaces
- Banner Making
- Block Printing
- Beginner Drumming Sessions
- Zine Workshop

---

1. Pop-Up Spaces

What is it?

Any temporary space we create as a group. Stalls, actions, talks and exhibitions are all examples of spaces we create that pop-up in the community space!

These are the spaces we create in which people can interact with us, where conversations are started and ideas shared.

It is in these spaces that we begin to create, communicate and invite people into our visions of the world we want. Through the way we act, the care we show and the curiosity for those who step in to visit or join.

How does this Build Community

Every interaction within the wider community is a potential connection. Every connection adds to the network. And the more interconnected our communities are the stronger we become. It is only through conversation that we learn who our community conectors are, that we discover the hidden talents of our neighbours and the passions that drive each of us.

30.08.24_Upgrde Democracy_Windsor_Oil Slick_Gareth Morris-3.jpeg

---

2. Banner Making

What is it?

Banner making workshop is a space where members of any group can come to make banners, flags and placards for an upcoming action.

Outline:

You will need:

- A space to host the workshop
- Newspaper and an old sheet to protect surfaces
- Fabric
- Paints (acrylic or fabric paint) & Tubs
- Brushes
- Letter templates, print blocks or stencils

You can also consider having eyelets to add and a sewing machine to hem the edges either before or after painting. Remind everyone to wear scrappy clothes or bring an apron.

From this point it's up to you what you create. It may be XR themed or it may be for another group's event, or for a campaign!

More information and graphics for banner making can be found on the Banners page.

How does this Build Community

Banner printing creates a shared purpose that can be realised quickly and through simple tasks that can be done with little teaching. There is space for people to share tasks and being simple there is space for conversation and connection.

There is very little teaching involved in banner making so once someone learns how to do it they can easily pass it on to others and become a teacher or designer of some wonderful banners!

Norwich Banner

---

3. Block Printing

What is it?

Block printing stands are a fantastic offering of our skills into the community. They invite people to have fun in a creative way and connect.

Outline:

You will need:

- Print Blocks
- Swatches or clothes to print on
- Foam roller & acrylic sheet
- Ink
- Lots of old newspapers

All the information needed to run an effective print stall can be found here: Block Printing by the Art Blockers.

How does this Build Community

By creating a small task that can be done with the hands with very little teaching required space is created fo conversation, connection and the sharing of stories. The act of creating together also brings people together by experimenting with ideas.

There is potential for the expression of both individual and shared identity in wearing patches and printing clothes.

4. Beginner Drumming Session

What is it?

A drumming workshop for beginners is a great offering and entry point into the thriving community of Rhythms.

It is also a great offering of skills to the community as our bands support not just XR actions but a wide range of events that happen locally, showing solidarity and care for other groups.

Outline:

You will need:

- A collection of Drums
- Ear Defenders!
- A space where making noise is not going to be a problem
- A whistler helps but isn't absolutely necessary

Equipment List
Drums: Bass, Mid, High, Repinique, Snare **Backpack**: Agogo bells, Tamborim, Shaker, Ear Defenders, Beaters, Straps for Drums

A session for beginner drummers is fairly easy to hold. Start off learning a simple rhythm like Funk and go from there.

You can find more resources and contact XR Rhythms here: https://xrrhythms.uk

How does this Build Community

The low barrier into drumming and our Rhythms spaces creates fun entry points for new members, and space where new connections can be built.

Our Rhythms spaces really prioritise the creation of safe and inclusive space for our communities and by consistently showing up in solidarity to events organised by other groups we show are commitment to the work and purpose that exists between these groups.

01.11.24 - Insure Our Survival Birmingham - Vladimir Morozov-19.jpg

---

5. Zine Workshop

What is it?

A creative workshop that allows people to express themselves in many different ways! Zines have a long history in activism and are a great, low budget tool we can use to share ideas, get people thinking.

Holding a Zine Workshop invites community members to consider the skills, interests and passions they have that they may wish to share in a new creative way.

Outline:

You will need:

- Some old magazines, scissors & glue
- Paints, pens, pencils
- A4 paper
- Photocopier

Either around a table or scattered on the floor, let people create whatever they want! It may be an Art Zine where they draw on all the pages, maybe they create a comic book, maybe a workshop outline people can run, maybe a collection of poems or essays on a topic. The possibilities are endless.

Make time to scan, photocopy and share the zines people have made. Maybe take a few away with you to give to friends. Some notice boards have areas for flyers and zines - share them even wider.

Zine Folding

How does this Build Community

Zines are a fantastic way to share information, ideas and resources! They are also great tools for artists, poets and writers to share tasters of their work. Encouraging people to express themselves creatively.

A workshop like this really allows a window into the skills, interests and assets in your local community. From simply socialising in such a space you now know who the artists are, who the writers are, who can offer specific skills, and what people are passionate about! This in many ways can be used as a form of gift circle.

Here are some examples of zines:

Example Zines

Pre-Action Activities - To Weave Community Building into Actions

When we have a group of people there are two directions in which we can build community. We can build our community for ourselves, so before an action this looks like building trust with those you are taking action with and strengthening the skills of your group. And we can build community with those around us, this looks like engaging with others in the area you are taking action and building connections with others that care about the issue you are taking action on.

Strengthening Action Community

This is something XR does very well! We have been doing it for years and are experts.

Here are some examples of how we do this:

- **Pre-Action Trainings**
  - Prepare for Action
  - Know Your Rights
- **Creative Workshops**
  - Banner Making
  - Drumming Workshop
- **Social Events**
  - Group Dinners
  - Pub Trips

Building Local Relationships

Building relationships in the places we are taking action not only develops our local networks and support structures but also allows us to start conversations about what matters to people. Through curiosity and forming connections at the speed of trust we can discover what people care about and create actions on those shared points of caring.

Talks

Holding talks and events locally creates a hook to bring people in. They don't have to be XR specific, you can bring in guest speakers from other organisations to platform them in your local area, or find topics that matter to people locally and craft events with speakers on those.

Example Posers for Talks

Picnics

Picnics are great for building community simply by the process of gathering people together in a low cost, accessible way and sharing food. You can treat it as a pot luck, get people talking about the food they brought. Picnics are great at breaking down hierarchies, the activist and the politician meet on the same level when sharing food in a park. Having space for people to talk and share can also pull out opportunities on issues and actions that people may want to work on!

An Example

In the East of England we had a region wide picnic in Ely. Inviting groups from all corners of our region to a central point for food, workshops and simple connection.

We created a space which enabled people to introduce themselves, share food, ideas and simply being. Groups from across the region came together for the explicit purpose of just being together in a social space without agenda. Bringing in creativity through block printing and drumming activities. From this event a group of rebels from across the region have started to plan an action around water issues.

XR Cambridge Picnic

Stalls

Having a visible presence is a great way to engage with the local community. Stalls are all about finding something that will create a question in someone's head, so that they can come up and ask. Survey boards are great, or print blocking, or even selling jams or chutneys to raise some funds.

AprilReb_TateOutreach_AC_14.4.22--4004

Walks

When focusing on issues around nature, physically bringing people into nature can not only highlight the reasons to fight but also build connection between people and groups who care in potentially different ways about the issue. Another space we can create that is equalising and

removes hierarchies. Events can be planned for the start and finish, with spaces to learn, connect and share.

An Example

King’s Lynn Local Group have had a great success with their Walk for Nature. People from a wide variety of groups attended including XR, Wildlife Trust, a local hedgehog hospital, and 5 different Borough Councillors! The event really broke down hierarchies, connections were made between different groups and with local councillors.
At the end, everyone gathered for a picnic where folks chatted amongst themselves and listened to speakers representing the groups that supported the walk.



Putting them Togehter!

Also, these two framings of internal and external community building do not have to be separate. We can and do create events that meet both.

For example: XR Norwich put on a day of talks and workshops for the whole community before big London actions. Holding a space to connect and upskill activists and the local community, building connections that would last locally and introducing people into the space of rebellion.

This would often include a banner drop to kick it off, with a Paint the Streets initiative blending community building and action to get the benefits of them both and see them fuel each other.

Action on Shared Points of Caring

In the ideal situation we, as individuals and as rebels, are embedded in our local communities and so the ideas and issues behind the actions we take are co-created by the wider community.

As a network, rebels have skills and experience in NVDA, Action Design, support roles such as Action Wellbeing, De-escalation and Stewards. We can offer this wealth of knowledge to the local issues that really matter to people in a way that embeds protest, as the valuable part of democracy that it is, deep into the spaces and places we exist in.

In this way action and community stop being separate parts of the work. It is through our work in the community that we take action and through our action that we become valued members of the community.

□□ Zines/Handouts □□ - To Share and Play with!

Below you'll find printable zines/handouts, all will download as Google docs. They're available both in XR and Unbranded format as different people will pick them up.

Handouts

HEATWAVE!

It's hot out there team!

Download and print this leaflet to share with your neighbourhoods. Start to have conversations around what you can do to prepare together as a community!

HEATWAVE.jpg HEATWAVE2.jpg

Full Colour Download Here

Ink Light Download Here

Caring For You Community in Crisis

Here we have a pamphlet you can print out and share in your local area, it prompts people to consider how connected their neighbourhoods are should a crisis hit.

Caring For Your Community.jpg Caring For Your Community2.jpg

FULL COLOUR DOWNLOAD HERE

INK LIGHT DOWNLOAD HERE

Community Building Bingo

Challenge your group to a game of **Community Building Bingo** a great activity for Local Groups, Community Groups, Neighbourhoods and Friends! Fill in the blanks to personalise it and see who hits a BINGO first!

Community Building BINGO.jpg

Zines

Zines are little pamplets filled with information. As a format they have a rich history in activism and the use of printed media like this opens our resources up to a much wider audience in a really fun and accessible way!

Consider where you could put a zine like this:

- Maybe pin one to your local notice board?
- Does your library or cafe have a table of leaflets you can add them to?
- Are there any community organisations in your area you could share them with?
- Keep some in your bag as a gift for anyone you start an interesting conversation with.

To fold the zine formats check out this guide.

2026 Zines!

XR Zines!

We fully believe in a culture of play, experimentation and joyous mistake making. Our Zines will forever be imperfect and scrappy, this is an intentional mirroring of Community Building.

With new information, learnings, a changing world, and different perspectives as our team grows, we will continue to update our Zines to reflect our forever growing understanding of this work.

Community Building will never be clean and perfect - it is about trying things, learning, and trying again!

□□□□□ Community Building Zine Set □□□□□

Interested in Community Building? Start here! Discover what it's all about, and what your first steps could be starting from where you are right now!

XR CB Set.png

View Full Sized	Download
Introduction to Community Building	Print & Fold
Community Building Myths	Print & Fold
Community Mapping	Print & Fold
Stepping into Community	Print & Fold
Turning a Group into a Community	Print & Fold
Building Resilient Communities	Print & Fold

□□□□□ Strength Spotting Zine Set □□□□□

Want to go deeper? Discover what is already strong in your communities, and discover the power you can generate in them through being a connector!

XR SS Set.png

View Full Sized	Download
Identifying Our Strengths	Print & Fold
Taking Action Together	Print & Fold
Community Curiousity	Print & Fold
From Scarcity to Abundance	Print & Fold
The Power of Being Known	Print & Fold
Becoming a Community Connector	Print & Fold

Each of our zines has a pair to it. We would recommend printing these back to back on A4 sheets! This will allow you to fold your zine forward or backward and share 2 beautiful resources with each sheet of paper!

Pairing	Download
Intro & Myths	Print & Fold
Mapping & Agenda	Print & Fold
Resilience & Groups	Print & Fold
Strengths & Action	Print & Fold

Pairing	Download
Curiosity & Abundance	Print & Fold
Known & Connector	Print & Fold

Zine Photo.jpeg

Unbranded Zines

And for when it is not appropriate or suitable to step into spaces as XR, we have provided some unbranded versions for you to play with!

□□□□□ Community Building Zine Set □□□□□

Interested in Community Building? Start here! Discover what it's all about, and what your first steps could be starting from where you are right now!

Unbranded SS Set.png

View Full Sized	Download
Introduction to Community Building	Print & Fold
Community Building Myths	Print & Fold
Community Mapping	Print & Fold
Stepping into Community	Print & Fold
Turning a Group into a Community	Print & Fold
Building Resilient Communities	Print & Fold

□□□□□ Strength Spotting Zine Set □□□□□

Want to go deeper? Discover what is already strong in your communities, and discover the power you can generate in them through being a connector!

Unbranded CB Set.png

View Full Sized	Download
Identifying Our Strengths	Print & Fold
Taking Action Together	Print & Fold

View Full Sized	Download
Community Curiosity	Print & Fold
From Scarcity to Abundance	Print & Fold
The Power of Being Known	Print & Fold
Becoming a Community Connector	Print & Fold

Each of our zines has a pair to it. We would recommend printing these back to back on A4 sheets! This will allow you to fold your zine forward or backward and share 2 beautiful resources with each sheet of paper!

Pairing	Download
Intro & Myths	Print & Fold
Mapping & Agenda	Print & Fold
Resilience & Groups	Print & Fold
Strengths & Action	Print & Fold
Curiosity & Abundance	Print & Fold
Known & Connector	Print & Fold

Zine Photo.jpeg

Worksheets

These can be printed for use in workshops to explore some of the tools in a more focused way. They can be used one at a time or together as a complete set. As always, take what works and leave the rest. We'd love to hear how you get on!

Worksheets to Print
Identity Mapping
Gift Circle
Action on Shared Points of Caring
Personal Maps
Asset Maps

Worksheets to Print
Community Curiosity
Curiosity Questions

We would love to hear your feedback on these resources, and if you have any requests for additional resources please let us know!

To contact the Community Building Team please email us at:
CommunityConnectors@proton.me

Glossary

In every setting we use words in a slightly different way. There is no right or wrong way to define these things. But when used here this is what we are meaning

Term	Meaning
Community	A group of people who share some aspects of identity, purpose, interest or experience. The space between individual change and governmental change where people collectively make change that matters to them. A verb, the things people do that build trust, connection and collective action
Community Building	The active building of trust and connection between people
Cultural Momentum	The state of being indistinguishable, as activists, from the general public, finding friends/allies that we don't currently know about who are sympathetic to our goals
Broader Spectrum of Support	The diversity and breadth of individuals, groups, and organisations, including those not previously aligned with the movement or its cause, who may actively endorse, participate in, or contribute to its goals.
Asset Based Community Development	Methodology for sustained development of communities based on their strengths and potential, rather than by their deficits. An approach based on how communities naturally organise themselves (30 years of research into this)
Community Connectors	People who are known by and know their neighbours, the people in our communities we talk to when we need help, that one person who always seems to know who to ask and who may have the answer to any question.
Permeable Boundaries	Acknowledging that a healthy, functional community doesn't claim ownership of the individuals.
Community of Place	A community of individuals connected by living in the same place.
Community of Interest	A group of individuals or groups who share a common focus on a given activity or goal who reinforce their mutual trust and connection through shared action.
Community of Practice	A group of individuals who share a common interest or profession and actively engage in collective learning, knowledge-sharing, and skill development through ongoing collaboration, dialogue, and shared experiences.
Community of Identity	A group that is organised around a shared characteristic of the people within the group. For example age, gender and parenthood.

Term	Meaning
Community of Action	A group of individuals or groups who connect and interact around a given subject or issue.