How to Run Meetings

The XRUK Facilitation Circle offers training in meeting structure and culture, facilitation, minute-taking, and decision-making. You may also find the following agenda guide and template useful:

- Agenda Document Guide (Google doc)
- Agenda Template (Google doc)

Types of Local Group Meetings

The aim is to have inspiring meetings where people connect and feel a sense of community amongst those who really understand the criticality of the climate and ecological emergency, and that together we can take positive action.

A mix of in person and online meetings may be useful for those who cannot/do not want to travel & those who prefer not to attend online meetings. Some meetings & events should be focussed on attracting new members. So, this could be by having a guest speaker, a film night or a community building workshop.

It is important to have an **accessible venue** where people feel safe. It also makes your meetings feel more friendly if you provide refreshments. A prepared list of simple jobs people can undertake afterwards will help new members feel engaged with the group. Some meetings may be more focused on existing supporters, such as a meeting to decide the next six months' worth of activities.

Meeting Culture

Whether you have an online or in-person meeting, XR has a unique meeting culture that has roots in our Self-Organising System and our vision for accessible, inclusive, and functional workspaces. It can feel very different from other work cultures, but once you are used to it we hope you will value and appreciate it.

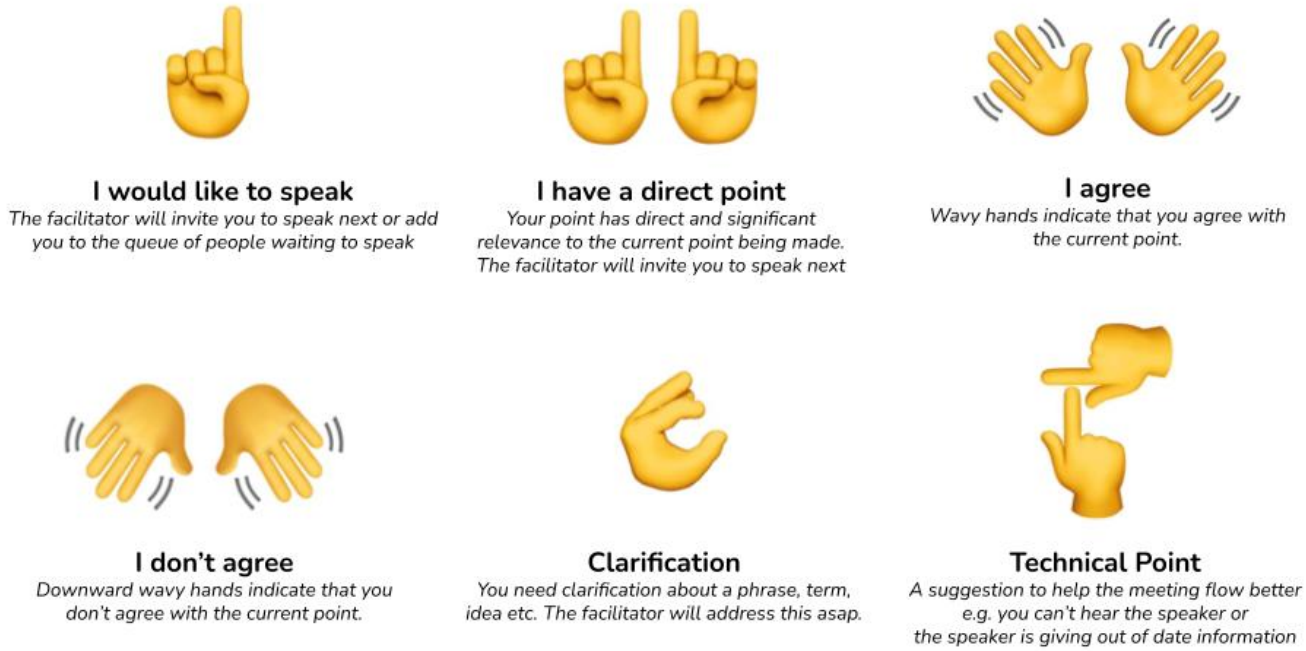
Most of our meetings will include the following:

- Check-ins, where we introduce ourselves and share how we are doing.
- A regenerative culture reminder: we remind ourselves to be kind to one another, pay attention to our feelings and not to take on too many tasks.

- A facilitator: a person whose job is to make sure everyone is heard and that we stay on task.
- A minute taker: a person who writes down the key things mentioned in the meeting, including any action points (tasks that people agree to take on).
- Check-outs: we briefly say how we feel the meeting went or what we are each looking forward to today.

Hand Signals

We use hand signals in our meetings to avoid talking over one another. These are the most common ones:



By following these ways of meeting, it means that no matter which part of XR you are in, if you go to another space you will know what is happening and how to participate.

Meeting Structure

Standing Items

Attendees list

A list of who was at the meeting is important for managing accountability for decision-making, and if a name is not recorded, there is no evidence that they were at the meeting. Some people may want to use pseudonyms on documents.

Assign a facilitator and minute-taker

A facilitator holds the meeting, upholds any agreements made, and manages time and contribution.

A minute-taker keeps an accurate record of what happened in the meeting, including what was decided and what tasks need to be done.

We recommend both roles be filled by trained people who hold no other roles in your group.

Check-ins

Check-ins are a core part of XR's vision of regenerative cultures. They help both the facilitator and those attending the meeting to understand where each other is coming from in terms of feelings, as well as being clear on how to address each other respectfully.

Be mindful that check-ins are there to learn how people want to be addressed, and to see how they are feeling before starting work. It is important to structure check-ins, especially with a time limit, as check-ins can easily take over a meeting.

Check-ins should not be used for updates on any work or any feedback. It's is purely a short personal update, and the facilitator can give some guidance on how to do it - which can be varied each meeting.

Example check-ins:

- "Please check in by saying your name, your pronoun preference, naming one "feeling word" you are with today (Happy/sad etc), and name a non-human animal you relate to. Could you do that in about 20 seconds, then choose someone to pass on to!"
- "Please check in by saying your name, role in this meeting, something fun you've done today or recently. Then choose someone to pass on to!"

Regenerative cultures reminder

> "We are transitioning towards (regenerative) cultures where we respect and listen and do not interrupt. We deal with conflict when it arises using short feedback loops. We cultivate healthy boundaries by slowing down our Yes and returning tasks we are unable to complete and we do not blame and shame. These are cultures built on care and support, where we arrive on time for commitments. We are all crew."

This is a very standard 'regen' reminder, but could also choose to share a short poem or look throught this longer list of suggested options.

Group agreement

Now may be a good time to read out (or point out if it is displayed), your Group Agreement.

Purpose of the meeting

It is helpful for everyone to be clear as to what the meeting is about so that everyone knows what to expect and to keep the meeting on track. As a Local Group, your meeting will likely be your regular weekly/fortnightly/monthly meeting. At times you may organise a meeting about a specific issue, action or event.

Action point review

Action Points from past meetings are reviewed. This should be brief and is not a discussion. This should be an open opportunity for people to ask for help, or hand back tasks they are no longer able to complete.

Updates

For example there could be updates from the following:

- Anyone who has something to bring up from a sub-circle or working group that is relevant.
- The **External Coordinator** of your group if they have attended a Regional or National meeting.
- Anyone who has attended a revelant non-XR meeting or event.

Each update should be concise. They should not be discussions, but if they need to be talked through they should be added as items to the agenda.

The Agenda

By now you may have taken up a large chunk of the meeting already! So depending on how long the meeting is planned for, the rest of the agenda should fit comfortably and not feel rushed. You may want to 'roll-over' items to the next meeeting if time needs to be spent on more urgent items.

Build and finalise the agenda

There are different ways to compile an agenda. Typically it would be through the **Internal Coordinator** (the person who makes sure the team is healthy and achieving its mandate) before the meeting, but it could also be done in the meeting by asking everyone if they have anything to add.

To help direct an agenda item, consider what you need from the attendees:

- Report - Share information or give updates
- Explore - A discussion, time to generate ideas
- Decision - Make a decision

Also, when framing an agenda item, consider:

- What are you bringing?
- Why are you bringing it?
- What do you need from this meeting?

Deliver the agenda

The **facilitator** will then deliver the agenda. Items should time-limited, and by the end of the item there will usually be a list of next steps; perhaps the item needs to come back to a future meeting, or there will be a list of tasks that need to be allocated and complete- these are known as Action Points.

Action points

The **minute-taker** should record all the Action Points from the meeting, including what is to be done, who is doing it, and when it is to be done.
These action points can be noted in bold in the minutes- e.g
AP Greta - make school strike placard

End the Meeting

The last 10 minutes of the meeting should be used to bring it to a close.

Set the date of the next meeting

If your meeting is regular, take time to remind people when the next one is.

If the meeting is irregular, take time to set a date for the next meeting before everyone leaves.

Some groups also use this time to find volunteers to be the facilitator and minute taker for the next meeting.

Check-outs

Like check-ins and the regenerative cultures reminder, check-outs and the vision reminder are core parts of XR’s commitment to creating regenerative work environments.

Run check-outs as you would a check-in.

Vision Reminder (Solemn Intention Statement)

> “Let us take a moment to consider why we are here. Let’s recall our love for the whole of humanity, in all corners of the world. Let’s remember our love for this beautiful planet that feeds, nourishes and sustains all life. Let’s recollect our sincere desire to protect all this, for now, and for generations to come. As we act today/this week, may we find the courage to bring this sense of peace and appreciation to everyone we encounter, to every word we speak, and to every action we make. In this emergency. Together. Rooted in love. We are all we need.”

Online Meetings

Online options are great for non-local meetings. Many of our online meetings use Zoom, but you don't need an account to join a meeting. If you have not used zoom before, have a look at our page on Zoom meetings

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