Our Culture

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The Way We Work Together

To achieve our demands and see real progress in tackling the climate and ecological emergencies, we need our movement to work rapidly and effectively.

SOS

We organise in autonomous groups distributed around the world using **self-organising systems (SOS)**.

The Self-Organising System replaces traditional ways of organising and is based on a non-hierachical system called Holacracy.

Roles and Mandates

Each role and group within XR has a **mandate**. This tells those in that role or group what they can do and lets others know what they are responsible for.

Any person or group can take action in the name of XR so long as the action fits within our principles and values. There is no need to ask for permission.

We are seeking a balance between being able to act quickly in response to fast-changing situations and being able to call on multiple perspectives when needed. Our aim is a movement that is participatory, decentralised, and inclusive.

Working Together

SOS as a way of organising is very different to the usual hierachical system experienced in school and work life. It takes time to get used to, but it is a rewarding and regenerative way to work together.

If you don’t choose a structure one will emerge anyway based on personalities

The XRUK Constitution

The XRUK Constitution was adopted by XRUK’s Anchor Circle in March 2019. (The Anchor Circle has since been replaced by The Rebel Hive.) The latest version was created by the SOS circle in response to feedback from the movement, and adopted by The Rebel Hive on 17th March 2023.

All circles and roles contained within The Rebel Hive and its sub-circles are bound by the XR UK Constitution. Other groups (e.g. Nations and Regions) are not bound by the Constitution, but may choose to adopt it, or parts of it, if they wish to.

Full information on the XRUK Constitution can be found here

Inclusivity

> **Principle 6: We welcome everyone and every part of everyone:** working actively to create safer and more accessible spaces.

It is our goal to genuinely welcome everyone regardless of who you are, how you look or how you live. We ask everyone who joins us to help make XR as safe, compassionate and welcoming as possible.

Here are some example groups that provide communities of shared self-identity:

Unify Art Collective

BIPOC arts group

Email: unifyartcollective@protonmail.com

Faster response by contacting inbox on Instagram

Disabled Rebels Network

Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodiverse

Email: xr.inclusion@protonmail.com

Rainbow Rebellion

LGBTQ+

Email: rainbowrebellion@protonmail.com

Digital Rebellion

Digital Rebellion exists so that everyone can take climate action! If you can write a letter or send an email or make a phone call you can take part. You will join others all working together to make your lone voice part of a heavenly chorus.

Sign up for weekly emails with details of current campaigns and the actions you can take here.

Inclusivity principles

We use XR Principles of Inclusivity (Google doc) and Diversity & Inclusivity at Actions (Google doc) to provide for the needs of as many people as possible. We welcome every person but not every behaviour. If you have needs or concerns, please do get in touch with the people organising the event that you want to take part in - we want to help you. If you see barriers to inclusivity, please let organisers know so they can work to sort things out.

Care and Respect

> **Principle 8. We avoid blaming and shaming:** we live in a toxic system, but no one individual is to blame.

> **Principle 3. We need a regenerative culture:** creating a culture which is healthy, resilient and adaptable.

We do not waste energy or sow division by attacking people personally. We live in a system that damages us all and no one person is to blame.

The work we do in XR can be demanding. To protect ourselves, we try to integrate what we call 'regenerative culture' into our everyday behaviour. ‘Regen’, as it is commonly known in XR, means taking care of ourselves and each other, but it is more than that. We aim to move away from the destructive **de**generative culture that we live in, towards one that is **re**generative instead. By attempting to build the world we wish to see, we are building regenerative cultures.

Behaviour

We ask everyone who joins XR to agree to abide by our Principles and Values. If you abide by them then you can take action in the name of XR. If you do not then you might (in extreme cases when other avenues have been exhausted) be asked to leave.

Although we accept every person, we do not accept every behaviour. We will tackle harmful behaviour or language when it arises. There are also a few rare cases where we might not be able to include you. Your needs might be beyond what we can meet, or you might risk causing harm to others (see ‘Safeguarding’ below).

At Actions

Rebels who attend Actions are asked to follow our Rebel Code. This gives us a basis for trust in each other and between us and the public.

Group Agreements

Group agreements are key to keeping the group running smoothly and ensure a respectful and supportive space. Find out more about them here. This page also contains information about support you can access if conflicts do arise in your group.

Emotional Support

The crisis we find ourselves in can cause us very real and painful emotions such as grief, hopelessness and anxiety. XR maintains the following support provided by our **Trained Emotional Support Network (TESN)**:

Telephone Active Listening

Feeling anxious, lonely, or just had a bad day? You can make a request to speak with a trained and vetted Rebel Active Listener by emailing rebel2rebel@tesn.uk. (Please note that this is not a counselling service.)

This 2min video gives more detail.

Counselling or Psychotherapy

Climate Psychology Alliance (CPA) provides a list of Practitioners offering three free sessions of therapeutic support to activists. Please note that the practitioners have not been formally vetted so it is up to you to confirm their suitability.

Safeguarding

It is everyone's duty to make sure everyone in XR is safe from exploitation or abuse, especially from those in a position of responsibility.

If there's anything in your past that may indicate a risk to others, you should tell the relevant group before you take on a role within XR, e.g. failed DBS checks, a conviction for a violent or sexual crime (even if spent), or restraining orders. They may not stop you volunteering for XR, but we need to know about them so that we can protect you and others.

We each have a responsibility to look out for each other and report anything that worries us or makes us uncomfortable. If you encounter a situation that makes you uncomfortable either for yourself or someone else, please let your group coordinators, and if necessary your wider circle, know so they can work to sort things out.

Our full safeguarding policy can be viewed here

Data Protection

How we protect your data

XR Privacy Policy

For queries or requests about your data, please email dataprotection@rebellion.earth

How we ask you to protect other people’s data

Data Protection Agreement

This agreement gives some simple principles for treating data with care and respect. Anyone handling personal data within XR should digitally sign this, but it is particularly important that coordinators do so.

Challenging the Toxic System

> **Principle 4. We openly challenge ourselves and this toxic system:** leaving our comfort zones to take action for change.

Nonviolent direct action can be challenging and may require disruption in our own lives.

Public acts of rebellion may be physically uncomfortable, involving getting cold, stiff, tired and hungry. They may also be psychologically challenging, evoking feelings of fear, vulnerability, anxiety and sometimes anger. **But** they can also be moments of real joy and deep solidarity with each other.

So we have to challenge ourselves - are we willing to act? Are we willing to make changes in our lives to give us enough free space in them to enable us to act? Are we willing to make sacrifices, even?

> In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now.
>
> **Wangari Maathai**, Nobel Peace Prize winner

> To sin by silence, when we should protest,
> Makes cowards out of men. The human race
> Has climbed on protest. Had no voice been raised
> Against injustice, ignorance, and lust,
> The inquisition yet would serve the law,
> And guillotines decide our least disputes.
> The few who dare, must speak and speak again
> To right the wrongs of many.\
>
> **Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850 – 1919)**

Learning

> **Principle 5: We value reflection and learning:** following a cycle of action, reflection, learning, and planning for more action. Learning from other movements and contexts as well as our own experiences.

We never know how things will change, so we try to stay open and flexible, to experiment and to learn from what we do. This helps us work out how to be as effective as possible. We value feedback and aim to both give and receive it with grace. We share our experiences so we can learn from one another.

Training

You will find a huge range of free talks and trainings on offer in XR - all are listed in the Directory of Talks and Training.

Some aim to help you navigate XR, some to support you in taking action, some to explain the science and yet others to help you grow in skills and confidence.

Talks and training on offer include:

- **Intro to XR** - a starting point for new joiners wanting to learn more about XR.
- **Get Involved** - interactive session where we guide you through options for getting involved with XRUK, including how you can volunteer or join an action or group.
- **Prepare for Action training** - core training for attending actions.
- **Know Your Rights (KYR) training** - Core information for attending actions.

Training Platforms

- Rebel Toolkit – public resource library (you are on the Rebel Toolkit right now!)
- Rebellion Academy - e-learning platform with self-learn interactive courses on a wide range of topics.

Nonviolence

> **Principle 9. We are a nonviolent network:** using nonviolent strategy and tactics as the most effective way to bring about change.

We choose to practice Nonviolent Direct Action (NVDA) out of principle and because it is proven to be more successful in creating a stable transition than other kinds of resistance. Its success throughout history, has been thoroughly researched by leading civil resistance scholars. In the 20th C, examples of mass NVDA that brought about huge social change include the Suffrage Movement, the Indian salt marches, US Civil Rights Movement, Women's Liberation, the Gay Rights Movement of the 1960s, and Anti-Apartheid. Smaller campaigns have also had major impacts. NVDA is also more inclusive, attracting people from wider segments of society. Nonviolence makes it harder for the state to respond with violent oppression. NVDA is beautiful.

> Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence.
> Martin Luther King Jr (1929-1968)

This is reflected in the **rebel code** which we ask everyone to abide by at actions:

1. We show respect to everyone - to each other, the general public and to the government and police.
2. We engage in no violence, physical or verbal.
3. We carry no weapons.
4. We hold ourselves accountable for our actions.
5. We bring no alcohol or illegal drugs.
6. We take responsibility for ourselves, we are all crew.

On major actions, or those with potential conflict situations, we use trained deescalators (identifiable by their white high viz vests) to keep the situation calm and try to ensure that tense situations never escalate to violence. This has proved highly successful.

More information:

Nonviolent Direct Action (NVDA) training

Information about the Deescalation team.

Autonomy

> **Principle 10. We are based on autonomy and decentralisation:** we collectively create the structures we need to challenge power.

Autonomy is at the heart of the XR Self Organising System. We have no 'bosses' or hierarchies of power, where one person or team can tell another how to do its work. Instead we use ‘hierarchies of purpose’ to help organise our teams.

Rather than **consensus**, which is slow and can easily get bogged down, we work by **consent**. Our system of mandates - of individuals and of whole teams - tells us what we can do.

Any person or group can organise autonomously around the issues that feel most pressing for them, and take action in the name and spirit of Extinction Rebellion – so long as the action fits within Extinction Rebellion’s Principles and Values. There is no need to ask for permission.