# XR UK Ways of Working and Constitution

How rebels in XR UK work together.

1. The Principles and Values are the core propositions that we need to commit to in order to act in the name of XR.
2. The Ways of Working guide how we relate to each other in all teams across the UK.
3. The Constitution sets out how we agree to organise and make decisions when acting at scale (i.e. not just locally) in the UK. This is known as our Self-Organising System (SOS).

Within the UK, the nations and regions choose whether to follow the XR UK Constitution or their own version of decentralising and self-organising.

All groups within the UK Rebel Hive follow the Constitution.

- Principles and Values
- Ways of Working
- XR UK Constitution
- Constitution resources
    - Constitution Roles, Policies & Support
    - Integrative Decision Making (IDM) process
    - Pre-Election Checklist
    - Integrative Election Process for Roles in XR UK
    - Considered Majority Vote for Roles in XR UK
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# Principles and Values

Full-length text of the Principles and Values written in 2018.

Anyone who takes action in pursuit of XR's three goals and adheres to its ten principles, can claim to do it in the name of XR.

## 1. We have a shared vision of change

Our duty is to create a world fit for the next seven generations to live in. Our hearts tell us a different world is possible. Our vision of change is sufficiently broad that it can contain a variety of opinions on how best to work towards that change:

**"A healthy, beautiful world, where individuality and creativity are supported, and where people work together, solving problems and finding meaning, with courage, power and love. This will be underpinned by cultures rooted in respect for nature, genuine freedoms and justice."**

## 2. We set our mission on what is necessary

The change needed is huge and yet achievable. No regime in the 20th century managed to stand against an uprising which had the active participation of up to 3.5% of the population ( see Erica Chenoweth's research). In the UK, this would mean mobilising around 2 million people in order to oversee a rapid change in wealth distribution and power structures, preventing a rich elite from perpetuating a self-serving ideology.

We acknowledge that we are in the midst of a massive crisis, one which can be hard to comprehend and cope with. We are experiencing the 6th mass species extinction and we are not taking adequate steps to avert our civilisation from the most horrendous trajectory of climate change. The world is deeply unequal, with wealth and power levers concentrated in a small minority. We have crises in our mental and physical health, including our children, based in different forms of malnutrition and an increasingly toxic environment. We live with the threat of pandemics alongside antibiotic failure. Our financial system is destined for another crisis bigger than the last. There is a global culture of conquering "others", of competition, of revenge and of terrorism.

We recognise that our job may be less about "saving the world" and more about trying to develop our resilience as multiple collapses take places. We are based in the UK and we love this part of the world deeply. We are focussed on significant change here towards:

- A functioning democracy, where people have real agency in decision making. This would include devolution of power to the level closest to people and communities, with structures to facilitate decision making locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, where appropriate.
- An economy designed to maximise well-being for all people and minimise harm to each other, our fellow creatures and our home planet. We need policies and laws that achieve greater equality, localised production, reduced consumption, zero carbon emissions and zero waste.
- Creating a regenerative culture. We can begin doing that right now! (See 3. Below and interspersed throughout).

We can focus on symptoms of this toxic system, yet we also we take opportunities to point out that full system change is needed. We also focus on the pillars that keep the current neo-liberal system in place:

- A debt- and interest-based, deregulated finance sector.
- A fake and decaying democracy.
- A media captured to the interests of exploitative rich people and corporations.

## 3. We need a regenerative culture

A regenerative human culture is healthy, resilient and adaptable; it cares for the planet and it cares for life in the awareness that this is the most effective way to create a thriving future for all of humanity. Regenerative culture means improvements year on year, taking small steps to heal and improve, and on all levels, including individuals, communities, our soil, water and air. More than being a network of “activists”, we seek to find ways of being and doing that support positive change. This can include ceremony and prayer (in ways that are neither dogmatic nor expected) as formats to find inspiration from things bigger than ourselves. We need to reconnect with our love for ourselves, our country and our people alongside wider neighbours; people and the natural world.

Regenerative culture includes a healthy focus on mutually supporting categories of:

- self care - how we take care of our own needs and personal recovery from this toxic system
- action care - how we take care of each other whilst we undertake direct actions and civil disobedience together
- interpersonal care - how we take care of the relationships we have, being mindful of how we affect each other, taking charge of our side of relationships
- community care - how we take care of our development as a network and community, strengthening our connections and adherence to these principles and values
- People and Planet care - how we look after our wider communities and the earth that sustains us all

It's about relationships. Our relationships with ourselves and personal histories, our relationships with what we struggle against, our relationships with other individuals day to day, and our relationships as a group - these are completely interdependent. Self care is also about taking care of the animal parts of the self that respond instinctively to stressful situations with fight or flight or faint.

## 4. We openly challenge ourselves and this toxic system

We have a duty to disobey this system which destroys life on earth and is deeply unjust. Some of us will undertake open **(“above ground*”)** actions that risk arrest and charges. Evidence suggests that such open civil disobedience and direct action are crucial to change (See for example evidence in CounterPower by Tim Gee and This is an Uprising by Engler & Engler). It isn't necessary or required that everyone do this, as for some there are good reasons not to (we ask everyone to take time to be clear on their own circumstances, fears and motivations here). Importantly, our Extinction Rebellion culture should support those of us willing to put ourselves on the line in this way - there are also many support roles that are useful and we need to enable at least 3% of the population to actively participate. We will practice a security culture to the extent that it enables actions to be planned without being intercepted before they are completed. However our civil disobedience and direct actions are in full public light, organisers accept the risks they are taking, and we have issued a “necessity statement” online as to why we believe our actions are justified.

*We appreciate and admire those willing to take “below ground” or “covert” actions to fight for environment and social justice, within other settings. For clarity, and for the safety of those organising in Extinction Rebellion it is important we are clear that all actions taken in the name of Extinction Rebellion are “above ground,” i.e. that they are taken in the open and no below ground actions are taken as Extinction Rebellion.

However we are not just about being out there and taking action, we must also resource all aspects of a regenerative culture and also take time to reflect on whether what we are doing is effective. We might find it challenging to keep a focus on some aspects of this work, including self-care and looking after each other. There can be a pull to do the next thing, to be “active”, but this can lead to burn-out.

There is a value in us making changes in our own lives to reflect the changes needed, such as changing our diets, where we go on holiday and so on (however personal responsibility can be overstated and is based, to some extent, in privilege). For all of these challenges we ask for room, patience and willingness to try new things to see if they support our goals.

## 5. We value reflecting and learning

We don’t know how things will change so we are willing to experiment and learn from what we do. Through ongoing questioning, reflection and learning about what has worked elsewhere we will improve what we do and not get stuck in repetitive behaviour. This is an active and ongoing process, requiring time and input for individuals and groups to think about what has gone well and why, what would be better to be done differently.

## 6. We welcome everyone and every part of everyone

As a movement we are committed to campaigning for the right to life, and for the future life of our children and the planet. We recognise that in order to change the world, we must change the way we think about and form relationships with those we work and ally ourselves with. The world is currently defined by multiple hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. For those lower down these hierarchies, much of the world isn't a safe space. To create safer spaces we need to work actively to continuously build understandings of how these hierarchies operate, so that we can challenge them and build inclusion through making our spaces more accessible. Therefore, for our movement to be safe for everyone, it needs to be safe for the most marginalised.

This principle includes a commitment to making safer spaces to support inclusivity. It is our goal that every individual is welcomed regardless of ethnicity, race, class, gender, gender identity, gender presentation, sexuality, age, income, ability, education, appearance, immigration status, belief or non-belief and activist experience. Every individual in the movement is responsible for creating and maintaining safer, compassionate and welcoming spaces. New people to the movement need to be explicitly welcomed. A simple starting point is adherence to these core principles.

Physical violence or the incitement of violence towards others is not accepted. Discriminatory behaviour, language or behaviour that exhibits racial domination, sexism, anti-semitism, islamophobia, homophobia, ableism, class discrimination, prejudice around age and all other forms of oppression including abusive language towards others, either during an action or elsewhere, is not accepted whether physically or online

We also recognise that we are complex beings and exhibit many different parts of ourselves at different times and in different circumstances. For example, sometimes we might be caring, at other times judgemental, and at other times carelessly reactive. Some of those parts are parts of us that we’re happy to bring, and some of those parts are parts that we’re struggling with, or perhaps not even aware they existed until they revealed themselves. With this knowledge, we approach each other from a place of compassion, and encourage each other to increase our own self-awareness.

## 7. We actively mitigate power

The ground on which this network stands is on the relationships between its participants. We will work every day to build trust, respect and reciprocity among all of us. We assume all members to have good intentions and will react against disrespect. We use conflict resolution techniques to deal with conflict in a healthy way that will bring growth to our movement. We ground our work in dialogue, healing, collective transformation and justice. We won’t tolerate shaming of each other or bullying in any form. This requires us to be honest and clear with ourselves and each other; we all hold prejudices and biases, and these must be acknowledged rather than dwelled upon negatively. It is everyone’s responsibility to change destructive habits and behaviours.

We recognise that our world as it stands is currently structured by various intersecting hierarchies based on class, race, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability and so on. As such each person's experience is shaped by their position within these various social hierarchies. For instance, being a black woman one encounters different forms of oppression to a white woman, because of how race and gender combine and compound to shape experiences.

Whilst we aim to live in a world where these hierarchies no longer exist, we cannot simply pretend that they don't within our own network. For this reason we aim to centre voices that are normally the most marginalised, by allowing space for them to speak and encouraging those who normally wouldn't to take leadership / coordination positions. This isn't about deciding 'who is the most oppressed', it's about consciously making space for the people who have to fight the most to be heard, recognised and respected.

In practical terms this means: - We weight coordinating roles towards marginalised groups. - Our media messaging includes issues and voices that are normally ignored (e.g. the link between climate change and immigration detention centres). However we are mindful of not trying to speak on someone else’s behalf. - Accessibility is important (in terms of child care, wheelchair access, not speaking in technical jargon), both for meetings and actions. - We recognise that oppressive behaviours are socially embedded within us, and privileged people are asked to commit to questioning their privilege and to be open to being challenged. - We refresh those who hold positions of responsibility so that power doesn’t get entrenched. - We embed anti-oppressive practice into our training materials. - Our strategy is focussed on doing the work it takes to forge genuine alliances with the grass roots movements of the people who are most marginalised. - We also recognise that sometimes people make mistakes, misjudgements and missteps, and we seek to avoid humiliating exposure when it is clear that an issue needs to be raised and dealt with.

Having a database, social media and a website; fundraising for meetings, etc, means that there is inevitably a centralisation of some power. To mitigate any power issues that can arise we have an Anchor Circle, whose role is transparent and into which there is a process for people to rotate in and out.

Thinking about these questions is encouraged: If you always do a role, is it possible to train someone else to do it? If someone else is taking leadership on a role, can you learn from them so that you can step in? Can you challenge yourself to take on a more upfront role if this is

something you don’t usually do? Do you take time to learn about power and privilege? Do you have an understanding of how the power and privilege you hold has an effect on other people and the movement you are part of?

## 8. We avoid blaming and shaming

Blaming and shaming will not serve us in the long run. Whilst a specific campaign may seek to highlight the damaging role played by an institution, including individuals serving that institution, our starting point is that we live in toxic system that has damaged everybody. We can point out behaviour that is unhelpful, exploitative or abusive, and we won’t tolerate such behaviour, yet we don't hand away our love or power by blaming and shaming. This is also true in our interpersonal and group dynamics as well as our relationship to ourselves.

We embrace change that creates unity in diversity; we need to set right the relationships between us, avoiding the interpersonal traps that come from games we may inadvertently play and bringing awareness to the structures that would divide us. We accept that emotion sometimes needs to be expressed, that a period of venting can be necessary. We ask each other for good grace in how we share emotion and to return to a baseline of love, respect and conviviality. We need to be compassionate when mistakes are made. Mistakes are opportunities to learn. We look for ways to connect and understand. Listening deeply to each other is a powerful tool. We especially need to listen to those of us that come from groups whose voices tend to be silenced.

## 9. We are a nonviolent network

Nonviolence keeps our movement alive. We use non-violence to reveal the true perpetrators of systemic violence that people suffer from daily all over this world. It is our strategy to bring light to the injustice that too many suffer each day. We feel pain from the abuses of the police and others, and we will keep exposing their violence through our discipline. Nonviolence has unequivocally been demonstrated to be an effective tool in mass mobilisations (see the work of Gene Sharp and Erica Chenoweth) and so we base a cornerstone of our movement on this.

At the same time we also recognise that many people and movements in the world face death, displacement and abuse in defending what is theirs. We will not condemn those who justly defend their families and communities through the use of force, especially as we must also recognise that it is often our privilege which keeps us safe. We stand in solidarity with those whom have no such privilege to protect them and therefore must protect themselves through violent means; this does not mean we condone all violence, just that we understand in some cases it may be justified. Also we do not condemn other social and environmental movements that choose to damage property in order to protect themselves and nature, for example disabling a fracking rig or putting a detention centre out of action. Our network, however, will not undertake significant property damage because of risks to other participants by

association.

## 10. We are based on autonomy and decentralisation

We recognise that we can't look to government to solve the world's problems. It tends to concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a very privileged few, and often does not have the interests of the majority of people and the natural world at heart. We understand that we must self-organise to meet our own needs, which in the context of Extinction Rebellion means that we are working to equalise power by disrupting the usual pillars of power that govern our lives. In so doing, our intention is to create access to the resources we need, such as democratic structures that ensure everyone has a voice and an influence, information that comes without the bias of the rich and powerful, decent healthcare, education, social care and housing, clean energy production, and protections in law to prevent ecocide.

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. In this way, power is decentralised, meaning that there is no need to ask for permission from a central group or authority. We also promote the ideas of "holacracy" over consensus:

- That it may be agreed in a group for one or two people to do a specific task for the group. Those people are then fully empowered to do the task.
- They are best to seek advice and feedback but they don't need anyone's permission to complete the task.
- They are fully responsible for outcomes and should reflect on them and how to improve in future. If anything goes wrong they should help to "clean up".

At the same time, as a network, Extinction Rebellion self-organises to provide for the needs of the people participating within it, working to provide training in strategic action for change, educating ourselves and each other around issues of power, privilege and how to decolonise, creating better accessibility, caring for our emotional needs in relation to working together, and making time for connection and fun.

# Ways of Working

## Our approach, skills and capacities as we volunteer in XR UK

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# 1. Our shared understandings

### What volunteering with XR UK involves

- In order to be a rebel with XR UK, we always need to align our intentions and actions with our Principles & Values to get our demands met. This document outlines what acting in

line with the Principles & Values means in practice. It can be seen as part of our move towards regenerative cultures, including how we care for ourselves and others, and how we work in ways that mirror the regenerative capacity of planet Earth.
- To be a member of one of the teams that has signed up to our Constitution (often referred to as the Self-Organising System, or SOS), you also need to:
  - follow the Constitution,
  - learn and respect our ways of working (which are outlined in this document), and
  - if you are in a role which involves handling personal data, sign the Volunteer Data Handling Agreement.
- We aim to be **transparent** in our organisation. This includes:
  - finances,
  - the work of specific groups (or circles), and
  - names of individuals involved.
- This makes it easier to hold each other to account and spreads out the power.

## How we make XR UK a regenerative space where all rebels can take part equitably

- We **welcome new people** and open our existing spaces to them where we can, based on the values of confidentiality and trust.
- We **take time to learn** how our use of language, our attitudes, our technologies and our approach affects how Rebels can participate in XR.
- We are respectful and considerate about each others' strengths, weaknesses and backgrounds.
- We **do not accept behaviours or language that discriminate** against any marginalised group.
- We understand that we are **constantly unlearning behaviours that don't meet needs** for safety and security. We understand that by trying new approaches there will be times when we need to change course.
- When we become aware that our Ways of Working are not being followed, we encourage Rebels to **call in (not call out) behaviours that don't meet needs** for safety and security. We do this **without blaming and shaming**; we are all learning. We call people in. We invite people to learn and do better. We include them in creating a new way of doing things. While calling out excludes people, calling in includes people.
- If you are being called in, **you are invited to accept the feedback as a gift** in this ongoing movement of growth and change. Be open to active listening. Try to learn awareness of defensiveness to make space for tension shifting and conflict resolution.
- **XR is an international and internationalist movement**. As the UK is a Global North / Western democracy we need to be aware of when our lens of experience is biasing our work, then take steps to broaden our view without burdening marginalised people with emotional labour. Given a context of continuing global inequality, (violent) oppression and discrimination, and the relative privilege that some in XR in the UK have regarding access to food, health, shelter, wellbeing and safety etc, rebels are invited to speak up and act appropriately where possible to redress these inequalities in the service of harmony, healing, equity and connection. It is recognised that this inequality also impacts in the UK

on account of socio-economic group and colour.
- We **seek to support those with less power in society by focusing on their needs**, rather than our own expectations or wants. The majority Global South face the worst impacts of climate and ecological breakdown and injustice. Given that we in the UK enjoy relative privileges which add to their suffering, we bear greater responsibility to mitigate impacts of climate and ecological genocide.
- We **recognise that accessibility and inclusion consists of more than physical accessibility**. It includes considering culturally neutral, sober spaces, along with practical considerations for creating inclusive spaces.
- We **ask about accessibility needs in advance and at the start of events and meetings** where possible, and we **create space in meetings** should an accessibility need come up.
- We **use the pronouns people ask us to use for them**. Not everyone identifies as the gender they may appear as, or the one they were assigned at birth. Some people identify as not having a gender at all.
- We **avoid jargon and complex language where possible**. XR does use acronyms and specialised language but these can be a barrier to accessibility. We take time to write out all abbreviations in full at least once in documents, bracketing the abbreviation. We will explain what abbreviations mean when asked.
- We **make time to mentor and support Rebels**, working to build their skills and confidence within XR. We make training and support available to people with commitments that constrain their availability, using recordings, resources and online courses that can be accessed round the clock.

## How we mitigate power and distribute decision-making

- For groups working UK-wide we need an agreed way of **distributing authority between and within teams, for improving collective decision making** — so that we don't have to renegotiate this every time. The XR UK Constitution sets out the agreed processes, roles and methods of organising in our Self-Organising System (SOS). We sometimes refer to groups as 'teams' or 'Circles' — these all mean the same, though the term 'Circle' has a specific definition in the Constitution.
- We reject **hierarchies of power**, where one role or team has authority over how another works. However, we adopt a **hierarchy of purpose** to help organise our teams. Uppermost is the achievement of XR's shared vision and its demands in the UK, working to create a world that is fit for generations to come.
- We divide the goals set by our vision into sub-goals, each with their own purpose, and their own team responsible for deciding how to achieve it; we keep on creating more sub-divisions. In this way each team and each role adds together to play its part in achieving our demands.
- As well as organising according to purpose, we also organise according to location. Within the UK, the nations and regions choose whether to follow the XR UK Constitution or their own version of decentralising and self-organising. Small and informal groups may not need to collaborate frequently with others, so may not need processes for decision-making beyond their own limits. As with other groups, however, they may discuss and

record group agreements about how everyone wants to treat each other and work together.
- If someone breaks the group agreement, we ensure there is clarity about the breach, and support for changing the relevant behaviour, while also keeping the agreement under review. We revisit the group agreement with the person and the team to ensure it is fit for purpose. If these steps are not effective the person may be asked to leave the team. (These processes should be in your constitution or other agreement, including when and how agreements are reviewed.) Behaviour that doesn't meet needs for safety and security can sap the energy of the group. It might seem like you're doing the kind thing, but other people won't join it or stay in it. If you would like to seek support with a tension or conflict, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Healthy Teams on their Mattermost reception channel or email HealthyTeams@proton.me.
- In the SOS, **roles and teams have autonomy to make decisions within their mandates**. To inform these decisions, teams should get advice from others affected by the decisions and also from people with experience in the area. This means that decisions are made by small groups, not by large group consensus.
- We aim to be clear about **roles, their purposes and accountabilities**, and transparent about decision-making. Those making decisions are accountable for the outcomes of their decisions. We reflect and learn based on these outcomes and how advice was taken into account.
- If you are not taking an active role in the group, yet still taking part in team discussions and decisions you should consider stepping back. Only by committing to work to help the group achieve its purpose do you have the right to have a say in how it is run. Taking part in group decisions without working to put the decisions into action is a form of 'power over' the rest of the group. We aim to mitigate such power. If you have a mandate, including purpose and accountabilities, you are expected to do the things you are accountable for, but you have control over how you prioritise them to achieve your purpose. Mandates define the range, not the amount, of work.

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# 2. Ways to be around each other

## We listen to each other, and speak and act mindfully

- When we listen:
  - We accept that everyone is in the Rebellion because we share a vision of change.
  - We use active listening with the intention to understand what the other person is sharing.
  - We avoid making assumptions, and ask thoughtful questions for clarification.
- We work to **understand the difference between being in dialogue with others and talking at them**.
- If you find it difficult to share speaking space with others, please seek support in how to participate from the Internal Coordinator of your team (who may refer you to other specialist roles or teams in the movement).

- We are aware that **some people find speaking in groups challenging**, so we make space for everyone to participate equitably.
- We use the acronym **WAIT** in meetings to remain mindful of what we say and why we say it:
  - Why
  - Am
  - I
  - Talking?
- **We speak from our own position, beginning statements with "I"** to ensure we take ownership over our opinions and contributions. For example: "I think...", "I feel...", and "In my experience...". Sometimes we may acknowledge contradictory perspectives within ourselves and say, "a part of me feels..." or "something in me resists..."

## We work in groups productively and support each other

- When we work in teams, there are several dimensions to our activity:
  - **Task performance and production** — as set out in the mandate of our role, these tasks help the team achieve its purpose and help the movement achieve its demands;
  - **Support of members individually** — seeking and providing advice, coaching, and apprenticing with more experienced team members;
  - **Building a team identity** — where we develop shared values and understandings and loyalties to each other collectively.
- While these different strands are often woven together in the course of our teamwork, it can be helpful to reflect and remind ourselves about each of them. This includes when to pursue each strand and when to leave it. Here are some examples.
  - In meetings, when discussing a proposal from a team member, it can be helpful to **speak from our role(s)** — which means not sharing every opinion that comes into your head, but asking "how can my role support this proposal?" or "does the proposal have an impact on my role at all?" because, if it doesn't, it may speed performance and production to keep quiet (see WAIT above);
  - Alongside formal meetings, it can be useful to **schedule time devoted to personal relationships**, including giving people the support they need to be effective members of the team, and building our shared values and team identity. This is where we show up as our whole selves, not just our roles.

## We treat people and their personal information with respect

- We make sure we only hold the information we need, and, where we need personal data, we take care of it in line with our Privacy Policy.
- We keep the data secure, and delete it when it is no longer needed. (The GDPR and Security Circle are here to help.)

# More than just resistance, we are building regenerative cultures

- We **take self-care seriously**.
- We **process the emotions we find ourselves experiencing**. Ways of doing this include, but are not limited to:
  - peer-to-peer support
  - listening circles
  - therapy
  - regular breaks and holidays
  - hobbies and sports
  - eating well
  - exercise
  - addressing addictive behaviour
  - mindfulness practices
  - awareness of group dynamics and the tendency for some groups to be silenced
  - spirituality and religion.
- We need to be aware of our risk of burnout.
  - The work we do together is difficult.
  - We limit the times we say “Yes“ to things, so that we stay within our capacity.
  - **Burnout compromises our own needs for safety and security**, and may impact our: physical health, mental health, emotions, focus and productivity, decision-making ability, relationships, morale, creativity, self-care.
  - **Burnout compromises others’ needs for safety and security**, and may impact their: team dynamics, communication, team capacity, compassion and empathy, support networks, shared work loads.
- **Take a break if you are not feeling positive about your time in XR**. Negative feelings will have an impact on your wellbeing and the wellbeing of the people you work with.
- We value honesty, authenticity, and sharing feelings of kindness towards each other.
  - We keep our groups as **welcoming to as many people** as possible
  - We **ask for consent** before entering someone’s physical space.
  - We are mindful that we **come from different social and cultural backgrounds**.
- We consider how you “land” with other people.
  - **One person's idea of friendliness will not always match another’s**.
  - We do not take it personally if our ideas of friendliness are not always shared.
- We welcome people to bring their whole selves to XR.
  - Sometimes Rebels can get quite emotional or animated in meetings, and this can make spaces uncomfortable.
  - If your feelings are becoming too much, we ask you to respectfully step-back from the meeting.
  - We understand that not everyone can engage with information and ideas in the same way.
- We celebrate and appreciate each other,ourselves and our relationship with the planet

    - We **make room for gratitude**, towards others and our place in the ecosystem, and try to express it in the moment.
    - We take time to **celebrate what we are getting done**, not just on the to-do list.
    - We develop a deepening understanding of ourselves as part of an interconnected ecosystem.
- We have a sense of humour.
    - The climate emergency is not going away overnight.
    - We can have **fun in XR, and have laughs and make jokes** even while we do serious work.

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# 3. How to approach working together

## We work together in groups (circles/teams)

- We are all crew.
    - Each of us takes responsibility for how we work together in groups.
    - If we see a task that needs doing, and we can do it, we do. We may do this after first checking that another team has not got a mandate or other authority to decide how the task is done.
    - If we know other people aren't seeing tasks that need doing, we value making the changes so those tasks are seen.
- We treat each other well.
    - We join groups with the **intention to work together**.
    - We take up roles and **engage with existing groups** when we have ideas that are in alignment with a group and when we are prepared to do the work.
    - We **trust and support our groups** and the individuals within them, even if we are not always in agreement.
- To create and inspire more positive and regenerative ways of being together, we **do not blame or shame** each other.
    - We take time to understand each other's ideas and motivations.
    - If we are feeling an unresolved tension in relation to something another group member has done or said we can invite a compassionate dialogue using short feedback loops.
    - We avoid talking about anybody in a negative way when they're not around as this can corrode trust.
    - We start from the assumption that everybody is well meaning, shares the same goals, and is doing their best.
- We try to communicate openly, honestly and compassionately.
    - One model is Nonviolent Communication, started by Marshall Rosenberg. We share what we observe, feel, need and request.
    - NVC is not the only model of communication.
- We reflect and learn without blame
    - We are all human, and do things that we may regret or feel that we could improve. .

    - We aim for a balance between trying and experimenting while being prepared to change course.
    - Our focus is on compassionate and just solutions.
- We are solution focused.
    - When a problem is identified, we form the habit of suggesting and working on solutions.
    - We encourage and inspire others to be solution focused too.

## We are committed and reliable

- We are aware of how much time we and others can realistically volunteer for XR.
    - **Volunteer hours are the most valuable resource we have**.
    - We **take responsibility** for managing the time you have available for XR work
    - We are mindful of using up the time of other volunteers. Thousands of hours are wasted each year by people being inconsiderate of other people's time.
- We are willing to **use XR's tech infrastructure**.
    - Most importantly we use the XR UK Hub
        - to record important details: team members, how to contact them, mandates, policies, sub-circles; and
        - to provide transparency to the rest of the movement.
    - Mattermost is the messaging platform over which we have most control, supplemented by Telegram and Signal for some purposes. WhatsApp enables the collection of data about our teams for use by those who oppose us, and is not safe.
    - Introductory guidance on our online tools — and on our ways of working generally — is available on the Rebel Toolkit.
    - All our ways of working also apply to online spaces including video-conferencing platforms.
- We try to communicate mindfully, compassionately and nonviolently with each other rather than against each other.
- Additionally, we **respect rebels' need for screen-free time**. Online discussions can be a great way to connect over long distances but they can drag on forever and clog up people's inboxes. Discuss issues face-to-face when possible, or at meetings when they affect the whole group, and don't include more people on an email thread than needed.
- We follow through with our projects and action points.
    - **Slow down your "yes"**. Only volunteer for tasks you are willing and able to do.
    - **Return tasks you are unable to complete**, so that someone else can do them. We understand that situations change; returning tasks is done without blame and shame.
    - For significant work, **try to have a back-up person or work with a group**.
    - Lack of follow-through may indicate underlying group issues, such as hurt feelings or unresolved conflict. Working through these issues can help find a solution.

## We run efficient, inclusive and regenerative meetings

- **Meetings in XR UK should follow a similar structure**, so that no matter what meeting you attend you will be able to understand what is happening.
  - List of attendees and their roles. We use nicknames if this helps protect people. This is important for accountability of any decisions made.
  - **Assign a facilitator and minute-taker**. As both roles hold a lot of power and responsibility, it is recommended that they attend training where practical and possible. Some groups elect people into these roles.
  - **Check-ins** are an opportunity for people to arrive in the meeting, and to see how people are before starting work. We recognise that not everybody is comfortable checking in, so check-ins are always optional.
  - **Regenerative cultures reminder** provides an opportunity to pause, to connect in with ourselves and the others in our meeting, and our deeper mission for cultural transformation and the wellbeing of all.
  - Read over any group agreement that provides additional guidelines teams work within (this may complement or embody the Constitution and Ways of Working).
  - **Review the action points** (tasks) from the last meeting — the opportunity to see how tasks are going, and if they need to be returned to the group.
  - Hear updates from sub-circles and project groups — the opportunity for the group to hear how sub-circles and projects are doing.
  - **Deliver the agenda** — where the main part of the meeting takes place.
  - **Collate action points** to ensure we all know what we will be working on.
  - Decide the date of the next meeting to ensure we all know when we are meeting again.
- Here is the agenda template and agenda guide.
- We know how to be in meetings, to keep them efficient, inclusive and regenerative.
  - **We agree our agendas in advance** as much as possible.
  - **We arrive on time**, and we try hard to finish on time, because we value the time each person volunteers to XR.
  - **We are concise** when we talk, so that everybody has time to speak.
  - **We remember WAIT: “Why am I talking?”** Ask yourself if something needs to be discussed in the meeting before you bring it in.
  - **We take breaks in meetings**. Everybody has different energy levels and accessibility needs.
  - We talk when the facilitator invites us to speak.
  - We talk one at a time.
  - We use hand signals in meetings to indicate that we wish to speak.
- We take responsibility for our feelings and behaviours in meetings.
  - Everyone is allowed to mindfully express our personal difficulties and our grief about the climate emergency if it helps you participate in meetings.
  - Anger can be a challenging emotion to express safely in a meeting, and expressing unfocused anger can be unfair to your team members.
  - If we experience anger around a group decision, and then block the work of the group because we cannot move past it, we should step back from that group.
  - If we are consistently struggling to manage our emotions, we can and should take a step back from our work until we can put support in place for ourselves.

- The Trained Emotional Support Network (TESN) is available to offer support to any Rebel in need.

| | |
|---|---|
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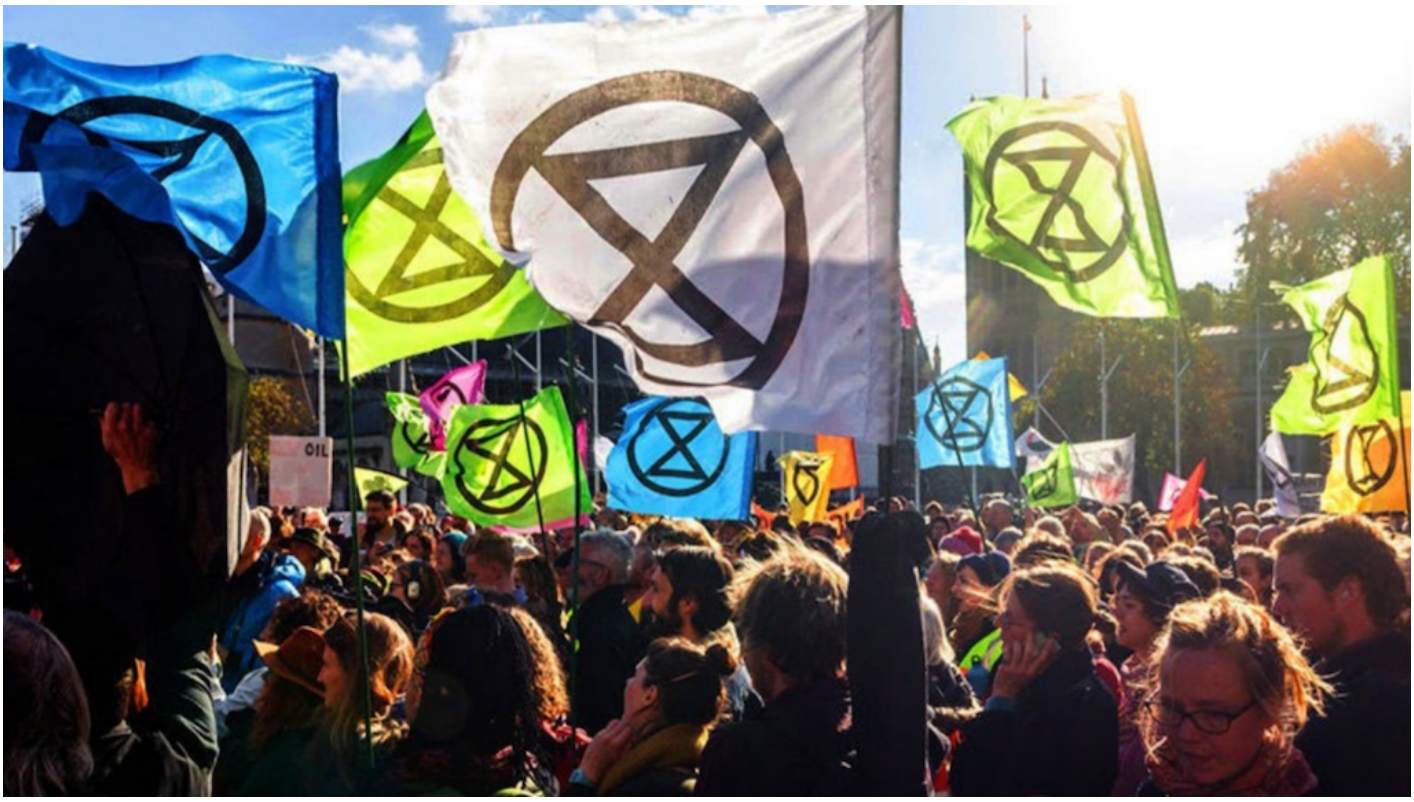
# XR UK Constitution

# The Self-Organising System

## Guiding & Empowering The Rebellion

As updated 8 June 2026

> We pursue great demands, but we sometimes make mistakes. We are all crew together, but we often disagree. We want to spread power, but it’s hard to do this and stay coherent as a movement.
>
> This Constitution provides a set of agreements to guide us in making decisions when we don’t know how.
> It is a modest tool in pursuit of immodest goals.
>
> Self-organising keeps us agile — able to draw on collective wisdom,
> but free from unnecessary interference.
> It cannot guarantee success, but it reduces the chances of us falling out.
>
> This Constitution will not lead us to heaven;
> but we hope it may continue to save the movement from hell!



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# A. Introduction — What this is, who it’s for, and how it changes

1. This document defines the Self-Organising System for XR UK.
2. To achieve our demands and see real progress in tackling the climate and ecological emergencies, we need our movement to work rapidly and effectively. The Self-Organising System replaces traditional ways of organising. It empowers rebel teams to make decisions independently within agreed parameters. Through this system the movement entrusts groups with the responsibility to make the best decisions they can so that we can all be successful.
3. The Constitution was created using many of the principles of Holacracy, and has been gradually revised since it was first adopted in March 2019. This update was prepared by the SOS circle in response to feedback from the movement, and adopted by The Rebel Hive (often known as The Hive) on 8 June 2026.
4. The rules in this Constitution apply to everyone in the same way — there are no privileged classes, no exceptions.
5. The rules appear in **bold text**, explanations and recommendations in plain text.

6. **All circles and roles contained within The Hive and its sub-circles are bound by the XR UK Constitution.** Other groups are not bound by the Constitution, but may choose to adopt it, or parts of it, if they wish to.
7. It's not complete or perfect. It's always a work in progress, which will evolve as needed.
8. If you have any feedback about how the Self-Organising System is working in XR UK, or you need training or support with using the System in your group or circle, then do please message the XR UK Self-Organising System circle on Mattermost or via email.
9. **Minor changes to this document may be made by the SOS circle. Any significant changes must be approved by both The Hive and the SOS circle, using the Integrative Decision Making Process.**

# B. Basic Principles

1. The Self-Organising System is designed to enable groups to act quickly and be responsive to fast-changing situations when needed, and at the same time integrate the wisdom of multiple perspectives when helpful.
2. The System is based on distributed authority — groups and individuals within groups are given the authority and the responsibility to make decisions and do things by clear mandates that are created and agreed upon by the wider team.
3. This means that we only use group decision-making when it's needed, and not for everything. (Group decision-making can take a lot of time and energy.)
4. The design of the System ensures that everyone can see who is doing what, and it promotes communication between related teams so that we can work with a common purpose across a large number of groups.
5. By distributing authority through the System, we create a hierarchy of purpose, instead of a hierarchy of power. Each team has its own purpose, delegated from a broader part of the organism. By following the rules of the System, these purposes add together, so the work of the different parts can serve the purpose of the whole.
6. The System helps us embody two of our Principles and Values: that we are based on autonomy and decentralisation; and that we actively mitigate power.
7. Distributed authority depends on relationships of respect and participation. The processes in this Constitution will not on their own remove existing inequalities. We need to follow them in ways that help reduce traditional barriers to participation, such as those based on race, gender or ability.
8. Building trust is key to sustaining our work. How we relate to one another determines how well we can collaborate to realise our Demands. We have agreed to follow our Ways of Working together as we implement the rules of this Constitution.

# C. The Self-Organising System

# 1. XR UK Organism — How it all fits together

1. XR UK is a movement of groups and teams working autonomously on different inter-connected projects to support the achievement of our three demands.
2. Throughout this document we use the word *circle* to refer to any collection of rebels who are bound by this Constitution and work together in a group or team with a common purpose. (This is sometimes called a Working Group.)
3. Representatives from circles come together in broader circles, to share information and coordinate activities. And any circle can also create sub-circles to which it can delegate some of its work. The result is a series of circles sitting within one another like a set of Russian dolls.
4. For example, The Hive is currently the broadest UK-wide circle. It contains representatives from the regional and national circles of the UK. It has delegated some of its work and responsibility to the Operations Circle, which in turn has delegated some of its work and responsibility to the Media & Messaging Circle. You can see what this looks like in the overall picture of circles.
5. **Each circle must have its own *mandate* which will be defined by:-**
   - **a *purpose* — the reason the circle exists / what it is working towards, as a smaller part of the purpose of the whole organism; and**
   - **some *accountabilities* — the ongoing work that the circle does, what tasks the circle is responsible for; and may also include**
   - **a *domain* — the resources or processes that the circle is responsible for, and which may not be changed or used without their permission.**
6. The mandate defines what the circle is expected to do or create, and the scope that it must operate within.
7. Advice on how to write mandates can be found in How To Write Mandates, together with some examples.
8. Each circle is self-governing within its mandate. This means that it's up to them how they work within their area of responsibility.
9. A sub-circle is also a part of the broader circle. This means they are accountable to that circle for the work that they do, and will need to prioritise their activity as requested.

10. A member of each sub-circle attends meetings of the broader circle. This is to ensure that information flows in both directions and that issues are addressed at the appropriate level.
11. All XR UK rebels can view a map of the XR UK organism on The Communications Hub (often known as The Hub).
12. **All decision-making authority sits with the broadest circle until delegated to the mandate of another role or circle.**
13. Projects may emerge which don't easily fit into the existing system; for example, a project which involves people from multiple circles. In this case, it is recommended that one role takes the lead on the project, and creates an ad-hoc project group to do the work with people from wherever relevant.
14. A project group can decide itself how it is going to be organised, or a broader circle can specify this. Since it doesn't have a formal mandate, **it can only make decisions through the existing mandates of its members, or by making a proposal to a broader circle**.

# 2. Roles Within A Circle — Creating responsibility for getting things done

1. It is recommended that, wherever possible, a circle devolves all its ongoing work to individuals in clearly defined roles with written mandates. This increases clarity and reduces potential confusion and conflict about who is doing what.
2. **Roles must be created or amended using the Integrative Decision Making Process, and given a written mandate with the elements described in 1.5 above.**
3. **When a circle defines a mandate for a role, the authority for whatever is included in that mandate is devolved from the circle to the role. This means decisions about whatever falls within the mandate are no longer taken at a circle level, but instead are made by the role-holder.**
4. **Role-holders remain bound by this Constitution, and the policies of their circle and broader circles, and will need to get permission to impact the domain of any other role or circle.**
5. **Role-holders have authority within the limits of their mandate, but must align their work with the priorities set by the Internal Coordinator of their circle.** How a role-holder fulfills their accountabilities is up to them, but the relative importance of any aspect of their work can be indicated by their Internal Coordinator.

6. **If, in order to fulfil the purpose of their role, a role-holder wants to act outside their accountabilities, they must seek authority from anyone who has an existing mandate with accountabilities that cover that work.** (If no mandate already exists, then it may be helpful to create one.)
7. **If you want to act from the mandate of your circle, rather than from a specific role that you hold, then you need the circle's consent to take any action that is significant.**
8. **Role-holders are accountable to their circle. The Internal Coordinator must ask them to give regular updates on their work, and invite other circle members periodically to offer feedback or voice any concerns they may have from the perspective of their role.** It is recommended that this is made a routine part of the cycle of the circle's meetings, and is not left until there is a specific problem or difficulty that needs attention. Advice on how to be accountable can be found in How To Manage Your Work And Stay Accountable.
9. **At a minimum, each circle must appoint an Internal Coordinator, to be responsible for the healthy and effective functioning of the circle, an External Coordinator, responsible for connecting with the next broadest circle and the rest of XR UK, and a Group Admin, responsible for making the circle and its roles visible to other rebels.** (The Hive does not need an External Coordinator, as it is the broadest circle.)
10. **The mandates for these roles are defined in Core Roles, and may not be changed**. The mandate of a core role may be shared between two or more people. **Where a coordinator role is shared, there will be a need for active communication between the role-holders.**
11. **Circles must ensure their core roles are filled.** If the appointment of an Internal Coordinator, External Coordinator, or Group Admin expires and a circle is unable to find a permanent successor, then they may make a short-term appointment.
12. **If no appointment is made when one of these roles expires, the Internal Coordinator of the broader circle has the authority to decide what needs to be done next, in the interests of the broader circle's mandate.** This may include asking the broader circle to appoint a new Internal Coordinator of the sub-circle.
13. Each circle may define other roles in whatever way serves their work. Other suggested roles that may be useful can be found in Roles. **Mandates for roles must always form part of the existing mandate of the circle creating them.** Circles cannot distribute authority that they do not already have.
14. **A role may be dissolved by the circle using the Integrative Decision Making Process.** As a member of the circle, the role-holder will be included in the decision.

# 3. Sub-circles — Increasing effectiveness and de-centralisation

1. When you have too many people attending meetings of a circle, it may be more effective to divide the work between sub-circles.
2. **All decisions to create a sub-circle, amend its mandate, move or dissolve it, must be made by the broader circle using the Integrative Decision Making Process.**
3. **The mandate of a sub-circle must form part of the existing mandate of the broader circle, and cannot form part of the mandate of another circle.**
4. **To create a new sub-circle —**
   - **The broader circle must define and consent to the sub-circle's mandate.**
   - **The broader circle may also delegate part or all of a domain it owns to the new sub-circle.**
   - **The broader circle will then elect the new Internal Coordinator of the sub-circle and ask them to determine what roles will be needed and how to fill them.**
5. **To achieve its mandate, the broader circle has a responsibility to support the work of its sub-circles to ensure they are functioning healthily, and also to review their work and hold them accountable.**
6. **If there is disagreement between two sub-circles over how to manage something, they must take the issue for resolution to the broader circle they both belong to.**
7. **Sub-circles are accountable for delivering their work within the limits of their mandate, and have authority to decide how they do so. They must align their work with the priorities set by the Internal Coordinator of the broader circle and the XR UK Strategy.** The Internal Coordinator may prioritise one aspect of the work of a sub-circle over another, but they may not indicate how that work should be done.
8. **If, in order to fulfil its purpose, a sub-circle wants to act outside its accountabilities, it must seek authority from anyone who has an existing mandate with accountabilities that cover that work.** (If no mandate already exists, then it may be helpful for the broader circle to create one.)
9. **The External Coordinator of a sub-circle must regularly attend meetings of the broader circle (unless they have the agreement of the broader circle's Internal Coordinator to follow its work in some other way). They must share the strategy and work of the broader circle with their circle (so that the work of the sub-circle aligns with that broader strategy).**
10. It is recommended that the broader circle reviews a sub-circle's purpose and accountabilities periodically.
11. **The mandate of a sub-circle may only be changed by the broader circle.** As a member of the broader circle, the sub-circle's External Coordinator will be included in the

decision.

12. If the broader circle feels that a sub-circle is not fulfilling its mandate, the first step will normally be to offer feedback to the sub-circle's External Coordinator. If this doesn't resolve the issue, then a meeting between representatives of the two circles may be appropriate to move things forward.
13. **A sub-circle may be dissolved by the broader circle.** As a member of the broader circle, the sub-circle's External Coordinator will be included in the decision.
14. **If a sub-circle is dissolved its mandate will return to the broader circle, and its members will no longer have roles or mandates.** The broader circle may wish to draw on the experience of some members of the sub-circle, by inviting them to join the broader circle, but there is no obligation to do so.
15. Sometimes it may be necessary to move a sub-circle into a different broader circle. (This will not often be appropriate, as the mandate of a sub-circle must always be a delegated part of the mandate of its broader circle.) When it is appropriate to do so, the correct procedure is to move the sub-circle and its mandate into the broadest circle from which it can then be devolved into its new position (using the Integrative Decision Making Process).

# 4. Policies & Domains — Holding it all together

1. A system which only has authority distributed to circles and roles could easily create chaos and fragmentation, if there was nothing to constrain the distributed authority and create alignment when needed.
2. A policy creates this alignment by specifying a shared way of doing things which either grants or restricts authority beyond the mandates of roles and circles.
3. For example, The Hive has created a policy that all Coordinators within XRUK must be trained to use this Self-Organising System.
4. **Policies must be adopted using the Integrative Decision Making Process, and be communicated to all sub-circles that they affect.**
5. **A policy that is created by a circle applies to all people, work and roles within that circle and any of its sub-circles, but not outside of that circle.** For it to apply outside of the circle that created it, it would need to be adopted by a broader circle.
6. **Where there is a conflict between two policies that have overlapping scope, the more recent policy will override the earlier one.**
7. **The Constitution overrides any previously existing policies that conflict with it, and may not be over-ridden by a new policy, but only amended in the way that is specified in A9 above, unless agreed by The Hive, with the consent of the SOS circle.**

8. **A domain gives control of a resource or process to a particular role or circle.** It may refer to something tangible, like a sound system or a bank account, or to a procedure, like posting to a social media page or liaising with the police.
9. Domains are powerful. It is recommended that they are created sparingly, and only when harm would be caused without one.
10. **A domain only constrains the circle that creates it, and its own sub-circles.** If you want a domain to apply to all of XRUK, then you will need to ask The Hive to delegate it through the circle structure.
11. **A broader circle may take back from a sub-circle any delegated domain.**
12. **Within the scope outlined in 4.10 above, role-holders and circles need to get permission to impact the domain of any other role or circle.**
13. **Domains form part of the mandate of a role or circle, and must be posted on The Hub, where rebels can see them.**
14. **Any creation or delegation of a domain must be communicated to all the circles that may need to be made aware.**

# 5. Choosing Role-Holders — Who has power and how to challenge them

1. The simplest way to decide who fills roles within a circle is to let circle members volunteer for the roles they want to fill. **Where this option is used, the facilitator must check that there are no objections to the appointment from other members of the circle (see the Integrative Decision Making Process). The circle must consider whether or not an individual has the skills and capacity to fulfil the mandate safely before appointing them.**
2. **Where a role holds a lot of power, or needs meaningful expertise, or if there are more volunteers than are needed, any member of the circle may ask for the appointment to be made by election.**
3. **The Internal and External Coordinators of a circle must always be appointed by election.**
4. **There are two options for electing someone to a role:**
   - **The Integrative Election Process, or**
   - **A Considered Majority Vote.**

   **The steps that must be followed for each process are set out in the linked pages, which form part of this Constitution.**
5. Both options allow the whole circle to reflect on what is required and who would best meet the need.

6. Before holding an election it may be helpful to resolve underlying questions or concerns that need attention. You can find advice on what to consider in Pre-Election Checklist.
7. **An appointment becomes effective once it is recorded on The Hub by the Group Admin.**
8. **Role-holders must be appointed for fixed terms, which must be agreed before their appointment.**
9. **Internal and External Coordinators may only serve a maximum term of 6 months, so that elections are held at least every 6 months for these roles.** This ensures that authority within a circle is refreshed at regular intervals, and allows for fresh ideas to keep things from becoming stuck. **A Coordinator may stand for re-election at the end of their term.** This allows for continuity and gives people time to grow into their roles.
10. The Group Admin of a circle keeps track of when re-elections need to be held.
11. In some cases it may be appropriate for a single role to be filled by more than one person. **Where this is the case, each role-holder is appointed to the role in their own right, independently of whoever they may share it with.**
12. To prevent undue concentration of power, the same person should not be both Internal and External Coordinator of a circle, unless there are no other acceptable candidates. **If this is the case, the broader circle must be informed** and may decide to take further action if appropriate.
13. **Any member of the circle may call for an election for any role-holder at any time.**
14. Calling for repeated elections without allowing some time to pass is unreasonable.
15. **With the agreement of the broader circle, the Internal Coordinator of that circle may attend a meeting of one of its sub-circles to call for an election for its Internal Coordinator, if the sub-circle is not fulfilling its mandate.**
16. **With the agreement of the broader circle, the Internal Coordinator of that circle may attend a meeting of one of its sub-circles to call for an election for its External Coordinator, if they have not been fulfilling their role or are persistently preventing the broader circle from doing its work. They may do the same with a linked circle for a Link Role (see 7.25 below). They have the right to object to the person the sub-circle or linked circle elects** (following the processes set out in 5.4 above)**.**
17. **If a role-holder wants to step down before the end of their term, they must let their Internal Coordinator know, so that someone else may be appointed, or the mandate withdrawn.**

# 6. Joining A Circle & Asking People To Leave — Keeping things healthy

1. **To be a member of a circle, all rebels must agree to act in alignment with XR's Demands and Principles & Values and this Constitution. They must read and agree to our Ways of Working and our Volunteer Agreement, and have a mandated role within the circle.**
2. **To join a circle, rebels must be invited by the circle's Internal Coordinator** on the basis of a clear fit between work that needs to be done and their skills and abilities. (This does not apply to External Coordinators of sub-circles, or Link Roles from other circles.) **The circle must consent to the addition of new circle members.**
3. In this system *authority is earned* — people earn the right to be a member of a circle and attend meetings by actively filling a role and working on at least one project for the circle. This prevents meetings being clogged up by people attending and sharing their views about how things should be done when they aren't actually involved in any work.
4. **The membership of a circle is defined by the list of current role-holders recorded on The Hub.**
5. **When a role-holder comes to the end of their term, the role immediately becomes vacant until someone is re-elected to it. The former role-holder is no longer part of the circle, unless they hold another role within the circle.**
6. Conflict within circles can be difficult to manage. This can lead to people withdrawing from their work, or even the movement. Disagreement can sometimes also be a rich source of creativity and strength, if handled well.
7. If someone has an issue with the way a fellow rebel is working or behaving, as set out in our Ways of Working it will usually be best to talk to them directly and privately. If that doesn't help, then the next step is to bring the issue to the Internal Coordinator of the circle the rebel is part of.
8. **If it becomes apparent to the circle's Internal Coordinator that a circle member is:**
   - **not properly fulfilling their role's mandate, or**
   - **not doing any work in the circle, or**
   - **violating XR's Principles & Values, Ways of Working, Volunteer Agreement or this Constitution,**
9. **Then the following steps must be taken:**
   - **The Internal Coordinator has a direct conversation with the circle member to attempt to resolve any issues and help them meet their accountabilities.**
   - **If that doesn't resolve the issue, the Internal Coordinator brings it to the whole circle for feedback and review.**
10. The circle and circle member may agree to do one of the following:
    - hold a process to address the underlying issues, or
    - ask for an externally facilitated conflict mediation process, or
    - begin the Harmful Behaviour process where appropriate.
11. **If a resolution can't be reached after two or more reasonable attempts have been made, the Internal Coordinator must ask the circle to vote on whether to exclude the circle member from the circle.**

# 7. How To Make Decisions — Moving things forward together

1. **The following ways of making decisions must be used for the following situations:-**

## — Decisions to create or amend policies or mandates for roles & sub-circles

2. **These decisions must always be made collectively in meetings,** because the views of the whole circle need to be integrated when distributing authority. **Collective decisions may be made at any formal meeting of a circle. There are no attendee or quorum restrictions, but all circle members must be given reasonable notice of the meeting and enough time to consider the proposal.**
3. **Any member of the circle may bring a proposal. An invited guest may bring a proposal, with the consent of the circle.**
4. **Proposals must explain the need that the proposal is seeking to address and how the proposal will help to meet that need.** (A guide to writing proposals is contained in How To Write Proposals.)
5. If the Internal Coordinator of the circle is not convinced that the proposal addresses a genuine need, or thinks that there may be a better way to address it, they may speak to the proposer before it is brought to a meeting.
6. **The facilitator must use the Integrative Decision Making Process. The steps that must be followed are set out in the linked page, which forms part of this Constitution.**
7. This Integrative Decision Making process will not normally be used to make operational decisions, as these will be made by the role-holders with the relevant mandates.
8. **As a last resort, if the process has been tried without arriving at a decision, and there is either:**
   - **a reason the decision needs to be made in the current meeting, or**
     - **if it has not been possible to reach a decision in two previous meetings,**

   **then the decision may be made by simple majority vote.**
9. **If the vote is tied, then a casting vote is made by the circle's External Coordinator. If the External Coordinator isn't present, then the casting vote passes to the Internal Coordinator.**

## — Decisions where a role has been given a mandate

10. **All role-holders may make decisions about any issues covered by their mandate. These decisions are made outside of meetings.**

11. **Where a decision is fairly straightforward, won't significantly affect others, or needs to be made quickly, a role-holder may make that decision entirely on their own.**
12. **A role-holder may not make a decision that goes against a policy of the circle or its broader circles, breaks a rule in the Constitution, or clearly violates XR's Principles and Values or Ways of Working. They will need to get permission before impacting domains that they do not own** (see 4.12 above)**.**
13. **Where a decision is likely to be more contentious or affect other roles or circles, and there is enough time to do so, a role-holder must consult other people who will be meaningfully affected, as well as those with relevant expertise.**
14. The idea is to create transparency, and collect input proportional to the impact of the decision, not require unnecessary delay or a burdensome number of meetings. The precise balance of how much or how little feedback to seek is up to the role-holder to decide.
15. **Once they have heard all the advice and perspectives they have received, the role-holder decides on what they believe to be the best course of action.** The point is *not* to create a watered-down compromise that accommodates everybody's wishes, it is about accessing collective wisdom in pursuit of a sound decision.
16. More information on how to use this Advice Process can be found in The Advice Process.

## — All other decisions

17. In most cases, if a circle is set up correctly with clear role-holders, there will rarely be anything that doesn't fall into the two categories above. **For any other decision which falls within the circle's mandate and is not covered by a specific role, the facilitator may decide which decision-making process to use.** For example, they may:
    - delegate the decision to a circle member, or
    - simply seek agreement from circle members, or
    - ask for consent from circle members on the basis of 'safe enough to try', or
    - test for levels of support by show of hands, or
    - use any other decision-making tool, or (if all else fails)
    - take a vote.
18. Suggestions on how to choose which process to use can be found in Decision Making Processes.

## — Who decides?

19. **Every member of a circle** (see 6.4 above) **who is present at the relevant meeting may play a part in collective decision-making processes.**
20. **Role-holders must represent the perspective of their role, not their personal opinions; and External Coordinators must represent the mandate of their sub-circle, not the opinions of its members.**

21. **If the External Coordinator of a sub-circle is unable to attend a meeting, they may nominate another member of the sub-circle to attend in their place. The Internal Coordinator of the broader circle must be informed before the meeting.**
22. **If a sub-circle has elected joint External Coordinators, then only one of them may attend any particular meeting of the broader circle (unless the broader circle agrees otherwise), and only one of them may participate in the decision-making processes.**
23. **Anyone present as an observer does not take part.**
24. **In the case of a vote, each member of a circle has one vote, regardless of how many roles they hold.**
25. **Where a circle contains link roles from other circles (not the External Coordinators of its own sub-circles), they will not usually take part in the circle's collective decision-making.** (See Link Roles.)
26. More information on when to create link roles or use other ways to coordinate between circles can be found in How To Work With Other Teams.
27. **Where a decision does not fall within the circle's mandate it will need to be taken to a broader circle for consideration.**
28. Once a decision has been taken it will usually need time to be acted upon before the issue is re-visited. In most cases, this means that it will not be appropriate to bring the same issue back for re-consideration in any form until some time has passed. **The Internal Coordinator of the circle may decline to put something on the agenda if they think it's too soon to consider the same issue.**

# 8. Meetings — Making them more efficient and enjoyable

1. It is recommended that meetings follow the format in this Standard Agenda Template.
2. How we have agreed to interact with one another in meetings and work together is set out in our Ways of Working.
3. Every meeting needs a facilitator, who may be an appointed role-holder, or someone who volunteers at the start of the meeting. It may be helpful to rotate who facilitates from meeting to meeting, unless someone has been appointed to the role. Where possible it is recommended that Coordinators do not facilitate meetings. Support and training for facilitators is available from the SOS circle and Rebellion Academy.
4. Good facilitation will support rebels who don't know how the Self-Organising System works to contribute their energy and ideas.
5. Some circles create the agenda in advance. Others build it at the start of the meeting.
6. Meetings work better and are shorter if circle members prepare clear reports and proposals in advance. A guide on how to write proposals can be found in How To Write

Proposals.

7. A successful meeting will strike a balance between operational issues (who's doing what) and governance questions (how we choose to organise things). Moving projects forward will often be more useful than open-ended discussion.
8. It is recommended to devote some time to review the way the circle is working every few months. (What is working well? What needs improving? What might we need to change about the way we work together? How do we run our meetings? Who needs help to do their work? Are there tensions between circle members that would benefit from some outside support?) Thinking about these questions may lead to the creation of new roles and policies.
9. **The facilitator may require circle members to speak from their role rather than their personal perspective, to help to keep the meeting effective and prevent it turning into a general discussion.**
10. **Minutes and meeting outputs, including the terms of any elected roles and the review dates of all policy decisions, must be kept somewhere all circle members can view them.**
11. **All circle members are entitled to attend meetings of the circle**, but there's no obligation for them to be present at every meeting. **Regular non-attendance must be agreed with the Internal Coordinator, and must not prevent the circle member from fulfilling their mandate.**
12. **There is no required quorum or number of people for a circle meeting to happen. It happens with whoever shows up, unless otherwise specified in a policy that a certain number or mix of people are required to be there for a meeting to be quorate. However, whoever schedules the meeting must give reasonable notice to all circle members before a meeting takes place.**
13. **With the agreement of the circle, a circle member may invite someone who isn't a member of the circle to attend a meeting, as a guest, to address a specific issue. Guests may only participate in the processing of that issue and will not take part in any decision-making.**
14. **With the agreement of the circle, someone may be invited to attend a circle meeting as an observer. Observers do not participate in the meeting unless invited to do so by the facilitator, and do not take part in decision-making processes.**

# 9. Record-Keeping — Creating transparency & improving communication

1. **Every circle within XR UK must publish and maintain an up to date profile on The Hub, including:**
    - **their mandate (purpose, accountabilities, domains and policies);**
    - **a way for others to contact them (eg email address, or Mattermost channel); and**
    - **the names and mandates of their Coordinators and other role-holders.**

# D. Definitions of Key Terms

The definitions of key terms used throughout this Constitution can be found in Terms and Definitions in the Self-Organising System.

# E. External Resources

Resources to support the use and understanding of this Constitution can be found in:

- XR UK Ways of Working And Constitution for rules and conventions, and
- SOS: Making It Work For You for help and guidance in implementing them.

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We all want to see real and urgent change in meeting the climate and ecological emergencies.

May this Self-Organising System empower us to be
the most effective movement we can be!




*This version was revised from a version originally created by Nick Osborne at evolvingorganisation.co. You are free to copy it subject to these licence terms.*

# Constitution resources

Supplementary guidance that is referenced in the XR UK Constitution

# Constitution Roles, Policies & Support

## Core role mandates

The mandates for the Core Roles are defined by the Constitution (see section C.2 to understand why these are needed) and are the same for all circles.

You can view all the Core Role mandates on the organism. Click the ⊕ next to each role to see its mandate.

Alternatively, if you have a Hub login, you can see the individual mandates on the Hub:

- External Coordinator
- Internal Coordinator
- Group Admin

## Template role mandates

These mandates for Template Roles are suggestions which can be used as templates to copy and adapt by any team for their own purposes. Some of them can be used to distribute some of the power in Core Roles, particularly where Coordinator roles get overloaded in busy teams. For example, the Integrator/recruiter role helps build the team, relieving the Internal Coordinator of this part of their role.

Links on the Hub are below. If you don't have a Hub login, please go to this list of Template Roles and click the + next to a role to see its mandate.

- Integrator/recruiter — Identify new team members to take on roles within the team, and supporting them to learn the team agreements and habits, including communication platforms and XR UK’s Ways of Working.

- Communications Lead — Regularly check all the messages coming to the team (email, messaging platforms). Respond to them or pass them on to relevant roles.
- Facilitator — Guide the team meeting, making sure people are speaking from their role and staying on topic. Cover main agenda items and facilitate decision-making process if needed.
- Budget Holder — Coordinate the finances for the team, including estimating and requesting financial needs, and distributing available finances to meet needs of the team's mandate.
- Secretary — Keeping the team's information and communications organised and accessible, supporting coordination, accountability, and transparency.
- Link role
- Decision-making Link role
- Team Member template role — Generic role for circles that prefer not to use more specific roles and mandates, but want to be clear who is a member and able to participate in group decisions.

# Elections and appointments to roles

- Integrative Election Process for Roles in XR UK
- Considered Majority Vote for Roles in XR UK

# Key Policies

- Co-option Policy
- Criteria and Conditions for Membership of an XR UK Working Group
- Harmful Behaviour Policy
- Representation and Mitigation of Power in Nations/regions
- Hive Policy on Link Roles

# Agreements

- Volunteer Agreement
- Ways of Working

# Guidance

See the SOS: Making it work for you book for the main guidance on practical self-organising.

Specifically on the Constitution, there is a Constitution Companion which provides an explainer in simple language.

# Training

- Calendar of live SOS training
- Rebellion Academy SOS training

# Integrative Decision Making (IDM) process

[Note: This page forms part of Section C.7 of the XR UK Constitution.]

This guidance includes mandatory and advisory parts.
Mandatory steps appear in **bold**, advice in plain text.

**Mandatory process**

The steps in the process are:

1. **A person *presents a proposal* for a new policy, role or sub-circle, or to change an existing one.**
2. **Whoever needs to may ask *clarifying questions*. Only questions to better understand the proposal are allowed. No reactions. The proposer may answer.**
3. **Each person, one at a time, gives their *reactions* to the proposal. No discussion or cross talk. If the meeting is online, no typing in the chat. The proposer does not react.**
4. **The proposer may *amend* the proposal if they want to based on the reactions they have heard. This is optional. Only the proposer speaks at this step. The proposer may also *respond* to some of the reactions where helpful. No other discussion or feedback.**
5. **The facilitator asks each person in turn if they have any *objection* to the proposal.** This is not the same as asking if they like it, agree with it, or think it's the best way forward. The question is not "Do you think this is a good idea?" or "Is this how you would have designed things?", but rather "Do you object to giving this a go?" or "Is this safe enough to try?". Objections are often helpful, as they may alert the circle to consequences that haven't yet been fully considered. They are a welcome part of the process of making a good decision. **Circle members respond from the perspective of their role, not their personal opinion.**
6. **If the facilitator is a member of the circle and has an objection, then they must ask someone else to take over the facilitation.**
7. **For an objection to be valid, it must meet one of these two sets of criteria:**
   **a. The objection must be a reason that the proposal causes *harm* — where harm is defined as**
   - **either degrading the ability of the circle to achieve its mandate,**

- **or limiting the objector from fulfilling the mandate of one of their roles *and* degrading the ability of the circle to achieve its mandate; and**
  **The objection must be created by the proposal and not exist already; and**
  **The objector must give a reason why they are reasonably sure the harm will happen or why they don't consider the proposal safe enough to try.**

**b. The grounds for objection must be that the proposal goes against a policy of the circle or its broader circles (not the subject of the proposal), or breaks a rule in the Constitution, or clearly violates XR's Principles and Values or Ways of Working. (The facilitator may also object to the proposal on these grounds.)**

8. **If there are no objections, the *proposal is accepted*.**
9. **If there are objections, the facilitator speaks with the objector to help clarify whether their objection meets the conditions above. It is the facilitator's job to determine this.** (They may find it helpful to use the table below.) **They do not consult the other circle members, but they must explain their reasoning. If in doubt, objections are considered valid. If the objections are not deemed valid, then the *proposal is accepted*.**
10. **If there are valid objections, then the facilitator may decide either to process them immediately if they seem resolvable, or to suggest they are processed outside the meeting so that it doesn't take up everyone else's time.**
11. **To process valid objections, the proposer *integrates* them where possible by adapting the proposal so that the objections no longer exist.**
12. **The facilitator holds *another objection round* for the integrated proposal.**
13. **Once there are no further objections the *proposal is accepted.***
14. **It becomes effective once it is recorded on The Hub by the Group Admin.**
15. **For what seems to be a minor or non-contentious proposal the following short version of this process may be used instead:**
    - **The facilitator asks if there are any clarifications needed or any objections to the proposal. If there aren't any, they ask for a show of hands to formally indicate no objections.**
16. **For the rules about who participates in the process, see Sections C.7.19 - 28 of the XR UK Constitution.**

To be valid, an objection must meet *all* of the following criteria, which can be addressed in any order:-

| Criterion | Valid | Not valid |
|---|---|---|
| The proposal causes **harm** — where harm is defined as either degrading the ability of the circle to achieve its mandate,<br><br>or limiting the objector from fulfilling the mandate of one of their roles *and* degrading the ability of the circle to achieve its mandate | Is your concern a reason the proposal causes harm? or… | … Is your concern that the proposal is unneeded or incomplete? |

| Criterion | Valid | Not valid |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The objection is created by the proposal and does not exist already | Is the harm created by this proposal? or… | … Is it already a concern, even if the proposal were dropped? |
| The objector is reasonably sure the harm will happen or doesn't consider the proposal safe enough to try | Would the proposal necessarily cause the impact? or…<br><br>Could significant harm happen before we can adapt? or… | … Are you anticipating that this impact will occur? (If "Yes," ask the next pair of questions)<br><br>… Is it safe enough to try, knowing we can revisit it at any time? |

If the grounds for objection are that the proposal goes against a policy of the circle or its broader circles, or breaks a rule in the Constitution, or clearly violates XR's Principles and Values or Ways of Working then the objection is automatically valid. (This includes proposals that would clearly reinforce patterns of exclusion or discrimination.)

- It is up to the proposer to see if they can find a way to amend their proposal in order to integrate and resolve a valid objection.
- They can ask the objector for help with this: "What can be added or changed to remove that issue?"
- Or ask for contributions from anyone else to resolve the issue.
- With each suggestion, the question for the objector is "Would this resolve your objection?", and the question for the proposer is "Would this still address the reason you brought the proposal?"

# Pre-Election Checklist

## Some things it may be helpful to resolve before holding an election

This guidance for facilitators and Internal Coordinators is about sequencing: making sure any **tensions around mandate, membership, conflict, or process are surfaced and addressed before the election begins**. That way the election itself can focus on deciding who will be best for the role, not unresolved issues.

# 1. Mandate Clarity

- Have the role's purpose, accountabilities, and domains been read aloud and/or displayed in an accessible way?
- Is the tenure of the appointment clear?
- Does everyone agree this matches the team's current needs?
- If there are tensions about whether the mandate is right or needs amending → resolve or note them first (may need an IDM proposal before an election).

# 2. Circle Clarity

- Is it clear who is a member of the circle and who has consent rights in the election?
- Have new or visiting people been welcomed and boundaries explained?
- Have steps been taken to ensure all members, including under-represented voices, feel able to participate fully?
- If there are contested questions about circle membership, pause and address those first.

# 3. Readiness of the Circle

- Has enough information been shared about what the role requires (time, skills, relationships)?
- Do people feel the role is ripe to be filled (not premature, not overdue)?

- Have potential candidates from under-represented groups been encouraged and supported to stand, if willing?
- If doubts remain about timing or necessity, test these tensions before proceeding.
- Can the role be shared, and, if so, has the circle considered whether it is willing to have more than one person appointed to the role? (See notes below)

# 4. Conflict & Relationship Health

- Are there known interpersonal conflicts that could distort the election?
- Has there been a chance for people to voice underlying tensions in another setting (e.g. a conflict process, the Advice Process)?
- If the election risks becoming a proxy battle, do what you can to mitigate the conflict separately.

# 5. Procedural Clarity

- Has the facilitator confirmed which election process will be used (Considered Majority Vote or Integrative Election)?
- Does everyone understand the steps (nominations, clarifying questions, secret ballot, objections integration)?
- Is there consent to use this process now, under the time available?

# 6. Right Ordering Check

- Take a brief pause or moment of silence to centre the group.
- Ask: “Is there anything that must be resolved before we can move ahead in good order?”
- Only proceed once there is shared confidence the conditions are met.

# Advisory Notes

Experience has shown that two co-coordinators can work well. Three can work or be unwieldy depending on the individuals. Four or more are unlikely to work as well as coordination requires a lot of decision making and you’ll need to decide how to do that. The more people, the less likely you’ll get agreement on how to proceed.

When co-coordinators are not in agreement there is the potential for confusion and difficulty within the wider team. A formal group agreement about decision making and communication may be

helpful. Here is a template agreement you can copy and adapt.

> - For any coordinator decision or communication we agree to seek agreement between all co-coordinators before we share it with the wider team.
> - If we cannot reach agreement with our co-coordinators then we agree to explain this to the circle during a meeting. We can then share our individual opinions.
> - We agree that information and communication shared outside the team requires agreement from all co-coordinators regarding content and distribution.

# Integrative Election Process for Roles in XR UK

[Note: this guidance forms part of Section C.5 of the XR UK Constitution.]

This guidance includes mandatory and advisory parts. Mandatory steps appear in **bold**, advice in plain text.

## Mandatory process

The steps in the process are:

### 1. Clarify the role

- **The facilitator reads out or displays the mandate of the role.**
- The Internal Coordinator may explain the value of the role to the circle, its history and relationships with other roles and circles
- **Ensure everyone understands what the role involves, its time and energy requirements, and the qualities needed to do it well**. Anyone may ask questions to clarify what is intended.
- **Seek consent for the term of appointment** (normally 3–12 months; 6 months max for Internal/External Coordinator roles).

### 2. First round of nominations

- **Each circle member nominates one person for the role (which may be themselves).**
- Online: each person puts a name in the chat and sends at the same time for everyone to see. The facilitator may cue up the process — “Type the name in the chat box, but don’t hit Enter. Anyone need more time? No, Ok. Then hit Enter on my count. 3…2…1…Enter!”
- In person: write a nomination on a piece of paper and pass it to the facilitator who will read them out.
- **If the circle has agreed that a shared appointment is acceptable, then more than one person may be nominated.**
- **Each person gives a positive reason for their choice (without commenting on other candidates).** For example, “I nominated this rebel because I believe they will bring a fresh approach, and grow into parts of the role that haven’t been emphasised by

previous role-holders".
- **Nominated candidates share the other roles they currently hold** (so we avoid too much power or responsibility being held by any one person).

## 3. Second round of nominations

- **After hearing others' reasons, each circle member may keep or change their nomination, giving a positive reason if their nomination has changed.**
- Nominations for multiple holders of the same role may be allowed if this emerges naturally.
- **No comments on others' choices or reasons.**

## 4. Proposal for appointment

- **Guided mainly by the number of nominations in the second round, but also taking into account the reasons shared and the needs of the role, the facilitator makes a proposal for who to appoint.**
- If appropriate, the proposal may include sharing the role between more than one person.

## 5. Check for consent

- **Ask whether anyone objects to the proposal, inviting the nominee to respond last.**
- **Objections must be valid under the Constitution. Objections are tested using the Integrative Decision Making Process objection criteria in the XR UK Constitution, section 7.**
- **If there are valid objections, the facilitator works with the objector and the nominee to integrate the objection.** This means looking for a solution which removes the objection but which is also acceptable to the nominee, until consent is achieved.
- **If an objection cannot be integrated, the facilitator makes an alternative proposal for appointment, guided mainly by the number of nominations in the second round (see 4 above), and checks again for consent.**

## 6. Confirm Appointment

- **Once consent is reached, celebrate and welcome the appointee(s).**
- **Record the decision and update the circle's shared records (e.g. on the XR UK Hub).**

**The process for the integrative election process may be used in a shortened form with the consent of the circle.**

# Advisory notes

## Inclusivity and encouragement

Give particular attention to voices less often heard or less confident; people grow through experience and support. Remember that much of our potential is latent. A particular appointment may enable someone to develop and exercise unsuspected abilities.

If a role has repeatedly been held by the same demographic group, explicitly invite others to consider whether they could take it on with support.

Facilitators may pay attention to who is and isn't being nominated and take gentle steps to widen participation where needed (e.g. invite reflection on barriers, offer mentoring).

## Psychological safety

Facilitators should aim to hold a calm, unhurried space; defend against persuasion, judgement or self-promotion. The process is about the role and the circle's needs, not competition. Facilitators may proactively invite new or quieter voices who have not yet spoken.

If you nominate someone for a role without speaking to them first, the first they hear of it may be in front of the whole group. Especially in larger circles, that can create strong social pressure — even when the intention is kind — and might lead someone to take on a role they're not ready for or don't feel right about. Encouraging others to take on leadership can be very positive, but it's often best to talk with them beforehand and give them time to consider whether it's a good fit.

## Equality of opportunity

A slower pace or extra clarification may help those new to the circle or unfamiliar with the process. If it appears that there may be only one candidate for the role, slow down and double check that nobody else is interested. You might say something like "If we could offer any kind of support, what support might you need to take on a role like this?"

If structural or cultural barriers appear (e.g. dominance of one demographic or style), pause to discuss what support or adaptation would make participation easier.

## Transparency and trust

Explain why this process is used — to integrate the wisdom of the group without turning it into a popularity contest.

## After the election

Check-in soon after to confirm that the appointee feels supported and the circle is aligned on expectations.

# Considered Majority Vote for Roles in XR UK

[Note: this guidance forms part of Section C.5 of the XR UK Constitution.]

This guidance includes mandatory and advisory parts. Mandatory steps appear in **bold**, advice in plain text.

## Mandatory process

The steps in the process are:

### 1. Clarify the role

- **The facilitator reads out or displays the mandate of the role.**
- The Internal Coordinator may explain the value of the role to the circle, its history and relationships with other roles and circles.
- **Ensure everyone understands what the role involves, its time and energy requirements, and the qualities needed to do it well**. Anyone may ask questions to clarify what is intended.
- **Seek consent for the term of appointment** (normally 3–12 months; 6 months max for Internal/External Coordinator roles).

### 2. Gauge interest

- **The facilitator asks who has the capacity and motivation for the role.**
- **Circle members may nominate themselves or others who have agreed to be considered**.
- Nominations can also be made for people who have not put themselves forward, but who others in the circle feel might fit the post well. If nominating someone in this way be careful not to put social pressure on anyone to stand if they are unsure.
- If there appears to be just a single candidate, check carefully that no-one else wishes to be considered before accepting this — the Advisory notes below are relevant here.
- Explore the possibility of rotation for sharing experience, and support potential new role-holders — again, see the Advisory notes, below, for more details on how to approach this.

### 3. Candidate introductions

- **Each candidate speaks about why they would fit the role, or someone else can speak on their behalf. No commenting on other candidates.**
- **Candidates share the other roles they currently hold** (so we avoid too much power or responsibility being held by any one person).

## 4. Clarifying questions for candidates

- **The facilitator initiates a round of clarifying questions for the candidates.**
- These questions can be responded to by the relevant candidate.
- Responses should clarify the relevant candidate's position, without reference to other candidates.

## 5. Vote

- **Each circle member votes for one candidate** (which may include themselves) **in a secret ballot.**
- Online: each circle member puts the name of the candidate in a private message to the facilitator.
- In person: write a candidate's name on a piece of paper and pass it to the facilitator.
- **The facilitator adds up the votes for each candidate, and announces who got the most.**
- **In the event of a tie, the External Coordinator of the circle has a casting vote. If the External Coordinator isn't present, then the casting vote passes to the Internal Coordinator.**

## 6. Check for consent

- **Ask whether anyone objects to the appointment of the winning candidate, inviting the nominee to respond last.**
- **Objections must be valid under the Constitution. Objections are tested using the Integrative Decision Making Process objection criteria in the XR UK Constitution, section 7.**
- **If there are valid objections, the facilitator works with the objector and candidate to integrate the objection.** This means looking for a solution which removes the objection but which is also acceptable to the candidate, until consent is achieved.
- **If an objection cannot be integrated a new election is held without including the candidate objected to. The facilitator decides whether this happens in the same meeting or a future meeting.**

## 7. Confirm Appointment

- **Once consent is reached, celebrate and welcome the appointee(s).**
- **Record the decision and update the circle's shared records (e.g. on the XR UK Hub).**

Sometimes more than one person may offer themselves as joint candidates for a role. **In this case their joint nomination is treated as if they were a single candidate in the process above.**

**The process for a considered majority vote may be used in a shortened form with the consent of the circle.**

# Advisory notes

## Inclusivity and encouragement

Give particular attention to voices less often heard or less confident; people grow through experience and support. Remember that much of our potential is latent. A particular appointment may enable someone to develop and exercise unsuspected abilities.

If a role has repeatedly been held by the same demographic group, explicitly invite others to consider whether they could take it on with support.

## Psychological safety

Facilitators should aim to hold a calm, unhurried space; defend against persuasion, judgement or self-promotion. The process is about the role and the circle’s needs, not competition. Facilitators may proactively invite new or quieter voices who have not yet spoken.

If you nominate someone for a role without speaking to them first, the first they hear of it may be in front of the whole group. Especially in larger circles, that can create strong social pressure — even when the intention is kind — and might lead someone to take on a role they’re not ready for or don’t feel right about. Encouraging others to take on leadership can be very positive, but it’s often best to talk with them beforehand and give them time to consider whether it’s a good fit.

## Equality of opportunity

A slower pace or extra clarification may help those new to the circle or unfamiliar with the process. If it appears that there may be only one candidate for the role, slow down and double check that nobody else is interested. You might say something like "If we could offer any kind of support, what support might you need to take on a role like this?"

If structural or cultural barriers appear (e.g. dominance of one demographic or style), pause to discuss what support or adaptation would make participation easier.

## Advocacy for candidates

When candidates speak for themselves, it can easily turn into a “campaign speech” — something we try to avoid in XR. Asking someone else to speak on a candidate’s behalf helps prevent this, while also adding the speaker’s own perspective and endorsement. For this reason, we recommend that, wherever possible, candidates have someone else introduce them.

## Transparency and trust

Explain why this process is used — to integrate the wisdom of the group without turning it into a popularity contest.

## After the election

Check-in soon after to confirm that the appointee feels supported and the circle is aligned on expectations.

# The Advice Process

[Note: this guidance is referred to by Section C.7 of the XR UK Constitution.]

The Advice Process can be practised in many ways, but they share a common factor, which is that anyone can make any decision within the mandate of their role after seeking advice from

1. other roles who will be meaningfully affected, and
2. people with expertise in the matter.

There are two key principles:

- **Advice received must be taken into consideration**. The point is not to create a watered-down compromise that accommodates everybody's wishes. It is about accessing collective wisdom in pursuit of a sound decision. With all the advice and perspectives the decision-maker has received, they choose what they believe to be the best course of action.
- **Advice is simply advice**. No one, whatever their role, can tell a decision-maker what to decide. Usually, the decision-maker is the person in the role with a mandate that relates to the decision, or the person who either first noticed the issue or is most affected by it.

In practice, this process proves remarkably effective. It allows anybody to seize the initiative. Power is no longer a zero-sum game. Everyone is powerful via the advice process.

# It's not consensus

We often imagine decisions can be made in only two ways: either by a person with authority (someone calls the shots; some people might be frustrated; but at least things get done), or by unanimous agreement (everyone gets a say, but it can be frustratingly slow).

It is a misunderstanding that self-management decisions are made by getting everyone to agree, or even involving everyone in the decision. The advice-seeker should take all relevant advice into consideration, but can still make the decision.

Consensus may sound appealing, but it's not always most effective to give everybody veto power, which effectively leads to 'minority rule'. In the advice process, power and responsibility rest with the mandate to make the decision. Ergo, there is no power to block.

Ownership of the issue stays clearly with the mandate-holder. Convinced she made the best possible decision, she can see things through with enthusiasm, and she can accept responsibility for any mistakes.

The advice process, then, transcends both top-down and consensus-based decision making.

# Benefits of the advice process

The advice process allows self-management to flourish. Dennis Bakke, who introduced the practice at the American power-generation company AES (and who wrote two books about it), highlights some important benefits: creating community, humility, learning, better decisions, and fun.

- **Community**: it draws people whose advice is sought into the question at hand. They learn about the issue. The sharing of information reinforces the feeling of community. The person whose advice is sought feels honoured and needed.
- **Humility**: asking for advice is an act of humility, which is one of the most important characteristics of a fun workplace. The act alone says, "I need you“. The decision-maker and the adviser are pushed into a closer relationship. This makes it nearly impossible for the decision-maker to ignore the advice.
- **Learning**: making decisions is on-the-job education. Advice comes from people who have an understanding of the situation and care about the outcome. No other form of education or training can match this real-time experience.
- **Better decisions**: chances of reaching the best decision are greater than under conventional top-down approaches. The decision-maker has the advantage of being closer to the issue and has to live with responsibility for the consequences of the decision. Advice provides diverse input, uncovering important issues and new perspectives.
- **Fun**: the process is fun for the decision-maker, because it mirrors the joy found in playing team sports. The advice process stimulates initiative and creativity, which are enhanced by the wisdom from knowledgeable people elsewhere in the organiaation.

# Steps in the advice process

There are a number of steps in the advice process:

1. Someone notices a problem or opportunity and takes the initiative, or alerts someone better placed to do so.

2. Prior to a proposal, the decision-maker may seek input to sound out perspectives before proposing action.
3. The initiator makes a proposal and seeks advice from those affected or those with expertise.
4. Taking this advice into account, the decision-maker decides on an action and informs those who have given advice.

# Forms the advice process can take

Because the advice process involves taking advice from those affected by a decision, it naturally follows that the bigger the decision, the wider the net needs to be cast.

For minor decisions, there may be no need to seek advice. For larger decisions, advice can come through various channels, including one-to-one conversations, meetings, or online communication.

Some organisations have specific types of meeting to support the advice process, or follow formal methods. The Integrative Decision Making process, which XR UK uses for governance decisions, can be seen as a formal variety of advice process. Some organisations choose to have circles made up of representative colleagues who go through the advice process on behalf of the whole organisation.

When decisions affect large numbers, or people who cannot meet physically, the process can be held online.

- The mandate-holder can post a proposal on the UK Forums and call for comments and then process the advice they receive.
- The team can use decision-making software like Loomio, a free and open-source tool, or Murmur, which embodies Integrative Decision Making. The process for using the advice process on Loomio: start a discussion to frame the topic and gather input, host a proposal so everyone affected by the issue can voice their position, and then the final decision-maker specifies the outcome (automatically notifying the whole group).

Equal Experts, a UK network of software consultants, specialising in agile delivery, has written an open playbook to share their ongoing experience of a real-world implementation of the Advice Process (the organisation had approximately 1100 members in 2021).

# Underlying mindsets and training

The advice process is a tool that helps decision-making via collective intelligence. Much depends on the spirit in which people approach it. When the advice process is introduced, it might be worthwhile to train colleagues not only in the mechanics but also in the mindset underlying effective use.

The advice process can proceed in several ways, depending on the mindset people bring to it:

- The initiator can approach it authoritatively ("I don't care about what others have said" or, alternatively, "I fully comply with what others - someone highly respected, or the majority - have said").
- They can approach from a perspective of negotiation or compromise ("I'll do some of what they say so they're happy, but it will increment my frustration levels by 1").
- They can approach it co-creatively, which is the spirit of the advice process ("I will listen to others, understand the real need in what they say, and think creatively about an elegant solution").

# Role modelling

Coordinator roles in teams need to be role-models. Successfully distributing authority requires careful, proactive effort. Roles and mandates support this, but Internal and External Coordinators can help further by modelling and demonstrating the advice process in their own decisions. Other team members will take cues from their behaviour.

Modelling and demonstrating can take several forms:

- When you want to make a decision, pause and ask: Am I the best person for this decision? (That is, does it fall principally within my mandate? Might it also affect others' mandates? Am I most closely linked to the decision, or the person with most energy, skill, and experience to make it?). If not, ask the role you think is better placed to take the initiative. If they don't want to, you might be best placed after all.
- If you are the right person to make a decision, identify those from whom you should seek advice. Approach them and explain what you are doing. ("I'm using the advice process. Here is an opportunity I see. This is the decision I propose to take. Can you give me your advice?"). You can also share who else you are asking for advice. Once you've received advice and made your decision, inform those you consulted (and anyone else who should know).

- When colleagues ask you to make a decision ("What should I do?"), instead ask them "What is your proposal?". Share your advice and suggest who else to ask. Remind them the decision is theirs.

For many of us, unlearning the habit of making all the decisions is hard. It requires commitment and mindfulness. If you find yourself falling into the old pattern, take the opportunity to acknowledge your mistake, and restate the importance of the process. This can turn a mistake into a powerful learning moment. Better habits are formed through repeated practice.

[Note: this text is largely copied, with light adaptation, from a longer one that is part of the Reinventing Organizations Wiki. Copyright belongs to the original creators of that text. [Note: Once we have got more of our resources in order, David as SOS Resource Steward will contact Frederic Laloux to check this is OK. He has been a friend to XR in the past.]]

# Objection testing

[Note: this guidance is referred to by Section C.7 of the XR UK Constitution.]

When a proposal is brought using the Integrative Decision Making process, the facilitator asks each member of the team if they have any objection.

If there is an objection, the facilitator tests it by asking questions to determine whether it is valid within the terms of the Constitution.

Integrative Decision Making aims to integrate all valid objections to a proposal.

To be valid, an objection must meet all of the following criteria, which can be addressed in any order:-

| Criterion | Valid | Not valid |
|---|---|---|
| The proposal causes **harm** - where harm is defined as degrading the ability of the circle to achieve its mandate | Is your concern a reason the proposal causes harm? or… | … Is your concern that the proposal is unneeded or incomplete? |
| The proposal limits the objector from achieving the mandate of one of their roles | Would the proposal limit one of your roles? or… | … Are you trying to help another role or the circle in general? |
| The objection is created by the proposal and does not exist already | Is the harm created by this proposal? or… | … Is it already a concern, even if the proposal were dropped? |
| The objector is reasonably sure the harm will happen or doesn't consider the proposal safe enough to try | Would the proposal necessarily cause the impact? or…<br><br>Could significant harm happen before we can adapt? or… | … Are you anticipating that this impact will occur? (If "Yes," ask the next pair of questions)<br><br>… Is it safe enough to try, knowing we can revisit it at any time? |

If the grounds for objection are that the proposal goes against a policy of the circle or its broader circles, or breaks a rule in the Constitution, or clearly violates XR's Principles and Values or Ways of Working then the objection is automatically valid. (This includes proposals that would clearly reinforce patterns of exclusion or discrimination.)

## Facilitating Integration

- It is up to the proposer to see if they can find a way of integrating a valid objection.

- They can ask the objector for help with this: “What can be added or changed to remove that issue?”
- Or ask for contributions from anyone to resolve the issue.
- With each suggestion, the question for the objector is “Would this resolve your objection?”, and the question for the proposer is “Would this still address your tension?”

[Note: Parts of this text are derived and adapted from the Governance Meeting Process published by HolacracyOne with permission, © HolacracyOne, LLC.]

# Link Roles

# Standard and Decision-Making Link Roles

[Note: this guidance is referred to by Section C.7 of the XR UK Constitution.]

## 1. What Is a Link Role?

A Link Role is a role created by one circle to represent its mandate within another circle, and to pass information between the two circles. It is only available when both teams involved are mandated circles under the Constitution.

## 2. Key Definitions

**Source Circle**
The circle that elects the Link Role. The role holder represents this circle in the Destination Circle.

**Destination Circle**
The circle in which the Link Role sits and represents the Source Circle.

**Governance**
Decisions that distribute or restrict authority (e.g. creating or changing mandates, policies or domains; creating, moving or dissolving roles or circles).

### An Example

Operations has a link role to Systems & Cultures.

- Operations elects the link role → Operations is the **Source Circle**.
- The link sits in Systems & Cultures → Systems & Cultures is the **Destination Circle**.
- The link represents Operations' mandate inside Systems & Cultures.

The link does **not** make Systems & Cultures accountable to Operations.
And Systems & Cultures cannot set priorities inside Operations.

This reflects a core constitutional principle: authority must match accountability.

# 3. Why Decision-Making Authority Is Limited

To understand why Link Roles have limited decision-making power, it helps to understand how accountability works between circles.

A Destination Circle can hold its own roles and sub-circles accountable — but it does not have the same authority over a Source Circle. The Destination Circle's Internal Coordinator, for example, cannot set the Source Circle's priorities or direct its work.

Because a Destination Circle cannot fully oversee a Source Circle, it would be problematic to give Link Roles — which represent that Source Circle — broad decision-making authority within the Destination Circle. Keeping that authority limited helps maintain clear lines of responsibility.

# 4. The Standard Link Role (Default)

This is the normal and recommended form.

In the example above, the Operations link to Systems & Cultures would usually be a Standard Link Role.

## Rules

**1. A Link Role must be created in the Source Circle and approved in the Destination Circle using Integrative Decision Making (IDM).**

**2. The role holder must be elected by the Source Circle.**

**3. The maximum term is 6 months, after which a new election must be held. The same person may be re-elected.**

**4. The role represents the mandate of the Source Circle, not individual views.**

**5. A Standard Link Role does not take part in decision making in the Destination Circle.** This precludes voting, raising objection or other participation in governance or operational decisions.

**6. The role holder retains full authority in the Source Circle (including governance), within their mandate.**

## Standard Link Role Mandate

**Purpose**
Information that helps the work of both circles is shared.

**Accountabilities**

- Representing the mandate of the Source Circle in the Destination Circle.
- Helping information flow between the circles.
- Communicating regularly with the External Coordinator of the Source Circle.

# 5. The Decision-Making Link Role (Exceptional Case)

On rare occasions, there may be a compelling reason for the Destination Circle to include the Source Circle in certain operational decisions.

In that case, a Decision-Making Link Role may be used.

Using the example:

If Systems & Cultures genuinely needed Operations to participate in certain operational decisions (but not governance), they could agree to use this model.

## Rules

**1. The Destination Circle must explicitly agree the link role is Decision-Making.**

**2. A Decision-Making Link Role must be created and approved in each circle using IDM.**

**3. The role holder must be elected by the Source Circle.**

**4. The maximum term is 6 months, after which a new election must be held. The same person may be re-elected.**

**5. The role represents the mandate of the Source Circle, not individual views.**

**6. A Decision-Making Link Role may take part in non-governance decisions in the Destination Circle.**

**7. A Decision-Making Link Role may not take part in governance decisions in the Destination Circle.**

**8. The role holder retains full authority in the Source Circle (including governance) within their mandate.**

## Decision-Making Link Role Mandate

**Purpose**
The Source Circle’s mandate is well represented in the Destination Circle by sharing relevant information and contributing to non-governance decisions.

**Accountabilities**

- Representing the mandate of the Source Circle in the Destination Circle.
- Taking part in non-governance decisions in the Destination Circle.
- Helping information flow between the circles.
- Communicating regularly with the External Coordinator of the Source Circle.

# 6. Choosing the Type of Link

Use the Standard Link Role unless there is a clear and compelling reason not to.

Ask:

- Is information flow sufficient?
- Is shared operational decision-making genuinely required?
- Would granting decision power undermine the principle that authority must match accountability?

If unsure, choose Standard.

# Decision Making Processes

[Note: this guidance is referred to by Section C.7 of the XR UK Constitution.]

This page includes some basic steps and then details specific decision making processes. It is aimed mainly at facilitators.

These decision making processes are alternatives to Integrative Decision Making (IDM). **They can be used in settings where IDM is not required by the Constitution.**

A fair process helps to get people on board with a decision that may not be their first choice. If people feel what they care about has been heard and the decision is made for a legitimate reason, they are more likely to accept it and remain engaged with the group. Finding a way to balance a fair process with an efficient one is the fine art of facilitation!

## Consent Based Decision Making

The overarching approach we recommend taking to decision making is consent based decision making. **Consent based decision making is about finding an option that sits within everyone's range of tolerance** ("OK, I can live with it"), not their range of preference ("I love it"). This is because finding a proposal that everyone loves will be really difficult while finding one that everyone can live with will be a lot easier. Let's go with a proposal that's good enough, rather than trying to perfect it. Explain this approach to the group before starting the decision making process.

## Tips for before starting the process

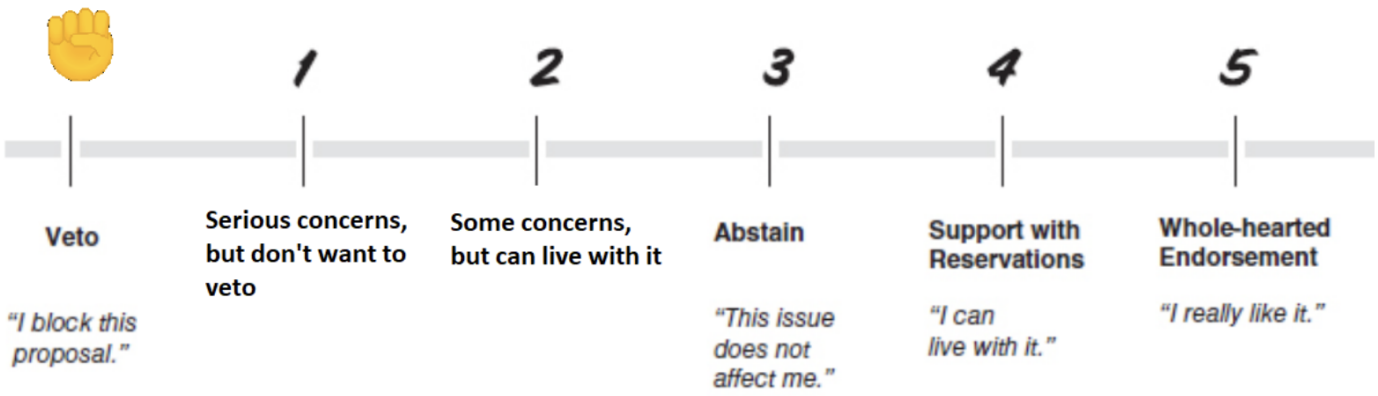
**It's good to be clear about the type of decision making process that will be used before the process starts**. This way people will set their expectations, for example, whether they will have to accept what the majority wants to do or whether the proposal will be changed based on their concerns. Always state the decision making process and give a brief explanation before starting it. Don't get into endless discussions about what process to use, you should decide how to decide as their competent and confident facilitator.

Most decisions are time-bound, especially during rebellions, so decisions have time limits. Getting clear on the time limit before the meeting and stating it at the start will help the group understand why you're using a specific decision making process, e.g., "the police will make arrests within 5

minutes, so we’re going to do a majority vote”.

# 1. Fist to Five

Fist to Five is a decision making process which allows people to state more than yes or no. This is very similar to consent except that people can give more nuanced responses. It’s important to people to be able to express dislike, so we need to give them a way of doing it that's not a block. They can state any of the following options:




Explain the instructions very slowly, maybe even twice. Don’t be rushed yourself or people will feel rushed and they don’t like it.

1. Explain the different response options, i.e., the Fist to Five are (“Instead of asking you to vote yes or no, I want you to hold up a number of fingers:
   - 5 finger if you really like the proposal
   - 4 if you think it’s pretty good
   - 3 if you want to abstain (e.g., “I’m indifferent”)
   - 2 if you have reservations but can live with it going ahead in order to not hold up the group
   - 1 if you have serious concerns, but wouldn’t veto this version of the proposal (see below)
   - **Fist if you have a major concern that means you want to veto this version of the proposal. It’s very important to make this clear to the group**. Vetoing the proposal should be grounded in a reason ( e.g., violating XR UK’s Principles & Values or someone may get hurt due to the proposal), rather than personal preference (e.g., “I just don’t like it”).
2. State the threshold at which the proposal will be passed, e.g., “Given that we have 10 more minutes so need to make a decision quickly, the proposal will pass unless someone blocks”. (This sets the threshold for passing the proposal as quite low, so it is quite likely to pass.)
   - If there is a veto or serious concern, you can either ask the person voicing it what they would need to amend to pass the proposal.

- Ask the proposal/idea/question and record the number of people for each number. Hopefully, major concerns will have been voiced before this stage, but just before asking people to respond remind them that you do want to hear major concerns if anyone has any because then we can amend the proposal to make it better.
- Alternative option: for a secret ballot you could choose to ask people to close their eyes if they're comfortable doing so.
- It's useful to check in if you have large quantities of low numbers - if there isn't a block, but everyone is at 1 finger (they have concerns), then you might want to spend more time thinking about this proposal - if you have time. You could say something like "I'm seeing lots of 1s - can I invite one or two people to speak to why they've given this a 1?" Then use that to decide if we need to resolve something before moving forward.

3. State the outcome:
    - If there is no block (i.e., a fist) and you're short on time, consider the proposal passed.
    - If there's a block, invite that objector(s) to share their reasons, then work with them and the proposer to amend the proposal and ask people to decide on the new version by showing a number again.
    - If you have time, invite those who have expressed serious concerns (1) to share their concerns. If multiple people have serious concerns, it's worth considering whether to work with the proposer and objector to amend the proposal if possible, as described above.

**Pros**: Allows for more nuance; people can express that they have a concern but don't want to block the proposal. Asking for a number can speed things up.

**Cons**: Need to explain what the numbers mean and people need to remember it so it can be too complicated in time pressured situations. You need to start off with one proposal; this will not work when there are several on the table. Works best with a small group of people, say less than 10.

**Thresholds**: As the facilitator you can set the threshold; you can declare the decision as passed even if there's one or two people disagreeing (majority vote situation) or decide to hear from everyone who has a niggling concern. **The threshold you choose will depend largely on the time limit and the seriousness of the decision**. If people do not agree with the threshold, they will tell you. As a facilitator, it's most important here to keep open and to welcome refinements - not always easy, especially when under pressure.

In the above example, we've set the threshold in favour of the proposal passing since it will only be blocked if someone's concerns are so serious they are prepared to veto the proposal. This is deliberate - we want to be biased in favour of taking action and trying things.

However, we also want good proposals, so if you have the time or the decision is very important, consider resolving the issues of those who have serious concerns - the facilitator and group can set the threshold wherever they like.

# 2. Majority Vote

The group is expected to go with what the majority is in favour of.

1. Ask the group to raise their hands if they are in favour of the proposal, against it or abstaining (eyes closed for a secret ballot).
2. Record the number voting for each.
3. Announce the decision.

**Pros**: Fast, perfectly fine to use it when a decision needs to be made super rapidly or is inconsequential, e.g., “shall we move to the shade?”. But when the decision will be contentious, Fist to Five would be better. Works well when there are many people. It’s OK to disagree and this method reflects that.

**Cons**: The minority may be unhappy, feel undervalued and disengage from the group.

# 3. Temperature Checks

Temperature checks can be seen as a type of voting, but they are usually not taken as a formal decision unless all hands are in the air or the decision is inconsequential (e.g., "should we stay here or move to the shade?”)

1. Tell people you’re going to do a temperature check and what the response options are: People do jazz hands in the air for yes, and downward jazz hands for no.
2. Ask the question.
3. Announce the decision.

**Pros**: gives a quick idea of how the group feels about something.

**Cons**: can be ambiguous what it means when people put their hands in the middle, can be hard to look at a crowd and determine how many people are doing each, can be hard to see hands that are down because of people standing in the way.

By asking yes or no (or any question with a binary response), you cut down on the amount of discussion needed. Thinking about the different issues related to the topic and asking a series of binary questions can be useful to get a sense of how the group feels really quickly. It can also be useful to check in with one or two people who indicated that they disagreed so that at least they can feel heard and hopefully be less frustrated.

# Comparison between the processes

Below is a table allowing comparison of these three different decision-making processes - Fist to Five, temperature check, and majority voting. The table outlines their details and relative speed to aid you in choosing the right process for a given decision making scenario.

| | Fist to Five | Majority Voting | Temperature Check |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of response options | 6 (see section above) | 3 (yes, no, abstain) | 4 (Agree, not sure, disagree, abstain) |
| Speed | Medium | Faster | Fast |
| Strength | Allows people to give more **nuanced responses** & allows proposals to be adjusted into something **everyone can live with**, rather than just rejected | Quick & can be used when **there are several options available** | Quick & can be used when **there are several options available** |
| Weakness | Slightly more complicated so will take more time to explain | Many people may be frustrated | Can be ambiguous what hands that are at chest height mean |

# How do I know what process to use?

There are many different aspects of the decision that may influence which process you want to use. The key ones are:

- **Is the decision urgent?** We've provided some fast versions above, but you will have to use your intuition to decide what's the best way to balance discussion and speed.
- **Is the set of options clear?** See below on brainstorming if there are no options. If there are several you could do a majority vote to choose the most popular option and then do consent decision making to ensure it's something everyone can live with.
- **How contentious is the topic?** Are there a lot of feelings? Best to discuss it thoroughly. As stated above, people usually accept a decision when they feel what they care about has been heard and the process is fair, so it's worth slowing things down and hearing from people when tensions are running high. A round of hearing from everyone is always a good idea in tricky situations, make sure it stays as a round though and doesn't become a discussion.

- **How consequential is it?** For example, are we considering moving to the shade to hold the People's Assembly or deciding on an action that will trap MPS in their offices for days? This greatly determines the decision making process you'll want to use. Moving to the shade can be decided by a vote or temperature check and no one will be that upset. A very spicy action will need strong agreement with lots of time to hear dissent and seek advice and feedback from those with expertise.
- **Does it affect a large number of people?** If yes, have you got their input? This is tricky because high profile, spicy actions in some ways affect everyone in the movement.

  We recommend reminding people that the Principles & Values and the Rebel Agreement are what we have to guide behaviour and that people have the autonomy to make their own decisions within those parameters.
- **Who's best equipped to make the decision?** If there's a person or a small group with the information and knowledge to make the decision and you trust them, why not let them make the decision? The group could share some thoughts with them and then leave them to it. Remind people that sometimes it's OK that some people have their say and others don't, because it might be an issue that person cares about in particular while everyone else doesn't care (e.g., a focus on health and safety, or a focus on fairness).
- **Can it be trialled for a period of time?** Or is it a one off event? If it can be trialled, ask those with concerns to give it a go with the knowledge it can be changed in a day or two if they still have concerns.

You can determine what process to use using The Decider App, a website that will ask you questions similar to those above. At the bottom of the start page you can click on the different options and read about each including their pros and cons in detail. You can also see a comparison of decision making processes.

**Rapid Decision Making**: As a facilitator, you generally don't want to bring too much of your own input to discussions. But when a decision needs to be made rapidly (usually in a "the police are here and we need to do something quickly" context), facilitators can be quite active in suggesting what to do. So don't be afraid to make a proposal, ideally by summarising the opinion that has been voiced most frequently and turning it into a proposal. Or after a temperature check on 2-3 proposals you have in mind.

# What if I don't have a proposal?

Some different options to generate ideas include:

- Ask if anyone has a suggestion (and ask them to be brief) and ask the group to use wavy hands to signal what ideas they like. Capture them all somewhere so everyone can see if possible. Do a decision making process above on the idea that got the most wavy hands. Best to set a time limit on this.

- People’s Assemblies are great for generating many different ideas because people have the chance to discuss in small groups and may be more comfortable sharing wacky ideas. Again, watch the group to see what ideas get the most wavy hands and pick that one.
- Negative Brainstorm: pose the question in the opposite form, e.g., what action do we not want to do today? This will take some time.
- Even though you’re the facilitator, don’t be afraid to suggest a proposal if you have one.

# What if there are several options?

Are the options mutually exclusive? Could the options be combined? Remember, you may not need the perfect option, but an option that is *good enough*. **If all your options are good enough then see what elements of them could be combined, but it is possibly more important to simply start taking action on one of them**. In this situation, if you are stretched thinly, maybe the key criteria is which option will take the least of your limited capacity, or which can be delegated to a volunteer or temporary team.

Keeping track of the different options is essential, but can be difficult, especially when there’s many different variations of the same option. Visual aids can help such as writing it down and labelling them plan A, etc. Although if you refer to it as “Plan A” make sure you’re all on the same page about the plan you’re talking about. Then get people to vote so that you can narrow down the options and explore the top 2 further. Also, consider 'unpacking' exactly what people mean by specific words.

Try asking people to vote for each proposal and use consent based decision making to make sure it’s workable for everyone in the group.

# Keeping it Smooth

A good facilitator can help keep the group on track to making a decision that works for everyone in the group. Encourage people to come to the meeting with all the information they need to make a decision. Point out logical fallacies (e.g., “those options are mutually exclusive”) and correct information when you notice it.

**Information**: Rebellions can be hot beds for rumours. Tensions can run high, people can be on edge which leads to exaggeration, especially when information is being relayed through multiple people. For example, the police changing shift can lead people to jump to conclusions that they are trying to clear the site. Fact check information and don’t share it unless it is from someone you trust personally or you’ve witnessed it directly. As a facilitator, remind the group to make decisions based on the best evidence available rather than hearsay.

**Dissent**: It’s your job as facilitator to ensure that everyone in the group can share their thoughts, especially the voice of doubt or concern that will probably make the proposal more robust. You can

decide to set the threshold for dissent really high (“Does anyone have any major concerns with this proposal?”) or really low (“Does anyone have any little grumblings with this proposal?”). If there are people who you think might have a hard time speaking up, you can set the threshold lower for them. You may also model some dissent yourself so people feel comfortable saying theirs.

**External factors make the decision for you**: Make sure that the decision being discussed is not already decided by an external factor. For example, during one people’s assembly during a rebellion people spent a long time deciding whether to hold a road overnight or not. Half way through the People’s Assembly, someone asked “Who here is actually willing to sleep in the road tonight?” Two people put up their hands, and so the decision was pointless because there were not enough people willing to do the proposed option.

The key thing here is that if there is work to be done, check that enough people are willing to do it and they are heard on the issue. This should be done during the fact finding stage before you start the decision making process.

Other external factors could be that if we don’t act this minute, the police make the decision for you, so that limits you to choosing options already on the table.

**Polar collaboration**: Ask those who feel strongly about the issue to work together outside of the meeting and come back to the group with something that works for them. This is useful when there’s a few that care and others that don’t and it saves the latter sitting through those who care thrashing out the details.

**Discouraging unnecessary permission seeking**: Sometimes people bring a decision to the group that they can actually make themselves because it’s in their role description/mandate. Check whether the decision needs to be made by the group or whether that person can make the decision by themselves - they may still want to hear advice from the group. You don't have to know the mandates exactly, but use your judgement and if in doubt just ask "Are you sure you need a group decision/input on this? Is it a decision you can make within your mandate?"

**Amplify**: When someone from a traditionally marginalised background makes a contribution it can often be overlooked or repeated by someone else who takes the credit. Accrediting the originator of the idea with their idea can be really helpful to make sure the idea nor the person doesn’t get overlooked. Some facilitators highlight that they are not being strictly fair when it comes to young people for example. They take their points/questions more often and give them more time to speak, and publicly acknowledge that they are doing it and why.

**Facilitation leadership**: Facilitation leadership is helping the team achieve their purpose and ensuring everyone can contribute so the team can harness its collective wisdom.

**Consistency**: Although it’s great to rotate representatives and leaders, on the time scale of a rebellion, it can lead to a lack of consistency in who is turning up to meetings and so there’s no capacity to get to know each other and build trust. You could encourage the representatives that do come to site meetings to show up consistently.

**Preparing to facilitate**: As a facilitator, you need to bring groundedness, fairness, sensitivity to emotions, and wisdom. Yes, that's a very tall order! If you are to facilitate, try to find some quiet time beforehand to relax a little, look after your needs and ground yourself so you can stay cool and collected and help others do it too.

**Framing questions**: The direction in which a proposal is made, e.g., "the proposal is that we leave the road" vs "the proposal is that we stay here", can influence the outcome of the decision. People tend to agree with questions and no one wants to be the naysayer (or at least it can be difficult to speak up sometimes), so people will probably tend towards passing the decision. That means you're more likely to stay if the proposal is that we stay where you are, and more likely to go if the proposal is to leave. There's not much that can be done here because there's no neutral framing in this example, but it's something to be aware of.

Acknowledgement: This text is derived from an earlier document, Guide to Decision Making on the Streets.

# Understanding SOS terms

Terms in the XR UK Constitution and their definitions; how and why they may differ if your group is not signed up to the Constitution; why we use these terms

# Terms and Definitions in the Self-Organising System

This table shows the definitions of the main SOS terms used in the XR UK Constitution.

| SOS term | How we define it |
|---|---|
| Circle | A circle is a team that has been created with a **mandate**. It operates within the terms of the Constitution, which means that it makes its own decisions about how to achieve its purpose. |
| Role | A position within a **circle** to which the circle delegates some of its power — via a **mandate**. A member of the circle is appointed to a role for a fixed term. |
| Mandate | The authority given to a **role** or **circle**, to set out what they are working to achieve, and what others can expect them to do in order to achieve it.<br><br>The concept of a mandate is central to how we distribute power across the movement. We define the power in terms of, first, a description of what they are working to achieve — the **purpose** — and what others can expect them to do in order to achieve it — a set of **accountabilities**. Some mandates also control one or more **domains**. |
| Purpose | The purpose of any **mandate** is the end state, or outcome, that the role or team is working towards. |
| Accountability | The accountabilities of a **mandate** are what the holder (a **circle** or **role**) is accountable for. They are the activities that the rest of the movement can expect you to do — the responsibility that comes with your autonomy. (Typically you will have to do a lot of other tasks, besides your accountabilities, to achieve the purpose of your role, but these are at your discretion.) Others can only hold you to account for your accountabilities. |
| Domain | A domain is a kind of resource which is controlled exclusively by the mandate-holder. For example, the design of the XR UK website is the domain of the UK Media and Messaging circle. It's important for their mandate that others do not interfere with this. |

| SOS term | How we define it |
| --- | --- |
| Sub-circle, Broader circle | Circles can delegate a specific task to a set of team members forming a sub-circle.<br><br>Thus the structure of XR UK comprises one broadest circle, within which there are nested circles and sub-circles — each with a mandate that contributes to the whole.<br><br>This simple extension of the Circle term reflects how the teams appear visually at organism.extinctionrebellion.uk and shows how teams are nested within each other, each having a part of the broader circle's authority delegated to them. |
| Internal Coordinator | A core role within each circle, whose purpose is that the team is healthy and achieving its mandate. |
| External Coordinator | A core role within each circle, whose purpose is that the team is represented in the broader circle, and aware of that circle's work and priorities. |
| Group Admin | A core role within each circle, whose purpose is that the team's governance records — including roles and appointments to roles, policies, any subcircles — are kept up to date on the Hub. |

# How circles, roles and mandates work together

As you can see from the definitions above, the concepts of **mandate**, **circle** and **role** are closely related to each other. They are also central to how we mitigate power, and how we are based on autonomy and decentralistion.

Mandates give authority to make decisions within a defined scope, and are distributed among circles and the roles within them to spread power and share responsibility.

To avoid clashes, it's important that mandates do not overlap or undermine each other. So mandates are created and amended in circle meetings, using collective decision-making.

If role holders are not fulfilling their mandate, there are several ways of resolving such issues. The decision-making and resolution processes are set out in the Constitution.

Circles must include three Core Roles: **Internal Coordinator**, **External Coordinator**, and **Group Admin**. Together they help to support the team, coordinate with other teams, and keep team records accessible. These roles are up for election at least every six months.

Beyond these three Core Roles, each circle is free to create any other role to meet its mandate. Circles are all different, but may have the same or similar roles for doing similar work within their circle (all teams need a role that checks team communication channels, for example).

# SOS terms beyond the Constitution

## Where and when do Self-Organising System terms vary?

> Any person or group can organise autonomously and take action in the name and spirit of XR so long as the action fits within XR’s principles and values. In this way, power is decentralised, meaning that there is no need to ask for permission from a central group or authority.

How groups organise is up to them, as long as it aligns with the Principles and Values (including "We are based on autonomy and decentralisation" and "We actively mitigate power"). There is no requirement to follow the XR UK Constitution, but the advantage of doing so is that provides a set of agreements about how we distribute authority and decision-making across the movement. This provides clarity and transparency so that we do not lose time arguing about who has the right to make each decision.

Many groups — particularly Local Groups, Affinity Groups and some Community Groups — may feel that the full constitution is not appropriate for them. For example, they may not want to commit to having all the Core Roles in the constitution. But at the same time they may want to follow the basic 'pattern' of the Self-Organising System approach. (This also helps if, at a later date, the group circumstances change and it wants to sign up to the constitution.)

To support and enable this, the XR UK Hub uses the same basic structure of data for these groups, but uses different terms, as shown in the following table.

| Signed up to the consitution | Not signed up |
|---|---|
| Mandate | Scope |
| Purpose | What this group/position is for |

| Signed up to the consitution | Not signed up |
| --- | --- |
| Role | Position |
| Accountability | Activity |
| Domain | Resources |
| External Coordinator | Connector |
| Internal Coordinator | Coordinator |
| Working Group, Circle, Sub-circle, Group, Team | Group, Team |

Groups in the right hand column have not actually received a mandate from a broader circle. A mandate is how a circle or team distributes power and authority to its sub-circles. Groups on the right simply have their own authority under the Principles and Values (see top of page).

And because there is no mandate for the group, other groups cannot hold them 'accountable' for performing specific activities. So we replace 'Accountability' with 'Activity'. And so on.

# Why does the Self-Organising System use special terms?

Our Principles and Values inspire us to find new ways of organising that foreground transparency and accountability, mitigate power and are based on autonomy and decentralisation. We also want to keep everything as simple and inclusive as possible. But if we use the language of more traditional organisations, this comes with baggage and assumptions, and will drag us away from our Principles.

We use a small set of special terms in the SOS. These are set out below, together with the reasons for using each term, and other terms that we have considered using instead. We keep these under review, and feedback and advice can be shared with the SOS team via our reception channel on Mattermost or to sos@extinctionrebellion.uk.

| SOS term that we use | Why we use it | Alternatives we have considered |
|---|---|---|
| Circle | Frequently we use Team synonymously with Circle, but sometimes it is useful to distinguish a Circle from other types of team (project teams, local groups etc.)<br><br>It ties into the whole decision making structure of the SOS. | Team, Group |
| Role | This term is widely used and understood in common usage, and there are no better alternatives with the same usage. We do not have ‘jobs’ or ‘posts’ in XR. | No clear alternatives |

| SOS term that we use | Why we use it | Alternatives we have considered |
|---|---|---|
| Mandate | Our use of this term is in line with the dictionary definition of mandate as “the authority given to a group of people.”<br><br>The concept of a mandate is central to how we distribute power across the movement, and the way we use it is entirely in line with common usage.<br><br>This term is embedded in UK teams, and is used in almost every meeting and thousands of conversations. It would be very difficult to change it now. | Authority |
| Purpose | Alternative terms bring other connotations that we prefer to avoid. For example, Goal sounds like something you would stop trying to do once you achieved it, whereas Purpose is the reason for your existence, whether you have achieved it (temporarily or permanently) or not. | Goal, Aim, Vision |
| Accountability | The accountabilities of a mandate are literally what the circle or role is accountable for. They are the activities that the rest of the movement can hold you to account for.<br><br>Task and Activity do not cover the dimension of expectation and accountability. Responsibility is closer, but still not as clear as Accountability. | Responsibility, Task, Activity |

| SOS term that we use | Why we use it | Alternatives we have considered |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Domain | A domain is a special, exclusive kind of resource. Some resources are not exclusive. For example, lots of teams use the Hub and the resources on it in the course of their work. So this would not be a domain.<br /><br />However, controlling access to specific permissions on the Hub — for maintaining specific information, for example — is something that we want to restrict to particular roles or circles. So we give them the domain of these Hub permissions. A domain is something that a team or role has exclusive control over, as part of their mandate.<br /><br />Hence we use Domain as a specialist term. The only other term that has been mentioned is Resource, but that could be confusing because of its wider, more general use. | Resource |
| Sub-circle, Broader-circle | We avoid referring to Child and Parent circles, because these come with cultural baggage concerning parental authority and oversight. This is exactly the opposite of the autonomy granted to sub-circles, which can decide how they go about achieving their mandate without the broader circle having any say, beyond setting priorities for its wider programme of work. | Child circle, Parent circle |