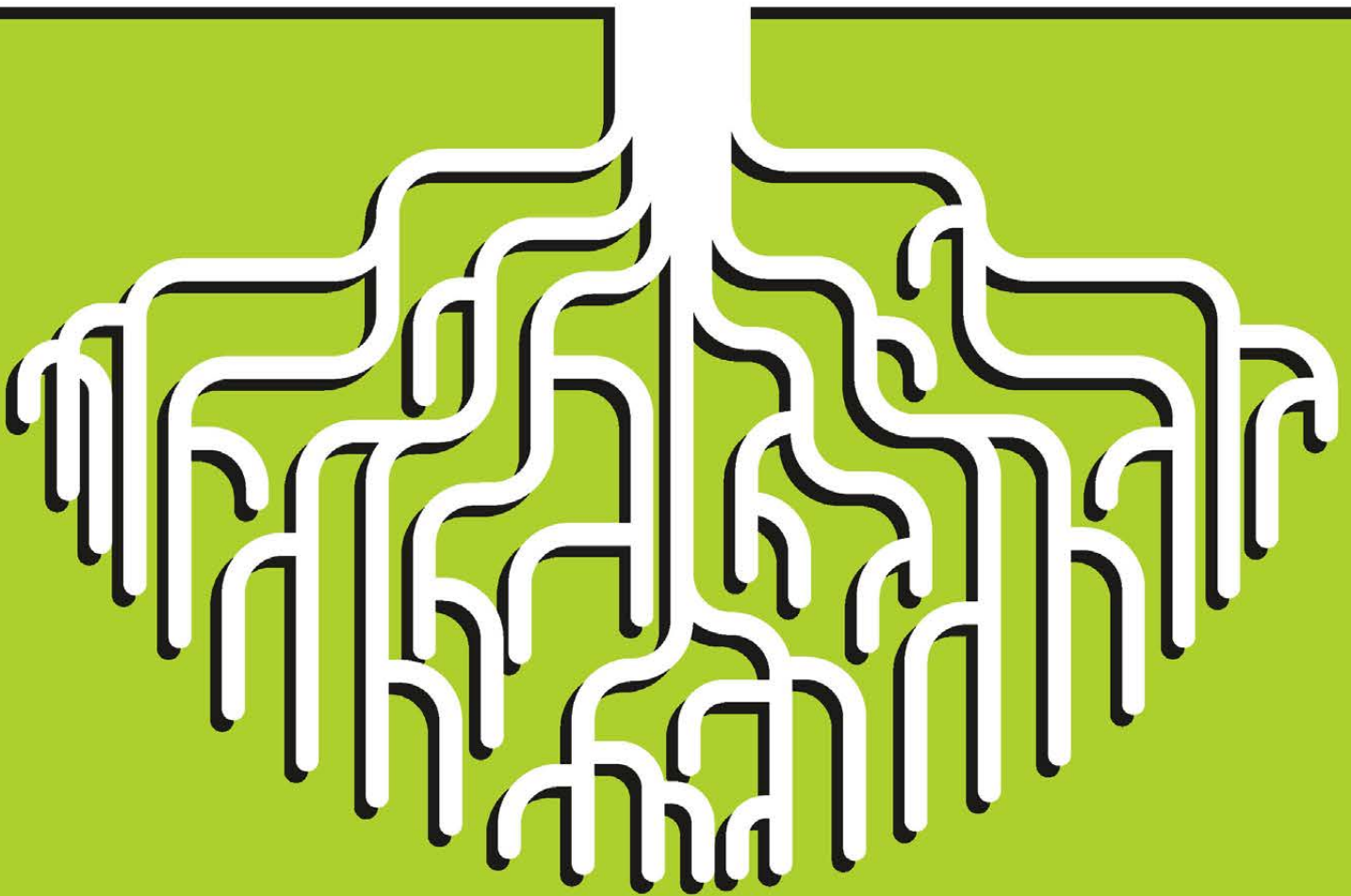


SUSTAINING PARTICIPATION IN CREATIVE ACTIVITIES  
BY BECOMING A VOLUNTEER-LED GROUP

# PUTTING DOWN ROOTS



Voluntary Arts Wales  
Celfyddydau Gwirfoddol Cymru

WITH SUPPORT FROM:



Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru  
Arts Council of Wales



SPIRIT  
OF 2012

*The Putting Down Roots toolkit is designed to support participants of creative activities who want to set up their own voluntary groups within their communities.*

*It draws from research undertaken by Voluntary Arts Wales and ArtWorks Cymru, who have spoken to arts organisations and participants throughout its development, providing easy-to-follow, accurate information, supported by relevant activities to help you put the right practices in place and monitor your progress.*

*ArtWorks Cymru is proud to support the use of this toolkit, and to be part of the Putting Down Roots project.*

**Rhian Hutchings, Artworks Cymru**



## Putting Down Roots toolkit

This toolkit has been made possible with the generous support of **Spirit of 2012** and the **Arts Council of Wales**.

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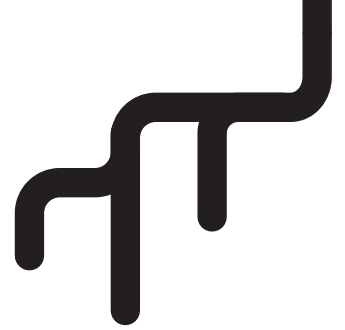
*Voluntary Arts is the trading name of Voluntary Arts Network, which is registered in Scotland as Company No. 139147 and Charity No. SC 020345. Registered address: The Creative Exchange, Constitution Street, Edinburgh EH6 7BS.*

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*Voluntary Arts acknowledges funding from Spirit of 2012 and the Arts Councils of England, Northern Ireland and Wales and Creative Scotland.*

## PUTTING DOWN ROOTS



### The project

Professional-led arts initiatives are an invaluable way for people to get actively involved in creative activities such as visual arts, crafts, music or performance – sometimes for the first time in their lives. But, inevitably, these initiatives, whether they are one-off workshops or year-long adult education programmes, have both a beginning and an end, after which it is not always clear how participants can continue their involvement even if they are motivated to do so.

Putting Down Roots was set up to enable participants of arts and cultural initiatives that have finished, or are coming to an end, to continue their involvement, either by finding a local voluntary arts group to join or by setting up an independent group of their own. It is run by Voluntary Arts Wales with the help of ArtWorks Cymru and supported by the Arts Council of Wales and Spirit of 2012.

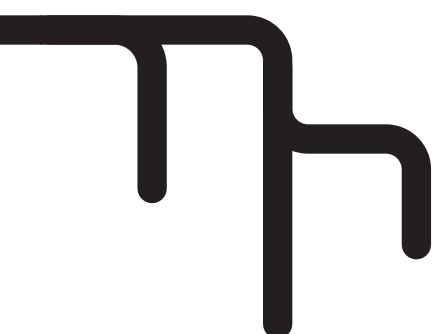
### The pilot work

Voluntary Arts Wales worked with participants of funded arts and cultural initiatives in four areas of Wales (Torfaen, Wrexham, mid-Powys and Carmarthenshire) to create a new methodology to enable them to set up and run their own independent volunteer-led groups sustainably into the future. Each of these groups faced different challenges, and this breadth of experience is reflected in this toolkit, which is suitable for new groups throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland.

### The toolkit

This toolkit is designed to be easy to use by groups of participants going through the process of setting up their own independent volunteer-led groups. Featuring a mix of information and relevant activities, it is intended to be equally useful for groups to use on their own or with a mentor to help guide them through the process.

More in-depth information about the topics covered in this toolkit can be found on the Voluntary Arts website at [www.voluntaryarts.org](http://www.voluntaryarts.org).







## FINDING AN EXISTING GROUP

The most straightforward way to continue your involvement in the creative activity you have grown to love is to join an existing voluntary group, if one exists in your area.

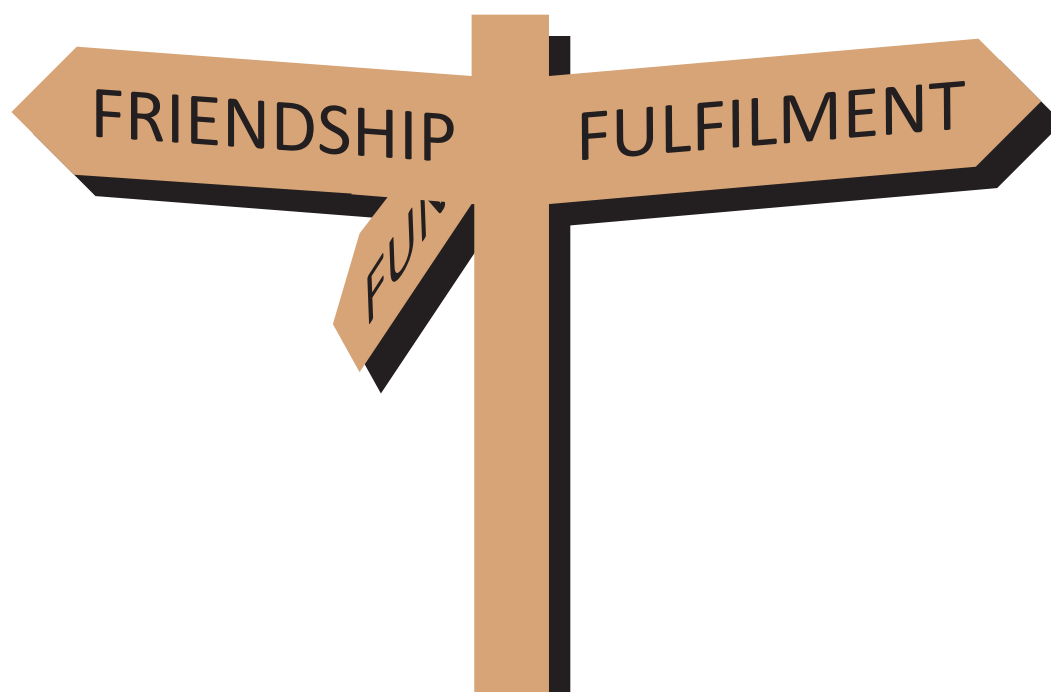
The great thing about these groups is that they are run by volunteers – people like you that love taking part in arts and culture and are happy to give up some of their spare time to help enable others to join in. They are often much less reliant on public funding, doing what they do very cost-effectively and raising what money they need from within their community. This means they are likely to be sustainable long into the future... some have been running for over a hundred years, constantly adapting and still going strong!

If you have been a participant in a funded arts or cultural initiative, then whoever led that initiative (community artist or tutor) may be able to suggest a local group you could join after your time with them is over. If you are still in contact with them, don't be nervous about asking them – even if they don't know a suitable group themselves they might know someone (such as a local authority arts development officer) who does.

If not, use a search engine to look for local groups in your area, or find contact details for your local authority (city, borough or county council) in the phone book. If you ask the switchboard operator for the arts development officer then they should know who to connect you to, even though they are sometimes called different things in different places. You could also try your local volunteer centre, if your area has one. Ask if they know of any volunteer-led dance, painting, film groups etc (whatever you are interested in) that might be open to new members.

You can also contact your national Voluntary Arts office (England, Ireland Scotland or Wales – contact details at [www.voluntaryarts.org/contact-us](http://www.voluntaryarts.org/contact-us)) to see if they have details of any relevant groups local to you on their database.

If you don't find a suitable group, don't worry. This is an opportunity to set up a new group exactly how you want it to be – it's not as difficult as you might think! Read on...





## SECTION 1 – STARTING OUT

The first stages of planning your group and its programme of activities is an exciting time! There is always the danger that this excitement can be overshadowed by the thought of obstacles you might face in the future. But knowing you have the Putting Down Roots toolkit and all the resources behind it to point you in the right direction can mean that, for now, you can enjoy focusing on what you want to do, in the knowledge that the vast majority of future difficulties can be overcome with the right information available to you.

This section will help you be clear about why you want to remain involved in your favourite creative activity, what you have to contribute and how you would like to benefit from continuing. The most sustainable activities are those that are fun, and remain fun even when they grow and become more organised.

### *Exercise: What are your hopes?*

Four green thought bubbles with black outlines and three small circles leading to them. Each bubble contains a question and three dashed lines for writing.

- Top-left bubble: "What is it about my involvement I enjoy?"
- Top-right bubble: "Why do I want to be part of a group?"
- Bottom-left bubble: "What do I want to take from the experience?"  
– learning, social contacts, fun, contribution to the community etc.
- Bottom-right bubble: "What am I able to contribute?"

## Who's in?

If you are keen to continue beyond the end of the course or project in which you first became involved, then chances are others feel the same way! Have a chat to your fellow participants and see if they would be interested in helping you form a voluntary group. Not only can this help you continue your creative involvement, but it's also a great way to take forward these burgeoning friendships – friendships that for busy people might be difficult to maintain without the structure of a weekly meet-up.

Not everyone will be interested, and those that are might have reservations about how successful they think it might be, or how much time they might be able to devote to it.

That's all fine at this stage – some people might be holding back but gain confidence when they start to see it happening, whilst others may have an initial burst of enthusiasm and then disappear. Anyone who expresses any degree of interest should be included in the initial planning stages – who knows who might turn out to be a valuable team member in the weeks and months to come.



## The perfect gathering

Where you have people coming together to make something happen, you also have meetings. When a meeting works well, it can generate great ideas and add enormous value to the group. With a little care and thoughtful planning, your meetings can be inspiring, efficient and enjoyable.

### ***The five Ws of worthwhile meetings – why, who, what, when and where?***

- Why are you having the meeting?
- What is it about?
- Who needs to be there?
- When is the best time to have it?
- Where is the best place to have it to provide the best access to those who need to be there?

*The Voluntary Arts Briefing 'Effective meetings' gives more information on how to run a great meeting.*

## Unlocking your potential

Sometimes it is obvious who are the 'leaders' that will be proactive and take the group forward... but take a moment to think about how decision-making and leadership might work in your group.

At the early stages this can be quite an organic process, with people taking on roles for a short time based on their aptitudes, interests and willingness to do the work. For a newly-formed group it is good to harness people's enthusiasm, whilst being clear that, as the groups grows and develops into the future, different people will emerge to take the groups forward in different ways. Keep in mind at all times why you want to form a group in the first place.

The groups that last the longest tend to be the ones that understand that 'leadership' does not always reside in one charismatic or confident individual spearheading the group. If, for example, that person takes the group off into an unexpected direction or loses interest, or if they burn out after having too much burden placed on them, then the whole group might suffer, preventing you all from doing the activity you are passionate about. Instead, the most sustainable groups are those that spread leadership roles throughout its membership.

### ***Exercise: Who is suited to...?***

- Taking a lead in planning and organising events, activities and projects?
- Working with others to create a team that works well together, and is comfortable resolving disputes?
- Facilitating discussion and making sure everyone is involved in decision-making?
- Bringing new ideas to the table and open to thinking boldly and creatively?
- Identifying what needs to happen to achieve the group's aims?
- Networking and developing relationships outside the group?
- Challenging assumptions that the group is making or any kind of unhelpful 'status quo' that might be developing?
- Supporting others (and possibly themselves) to take on leadership roles within the group?

As your group develops, you may or may not decide to follow the convention of having 'officer' positions such as Chair, Secretary, Treasurer etc, but for the moment such formalities could stifle your early growth. Feel free instead to think of roles in terms of matching the things that need to be done with the people who are best placed to do them.

*The 'Stronger Together' series of Briefings from Voluntary Arts is a great resource for unlocking leadership potential in your group. For more details, see the links at the end of the toolkit.*

As your group develops, you will probably need a written 'constitution' of some sort. This isn't as scary as it sounds – it's just the instructions for how the group will operate. Voluntary Arts has a Briefing on this when you are ready.



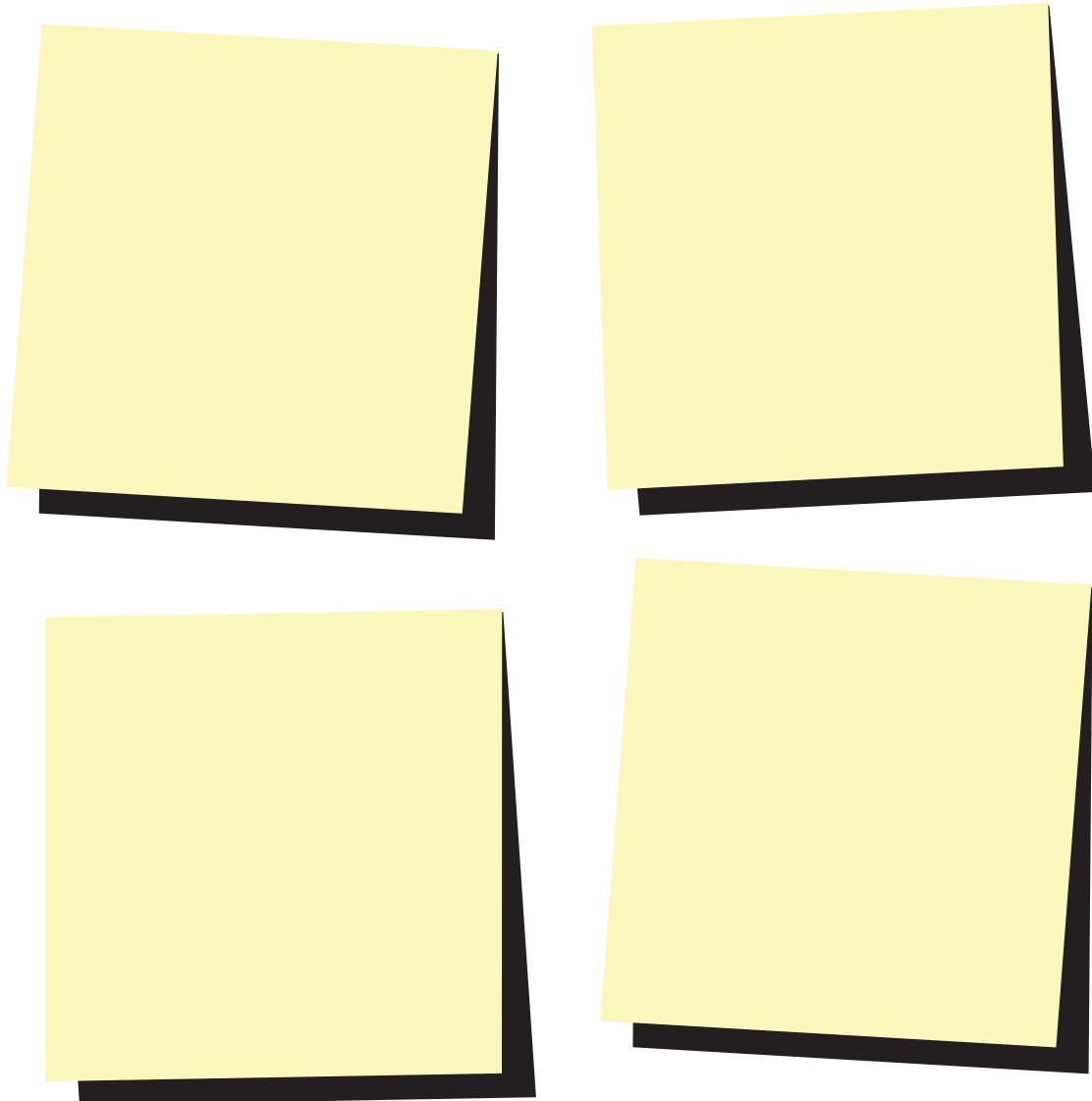
## What do you want your group to achieve?

Your first meeting is a good opportunity to each share your hopes for the group, and, based on the commonalities, begin to formulate what your group will do and how it will present itself. This could be as simple as saying, for example, that it's group for people in Leeds who want to make mosaics, which will be open to everyone, and where members will share their knowledge of the craft, whilst enjoying tea and cake.

This first phase of laying the foundations is a good time to think further about the wider values your group would like to embody, like being inclusive, ethical, environmentally aware, and so on.

### *Exercise: Our group in five years' time*

This is a fun exercise that can be a really good way to develop ideas of what people would like to get from participating in the group. It's simple – individually write onto post-it notes three imaginary 'proudest achievements' from a point in time five years into the future. Then discuss what is exciting for the group and what is achievable.



## Your purpose

Having decided what your group is for, it's a good idea to write it down. This might seem like a formality, but it's a good way of reinforcing it in your minds. In the example above, your purpose could be as follows:

*'Our group exists to give anyone in Leeds the opportunity to enjoy the craft of mosaic in an open and friendly atmosphere.'*

This statement of purpose tells people immediately what you do (mosaic) and who it's for (the people of Leeds), but also what you value about this activity (enjoyment), your ethos (open and friendly), and your attitude towards inclusion (anyone).

Having a clear summary of your group's purpose will not only help your group communicate what it does and why, but it will also help to be consistent in what it does and how it does it. The true wonder of a successful statement of purpose is that every action that the group takes should naturally support this purpose – from the smallest to the largest of activities.

It will be immediately useful to members and potential members, and, a bit further down the line, to funders if you decide to seek external funding.

*The Voluntary Arts Briefing 'Statement of purpose' considers what a 'statement of purpose' or 'mission statement' is, and suggests how you might go about creating one.*

## Exercise: Our statement of purpose



## What's in a name?

If you are starting a new group, spending time choosing the right name is essential, and it's good to choose a name that feels good. However, a name that lets people know immediately what your art or craft group does and where it happens does make you more visible to those who you may wish to connect with as you grow and expand. If your group is drawn to a name that is more imaginative than descriptive, look at whether you could give more information by adding a strapline.

## SECTION 2 – PUTTING RESOURCES IN PLACE

So now you have a shared purpose for your group, which is broad enough so that the people who are involved in setting it up and running it are happy. Now is the time to lay some real foundations by gathering together what you actually need to get your group up and running.

On the whole, it's better to make a list of the things you need to get your plan into operation, rather than think about money at the beginning. Many of the resources you need, may – with a little ingenuity – be acquired on a low cost or no cost basis. This section will help you draw up a list of what you need and give you some ideas on how to think creatively about getting what you need.

### Venue

It is likely, if you have already been participating together as a project, that you will have a good idea of what your requirements are in terms of space to do your creative activity – whether it is a sprung floor for a dance group or good acoustics for a choir, and so on.

Perhaps you can continue to use the same venue you did when you were participants of the funded initiative, especially if the venue provider was a stakeholder in that activity and is keen to see its benefits continue in a sustainable way. Have a chat to them and see if they are prepared to let you use it at a reduced rate.

Alternatively, community centres, church halls, sports clubs, schools, libraries, museums and local authority arts venues are all places to check what's available once you have defined what you need.

### Venues – things to think about

- **Insurance** – if you are hiring a venue or someone has donated the use of their venue to you, find out what insurance the owner already has, and whether, together with your own public liability insurance (covered later in the toolkit), it covers your planned activities.
- **Accessibility** – always consider accessibility for disabled members and visitors, and discuss the issue with the venue manager before deciding whether or not to use it.

*Check out the Voluntary Arts Briefings 'Finding a Venue – some new ideas', 'Events checklist - disability and access' and 'Insurance' for more ideas and guidance on getting the best venue for your purposes.*

## Tutors

This is the one thing that will probably mark you voluntary arts group as different from the funded arts initiative or course from which it sprung – you are much less likely to be able to afford a professional tutor, musical director or creative programmer to come and teach you on a regular basis.

One way of getting around this is to share your existing skills with each other, and developing these skills independently to bring back to the rest of the group. This can be very rewarding and many people find they learn things a lot better when they are preparing to teach them to others compared to when they are just learning for themselves.

Voluntary Arts runs training for people wanting to share their creative skills with others on a voluntary basis. Contact them using the details at the end of the toolkit for details about whether this is running in your area.

Of course this suits some creative activities better than others, so you might want to combine this approach with having a guest professional tutor on a less frequent basis. This could be the leader or tutor of the funded initiative from which your group originally sprung, or someone else you know. If they are really obliging, they might also be prepared to help develop the voluntary facilitation tutoring skills of individuals within the group.





## **The elephant in the room – money money money**

One of the first questions that tends to come up as part of Putting Down Roots is ‘How are we going to fund this without the support of an arts organisation or adult education provider?’ Although the answer to this is not often simple, it is important not to make this the sole deciding factor about whether you proceed with your group even before you try.

By starting out small (even if you are dreaming big for the future) you are able to test the water without taking a big financial risk.

This is one of the reasons we asked you at the start of this toolkit what was the basic things you valued about your participation. Being clear on what is valuable may lead you to cut out some of the extraneous and expensive things to make your group more cost effective.

For example, one of the groups we support loves singing together as a community encompassing different generations from children to grandparents. As a funded initiative they benefit from the weekly tuition of a musical director and piano accompanist. In becoming a volunteer-led group there was no way they could afford to continue in the same way, but they didn’t let this stop them.

Instead, they focused on the essence of what they loved and got some CDs to sing along with, whilst some of the more confident singers developed their own skills in sharing their knowledge with the rest of the group. And part of the money they do generate, through a small weekly membership fee, is used to bring in the musical director and accompanist for less-frequent development sessions. The rest they use on drinks and refreshments, whilst making the most of local goodwill by convincing a local community centre to let them use a room for free.

***Exercise: How could we change the way we do things in order to sustain our enjoyment?***





## **Fees**

One thing you'll want to think seriously about when setting up your group is how much to charge in terms of membership fees (weekly, monthly or annually) or attendance fees (each time you meet). This will depend not only on the costs faced by your group, but also the ability of your community to pay – and it can sometimes be difficult to strike the right balance.

People are usually prepared to pay something to take part in an activity they enjoy. You could think about it in comparison to the cost of other types of entertainment, such as buying a magazine or watching a pay-per-view film. How does the cost compare with the level of enjoyment and fulfilment you get from it?

If you live in a community with a lower-than-average typical income, you may want to reflect this in your fees in order not to exclude people. Other options include having concessions for particular groups of people, or, for groups with annual fees, payment plans where people can split the cost over a longer period.

Other ways of raising modest amounts of money locally include crowdfunding, where lots of people in the local or online community contribute a small amount of money each, and business sponsorship, whereby local companies give money in exchange for publicity or to improve their standing within the community.

In the future you may want to apply for more money to do something special, either to a charitable trust or foundation, government scheme or Lottery fund, but many groups are run quite happily on the small membership fees or attendance fees of their members, and some goodwill from the community in the form of discounted venues, supplies etc.

The Voluntary Arts Briefings 'Crowdfunding' and 'Business sponsorship' are just two of those available on the topic of fundraising.



## SECTION 3 – WHAT WILL BE EXPECTED OF US?

So now you are ready to get going – you have a name and a clear, communicable statement to the world of what you do, with plans for how to resource the group and an idea of how sessions will be run.

Voluntary Arts groups contribute massively to the good of their communities and this section helps you understand and work through what is expected of you as a group when putting your plans to action. Whether it's determining the right level of insurance, or putting child protection procedures in place – it's worth keeping in mind that the goal of all this is to make sure that your group works in a way that is transparent, worthwhile and safe for everybody taking part, without detracting from the fun!

### Legal form

The simplest type of voluntary group, of which your group is one, is the 'Unincorporated Association'. Don't worry about this for now, but if your group grows in the future to the level where the amount of money you are dealing with becomes a risk, you may decide to register as a limited company or Community Interest Company, and/or to change your tax status by becoming a charity.

Don't worry about this now. There are Voluntary Arts Briefings on all of these topics for when you get to that stage.

## Managing risk

Managing risk is just about looking at what you intend to do and identifying and assessing what could go wrong and, making sure as much as possible, that you have plans in place to make sure it doesn't.

You almost certainly conduct risk assessments already, whether you know it or not! Take the following hypothetical case study:

*JB holds a quilting morning for young mothers at her home. Six mothers attend, with their children. Two other mothers expressed an interest in attending recently but JB turned them down as she thought this would be too many children. A parent once asked if they could bring their family dog. JB said no as she thought the animal might be too boisterous and hurt a child. As a matter of course, JB keeps children out of the kitchen when she is preparing drinks and ensures that all cups are tidied away as soon as they are finished with.*

Nothing special there, but what JB has done, without knowing it, is conducted a mental risk assessment of her event and taken the appropriate measures to reduce the risks.

It's good to have everyone involved in your risk assessment, so make it part of your collective mindset for everything – and not just health and safety risk, but financial risks to the group too. That way, when you have to put a risk assessment on paper, it's not such an ordeal.

It is worth to say that while you cannot completely avoid things going wrong by being cautious. In many cases, combining the correct level of insurance with a number of other precautions is the best approach.

### Five steps:

- Look for and identify hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Assess the risks and decide if they are acceptable
- Record your findings and implement them
- Review your assessment

*Voluntary Arts has a number of Briefings on managing risk, including 'Risk management for charities' and 'Risk assessment for event organisers'.*



## Insurance

Insurance can provide protection against many of the things that are likely to go wrong. Depending on what your group does and how it is set up, there are types of insurance that you must have, the main one being public liability insurance, which is required if you have members of the public attending events, workshops, classes, festivals and so on.

Then, depending on your situation and activities, you may also need other types of insurance.

*Check out the Voluntary Arts Briefing 'Insurance' for more on this issue, and many voluntary arts umbrella organisations and membership bodies (more details at the end of the toolkit) provide insurance schemes for their members which takes away much of the hassle.*

## Policies and procedures

As you grow you will need to have clear guidelines, to keep people safe, to be fair, and to be able to prove you are fulfilling your legal responsibilities. But you're not expected to have all the policies and procedures of a much larger charitable organisation when you're just starting out as a small group.

The best thing to do in the early life of your group is to spend a little time thinking about the important issues, start simply with a few principles agreed between you and written down, and work from there. It's much better to have a few simple points of principle agreed on a range of issues than to wait until you have a long and detailed health and safety policy before you move on to your expenses policy, for example. And don't forget, you need to leave room for fun, enjoyment, friendship – all those things you started the group for in the first place.

*Luckily, Voluntary Arts has a range of Briefings available with guidance on how to create policies and procedures on such things as child safeguarding, equalities, finance, health and safety etc.*

The other thing to remember is make sure your policies and procedures are written about your group and what you actually do! It's much better to have simpler policies written from the starting point of your activities than using a more sophisticated policy adapted from one found online that was written with someone else's group in mind.

## Licenses

Again, depending on what you do, you might need to apply for licenses to play recorded music, perform authored works or hold public entertainment events.

*Voluntary Arts has Briefings with guidance on these issues and links to the relevant licensing authorities for the latest information on its website.*

## SECTION 4 – OPENING UP TO NEW MEMBERS

Exciting times! You now know who the group is and what it's about. It's time to let others know. But who needs to know about your activities – and what's the best way telling them?

### Communication

Letting the wider world know about your group and what you do is a key part of the whole process. It's a good way of making sure that those who are interested in what you can do, can find you – and to give those who may become future members, friends and supporters an idea of who and where you are.

You will need to spend some time clarifying how you want to communicate, establishing with whom and through what channels. This might include word-of-mouth, your local newspaper or community publications, a website, Facebook and/or Twitter. If your artform is a visual one you may like to have a presence on Pinterest and/or Instagram as well.

*Voluntary Arts has a range of Briefings on how to create and implement a marketing plan, how to deal with the media, how to create a presence of different social media channels and what kind of content to put on them.*

### Join, connect, extend

Right now someone is looking for the group you are creating. But where is that person looking? Local authority arts officers are often approached about arts activities, so it's a good idea to make contact with them. Libraries, schools, churches and other community contact points are also often asked what's going on so they'll be glad to point people in your direction.

Voluntary arts umbrella organisations and membership bodies are another point of contact for potential members and a useful networking opportunity for you, so it's a good idea to join them. It might also be helpful to contact other charities who will be keen to promote arts activities to a range of people through their work e.g. those working in environment, health or social inclusion.

Think also of online directories and listings of hobbies, arts and local activities. Include details on all those that are appropriate to your group. Always ask people who get in touch how they heard about you – the answers may be very useful.

*For more ideas on how to get the word out there about your group see Voluntary Arts Briefing 'Putting your arts or crafts group on the map – ten ways to get noticed'.*



## Being inclusive

### *Exercise: Put yourself in someone else's shoes*

Bringing people together from a variety of backgrounds adds to the richness of everyone's experience, and this is so, particularly, in the context of creative activities.

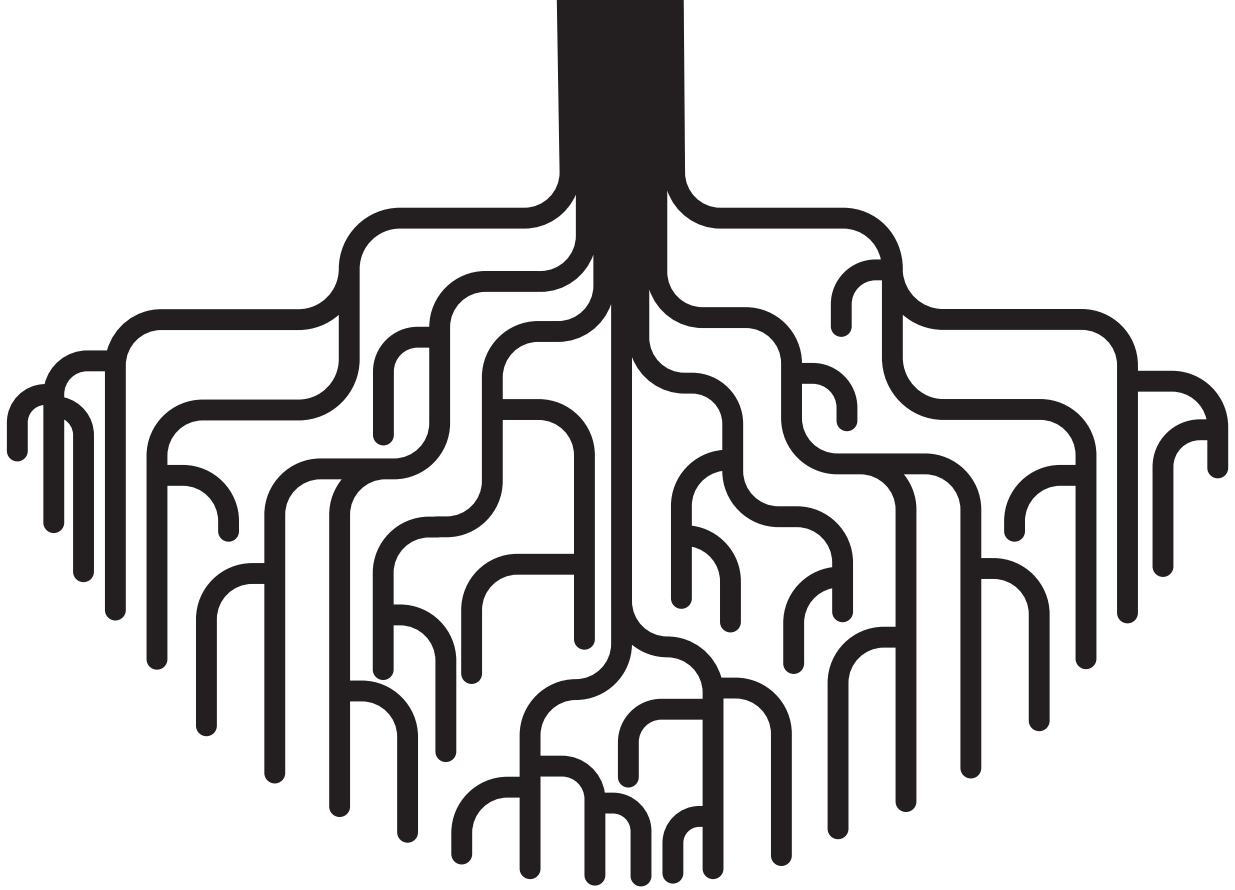
Pick one of the following (which you are not) and ask yourself what would be attractive to you about being part of the group – and what would be either off-putting or would make it impossible to attend:

- opposite sex
- different race or ethnicity
- different religion
- different age (older or younger person)
- with a disability (mobility issue, sensory disability etc)
- married, single, civil partnership
- different sexual orientation
- different caring responsibility (caring for young children or for an older parent)

Creating an inclusive environment has massive benefits for your group and your community, particularly as it grows and develops, and this is something that is best to commit to from the beginning. It is important to remember as well that the group has legal responsibilities to be inclusive.

Many aids to inclusion are relatively low cost and are often a matter of forethought and good planning (like the choice of an accessible venue over a less accessible one, or time of day that you hold your events). Check out local representative organisations to see what support they can offer with any advice and or adaptations you feel you need to make.

*The Voluntary Arts Briefing 'Welcoming newcomers to your group – removing potential barriers' has more things to keep in mind when planning for your groups activities.*



**Congratulations!** If you have worked through the previous sections, then your group has put down some strong roots for flourishing in the face of whatever the future holds.

Don't forget, the most sustainable groups are those that:

- Are realistic about what can be achieved, whilst still being ambitious.
- Are well networked with information providers, support organisations and local groups similar to themselves.
- Celebrate the contribution of their volunteers.
- Don't forget why they do what they do – to have fun with likeminded people.



## Useful contacts

One of the biggest differences between groups that struggle and those that are successful is access to good quality and up-to-date advice and guidance. Though the Putting Down Roots toolkit gives you an overview of where to start, it's nice to know there are organisations and resources out there to support your development.

- **Voluntary Arts** – the organisation set up to promote participation in creative cultural activities, with a website full of Briefings and other resources covering a range of topics from accessibility and publicity to licensing and insurance. The Briefings also provide find links to the relevant authorities overseeing the various regulations effecting voluntary arts groups – [www.voluntaryarts.org](http://www.voluntaryarts.org)

One Briefing that will be particularly useful is 'Useful information and contacts when setting up a voluntary arts group'!

Voluntary Arts would be really interested to hear from you if you are planning on setting up a new group, or are in the process of doing so. They can create some extra publicity for your group, and pass your details to the **Spirit of 2012**, which was set up to celebrate and build upon the volunteering legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games. Contact your nearest Voluntary Arts team (England, Ireland, Scotland or Wales) via the contact details at [www.voluntaryarts.org/contact-us](http://www.voluntaryarts.org/contact-us).

- **Voluntary arts umbrella organisations and membership bodies** – these organisations exist for many of the most popular art and craft forms, as well as many of the more obscure ones! Many offer a range of services to their members, including information, publicity and discounted insurance – see [www.voluntaryarts.org](http://www.voluntaryarts.org) for more.
- **Local groups similar to yours** – some local intelligence is needed here to find out what other local arts/crafts groups are in your area, as these can be a good source of information about what support (such as venues, suppliers, places to advertise) may be available that you didn't already know about. There may be scope for working together on future projects as well.
- **Local authority arts/culture/leisure offices** – local authorities are often very strong supporters of voluntary arts activity in their areas – offering discounted venue hire or, in some cases, small pots of funding. It's also very useful for them to know that you are there, as they are often asked for information about arts activities in their area – and they may be in a position to point potential new members in your direction.

These national voluntary sector organisations have a range of information materials on their websites and send out regular email newsletters. They can also put you in touch with your local volunteer support council or volunteering centre.

- **National Council for Voluntary Organisations** (England) – [www.ncvo.org.uk](http://www.ncvo.org.uk)
- **Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action** – [www.nicva.org](http://www.nicva.org)
- **The Wheel** (Republic of Ireland) – [www.wheel.ie](http://www.wheel.ie)
- **Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations** – [www.scvo.org.uk](http://www.scvo.org.uk)
- **Wales Council for Voluntary Action** – [www.wcva.org.uk](http://www.wcva.org.uk)

