



HOLDING YOUR FIRST MEETING

1. Make the first meeting a 'get to know you' meeting

It's useful to give a simple introduction to explain who you are and why you have called the meeting. Ask people to introduce themselves and explain their interests too.

2. Get to know the issues

People will have different reasons and perceptions of what needs to be done. Try and build a list of issues or concerns so that you get an idea of what is important. It's unlikely that a group getting together for the first time will be ready to make big decisions like setting priorities and electing office holders or a committee – but those things will definitely come later.

3. Make sure different people get a chance to speak

One of your important jobs of the meeting is to make sure that everyone who wants to gets a chance to speak. You can invite people to contribute if you've noticed that they haven't said much – although some people prefer to listen and reflect, rather than talk.

For large groups, it may be easier to invite people to break up into smaller groups, have a discussion and then report back.

3. Discuss next steps

Leave some time at the end of the meeting to discuss next steps:

- Hold another meeting to focus on setting your priorities for action.
- Holding another meeting to focus on the group structure and the committee.
- Do some research to better understand the issues or build your case for change.
- Draft a letter or petition on a particular issue, to be circulated within the group and the neighbourhood.
- Make sure it's clear who'll be involved and when the task will be completed.

Summarise the agreed actions at the end of the meeting, so everyone in the group is clear about what's been agreed – and send minutes or action items around by email or letter as a further reminder.

