

Your guide to...

# CREATING AN INFORMAL GROUP

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**This short guide provides steps and guidance on initiating an informal collective of people to start taking action as a group to rescue your local river.**

## WHAT IS IT?

An informal group is essentially a gathering of like-minded individuals with a shared ambition to save our rivers, without the need for complex structures or formalities. This type of group thrives on simplicity and the passion of its members.

## WHEN IS IT SUITABLE?

Keeping things informal is usually (although not always!) less work, and is a great way of testing the water (perhaps literally!) to see if you have the support, dedication and interest needed among people to become a more formal group in the long term. It allows members to focus on achieving their shared goals without facing any bureaucratic hurdles.

## HOW DO I START AN INFORMAL GROUP?

- ✓ **Initiate conversation**  
Hold a meeting with the other people you would like to form a group with. Establish a shared common purpose and interest and identify who will be a part of your group and decide what sort of actions you would like to take to start with.
- ✓ **Consensus**  
If you all agree you'd like to keep things informal, be clear that everyone is responsible for their own safety, conduct and actions. Ensure that everyone is included in the decision making process and consider accessibility and inclusivity.

## **Organise meeting**

Decide how often and where you want to meet, and what you will discuss. Consider whether you're open to others to join - if so, how will you tell people about your group?

If you're keeping things informal, your meetings can just be a meet-up between friends to take part in a shared activity, perhaps litter-picking or weeding out invasive species along a riverbank, or monitoring for phosphates and recording the results on an app.

Alternatively, you might just want to schedule an online meeting for discussion.

## **Going forward**

Informal groups will evolve naturally based on the interests and dedication of its members.

If it comes to a point where you feel your group would benefit from a more formal structure you should discuss this with your group. It can be useful to formalise arrangements when the group becomes larger for organisational purposes, and it is safer to have risk assessments and safety regulations in place as your activities start to expand. Formalising things is also much safer if you are going to be handling financial matters, to ensure it's clear where the money goes.