



Your guide to...

SETTING UP A FORMAL GROUP

View the full toolkit at kit.riveractionuk.com

This short guide will provide useful resources and guidance on how to set up a formal group covering topics such as mission statements, roles & responsibilities, and creating a bank account.

WHAT IS IT?

A formal community group is an organised entity with established structures such as a constitution and a bank account. This setup reflects a commitment to governance, clear objectives, and a systematic approach to achieving community goals.

WHY SET UP AS A FORMAL GROUP?




If your group membership and responsibilities are growing it is a good idea to formalise things for organisational purposes.

Setting up a formal group will give you access to greater resources and sources of funding to help achieve your aims. It will also help establish a reputation as a trusted group both in and outside of your community. This can lead to collaboration and amplify your impact in rescuing our rivers. Additionally, having more established policies is useful to safeguard your group and its members.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Start by writing a **mission statement** for your group, setting out what you intend to do and how you will achieve it. Ensure this represents the ideas of everyone in your group and keep record of this in an official document. This may take the form of a constitution or governing document.

Appoint key roles/trustees: These people will share formal responsibility for the charity, often taking on specific duties, nominated through an open and fair process. Typically, it's a good idea to:

-  **Chairperson**
Nominate a chairperson or someone to lead the group and chair the Annual General Meetings.
-  **Treasurer**
Think about who will handle the money, and appoint a treasurer. See here for everything you need to know about [banking for charities and voluntary organisations](#).
-  **Secretary**
It's also really useful to have a secretary who will keep a record of everything.

These three roles are key - more can be added along the way! For more information and guidance, check this [useful guide from the National Council of Volunteer Organisations](#).

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Your three key roles now form a [committee](#), and your mission statement becomes a governing document, which sets out how you will behave - for example, how you will apply for funding, whether or not you will be political, and how you will be accountable to your members and to the wider public.

It is a fairly straightforward process and can help to align your group with its objectives. The process is similar to those followed at voluntary sports clubs, the scouting/guiding movement, or being a school governor. If you can, ask advice from someone who has gone through the process before.