Support Cambridgeshire

Getting Started Toolkit

A basic guide for groups looking to do good in their community

March 2026

1. Introduction

This toolkit is designed for people who are beginning to think about setting up a voluntary group or formalising something they have been involved in.

It provides a basic guide and is not intended to be comprehensive but you will find links to more detailed information. It also connects to our library of bite size recordings. You'll see suggested tasks in the blue boxes to help you make progress.

There is a lot of useful information on our website and the Support Cambridgeshire development team is also on hand to offer support. Please feel get in touch with us on info@supportcambridgeshire.org.uk

As a starting point your organisation needs to:

- Decide whether you are a voluntary organisation or a business?
- Be clear about the aim and purpose of your group including who will benefit?
- Identify who is running your organisation

You may then want to think about :

- Choosing an appropriate legal structure
- Setting up a bank account
- Developing key policies (e.g. safeguarding, data protection)
- Creating a budget and funding plan
- Recruiting volunteers or staff
- Planning and launching your first activities

2. What sort of organisation are you?

Are you an independent voluntary organisation?
There is no single legal definition of a voluntary organisation but they usually share the following characteristics;

Organised. The organisation has some form of structure. This means there are people who manage the finances, run activities and oversee the group – often with the support of others. The rules for how the group is run are normally written down in a document such as a constitution or list of rules.

Private and Self-Governing. Is the organisation independent with its own internal procedures for deciding matters without consulting an outside body? This does not mean that voluntary organisations cannot receive support from other organisations, such as Support Cambridgeshire. It simply means that your management committee must be free to make their own decisions in the best interests of your organisation

Not-for-profit. Voluntary organisations can make a surplus, but their main purpose is to deliver social or public benefit. Any profit - what is left after costs are paid (costs can include salary) must be reinvested to further the organisation's aims.

Voluntary. The organisation must include some genuine voluntary involvement—either in the running of the organisation or in delivering its activities. This does **not** mean that all its income must come from donations, or that everyone working for it must be a volunteer.

However, the management committee (the group legally responsible for putting the organisation's interests first) must all be volunteers.

If you set up your organisation as a charity, these management committee members are usually called **trustees**.

What do you want your group to do?

Organise an event

Set up a group to support others

Set up a group to share common interests

Raise funds to help your community

Create and manage community spaces

Self help group

Campaigning on issues of concern

If it is any of these, then this toolkit can help you develop your organisation and you should skip to section 3.

If your group is not a voluntary organisation, then what is it?

Some people want to provide services that are socially aware but also want to earn a salary.

A voluntary sector structure is usually unsuitable for this, because those who have legal control and responsibility for the organisation must be volunteers.

For advice on setting up a business see the resources offered by Business.gov.uk and The Business & IP Centre (BIPC) Cambridgeshire they provide free and low cost business support and advice to start up business owners, entrepreneurs and inventors. You can also approach Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Growth Hub for free support.

You may choose to set up a business with a social or environmental mission to create a social enterprise. Such a business generates most of its income through trading in goods and/or services rather than grants. It is generally expected that more than 50% of any profits are reinvested back into the business to support its mission.

Any business can seek to act ethically and put in place measures to minimise any negative impact it causes. However, a social enterprise is different because it is set up to deliver a social and/or environmental mission from the start.

An example of a social enterprise is a café set up to offer meaningful jobs to people who face barriers to employment, it helps them gain skills and experience for future work and ploughs more than 50% profits back into the enterprise.

There is no single legal structure for a social enterprise. Social Enterprise UK have produced a handy guide to the options. Possible structures include a:

- limited company
- community interest company (CIC)
- sole trader or business partnership
- co-operative

Although social enterprises are often non-charitable, a charity that earns the bulk of its income through selling goods and services can also be a social enterprise. However, charity trustees are not usually paid making charity structures unsuitable for founders who want to retain control and receive a salary.

A Community Benefit Society (BenComm) is another option. These can be charitable but unlike a charity are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority They are a suitable structure for community ownership of local assets such as a village shop or community centre.

Community Interest Companies (CIC's) are one of the most chosen structures for a social enterprise in the UK. They are set up primarily to deliver community benefit rather than private profit. They have the same characteristics as a limited company and the directors can be paid. However they differ in 2 key ways:

- CIC's are regulated by the CIC Regulator and must pass the Community Interest Test -that any reasonable person would consider that the CIC's activities were carried out for the benefit of the community. The community can be one of place (those living in specific area) or a community of interest (people experiencing a specific disadvantage). The benefit must be broad and not be limited to just a small group of people or the employees or directors themselves.
- Compulsory Asset Lock is a legal clause that prevents the CIC's assets from being used for private gain. CIC assets can only be transferred to another CIC or Charity and not to a normal limited company.

Most CIC's are set up as a CIC limited by guarantee – this means they have no shareholders and the asset lock prevents any distribution of profit to members. However, CIC's can also be set up as CIC limited by share capital allowing capped dividends (up to 35% of the CIC profits)

CIC's are intended to derive most of their income from trading goods or services. However, they may be eligible to access grant funding once they have a track record in delivery and established financial accounts. Grant funders vary in their approach to CIC's… For example to be eligible for Cambridgeshire Community Foundation (CCF) grants a CIC should NOT have a person with significant control i.e no single person should have more than 50% of the voting rights or shares or have the power on their own to appoint or remove directors. Some funders may prefer CIC's limited by guarantee. It is important to check the individual funder eligibility criteria.

CIC's are easier and quicker to set up than a registered charity but it is important to be clear on the differences as outlined above. CIC's are not charities they are businesses set up to deliver community benefit. As such they are subject to the same tax regime as a normal company. CIC's are required to file yearly accounts and a CIC Report to Companies House.

It is possible for directors of a CIC to apply to the Charity Commission to convert their structure to that of a Charity (specifically a Charitable Incorporated Organisation). But it should be noted that this is far from straightforward and that, according to recent Charity Commission reports, a third of requests made by CIC's to convert to CIO's are rejected. The chart on the next page provides a simple comparison of CIOs and CICs.

We look at charitable structures in Section 5.

For more information on setting up a social enterprise check out the training and resources provided by Allia and by Social Enterprise East of England (SEEE)

Table A: Legal Structures for Social Enterprises

Structure	Incorporated	Regulator	Can Pay Directors?	Asset Lock	Charitable Status	Notes
Company Limited by Shares (CLS)	Yes	Companies House	Yes	No	No	Profit distributed to shareholders
Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)	Yes	Companies House	Yes	Optional	No	Often used by non-profits
Community Interest Company (CIC) - CLG	Yes	CIC Regulator	Yes	Yes	No	No shareholders; profits reinvested
Community Interest Company (CIC) - CLS	Yes	CIC Regulator	Yes	Yes	No	Can distribute capped dividends
Community Benefit Society (BenCom)	Yes	Financial Conduct Authority	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	Assets used for community benefit
Co-operative Society	Yes	Financial Conduct Authority	Yes	Optional	No	Owned and run by members
Trust	No	Charity Commission	No	Yes	Yes	Trustees manage assets for public benefit
Association	No	Charity Commission	No	Yes	Yes	Unincorporated; run by volunteer trustees
Registered Charity	No	Charity Commission	No	Yes	Yes	Must meet charitable purposes and register if income > £5,000
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	Yes	Charity Commission	No	Yes	Yes	Simplified reporting for charities

Key: CLS = Company Limited by Shares; CLG = Company Limited by Guarantee; Bencomm = Community Benefit Society; Co-op = Co-operative Society; CIC = Community Interest Society; Incorporated – a legal entity distinct from those that own and /or run it this limits the financial liability of those involved; Trust = trustees manage assets on behalf of community benefit; FCA-Financial Conduct Authority; CIO =Charitable Incorporated Organisation; Mem& Arts = Memorandum and Articles of Association

Source : Good Finance

Table B: CIO vs CIC: Key Differences

A quick comparison of two popular structures for community-focused organisations

Feature Category	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	Community Interest Company (CIC)
Legal Status	Incorporated charity Regulated by Charity Commission	Incorporated business Regulated by CIC Regulator
Tax & Funding	Eligible for grants Tax benefits & Gift Aid Attractive to donors	Some grant eligibility Taxed as a business Lower public awareness
Governance	Trustees are unpaid Foundation or Association model	Directors can be paid Limited by Guarantee or Share Capital
Trading & Setup	Limited ability to trade Complex registration process	Set up to trade Quick registration
Purpose	Exclusively for public benefit Must meet charitable purposes	For community benefit Not a charity

Test your knowledge quiz 1:

What Kind of Organisation Should You Set Up

3. What is the aim and purpose of your group

Overview

Every organisation needs a clear purpose or aim. This should explain who you want to help and what positive change you want to deliver.

Who will benefit?

Your organisation will usually be set up to support a group of people in need or address a particular problem. To understand who will benefit and how to support them effectively consider:

- How many people are there?
- What problems are they facing? Where do they live?
- Who are they? For example: men, women, children, working, unemployed, poor housing etc)?
- What other support already exists?
- What do your potential beneficiaries want to happen?
- What do other people or organisations who support them think?
- Is a new organisation needed? Could you partner with an existing organisation instead, so you can focus on delivering benefit and not on running a separate structure.

It is very important when looking for funding that you can prove that there is a need for the work, and that it can truly benefit people.

Describe the group your organisation will benefit; *E.g. "People with a hearing impairment in Huntingdonshire; residents of X estate; people affected by Diabetes."*

How many people are in the group? *Try to give figures that are supported by evidence that either you have collected and/ or you have obtained from another source.*

How will you break down information about the group? *Age, ethnic origin, the geographical area they live in, the type of support they need?*

Describe how you will carry out further research on the groups who will benefit from your service. *E.g. How will you ask users what they want, how will you record and measure the impact of your work, how will you know that you offer will still be needed in two years' time?*

Example Sources of Evidence

You can use a range of evidence to show there is a real need for your work, such as:

- Questionnaires and surveys asking for people's views
- Written and spoken statements from users and community members on what services they need
- Numbers and types of people currently using the service
- Information from Cambridgeshire Insight

What will change?

Now think about what will change in the lives of your beneficiaries because of the work you plan to do. Putting together your description of the beneficiaries and the change you want to make will help you define your aim. The changes you expect to see are your outcomes.

Avoid simply listing the activities you plan to carry out – instead explain what will be different for the people you support

For example, if your aim is to improve the quality of life of older people in your community one outcome might be to ensure older people feel less socially isolated.

4. Who is running your organisation?

What does a committee do?

Most community associations and all charities have a constitution (or set of rules). A section of this defines the committee, including its size and how often it should meet. The committee tends to be drawn from members of the association and is elected by them, usually at an annual general meeting (AGM). A very small group may meet informally and have no elected committee. In this instance the entire association is the management committee and so are responsible for managing its affairs. Many associations with modest aims and activities run very successfully like this.

There are often different roles within a committee, but all members have the same legal and financial responsibilities.

Roles within a committee:

<u>The Chair</u>

The chair is a trustee with a specific role on the board, they are elected or appointed, the main responsibilities of the chair are to:

- Lead meetings of the committee, acting as the chair, moving the meeting forward. They may also have a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- Ensure clear policies and priorities, keeping you on track.
- Act as the main spokesperson, for example, representing you group at functions, meetings or in the press.

- Take urgent action (but not decision-making unless authorised) between meetings when it isn't possible or practical to hold a meeting.
- Then also, depending on the size of your group, supporting, and supervising the staff or chief executive and acting as a channel of communication between the board and staff team.

The responsibilities listed aren't exclusively roles for the chair but give an understanding of what the role can include.

<u>Vice Chair</u>
In addition to the chair, some boards have the specific role of vice-chair.

The vice-chair's role varies from charity to charity. In some charities the vice-chair acts as a deputy for the chair, taking on the chair's role when the chair is absent. In others, the vice-chair is the 'chair in waiting' or 'chair designate' and will take over the chair's role in the future.

<u>Treasurer</u>
Generally, the treasurer helps committees carry out their financial responsibilities.

They might do this by:

- Presenting financial reports to the board in a format that helps the board understand the charity's financial position.
- Advising the board on how to carry out its financial responsibilities.
- Working with professional advisors
- Overseeing the preparation and scrutiny of annual accounts
- In small charities they take on some or all day-to-day financial duties, such as book-keeping, budgeting, and preparation of reports.
- The work of the treasurer can vary significantly, depending on the size of your group or charities.

Secretary

Not all groups will have a secretary role, but it can help ensure that someone is taking the lead on the administration and organisation of committee meetings.

They would generally be responsible for:

- Recording the decisions of the Committee
- Ensuring minutes and papers are sent out in advance of meetings and that rooms are booked, or online meeting requests sent.
- Dealing with any correspondence on behalf of the group.

You might also have sub-committees, depending on the size of your association or charity, to help you tackle tasks or topics.

What are the shared responsibilities of a committee?

Members of a committee are essentially a team that have joint responsibility for keeping a community group or charity on track.

For example, it is important to review your activities to ensure you continue to deliver what you were set-up for. The way you are involved will depend on the size of your group or charity.

Examples include:

Following your rules

Whilst some committee members might lead on specific elements, all should be familiar with your constitution. The constitution will set out guidelines such as how often meetings should take place or who is entitled to attend.

Planning events & activities

If you are a small charity or association, members of the committee will probably play keys roles in the day-to-day running of your group’s activities, as well as making decisions about your future and finance’s.

Finance & Fundraising

Every committee member is responsible for making sure that the association accounts for its money properly. Fundraising is also an important task. This can include working out a basic budget and how your group will raise funds.

Policies and procedures

Depending on what your group does, you will need policies and procedures to ensure you are doing it legally and safely. Common policies needed by groups include health & safety, data protection and safeguarding. See Section 7 for more on policies and procedures

Equal opportunities

Equal opportunities are something that should underpin everything that your group does, from running its activities to running its committee. The committee should ensure that they are welcoming and considerate to all members and that all voices are heard and respected.

Insurance and liability

You will need to make sure that you have the right insurance in place, depending on what your group does. You can watch our Insurance for small charity and voluntary groups bite size training for more information on this.

Get help if needed

Remember that you are not alone, and you're not expected to know everything. Get expert advice if you need it and talk to Support Cambridgeshire for more help. For help finding committee members see Section 7

See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size training for guidance on ***What is a committee?*** And ***What do trustees have to do?***

Consider writing down the names of everyone who is currently involved in running the project, their position in the organisation (if they have one), and their relevant skills.

Then write down the type of people you want to recruit to run the organisation efficiently. See section 7 of this guide on how to find more helpers.

Name	**Role on Committee**	**Skills Possessed/*Interested in Learning***

5. Structure of Your Organisation

The structure of your organisation is very important. Voluntary organisations need a structure to receive funding and each type of structure carries with it certain legal responsibilities and implications.

Will your organisation be charitable?

Charities are independent organisations, which are established for purposes that add value to the community, or a significant section of the community, and which are not permitted by their constitution to make a profit for private distribution. Charities do not include local government or other statutory authorities.

To be charitable an organisation must be set up exclusively to achieve charitable purposes as defined by charity law.

Charitable purposes include the prevention or relief of poverty, the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage and the advancement of animal welfare. The guidance in the links at the end of this chapter explain how the law interprets these purposes in very specific ways.

If the aims of your group are not exclusively about one or more of the charitable purposes outlined in legislation and/or you are not benefiting a sufficient section of the public then it is not a charity.

You must also be set up for public benefit to ensure the benefit will outweigh any potential harm and will apply to a sufficient section of the public.

If your group's aims meet both these criteria, then you are a charity even though you may not be registered with the Charity Commission.

Charities are managed by volunteers known as trustees, although some groups call them something else such as committee members, governors or directors, Charity trustees are the people who share ultimate responsibility for governing a charity and directing how it is managed and run.

If your organisation is charitable and its income is more than £5,000 a year, it needs to register with the Charity Commission, and send financial information to them each year

See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size training for guidance on ***Is your group a charity?***

Test your knowledge with quiz 2:

Will your organisation be charitable?

Do you need to be incorporated?

What your charity wants to do is likely to dictate the structure, but it also depends on how much risk your trustees are willing to take – which comes down to whether you need to be incorporated.

Incorporated groups have a legal standing like a person, which means the group can make legal commitments, such as entering contracts, rather than the trustees as individuals having to make this commitment. This means trustees of incorporated groups are not personally liable for the group's actions. An incorporated structure is most appropriate for groups which intend to trade, raise large sums and or enter legally binding contracts such as employing staff and managing property.

Conversely, unincorporated groups cannot enter contracts, and a trustee must enter the contract in their own name. An unincorporated structure is most appropriate for groups with low incomes and without employees or property

Test your knowledge with quiz 3:

whether your organisation needs to be incorporated

What structure will you choose for your charity?

These are the main legal structures for charities:

- A trust
- An unregistered charity or association or a registered charity
- A company limited by guarantee
- A charitable Incorporated Organisation also known as a CIO
- A community benefit society

The following chart summarises which charity structure is incorporated. This means the name and therefore the liability for any contracts is the charity's and not the trustees. The chart also highlights who the legal regulator is for each legal structure, i.e. the organisation that sets the rules and who the charity must report to.

Legal form	Incorporated	Contracts in the name of	Liability to third parties limited	Legal regulator
Trust	No	Trustees personally	No	Charity commission
Registered/unregistered charities or association	No	Trustees personally	No	Charity commission
Charitable company/Company Limited by Guarantee/shares	Yes	The Charity	Yes	Companies House Charity Commission
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	Yes	The Charity	Yes	Charity commission
Community Benefit society	Yes	The Charity	Yes	Financial Conduct Authority (registered but not regulated by FCA)

Do you have an income below £5,000pa?

If you are likely to start up with an annual income of below £5000 pa – the two most popular structures are to set up as an unregistered charity (also known as a **charitable association**) or as **Charitable Incorporated Organisation.**

Unlike a registered charity, an **unregistered charity** is, as the name suggests, not registered with the Charity Commission because its income is below £5000 pa. But both registered and unregistered charities will be run by a group of trustees, which are unincorporated so trustees are personally responsible for any of the charity's financial and legal obligations and are required to comply with Charity Commission rules. However, unregistered charities do not send in a report of their activities or accounts to the Charity Commission.

To set up an unregistered charity all you need to do is to find at least one other person willing to be a trustee and complete and sign a constitution. We would recommend contacting Support Cambridgeshire for advice on selecting a suitable template for your constitution. You don't need to register your group anywhere before you can get started. If the group's income reaches £5000 per year it will then need to register with the Charity Commission – if this looks like it might happen to your group get in touch as we can help with this.

The second option is to set up as a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)** which as the name suggests is incorporated – so it exists as a separate legal entity. You can set up from the beginning as a CIO as there is no minimum income requirement. There are two types of CIO: an Association model which has voting members and trustees, and a Foundation model which does not have voting members and is run by appointed trustees. CIOs are registered with the Charity Commission and must provide accounts and annual returns. To set up a CIO is more complex than an unregistered charity and we would recommend speaking to us for guidance.

If you have an income above £5,000 pa?

If you have an annual income of above £5000 – the two most popular options for governance structure are to become a registered charity or a CIO.

To apply to become either a registered charity or a CIO you have to meet various legal requirements to prove you are a charity in the eyes of the law and once you are registered you have to comply with Charity Commission rules, which includes sending in reports and accounts – the level of reporting depends on the income.

However, as you may recall a registered charity is not incorporated so the option most groups will go with is to set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Other options?

There are other structures you can use to set up a charity, but they are less frequently used:

A charitable company is a limited company registered with companies house that has charitable aims – charitable companies are set up using a Memorandum and Articles of Association rather than a constitution However once income reaches £5000 per annum the company must also register with the Charity Commission and will then need to report to both regulators annually.

If you are setting up a committee to manage a particular asset or legacy you might set up as a **Charitable Trust**

Where communities are managing community assets such as a community shop or community owned pub they may choose to become a **Community Benefit Society** which is owned and run by its members for the benefit of the wider community. If these societies meet charitable criteria, they can call themselves charities. They are registered with the Financial Conduct Authority and not the Charity Commission. They are incorporated and can have paid directors.

See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size training for guidance on
What structure will you choose?

How will you be funded

Another consideration in your choice of structure, is how you expect to fund your activities.

If you anticipate your funding coming from small donations or grants then your trustees may feel that their level of liability is acceptable and they are happy to work within an unincorporated structure. But once your organisation starts entering contracts with grant funders or commissioners for larger amounts or engages in the sale of goods or services in a more major way financial risks increase, and trustees are more likely to want an incorporated structure to limit their liability. Some charities are run as social enterprises which means that rather than seeking donations and grants they obtain most of their funding by offering goods or services to consumers or commissioners.

Social enterprises

A social enterprise is not a legal structure in its own right; it describes a business that is driven by social objectives rather than profit. A charity can be set up to act as a social enterprise, but it is limited by Charity law. So, for example, if your charity is set up to advance education you can only sell services connected to education. Social enterprises can also be set up as social businesses; these do not have to follow Charity law. One form a social business might take is as a **Community Interest Company (CIC**), these straddle the boundary between charity and business ploughing significant parts of any profit back to support social aims but still being able to offer dividends to private investors. You can find more about CIC's in section 2

Need some help contact us on info@supportcambridgeshire.org.uk

Guidance links

How to choose a structure

Model governing documents

How to write you charity's governing document

How to register your charity

How to change your charity's structure

Setting up a social enterprise

The Essential trustee: what you need to know

6. Finding helpers to run your group?

It is most likely in the first instance that everyone will be a volunteer. To help find the right people to help it might be useful to write down answers to the following questions:

- What's needed? Numbers, types of skills and experience?
- Who could help? Think of all the different groups of people you could approach
- How do we attract people to help us?
- What will you ask of them? Tasks and level of commitment
- Where will you find them?
- How will you keep them engaged? Including how you will train and supervise the volunteers
- How will you keep everyone safe? If you have people working with children or vulnerable adults have you got the right safeguarding in place?
- There is more about policies in section 7 of the toolkit.

Don't forget to sign up to Volunteer Cambs our online platform that allows you to advertise roles and recruit volunteers for free.

If you become an employer at some stage in the future remember that being a voluntary group does not excuse you from meeting all the legal requirements of an employer. Always seek advice about the legal and financial implications of recruiting staff. A good source of information on this topic is NCVO

See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size guidance on *Attracting Volunteers* and the *Legal Issues around managing volunteers in England and Wales.*

7. Organisational Objectives for Year One

These describe **how your organisation will develop, strengthen, or organise itself** so that it can achieve its overall aim. They focus on **building capacity**, **improving systems**, or **putting the right structures in place**.

Think of them as the *internal foundations* you need to run your service well.

These objectives are about your **organisation's readiness and capability**.

- To get a group of three to 11 people together to form the management committee of the new organisation, with the necessary skills See Stage 3
- To agree the organisation's aims and objectives see Section 2.
- To agree a governing document depending on your structure See section 5
- To hold regular committee meetings, with agendas circulated in advance and written minutes of decisions circulated to all committee members.
- To set up a bank account with at least two signatories who are members of the committee (most local banks have community accounts) See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size guidance on Bank accounts and financial controls
- To agree financial procedures (how the organisation will record and account for money (See Support Cambridgeshire's guidance on Bank accounts and financial controls
- If you plan to register as a Charity we would strongly recommend contacting the development team at Support Cambridgeshire to help with this.
- Ensure you have all the policies and procedures you need to keep people safe and work within the law.

Without achieving these organisational objectives your chances of securing funding and successfully delivering services to your beneficiaries are greatly reduced. Many of these objectives also have legal or financial implications that your management committee needs to be aware of.

Consider making it a permanent item on your agenda for your committee meetings to review these objectives checking both your group's progress and the committee's understanding of the issues.

What policies and procedures do you need to support your objectives?

Your policies are your written guides to how the organisation; its committee, staff, members and users will act. It is important to have these policies in place because:

- They may be required by law and your funders
- They help the organisation be more effective by providing a guide as to the correct way to act in certain situations. This means your service is more likely to achieve consistent standards. This can also reduce conflict and uncertainty in the organisation improving morale.
- They are also a chance for your organisation to publicly explain its values and ideals, particularly in how it treats everyone it encounters. This can help build a particular culture within your group that puts into practice the ideals that founded it and ensure the organisation keeps to those ideas when the founders have moved on.

As a starting organisation you may not have any of these, but don't worry.

> Set aside time in one management committee meeting to review this list. Decide which policies cover activities you are currently, or will soon be carrying out and do not have a policy for. A good starting point is the Support Cambridgeshire website or get in touch with our development team as they will be able to offer guidance to help you draft your policy.
>
> Review this list at least once a year to ensure that your activities are all covered by a suitable policy.

If you are given a policy template do not simply agree to adopt it in the committee meeting. Instead, take time to look at the model and adapt it to your group's needs. A model is a good starting place but may not meet all the demands of your group. Also think about how you will implement the policy and how you will check to see that it is working. If your organisation ever becomes involved in a dispute and is shown to have inadequate policies in place or to have failed to follow its own policies because of lack of training, understanding or ability then you could well lose the dispute, at a cost to your group's time, money, morale and reputation.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) policy

This covers how your group will avoid discrimination against people and how it will meet the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act. It will also show how you will create a safe, respectful and inclusive space for people and how you will manage a situation if discrimination or harassment does or is alleged to have taken place.

> See guidance from the Resource Centre Equality and diversity policies for small groups

A Financial control policy

This covers how you will keep accurate financial records and ensuring funds are spent only on activities that deliver the aims of the group, as outlined in your constitution…

> See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size guidance on *Bank accounts and financial controls*

Health and Safety policy

Your group is responsible for keeping people safe at your events and activities. Your policy and procedures will include undertaking risk assessments to avoid unnecessary risk. You are also likely to need insurance for activities where there is a chance of someone being hurt physically, mentally or financially.

> See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size guidance on *Health and Safety* (there are 3 short recordings) and Insurance

Safeguarding policies

A safeguarding policy outlines what your organisation will do to meet its commitments and responsibilities to those you work with. It seeks to protect children or adults at risk from harm, abuse, and distress. It is recommended that you have separate policies for safeguarding adults at risk and safeguarding children as there are significant differences in the laws that shape how we safeguard children and how we safeguard adults.

See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size guidance *Safeguarding policy and procedures*

Data Protection policy

Data protection is about protecting people's privacy and ensuring the data you hold about them cannot be used to cause them harm. Your organisation is responsible for the safe management of any data you hold. If you are holding any information online you must also be aware of cybersecurity.

See Support Cambridgeshire's bite size guidance on *Data protection* (there are 2 short recordings) and *Cybersecurity*

Social Media policy

You are responsible for putting in place a social media policy to control the use of accounts related to your group to avoid harm to individuals or to your reputation. You can find out more about this on our website

There are many other policies your group may decide to adopt as you grow, particularly if you start employing people.

As a committee you need to regularly review what is needed and you can always contact Support Cambridgeshire to find out more.

8. Year one service or delivery objectives?

These describe **what your organisation will deliver to the community**. They are about the **outputs**, **activities**, or **benefits** your users will see.

Think of them as the *direct service actions* that fulfil your mission.

A service objective might be *'we will develop a community car scheme offering 20 lifts a week by Sept'*

Thinking about the service objectives. Write down each service that you want to provide. Then for each one describe: How often will your activities be run – e.g. daily, once a week, twice a month etc? When will they be run – what time is most convenient for those you are trying to help? Where will they be run – do you need premises? Acquiring them is an objective in itself How many people will use the service – e.g. 30 people attend each session, 300 people attend over twelve months, receive 400 calls to the helpline. When will you start the service? For how long will it run? Who will run the service? What will change as a result of the service?

See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size guidance *Business planning*

9. Develop a Budget and thinking about funding

Decide on your financial year. Most organisations keep the year 1 April – March 31st. When you produce annual (i.e. yearly) accounts, they will cover all transactions in the financial year.

Developing a budget

However, when you start your organisation you will need a budget – it is an essential planning tool, it is an estimate of your income and expenditure for a set period – your realistic best guess of what is going to happen. It is not set in stone, and it will be adjusted as necessary with the agreement of the committee. Below is an example budget based on previous activities- the notes state the key assumptions being made. For more information about creating a budget see our recording on putting in place financial controls.

Income	Notes and calculations	Budget
Grants	Applied for town grant for coach trip same destination	200
Fundraising	Quiz night raised £100 last year. Aim to sell 20% more tickets	120
Coach ticket sales	Aim to sell 30 adult seats @ £10 and 10 kids @ £5	350
Total income		670
Expenditure		
Coach hire	Est 20% increase in cost due to fuel increases	400
Insurance	Est 10% increase in cost	150
Promotion	Photocopying 100 leaflets @10p 40 tickets@ 10p and 20 posters @20p	18
Fundraising costs	Cost £30 last year costs incr by 10%	33
Total expenditure		601
Surplus		69

See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size guidance
Bank Accounts and Financial Controls

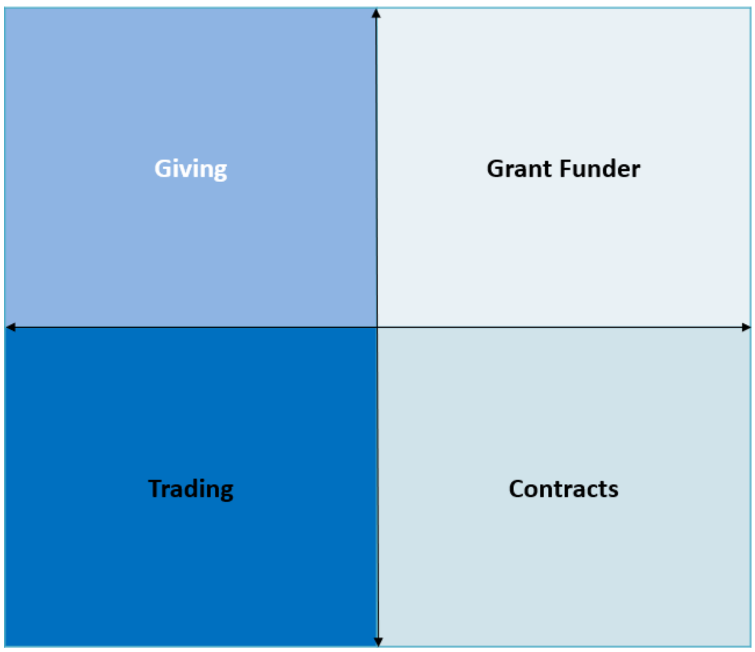
Consider writing a budget based on your activities. This template can be used for your starting budget. List as many items as you think are needed, not just the spaces given here.

Source of Income	Notes and calculations	Budget
Total income		
Source of expenditure		
Total expenditure		
Surplus		

Thinking About Funding

Before you can start running your service you need to know how much money you will need as well as when you will need it.

Most voluntary groups are funded through a combination of funding sources. Ideally the funding should be spread across potential funding streams to avoid overreliance on one area of funding.



Giving might be small one-off payments, in response to a collection, or regular donations through direct debits. This includes one-off legacies from wills. You might run a fundraising event where people make donations or pay to take part.

You may also be able to apply to **grant funders** – grants tend to be restricted to fund projects that meet the funders priorities, although some funders will fund general running costs.

Your group may be able to sell some goods or services relevant to its charitable objects and use the profits from this **trading income** to fund charitable activities. Or you might be **contracted** by a statutory commissioner to deliver a service.

See Support Cambridgeshire's bite-size guidance *Fundraising basics for small voluntary groups and charities* and *Funding Application Tips* on how to apply for grant funding.

At your next committee meeting consider discussing the following questions. Write down your decisions in the minutes.

When do you need the money by? How much do you need?

Who will research the information on funding sources?

Who will write any funding applications and letters?

Decide how much money you will get from which sources. You do not need to raise funds from all sources.

Conclusion

We hope this toolkit has given you the information to help you take the next steps in developing your group. If you'd like support, have questions, or want to talk through your ideas, our Development Team is here to help.

Please do get in touch with us at info@supportcambridgeshire.org.uk — we'd be delighted to hear from you.

10. Resources

Charity Commission guidance on starting a charity

Official guidance on how to register and set up a charity in the UK.

https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-charity

Companies House registering a Company

Instructions for registering a private limited company with Companies House.

https://www.gov.uk/limited-company-formation/register-your-company

CIC regulator

Guidance on forming and managing a Community Interest Company (CIC).

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-interest-companies-how-to-form-a-cic/community-interest-companies-guidance-chapters

NCVO guidance on setting up a group

Advice for starting and running voluntary or community groups.

https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/setting-up/

ACAS

Employment and workplace advice for organisations and employees.

https://www.acas.org.uk/advice

Disclosure & Barring Service

Information on DBS checks for safeguarding and recruitment. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-checking-service-guidance--2

ICO for small groups

Data protection and GDPR guidance for small organisations.

https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/advice-for-small-organisations/getting-started-with-gdpr/

Health and Safety Executive risk assessments

Templates and examples for conducting risk assessments.

https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm

NSPCC safeguarding for small groups

Safeguarding advice for voluntary and community groups working with children.

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/voluntary-community-groups

Support Cambridgeshire Micro Trainings

On-demand micro training sessions for community groups in Cambridgeshire.

https://supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/on-demand-training/

Embrace Finance

Financial guidance and resources for charities and social enterprises.

https://www.embracefinance.org.uk/