

Becoming a CAG Devon group

What is CAG Devon?

The Community Action Group (CAG) Devon network consists of groups across Mid-Devon and Teignbridge organising events and projects to take action on waste, including repair cafes, food surplus, reducing single-use plastic, composting and much more.

Established in 2016, and funded by Devon County Council, CAG Devon is a growing network of community sustainability groups. The model for CAG Devon is based on the now fully independent, CAG Oxfordshire, the largest local network of community sustainability groups in the UK, with over 80 affiliated groups.

What can the CAG Devon Project offer you?

The CAG Devon Project has a Devon based staff team that provide free day-to-day support to the network members including

- Advice, expertise and mentoring to set up and maintain groups, and develop projects, events and activities.
- Insurance cover for network activities.
- Access to CAG Devon funding for special projects, and support sourcing external funds for larger projects.
- Press, media, and communications coordination via our communication channels including our website, Facebook and Twitter.
- Training, skill sharing and networking events and opportunities.
- Access and contact with a network of other community action groups including networking and collaborative activities and meetings.
- Access to Resource CIT, a Government-recognised data collection and monitoring portal, to report on and evidence the impact of the groups' activities.
- Access to a bank of materials and resources.
- Signposting to other organisations and bodies for advice and building partnerships.
- Facilitating work with local and national government.

Is becoming a CAG Devon member right for you?

If you have an idea for a project or a collection of like-minded people, we can support you to set up a new community group. Alternatively, if you are an existing community group or project, you could join our network and become part of a larger movement.

To join the network your group, organisation, or project needs to:

- Agree to the terms set out in the **CAG Devon membership agreement**.
- Be based in Devon, in the Mid-Devon and Teignbridge districts. (Our aspiration is to become Devon-wide, resources permitting).
- Be community led, outward facing and open to all.
- Be actively focused on creating practical solutions to climate change and issues including waste and food.
- Not engage in proactive lobbying or party-political activity.
- Be willing to actively participate in and contribute to the wider network activity.

What are the next steps?

If you think becoming part of CAG Devon is right for you, the CAG Devon team will help guide you through the process of joining the network. Please email info@cagdevon.org.uk with your contact details and a brief description of your group or project and will get in touch to arrange an initial phone call.

In the meantime, here is some information on what to do next to become a member of CAG Devon.

1. Make a group decision

Discuss as a group your motivations and intentions for joining the network. We would also like to know more about you. What interests you in the network? Why do you want to be a part of it? What do you think your group can bring to the network?

2. Sign the CAG Devon membership agreement

All groups need to sign a formal agreement with CAG Devon to begin. A copy of the **CAG Devon membership agreement** is on our website. This outlines what you can expect from the CAG Devon network in terms of free support and what your group needs to do to be part of the CAG Devon network. In particular, the commitment to submit annual accounts statements, maintain records and regularly enter data about your events and activities into Resource CIT, our monitoring and evaluation portal.

3. Read over the CAG Devon membership agreement

Once you are happy with this document, it needs to be signed by your group's officers and returned to the project staff via email.

4. Constitute your group

All groups need to be formally constituted. The constitution is a statement about the group's purpose and how it will be structured and run, which is agreed to by the group.

If your group is new, CAG Devon staff can help your group create a constitution. You can find an **example constitution** that you could adapt for your own group on our website. Please note that adopting a constitution does not bestow charity status.

Alternatively, your group may decide to formalise its structure in a different way (e.g. by becoming a charity, co-operative or community benefit society), especially if you wish to become a social enterprise or hire paid staff members. Having a different legal structure does not exclude you from becoming a CAG Devon member, you will just need to provide your terms of reference appropriate to that structure.

If your group, project, or organisation is already constituted, please provide us with your existing constitution document or terms of reference.

5. Appoint officer roles

According to what you decided in your own group's constitution, you will need to have named officer positions, such as (but not limited to) chair, secretary, and treasurer. You can read more about the roles of officers in the **example constitution** on our website. You appoint these officers at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Special General Meeting (SGM). You will need to inform the CAG team of the names and contact details of the appointed officers.

6. Open a CAG bank account

To manage your finances, we ask that you open a bank account within three months of becoming a CAG Devon member. CAG Devon staff can provide advice on opening bank accounts and templates to help you manage your accounts and submit your annual accounts report.

7. Get going!

Once you have joined CAG Devon, a member of the team will send you a welcome pack of useful support documents and resources. Everything you need to know about starting up a group including how to recruit members, run meetings, organise events and projects, get publicity, measure your impact, find resources online. CAG Devon staff will be on hand to give advice and support.