

How to...

Run a Young Greens group

(Everything you need to know)

HOW TO...

MAKE THE MOST OF A FRESHER'S FAIR!

Freshers Fairs are the ideal time to recruit new members, raise the profile of the Young Greens group and get names on petitions/email lists.

So it is worth going to the extra effort to make a really big impact on the Freshers, especially since there will be strong competition from other societies and groups.

11 EASY TIPS FOR PLANNING A STALL:

- 1. Make sure that you book a stall at the Fair well in advance.** Contact your Union or sabbatical officers to find out how and do it as soon as possible.
- 2. Do you have any choice in the location of the stall?** Try to be near the entrance and facing them, not tucked up in the back of the hall.
- 3. Plan your first meeting of the term *before* the Freshers Fair.** You can then give details and directions to it to the Freshers at the Fair, and definitely distribute flyers.
- 4. Plan a programme of events** (see events listing ideas) so that you can tell people about the plans you have.
- 5. Hold a briefing meeting before the Fair** to make sure the people staffing the stall know what to do and are up to date.
- 6. Photocopy/print lots of copies of the contact sheet!**
- 7. Find out what the requirements of a membership fee for the Union are;** find out what other groups charge to get some idea. You will also qualify for funding from the national YG group.
- 8. Make your stall as visible / audible as possible.** This pack will help you to do that, but try to make a banner which you can attach to your table or the walls nearby, and if possible, find a tablecloth – preferably green!
- 9. Can you get hold of anything to give away,** such as Fair Trade chocolate, or Tea or Coffee? Avoid unsustainable, useless products like flashing LEDs embedded in bouncy balls etc!
- 10. If possible, prepare a display of photos or posters from previous events,** to show the sort of things your group does.
- 11. Make sure you and your helpers know when the Fair is and what time to turn up!**

Q: WHO CAN HELP?

A: *If possible, ask the advice of the people who ran the Freshers Fair last year, so that you can learn from their experience.*

- Get as many people to help you as possible. Do you have friends or contacts in the Local Party who could spare some time? Are there previous members of the group who could come back and help?

- Contact the YG committee: studentsupport@younggreens.org.uk. We will do what we can to help.

THINGS TO DO AT THE FRESHER'S FAIR

- Have people at the door distributing flyers and directing people to the stall, if possible. Ask sympathetic Societies to put some flyers on their stalls (Amnesty, People and Planet, etc)
- Staff the stall with people who can answer questions about your group, YGs, the Green Party. Make sure they know how to find information like plans for the year, when and where the first meeting is, and so on.
- Get contact details from anyone who is interested in the stall – even if they don't join immediately. Use the Contact sheet supplied and have a ready supply of pens!
- Remember the faces and names of the really interested people. If they come to subsequent meetings, look out for them and make sure they feel welcome.
- Give people the chance to join the Green Party on the spot. Collect in completed joining forms with £5 in cash or cheques, and send them in yourself to Party Office at 56-64 Leonard Street, Development House, London, EC2A 4LT.
- Please send the contact sheet information to membership@younggreens.org.uk.
- Don't be long-winded and boring. Let people talk about themselves, and be helpful – if they want the sci-fi society, don't trick them into coming to your group!
- Do interesting stuff – play a game, have alternative technology on the stall (wind up radio, bike etc) grab attention and make people talk!

HOW TO...

RECRUIT AND RETAIN GROUP MEMBERS

Getting members is one thing, but keeping them interested is quite different! Here are a few tips to show you how.

Make an impact at the Fresher's Fair!

Plan well in advance of the Fair – this is the best time to recruit new members. Find out if there are separate Freshers Fair(s), and book a stall at this. Promote the events and successes of your group. This should generate enthusiasm and interest in the group.

Recruit at events - not meetings

Recruiting at regular meetings is not always the most efficient way to attract newcomers. People join an organisation that is action orientated and fun to be involved with.

Find out others' interests

Some people join organisations to meet new people with similar values, but others want to try new things. Make the atmosphere fun and informal, but offer each member the chance to challenge themselves and take on new tasks.

Be visible and active

Keep a high profile around campus by organising events such as rousing speakers, festivals, demos, film-nights, fair trade fairs or even an ethical careers fair. Collaborate with other groups on events of mutual interest, to reach out to the wider audience and come into contact with similar people.

Don't ignore new members

Make them feel included the minute they walk through the door, and give a good overview of what's going on. Avoid inside jokes! Make it clear to them how they could become actively involved, but carefully avoid overwhelming them!

PUBLICITY, PUBLICITY, PUBLICITY!

- **Try to be innovative with poster campaigns;** cryptic, or an obviously linked series of posters attract people's attention.
- **Try to print on coloured paper** or add a dash of colour to ordinary black and white. Look at successful posters from the past
- **Try to get a YG noticeboard** put up in the Student Union.
- **Write letters to the student newspaper** raising key issues and awareness amongst the student body.
- **Publicise forthcoming events in good time** and if possible, further events and regular meetings.

Once you've got members - keep them!

- Make sure everyone feels involved and useful within the group's activities, and has a role that fits their capabilities and liking. Let members control their own commitment – no one like feeling trapped!
- Be open to new suggestions and challenges – people rise to their own challenges better!
- Show gratitude for the effort that people put into the group.
- Make the meetings interesting and well organised!
- Set realistic targets for what you want to achieve through the year. Don't worry if you don't fit in everything you'd planned.
- Celebrate your successes; let people know that they've been successful.

EMAIL LISTS

A comprehensive list of Young Greens email lists can be found at <http://lists.greenparty.org.uk/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo>.

In addition to the Young Greens Committee-Regions list (for committee members, regional contacts and local coordinators), there are a number of Working Group e-lists and Local Group e-lists. Email lists encourage a more inclusive way of working, they enable new members to link in to activities and discussions straight away, without their details being circulated to others in the group.

EMAIL LISTS (Continued)

Many local groups find it useful to have a separate discussion list for active members which allows unmoderated postings, as well as an announcement list for the wider membership and interested non-members. This ensures that those less involved in the organisation of the group are not overwhelmed with unwanted messages.

Local group coordinators should have passwords to allow them to add/remove members, and alter settings on their local lists.

If you need any help administrating your list or want a new one set up, then email: membership@younggreens.org.uk.

Composing Email Announcements

Remember to keep emails short and structured – give a clear introduction and maybe a contents list at the top.

Avoid sending too many emails, and make sure they are all strictly relevant to your members. Think about consolidating lots of info into a single structured email.

In particular, try not to forward emails on without formatting them and removing the previous headers.

Note that only certain attachments will go through on most lists: mainly rtf, pdf and plain text - **not** MS Word.

HOW TO...

HOLD GREAT MEETINGS

Students may join many societies in the first week of term, but realistically only have time to contribute to one or two groups. The first few meetings are therefore crucial to generate and maintain the interest of new members.

PLANNING YOUR FIRST MEETING - 10 KEY STEPS

1. Get one or two others to help you with the first meeting;
2. Plan the meeting **before** the Freshers Fair to let people know about it on the day;
3. Try to avoid clashes with other similar societies, if possible! And tell them too;
4. Find out where you can hold your first meeting! Is it suitable for later meetings?
5. Work out the best time to hold a meeting;
6. Decide an agenda – ie, to introduce yourselves and the group and the interesting people who turn up. Will you set out a provisional programme for the term? Are there parties planned?
7. Bring leaflets and YG Newsletters to the meeting. This will stimulate discussion, and be open to ideas / campaigns that other members would like to pursue;
8. Put up posters guiding people to the meeting – Freshers don't know their way round as well as you may do;
9. Advertise your meeting well with flyers and posters (again!)
10. Email / phone everyone.

At the first meeting

Get there 10 mins early! Have time to prepare.

- Explain the purpose of the meeting. Attendees should know what to expect, and will want to find out more about the Young Greens. Introduce the Green Party and some of the campaigns/policies we have.
- Explain the aims of the group to everyone. Allow space for input from other individuals.

- You will want to include the social aspect of the group and ideas such as raising awareness about environmental issues and getting something useful done at the same time.
- Keep the first meeting short and go for a drink afterwards.
- Pass a contact sheet around at the first meeting to get every attendees name, number, email and address. Try to remember faces and names!
- Decide on when and where to meet, and on the frequency of meetings at the first meeting. This can be difficult to find a time that suits everyone, and will test your negotiating skills!
- Spend some time getting some idea of what people would like to do with the group – ie direct action or inviting speakers etc. – or both!
- Sum up succinctly at the end, so everyone knows what to expect / do next.

Ideas for the first meeting

Opinions vary greatly about the content of a first meeting – often an ice-breaker such as going round the room, getting everyone to talk briefly about themselves, why they're interested in the Young Greens, and anything they'd like to see happen over the year.

Alternatively, you could give a short talk about YG, and follow it up with a question and answer session. If you don't want to create a situation where everyone is 'forced' to contribute, then give a general invitation to people to talk about their interests and try to get small conversations within the group established. Another thing to do is to launch into some direct action of some sort immediately.

At subsequent meetings

Always prepare an agenda to discuss, and try to keep a fun element in the meeting. For example, in national YG meetings we always have a break in the middle for free association, joking and eating. Always introduce yourself and the group at the beginning of meetings for the benefit of any newcomers.

Keep meetings short and keep time for socialising. Sometimes a social event such as dinner together can be more productive than a meeting! Change the content of meetings for variety regularly – different activities such as talks, videos, discussions, canvassing, community actions etc all make for exciting times!

Ask for feedback on the group's activities and the meetings. Always ask newcomers as first impressions are often frank. Keep minutes of discussions, so absences don't take up time regurgitating previous meetings to bring them up to speed.

HOW TO...

LET EVERYONE KNOW!

So you've organised an event, action or meeting. But you need to let people know about it! Publicity is the key. There is no point putting loads of time and effort into organising an action, event or meeting unless you publicise it widely. You can never do enough of it.

BEFORE THE EVENT

Notify your student newspaper

If your student / local newspaper has a diary section, then tell them about your event. Include the date, time, place and a short, snappy description. Don't forget to leave a contact!

Write a press release

If you want press coverage, then send the relevant people a press release.

Contact your local radio

Often Universities have a student radio – so get them to mention your event at popular times throughout the week before. If there's no radio, perhaps you could start one?

Put up loads of posters!

It is very difficult, competing for attention and space amongst the hundreds of posters that get put up each week on campuses.

Try and develop a 'brand' of poster that is recognisable as a YG poster. Another way is to run a series of linked or cryptic posters – when you finally put up the last in the series, all is explained. That should get people thinking / talking.

Make sure you know the Uni rules on poster around campus – you don't want to put lots up and then find they've all been taken down because they are not in 'the right place' (of course, those places often make more of an impact because no other posters are there, so if you have time and don't mind reposting and reposting....)

Flyers

Flyers are easy to make from reduced size posters. Make sure they are legible and have the important information on them (time, date, place etc). Distribute them in the student union and outside lectures where you'd expect to generate interest.

Organise a publicity stunt

Do what you can to draw attention to yourselves, dress up as Santa, borrow a megaphone, make a banner, climb trees, go naked, wear ginger beards, hold a stall, organise a bed in...

Email

Email your members with details of the event, and encourage them to forward them to friends. Also email coordinators of other societies, who may publicise your events among their members. Make sure emails are not too many kb, and convert well into plain text, in case email programmes de-format them accidentally.

AT THE EVENT

Take photos to preserve memories of what happened to tell your grandkids, and as useful material for advertising the group in the future! Make sure posters on the day guide people effectively to events that are hard to find. If the press turn up, have a quick quote up your sleeve and get a good photo...

The Young Greens newsletter and publications coordinators are also very grateful for images of events: newsletter@younggreens.org.uk and publications@younggreens.org.uk

After the event

Try to clean up the posters and recycle or reuse them if possible. Remember blu-tac can be reused many times.

Remember to thank attending speakers and guests and find out if they enjoyed it and/or found it useful.

HOW TO...

HELP YOUR STUDENT UNION HELP YOU

Each year, outgoing committee members take lots of knowledge with them, much of it about the bureaucratic procedures of your Union. Get to know the staff and the procedures at your Union well, and pass on your knowledge to the people that follow!

Who to ask

Ask anyone you know who's involved with the Union at one level or another.

Previous YG members and people from other societies will know plenty about the best way to get stuff done at the Union and what it can offer. Your Union may well run special meetings for clubs and societies, which can be used for getting help running the group. Likewise the Union may publish a helpful guide booklet – get hold of a copy! Your Union will also have a sabbatical officer who has been elected to represent you. Ask him/her for advice!

THINGS TO FIND OUT

- What resources are available to you? Do you have a pigeonhole? Computers to use? Access to telephones? Faxes? The internet and webspace? Uni-based distribution lists? Printing and copying facilities? Video camera?
- Is there a room or cupboard where you can store things safely? Which rooms can be used for your meetings and what is the booking procedure?
- Can you use TV/video equipment or overhead projectors and slide projectors? These will be useful for events such as talks.
- Is there a notice-board that you can use to advertise the group in the Union?
- What is the group email / webspace? Find out how to set one up if you don't have one already.
- What are the 'poster regulations' on your campus?
- How can you contact the student newspaper? If you want to start a newsletter, they'll be able to give you good pointers and useful information.
- How do you put motions through your Union's meetings / AGM? What are the dates and deadlines, and what can you propose/ask for?

THINGS TO FIND OUT (Continued)

- Who are the sabbaticals and important permanent staff at the Union? Keep them informed about your activities and events, and they'll be able to help you secure extra funding and find you good contacts.
- How can you best collaborate with other clubs and groups? Is there a contact list or website listing all the clubs and societies? If not, put one on your site / set one up and you get the kudos and people looking at your society. Linking up strengthens your community and can save costs.
- What are the sources of funding? How can you apply for them? You may have to have a Treasurer of the group in order to qualify and deal with the financial side of student groups.
- Is there extra 'hidden funding' available for special events like conferences? You may be able to get extra funding by putting forward motions at the Union meetings (for example, Imperial College Environmental Society won £300 and logistical support for its annual 'Alternative Careers Fair' each year in the future from imperial College Union).
- Finally, which committees are directly relevant to matters that affect you and give the members your opinions?

HOW TO...

LINK TO THE GREEN PARTY

Getting in touch with the Green Party is like discovering a whole new world of proactive support and ideas, so why not make yourselves known to the local party?

Linking up

Your local party is there and ready to help you – all you have to do is call them, or get in touch through party office. They'll have a social diary and also campaigns which can provide sociable outings with a trip to the pub after. Perhaps your group could adopt a local ward and help out with campaigning there. You can find the names of your local contact from Party Office: 020 7272 4474 / members@greenparty.org.uk.

Conference

Twice annually the Green Party national conference provides the opportunity to contribute directly to policy, strategy and direction of the GP. All members can join in debates and vote on the outcome, so it's a good time to meet some of the GP characters and have your say. Or if you prefer, to have a party whilst discussing drug policy, or even prop up the bar.

The conference also gives YG the chance to strengthen the national network, share ideas between the different groups, and get to know like minded people.

Talk to the YG Committee about arranging shared accommodation and cheap travel, and bring a whole group if you can. Don't worry: non-GP members are welcome to come too.

Your local party contact:

Your local party:

Local party contact name:

Telephone number:

Happy Greening!

If you have any ideas, suggestions or improvements that could be made to this leaflet, or could help out establishing new groups at other Universities, then please contact:

studentsupport@younggreens.org.uk

Thanks!