Outcomes and action plans

Every event should have an outcome

You must have a clear goal for what you want to achieve from holding a public event. Your events should never just be about giving people some information. You should always aim for a decision to have been made on something at the end of the meeting, and explain to the attendees what the outcome is that you are hoping for, for example:

Introductory meeting: "Our aim is that by the end of this evening you will understand why we as a group are interested in establishing a renewable energy project in our community, and we will have narrowed down the options that everyone here thinks we should investigate further. We also intend to hold further meetings to plan the project, so would like you to register your interest if you wish to be involved, even if that's just to remain on our mailing list so that you know what's going on"

Next meeting: "Our aim for this evening is to study in more detail the three renewable energy technologies that were the most popular choices of people who attended the first meeting. We hope to reach a point where we know which one(s) of them we will pursue further, and to secure volunteers who are willing to help with any investigations that arise from this."

Subsequent meeting: "Our aim for this meeting is to report back on the investigations we carried out on the three technologies we are looking at, and to examine the different ways we might structure ourselves as a legal entity and finance the project(s). By the end of the meeting we hope to have recruited volunteers who will work to draw up a business plan for our chosen technology(ies), and establish a some form of company, which we can report back on at the next meeting"

And so on.

One of the main outcomes of the day will be the **write-up** of the event's *formal* content. This includes what was written on flipcharts and post-it notes, and also the views expressed in periods of discussion (some of which will be unplanned, resulting from interruptions from the floor).

It's therefore a good idea to have a section of the wall where you have pre-arranged a series of flipchart sheets, on which the Recorder can write down points that arise that are not dealt with there and then. As discussed in the section on facilitation skills, you will find it helpful to have one of the sheets pre-headed with the title 'Unresolved Issues'. This is where you will write things down that are acting as a block to progress, in order to move things on (see box 'Moving things on').

You may also find it helpful to set up a flipchart sheet called 'Actions' – on this you can record important next steps that need to be taken, and the names of anyone who has volunteered to do them. Tasks will arise as a result of many of the participatory exercises, and you can summarise them at the end of the event on one sheet, if possible, which cements people's commitment to undertaking certain tasks.

Event evaluation

If you are using this pack as a Community Development Worker, and are likely to be running a series of essentially very similar events getting different communities started on the path of setting up a community owned renewable energy project, then you might want to produce an evaluation form that will help you refine the event and what you do during it.

For those who are Community Activists, and using the pack to get a project off the ground in your own community, your evaluation should probably centre more around checking the suitability of the arrangement, and using it as a way of cementing people's intentions to promote what you are doing. This is probably possible with a simple form like the one opposite.

Event planners

There is an event planner in Excel format on the downloads page of www.planlocal.org.uk, which allows you to select different film segments, participatory exercises, presentations and breaks in order to build an event plan using this resource. There are some powerpoint slides in the downloads section of planlocal.org.uk that you might find useful to include in your introductory presentations.

If you wish to use a paper version of an event planner, the template below is a useful guide.

An important thing to realise is that some of the time is 'dead time' (arrivals and refreshment breaks) and some is 'productive time'. You must accommodate a certain amount of dead time and the longer the event, the more of this there is. The result is that an event running from 6 pm to 9.30 pm (3.5 hours) will only have about 2 hours and 45 minutes of productive time.

This is often overlooked by people who haven't run events before, and it's very tempting to try to cram more in than you can. Some rules of thumb we find useful are:

- Always allow a minimum of 15 minutes from the start of the event for people to arrive and sit down. You may have advertised a 6pm start, but your schedule will not show any productive time till 6.15pm.
- Never insert any segment that is less than 5 minutes. So even brief introductory or linking speeches have a minimum of 5 minutes allocated to them.
- If your event is a long one (3.5 hours or more) you will need to provide something more substantial than tea and biscuits to eat.
- If your event is a long one, make the breaks so that they can be shortened – this will give you a way of making back lost time. E.g. a planned 50 minute lunch break can be cut to 35 minutes, or 15 minute tea breaks can be cut to 10 minutes.

Evaluation form

How did you hear about this event? _____

Was the venue acceptable? _____

Was the catering acceptable? _____

Was the information useful to you? _____

Would you be interested in getting more involved in this project?

- ☐ Delivering flyers
- ☐ Talking to friends and neighbours
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Media
- ☐ Bank Finance
- ☐ Web design
- ☐ Graphic design
- ☐ Accounts
- ☐ Business Plans
- ☐ Running events
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

If you are able to help or would like to be kept up to date on the mailing list, please give your details below:

Name _____

Address _____

Email and phone _____

Any other comments?
_____
_____

Simple event planner

Start time	End time	Duration	What	Who	Notes and equipment
6.00	6.15	15 mins	Arrivals and tea/coffee		
6.15	6.25	10 mins	Introductory presentation		
6:25	7.30	65 mins	Setting the scene exercise		
7.30	8.00	30 mins	Light supper & drinks		
8.00	8.20	20 mins	Show two case studies		
8.20	8.30	10 mins	Discussion period on the case studies		
8.30	9.25	55 mins	Exercise – Synergies between a renewable energy project and wider community concerns		
9.25	9.30	5 mins	A cautionary tale – show film		
9.30	9.45	15 mins	Discussion and ask for people to sign up to attend the next event, where we will consider what technologies might be suitable, and to encourage friends and neighbours to attend		