

# Building Teams

Self-Organising System, mandates, healthy teams and meetings.

Resources for you and your team. From starting off, to resolving issues to the best practices we have for building and maintaining healthy teams.

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# Healthy Teams: An Overview

Upon taking on a role within XR, you will find yourself joining a team. This can be daunting for some but being a part of a well-functioning team can be incredibly empowering!

## What Makes a Good Team?

You already know your answer to this. Take a moment to consider the following:

- When have you felt comfortable/uncomfortable working with others?
    - What stood out to you?
    - What was it that made you feel this way?
  - Think about a behaviour that you find difficult to deal with in others:
    - Have you had any past experiences connected to people showing such behaviour?
    - What do you think you can do to better understand such behaviour?
  - Think about a behaviour that you exhibit that others may find difficult to deal with.
    - Why might they find it difficult to deal with such behaviour?
    - What can you do to check such behaviour?
  - Imagine that you are working with others to create a dream team:
    - What values do you think should help guide the team?
    - What do you want this team to know about you? How will you share this? Keep your idea of a good team in your mind as you look over the following resources - how do they fit into your experience and understanding?
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## Our Ways of Working

In order for our work to come together in a cohesive way, we use a Self-Organising System. This is essentially a collection of rules around how we organise and work together. We have these shared structures and processes to help us each hold something small and manageable; but collectively we can achieve our bold goals!

## Your Place in the Big Picture

You can explore the XRUK structure using the XR UK [Organism](#). By clicking on each circle, you can zoom into that space and see the circles nested within. In this diagram, you can see that **The Hive**

is the widest circle within XRUK and so encompasses the widest purpose.

## Rebel Ringers video

(**Note:** it is a misunderstanding to say that they hold the most power; their scope is too wide to be able to wield much power over anything in particular.)

“ You should be able to find the circle you are working within in this diagram, whether that be a team focusing on arrestee support in the East of England or a team advocating for Citizens' Assemblies across the UK.

Not every role is entered into [Organism](#) as this takes a fair bit of time, but most aspects of the work being done are represented or at least the circle they sit in is.

The information about groups held by [the Hub](#) feeds into the Organism. And the word "group" is taking over from the word "circle" in some places.

## Interacting Between Teams

As you can see, our structure is a series of circles within circles. Each circle contains the role of **External Coordinator** who attends the meeting of the **wider circle**. So your External Coordinator (EC) will be feeding the progress your team is making into the wider circle, and the EC of that circle will do the same, and in this way information is passed through the system.

External Coordinators also feed from the wider circle back into your team so you can understand how your work fits into the teams close by.

**Note:** This should not be the sole interaction between teams. It is recommended if you are working on something that overlaps or sits close to a team many circles from you, that you reach out to them directly. Your External Coordinator should be able to find their contact details.

## Mandates

While exploring the [Organism](#) you will be able to see the purpose and accountabilities of each team and role in the system. These are part of what makes up the **Mandate** of that role or team.

We use mandates to distribute power through the movement. They help us manage without managers, and make our organisation transparent and accessible, with no mysterious 'black boxes'.

Simply put, a mandate outlines your purpose within the system, what is expected of you and what you are responsible for. It is typically split into the following:

- **Purpose Statement** - Why does this Role/Circle exist, what is it for?
- **Accountabilities** - What will this Role/Circle do, what can I expect of them?
- **Domain** - What does this Role/Circle control, what do I need to ask them before I do?

Mandates are never set in stone; they are as dynamic as we need them to be. When you pick up a role in XR, you will likely be given a mandate with it. You can (and probably should) make this your own, either by handing back accountabilities that you don't feel you can meet, or by adding things that you think you can do to help.

To change a mandate, the desired change simply needs to be brought as a proposal to the meeting in which that role or circle sits. For example, if my role were to schedule trainings in the South West and I also wanted to do the scheduling for the Heading for Extinction talk, then I would propose that change in the SW Talks & Trainings meeting.

As part of its [constitution](#) XR UK requires that, "At a minimum, each circle must elect an Internal Coordinator, to be responsible for the healthy functioning of the circle, and an External Coordinator, responsible for liaising with the next broadest circle. The mandates for these roles can be found in [Working Group Core Roles](#), along with other suggested roles that may be useful."

Want to know more? See [Mandates in more detail \(and how to write them\)](#).

## Making Decisions

There are several different ways we make decisions in XR, and you will likely come across each of these fairly quickly.

### Role Mandated Decisions

“Does this need to be decided by the group?”

Many of the decisions you come across do not need to take up time in a meeting. The first thing to consider would be if anyone has a mandate for the decisions that need to be made. It may be that you can make that choice without consulting the team because you have the responsibility (or mandate) for that thing. Or it may be that someone else does, in which case you should ask them what should be done.

### Temperature Checks

These are used to make very simple group decisions. The question is usually phrased as "How do you feel about..." and then the group displays their enthusiasm by either raising their hands

(positive) or lowering them (negative). A neutral response hovers around the middle.

These are often used to gauge how controversial something may be. If everyone is hands-up happy then there is no need to dive deeper into a longer process. But if some people have concerns, then it's advisable to move to the Integrative Decision Process or something similar.

## Integrative Decision Making

This is a more indepth process for making group decisions. The object is to find a solution that everyone thinks is "safe to try." The process follows these steps:

1. **Stating Proposal** - Whoever is making the suggestion brings their proposal to the group.
2. **Clarifications Round** - Everyone in the meeting is then asked, in turn, if they need anything clarified to fully understand what is being proposed.
3. **Reactions Round** - Everyone then has a chance to react to the proposal, what they think of it, how it may affect their work, any foreseeable problems etc.
4. **Chance to Ammend Proposal** - The person who brought the proposal has a chance to make any changes to it, any additions or changes to phrasing etc. They can also choose to withdraw the proposal or bring it back in another meeting.
5. **Objections Round** - Everyone in the meeting is then asked if they approve or object to the proposal. Objections must come from the role the individual is holding (not a personal view) and they must be concrete objections, either that the proposal will cause harm to the movement or it will stop existing work from being done.

If there are no objections to a proposal, it is passed and enacted immediately. However, if someone raises an objection to the proposal, the group comes together to try to integrate that objection.

6. **Integrating Objections** - The objection is stated for the group and the floor is opened to suggestions on how this objection can be integrated into the original proposal. It may be that the wording needs to be changed or that the scope needs to be limited in some way.

The outcome of this process will either be the original or an ammended proposal passed by the group or, if the facilitator or person bringing the proposal choses, it can be taken away to be worked on between meetings and brought back at a later date.

## Your Power Within the System

We have created our Self-Organising System with the intention that every rebel has a voice. On an individual level, there are several things that you can do within the system.

- Any rebel can bring a proposal to their team.
- Any rebel can ask to bring a proposal to another team - by contacting the Internal Coordinator.
- Any rebel can ask for an election for a role - if they wish to step back or feel like someone isn't fulfilling their mandate.
- Any rebel can give back Action Points if they are unable to complete them.

- Any rebel can refuse to take on anything new and give back things they are struggling to fulfill.

Want to know more? See [The Self-Organising System in more detail](#).

# What do you bring to your Team?

## Task vs Maintenance

The two key parts of effective group operation are task roles and maintenance roles. Each role is really a set of behaviours to pay attention to in meetings and activities. Generally, task functions keep groups headed toward decisions and action. Maintenance functions help build a group's sense of identity and develop the social relationships in a group.

Task Roles	Maintenance Roles
<b>Initiator</b> - Starts things off or helps to change direction.	<b>Encourager</b> - Provides warmth and accepts different points of view
<b>Coordinator</b> - Clarifies suggestions and seeks agreement to move ahead	<b>Harmonizer</b> - Tries to reduce conflict by encouraging sharing and respect
<b>Energizer</b> - Inspires and stimulates group into discussion	<b>Welcomer</b> - Draws out quieter members and suggests processes to promote equal power.
<b>Information Seeker</b> - Gives or seeks to find out certain information	<b>Self-Discloser</b> - Shares experiences to break through on a personal level "This also happened to me..."
<b>Clarifier of Opinions</b> - Encourages people to be specific "It seems like you are saying..."	<b>Process Observer</b> - Helps to unblock the group and get conversation back on track
<b>Summarizer</b> - Clarifies and checks what has been said	<b>Standard Setter</b> - Expresses best practices for the group

**Task-related group roles and behaviors** contribute directly to the group's completion of a task or the achievement of its goal. These roles typically serve leadership, informational or procedural functions and include the following: task leader, expediter, information provider, information seeker, gatekeeper and recorder.

**Maintenance group roles and behaviors** function to create and maintain social cohesion and fulfill the interpersonal needs of the group members. To perform these role behaviors, a person needs strong and sensitive interpersonal skills. These roles include social-emotional leader, supporter, tension releaser, harmonizer and interpreter.

“ Task:

1. Think of a group you have been a part of in the past; what roles have you taken on?
2. Think of a group you are in now; do you think most of the roles in the group are Task focused or Maintenance focused?

## Knowing your skills

When joining a new team, it is often hard to know where to start, what to pick up. Especially if that team is already established, how do you know what they need help with or what you are qualified to hold?

The first thing to remember is: **They asked you to be there and so they WANT your help!**

Now that we are clear on that, take a moment to think about what you **CAN** and what you **WANT** to offer the team. Here are a few examples you may come up with:

Knowledge (I know...)	Functional Skills (I can..)	Peronal Traits (I am...)
Java / Python	Facilitate Meetings	Creative
First-Aid	Organise Information	Empathetic
Conflict Resolution	Manage Projects	Patient
Accounting	Analyse Data	Fun
Animation	Communicate	Diplomatic

**Note:** Just because you **can** offer something doesn't necessarily mean you **want** to; it is important to set your own boundaries in order to avoid burnout.

Now that you know what you want to offer the team you are joining, we recommend going along to a meeting and letting them know exactly what you can offer them, both within and beyond the role your are stepping into.

## Listening vs Speaking

Extinction Rebellion is not like your usual working environment, and we say this in both a positive and negative way! It can often be a bit of a culture shock if you are not used to how we work. So here are some quick hints to get you started:

- Our meetings are all facilitated; if you have something to add, **raise your hand** or type into the chat and the facilitator will come to you. This stops us all talking over each other - especially in video calls!
- Try to be **actively listening** to others when they speak; think about what they are adding and ask your questions thoughtfully.

- Try to be okay with **staying silent**; just because you have something you *could* add doesn't mean that it is needed in the meeting. Ask yourself if your comment adds to the discussion before you raise your hand.
- Try to **own your contributions** by speaking only from yourself. Try using "*I think that we should...*" or "*It seems that...*" rather than "*We need to...*".

## Feedback

Being able to give and to receive feedback is important when working with others. It allows us to build trust, understanding and lets us make progress towards our goals. Without feedback we can't judge the impact of our own work and we just don't mesh well as a team.

That said, giving and receiving feedback is not always easy. Here are some suggestions which may help.

### When Giving Feedback

- Own what you are saying; use "I" statements "I think..." or "I feel..." and try not to use "You" statements since they can come across as an accusation.
- Don't only comment on the critical. People really benefit from positive feedback or being noticed when they have achieved something.
- Think about your intention and what you want to say; sometimes it helps to write it down first.
- Give feedback in a 1-1 setting; people can often feel vulnerable or put on the spot if singled out from a large group.

### When Receiving Feedback

- Try not to take any feedback personally; they are giving you information to help you improve at something.
- If the feedback has upset you, try to process it on your own. Sit with your feelings and process them before responding.
- Be aware that giving feedback is not easy - they are saying these things to you because they value you and are comfortable enough to say something.

#### **What if I don't know to whom to give my feedback?**

If you have feedback about something and you do not know who is directly involved, you should first talk to your Internal Coordinator (if it relevant to your team) or your External Coordinator (if it is relevant to a wider issue). They will most likely be able to either pass it on to the right place or signpost you to that place.

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## How can you best work together?

Every team is different because every team has different people in it. It may be that your team works well with brief meetings, mostly digital interaction, and minimal coordination, or it may be that your team needs longer, more discursive meetings, regular check-ins and some social spaces to let off steam together.

All teams work in different ways; the key is to identify and agree upon the way that works for your team.

## Group Agreements

Having **group agreements** sets expectations for how you are going to work together and what to expect of each other. This is where you can personalise the dynamics of your team to suit the members in it.

Some groups will have agreements in place when you join and others may not; it's always worth asking. Any member of the team can propose an agreement. Here are a few examples that you may wish to bring to teams that you are in.

- **Meeting Length 1** - We will keep our meetings to a maximum of 60 minutes.
- **Meeting Length 2** - Our meetings will be for 120 minutes with a 10 minute break at the halfway point.
- **Meeting Format 1** - All meetings will start with a minute of silence to ground group members.
- **Meeting Format 2** - All meetings will start/finish with a round of Check Ins/Outs to build relationships within the group.
- **Minutes** - We will rotate the minute-taker each meeting to ensure that everyone can participate fully in the majority of meetings.
- **Agenda** - the agenda of each meeting must be set 3 days prior to give members a chance to read any documents given.

## Roles

It is important for the smooth running of our teams that we are explicit about the roles each of us holds. This not only allows us to share out the responsibilities but also provides clarity for who is doing what. As a new rebel, your team should always welcome you by doing a round of role descriptions, letting you know what their role is in the meeting and providing some understanding of how things are set up.

As mentioned in the **Mandates** section, each role is adaptable; you can add to it, take things away that you can't do, as well as pick up multiple roles in a team.

### Core Roles

There are a few **core roles** that you will find in your team with XR. These are typically suggested as the first roles to be filled when a team forms. Since a team usually starts off with 2-4 people these can often be shared fairly easily.

Core Role	Purpose
<b>Internal Coordinator</b>	To ensure that all <i>aspects of coordination</i> are met by the team
<b>External Coordinator</b>	To represent the team in the wider circle and be first point of contact for the team
<b>Integrator</b>	To actively look for new team members and welcome them
<b>Budget Holder</b>	To manage the financial requests of the team

As you join the team, you will likely be in contact with either the team Integrator or the Internal Coordinator. They will introduce you to everyone else and you should consider them your first point of contact if you have any questions about the team or your role within it.

## Aspects of Coordination

One of the big things we share as a team is the coordination. Despite having roles such as "Internal Coordinator" as part of a team, this does not mean that the person holding that role coordinates *everything*. It is the responsibility of the team to coordinate itself.

Here are the different aspects of coordination that each team will encounter:

Aspect	Description
<b>Representing the Team</b>	Making connections and feeding back to the wider circle
<b>Project Management</b>	Keeping track of progress and highlighting any barriers
<b>Checking In</b>	Problem solving in 1-1 sessions as two brains are better than one
<b>Team Building</b>	Strengthening the wellbeing and relationships of those in the team
<b>Structure</b>	Keeping track of mandates and updating the team's structure on Glassfrog
<b>Budget</b>	Managing finance requests and keeping track of budgets
<b>Minutes / Facilitation</b>	Ensuring meetings run smoothly and a record of decisions is kept
<b>Integration</b>	Welcoming new rebels and ensuring that they land on their feet
<b>Communication</b>	Keeping track of team email addresses and ensuring team is contactable

It is highly recommended that each team shares these responsibilities amongst themselves; so, if you feel that your skills match well with an aspect of the team coordination, please let your Internal Coordinator know.

# Facilitation

You will soon notice that each XR meeting you are in has a facilitator. This helps us have ordered and efficient meetings where we don't talk over each other or waste each other's time. We are all very aware that we are here on a voluntary basis, often in our spare time or between other responsibilities. Our time is precious and our work important, so good facilitation is key!

Some teams have a consistent facilitator whereas others choose to change facilitators each meeting to give everyone the chance to hone this important skill.

One tool which is universal within XR is the use of handsignals in meetings, both online and in person. The most common handsignals are in the picture below.

[Rebel Ringers video](#)

## Facilitation Tools

We have many facilitation tools at our disposal. Here are some which you might encounter or may wish to use.

- **Rounds** - A round (or go-around) is a tool when everyone in the group is asked to give their thoughts or reaction to something, going one after another in a seated or online arrangement e.g. clockwise around a circle. This is a great tool in making sure that everyone in the group has an equal opportunity to speak and should be used often.
- **Pyramiding** - Start with an individual brainstorm (a few minutes is usually enough), before going into pairs and comparing ideas. Then, two pairs come together to form a four and between them they share ideas and select their collective favourites. Then this four can share their top ideas with the rest of the group when it becomes time to present back.
- **Reflecting** - Often helpful when there is a misunderstanding or conflict to let people feel heard. Do a round where individuals can express their feelings on the topic; after each individual has spoken for around two minutes another person reflects back to them what they have said. Doesn't offer opinions or solutions but simply reflects what they heard.

## Help

Good facilitation is a skill to be learned and practiced. One important thing to know is when you need help. We have plenty of facilitators in our movement, and sometimes it is most appropriate to ask someone external to your team to facilitate you through a specific process or meeting.

If you are planning what could be a difficult session, or feel like your team is loose in its use of good facilitation, we encourage you to reach out to either your wider circle or the SOS team of facilitators and someone will be able to step in to help.

There is facilitation training available on the Rebellion Academy, you can find it [Here](#). There is also training available from our SOS teams, so if you are interested in some more in depth sessions.

## Culture & Support

Think back to the start of this page, when we asked questions about what made you comfortable/uncomfortable in a team and what values would your dream team hold.

Hopefully, you now have an idea of the tools at your disposal to forge that dream team, sharing responsibilities, playing to each others strengths and making open agreements on how exactly you are all comfortable with working together.

This is the start of building the culture of your team.

### Sparking a Culture

When we think of our dream team, some of the same words always come up:

“ **Trust / Motivation / Purpose / Direction / Respect / Cohesiveness / Fun / Openness / Safety / Energy / Efficiency** ”

These are often shared values but it can be hard to know how to make them happen within a team. So here are some suggestions, but there are many many more.

- **Inverting the Question** - So it may be hard to know how you build trust in your team, but if you ask "What would erode trust in our team?" it surprisingly seems much easier. Some examples of answers may be:
  1. We don't do the things we say we are going to do.
  2. We use violent language or are rude in meetings.Now that you have identified what would hinder the building of trust, flip them around. If your team did the following things, would you be more likely to trust it?
  1. We do the things we say we will and, if we don't, we are honest and hand them back.
  2. We are calm and kind to each other in meetings and celebrate our successes.These statements can then become the basis of your group agreements as you start to create the culture of your team together.
- **Leading by Example** - It may be that you want to create a culture where you feel safe to express your emotions or to share the more personal side of your motivations. There is no better place to start than with yourself.
  - Often people feel uncomfortable sharing because it's not something they are used to in professional settings. Maybe you start off a round of check-ins by opening up about how you truly feel that day? If you start with "I actually feel exhausted and vulnerable because..." then the check-ins that follow are likely to be deeper than if

you started with "Yeah, I'm tired, but okay..."

## Having Fun!

Remember, XR is not just the work we do but the experience of doing it! We are not here because of an undying passion for spreadsheets (or at least most of us aren't). We are here to change the world, to find a community that shares our values, to connect, to laugh, to cry, to play, the list goes on.

At the end of the day, we are here for each other!

Here are some things we have found during lockdown that have allowed us to get together without the work, blow off some steam and have fun!

- [KumoSpace](#) - Invite your team to a video call where they can move between conversations.
- [GatherTown](#) - Same as above but you can customise your space and add interactive boardgames and whiteboards.
- [Skribbl.io](#) - Online pictionary, slightly competitive and hilarious if you add your teammates names to the custom word list!
- [Psych!](#) - An app for your phone which pits you against your team asking silly questions about each other.

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*This page was written by @Raenyah please contact me if you have any questions or think something needs to be added.*

# Exit Process

## “ Emergency Summary

Help I need to step back!

**Step 1** Tell your Coordinator.

**Step 2** Fill out [This Doc](#) to help your team pick up where you left off.

**Step 3** Breathe.

We are all volunteers in XR. This comes with some benefits and also some drawbacks. The benefits are clear and include the ability for us to step up when we have time and step back when our circumstances change. We can tailor the time we give to suit our lives, give the things we want to give, and hold back as much as we need for ourselves. There are a lot of aspects to our volunteer structure that are inherently regenerative in nature: after all, we are all crew, we are a family.

However, sometimes we will offer to do things that take much longer than we had expected, or our other responsibilities change after we step up to be a part of a project. There are often conflicting responsibilities for volunteer teams, and this can mean that the team membership changes a lot, or that there are some months where the team just doesn't have the capacity to meet its goals.

We never want to blame our individual volunteers for this. It is not our fault when our situations change. However, we want to make sure that we can change our commitment to XR with the least impact on our teams.

Below are two suggested processes to guide Rebels in stepping back smoothly.

## The Gradual Change of Focus

We often step into a team or role in XR to work on a specific project or for a fixed term. As the project or term ends, we may want to change what we are working on or move to another project. We don't want to leave the role suddenly but we do want to transition our attentions to elsewhere.

1. **Let your Coordinators know you plan to change focus.** It is useful to give as much warning as possible if you plan to move from your team, because they can then redistribute tasks in your absence. But also make a firm end date for yourself - it is all too common for there to be that one last thing to clear up and it could take months for a clean separation! Don't be afraid to leave some things unfinished.
2. **Find your new home!** If you don't already know what you want to dive into next then check out the Volunteer Website. You may have used this when you joined XR but it is also a great way to see where help is needed in different parts of the movement.

3. **Find your replacement if necessary.** If your team or project is continuing without you, it would really help if you can help to find someone to replace you. This may mean holding an election for your role or onboarding a new Rebel. Don't be daunted by finding someone new - we can help!

#### “ 5 Steps to finding a New Rebel:

1. Write up a short role/project description.
2. Ask your integrator or IC to post it on the Volunteer Website.
3. Once you get a response, reach out to them for a chat, send them the [Rebel Starter Pack](#) and give them a run down of the project.
4. Introduce the new Rebel to your team and let them shadow you for a week or two so then can slowly pick up the role.
5. Make sure you step back at the date you had planned. If possible, stay in contact with your replacement when they need help but make sure they know that the role is now theirs and they should fly!

4. **Wrap up your loose ends.** Take an hour or so to track down the loose ends that you will leave to your team (or teams). This will not only help your team in picking up where you left off but it will also give you a sense of rounding off so that you don't have to worry while your mind is needed elsewhere.

#### Consider:

- Making note of conversations you were having;
- Linking to any documents you were working on;
- Copying over your to do list and any unfinished action points or to-dos;
- Adding a couple of sentences on what your goal for the next few weeks was going to be.

This [template loose-ends document](#) may be useful.

5. **Say goodbye to your team.** Plan a small social or activity for your team to round off your time with them. We recommend Kumospace to bring larger teams together in a natural mingling way, or an intimate Zoom drinks party. Or you can host an activity, play a game or a gratitude sharing space.
6. **Stay in contact.** XR works due to our interconnectivity. In your new role you won't only bring yourself but you'll also bring your experience and knowledge of your previous teams. Use it! Make connections, start collaborations and most of all have fun!

## The Swift Retreat

Sometimes the need to step back comes quickly and unexpectedly due to family responsibilities, mental health, job applications or many other things. Here is a roadmap for a swift exit which

doesn't leave your team in the lurch.

1. **Let your Coordinators know that you need to step back.** Ideally give them a date (end of the week, after the next meeting etc.) but, if you need to go instantly, that is also okay. The important thing is that your team knows to not expect you to continue doing the work you had been.
2. **Compile your loose ends.** Take an hour or so to track down the loose ends that you will leave to your team (or teams). This will not only help your team in picking up where you left off but it will also give you a sense of rounding off so that you don't have to worry while your mind is needed elsewhere.

### Consider:

- Making note of conversations you were having;
- Linking to any documents you were working on;
- Copying over your to do list and any unfinished action points or to-dos;
- Adding a couple of sentences on what your goal for the next few weeks was going to be.

This [template loose-ends document](#) may be useful.

3. **Set up auto replies.** On your Mattermost or your XR email address set up an auto reply saying that you have stepped back and who to contact instead. This will allow any contacts to connect with your team once you've gone. Consider writing a short message in a document that you can copy into your texts or emails if someone contacts you from XR but you cannot set up a generic auto reply for that account. For example:

“ Hi Rebel,  
I'm sorry but I have had to step back from my XR work for the time being. If your question is about X please forward it to rebel1@example.com and if it is about Y then connect to rebel2@example.com.  
Love & Rage,  
Rebellina

4. **Take a breath.** You have now done everything to help your team continue the work without you. Thank you! Take a moment to yourself to reflect on the amazing things you have done with XR and don't be surprised if a few Rebels reach out in the coming days to say thank you! Come back when you are ready or good luck in the next adventure!

# Mandates in more detail (and how to write them)

## Why mandates?

We are based on autonomy and decentralisation. Mandates are the building blocks by which we decentralise and mitigate any concentration of power.

We divide all the different types of decision we have to make into mandates, and then we distribute these mandates to the people best able to carry them out. We trust them to do just that, and we hold them accountable if they don't.

So the mandate for a circle or role defines which decisions it can make.

Taking care of our mandates — recording them, communicating them, updating them — is *critical* to how we manage ourselves without managers.

## What's in a mandate?

A mandate has three parts:

- a **purpose** — the result we want to bring about (e.g. for XR UK the purpose might be 'Achievement of the three demands');
- some clear **accountabilities** — the activities we will do to bring about the result;
- some **domains**, if they're needed — the resources (e.g. PA system) or spaces (e.g. website, social media presence) to which we need to regulate access.

## What makes a good mandate?

- **Short** — rebels need to be able to scan mandates quickly to find the right team, so try to make this easy.
- **Clear** — use plain does-what-it-says-on-the-tin terms that rebels don't need training to understand.
- **Specific** — each circle or role has a purpose which is part of, or contributes to, the wider circle of which it is part. So focus on what your part of that wider purpose is, and avoid overlapping with areas that other circles might think are part of their mandate.

Notes:

- None of this means that your team cannot create richly described visions of the world you would like to bring into being, or the strategy by which you might do this. If that helps you achieve your mandate, do it. But it is separate from your mandate, and serves a different function.
- If circles *do* feel that their mandates are overlapping unhelpfully, then we count this as a tension and one or both circles may work on a proposal to resolve it. This is part of how the wider Self-Organising System works.

## Tips for writing mandates

### Purpose

Everything starts with the **purpose**. This is the outcome that your team exists to bring about.

Try answering one or more of these questions:

- What would it look like if your team were wildly successful?
- If I fulfilled my purpose, there would be... [what?]
- We imagine a world where... [what? but keep it specific: remember this is what *you and your team* are creating, not the whole movement]

You should be able to use your answer as a purpose statement.

You can do whatever it takes to achieve your purpose.

### Accountabilities

**Accountabilities** are the things that a circle or role does day-to-day, the most common activities to achieve the purpose.

Try completing the sentence, "I was watching the team (or role) for a while and I saw them..."

- contacting..., communicating..., coordinating...
- creating..., producing..., designing..., making...
- identifying..., analysing..., evaluating...
- supporting..., assisting..., caring for...
- planning..., deciding...

Try to avoid words like 'ensuring' because they usually imply controlling someone else's work.

Think about all the work your circle/role needs to do to fulfil its purpose.

Again, try to keep each accountability to a single concise sentence, so that all rebels can grasp them quickly.

The holder of a mandate has the *authority to do whatever they need to get their accountabilities done*, unless it impacts someone else's domain.

(Still want more? Check out this [blog post from HolacracyOne](#) for some further guidance on writing accountabilities.)

## Domains

**Domains** are things that a role has exclusive control over. These could be physical things (like a PA system or greenhouses) or more abstract things (like payment processes, or event lists).

Only add a domain to a mandate if there is a clear reason for it. Most mandates don't have domains.

What harm would be caused by having no exclusivity? If a role wants the PA system for an event, but finds it has been taken to another event, the former role experiences harm. If lots of people can add, edit or delete events from a list, there could be harm (e.g. from mistaken deletions), but there may not be. Is it safe enough to try?

## Scope - important

A circle cannot delegate a mandate that has a wider scope than its own mandate:

- it can't give a role or subcircle a purpose that is not a part of achieving its own purpose;
- it cannot make someone accountable for doing something that it is not itself accountable for;
- it can't add a domain to a mandate unless it already controls that domain.

## Example mandate

Let's say our circle has been given a mandate to organise a fundraising party.

We decide we need a role for finding the venue, which we'll call Venue Finder. Now we need to give the role a mandate so that someone has the authority to find the venue.

“ **Purpose:** The party is held in a location with space for dancing and awesome acoustics.

**Accountabilities:**

- Contacting and maintaining a list of potential venues
- Evaluating the potential venues in terms of access, cost, and other criteria agreed with relevant roles
- Booking a venue for the date of the party

Should the Venue Finder role have 'Food and drinks tables' as a **domain**? If they did, the Catering role would have to get permission from the Venue Finder if they wanted to move the tables or buy more tables. It is for the circle to decide, when creating the mandate, whether this is necessary or

would prevent the Catering role from fulfilling its own purpose and accountabilities.

# The Self-Organising System in more detail

How the SOS empowers rebels and enables us to operate within our principles of being based on autonomy and decentralisation, and of mitigating concentrations of power.

How the system distributes power and makes decisions

The Self-Organising System in more detail

# Empowering the Movement

## XRUK's Self-Organising System (SOS)

There's a climate and ecological emergency. We can't waste time. We need to organise in the most effective way to achieve [our demands](#), to be the most successful we can be.

### So what works?

XRUK has adopted the self-organising system, because we recognise that this is the best option available to us. It empowers everyone to contribute, it enables people to work autonomously but with accountability to our [Principles and Values](#) and to each other. It allows for agility and flexibility, so we can respond to events quickly. XRUK needs empowerment and it needs flexibility.

Let's learn from those who have gone before us in other civil disobedience movements. A huge amount of research has been done, on all the major civil disobedience movements of the last 100 years. Four main principles seem to be universal:

1. We need to be large and broad based. We need many more people to join us, and when they do we will need a robust system that can absorb and empower them.
2. Non-violence is much more effective than violence. The SOS enables us to build a non-violent culture in the way we work and communicate with each other.
3. We need a large variety of non-violent methods. XR is good at being creative, different, eye-catching, and that is why so many people are drawn to us.
4. We need to be highly organised, maintain discipline, and maintain our organisational infrastructure even under pressure. This is where the SOS comes into its own.

### The importance of structure

Well-known feminist [Jo Freeman](#) has written a lot about this, [the tyranny of structureless groups](#), and how informal structures allow for informal hierarchies to develop. Small groups may be able to organise themselves effectively, but when about ten or more people are trying to organise, they need a structure. And we have to actively choose the right structure before the wrong structure chooses us.

### Mitigating power

Having the right structure is important because number 7 of our [Principles and Values](#) says that we actively mitigate power. We are against hierarchical power, which we are all familiar with, from school, from work and many other places, and it takes a change of mindset to work in a different

way. We need a cultural shift. We can't swap the structural power of hierarchy for a vague idea, it simply won't work. We have to find something equally powerful to act against it. Without that, what tends to happen is that the loudest voices in a group rise to the top, and with no system, it's difficult to change that. If an unelected person is running things, people will become unhappy and start leaving the group. We have to actively work for group cohesion, because without that we will achieve nothing.

In fact we can't mitigate power. Power exists. Power exists in groups as much as anywhere else. It's power concentrated in just a few hands that's damaging, because it means everyone else is disempowered. If power is spread to everyone, that is empowerment, which is good. 'Power to the People' we say. The self-organising system is about spreading power through the whole movement, so that the people doing the work have the power to make decisions. We don't have bosses. We are all in charge, which means we have to work things out together, which can be hard sometimes, but it's worth the effort.

## Autonomy and decentralisation

Number 10 of our Principles and Values is about autonomy and decentralisation. These things are at the heart of the self-organising system, and in fact we need a self-organising system in order to live according to this principle.

## So how do we go about this?

What non-hierarchical options are there? We could work by consensus, where everyone has to agree to every decision. Again with a small group this can work, but with a large group it is very slow, cumbersome, laborious. With the thousands of rebels we have in XRUK as it is this clearly wouldn't work, and as we grow bigger it would obviously be daft.

## Distributing power

The self-organising system works by spreading power to different roles or working groups, who can make decisions within their roles. They have complete autonomy within their roles, while being accountable to the shared purpose we have, and our principles and values. We see XRUK as a circle (The Hive), with smaller sub-circles within it (e.g. Operations circle), and yet smaller circles within those (eg Actions circle, which again breaks down into more specific roles). The nations and regions of the UK are also sub-circles of the Hive, and the local XR groups are smaller circles within them. The smallest circles communicate with the next widest circle, which communicate with the circle above them and so on. Circles within circles, each having power to fulfil their specific roles. The bigger circles set up the smaller circles, give them roles, written down as mandates or role descriptions, and give them the authority to perform their role.

## Consent-based decision making

Most decisions are made within the roles or working groups, but decisions about how we organise things need to be made by the whole group. These decisions are made by **consent**. If someone wants to set up a new role or working group, the group asks not 'Do we all like this?', but instead 'Is it safe enough to try? Will it cause harm?'. Harm, here, means that it will prevent someone

fulfilling their role, or will act against the shared purpose we have. By saying 'Is it safe enough to try?' we set the bar low for proposals to get passed, and decisions can be made quickly. The person given the role can then go and work on their role with confidence, autonomy, and creativity, and be innovative. They have no power over anyone else, and no-one has power over them. Everyone knows who's doing what, which should avoid confusion and the things that need to be done falling between the cracks. If things don't work, we can change them. A role holder can ask advice from those with more expertise than them, or from people who might be affected in their roles by their decisions, but if we take the advice process too far we end up with a consensus type of working, which will slow us down.

## Keeping the self-organising system healthy

Once a self-organising system is set up, it will need constant revision. Needs will change, capacity will increase or decrease, but the system is designed to adapt to change. It is fluid, evolving, and like a garden it keeps growing and we have to choose what work we're going to do in it, and how it's going to look.

## Healthy Groups

Healthy ways of working lead to healthy groups, where every voice is heard. Inclusivity is important in XRUK. Groups have meetings. The way we conduct our meetings is fundamental to a well-running self-organising system. Some people feel more confident at speaking up in meetings than others, which may be to do with culture, language, personality or background. A good **facilitator** will make sure that the meeting is efficient, so as not to waste people's time (we don't have time to waste), that everyone has their say, and the meeting isn't dominated by a few people.

Groups also need good coordination, and should elect an internal **coordinator** to manage the good functioning of the group and its roles, and an external coordinator to represent the group to the next widest circle. Elections every 3 or 6 months are important, as they allow for other people to take a turn at coordination, and prevent power building up with one person.

## Building a Regenerative Culture

Good facilitation and coordination mean we can have a good working culture within the group. We need to take care of each other. This means thinking of people's needs, and spending time together socially, whether in person or otherwise. This is how we build a regenerative culture in practice. We say 'culture eats strategy for breakfast'. If we don't have a healthy working culture then however good our strategy is it won't work. We work at the speed of trust.

## And more...

There is much more to say about the self-organising system, and the Self-Organising Systems team in XRUK can provide training, advice, and more resources.

Find our [reception channel on Mattermost](#) or email us at [xr.mandates@gmail.com](mailto:xr.mandates@gmail.com).

Let's organise to be the best we can be.



The Self-Organising System in more detail

# Organising your meetings

These guidelines and resources are designed to help you organise your meetings and keep a record of decisions and action points. They may help you establish a routine where, at the end of each meeting, you have a set of minutes ready to go for the next meeting... because, who likes to write up minutes after a meeting?!

The guidelines include

- a suggested agenda structure for your meetings
- notes on each point in the structure
- a [template that you can copy](#) and adapt for your own use

## Agenda structure

### Title

Usually your Circle/Team name and the date

### Quick links

Make it easy for team members to find the links they will need most frequently:

- Time, date and zoom/teleconference link for regular meeting
- Link to Comms Hub page -- so it's easy for everyone to find the team's mandate, role descriptions etc
- Review dates for role elections and policies
- Link to team's agenda template, so it is easy to copy for each meeting -- some teams put it at the bottom of the minutes document.
- Archived minutes -- if you keep the current minutes document under 50 pages it should still run quite quickly (longer documents are slow to load and scroll).

Some teams keep their quick links on a single linked page, using start.me or similar services.

Here's the [SOS team links](#) for example.

## A. Assign facilitator & minute-taker

It's best to name the facilitator at the end of the previous meeting so the facilitator has ample time to prepare. Reviewing the context from the last meeting may inform how the new meeting runs. If this hasn't been possible then before the new meeting starts, make sure that you have chosen a

facilitator and a minute-taker.

It's better if the minute-taker is on a PC/Mac for ease of access rather than a phone or tablet.

If you are the minute-taker, please type into your team's minutes document.

First, record who took which roles at the meeting:

Minutes:  
Facilitator:  
Present:

## B. Check-ins

Everyone present checks in by saying how they are feeling, or what would make it easier for them to be present in this meeting today. This could also include any barriers/things that stop people from being fully present and therefore able to absorb everything including neurodiversity, sensory or physical impairment.

If not everyone knows each other, the facilitator may remind them to state their name and preferred pronouns.

Sometimes check-ins may include each participant mentioning one thing they're grateful for.

Check-ins helps to enrich the culture, build trust, deepen relationships and prepare the ground for richer, respectful meetings.

## C. Culture Reminders

As collective preparation for the meeting ahead, we generally have a reminder of how we aspire to treat ourselves and each other in our work and relationships. We have a series of reminder texts:

- [Regenerative Cultures Reminders](#)
- [Vision Reminder](#)
- empowerment reminder.

These are included in the [meeting template](#). Please decide within your team which you would like to use. Some teams use this space to do short guided meditations or other regenerative exercises.

The facilitator of the meeting asks someone to read out the reminder or lead the experience.

## D. Name the purpose of the meeting

The facilitator checks for broad consent on the purpose of the meeting:

- to go through as many agenda items as possible?

- Or get deep into one?
- Or maybe team connection is more important today?
- Or reviewing the way the circle is working?
- Or what?

## E. Actions Review of the Minutes of the last meeting

To check that all outstanding action points are in hand and identify steps to deal with any that are not.

**This should not develop into a discussion.** The facilitator may propose that an agenda item is added for action points that are stuck and defy a quick solution, but then move on, rather than searching for a solution.

The minute-maker may strike through action points that have been resolved -- to do this quickly, select the Action Point and then (PC) press Shift+Alt+5, or (Mac) Command+Shift+X.

## F. Feedback from external coordinator on wider circle meetings

To pass on anything relevant to the group's mandate that has come up at other meetings the External Coordinator has attended.

To save meeting time, the External Coordinator may write a short update into the minutes document before the meeting starts.

The the discussion need only cover any clarifications or reactions to this update. If there are none, the update is noted and the meeting moves on.

## G. Feedback from link roles

Some teams have roles with a mandate to link to other teams whose work is frequently related to this team's purpose.

As with (F), the Link Roles may write a short update into the minutes document before the meeting starts, to save meeting time.

## H. Project updates and reports from subgroups

Again this is not a discussion. Nor is it an opportunity to explain what's been keeping them busy -- *unless*

- they have been stuck with an issue or tension that the team may be able to help with (this issue may be added to the agenda if it cannot be resolved on the spot) or
- the project is likely to have an impact on others in the team.

Again short written project updates in advance of the meeting can help make the most of meeting time.

## I. Build and work through the Agenda

In line with the purpose of the meeting (see D above), the facilitator supports the meeting in integrating and prioritising agenda items

- left over from previous meetings,
- added by participants before the meeting, and/or
- arising from E, F, G or H above.

Items can be prioritised on a scale from 1 (most urgent) to 4 (least). Normally priority 1 & 2 items need to be resolved today; priority 3 & 4 items may be held over to a future meeting without harm.

The name of the person who proposes an item for the agenda needs to be added next to their agenda item.

It really helps if the person bringing an agenda item is clear whether they are just sharing information, looking for feedback or suggestions, or asking the group to make a decision.

The facilitator may request that each agenda item is 'time-boxed', e.g. 10 mins - to avoid one item dominating the meeting. Time-boxing gives everyone an indication of whether something is taking too long in the context of the limited time available for the meeting.

As the meeting works through the agenda, the minute-taker needs to type in a summary of the discussion under each of the Agenda points. (This can be rough at first and cleaned up afterwards).

The minute-taker can stop the discussion and ask for clarification if they need to.

## J. Date and time of next meeting

Before you close the meeting, always set the date and time of the next meeting and ask for a volunteer to facilitate the next meeting. This allows for ongoing group continuity. The internal coordinator of the group will set up the next meeting and inform/remind the group via Mattermost (and if still using them - Signal/WhatsApp/Telegram group chats, Basecamp etc.), and this will also inform any absent team members when the next meeting will be held. If you have a Telegram group, you can schedule messages so the reminder can be composed right after the meeting and sent later. Just hold down the send button and the option will appear.

## K. Culture reminders

As with C above, the facilitator asks someone to read one of the reminder texts, included in the [meeting template](#), to bring the meeting to a close .

## L. Closing round

Closing round sharing gratitude for something that has happened in the meeting. (This can just be 1-2 words if time is short.)

## M. Preparing for the next meeting

It's helpful if the minute-taker can set up the template for the next meeting. This might include

- collating the action points from the meeting into a list
- copying the blank agenda template and writing in the next meeting date in the title area
- copying the list of action points into section E
- copying any agenda items not discussed into section I

# When to meet?

How to use when2meet

When2meet is a really useful tool for helping groups to decide which times are suitable for them to be together. It is a free tool and relatively easy to use, once you know how. There is a short video [here](#).

It is divided into three sections:

1. Filling in when2meet
2. Monitoring when2meet
3. Setting up when2meet

Whilst When2meet can be accessed on a mobile device, it works much better on a computer.

This might mean that even if you receive the link via a social media chat, you will find it easier to use on a computer.

## Filling in a When2meet

Open up when2meet by clicking on the link you were given.

Type your name into the 'Your name' field under the 'Sign in' section to the left of the screen.

Make sure you remember this (the exact spelling and whether you used upper/lower case letters) as this will allow you to return and edit your availability. People tend to use the same name, spelling, case for all their when2meets.

You don't need to fill in the password, although you can if you want (again, remember this if you do, so you can edit later)

Click the 'Sign in' button - the dates/times field will appear below.

Click and hold as you drag your cursor across the times you are available. The cells, which are in half-hour increments, will turn green. If you want to turn a cell back to pink, click and hold and drag back over the cells where you are not available.

When2meet saves your selections automatically, you don't need to do anything. When you leave the page, your availability should be saved.

That's it!

Bookmark the page if you want to visit it later, or it will appear in your history.

If you want to edit your availability, just click on the link, sign in using the name you used originally and then use your cursor to turn area green or pink as you need to.

## Monitoring a When2meet

Open up the when2meet by clicking on the link you were given.

You will see that as more people fill when2meet in, areas on the date/time field on the right side of the screen will become darker and darker green. These are the 'hotspots' which indicate where the most people are available.

If you put your cursor over any area of the field, the names of the people available/not available will appear in the left half of the screen.

You can move your cursor over the time increments to work out exactly who is available when.

## Setting up a When2meet

Click this link to go to the when2meet site: <https://www.when2meet.com>

Type your event name (this could be the name of the group you are trying to bring together) in the 'New Event Name' field at the top of the screen - do this carefully - it can't be edited once you have done it. If you make a mistake, no worries, you can just start a new one in another browser window.

Go to the 'What dates might work?' section in the left half of your screen. Select which dates you want to include in your when2meet by clicking on them. The dates you have selected turn green. Click them again to deselect them.

The default setting is 'Specific dates' meaning the when2meet will be for the dates you have selected, but you can select 'Days of the week' to create a generic when2meet for days of a week without specifying dates.

Move across to the 'What times might work?' on the right side of your screen. Here, you can choose the number of hours your when2meet will span. The 'No earlier than' field indicates the start of the when2meet window, whilst the 'No later than' field indicates when the end of the when2meet window will be.

Select the time zone, if needs be.

Click the 'Create event' button when you are ready. But remember, once you have done this, you won't be able to edit your event, so if you have made a mistake you will just have to start again and make a new when2meet.

You will be taken to another page where you can email them a link or send them a link via facebook. Probably the easiest way is to cut and paste the link from your browser's address bar into the message you want to send.

When you send the link out, it's a good idea to include a deadline for people to complete the when2meet by so you can convene the meeting with appropriate notice.

It's also a good idea to bookmark the when2meet so you can revisit it and see who has filled it in and identify 'hotspots'.

You're in business!!!!

# Regenerative Cultures Reminders / Intention Statements

Link to [original doc](#)

## **Regenerative Cultures Reminder - 37 and counting**

This collection of intention statements / regen reminders can be helpful for the start or end of sessions. Please continue to add additional ideas at the end of the document

Choose an invitation: pause, breathe, close eyes and share:

### **1) Transitioning towards regenerative cultures**

We are transitioning towards regenerative cultures. These are cultures of respect and listening, in which people deal with conflicts when they arise, using short feedback loops to talk about disagreements and issues without blaming and shaming. They are cultures in which we cultivate healthy boundaries by slowing down our yes' and returning tasks when we are unable to follow through. They are healthy resilient cultures built on care and support, where people arrive on time for commitments. We are all crew.

### **2) Online sessions**

Let us take a moment to be present with each other, despite the physical distance we have to maintain. Let's remember that we are transitioning to regenerative cultures. These are cultures of respect, understanding, inclusivity and listening where we arrive on time for commitments, slow down our yes, return tasks we cannot complete, where we do not blame and shame. We deal with issues and conflicts as they arise, using short feedback loops to talk about disagreements and issues without blaming and shaming. These are also cultures where we understand and celebrate that we are all deeply connected to the natural systems that sustain us, and that what affects us in one time and place will come to affect all of us. We are a part of nature, a part of each other, never apart. Let us embrace this time of isolation and reflection as an opportunity to revisit our principles and values. Let's use the time and space as a cocoon in which we transform, ready to continue our rebellion in new beautiful and creative ways when we reemerge. We are all crew.

### **3) Howard Zinn (1997)**

Howard Zinn (1997) "You can't be neutral on a moving train... the world is already moving in certain directions - many of them are horrifying. Children are going hungry, people are dying in wars. To be neutral in such a situation is to collaborate with what is going on." We will not

collaborate and choose instead to rebel.

#### **4) Arundhati Roy**

“Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness – and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we’re being brainwashed to believe.

The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling – their ideas, their version of history, their wars, their weapons, their notion of inevitability.

Remember this: We are many, and there are few. They need us more than we need them.

Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.” — Arundhati Roy

#### **5) We come from a world which makes us weary**

If you would like to close your eyes or lower your gaze..... We come from a world which makes us weary. And we have volunteered to be wearier. We know that by fighting for this planet we will be poorer, more tired, and more stressed than the versions of ourselves who did not do this. Thank you all. We have put ourselves at risk for others. But whilst we fight for a different world, let us each take a moment now to decide a way that we will enjoy a glimpse of that world. Decide now how you might take a day, or an afternoon, or even an hour. To enjoy the qualitative over the quantitative, the odd over the one-size-fits-all, the joyful over the productive, the community over the individualist. In some small way which is meaningful to you, commit to it, to keep you going, through all the amazing work that you do.

#### **6) XR Youth grounding**

We have the right to self sooth, To take care of ourselves throughout the day,

We have the right to self care, To make our lives ones in which we can find enjoyment,

We have the right to community care, To be a part of networks who look after one another,

We have the right to structural change, To live lives in which we are not exploited and are not required to exploit others

We have the right to a planet all life is able to thrive on

Let us make this meeting one which is understanding of the need for each of these things,

That they look different to each to us,

That we don't always get it right,

And that we need each other to make it happen.

## **7) Think from the gut**

Think from the gut

Follow from the heart

Act with the brain

Do what's right for the self

The planet will not thank you for worrying about it, unless the self is at peace.

XR is an intra capitalist organisation.

It needs warriors at peace within, not burnt out individuals. Nothing is worth that.

Especially not extinction.

It's not going away. Step back: take time to observe the self especially when quiet!

Now is all you have. Get peace now and the future will take care of itself.

And enjoy lots of clever, interesting books on how.

Liam Geary Baulch

## **8) A poem by Becky Hemsley**

"She sat at the back and they said she was shy.

She led from the front and they hated her pride.

They asked her advice and then questioned her guidance.

They branded her loud, then were shocked by her silence.

When she shared no ambition they said it was sad.

So she told them her dreams and they said she was mad.

They told her they'd listen, then covered their ears,

And gave her a hug while they laughed at her fears,

And she listened to all of it thinking she should,

Be the girl they told her to be best as she could.

But one day she asked what was best for herself,  
Instead of trying to please everyone else,  
So she walked to the forest and stood with the trees,  
She heard the wind whisper and dance with the leaves.  
She spoke to the willow, the elm and the pine,  
And she told them what she'd been told time after time.  
She told them she felt she was never enough,  
She was either too little or far far too much,  
Too loud or too quiet, too fierce or too weak,  
Too wise or too foolish, too bold or too meek,  
Then she found a small clearing surrounded by firs,  
And she stopped...and she heard what the trees said to her.  
And she sat there for hours not wanting to leave. For the forest said nothing, it just let her breathe.”

Becky Hemsley

## 9) Quick Quotes

“Go where the energy is.” - Kate Rayworth

“Let this radicalise you, rather than lead you to despair” - Mariame Kaba

“In our struggle for freedom, truth is the only weapon we possess.” - Dalai Lama

“Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare”- Angela Duckworth

“Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you”. - Maori proverb

“Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.” — Dalai Lama

“Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying 'I will try again tomorrow.’” - Mary Anne Radmacher

“Compassion is the radicalism of our time.” — Dalai Lama

“What surprises me most is “Man”, because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he doesn’t enjoy the present; The result being he doesn’t live in the present or the future; He lives as if he’s never going to die, and then he dies having never really lived.” – Dalai Lama

“Whether one is rich or poor, educated or illiterate, religious or non-believing, man or woman, black, white, or brown, we are all the same. Physically, emotionally, and mentally, we are all equal. We all share basic needs for food, shelter, safety, and love. We all aspire to happiness and we all shun suffering. Each of us has hopes, worries, fears, and dreams. Each of us wants the best for our family and loved ones. We all experience pain when we suffer loss and joy when we achieve what we seek. On this fundamental level, religion, ethnicity, culture, and language make no difference.” – Dalai Lama

## **10) We are the Ones We've Been Waiting For (Hopi Elders' Prophecy, June 8, 2000).**

You have been telling people that this is the Eleventh Hour. Now you must go back and tell the people that this IS the Hour.

And there are things to be considered... Where are you living? What are you doing? What are your relationships? Are you in the right relationship? Where is your water? Know your garden.

It is time to speak your truth. Create your community. Be good to each other. And do not look outside yourself for your leader. This could be a good time!

There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold on to the shore. They will feel they are being torn apart and will suffer greatly. Know the river has its destination.

The elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open, and our heads above the water.

And I say, see who is in there with you and celebrate. At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally, least of all ourselves. For the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey come to a halt.

The time of the lone wolf is over. Gather yourselves! Banish the word 'struggle' from your attitude and your vocabulary.

All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration. We are the ones we've been waiting for.

## **11) We hear history calling**

“We hear history calling to us from the future. We catch glimpses of a new world of love, respect and regeneration, where we have restored the intricate web of all life.

It's a future that's inside us all – located in the fierce love we carry for our children, in our urge to help a stranger in distress, in our wish to forgive, even when that seems too much to ask. And so we rebel for this, calling in joy, creativity and beauty.

We rise in the name of truth and withdraw our consent for ecocide, oppression and patriarchy.

We rise up for a world where power is shared for regeneration, repair and reconciliation.

We rise for love in its ultimate wisdom.

Our vision stretches beyond our own lifespan, to a horizon dedicated to future generations and the restoration of our planet's integrity.”

## **12) Anti-Regen Reminder?**

We refuse to wait any longer

We have been chosen by time

When we see injustice

We must speak out

There is no room for silence

When we feel defeated

We must stand tall

There is no time for despair

No place for self pity

No time to grieve

No time to rest

When confronted

We must challenge

We must push as hard as they push

And then push harder

When we feel anger

**ACT!**

Act with audacity

Relentless audacity

We are a movement

An unstoppable movement

The need for protest will never end

Either we all live in a decent world or nobody does!

When the history of our time is written

We will be the heroes

### **13) From Joanna Macy**

Out of this darkness a new world can arise, not to be constructed by our minds so much as to emerge from our dreams. Even though we cannot see clearly how it's going to turn out, we are still called to let the future into our imagination. We will never be able to build what we have not first cherished in our hearts."

"The biggest gift you can give is to be absolutely present, and when you're worrying about whether you're hopeful or hopeless or pessimistic or optimistic, who cares? The main thing is that you're showing up, that you're here and that you're finding ever more capacity to love this world because it will not be healed without that. That is what is going to unleash our intelligence and our ingenuity and our solidarity for the healing of our world."

### **14) Active Hope is not wishful thinking**

"Active Hope is not wishful thinking.

Active Hope is not waiting to be rescued . . . .by some saviour.

Active Hope is waking up to the beauty of life on whose behalf we can act.

We belong to this world.

The web of life is calling us forth at this time.

We've come a long way and are here to play our part.

With Active Hope we realise that there are adventures in store, strengths to discover, and comrades to link arms with.

Active Hope is a readiness to discover the strengths in ourselves and in others; a readiness to discover the reasons for hope and the occasions for love.

A readiness to discover the size and strength of our hearts, our quickness of mind, our steadiness of purpose, our own authority, our love for life, the liveliness of our curiosity, the unsuspected deep well of patience and diligence, the keenness of our senses, and our capacity to lead.

None of these can be discovered in an armchair or without risk.”

## **15) The Three Beings**

The Three Beings

"We call first on the beings of the past: Be with us now, all you who have gone before. You, our ancestors and teachers, who walked and loved and faithfully tended this Earth, be present to us now so that we may carry on the legacy you bequeathed us. Aloud and silently in our hearts we say your names and see your faces...

"We call also on the beings of the present: All you with whom we live and work on this endangered planet, all you with whom we share this brink of time, be with us now. Fellow humans and brothers and sisters of other species, help us open to our collective will and wisdom. Aloud and silently we say your names and picture your faces...

"Lastly we call on the beings of the future: All you who will come after us on this Earth, be with us now. All you who are waiting to be born in the ages to come, it is for your sakes too that we work to heal our world. We cannot picture your faces or say your names — you have none yet — but we feel the reality of your claim on life. It helps us to be faithful in the task that must be done, so that there will be for you, as there was for our ancestors: blue sky, fruitful land, clear waters."

— World as Lover, World as Self

## **16) Roots by Steve Turner**

It's a quiet job being a root No one hugs you, climbs you or praises your intricate ways. Roots work in the dark. And it's hard work tunnelling, travelling, finding nutrition. But when the storms come it's our fingers which cling. When the drought comes it's our lips that drink. Without us the ground would crumble. Without us life would fall. Everyone needs roots.

## **17) standing on a precipice**

Facing the reality that we're standing on a precipice right now, as a species and as a whole planet, is sobering, to say the least. But facing what is real opens the heart to grief, which somehow opens the heart to love even more deeply... When you reconnect with the alive world in a more compassionate way, and when you realise that the whole world is a living system that can only thrive when death makes room for new life, you may feel a calm settle inside you. You may find yourself with the energy that comes from love to embrace the whole story including the necessary emptiness and loss... When we look toward what has been lost with the climate crisis or other ecological damage that our species has inflicted, we do still need to strive toward repair, but the cure is in our own mentality. The mentality that love really is as strong as death compels us to regard those of us who remain - forests, polar bears, wilderness, people - with fierce love, looking

toward how we can all live our highest quality of life together as a beloved community, no matter what. We don't need to minimise or overlook the pain and tragedy we encounter as we live in this time of interwoven crises. Eventually, when we recognise that the pain is directly connected with our love, we can embrace it. We can move into actions of restoration that are firmly planted in love. From "Church of the Wild: How Nature invites Us into the Sacred" Broadleaf Books 2021

## **18) The Peace of Wild Things**

By Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds. I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

## **19) The emancipation of the proletariat**

"The emancipation of the proletariat is not a labour of small account and of little people; only they who can keep their heart strong and their will as sharp as a sword when the general disillusionment is at its worst can be regarded as fighters for the working class or called revolutionaries."

(Antonio Gramsci, Selections from Political Writings 1910-20, p.349)

## **20) Thankful to our Mother, the Earth**

"We are thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us everything that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk upon her. It gives us joy that she still continues to care for us, just as she has from the beginning of time. To our Mother, we send thanksgiving, love and respect. Now our minds are one. Intention Setting Statement At a foundational level, regeneration requires us to RESIST. We are in resistance. We ARE the resistance. Resistance against a failing government Resistance against corporate greed Resistance against a system that is killing us

In resistance we need to reframe how to fully show up in our humanity, at this, the most critical point in human history. We refuse to wait any longer. We have been chosen by time. And we must do what is necessary.

The task at hand, our great calling is to ACT. When we feel anger ACT. When we feel love ACT. When we are alone ACT.

We cannot treat social injustices and ecological crises as separate. When we see injustice We must speak out. There is no room for silence.

The need for protest will never end. Either we all live in a decent world or nobody does!

When we feel defeated We must stand tall. When confronted We must challenge. We must push as hard as they push. And then push harder.

There is no time to waste on projects that make us feel good but lack deeper impact There is no time for despair or distraction There is no time for infighting or division There is no time for navel gazing, self pity and E-GO

There is no time... There is. NO. TIME. All we have is now!

## **21) The Seasons**

May you all enjoy the beautiful colours of spring, the fragrant Summer breeze and glowing sun, the gold and crimson leaves of autumn, and the cool, beautiful light of winter. May you remember also that every being with whom we share this beautiful planet is also a precious gem. May you enjoy everyone around you and not wait until it is too late, until everything is nothing more than a dream. Sister Chân Không (Cao Ngọc Phương)

## **22) XR Intention**

"If you would like to close your eyes or lower your gaze.

Let us take a moment to consider why we are here. We are all here out of a sincere love for the Earth, who is still sustaining us and nourishing us after all the hurt that has been inflicted on her. Even as she burns, she is still feeding us. Sometimes this feels like too much to bear. We are all here because something deep inside each of us compels us to action. Call it conscience or courage, maybe even fear, or just love. We are all propelled by the same wish to protect our Mother and all our fellow beings who she gives life. Today, let's take a little extra time to show love and compassion to ourselves and to each other as we walk this difficult path together. Choose the generous word over the snarky one, choose the act of self care over the act of self criticism. Remember that, different as we all are, we are all joined in the most important work that has ever been. Let's take a moment to cherish each other. We are XR, and you are us."

## **23) Blaming Never Helps**

Blaming Never Helps (Thich Nhat Hanh) When you plant a lettuce, if it doesn't grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look into the reasons it is not doing well. It may need more nutrients, more water or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or our family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce.

Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and arguments. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no arguments, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change.

One day in Paris, I had a lecture about not blaming the lettuce. After the talk, I was doing walking meditation by myself and when I turned the corner of the building, I overheard an eight year old girl telling her mother, "Mommy remember to water me. I am your lettuce." I was so pleased that she had understood my point completely. The I heard her mother reply, "Yes my daughter, and I am your lettuce also. So please don't forget to water me too." Mother and daughter practising together, it was very beautiful.

## **24) The Fragrance of the I am She**

The Fragrance of the I am She

When the Fragrance of the I am She is upon the Wind  
The Bee of the Heart Finds the Flower of it's  
choice And nestles there, caring for no other thing

Kabir - 17th Century Sufi

## **25) Starhawk from The Earth Path**

"We give thanks for all those who are moved, in their lives, to heal and protect the earth, in small ways and large. Blessings on the composters, the gardeners, the breeders of worms and mushrooms, the soil builders, those who cleanse the waters and purify the air, all those who clean up the messes others have made. "Blessings on those who defend trees and who plant trees, who guard the forests and who renew the forests. Blessings on those who heal the grasslands and renew the streams, on those who prevent erosion, who restore the salmon and the fisheries, who guard the healing herbs and who know the lore of the wild plants. "Blessings on those who heal the cities and bring them alive again with excitement and creativity and love. Gratitude and blessings to all who stand against greed, who risk themselves, to those who have bled and been wounded, and to those who have given their lives in service of the earth. "May all the healers of the earth find their own healing. May they be fueled by passionate love for the earth. May they know their fear but not be stopped by fear. May they feel their anger and yet not be ruled by rage. May they honor their grief but not be paralyzed by sorrow. May they transform fear, rage, and grief into compassion and the inspiration to act in service of what they love. "May they find the help, the resources, the courage, the luck, the strength, the love, the health, the joy that they need to do the work. May they all be on the right place, at the right time, in the right way. "May they bring alive a great awakening, open a listening ear to hear the earth's voice, transform imbalance to balance, hate and greed to love. Blessed be the healers of the earth." ~Starhawk from The Earth Path

## **26) Just show up, as you are.**

"Just show up, as you are. You don't have to look or feel great. You don't have to be prepared for each challenge, or know all the hows of every situation. You don't have to be fearless, or have all the answers, or be 100% ready. Nobody is any of those things. Nobody ever was. It's not about being perfect, at all. You just have to show up, as you are, despite all the objections and insecurities in your mind, despite each and every fear that threatens to hold you back, despite the limitations and criticisms others will place in you. To hell with it all. This is your life, your journey, your adventure, and all it's asking is to show up for it, as you are. That's enough, That's more than enough. That's everything."

Unknown of Facebook

## **27) All we can do in a crisis is try**

The human spirit is an unwavering force that shines brightest in the face of adversity. When crisis strikes, it is our innate resilience that propels us forward. Despite the overwhelming challenges that may surround us, we find the strength within ourselves to persevere and adapt. It's in these moments that we discover the extent of our capabilities, fueled by an unyielding determination to

overcome. Though the road ahead may seem uncertain, the human spirit reminds us that all we can do is try. In the midst of chaos, we rise above, forging connections, offering support, and demonstrating the remarkable power of our collective will to endure and emerge stronger on the other side.

## **28) Hold onto Hope**

Amidst the challenges of the climate and ecological crisis, let's hold onto hope. Humanity has a remarkable history of overcoming adversity and finding solutions. By working together, embracing innovation, and fostering a deep connection with nature, we can forge a path toward a more harmonious and sustainable world. Every step we take today, no matter how small, brings us closer to a future where nature thrives, and generations to come will be grateful for our unwavering determination.

# Vision Reminder

(also known as the **Solemn Intention Statement**)

May our energy flow like a wave. We need the highs, the music, the joy, the laughter. And we also need the solemn, the heart opening and grieving, so the people watching know why we're really here...

## **Vision Reminder**

(invitation: pause, breathe, close eyes):

'Let's take a moment, this moment, to consider why we are here.

Let's recall our love for the whole of humanity, in all corners of the world. Let's remember our love for this beautiful planet that feeds, nourishes and sustains all life. Let's recollect our sincere desire to protect all this, for now and for generations to come.

As we act today, may we find the courage to bring this sense of peace and appreciation to everyone we encounter, to every word we speak, and to every action we make. In this emergency. Together. Rooted in love. We are all we need.'

# Self-Administered Team Health Check

This workshop is designed to be used as a tool by any team that wants to run a health check on the way their team is functioning.

It focusses on both task and maintenance. Task means getting stuff done. Do you achieve your goals? Maintenance means how you get stuff done eg looking after the team, the people in it and the systems and processes that keep the team alive and developing. Is everyone on board with the Principles and Values? Do they understand where the team fits in the whole movement and where they fit in the team? Are they comfortable enough and enabled to be brave and step out of their comfort zone? Are there any issues under the surface that need to be addressed?

The workshop is designed to be flexible. It can be done as a whole at one sitting or it can be broken up into several different activities which can stand alone. It can be done in a face-to-face setting or online. One or two team members can facilitate. Someone should take notes. A follow-up meeting may be needed to decide on actions arising from the workshop.

Facilitators may need to have available XR Principles and Values and relevant team documents such as mandate, agreed strategy, and designated roles.

## 1. Welcome to the Workshop

Regenerative Culture Reminder, Lighting the Children's Fire,

**Check-in go round:** (Names, pronouns, roles, a word or animal that conveys how each person is feeling)

Is there anything anyone needs to help them participate?

**Benefits:** gives everyone a chance to become present, remember what is important and ask for anything they need, establishes a brave space.

## 2. Purpose of the Workshop

A time to pause and reflect together, review how it is going, check if there is anything you need to change. It looks at group maintenance as well as task performance. It gives everyone an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about your team working, identify team strengths, weaknesses and blind spots, issues to be addressed in the future.

**Benefits:** clarifies that this workshop is for everyone to contribute to improving team working, identifying rather than solving any problems (this is done as a follow up).

### 3. Individual extended Check-In: Life-story in 3 minutes: “How I got to this point”

A facilitator demonstrates the process, picking out key factors that led to them being in this team at this time. Strictly timed.

**Breakout rooms.** Small groups so that everyone gets three minutes to tell their story.

**Feedback to full meeting:** respect confidentiality, feedback on how that exercise was for you, what did you learn about yourself, any insights or discomfort. No note-taking.

**Benefits:** everyone is valued equally, gives a chance to get to know others as people with lives and history outside XR, reminds individuals of their own motivation, what they believe is important, why they are in this team.

### 4. Principles and Values

Facilitator displays or shares copy of XR Principles and Values

- Which ones shine through in this team?
- Which ones get overlooked?

Responses are recorded eg in the meeting chat.

**Benefits:** reminder of XR Principles and Values and their relevance to healthy team working. In every team there will be differences of opinions, views, styles, personalities, energy etc. That is healthy. Principles and Values are different. Shared values play a major part in holding a team together.

### 5. Mandate and Strategy

Facilitator displays the team’s mandate or purpose, agreed strategy and the designated roles within the team.

**Discussion:** Have you looked at this recently? (*wavy hand responses*) How does this fit together? Are there gaps?

- Everyone considers what they bring to the team and how that contributes to the team’s performance of its task.
- What are the team’s current priorities?
- Does anything need updating?

Responses to these questions are recorded.

**Benefit:** reminder of team’s responsibilities in the Self Organising System, opportunity to review how well the written purpose fits with team members’ sense of direction and commitment.

### 6. Successes

Where has the team done well, either in tasks or in team maintenance?

Brainstorm all the successes, big and small.

Responses are recorded. We use a copy of this [Gathering Successes](#) Document.

**Benefits:** recalling occasions when the team did well brings gratitude, joy and hope and increases motivation to work together.

## 7. Issues

What has not gone so well? No team is perfect. It's normal to have some slips and failings. If they are noted everyone can learn from them.

Give everyone an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings citing specific examples and using the framework:

- I observed or I noticed....
- I felt.....
- I needed.....

This is not a time (yet) for answering or problem solving.

Responses are noted

**Benefits:** everyone is listened to equally, gives an opportunity for any disappointment or dissatisfaction to be voiced in a non-violent way and acknowledged without blaming.

## 8. Identifying the roots of issues and next steps

**Discussion:** Think about what these issues mean about the way the team works. Are there themes or common threads?

Looking at the successes and issues, the Principles and Values and the documented purpose of the team, where are the strengths and where are the gaps, blind-spots or weaknesses?

- What does the team need to work on?
- Think about what you might do differently as a result of the learning from this workshop.
- How will you go about making this shift?
- What help and support do you need and where will you find it?

**Next steps:** who will take the lead in moving forward? When? How?

## 9. Closing

Check-out go round

- Say one thing you are taking away from this workshop.

Extinguish the Children's Fire.