



Information when setting up a Local Group

There are a number of Herb Society local groups around the country. These groups are not formally affiliated to the national Herb Society, but help to bring together its members to share our love of all things herby.

The benefits to the Herb Society of local groups are to:

- Bring Herb Society members together regionally to share interests and knowledge
- Represent the Herb Society at local and national events
- Provide local volunteers for initiatives around the regions
- To promote and raise the profile of the Herb Society
- To provide forums to feedback comments, information and news to the Herb Society which can influence its future direction.

Format

The good news is that there isn't just one format for your local groups. Some groups meet regularly in the same venue with different speakers, some do hands-on activities, some groups go on nursery and garden visits together, some go out into the hedgerow and some groups do a bit of everything....

It's up to you and your organisers to decide how you want to run your group. You could:

- Find a venue and invite members of your group to lead talks/demonstrations.
- Find a venue and invite guest speakers/workshop leaders.
- Arrange a trip to a garden or nursery as a group.
- Work in partnership with a local garden, developing joint events and providing volunteering opportunities.
- Have a hands-on session out in the hedgerow or go on a Herb Walk.
- Help your local school to set up their own herb garden.
- Look out for opportunities to take part in local allotment/garden/environment events organised by others.

It's also up to you how you run your groups. Obviously we would be really pleased if the group was made up of Herb Society members, but we are just as keen to get the message out there about the joy of herbs, so you can decide how your membership is made up.

It may suit you to have a formal committee with Chair, Treasurer, etc., but some groups are happy to have more informal arrangements for organisers. If you have a formal committee you may need a constitution and a community bank account. This would be a constitution and account for your local group and would not be linked to

those of the Herb Society. Some groups charge a membership fee, others charge per event/activity. You may decide not to handle money at all, and some groups get round this by organising activities where payment goes directly to the venue you are visiting. The Herb Society does not see local groups as a way of raising funds. The focus is on providing accessible and inclusive events to support a wider understanding of herbs.

If you are organising events as a group, such as demonstrations and workshops, rather than just visiting a venue as a group, then you will probably need public liability insurance.

Obviously one of the most important things to do is publicise your group. We are happy to help with this, but you will need at least an email address. Some groups have their own websites, facebook pages, blogs or communicate by e-newsletters.

How the Herb Society can help

- We can provide you with a £150 loan to set-up your group, for instance if you have to hire a venue for an initial meeting. We would expect the loan to be paid back to the Society within 6 months.
- We can provide information on costs and providers of public liability insurance.
- We can advertise your group and its programmes in the Herbs journal and on the Herb Society website.
- We will notify new Herb Society members in your area about the group.
- We can promote the work of your group with articles in the journal, on the blog, in the newsletter, on facebook and through twitter.
- We will get in touch with you if we are approached about a show or fair in your local area which you could attend on the Society's behalf.
- We can provide you with Herb Society publicity material for you to distribute.
- We can put you in touch with other local groups to get their advice.

If you would like any more information then please contact the local group co-ordinator Sue Hughes on nwherbsociety@gmail.com.