

1. INTRODUCTION

Buxton Town Team activities are based around 'projects' - defined packages of work with clear aims and objectives, and usually a known end point. Some activities will continue in the longer term; once things are established these will be redefined as 'ongoing activities' and the original project closed.

The Town Team has a large number of active members, and at any one time may have ten or more active projects running in parallel. It is very important to have a formal structure to approve and monitor activities done in our name; if all our members went off 'doing their own thing' it would be chaos.

We have a reputation for doing things properly and professionally, we want to maintain this.

2. HOW DOES A PROJECT COME ABOUT?

When someone has an idea for a project, it is normally taken to the monthly Ideas & Action (I&A) Meeting. This gives members the opportunity to talk it through, put forward their own ideas, explore how it fits in with other projects that are planned or under way, or express any reservations. It is also a chance for the proponent to recruit people to join the project team. If the idea is supported by the members present, a project proposal will be drawn up; this is normally presented to another I&A meeting for further comment, then sent to the Directors for their input and (hopefully) formal approval to go ahead.

The template Project Proposal Form can be downloaded from the members' area of the website (see link at end). If you are unsure about completing it, there are lots of examples of past proposals there too; have a look at these to see how they are put together, and ask an experienced Project Leader or one of the Directors for help.

3. THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

The Project Proposal ensures that projects are thought through properly before too much time and effort has been expended. The Project Proposal Form is in effect an agreement between the project leader and the Town Team Directors. It defines exactly what work is to be carried out, who will do it, where the funding will come from and what it is hoped will be achieved.

You must not embark on activities in the name of Buxton Town Team until the proposal has been approved by the Directors.

Avoid 'mission creep'! If part way through the project you come up with a good idea for something extra, or you want to change the plan, you must go back to the Directors and get their agreement first. This is to make sure that what you do doesn't conflict with what another project team is doing or planning to do.

4. AIMS AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

It is important that projects are done to produce real benefit, and not just because it's something you enjoy doing.

The Aims of your project can be quite general or very specific, but they must fit in with Town Team objectives. Our overall objective is 'to advance the prosperity of Buxton and the well-being of its community'. There are then secondary objectives: to improve things for new and existing businesses; to make Buxton more attractive for residents and visitors; to work in collaboration with other organisations in the town. For the full detail look up our Community Interest Statement (CIC36) on the website (see link below). The concept of 'Main Street' and Buxton as one town rather than separate areas, is an underlying theme.

The Success Criteria should be much more specific. Ideally they will include things that you can quantify - numbers of people attending an event, maps sold, members recruited etc - as well as objective measures such as positive press coverage or feedback.

5. THE PROJECT TEAM

It is very unlikely that a project would be run by just one person, there is usually a team.

When recruiting a team it is important to ensure that you have the necessary skills, or know where you can get help. There is a list of skills that might be required at the end of the Project Proposal Form template - it's not exhaustive, your project may well need skills and experience that are not listed there.

Good communication is paramount. As Project Leader you need to know what your team members are doing, that they are doing what they promised to do and aren't going off on a tangent doing something different. Make sure your team all know what is included in the project proposal. Hold regular meetings, and circulate a written record of what was discussed and agreed. If people can't attend meetings chase them up and ask them to send you an update by email.

As Project Leader, you are responsible for making sure that the project is delivered as agreed in the Project Proposal, you can't sit back and assume other people are doing this for you.

6. PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

You will almost certainly want to promote your project in some way - on the website, on social media, in the press and on the radio, by means of fliers, posters and banners, by letters to specific organisations and individuals. It is important that all such publicity meets acceptable standards, and that Buxton Town Team branding is used in an appropriate way.

The Communications Group is responsible for upholding standards, and there is an agreed procedure for this on the website (see link below). You must involve them in the design of any promotional materials, they will help you with this or they can allocate someone to work with the project team and design publicity for you.

All press releases must be sent out via the Communications Group and you should consult them before doing TV or radio interviews. You must not set up separate project websites or social media accounts.

If your project involves contact with the general public or other organisations and you need a project email address (**@buxtontownteam.org) this can also be arranged through the Communications Group.

7. LICENSING, INSURANCE, HEALTH & SAFETY

Some projects will require a licence from HPBC or other body. Most activities will be covered by our Public Liability Insurance, but major events will need separate insurance cover, ask the Treasurer for advice. You may need to carry out a risk assessment; check what has been done for previous projects as it is likely you will be able to adapt something rather than starting from scratch.

8. FINANCES AND FUNDING

The vast majority of projects will involve some sort of expenditure.

The Directors need to know what the likely costs are before they agree that the project can go ahead. Try to give as good an estimate as you can, based on quotations, known costs of similar past expenditure and so on; the Treasurer will be able to help with this.

Costs should be kept to a minimum. The Town Team is well thought of, and you may be able to persuade local companies to offer donations in kind, for good or services, or discounted rates.

No member of the project team can be paid for work on a Town Team project. In very rare circumstances it may be that a Town Team member is asked to tender for a specific job, in their professional capacity; it would have to be agreed in advance with the Directors that this was appropriate.

The Town Team usually expects projects to cover their own costs. Some projects have the potential to generate an income, by selling maps, charging for stall space or similar; others do not, or the income may not be enough to cover the full cost. Funding can then be sought from the various grant giving bodies, corporate community funds and similar. Note that you must agree with the Directors in advance who you intend to approach for funding, or for significant donations in kind, in case the individual or organisation you have in mind is being asked by someone else to help with another Town Team activity.

The Directors will agree a budget for the project when they approve it. This may be an outright agreement to pay for the project, or it may be an agreement to underwrite the project up to an agreed amount, in the event that income or external funding is less than anticipated. You won't be criticised for underspending - any money you don't spend can be used on other projects.

Wherever possible goods and services should be paid for by Buxton Town Team, ask the Treasurer to do this for you. If this is not possible, you can claim personal expenses back from the Treasurer (the claim form is on the website). Please keep receipts to submit with the claim form. Make sure you keep track of any expenses incurred by other members of your project team as these will go against your budget.

We do not accept paid for advertising on our promotional materials, website or social media. We are happy to acknowledge sponsorship, whether financial or donations in kind, by including an organisation's name and/or logo in the project's publicity materials.

9. REPORTING AND EVALUATION

The Directors need to be kept informed of how projects are progressing, if you are having any problems or if plans need to change. If the Project Leader is not a Director, the project will be allocated a 'Link Director'; treat him/her as a member of the project team, invite them to team meetings and copy them in on any correspondence or notes of meetings. They are there to help you!

There is also a formal monthly status update run by one of the Directors: please let him know on a monthly basis where you are up to, whether you are encountering any difficulties, if you need any help.

Keep in regular contact with the Treasurer with regard to expenditure and any likely changes to the anticipated costs.

At the end of the project we ask you to write a Closing Report; there is a suggested format for this on the website (see link below). It is good practice to hold a 'debrief' meeting with everyone involved in the project as soon as possible while things are still fresh in people's minds; go through every aspect of the project and note what went well and what could have been done better. There will always be learning points that could be useful when planning other projects in the future.

10. USEFUL CONTACTS

Communications Group: comms@buxtontownteam.org

Treasurer: treasurer@buxtontownteam.org

Project Status Monitor: john@estruch.co.uk

Web links:

Project related documents: <http://buxtontownteam.org/members-area/projects/>

Community Interest Statement: <http://buxtontownteam.org/who-we-are/buxton-town-team-cic/>

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