

Holding an event is a great way to raise awareness of the money system and the Positive Money campaign. This is a comprehensive guide for our local group network to help you organise a successful event. Get in touch with the Positive Money team for any additional support.

THE FORMAT

WHO IS IN YOUR CORE TEAM?

Organising an event on your own is a lot of work. Suggest organising an event to your local group and, if possible, develop a team of people who are happy to take on different roles and perform different functions. If you are not a member of a local group, or no one in your group is keen to get involved, contact Positive Money who will be able to offer support and put you in touch with local supporters. You may also want to think about partnering with another local group or community organisation in your area.

Developing a core team of organisers is key to a successful event. It is a great way to get to know people, develop new skills and manage the workload.

STRUCTURE OF THE EVENT

There are lots of ways to structure an event. As a team, you should discuss:

- What is the purpose of this event?
- What would be the ideal outcome be?
- What experience do we want the audience to have?

If the purpose of the event is to educate people, a traditional format with a speaker followed by a Q&A works well. However, if you want people to build commitment and get new people involved in your local group you should consider a more participatory and interactive format.

From our experience, we've found that a good format is to book a 2hour slot, for example from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. We advertise the event as starting at "6.30pm for a 7pm start". People start to arrive from 6.30, which allows you to meet people and talk to people before the start. We've done events starting at 6.30 for a 7pm start, where the last person would leave the pub at midnight, and the discussion after the event can often be more productive than the talk itself!

HAVING A FACILITATOR

Having one or two people facilitating will significantly improve your event. This can be a tricky job and ideally it needs to be someone who is assertive but not dominating, and able to keep the event focused. The facilitator takes responsibility for:

- Getting the audience to quieten down when the event starts
- Setting the context for the event
- Briefly introducing the speaker (if you have one)
- Organising break out groups (if you have them)
- Selecting people to ask questions
- Making sure people stay on topic

- Telling verbose questioners when to stop talking
- Time-keeping
- Wrapping up the event

You can find facilitation tools and tips on our local group resources page <http://positivemoney.org/local-groups/resources-local-groups/>

THE AUDIENCE

Below is a list of target audiences that Positive Money local groups have approached in the past:

- Students
 - University unions
 - Economics Society
 - Alternative economics societies (<http://www.rethinkeconomics.org>)
 - Social justice student groups
- Political party members and activists
- Quaker groups
- Businesses and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- 'Green drinks'
- Relevant groups on Meetup.com
- Religious/faith groups
- Women in Business network
- Local discussion groups (e.g. Science Cafes <http://www.sciencecafes.org>)
- Local Trade Unions
- The peace movement
- Womens' Institute
- CASSE groups (promoting the steady state economy)
- Seroptimists International
- Local festivals, fetes, farmers markets etc.
- Local groups of other campaigning organisations, such as: Global Justice Now, Transition Towns, Occupy, Friends of the Earth, 38 Degrees, Jubilee Debt Campaign, Oxfam, The Peoples Assembly etc.
- Local voluntary groups, community groups etc

Of course, you may not want to invite a particular group. Instead, you might be aiming at a general audience of 'whoever is interested', by booking a town hall meeting room (for example) and promoting it in the local newspaper and with posters.

WHAT KEY POINTS DO YOUR AUDIENCE NEED TO TAKE AWAY?

- What are the key points that your audience should be left with at the end of your talk?
- How is this relevant to them?
- Why should they care about the money system?

The event should leave them with some relatively simple, memorable points that will make them remember the issue, so try to identify the key points for your chosen audience.

WHAT ACTIONS COULD THEY TAKE TO MOVE THE CAMPAIGN FORWARDS?

It's good to educate people but if we want to change things, then it's important that the people we speak to will actually do something.

- What steps could your target audience take to move the campaign forward and support the call for reform of the monetary system?

Getting people to sign up to the Positive Money newsletter is a really important outcome for any event. It may simply be signing up (by email) to support Positive Money and spreading the word to friends and family. Alternatively, it may involve meeting with or writing to their MPs to start a discussion there. It may be that you want them to get involved in a local campaign group.

It's important to have some idea of what you want them to do before you start planning the event, and ensure that you include a 'call to action' to encourage people to do that.

LOGISTICS

CHOOSING YOUR VENUE

In choosing your venue, remember to think about:

- Cost
- Convenience (how close is it to a train/bus station or the centre of town?)
- Disability access
- Will anyone be put off by this venue? E.g. If your event takes place in a pub it will rule out some groups.
- Do they have a projector and facilities for playing videos?
- How many people can it seat?

If the event is free, it is good to assume there will be a dropout rate. If you ask people to register (for free) than you should plan for about a 40% no-show rate, so you'd need to get about 80 people to confirm to have 50 people there on the day. However, if you are charging for the event, the turnout rate will increase.

Free tools on the Internet (such as Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk>), will help you with ticketing and taking bookings for your event.

FACILITIES

You need to check the facilities that your venue has:

- Speakers for playing videos?
- A projector?
- A laptop to plug the projector into? (Or do you need to bring your own?)
- Extension cables?
- Flipchart and markers (if you need it?)

- A microphone (only necessary if the audience is likely to be more than a hundred, or you're quietly spoken)

BEST NIGHT OF THE WEEK

What would be the best night of the week for your audience? This can be hard to judge, but in our experience Tuesdays and Wednesdays have been quite effective (Mondays less so).

Be aware that you'll never be able to find a date that satisfies everyone. However, if you want to invite the members of another local group to join your event, then make sure your event doesn't clash with their regular meetings.

COVERING COSTS

Do you need to cover costs for the event? First figure out what it will actually cost you to run the event, making sure you include all possible expenses:

- The hire of the venue
- Hire for a projector (if it's additional)
- Cost of teas and coffees if you provide them
- Cost of printing posters, flyers and handouts
- Travel expenses for yourself or other speakers (they may not want expenses, but this can be more important if the person is travelling a fair way or taking trains to get to the event).

Naturally you should try to limit costs as much as possible (eg. ask around to see if anyone has a projector that can be borrowed rather than hiring one if it's expensive). Also be careful not to overestimate your turnout and book a venue that is too large and expensive.

Once you have figured out the total cost, divide it by the number of people you realistically expect to attend to figure out how much you would need to collect in donations or charges to cover the costs.

From the experience of other events, the most effective way to cover costs is to make the event free but ask for donations to cover the costs. A simple way to do this is to say, at the beginning and end of the event, that "This venue cost us £60, and there's 20 of us here this evening, so if everyone could chip in about £3 we'd be able to cover the costs. If you can't no worries but if you want to help us out that would be appreciated." Make sure you state this at the beginning of the event, and as you're wrapping up; mentioning it as an after thought when people have started to leave means you won't get much in donations.

How can you advertise an event as free when you are asking for donations? Simple ways include adding to the posters and promotional emails a simple line such as:

- "Free entry. Donations welcomed to cover costs."
- "Free entry. Suggested donation of £3 welcomed to cover costs."
- "The event is free but if you're able to chip in around £3 to help us cover costs, we'd be very grateful."

You will find that some people donate more than £3. Providing that you ask at the beginning and end of the event you will find that most people are willing to chip in.

If you are speaking, then make sure that there is someone else who's job it is to collect donations at the end or as people leave. They should have a box and a bit of change in case people give fivers etc.

AFTER THE EVENT

People can watch videos and lectures online; what makes an event so valuable is getting to meet other interested people and having the opportunity to discuss and debate the issues. So what happens immediately after the main event is just as important as the formal event itself. Make sure there is time to socialise and have an informal chat.

CHECKLISTS

Having a checklist on paper for the event can make it much easier and smoother to prepare for the event and ensure that nothing is forgotten.

COLLECTING EMAIL ADDRESSES

We would like you to ask people to sign up to the Positive Money email list. If someone attends one event and then leaves without signing up, the chances are that they then will forget to get further involved in the campaign or take any other action. However, once they sign up we can email them to link to other resources, other videos and events, and encourage them to spread the word about this issue.

The most effective way to get people to sign up is:

1. Print off the email signup forms
2. Get an A4 clipboard with a pen attached to it by string
3. Explain that you're passing around a form for the Positive Money newsletter; that this includes links to new videos and resources about this issue, and updates on the campaign and other ways that the audience can get involved, and that they can unsubscribe at any time if they decide they don't want to be kept in touch.
4. Pass this to the first person in the front row and ask them to pass it on.

As with asking for donations, if you leave this to the end when people are about to leave, very few people will sign up. The best way to get the people who attend your event to take action afterwards is to make sure they are on the mailing list.

After collecting email addresses, please type them up into an Excel (or OpenOffice) spread sheet and email them to info@positivemoney.org.uk, with details of the event.

PROMOTION

This section addresses promoting the event and making sure people turn up on the day.

INVITING OR COLLABORATING WITH OTHER GROUPS

One way to boost your audience relatively easy is to do the event in conjunction with other local groups, or at least invite other groups. For example, we held a very successful event in Bristol that was hosted by Bristol Redland Quakers. We also invited local Positive Money supporters in the Bristol postcode, and

asked Bristol University students union to add the event to their own internal email newsletter. As a result there were approximately 90 people in the end.

PROMOTING THROUGH OTHER NETWORKS

You can let coordinators or leaders of other groups know about the event and ask them to let their members know. When you do this, you may want to tweak or tailor your description of the event so that it has maximum interest for the people you're contacting. You can also use online platforms such as Meetup.com to advertise your event.

LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Most local newspapers have classified sections where you can list events and an online area dedicated to events and new groups setting up in the area. Make sure you send the details of your event to the local media.

PROMOTING THE NEXT EVENT AT THIS EVENT

If you know the date and content of your next meeting, then promote it at your first meeting, so that people can get the date in their diary.

PROMOTION THROUGH POSITIVE MONEY

You can contact Mira at Positive Money (mira@positivemoney.org.uk) to make sure that your event is promoted to our other supporters in the wider area.

POSTERS

Putting up posters in your local newsagent's, shop, library or community noticeboard can be useful. These posters don't need to be too fancy, but check that you have the following information:

- Where is it (postal address, postcode, also potentially a description eg "Opposite Sainsbury's"),
- Room number of the venue (if applicable, and if it's a big venue)
- When does it start (day of week, date and time)
- Is it free?
- What is it about?

FACEBOOK

Setting up a Facebook event is likely to be the most effective way to promote the event, as it allows people to invite their own friends through Facebook and means the word can spread faster.

To set up a Facebook event:

1. click on 'Home' in the upper right corner
2. click on 'Events' in the left side bar
3. click on '+ Create event'
4. fill in Title, Description, Place and Time and click on 'Create'
5. click on 'Invite friends' and tick the names
6. then you may add event photo - click on the square box in the left side bar and choose an image from your computer

EMAILING YOUR OWN LIST

You may already have your own email list of friends and acquaintances that you want to invite to the event. This is fine, but **always add your emails to the BCC field (see picture below) to send emails to multiple people.**

Also, at the bottom of every email, add a simple message to say **“If you don’t want to hear about events like this, please just reply and I’ll remove you immediately”.**

If in doubt, email your ideas to info@positivemoney.org.uk and we’ll let you know if it’s suitable in our experience.

HOW TO HANDLE Q&A

With Q&A, you need to be quite assertive in keeping the questions on track, encouraging questioners to be succinct, and avoiding one questioner hogging all the ‘air time’.

Make it clear that you are asking for questions to the speaker, rather than statements. Ask people to keep their questions short (under one minute). If they are rambling then ask them to get to the point (eg. “OK, so what is the question you wanted to ask?”).

Try to avoid get into a hyper-technical discussion with one member of the audience (for example, debating the impact of the ‘credit event’ in Greece on bond yields). This will exclude everyone else in the audience who doesn’t have a clue what is being discussed. If a question would take more than 3 minutes to answer, or requires very technical explanations or an explanation of accounting, it is generally better to refer the questioner to *Where Does Money Come From?* than to try to explain this verbally.

As the chair, be aware of questions from people who haven’t spoken, and people at the back or sides of the room. When possible, alternate between men and women when taking questions.

Feel free to ask for questions on other aspects of the talk if the discussion has spent too long on one point.

At many events you will see “Let’s take 3 questions in a row”. This usually doesn’t work well; it’s extremely hard for a speaker to remember all three questions and answer them adequately. However, it may be necessary if you’re running out of time.

SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR Q&A BEFOREHAND

It’s worth being clear with people that you are not a complete expert on all financial things. At the beginning of the talk, or just before the Q&A, you can clearly explain, for example:

- “I’m not an economist; I’m an ordinary person who found this whole thing shocking and started studying it in more detail, so if I can answer your question I will but I’m still learning about this.”
- “I am not a professional economist, or an expert, in the way the City works. I’ve been learning about monetary reform for a while now and want to share what I know with everyone else.”

With very technical questions or questions that are off-topic, such as Credit Default Swaps (CDSs), the crisis in the bond market, and so on, there are simple ways to respond to these questions:

- I'm not sure of the answer to that, and to be honest it's not strictly relevant to the discussion today, as we're focussed on how the UK money system works, not all aspects of finance.
- I don't really understand Credit Default Swaps, but the truth is neither do most of the people who bought them or created them!
- Let's not get too tied up in the complexities of the financial system; even most people in the City don't understand everything about all aspects of finance.

Not being an expert can often be an advantage, as we want this to be a subject that many people can engage with.

AWKWARD QUESTIONERS

There are people who, no matter what you say, they won't agree with you. The important thing is not to get into a debate with folk like that. You can say, something like: "I have a slightly different take on it. Perhaps we can have a chat about it afterwards. Let's take some more questions."

Be very wary about getting stuck in very technical or semantic arguments with people who think they know everything. These can be boring or confusing to everyone else who is still learning about the subject. Ask them if they have read the book *Where Does Money Come From?*, as this explains most aspects of the current monetary system.

Have the confidence to tell people if they're off topic:

- "I'm sorry but that's a whole other talk completely; I can't really answer questions on that but I know there's some good books on the subject if you want to do your own research."

COMMON QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS, AND HOW TO RESPOND

- ❖ Banks don't create money; it's a myth! I don't believe you; this is just a silly conspiracy.

Don't worry – I had the same reaction when I first heard about this. It's hard to believe. But if you really believe this is a myth then you should tell that to the Bank of England, because they are really pedalling this conspiracy [and refer to the quotes from the Bank of England about money creation].

(Note that if you have already shown the quotes from the Bank of England and Martin Wolf in your talk, it's unlikely you'll get this response.)

- ❖ Don't you believe that XXX designed this whole system / planned the whole financial crisis? [The conspiracy angle].

Firstly, have you ever worked in a large organization? Incompetence is a much better explanation for what's happened than any conspiracy. Secondly, if you did want to design a system that fleeces everybody, you wouldn't design it the way this system has been designed, because it's absolute chaos. The way this system has been designed is as if you had built a house and then

realised the foundations were weak, and its starting to crumble, so you've propped it up here and there, and then something at the back, and then struts through to support the walls. That's how the current system is. Every time it's broken they just add a little bit more to it...there's no evidence of any intelligent design, either for benevolent purposes or otherwise!

- ❖ People in the City provide half of all the Tory's funding. Doesn't this mean that they'll just do whatever they want and refuse to change anything?

It might be a concern to an extent, but the media has much more power than donors do.

- ❖ You keep talking about everyone being in debt, but I've been responsible and never go into debt. So surely it's just because some people are reckless with credit cards?

You say you don't go into debt, but do you have a mortgage? Will your kids be able to buy a house without getting a mortgage? The reality is that, although some of us might just be able to stay out of debt, collectively we have to borrow the whole money supply. So you might be lucky, but as a whole we can't all stay out of debt.

Please also see the FAQs on the Positive Money website for more common questions and reactions.

See www.positivemoney.org.uk/frequently-asked-questions/

<http://positivemoney.org/2015/08/sovereign-money-common-critiques/>