

Positive Money Events - Tips for the Organizers

This guide is intended to provide you with the information and advice needed to plan and organize your events. It includes tips on:

- Format of the event
- Audience – list of various potentially interested groups
- Logistics
- Promotion
- Q&A and common objections
- Checklist

The Format

Hosted by yourself or another group?

This is a key first decision. It can be much easier, to go to a pre-existing meeting or group. This means you don't need to worry about arranging the venue or getting people to attend, as they will already be meeting. For example, local Quakers' or Transition town groups have their own meeting houses and members who would be interested in this.

Arranging your own event can be a lot more work, and it's worth pairing up with at least one other person to organize it. You'll need to think about the issues in the *Logistics* section below, as well as promoting the event.

Length of the event

From our experience, we've found that a good format is to book a 2 hour 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 them before the start. You will probably start 5-10minutes late (i.e. 7.05pm). You can have 45 minutes of content (eg. a 20 minute talk and a 20 minute video), followed by Q&A and general discussion, and then go to the pub (or have some drinks at the venue, if you're willing to buy a few bottles of wine, juice and crisps).

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!

Lecture/Talk and Q&A

A common format is to have a 20-or-so minute talk, followed by questions and answers and/or open discussion. This can be much more interactive and often more useful than simply watching a video.

You could combine a 20 minute talk with a 20 minute video from the Positive Money website to add a bit of variety: <http://www.positivemoney.org/videos/> You can use the videos to split up your own talk, or alternatively simply show key videos and provide some connecting commentary.

Film/Video Screenings

Positive Money has a range of videos that can be shown at events. We recommend to arrange a screening of the documentary *97% Owned* or one of our other videos. You can see all video resources on our website in the section Videos: <http://www.positivemoney.org/videos/>

Video Download Links:

You can download a high quality version of the videos so that you can play them at your event without needing a working internet connection:

<http://www.positivemoney.org/get-involved/organise-a-meetup-film-screening/download-high-res-videos/>

The files will be up to 500mb so you'll need to download them in advance of the event.

Debates

We would generally **advise against debates** as a format; they tend to result in people trying to defend their positions rather than actually learning from each other. They also result in highly-technical debates between 'experts' rather than simple and clear communication for people who are new to the subject.

Open Discussions

Depending on your personal style and experience of familiar events you may wish to hold events that are focussed more around group work, open discussion and facilitation. We haven't experimented much with this format, so you'll have to innovate something! (And let us know how it goes, what worked well and what could be used elsewhere).

Positive Money Meetups

You may want to organise a meetup for existing Positive Money supporters, as well as advertising it to new people. This could involve showing a couple of 20 minute videos from the website, having some discussion afterwards, and going to the pub afterwards. You'll need to balance the needs of people who are new to this issue and those of people who have been studying it for a while, as well as stopping the discussion becoming hyper-technical in a way that will lose the rest of the audience.

Having a Chair

It's always worth having a chair or introducer for the event (providing they're assertive enough to control the audience). The chair should be responsible for:

- Getting the audience to quieten down when the event starts
- Setting the context for your talk and briefly introducing you as the speaker

- Selecting people to ask questions, making sure they're on topic, telling verbose questioners when to stop talking, and time-keeping during the question and answer section.
- Wrapping up the evening and thanking you and any other speakers.

The Audience

Below is a list of different audiences identified by various Positive Money supporters for you to consider:

- Students / young people
 - University unions
 - Various student groups at the university
 - A general event on campus
- Transition Town groups
- Quaker groups
- Party members and activists of Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem, Green or other parties
- Businesses and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- 'Green drinks'
- Relevant groups on Meetup.com (see if they want speakers or to organise an event with you)
- Religious/faith groups
- Local 'Occupy' groups
- 'Green Drinks'
- Women in Business network
- University students
- Local Rotary or Roundtable groups
- Local Trade Unions
- The peace movement
- Womens' Institute
- CASSE groups (promoting the steady state economy)
- Seroptimists International
- Festivals
- Local groups of World Development Movement (<http://www.wdm.org.uk/>)
- Local voluntary groups, community groups etc
- Other local groups that are looking for speakers regularly – they may not be obvious target audiences but may be open to all kinds of speakers

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 event? 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?

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 the Venue

You may not have too many venue options, but in choosing, bear in mind:

- Cost
- Ease of access (how close is it to a train/bus station or the centre of town?)
- Do they have a projector and facilities for playing videos?
- How many people can it seat?

In terms of how many seats you need, consider both the size of your 'catchment area' (eg. a small town versus a decent size city) and how much promotion you will realistically have time to do. Don't assume that your first event will attract 100+ people; from our experience 30-50 people is a good audience size to plan for; less is to be expected in smaller towns.

Bear in mind that if the event is free, you will have a significant drop-out rate between people saying they will come and actually turning up. 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 (because you filter out the people who aren't seriously thinking about coming, and because people don't like to miss something they've paid for). If you're charging £10 for the event, then you could plan for a dropout rate of about 20%.

If you have a venue that has plenty of space for additional seats then capacity may not be a concern, but be careful if you have a fixed sized venue such as a lecture theatre or a small room. It looks great if the event is 'standing room only' but it's not so comfortable for the people sat on the floor.

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). On a Friday evening people tend to have social engagements or just to want to relax after a long week.

Thursday can be effective if your event is more social (for example, going to the pub); by Thursday people are winding down for the weekend and are more willing to hang around after the main event.

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.

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)

Room Layout

For bigger events you'll need to decide the optimal room layout.

Horseshoe

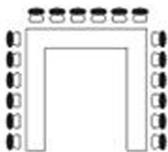


Theatre

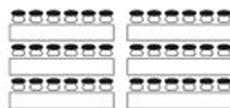


Horseshoe style can be good for an event that is based on a discussion and groupwork where everyone can see each other. However, it does mean you can fit far fewer people versus other styles of layout.

U-Shape

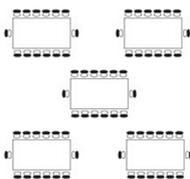


Classroom

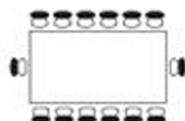


Theatre style is the best way to fit in as many seats as possible into the room, but is a bit of a barrier to working in groups. This is more suited for film screenings and lectures with Q&A.

Cabaret



Boardroom



Cabaret style can be good if you will have a lot of group discussion or people working in small groups, but isn't great if there will be a lot of talking at the front of the stage, as someone will always be facing the wrong way.

Socializing 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.

Here are three suggested options:

- If the venue allows you to, buy in a few bottles of wine, orange juice, tea and coffee, and some crisps, and invite people to stay around after the event to discuss further. Whether this is suitable or not will depend on the venue, whether you want to bear the cost, and

whether you're allowed to bring in your own food and drink (be wary of prices for wine, teas and coffees at professional venues).

- Go to a pub nearby the venue. Try to choose a pub that won't be too busy on the evening (and check there is no live sports that evening) and try to reserve a space for your group. As a rough estimate, assume that about half of the attendees will come to the pub with you. Ensure that you give extremely clear directions from the venue to the pub, and get a couple of volunteers to lead the way.
- You could alternatively invite people for dinner in a local restaurant after the event. If you do this try to find a restaurant that is not pricey, as the cost may put some attendees off joining you. (The pub is likely to get a better turnout, as it's easier for people to spend less).

Checklists

[Here](#) is a checklist to help you plan the event:
<http://bit.ly/14iAs1H>

You may want to edit or adapt this for your own event. 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.

Anyone signing up to the Positive Money email list will be able to unsubscribe at any time they want using a link at the bottom of every email. Typically we send out a newsletter once every two weeks, with new videos, links to further reading, and updates on latest developments in the campaign.

[Here](#) is a template email signup form which you can print off for the event:
<http://bit.ly/11ZjEOi>

It includes the very important privacy statement so that people who sign up understand what they are signing up for and that they can unsubscribe.

Please note, **never** ask people to add details for friends or family, even if those people would be interested. People who are added without their knowledge will tend to see our email as spam; if many people mark the email as spam our emailing account could be closed down or suspended, so we have to be careful to only email people who have personally 'opted in' to receive emails from us.

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

Follow the Positive Money Campaign
Sign up to follow the campaign by email. We send out newsletters with videos and updates about twice a month and you can unsubscribe at any time. We never share your email address with anyone else.

Name **Email** **Postcode (optional)**
for news about local events

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.

Make sure to do this early; 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 and email them to info@positivemoney.org.uk (*ideally in an excel spreadsheet with separate columns for name, surname, email and postcode*)

Giving something for people to take away

You may want to prepare a simple flyer or single side of A4 with next steps for attendees to take immediately after the event. This may include links for them to watch further videos, or details of the next event that you plan to do. You can also download some flyers here:

<http://www.positivemoney.org/get-involved/resources/>

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 to 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 at the end.

You may want to invite, or do the event in collaboration with, local groups including Friends of the Earth, World Development Movement, local Transition Town groups, local Quakers or other faith groups. See the list of potential audiences in the earlier section for more ideas of groups you could invite.

Inviting your MP

If you expect to get a turnout of 40 people or more please do **invite your MP to attend your event** MPs want to hear about their constituents concerns and inviting them to an event where they don't have to contribute is actually very appealing to them. Find out who your MP is [here](#) and

if you want more advice on how to approach your MP please email frank.vanlerven@positivemoney.org.uk

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; for example, although your talk may cover the impact on both the environment and the economy, your local chamber of commerce will be more interested in the economic impacts whilst your local Transition Towns group will be more interested in the environment. You can emphasise different aspects in the email (but of course be careful not to be misleading in the email).

You may find that church groups are happy to promote events related to social justice and ethics.

Local Newspapers

Most local newspapers have classified sections where you can list events. These may (or may not) be free. We have no idea if this is effective or not but it can be worth a try if the ad is free.

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 & Flyers

Various people have said that handing flyers out has been ineffective, so this probably isn't the best use of your time. However, 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 e.g. "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

For any event targeted at a younger or student crowd, 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 to send emails to multiple people**. The BCC ('blind carbon copy') field means that the emails you send to will not be revealed to other recipients. This is important for preventing your friends from receiving spam; it also means you don't inadvertently give all your friends and family's contact details to people you may not know very well.

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 and we'll let you know if it's suitable in our experience.

Reminders

Sad but true; many people don't know how to use a diary, so you may need to send out a number of reminders in the run up to your event. You can also send reminders to your partners who have promised to promote the event to their members.

Don't spam, but a reminder 2 weeks before, 1 week before and the day before could boost attendance. (Remember to give people the option to unsubscribe from emails).

Q&A & The Common Objections

In case your event will have a Q&A session, here are few tips how to handle it:

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 (e.g. “OK, so what is the question you wanted to ask?”).

Don't 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 the books *Modernising Money* or *Where Does Money Come From?*, rather than trying 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.

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 *Modernising Money* or *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:

<http://www.positivemoney.org/faqs/>

Reference

Setting up a projector & Powerpoint

1. **Switch on your laptop**
2. **Find a cable that comes** from the projector with an end that looks like this, and attach it to the side of your computer:
3. **Mac Users:** The connection for Mac laptops is different; you'll need to buy the appropriate Mac->VGA adaptor for your laptop (depending on when you bought it). If you don't have the cable already, it might be easier to save your powerpoint onto a USB disk and connect the projector to a Windows laptop or computer instead. (Ebay sells these connectors for significantly less than the Apple store!)
4. Turn the projector on and give it about 90 seconds to warm up (you'll probably see a blue screen or logo coming up on the project screen first)
5. On your laptop, press (and hold) the 'Fn' (function) key, and at the same time press one of the F1, F2, F3 etc keys which has an icon that shows a laptop and another monitor. This will tell the laptop to send a message to the projector. The projector may automatically detect the signal and show the screen; if it doesn't then look for an 'Input' button on the projector and press it to cycle through the different input options.



