

Community events and open days are a great way of getting more people out and enjoying their local green spaces. If people visit once, they are more likely to return...especially if they have a great time! Other Friends groups have also found community fun days to be a good way of promoting the group and getting more people from the local community involved.

Planning and arrangements

Overleaf you will find some examples of bat related activities that have been successful in the past. Always ensure that you have notified the site managers or owners of your plans well in advance of the event. Additionally, local bat groups always like to know about bat events taking place in their local area, so do let them know when you are organising something as they may be able to help.

Promotion is key to running successful events. There are many different methods including: emails; posters in parks, libraries, local schools, surgeries and community halls; door flyers; local radio and, of course, the Green City Bats website.

All events and activities should be as accessible as possible for all members of the community. Consideration of access requirements is particularly important for bat walks, indoor and outdoor activities. This includes promotional/information material, access to venues, use of appropriate language and visual and tactile aids. Visit www.bats.org.uk/countbat for more information and advice on accessibility.

Funding and fundraising

Events are a great way of getting some local fundraising underway. There are also a number of grants available to local community groups (some specific to Friends groups) to enable work that develops the involvement of local communities in conservation and improves biodiversity. Contact your local Council for Voluntary Service (www.navca.org.uk/liodir) for information on possible funding streams.



Partnerships and organisations

Working in partnership with other organisations to run events and activities will increase the likelihood of a successful event and provides an opportunity for local groups and people to come together. Partnerships can be established with a range of organisations including local schools, community groups and national organisations.

- **GreenSpace** is a registered charity which works to improve parks and green spaces by raising awareness, involving communities and creating skilled professionals. GreenSpace organises the annual 'Love Parks Week' – an ideal time for Friends groups to celebrate their green space.
www.green-space.org.uk
- **BTCV** has over 40 years' experience of promoting conservation volunteering across the UK. Involvement is integral to their objectives working with all members of the community to promote conservation and volunteer opportunities.
www.2btcv.org.uk
- There are 47 local **Wildlife Trusts** across the UK. Many Wildlife Trusts run bat walks and manage local nature areas. Volunteering and community involvement are vital to their work.
www.wildlifetrusts.org
- There are just under 60 **Local Bat Groups** across England working towards bat conservation. Local bat groups are an invaluable resource for support, advice and assistance. For details of your local bat group, visit the BCT website.
www.bats.org.uk

There are numerous other national and local organisations that can be approached for information, advice and partnership work. Your local Council for Voluntary Service may have lists of local organisations. Don't forget there are a wealth of contacts on your doorstep including local schools, libraries and community halls.

European Bat Weekend (EBW) is a celebration of bats held by the Bat Conservation Trust at the end of August each year. It encourages thousands of people to see and hear bats in their natural environment by taking part in a range of events organised by local bat groups, parks, wildlife trusts, countryside rangers and other organisations across the country.

Why not run an event as part of EBW to get local people involved in bat activities in their neighbourhood and promote bat conservation. All events can be uploaded onto the interactive map on the BCT website at www.bats.org.uk/ebw. This year we would like as many groups as possible to get involved.

Below are some suggestions of events that could be run.

Bat walks

EBW is a great time for bat walks. There will be hundreds of volunteers around the country out on walks and surveys so why not get your local community involved. If you do not have a leader with experience, contact your local bat group to see if they have someone to suggest. Alternatively, keep an eye on the Count Bat events page to see if there is any training coming up on leading and organising bat walks.

Build a bat box

More information on bat boxes can be found on the Parks and Bats information sheet. Why not offer a stall at EBW for people to sign up to make bat boxes for the park? You may find that a local timber merchant is willing to donate off cuts of untreated wood to be used to make the boxes. This saves you money and reduces waste!



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Bat gardening

Why not have a stall to sell small plants that attract insects and thus bats? People can purchase these to make their gardens more bat friendly. Alternatively, get the community involved in a bat gardening day. If you have a wildlife area, why not spruce it up with some insect friendly, native plants? Or you could even have a competition to design a bat garden.

Bats for kids

There are loads of different art and craft activities that kids can enjoy. Visit the 'bats for kids' page of the BCT website for templates. This include: bat masks, bat hats and bat kites. Children will really get into this and all you need are a few materials and enough supervisors.



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Bat hunt

Treasure hunt? Nah, go for a Bat Hunt! Place cut outs of bats or toy bats around the park and let people go and find them. Encourage them to think about the habitats that bats like and where you might find them. You could even have clues on each bat that will lead the person on to the next bat...and maybe a final prize? Bat biscuits are always a favourite...

Chiroptera Park

For one day only, why not make your park into 'Chiroptera Park'? This is a take on Jurassic Park with Chiroptera being the latin name for the order of bats. If you have the volunteers, why not have different stalls and events around the park. These can be a combination of the suggestions above or others that people may enjoy...bat face painting, quizzes, bat bingo, even a giant bat challenge where children are encouraged to make a bat out of recycled material to be displayed around the park.



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