

Bat Conservation Trust



Raising Public Awareness and Increasing Recruitment

Public Awareness

Why is raising public awareness of bats and the bat group important?

Bat conservation depends on persuading people to like bats. To do this the myths and misunderstanding about bats need to be removed through education. A higher profile for the bat group also brings more support in terms of influencing decision-makers, bringing in funding, recruiting new members and having a greater number of active volunteers.

Objectives relating to public awareness should involve distributing the name of the group and logo to as many places as possible (for example, in the press, on the radio, on posters, in other organisation's newsletters etc.). General marketing wisdom is that individuals have to hear or see an organisation's name three times before it registers and then they come to an event or join the group.

Increasing Membership

Why do bat groups need to recruit more members?

A larger membership lends weight and increases influence over decision-makers especially at a local level. The subscription income from a larger membership funds the group's activities and often attracts further funders. A larger membership also means that there is a larger potential pool of people from which to draw active volunteers and increases that number of individuals that the group is educating about bat conservation.

Things to consider when you're seeking to increase membership:

- Recruitment drives need to be targeted; think about who is most likely to join and focus your efforts towards them.
- Many people join organisations simply because someone asked them to join. This means that recruitment should be built-in to all of the existing work of the bat group such as; at events, in media interviews, leaflet handouts, social media accounts and newsletters.
- Joining needs to be easy, for example having a simple membership process and having the ability to accept money at events.
- Consider running special reduced membership offers at events.
- How you ask people to join is also important. By assuming that people will be interested, they are much more likely to respond positively. For example, saying "join us for just £5 and you'll

get details of all our events in the e-newsletter” is much more effective than “I don’t suppose you’d like to join us?”

Name gathering at events can also be extremely valuable in recruitment terms as these individuals can be re-contacted to ask them to join later (people are more likely to join if they have heard of the group already). Name gathering can be achieved using several different techniques, such as:

- Handing out flyers at events for free bat information packs.
- Quizzes where individuals fill in their names to enter a prize draw.
- Media articles which have a response address for fact sheets.
- Keeping a list of people who contact the group asking for information and encouraging them to come to events.

Always be mindful of GDPR if you are collecting personal details through flyers or quizzes, always remember to include an "opt-in" tick box asking if they would like to receive further information about your group. If the box is left un-ticked, you must not use their data further.