

A Guide to running a branch event

1. Event ideas

One of the hardest part of organising an event is coming up with an idea. Previous branch events have included:

- Talks or lectures on biological topics
- Guided tours of local areas with biology links, e.g. zoo, parks, laboratories, museums, apiaries, animal sanctuaries, bat walks
- A hands on activity at an outreach festival
- Poster competition
- Networking or social event
- Annual General Meeting (A branch must have one an RSB financial year, 1st October – 30th September, and it is often run alongside another branch event).

2. Choosing a venue

Finding an appropriate venue can be a challenge, and room hire can be costly. It is worth researching local venues, making use of contacts you have. The following places are good starting points:

- Village halls and community centres
- Local science centres or museums
- Local parks or communal green spaces
- Schools and universities
- Your workplace

3. Picking a date

The day of the week will affect which audience your event will attract, so think about a target audience for the event e.g. an evening event may have wider public appeal compared to an afternoon event, which may not appeal to those who work a 09:00-17:00 day. Also consider the time of year e.g. having more indoor events in winter. Having a selection of potential event dates are useful to ensure the venue/company are available.

4. Contact the venue/company

Use the events form on the [branch resources page](#) as a reference point for questions you may want to ask. This could include:

- What dates/times do they have available?
- What is the cost, and is there a charity discount, concession rate?
- What is the cancellation policy?
- How many people can attend?
- Is there parking?
- Is the venue accessible (e.g. steps, wheelchair access, hearing loop)?

5. Confirm the event with your branch committee

6. Funding your event

Each branch has a yearly allocation and will have created a budget proposal at the beginning of the financial year allocating funds to each event.

If an event is expensive to run it may be a good idea to charge people to attend. Head Office are able to take payments from attendees through a central booking system. Proceeds from the event will be allocated to the branch after the event. Providing subsidised tickets for RSB members can be a good way to engage local members, giving them a clear member benefit and encouraging new members to join the RSB.

If there is not enough in your branch budget to cover the event, you can apply for extra event funding of up to £500 using the form on the [branch resources page](#).

The venue may want payment upfront using an invoice. If your branch has its own bank account, pass the invoice to your treasurer for payment. If Head Office hold your bank account ask your treasurer to pass the invoice to regions@rsb.org.uk who will pay it out of your branch allowance.

Equally, if you are happy to do so, you can pay for the event on the day. Then submit a completed expense form to your treasurer to claim the cost back.

Invited speakers for events should talk free of charge, but branches are welcome to pay their travel expenses from branch budget. Ask them to fill in an expense form and send to the branch treasurer.

7. Fill in the events form

This can be found on the [branch resources page](#) and asks for details such as the event date, event description and number of attendees. This form and the risk assessment are the two key documents required to get your event added to the RSB website and advertised to RSB members.

8. Complete a risk assessment

A risk assessment form can be found on the [branch resource page](#), along with an example risk assessment with ideas for different activities. A risk assessment is required before your event is put online and advertised to members.

Risk assessments are important as it ensures your activity is covered by the RSB public liability insurance. Your risk assessment should only include what you could reasonably be expected to know - you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks.

The RSB provides public liability insurance which can be found on the [branch resources page](#). This is sometimes requested by a venue.

9. Send events form and risk assessment (and extra funding form if applicable) to regions team

Send your events form and risk assessment to regions@rsb.org.uk ideally this should happen a minimum of six weeks before the event is taking place.

The event will be uploaded to the RSB regional events page and added to the branch page e.g. www.rsb.org.uk/Wessex

10. Check over event

The events officer will send you a link to the event for you to have a final check before it is unhidden and promoted to members.

11. Marketing the event

The events officer will send an email out to your branch members and neighbouring branches (if required) sharing details on the event. They will follow up with further invitations as requested on the events form until the event is fully booked or is taking place.

The event will be added to *The Biologist* if it is far enough in advance to be included. If your event is taking place in Biology Week (2nd week in October), your event will be added to the Biology Week calendar. If your branch has social media, feel free to advertise the event on there.

12. Before the event

The events officer will send a guest list to you once the event is fully booked or when bookings close.

A final details email will be sent to guests a week before the event or when bookings close – including information on parking, where to meet, timings etc. If you have any extra information to include please let the events officer know.

13. After the event

The events officer will send a thank you for attending email to guests. Please fill in the post event report form found on the branch resource page, so that information on what happened at your event can be included in *The Biologist* and on your branch reports page e.g.

<https://www.rsb.org.uk/regional-activity/england/devon-and-cornwall/reports>

All branch resources can be found on the branch resource page at www.rsb.org.uk/branch-resources

If you have any questions, contact the events and regions team at regions@rsb.org.uk