**Holding a successful community conversation - Checklist**

These are general tips about organising events. Depending on the participants and scale of your community conversation, some elements of this checklist may not be relevant.

**Beforehand**

**Venue**

Book well in advance and get in touch a week before your conversation to confirm the details (room layout, catering, times). If you’ll need a projector check in advance if they have one and whether you can use it with your own laptop or with one they provide.

**Catering**

If you are getting external catering, book them well in advance and make sure to confirm your numbers, menu, dietary requirements, and times at least 3 days before the conversation.

If you are doing catering yourself, keep it simple and prepare as much as possible in advance to avoid last-minute panic.

**Invitations & attendees sign up**

Send around the invitation as early as possible with all basic information (venue, date and time, subject). Do mention if you will be asking people to make a contribution towards the costs of the event and if there will be food and/or drinks.

Indicate clearly how and by when people should RSVP

* + If you are providing any catering, ask about dietary requirements
  + Ask about access requirements
  + Ask if they are happy for you to share their contact details with other attendees
  + Ask if they are okay for pictures to be taken at the conversation and potentially shared on social media

Send reminders to people who haven’t RSVPed a few days before the ‘RSVP by’ date, and optionally again on that date. People do often wait until the last minute, so these reminders are very important.

If you are organising this conversation on behalf of a group or organisation who has a website or Facebook page, make sure to make an event page with all details and sign up information.

**Structuring the conversation**

Prepare an agenda / event outline in advance.

* Set out the different topics or questions you want to address and an estimate of the time you want to spend on each. Feel free to use the suggested conversation outline we’ve provided.
* We recommend taking at least 2 hours for the conversation. A comfort break half way through is advisable
* If there are more than one facilitator and/or note-taker, decide in advance who will be in charge of each topic and write it down in the outline for yourself. Also make a note of the different materials you’ll need.

**Presentation**

Do you want to use a presentation to introduce different issues (powerpoint, prezi, or other)? If so, prepare it well in advance. Don’t pack your slides with text as this takes attention from your audience away from you.

Think in advance about how you will show the presentation and make the necessary arrangements (do you need to bring a laptop, if so do you need an adaptor, if not should you put it on an USB stick? Will you need Wi-Fi for an online presentation? Will you need speakers for a film fragment?)

**Email to participants**

Email everyone who has signed up a few days before the event. Include the basic details as well as – optionally:

* The conversation topics,
* The list of attendees with or without contact details,
* Instructions for things participants should prepare or take with them.

**On the day**

Materials to bring with you (choose applicable)

* Registration list
* Name labels and markers
* Paper / flipchart /
* Pens / markers / tape / scissors
* Props and other materials (for example: a thread and pegs for hanging notes, objects to use to illustrate certain topics, …)
* Presentation(s) on a USB stick and/or own laptop
* Laptop, adaptor for projector, power cable
* Printed materials (about your organisation or others who asked to display flyers, e.g.)
* Handouts (agenda, printed slides, others)
* If there is food at the event, it’s always handy to have a few containers to take left-overs away.

Pictures are nice!

If you can, try and take a few pictures during the event, or get someone else to do it for you. You can share them on twitter or facebook instantaneously, or after the event. (Make sure to have permission from everyone at the event to do so)

**Afterwards**

Follow up!

This can include:

* Updating the event page on your website. If you have any, upload some pictures and put up the outputs / summary of the event - on a facebook event page, you can post a thank you note and include pictures / outputs / summary of the event.
* If you filled in the letter template for your local MSP, make sure to send it to him/her

Last but certainly not least, email all attendees

* Share attendees contacts details if not done already and if permission was granted
* Share pictures, outputs, and/or a summary of the event
* Follow up on any Action Points that came out of the event.

**Keep the momentum on things that were discussed and decisions that were made**