

Association: Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Associated Group?

An Associated Group is an independent local or special interest group whose aims are supported through informal collaboration with and support from Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

Who can be an Associated Group?

To become an Associated Group, you'll need to be a nature-focused, volunteer-led local or special interest group based in Cornwall.

You don't need to have a formal constitution or be incorporated (you can find more information on constitutions and incorporation on [The Wildlife Trusts' Nextdoor Nature Hub](#)).

What does Association mean in practice?

Being part of a strengthened and expanded network across marine and terrestrial groups which will facilitate opportunities to share information, learning, skills and support and help build more connections and opportunities for collaboration. This will include regular communications, meetings and opportunities to come together around shared areas of interest and / or development.

Conferences/ Workshops / Meetings focused around common themes, regions or areas of interest highlighted by groups. We will continue to run the annual Your Shore Conference and will identify other opportunities to bring groups together.

An online hub of information including key resources, templates, guides, case studies and signposting around all aspects of starting and running a local or special interest group and sharing details about and news from associated groups.

Dedicated staff resource coordinating the network and the provision of support – maintaining existing resource for the marine groups via the Your Shore Network, and establishing dedicated resource for terrestrial groups.

A package of free training opportunities, including first aid, health and safety, safeguarding, event leading, surveying, websites and social media, funding applications and other topics based on feedback from the groups themselves.

A 'working in association with Cornwall Wildlife Trust' logo will be available for all associated groups to use as and when they wish to.

Promoting your activities through monthly round ups on our main CWT social media channels and in our members newsletter.

Why are we introducing Association?

As we have set out in our 2030 Strategy, we want to get more people taking action for nature, and we'll need to work collaboratively with a network of organisations and groups to reach as many people as possible.

We know that local and special interest groups are already doing so much to connect people with nature, educate them and inspire them to take action and we want to make sure we've got the right support in place that will help these groups thrive.

With an improved and extended network, support and training provision in place for all groups, we will be in the best position to help existing groups flourish and new groups find the guidance and connections they need to navigate setting up and building their group.

These changes will enable us to support local and special interest groups to engage more people and achieve their local goals for nature, which in turn helps to encourage more people to take action for nature and help nature recovery across Cornwall.

How will Association be introduced?

We will be taking a phased approach to introducing Association:

Phase 1 has focused on communicating the changes to groups and we have prioritised those groups for whom the changes will have the greatest impact. This phase will be complete by the end of June.

Phase 2 will be ceasing affiliation which will take place between now and 30 September 2024. During this time, we will provide advice and support to currently affiliated groups to help them with the transition.

Phase 3 will be establishing the building blocks of the association model including the initial training package, the foundations of the online hub, promoting groups' events and increasing collective communications. We will start working on these building blocks from now and continue over the next year.

Phase 4 – the implementation of the full Association model will take time, and will be dependent on securing funding opportunities, for which we are currently exploring. Our aim is for the full implementation of the Association model to be completed by June 2026.

Will associated groups need to sign a formal agreement?

No. Associated groups will be independent of CWT and will have a voluntary, informal relationship with the Trust. They will not be asked to sign a formal agreement or comply with particular conditions.

Marine groups already have the Your Shore Network – will this be changing?

The Your Shore Network will remain in place. It is our model of best practice and one which we are keen to learn from and build on as we expand our support for local and special interest groups, and strengthen connections across marine and terrestrial groups.

What subjects will be covered by the training being made available to associated groups?

We want to make sure the training we make available to associated groups is relevant to their needs.

From our discussions with groups through the course of this review, we have identified a number of areas where guidance and training would be welcomed. These include:

- considering how to constitute a group and committee roles
- how to get more people involved in running groups and succession planning
- health and safety
- first aid
- safeguarding
- designing and maintaining websites and using social media
- leading engagement activities and engaging more young people
- funding applications
- responding to consultations and campaigns
- survey methodologies, species ID and habitat management.

We'll provide support in these areas through a combination of free training sessions where possible and the online hub where we'll provide guidance materials, case studies and signpost resources that will support groups in engaging with these topics.

We would also welcome more ideas from groups themselves on what topics they would find most useful to have further training and support in.

When CWT refers to ‘taking action for nature’ is there anything in particular we are encouraging?

We know that ‘taking action for nature’ is going to mean different things for different people and in different communities. We want our support to help local and special interest groups encourage the action that is most relevant to their communities – whether those are geographical communities, or communities of interest.

We will also regularly share with our associated groups news on our new campaigns and projects so that we can maximise opportunities to join up our activities wherever possible around these priorities.

Will associated groups be asked to submit data on their events and activities?

This will not be mandatory.

CWT is keen to celebrate your collective achievements and share any learning you are gathering so we would very much welcome any data you would be happy to share on your events and activities to help us do so. This might include how many events you have run, how many people attended your events and any feedback you’ve received.

Can Associated Groups comment freely on local issues and campaigns?

Yes. Cornwall Wildlife Trust staff will be available to provide any information and advice as needed and we hope that through our collaborative working with associated groups, we will be able to coordinate our responses wherever possible, but it will not be mandatory for associated groups to adopt the CWT stance.

Will there be opportunities to join up on funding applications?

Yes – as we do currently, we will look to local and special interest groups as local experts and potential partners for funding applications wherever appropriate.



We will also share information on funding opportunities available that would be suitable for local and special interest groups to apply for, and will be making available training in writing funding applications as part of our training offer.

Will we have access to advice and support from CWT staff

Yes. As currently, we will still very much welcome local and special interest groups getting in touch with us for advice and support. We hope that working towards having dedicated staff available for terrestrial groups as we currently have for marine groups will mean it will also be much more straightforward to get in touch with us.

For more information, please contact associatedgroups@cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk