

Planning anything, even one Guild meeting, is a big job for one person. It's always helpful to have a group of people to split the planning with. Here are some ideas on planning for a Guild meeting and also planning for a larger event.



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# PLANNING A GUILD MEETING

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## **Agree a location and time**

Guild meetings don't need to happen only at night and just in the church, they could be during the day, at the weekend, after church on a Sunday, or any time (see page 4)! Anything which suits the needs of your members is perfect.

## **Book your venue**

Even if this is your Church hall, it's worth checking there isn't another booking or perhaps if there is a charge for your group. We might know our church extremely well, but there could be Health & Safety forms to complete or agreements to sign, so it's well worth exploring early. Do try to find a venue which suits the size of your group – we all know there's nothing worse than a few people rattling around a huge hall! Perhaps if you aren't expecting many people, someone's house might be a more comfortable venue.

## **Work out what's happening at the meeting**

Who will lead the meeting (this doesn't need to be the Convener) and what activities will be done? Who will move the PowerPoint slides on or make the tea? If you're booking a speaker, remember to try to organise this with as much notice as possible as people's availability will be trickier closer to the event date. Will you sing hymns at your meeting, and do you need to book a musician if so? In everything, remember Guild meetings vary hugely from Guild to Guild, so do be free to do what fits your meeting best. When planning, go through every item in the running order and assign it to someone to oversee.

## **Organise refreshments**

We all know what a difference it can make to be welcomed with really lovely baking, or a particularly good cup of tea or coffee. If you're able to, try to make your Guild's refreshments the best they can possibly be. As the Bible says in 2 Corinthians, "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Whatever we are able to do to bless people as they come to our Guild meeting will truly be God's word in action.

*(continued overleaf)*

### Publicise your meeting

Don't just include an announcement in the church intimations if you can do more! Create a flyer and hand it out, write a letter to people you think might be interested, create a Facebook group – whatever might get the word out about your event is worth trying.

### Consider having designated 'welcomers'!

We're all probably familiar with being welcomed at Church, but what if we also had dedicated 'welcomers' in the Guild? It might not be appropriate to have someone formally welcoming everyone as they enter the venue, but even if it's one person's (or a couple of people's) specific job at the meeting to make sure they have spoken to every single person in the room, then every single person will go away feeling personally welcomed and more likely to return! Imagine it was your first time at a Guild meeting or even at Church at all – what would make you feel more comfortable?

### After the meeting

Do remember to thank any speakers or contributors to the Guild meeting and encourage each other with the good bits about the meeting, noting anything which could be improved in a kind way.

## THINGS YOU MIGHT NEED FOR A GUILD MEETING

- **Sticky labels for name badges** – these might not be necessary for well-established Guilds, but for Guilds where not everyone knows everyone, this is hugely helpful.
- **A coat rack**  
(or somewhere to hang outdoor jackets!)
- **Pens**
- **Tea / Coffee / Sugar / Milk** – you might like to offer herbal or decaf versions (especially for night-time meetings) as many people drink these. Lots of groups simply provide hot water, and allow everyone to choose a teabag or coffee. It might seem obvious, but remember to provide a place for used teabags and empty sugar packets to go – either a small bin or bowl. It can get very messy very quickly if people don't have anywhere to put them!
- **Cups / Spoons**
- **Biscuits / cakes / other food items**  
(if having any) – it makes such a big impact to be as sympathetic as we can to most dietary requirements in advance. Your Guild might know each other very well, but it's always worth having some gluten free biscuits or nut/dairy free alternatives to hand in case someone turns up with an intolerance of some kind. It won't always be possible to cater to everyone's needs, but wouldn't it be something if we could!
- **Napkins** – it's nice to use Guild ones!
- **Kettle / Urn**
- **Leaflets or resources about the subject being explored that meeting** (or a space for the speaker to provide their own materials)
- **Laptop / projector / screen**
- **Person able to work the technology!** – it can be helpful for this person to have a full running order for the meeting, so that they know when they'll be needed and what's expected.
- **Words for hymns** – either projected, printed or in hymn books depending on technology. Do remember to do large print versions or have large print books for those struggling with vision.
- **A programme or running order for the evening** – this might not always be necessary, but people do like to keep track of where they are in the evening. In the Guild Office, we've found it works best not to print times on schedules to avoid being held strictly to times, or people feeling subconsciously anxious about time overrunning. Always try to build in a bit of spare time if you feel your speaker or an activity might take longer than you've allocated. It's also important, particularly for evening meetings always to finish on time, even if it means cutting something short. Studies have found that people are much more likely to attend events or meetings regularly if they know when they will be able to leave.
- **Any Guild Office forms or information available for anyone interested**
- **Background CD/music** – although not essential, background music has a great ability to create a relaxed atmosphere regardless of how many people are in the room. Sometimes it helps to make people more comfortable and avoid awkward silences at the start of the meeting.
- **Offering plate / bag** (if necessary)
- **Expenses / donations for speaker** – remember it's far less embarrassing for the speaker if this is worked out prior to the speaker coming along. There is guidance about expenses in the Guild's *Planning & Practice* resource - contact the Guild Office for a copy of this.
- **Guild shop / stall**  
Guild meetings can be a great opportunity to sell Guild merchandise! You can order a 'sale or return' bundle from the Guild Office so you can just return anything that's left over.



# PLANNING A LARGER GUILD EVENT

## **Organise a planning group and delegate jobs.**

It might be worth having jobs for people who aren't able to attend planning meetings, particularly if they have a particular gift or skill (e.g. For hospitality or music)

## **It might seem simple, but working out the point of the event is a big step.**

If the event is to attract new members to your Guild, make sure that remains the focus of all your planning – how would this sound to someone outside the Guild, or how would sitting in this seat make a new person feel? If, however, the purpose of the event is to fundraise for one of the projects, then make sure this is very obvious as the focus of the event.

**Who are you hoping to attract to the event?** Make sure any marketing or publicity would appeal to this person or group of people. If in doubt, ask someone in your target audience to give you feedback.

## **Remember to factor in practical considerations when planning a big event**

– do you need to draw up a Risk Assessment for the venue, or sign any agreements beforehand? You may like to invite some First Aiders to attend your event, too. If possible, it's always a great idea to choose a venue which allows disabled access, to make sure everyone is welcome to attend.

**If you're hosting your event away from a familiar location to some folks, it's useful to let people know how to get there** by public transport, car or on foot. Lots of people have sat navs so might just need the postcode.

**If you want to take photographs or film at the event, it's a good idea to let people know that**, either by putting up signs or mentioning it in your housekeeping announcements. Remember to ask parents/guardians before taking any pictures of under 18s.

## **Make a budget for your event.**

It's a great idea for someone to be in charge of all costs so that there won't be any nasty surprises!

## **Remember to publicise your event in as many ways as you can**

– why not try getting something in the local newspaper or on the radio?

## **On the day, be sure to have jobs on hand for every volunteer**

to make everyone feel included and to avoid the worst scenario – when some willing volunteer ends up with no jobs and feels like a spare part! You might need people to help with the welcome, hand out programmes, man a shop, take tickets, steward, count the offering, clear up at the end... Try to make sure at longer events that volunteers manage to take breaks, but definitely make sure at all events that people are encouraged in their role and thanked at the end!