

GETTING

GOING

**A guide to
doing something
Incredible**

www.incredibleedible.org.uk



So you have decided to do something Incredible?

What happens next? You've probably heard some stories about Incredible Edible, seen a video or heard from a friend. First things first – have a cup of tea and find out a bit more. Have a look round the website and learn a bit about the **things we do** and about **our vision** and the **three plates**. Our **Toolshed** holds all the resources we mention here.

First steps

We have spent a lot of time talking to people who have been doing Incredible Edible over a number of years and we have learnt some lessons which we would like to share with you.

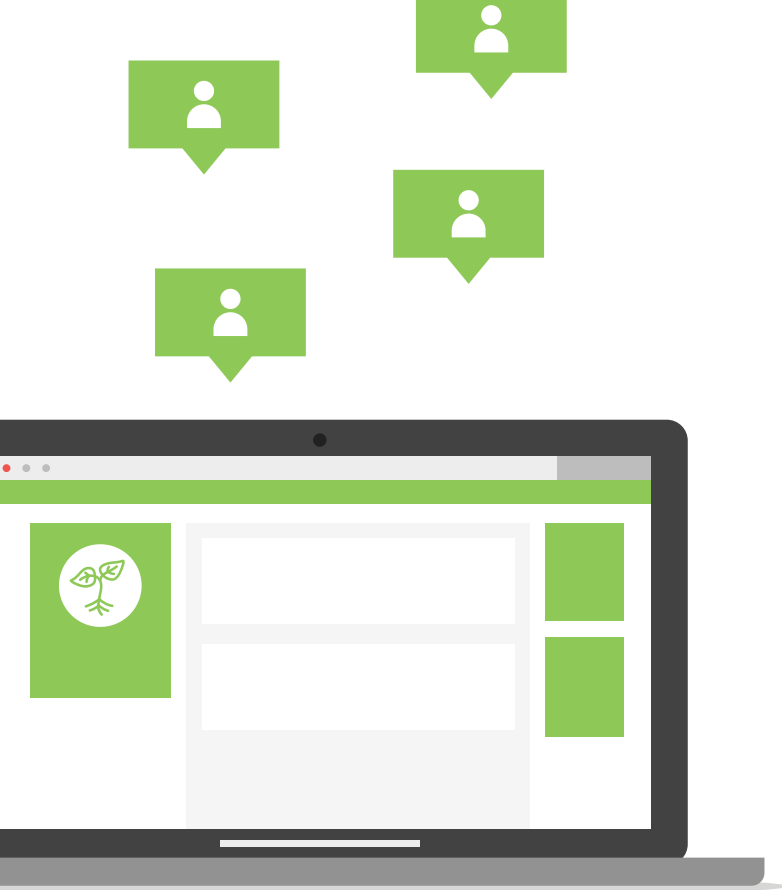
Firstly our vision is to create kind, confident and connected communities through

the power of food. We do this by bringing people together, then we grow food in public places and offer it for free. We think this is a 'symbol in action' of what we want the world to be. So... we are as much about people as plants.

Some people just start digging and then other people come along because they are interested. Most people gather together a group of whoever is willing and have a chat.

We think that bringing people together to have a chat and maybe a cuppa is important because it starts making those connections and together you will feel more confident. We find the following model seems to work.





ENGAGE

Have a meeting, use the **posters** and the **Everything you need to know about the Incredible Edible Network leaflet** to advertise your meeting and tell your community about what you want to do. Use the **PowerPoint** we have provided to lay out some of your thinking. All of this stuff is in your **welcome pack**. It might be an idea to just have a chat at the first meeting and then have another one to start the planning – more of that later.

INSPIRE

Make sure you spend some time talking about why you, as a group, think this is a good idea. From our experience it is important to start with 'why?'. You don't need to start with **what** you are going to do but with **why** you want to do it. What do you think the benefits will be to your neighbours and your community? This is a good place to start your conversation.

BUILD UP

Find ways to really encourage people. Get on **social media** or set up a WhatsApp group to share interesting things you've read with your group. Make sure people feel they are valuable and the things they offer are important.

CONNECT

If we are to create kinder, more confident, more connected communities we have to start with us. Spend time together chatting, drinking tea and eating. That way people really get to know each other. The bonds you create together help people belong.

AMPLIFY

Use **social media** and connect with other people around the global network. We will provide you with a logo for your group and then connect you with our National Team. This is a dedicated group of Incredible people who will help and encourage you. Shout about what you are doing online so that people can celebrate with you and encourage you... and then more people will come along and get involved. Once you start doing things outside, use signs to spread the word!





The early meetings

The people in the groups around the UK have told us that these are the ingredients that make Incredible Edible groups really fly. Don't worry if you don't feel you have them all. We think if you have decided you want to be Incredible you probably have.

- ✓ Passionate and skilled leadership
- ✓ Infectious enthusiasm
- ✓ Dedication
- ✓ Inclusive attitude
- ✓ Improvisation

In those early meetings spend time thinking about what you want to do. We are big fans of two models for doing this.

The first is **Asset Based Community Development** – a theory which says that we have more in our hands than we think. Focus on what's strong not what's wrong. Always try to think about the gifts and skills you have in your community and how connecting them together can create a greater place to live. That is why connecting the three plates is really important.

The second is **Appreciative Inquiry**. It's a little bit like the asset based model but as a way of planning which starts with the question 'what does good look like?', rather than what is wrong and what do we need to fix.

This model says it is great to:



Planning your activities

DREAM

Sit down with your group and think about how your small actions can create a better place to live. Talk about how you want the world to be and how you want your community to look – talk about what good looks like. Then think about the actions you will take to start to make this happen. We will be developing more on this in our section on **Building your Incredible community**.

DECIDE

Just pick one thing. One place in the local community where you could grow some fruit and veg – there is more stuff in our section on **Growing in your streets** about this. Don't be overwhelmed, remember the power of small actions and just pick something small to start with that you know you can succeed at.

DEVISE

As a group make a plan about what you are going to do. This is important because it starts to create a team. That is not always easy but it is worth investing time in building a team if you aren't going to end up doing it all on your own.

DELIVER

Do the thing you set out to do and then at the end celebrate what you have achieved and start the cycle again. If your group feel that they have already accomplished something good, it's amazing how energised they will be to plan new things.

Getting people on board

Once you and your group of friends have talked about your plan get as many people involved as you can. Use the **posters** and **social media** to start getting people interested. Go to the section on **Working with your local council** if you think you might need to talk to them about the site you have planned, but don't let that be a barrier to you. Focus on what you can do, not on the barriers you experience. Be flexible in your planning and don't be put off.

Get a venue and ask as many people to come as you can. Groups that hold open meetings often do well. People who have one set group of friends and, unintentionally, don't let others get involved, often burn out. Use the **PowerPoint** to share the vision of Incredible Edible and your vision for your community.

Starting your activities

When you've got your team together and you know why you want to be Incredible, it's time to start doing things. The **Growing in your streets** section of the Toolshed has lots of useful information and learning about starting your growing activities. In **Working with business**

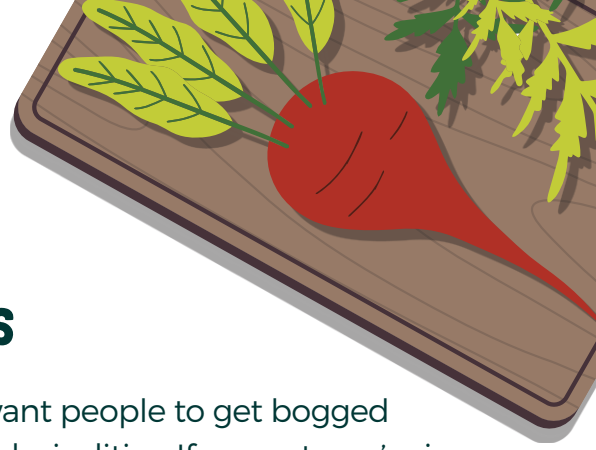


there are some great tips for engaging with local businesses, with many things you can do in the early stages of your group's activities. The **Working with schools** section has some exciting ideas for building learning into your activities – whether you're working with schools or not. And don't forget about signage! Let everyone know what's been planted, when it can be harvested and that it's their local Incredible Edible group who are bringing local food to their doorstep – see the **Communicating in the real world** for some hints and tips on plot signage.

Remember you are not alone – we will be in touch and, where we can, someone will come along and encourage you. Remember there are tools in the **Toolshed** and interesting stuff in the **Talking Shop** and **Marketplace**.

Tell us what you plan and what you are doing so that we can share it with others and amplify the work you are doing.





Moving on – the technical bits

Incredible Edible is a federation of independent groups. We celebrate this spirit of independence but also this spirit of co-operation. Each group is free to structure themselves in any way they want, but there are a few pointers we ask people to consider.

STRUCTURE

Groups vary around the UK. Some are groups of friends who just like what they do and are very informal. Most, after a little while, want to put some structure around what they do. In the section on **Constitutions** you will find some advice on what structure and constitution might suit you best from all the learning we have developed. You can have a look at this section but also talk to one of the National Team who will help you think through the options.



POLICIES

We don't want people to get bogged down in technicalities. If you eat, you're in... That said we always want to be the best we can be and to keep people safe. For that reason we always recommend that you get insurance (which is another good reason to have some type of group structure).

We would also recommend that you go over to the section on **Policies** and think about adopting a Health and Safety Policy, doing Risk Assessments and signing up to a Safeguarding Policy.

MONEY

We recommend that new Incredible Edible groups start their activities on a shoe string, making the most of community connections to find free resources to help you get going. Then, as you build your activities over time, you might want to get a bank account and seek funding or generate income. Our **How to fund your activities** section provides information on this.

Once we are connected and in touch we can give you further guidance on getting started with this.

Please don't let this put you off. Let's go back to where we started – you are starting out on an exciting journey which thousands of people have taken and whose lives and communities have been made richer for it.

Do something interesting and inspire some people – the rest will fall into place.

NEED SOME MORE HELP?

Get in touch at
info@incredibleedible.org.uk
and we'll get back to you right away.