



Guidelines for Club Survival – February 2021

Many clubs are struggling, especially in the COVID crisis which has prevented clubs from meeting and taking subscriptions. But COVID is not the only reason clubs struggle. An ageing population in some clubs leads to failing membership. Reluctance of members to join a committee and financial difficulties may also risk club closures.

These guidelines are designed to help both thriving and struggling clubs stay afloat and grow.

Club Management

- Consider sharing committee responsibilities and/or delegating specific tasks to non-committee members to minimise the workload of the committee.
- Have a flexible constitution, possibly reducing responsibilities and term of office, especially for the chairman. A management team approach can work. See '*BB&O Club Constitution template*' on the [Admin](#) section of the BB&O website.

Programme

- Put together an interesting, but manageable programme. National demonstrators may give a more enjoyable event but cost more and expect a higher flower allowance. Charge extra for meetings where you have a national demonstrator.
- Include some hands-on sessions that will help people to mix socially and cost less than a demonstrator. Newcomers are often more interested in practical sessions than demonstrations.
- Consider not having meetings every month. Some clubs have more sessions in the spring and autumn, with fewer in the winter when the weather is bad, and in the summer when people are likely to be on holiday.
- **Consider Zoom sessions especially in the winter.** Zoom sessions offer opportunities to increase your membership by reaching out to a different group of people.
- Consider sharing some costs or activities with other local clubs: eg travel costs of a demonstrator; or putting on a joint show.

Venue/Meeting times

- Use a venue that is cost effective and has a seating capacity that is sensible for the number of members you have or expect to have – not too big and not too small.
- Attract people by using a venue that is easy to get to and has parking facilities.
- If attendance at club meetings is not good, consider a different venue and/or different time.

Finances

- Set subscription and visitor fees at a sensible level. A club holding 8-10 meetings a year should aim for annual subscriptions in the range £25-40pa depending on the type of demonstrations and other events that are held.
- When preparing a programme DO NOT COMMIT more money in the next year than you have in the bank.

- Always use a club bank account. NEVER let a committee member manage finances from a personal account.
- Consider extra events to raise money if finances are your club's biggest problem. For example - jumble sales, open gardens, coffee mornings, outings.
- Consider a 50/50 club where members can opt to buy tickets at say £10 each per annum. Half the proceeds are used to fund prizes given out at the AGM and the other half for use by the club in the most appropriate way.

Promotional activities

- Publicise your programme on the area website which is visible to the general public. Send details to the BB&O Club Publicity representative at media@bbandoflowers.org.uk as soon as possible, and keep her updated of any additions/changes.
- Consider setting up your own club website or other social media pages – these are more likely to attract younger members. There are separate guidelines on how to do this.
- Prepare printed fliers (see separate guidelines on preparing printed publicity material) and display these with designs in public areas, eg library, hospital, garden centre, doctor's surgery. If you have business cards, especially offering a free club visit you could place these a card alongside the design.
- Ask local florists to display a poster advertising regular and/or special events.
- Look for opportunities for free advertisements in local magazines and local radio.
- Look for opportunities to offer promotional tickets to allow visitors free entry for one meeting. Then make it an enjoyable experience to encourage them to come again and at some stage become a member. See separate guidelines on converting visitors to new members.
- Ask your local council and/or local businesses if they would sponsor your club, either generally or for special events, eg a flower festival.

If your club is in danger of closing

- **Contact the Area Chairman AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** Do not leave it until there is no hope of recovery. The area officers will try to help in whatever way they can. In difficult circumstances it may be worth suspending your club for a year, or a temporary reduction in the membership fee.
- If your club reaches the sad conclusion that it must close please formally notify us by completing a [Club Closure Form](#).

If you have any queries, additional suggestions or require help on any of the above points please contact the most appropriate area officer.