

Board Game community organisers knowledge share and round table
(Herefordshire Board Gamers)

Meet up held online via Skype on 24/02/2022 at 7pm. Organised by
Adam Best of Herefordshire Boardgamers

The purpose of the session was for board game club organisers and anyone else who
was interested to meet up to share ideas.



Board Game Community knowledge share

Session 1- Online Feb 2022

HEREFORDSHIRE BOARD GAMERS

Gaming and Fundraising community
"More than just a games night"



Scope:
Board game* club and community leaders and other
event organisers.

Aim:
A chance to share and discuss problems, ideas and
best practice to further promote the hobby of board
gaming.

*All tabletop games are covered board game is the chosen generic term

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The session was attended by members of six board game communities from around the UK. The meet up started by people introducing themselves, their community and raised some topics they would like to discuss.

- Hereford (Herefordshire Board Gamers) has a focus on inclusion and charity fund raising, including getting grants.
- Edinburgh (Juniper Green Board-Gamers) meet in a church and attract a lot of families as well as young people on the ASD spectrum. They do regular outreach programmes in primary and secondary schools and attend local community events to attract new members.
- Sheffield (Sheffield Board Game Club) said they meet weekly in a pub and also monthly in another location.
- Basingstoke (Boardgamers of Basingstoke.) said they have been going for about 5 years and have started meeting in a local board game café. They meet on Saturday afternoons so attract a more adult crowd.
- A games designer/events organiser said they were interested in community interest and the issue of diversity within the board game community.
- Leeds (Aireborough Community Gamers)
- Preston (Preston Gamers Guild) They have been going for 5 years and meet every Tuesday.

Key take aways:

Advertising

Attendance is around 50-60% compared to pre-covid numbers

Meet Up is expensive and only worth it for some clubs, normally those in a large city. There is an option to share one paid subscription between three groups or organise a wider regional meet up.

Parish/village/community magazines are good free advertising

Outreach programs at schools / fetes/ museums can work but are volunteer heavy

Maintaining membership

Dedicated greeters

Starting with social icebreaker games where players can join in like Codenames

Setting standards via a code of conduct. Clear rules are generally a positive thing.

Diversity

Removal of members as a last resort was agreed by all. Working to find solutions including ground rules written in conjunction with the individual where appropriate.

Grants

National Lottery: Awards for All and local building firms/ supermarkets can be good places to try.

There are different levels of requirements for grants that standard game clubs may not meet i.e.

bank accounts, charters, constitutions, and accounting.

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Areas of discussion

Impacts of Covid

Most agreed that their post-covid attendance was down to about 50 and 60% of prior levels.

Advertising

Attendees discussed the types of advertising they have tried and where they have been successful.

Some organisers have seen success from using Meetup. This seems to work better in larger cities. Meetups can also be regional or by theme. An example given was that there is a Birmingham and West Midlands gaming group which has around 4,000 members. Playtest UK Meetup was discussed. They are one meetup group but hold multiple events in different places around the country. This is a paid for service and can be expensive, but costs can be shared between up to three groups, lowering the costs to around £50 a year.

Village/parish magazines. These are often free to advertise in for community groups.

Facebook and Instagram boosted posts. Preston Gamers Guild have had good success with this and said they have built up several regular attendees who found them via Instagram. They often hold 'share/follow to win' competitions for board games on Instagram, whereby the distributor will provide them with a game to give away. These are either posted out direct to the winner by the distributor or the games club must ship these on at cost to the club. It was asked whether these games were generally won locally or posted out of area, and they are usually posted out of area. It was suggested that maybe these should be done as collection only to encourage local attendance, but it was explained by Preston that this wasn't generally feasible as this would limit the reach, and the aim of the collaboration posts are for publishers to reach as many potential accounts as possible, and generally publishers won't even consider you if you haven't reached a certain threshold of followers on social media as for publisher's reach is usually a key metric. Preston also have begun to be sent games to demo or give away at events as they have reached a sufficient number of followers, over 7,000. However, noted that publishers have higher thresholds and follower requirements e.g. 10,000+.

Local universities. Some members have had mixed results in advertising within universities as they are not official university groups, so their advertising is considered as graffiti by the university and therefore removed, as many universities have their own affiliated games clubs or society for students.

Local community events such as schools or community fetes or museums. This has been beneficial in attracting a family audience.

How to engage with/retain newer gamers

It was discussed that a good way to welcome new gamers, was to begin the session with filler/light games such as Codenames or Wavelength which gives those who walk in later a chance to join a game and get to know people. It was suggested that groups should try not to begin all games at the official game's night start time. However, if a group is there and ready to play their heavier game at 7pm 'on the dot' then this is fine but make sure to have at least one quicker/more accessible game on the go that people can join as soon as they walk in.

It was agreed that having dedicated 'greeters' on hand to welcome new gamers and help them get into games suitable for their tastes and experience levels, was always well received.

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Hereford said their dedicated organisers/games teachers wear yellow 'crew' lanyards with name badges, so attendees know who to speak to if they have any questions/issues. They also make use of signage throughout their venue (as they play in the back room of a pub) so that new attendees can clearly find them as some people have been too anxious to ask a member of the pub staff. Starting from tomorrow night they are also going to introduce optional name badges for everyone where they can also share anything they want people to know for example their preferred pronouns or whether they are an introvert or new gamer etc.

Edinburgh said they have had success in using Eventbrite which they started using due to managing numbers due to Covid-19. This allows them to see who is booked into the session and identify new members. They usually try and engage with them prior to the session and essentially 'babysit' them when they attend to make sure they meet people and play suitable games.

Code of Conduct

Some of the organisers said new gamers had been put off by 'Code of Conducts' as they felt anxious about having to stick to the rules and this could come across as very 'stuffy'. It was agreed that it's important to get the tone of the code right and keep it positive, but it can also be a very beneficial tool to help set the expectations of members and make sure the sessions are fun for everyone involved. It was discussed that minorities /neuro diverse people often find 'Code of Conducts' reassuring as it infers a level of protection if issues were to arise.

An example of rules being put in place successfully was shared by one organiser who said they have a young adult with Autism who regularly attends and his behaviour had been so off-putting that other people were actively avoiding playing with him or not even attending if they knew he would be there. This was due to things such as cheating or getting up and wandering off mid game. The club organiser worked with the individual and his father to draw up a list of rules which they need to follow when attending the club.

This has really benefitted them and is an effective way for the organiser to keep 'on top' of any bad behaviour by reminding them of the rules they have agreed to follow.

A discussion then took place regarding 'problem' gamers within clubs and how to deal with them. For example, making the difficult decision to ask someone to stop attending if they are ruining games nights for everyone else. The organiser who put in place the rules for the Autistic attendee raised a good point that we wouldn't discriminate against someone with a physical disability if they wanted to attend and would try and accommodate them as best as possible. Therefore, they felt it was very important not to just ask this attendee to leave the club and to try and create a workable solution, which they have done so successfully. Everyone agreed all reasonable measures should be taken before asking a member to leave.

Costs

Most of the organisers present said they had to charge a small fee to be able to pay for their venue. Hereford said their mandate is to keep all events free as wealth is an accessibility factor. However, this means they have to meet in a pub which isn't for everyone, as some people don't like meeting in a pub for various reasons. It is also often harder to find pubs which are accessible. Preston said they used to use a pub function room for free for the last 4 years, as they also felt that wealth as an accessibility factor was important, however, after the pandemic the pub wanted to start charging

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them a lot of money. They have had four venue changes since starting back up after lockdown (August 2021) and now use a venue which charges.

Grants

Hereford explained how they have been successful in applying for grants from a local building company and water utility company as well as the National Lottery. Edinburgh said they have also been successful in obtaining a grant from the National Lottery. Hereford said it is worth checking with supermarkets to see if your club qualifies for their funding schemes and they would be applying for a grant this spring from the Co-op.

Hereford has used their grants to extend their games library (including games to take to events and also for people to take away and borrow) and also to be able to hire accessible venues to run a few events. They have also used the money to pay for some roller banners and other signage. Edinburgh said they have been able to use some of their funds to cover the fees for those who are unable to afford to attend due to a change in circumstances, such as loss of income. Again, wealth was also an accessibility factor in their area, made especially worse after the Pandemic.

Club structure and committees were then discussed as the type of set up you have influences what type of grants you are eligible for. Hereford said they were looking into whether to form a CIC in the future as this will qualify them for more grants.

Club organisation

Club organisation was discussed. Most clubs have a strong leader and a volunteer committee. Elections would be nice but often you have a limited pool of resources. Hereford said they like to empower their volunteers to run the type of tasks they want to.

Closing

A question was posed as to the purpose of this meeting, and it was agreed that this was a way to share 'best practice' between games club organisers.

To end the session everyone was asked what their key take away was.

One of the members said they really liked the yellow lanyard idea and would look to implement that at their games club. Another said clear signage to find the venue.

People said they found the session useful and would like to meet up again. An in person meet up is planned for Airecon 2022 at 14:30pm on 12/03/2022. A meet up at The UK Games Expo in Birmingham is also planned (time and date TBC).

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Resources and reference images.



Hereford's two core signs. Third one (below) to be added this week



Links mentioned by Hereford

<https://herefordshireboardgamers.co.uk/code-of-conduct/>

<https://herefordshireboardgamers.co.uk/what/how-to-run-a-great-games-night/>

<https://herefordshireboardgamers.co.uk/what/tips-for-running-a-games-club/>

<https://herefordshireboardgamers.co.uk/where/> (Links show clear signage from the front of the venue all the way to the function room)

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Lanyards (Also need ID holders) (Purchased in 2019)

PRE PRINTED Lanyards Neck Strap For ID Pass Card Badge Holder UK stock Free post



SKU: LANYARD TYPE: **CREW** YELLOW, SELECT QUANTITY: 10 X / PACK O...

Item price: £14.99

Order number: 01-03822-51625

Item number: 153215037374

Seller: [greencotton \(8040\)](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/prestonsgamersguild/?hl=en> Example of a giveaway by Preston Gamers Guild

prestonsgamersguild
Preston, Lancashire

prestonsgamersguild CLOSED congratulations @fields_of_carcassonne 🎉🎉 WORLDWIDE GIVEAWAY 🎉🎉

It's giveaway time, to celebrate 7,000 followers, we are giving away your choice of game from Power Rangers: Deck-Building Game or Equinox.

For a chance to win you need to

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That's it but if you'd like a bonus entry..

For extra entries:

- 👍 5 entries: for sharing this post to your own story (be sure to tag @prestonsgamersguild in, so we can count your entries)
- 👤 1 entry: for each additional friend you tag in this post (one entry per tag)

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👍👍👍 Liked by fields_of_carcassonne and 504 others

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