**Draft Plant Society Recruitment Plan**

**Society Name:**

**Membership Committee:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| NAME | ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
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Action: Review whether all these roles:

* Are necessary
* Need to be reviewed for effectiveness
* Need help from technology
* Could be broken down to make an easier role
* Need any further training/help to make them more efficient and/or effective.

**Membership Data:**

Where and how do you hold your membership data?

* If you hold electronically, even in a simple spreadsheet you can use the data to target particular groups and understand your members better.
* When and how is it updated? It should be fairly simple to update and manage the data.

What facts do you know:

* Number of members
* Length of membership (break this into groups for specific communications?)
* Likelihood of becoming an ‘active’ members of the society (may need separate communications)
* Why did they join – particular ‘wants’ from the Society
* What particular interests do they have
* What skills do they have that they could bring to the society/committee

Actions:

* Transfer your membership data to a spreadsheet
* Decide what you would like to know about members (even if you don’t hold this at the moment)
* Decide on various membership groups and how you might contact these differently/separately
* If you don’t already have this in a summary form - create a Society Vision Statement by putting into words ‘why we’re here’ based on what potential members may get from the society. If you already have a vision statement – does it need updating??

**Membership recruitment goals:**

* Set some targets about the information you need to start to understand about your membership. Without this understanding you are making your job much harder.
* What do you want to achieve. Break this down into short, medium and long term. You’ll need to come back and review this on a regular basis to update and make sure it’s working.
* Set some achievable and measureable targets and how many, location, ages and demographics of the members you would like to recruit.
* Decide on achievable % targets: Recruit above churn; specific numbers; 10 more than last year etc.
* Make sure you understand what potential members want and why they’re joining (or not) – then provide what they want.
* Provide at least one great ‘members only benefit’ such as access to plants, gardens and information; decide how to promote this.

**Membership Recruitment Actions:**

1. Create a membership database – even if this is only in a spreadsheet for now. At a later stage this can be imported into a website or other programme.

* Decide on the number of members can realistically cope with in the society at any one time – this will affect your membership and retention goals and actions. Think about why you want more members? If you can only host/support 500 people, you don’t need a membership database of 1000.

1. Decide how to record where somebody joined. If you understand how active members are from each point of joining you will start to understand where to focus your efforts.
2. Review leaflets that you distribute. Many free leaflets contain a lot of information so why do people need to join when you have already told them everything they want to know. Lure them in with a little info, a few tips and a list of member benefits. Quotes from successful garden tours and events are very helpful. Your main Society leaflet doesn’t need to contain everything. Make it simple and clear and pull people towards the website and membership info.
3. Work your way through the ‘Where you come into contact with potential members’ section of the workshop report. Divide all the suggestions into 4 groups:

* Immediate action – easy and quick to do in the next 6 months
* Short term – will require a little planning but could be implemented in the next 6-18 months
* Long term – possible but needs more thought. Plan to implement in next 18-32 months
* Not possible, practical to do. Make sure you’re putting it into this category for the right reasons – not because you don’t want to or ‘don’t think’ it will work. Give it some thought as they’re all suggestions that some of the other societies have tried.

1. Set at least one other recruitment action based on the goals you’ve set.

**Retention Goals: - make them achievable**

* Make the retention process as simple as possible, and least time consuming for you.
* Gain more than last year, and lose less than last year.
* Recruit active members – better 10 members who will stay for years and get involved than 100 members who you’ll never see or won’t renew after a year.
* Keep retention static
* Aim to retain known active/helpful individuals
* Identify and understand your non renewals and understand your retention figures. If you don’t know all about your membership you won’t know how/when to retain them or why they don’t re-join.

**Retention Actions:**

1. Decide what you want to achieve for retention. Break this down into short, medium and long term. You’ll need to come back and review this on a regular basis to update and make sure it’s working.

* Immediate action – easy and quick to do in the next 6 months
* Short term – will require a little planning but could be implemented in the next 6-18 months
* Long term – possible but needs more thought. Plan to implement in next 18-32 months

1. If you’ve never set retention targets before base them on last year’s figures – make them realistic and achievable.
2. Decide on what groups you can split members into for retention targeting – and what each group will receive in way of communication. Have a retention plan that fits the activities to the individuals and groups – doesn’t have to be once size fits all. Fit the target to the audience – different action plants for different groups.
3. Decide whether annual or anniversary based renewal is best for you in the long term. Look at your membership renewal dates. Realistically – do they need to be changed?
4. Set at least one other retention action based on the goals you’ve set.