

BIG BIOLOGY DAY - Running your own mini festival

For additional general event advice, download our [guide to running a successful local event](#).

There are numerous [science festivals](#) in the UK that occur throughout the year. These are a perfect opportunity to talk to and engage with large numbers of people in a very short period of time. However, as well as attending someone else's science festival, there is always the option of running your own. It needn't be on a large scale, and could just involve a handful of exhibitors (unless of course you have greater ambitions!) We will very shortly be releasing a guide on how best to organise and deliver a mini festival, written by the East Anglia branch committee, who are planning their third Big Biology Day on Saturday 18th October, following 2 previous [successful events](#), and we are encouraging other branches to organise their own Big Biology Day during either the weekend of the 11th / 12th, or the 18th/19th October.

This sort of event can be a large undertaking, but is a superb opportunity for collaboration and can have a high impact in the local area and numerous beneficiaries. We will support branches where possible from head office in their delivery of a Big Biology Day. So please email me on davidurry@societyofbiology.org if you are interested in organising one. Funding for the event can be incorporated into branches' budget in the next financial year and the event does not need to be run at a high cost.

Although a more comprehensive guide is to follow, the following are some key considerations for delivering your own mini science festival:

- **Venue:** where will the event take place? This is the most important starting point. Schools, Universities and [village halls](#) / community centres are the best option.
- **Main organiser:** elect someone who is ultimately responsible for delivering the event and is a main point of contact.
- **Exhibitors:** local schools, universities, professional biology related organisations, STEM ambassadors, natural history societies / community groups might all be suitable exhibitors. See our collaborations section in our [guide to running a successful local event](#) for more ideas
- **Volunteers:** This sort of project should not be undertaken alone. Make sure that you have a number of people committed to helping with the organisation and also providing general help on the day itself.
- **Ideas:** A successful science festival will depend a lot on the activities and displays present. Try and have a variety of ideas, suitable for a non-specialist audience. Many of the ideas in our [guide to running a successful local event](#) would be appropriate and collaborators and exhibitors will of course contribute their own ideas.
- **Promotion:** See our publicising your event guidance [in our guide to running a successful local event](#)
- **Logistics:** There will inevitably be logistical issues that arise during organisation and delivery. Careful planning and pre-emption of problems, as well as delegating logistical

responsibilities, and having people on hand at the event ready to deal with potential problems that arise, will help the event run smoothly.

What support is available to branches?

East Anglia branch guide

Based on the experience of delivering two successful Big Biology Days over the last two years and from planning a bigger and better third, the East Anglia branch are creating a thorough guide to successful delivery. This can be provided to all branches wishing to run their own event.

Network of volunteers

The Society of Biology has a list of potential volunteers across the UK that have expressed an interest in volunteering at public engagement events. We can therefore help branches source enthusiastic volunteers to help out on the day.

Exhibitors

We already have a number of our member organisations and partners that have expressed an interest in being involved in any branch Big Biology Day's that occur. We will work directly with branches to help source appropriate exhibitors for your event. For additional ideas, see the '**Potential collaborations / partnerships**' section of our [guide to running a successful local event](#).

Activity ideas

We are happy to provide ideas and resources for activities to take place during your Big Biology Day. For some initial ideas, see the '**Event Ideas**' section in our [guide to running a successful local event](#).

Publicity

We will promote and publicise your event through the usual channels at head office, to reach members in the area, as well as local schools and universities. We can also help advise branches with any further publicity, including provide templates for posters and publicity, and provide stickers / literature etc. See the '**Publicising your event**' section on our [guide to running a successful local event](#)

If you are interested in running your own Big Biology Day during Biology Week 2014, even if only on a very small scale, then please contact me, David Urry, on davidurry@societyofbiology.org or Tel: 020 7685 2576.