

# Creating a Gabriola Neighbourhood

We all know the benefits of fostering connections with the people who live nearby: improved mental health, a sense of belonging, sharing of resources, help during an emergency, Here are some ideas for getting started.

- **Meeting People**

How do you meet the folks in your neighbourhood? Well, some people meet while walking their dogs, others run into each other at the mailbox or the local egg stand.

Starting with a couple of people, ask if they are interested in forming a neighborhood group for fun and safety. Collect their contact information. Ask if they know anyone else in the immediate vicinity who might be interested. As the group expands, maybe you want to hold a potluck or weekend coffee gathering? If approaching someone that you don't know feels awkward, you can post a flyer on the bulletin board by your mailboxes or consider leaving notes at your neighbours' doors or gates with an invitation.



- **Creating Priorities**

At your first meeting, you can discuss the boundaries of your neighbourhood, what size group you wish to form, and what you want to focus on. Some groups, for instance, talk about central water storage or have a FireSmart representative give them a presentation. Others are interested in keeping an inventory of tools and emergency supplies, or noting who has a generator that can be shared when the power goes out. Some people want to organize block parties and potlucks, or create a map where pets and vulnerable people live. Sustainable Gabriola even offers a \$40 grant for newly forming neighbourhoods to spend on their event.

- **Defining Neighbourhood Boundaries**

We have found that between 8 and 12 households is often a good size, but that depends on the geography and lot sizes. Some groups start out small and add households or blocks until they are big enough to be divided into two. Others comprise large areas and only have a few households, or only a few neighbours that wish to be connected.

- **Connecting with the Gabriola Neighbourhoods Network**

Once you have come together and decided to take advantage of the resources and synergies of being a neighbourhood group, you may consider joining the Gabriola Neighbourhoods Network (GNN). If you haven't already, identify a volunteer willing to be the contact for the Network. This person's contact information would be made available when new people move to the neighbourhood or whenever the GNN Team has information to share. Your group would also be highlighted in colour on a map of the island that is displayed on the Gabriola Neighbourhoods Network webpage.

- **What do you do once you are connected to GNN?**

This is the easy part. There are a lot of neighbourhood resources online and many of these links are listed on Sustainable Gabriola's Neighbourhoods' web page:  
<https://sustainablegabriola.ca/climate12/neighbourhoods/>