



**DANCE** Dharma Action Network for Climate Engagement



*Marble Arch, London, 15 April 2019. DANCE action alongside XR.*

## How to organise a simple meditative direct action

### 1. Create a nucleus.

Contact anyone you know locally who could be interested in helping you run it. Ask us if we know of others in your area who could be interested.

### 2. Choose an issue or organisation you'd like to influence.

#### Suggestions:

**Support an existing campaign.** This can be a good plan as then you're part of a wider wave of pressure. For example in 2015 Taraloka, Shrewsbury and Llangollen sanghas came together on a meditation protest outside Sainsbury's in support of a Greenpeace campaign for more ethical tuna fishing. The campaign succeeded in 2016.

**Barclays Bank:** DANCE ([Dharma Action Network for Climate Engagement](#)) are currently active in the campaign encouraging [Barclays Bank](#) to stop investing in fossil fuel industry development. Direct actions have been taking place all over the country at their branches.

**XR:** Contact your local [XR](#) to find out about events local to you and do your direct action alongside theirs. Join XR if only on email - then you get to hear about what's going on.

Dates coming up:

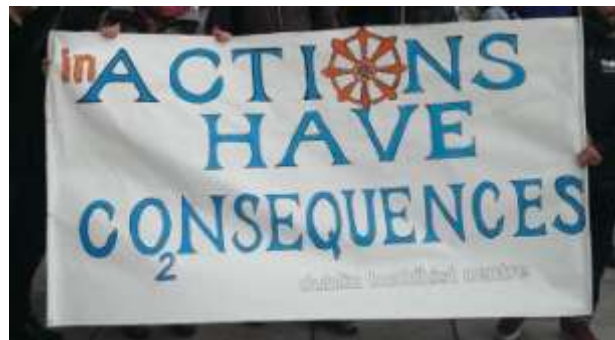
- **30th August - 3rd September** - [XR Northern Rebellion](#) in Manchester.
- **6<sup>th</sup> October onwards** - XR London Autumn rising - contact [London DANCE](#) to be part of their actions.

[Youth Strike 4 Climate](#): Again - do your action alongside theirs.

Dates coming up:

- **Friday 20 September** - Young people in the UK who have been striking for the climate are [calling on adults to join them](#) on as part of a massive global day of action.

**Government or Council:** Many councils have now declared a climate emergency - has yours?



*Banner from Dublin BAM Climate meditation outside the Dail - 12 July 2019*

### 3. Make a plan.

As an example of what a simple effective and legal action might look like, here's an email I sent out to organise a direct action with the West Wales Buddhist Group this summer, with some notes alongside. This is only an example! By all means engage your creativity.

Hello folks,

How do we respond to ecological crisis and climate change? Would you be interested in a meditative direct action at **Barclays Bank in Abersytwyth on 6 July**? All meditators welcome!

**What I'm planning for 6th July is:**

**9.45 - 11.00**

Meet **at our usual venue**, connect with each other, and explore how to engage in direct action around ecological collapse / the climate crisis with positive mental states. How do we bring love and awareness, not overwhelm or blame?

### Before the event:

- **Connect with each other and your motivation**

Short example: on the street, find a quiet place and get everyone to connect with their motivation for doing the action, with their body, with metta, maybe a short verse of dedication.

Longer example: for the Aberystwyth event we did an hour's session with both XR and Buddhists - milling and connecting with each other, a simple led metta practice including police, Barclays employees and anyone we might encounter during the action, and a ritual inviting people to offer a quality they wanted to bring to the world and chanting 'sabbe satta'.

- **Explain to everyone again what the direct action will look like.**

Allocate any roles and make sure everyone knows who is doing what.

In this example:

Liaison person - someone to explain politely what you are doing, how long you will be etc. to the police and any security or concerned representative of the bank/council/whoever.

Someone to start and finish the meditations with bell

Meditators - most people to meditate.

Leafleters - One or two (possibly more depending on numbers) to give out leaflets and talk to the public explaining why you are there - swapping sometimes with meditators.

Media person - take pics and upload to fb - during the action if possible. Happy to talk to any media who show up.

- **Allow time for questions.**

### 11.30 - 2pm

Meditate outside Barclays Bank in Aberystwyth, wearing posters 'Barclays: Blind to the Climate Crisis' and, if you're willing, wearing blindfolds. It looks very powerful. We will have breaks - not one long meditation!! This is all completely legal, as long as we don't block pedestrian access and we stay on the pavement.



*Barclays 'blind to the climate crisis' direct action with West Wales Buddhist Group - 6<sup>th</sup> July 2019*

**What you're going to do:**

Be specific and clear so people know what they're letting themselves in for. Do you want to stay within the law and simply make a strong public statement (still very powerful and worth doing), or do you want to do something more disruptive?

*If you plan on doing something illegal, please as a minimum read the [XR legal briefing](#) and [Green & Black Cross info](#), and make sure everyone involved understands possible consequences.*

Even if your action is within the law, the police are likely to attend. Their role is to protect your right to protest as well as the right of the organisation or whatever to continue its lawful business.

**from 2-ish**

Tea / cake / whatever in the Dragonfly bistro - for fun!

**Connect afterwards:**

An informal sangha social and - important - a chance to debrief.

Why Barclays? - [Barclays is the largest investor in the fossil fuel industry in Europe](#), including tar sand projects and until last autumn, fracking. [DANCE](#) (a Buddhist climate change action group I'm part of) is running a whole series of Barclays actions, as are others, so our Aberystwyth action is part of a much wider front of pressure on Barclays to behave more ethically. There's a big Barclays XR protest happening in Shrewsbury on the same day, and I've invited Aber and Mach XR to come and do something simultaneously if they'd like. Also the choir Cor Gobaith.

**Why you're doing this particular action.****Who else may be there.**

If you are initiating the event, you could invite any other local Buddhist sanghas, the Quakers, local XR, Youth Strikers etc to support your event. This worked really well in Aberystwyth - we had a total turnout of 50-60 people.

It's an interesting area - the relationship between spiritual practice / the Dharma, and social action. If you've not yet seen it, [here's my article](#) on how I've found the meditative direct protests I've been involved with so far.

If you're interested in coming please let me know. Meditating in public is very powerful and makes a strong statement. You could come and join in at any point - at the QMC, outside Barclays or just for tea and cake afterwards! But I'd really appreciate knowing when / numbers : email me on xxxxx

**Do you want people to tell you if they are coming, or just show up?**

## Practical points:

- Bring your own meditation sitting stuff - contact me if you'd like me to put in something for you.
- Wear black if possible - it makes a strong visual statement and makes the posters stand out.
- Leave any valuables at home if possible.

## Practicals: essential info

### Who will bring what?

eg: leaflets for passers by, posters to wear, banner or sign.

### What do you want participants to bring?

really hope to see you then!!!

lots of love  
Maitrisiddhi  
xxxx



*DANCE action outside Barclays AGM in Westminster, May 2019.  
The protest was reported in the Guardian online within an hour.*

## 4. Invite your Sangha.

Talk to your centre team about what you're planning - they may be happy to let you publicise the direct action by email, announce it at Sangha night, put up posters etc. If not, send out emails to anyone you know personally, and word of mouth is the most effective way of spreading these things anyhow.

I suggest that you identify yourselves as a DANCE group (**DANCE** is simply a loose network of Buddhists coming together to respond to the ecological crisis - so you could call yourselves DANCE Local Town or whatever). This means that your Buddhist Centre does not need to worry about being identified with / held responsible for your direct action.

Sound inspired by positive action, enthusiastic, and invite people in a way that says ‘this is something I’d like to be part of!’ Dire facts and doom and gloom put people off - and most people are already aware of the seriousness of the ecological crisis.

Do your best to exemplify positive mental states around the issues. Blame, anger and horrified anxiety are easy to fall into, but Buddhists tend to find a response of love, awareness and energy much more appealing - not to mention in line with the Dharma!



## 5. Publicise your direct action

### Beforehand:

- Contact your local TV, radio and newspaper.
- Put your event up on the [DANCE fb group](#) - anyone can post an event.
- ‘Share’ with similar groups - [Extinction Rebellion Buddhists](#), [Triratna Climate Emergency Action](#), (you need to join these to post), local XR fb pages...

### During/ after:

- FB - Post pictures and brief comments that explain the action to the [DANCE fb group](#) - and share everywhere you can think of.
- The Buddhist Centre Online. Do a brief writeup and send with pics to [sadayasihi@thebuddhistcentre.com](mailto:sadayasihi@thebuddhistcentre.com) for consideration.
- Tell people how it was for you/ write about it and post on social media. Express excitement and enthusiasm (only if authentic of course!)

(I’m so not clued up with social media so please feel free to send other suggestions of how to get our actions out there, and I’ll update this!)

**6. Debrief and thank everyone** and make a note of anything that worked especially well, or that you'd do differently next time.

**Good luck folks!**

Please get in touch if I can help at all.

This info is work in progress - do email back with suggestions or improvements and we'll incorporate them. Or any questions not covered.

Do let me know if you're planning an action and you're happy to have it made public, as it's so encouraging to hear about what others are getting together to do.

xx Maitrisiddhi

