



## TREASURES OF THE TRIBE

### Guidelines for OBOD Seed Groups & Groves

*The greatest achievement was at first and for a time a dream. The oak sleeps in the acorn. The bird waits in the egg. And in the highest vision of a soul, a waking angel stirs. Dreams are the seedlings of realities.*

**James Allen**

#### **Introduction**

The distance learning programme of the Order can provide you with all you need to follow the path of Druidry, but meeting with others to celebrate the festivals and share your spiritual journey can offer great support, introduce you to new friends and expand your horizons. The following information will help you understand what is involved if you decide to join a group, or are already in one, and it will also help you decide whether you'd like to start a group yourself.

May you experience the Joy of the Journey!

May the Spirit of the Order and the Spirit of your group guide and bless you!

#### **What is the difference between an OBOD Seed Group and Grove?**

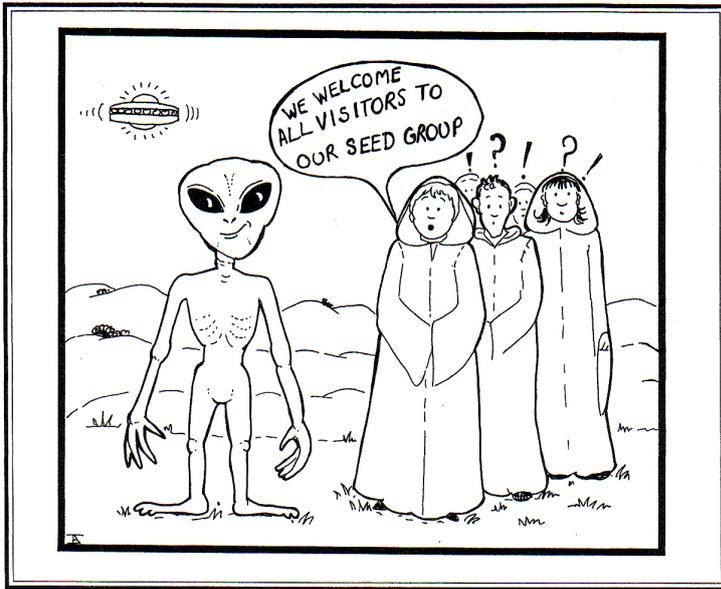
We use the terms 'Seed Groups' and 'Groves' to indicate our connection with nature and the Druid tradition.

There are over 100 OBOD Seed Groups and Groves worldwide.

A Seed Group can be formed by any member at any point in their studies. Each group is free to develop its own style of working, with the aim of making meetings informal and relaxed - giving members the opportunity to meet and meditate together, and to discuss Druidry and topics of mutual interest. Many Seed Groups celebrate the seasonal festivals together.

A Grove is a group which meets regularly, and which is led by at least two members who have been initiated into the OBOD Druid Grade. A fully functioning Grove will celebrate the eight festivals, and may also give initiations, hold Groves in each of the three grades - Bardic, Ovate and Druid - and arrange other activities such as retreats, workshops and camps.

## Who can join an OBOD Seed Group or Grove?



*“You may get a request from a friend or relative to come along.”*

Any member of the Order should be welcome at an OBOD group as a guest: either just ‘passing through’ or as a potentially permanent member. However, Groves and Seed Groups also have a duty to the group, and, at certain times, may not wish to welcome visitors. Please be sensitive to the variety of issues which may lead a group to say ‘no’ to a request for a visit. These issues may include limitations of space, or the need for privacy regarding meetings in members’ houses, the undertaking of a private ceremony or initiation on the date requested, and so on.

Nevertheless, OBOD’s general stance is open and inclusive, and a permanently ‘closed’ group would not be in tune with that ethos.

Membership of OBOD is defined as having entered the Bardic Grade, in other words having gone beyond the introductory Bardic package to actually start the course.

Some groups allow non-members into their meetings, and partners of members who are interested but do not wish to join the Order may also be welcomed. Membership of a group is not the same as membership of OBOD, which can be arranged only through enrolling with the OBOD office or via the OBOD website. Your attendance at the group does not in itself make you a member of OBOD. Bardic, Ovate and Druid Grove meetings are open only to members who have entered the relevant Grade, although an exception is sometimes made for Bardic Groves to invite visiting speakers or guests.

### **How are groups funded?**

Groups are self-managed and need to be self-supporting financially. Although in the early days the founders may fund expenses, it is unfair to them for this to continue for too long. It is also unfair to the members who need the reality and grounding that an attention to funding brings. The group is the people, not the regalia, and so costs incurred in running a group should not be onerous, and should be shared amongst its members. There is usually a small subscription or request for

donations to cover the cost of tea, coffee, candles, communications, etc. But this is a matter for the group to decide, and there are different ways that a group can support itself: some rotate their venues amongst members' homes, and each member brings food, candles and so on to share, so that there is no need for a central fund.

Usually the leaders will be too busy at meetings to collect fees, so a member should be chosen to do this at the beginning rather than the end of a meeting. If left to the end, those who have left early will be missed, and it is easy for such a task to be forgotten during post-ritual celebrations! Discuss finances openly to avoid misunderstandings.

Some groups run their own websites, newsletters, Facebook pages, and discussion forums. These are an ideal way of letting people know about events, for providing access to group policies and for members to keep in touch between meetings, and any costs incurred can be shared amongst members.

## **Meetings**

### **How often?**

Most groups meet for the eight seasonal festivals. Additionally there may be regular meetings between the festivals. Larger groups often hold separate meetings for Bards, Ovates and Druid grade members.

Most groups find that it is best to pick a day convenient to everyone and stick to it - for example, the Saturday before the festival. Decide on a start and finishing time so that everyone knows what to expect. Keep the arrangement constant and simple so that no-one gets left out. Of course it can be changed. Meeting at the full moon is one option but difficult to arrange as the Moon goes through her phases on different days each month. OBOD suggests a full moon meditation for peace each month at 6pm local time, and your group could commit to this, wherever individual group members happen to be.

### **What happens at meetings?**

The Order encourages freedom, creativity and individual responsibility, and for this reason we do not advocate any specific or set format for a meeting. It really is up to the members of a group to decide how they wish to spend their time together.

In working out how you would like to spend the time, remember that you need focus and boundaries as well as freedom and creativity!

A tried and tested format is to have a time for a combination of these elements:

- Arriving, welcoming, stating the purpose of the meeting
- Attunement
- Exchanging news and ideas
- Discussion and debate on a chosen subject
- Meditation
- Ceremony

- Eistedfodd
- Feasting

There is more about all of these below.

### **Arriving**

Those who have taken responsibility for the meeting should ensure that everyone is made welcome, particularly any newcomers.

Prior to newcomers attending their first meeting it's a good idea for an established member of the group to talk to them in person or via skype/phone to let them know what to expect and what is expected of them.

If you are the newcomer, a chat with the leader or host before the meeting will ensure you know what to expect and have brought anything you might need or want to contribute.

### **Welcome and purpose of meeting**

The meeting should begin with a few words of welcome and a brief outline as to its purpose. This would also be an appropriate time to introduce any new members.

### **Attunement**

This could include any of these elements: standing together hand in hand, lighting a candle, three breaths, a simple reminder of the journey that brought all together, a reminder to be here now, an invitation to listen to the wind outside... any short and simple witnessing of time, place and people.

### **Exchanging news and ideas**

Some groups use a 'talking stick'. A beautiful, sometimes decorated, stick is passed around the circle from person to person. Only the person holding the talking stick can speak, and while they do, everyone else listens. Everyone has a turn to speak, but knows they mustn't 'hog' the stick. As the talking stick moves around the circle each contribution becomes woven into a whole. If you do not want to speak, that is fine, just take the talking stick, hold it silently for a moment, then pass it to your neighbour. The purpose of having this talking circle is not for therapy, but to make sure everyone gets a chance to be heard. Sometimes this kind of sharing circle is only used when there is a specific matter to be discussed, or a decision to be made.

It is often surprising how a shy person will have the confidence and feel moved to speak once they have the talking stick in their hand. It is important to explain the simple talking stick rules before commencement, otherwise it won't work. To avoid problems, many groups reiterate the simple rules before each talking stick circle:

- Only the person holding the talking stick can speak, and while they do, everyone else listens.
- The speaker should focus on the subject matter, speak from their point of view and not direct their comments towards other contributors.
- The facilitator may interject if they feel that these rules are not being followed, if someone is

speaking inappropriately, or is blatantly taking too much time.

After the talking stick has gone round it might then be appropriate to have an open discussion.

### **Discussion**

Subjects could be about any of the topics covered in the broad sweep of Druidry and spirituality, such as Earth Mysteries, sacred sites, stone, tree or animal lore, storytelling, alternative medicine – the list is endless. There can be practical evenings or even weekends. And it's good to find out about the specialties and interests of each group member and for them to have the opportunity to share their experience and expertise with the group.

There are lots of approaches to this and it is best not to get too set in any one. So there might be a short series of discussion meetings on a particular subject area, or members with special interests or knowledge could be invited to host one. In the early days having time to discuss the development of the group may well pay dividends later.

### **Should we study the Gwersi in meetings?**

Since the members of a group will not be following the course at exactly the same pace, and because of the uniqueness of the journey through the gwersi for each individual, it is not recommended, and not at all practical, to try to study the gwersi together in a group. As you work through the gwersi you will realize how very subjective the experiences can be, and also that the course is carefully structured so that the experience of each gwers leads to the next or subtly suggests what is to happen in a few gwersi's time. It would be a shame to spoil another's journey by working with a gwers that they have not yet reached, and it could also change their experience of the meditation or practicum because they have pre-conceived ideas of what will happen. The magic of the exercises and meditations in the gwersi is that they act spontaneously upon the subconscious and trigger responses from the person's own inner world or psyche, as a continuing and ever-developing journey. There are so many wonderful subjects to choose for discussion that there is no need to treat meetings as 'Gwers Reading and Study Groups'.

However it is best not to stray too far from the topics and themes covered in the gwersi because one important role of seed groups and groves is to encourage and support members on their paths through the OBOD grades, leaving room for their own work.

This support can happen most simply by the occasional reference to the gwersi that relate to the discussion. Such reminders can be helpful in making members aware that active membership or leadership of a group is not a substitute for the personal study of the course.

### **Meditation**

Most meetings will include a meditation. This can be a treasured time. But if you don't want to participate, you may prefer to just enjoy sitting quietly. Remember there is no right or wrong way to experience a meditation. You might visualize vividly or 'see' nothing but can sense the surroundings, scents and sounds very keenly. No-one should try to analyze your experience, and often the images or words may take some time to reveal their meaning to you. You won't necessarily 'get' anything in a meditation, you may simply feel relaxed by it.

Working together in guided meditation and pathworking can be a very rewarding experience and can help to bring the group closer together. It may also enable the voice of the group, or group awareness, to become clearer over time.

Since members of a group are often at different stages on their journey, with some very familiar with meditation and others completely new to it, whoever is leading the meditation should be aware of this, and should use tried and tested meditation journeys. Try not to use the meditations in the gwersi, apart from the basic Light Body and Sacred Grove meditations, unless it is one the whole group has done already as part of the course, so as not to spoil it for others. Feedback from the group will help the person leading the meditation to make improvements, so do not feel shy about commenting on the meditation if you felt it too long, too short, or have some other constructive comments to make about it.

The group may find it best if the same opening and closing to meditations and pathworkings is followed. This repetition and familiarity enables people to more easily reconnect with the altered state of consciousness associated with this form of practice. If you lead an inner journey it is important to lead people back along the same route that they took on the outward journey, to enable people to be fully grounded more easily. Often a break for a cup of tea or similar will also help in this grounding, and a sharing using the talking stick might then follow. Beware, though, of lengthy 'picking over' of meditation experiences which to some may feel intensely private. In a large group this can be time-consuming and energy-draining. It may be better to suggest sharing in groups of two or three for ten minutes, or simply for everyone to sit quietly to process what they've experienced whilst the kettle is boiling.

### **Ceremony/Ritual and the OBOD scripts**

Meeting together regularly for ceremony/ritual is a way of establishing the spiritual foundations of a group. It is a time when differences of opinion are laid aside and individuals can begin to experience the unique energy or group soul of their Seed Group or Grove. For this reason, there is no insistence that groups should slavishly follow the scripted ceremonies, but conversely, leaders, in considering the expectations of the group, do not have the option of being experimental in the way they might be when working on their own in ritual.

Any changes should be made thoughtfully, for reasons that can be discussed, understood and agreed by the group. As is said in the opening section of OBOD rituals, 'We gather as equals ...' This is profound and powerful and has to be true if the circle is going to flow with energy. Every person in the group contributes with their inner and outer awareness, regardless of whether or not they have an active role to play, and this should be made clear to them.

When OBOD members come to a group they will expect the rituals to reflect what they have learned in the coursework. This is especially true when celebrating the seasonal festivals.

The Order ceremonies are fundamental to the work of OBOD: many members consider them part of an OBOD heritage, as magical templates to be cherished, and this must be respected. Groups that decide to share the seasonal celebrations between scripted and more free-flowing seasonal expressions should regularly refer back to the scripts and the Book of Ritual to keep the group 'on

track’.

If a group wants to make a change, it is often best to focus on changing the central section of a rite, while continuing to use the ‘standard’ OBOD opening and closing – itself a powerful holding structure for what might happen within the ceremony.

By always using the OBOD forms of opening and closing we not only reinforce the energy of our group but we also connect with the group energy of the Order itself. Knowing that this is happening in groves and groups throughout the world engenders a strong sense of spiritual community.

In considering possible changes, some questions to consider would be:

What does the proposed change add to the ceremony and group experience, and in what way?

Is this harmonious with and in the spirit of the Order?

How will this appear to and support the newest bard of OBOD on their journey?’

Most groups find that they develop their festivals together, refining and re-working them from year to year, so that they never become static, but grow as the group grows in experience and wisdom.

## **Festivals**



*“One group decided to trek across the public footpath...”*

Celebrating the festivals together is a great way to begin to meet. As time goes on, missing one can feel like a wheel without a spoke. Journeying together around the wheel of the year is a wonderful experience, building up your group rapport from one festival to the next, and then finding that suddenly you have done a whole year’s worth and are stepping out onto the second spiral of another round together.

## **Celebrating in the Southern Hemisphere**

In the Southern Hemisphere OBOD members observe the festivals at the opposite times of year to those in the Northern Hemisphere, and reverse the associations to South and North too. This means

that while some groups are celebrating the Winter Solstice, for example, groups in the other hemisphere are celebrating the Summer Solstice. Remembering this brings a great sense of balance to our celebrations.

### **Initiations**

OBOD Groves may provide initiations. Bards, Ovates and Druids wishing to be initiated in a Grove ceremony must have received the OBOD gwers containing the relevant initiation ceremony. It is not enough to have been accepted by the Order for the next grade or to have just the introductory gwers of the next grade. Some Groves insist that the member perform their personal initiation before a group one, while some hold the opposite view, believing that an initiation can occur only once, and offering instead a Welcoming ceremony if a member has already performed a self-initiation. OBOD Groves use ceremonies that differ from the self-initiations sent in the distance-learning course, and Grove Leaders can ask the office to send them copies of these. During an initiation ceremony, the only people present should be those members who have themselves been initiated into the relevant grade.

Seed Groups are not expected to offer initiations. However, some long-standing Seed Groups - which contain only one druid - do want to offer initiations, and if this is relevant to your Seed Group, please contact [groups@druidry.org](mailto:groups@druidry.org) for advice.

### **Eisteddfod**

The eisteddfod offers an opportunity to shed the more formal aspects of the ceremony for a while, to exchange stories, songs, music and poetry. Everyone is free to contribute or not.

### **Feasting**

A 'pot-luck' (bring and share) picnic following the ceremony is a lovely way to bring people together and to ensure that everyone is grounded before setting off home. Some Druids drink wine, beer and mead but being alcohol-free is part of a spiritual path for many people so alternatives to alcohol should be available.

### **What else do groups do?**

As well as meeting for the seasonal festivals, many groups also facilitate additional events which may include camps, workshops, local moots and other activities perhaps involving environmental work such as tree planting. Additional activities will depend upon local needs and opportunities, and offer the possibility to serve as druids whilst developing the group's identity.

A powerful and very fitting way for Druids to be of service, is for the group to agree to take care of a specific spot in their locality, perhaps where they meet for ceremonies. Members can agree to visit the site to remove litter, etc., in between or before meetings.

### **Leaders**

#### **What makes a person a leader of a Seed Group or Grove?**

Druidry and OBOD tend to attract warm-hearted, kind and generous people who are keen to make

a positive difference to the world. They may decide to start a Seed Group and later, when they enter the Druid grade, may combine with another member in the Druid grade to form a Grove. Often their homes will provide a base for the group. In this way they have self-selected to lead a group, and provided they have the support of the other members of the group, they deserve respect and consideration. But they should not be seen as 'superior' or 'above' any other member of the group.

Alternatively, members of a group may choose to operate a system of 'rotating leadership' whereby at each meeting different members take on the roles of organization, leading a meditation, and so on. Other groups may prefer to vote in their leaders who serve for a certain term.

Whatever way a group chooses to operate, it is important that members don't feel 'bogged down' in rules and formalities. A group needs to avoid on the one hand being so informal that it is disorganized and the structure unclear to members, and on the other hand being so structured that members feel it is too rigid. This question can be a good topic to discuss in the group.

### **What are the responsibilities of leaders?**

Leaders bring people together and give them encouragement and support. It is appropriate to lead but not command.

One of the most important leadership tasks is to tune in and sense the needs of the group - to listen to the voice of the group spirit. However, they should always remember that they are not the only ones connected to it or responding to it - its light and energy are available to all members. This group spirit is independent of the leaders who should see themselves as mediators of it. It will change and evolve in accordance with the people who join the group and not in accordance with the will or desires of any group leader.

Although leaders are responsible for a certain amount of direction, and for helping to maintain the continuity and stability of the group, the dynamic drive and evolution comes from the interaction of the whole group and each person's unique presence within it. Leaders should strive to create an appropriate space within which members may explore and experience their inner and outer Druid worlds.

Leaders should strive to uphold the integrity of the Druid spirit and of OBOD.

Leaders may have come to OBOD through explorations with other spiritualities, so it is important to remember that an OBOD group should not be skewed by practices from other spiritual paths. By bearing this in mind, leaders are ensuring that the group will support all members, from the newest bard to the most experienced.

Leaders may often be confided in and must always respect members' confidentiality. This applies to many areas, including photographs. As a general rule, photographs should be taken only with permission of those in the photograph, and only during the social time of the meeting, not in meditation or ceremony.

There may be occasions when leaders need to exercise discernment and demonstrate the authority to say 'No' to members who they consider are being disruptive. If a seemingly insoluble problem should arise it might help to consult with other experienced Grove leaders or if necessary the OBOD office.

It is important that all members of the group understand that the group does not belong to the group leaders. It exists independently of the leaders, and does not exist to have their ideas imposed upon it. Nor is it there simply to be taught by the leaders, although many group leaders experienced in Druidry do organize Druid seminars, workshops and retreats. Leaders take on the responsibility for nurturing and protecting the group, creating a safe place where members may sometimes want to share their deepest thoughts and feelings. They may also host the group, making their homes available to ensure the physical comfort of the group. Apart from a small subscription to group funds to cover tea, coffee, candles etc, mentioned earlier, leaders should not ask you for money, and your membership and progress within the group should not depend on any favours. If any member of a group is concerned about the conduct of a group or leader, they should contact the OBOD office.

### **Titles**

Titles are by no means necessary, and could even be considered inadvisable if this leads to members feeling that those in the group holding titles are more important than those without. However, if everyone understands that titles are symbolic and designate service roles and not superiority, then they can be used. Titles may remain with certain people in the group, or can be rotated, or allocated through divination or choice. Seed Groups might want to avoid titles since they are more informal groups, while Groves are more formalized.

Some Groves put a lot of thought and emphasis into the titles given to their leaders and others, and may link these into ritual roles as well. Others groups are less formal, referring to leaders as facilitators or enablers, avoiding formal titles altogether. There is no right or wrong in this, but careful consideration as to the best way forward would be time well spent as the foundations of the group are laid. The sorts of titles used are: Grove Chief, Grove Mother and Father, Pendragon and Scribe. Some people like the use of the terms 'Mother and Father' but others find these infantilising, and too evocative of parental control or Church associations. A group should not use the titles of High Priest or High Priestess (or Priest and Priestess) for their leaders. While Druidry and Wicca share much in common, these titles are strongly associated with Wicca and they do not reflect the OBOD ethos of equal responsibility, within each individual's capabilities, for the practical and ritual work of the group.

### **How do I establish an OBOD Seed Group or Grove?**

If you are a member of the Order, whether Bard, Ovate or Druid, you can start a Seed Group. You need to have enrolled on the course, and not have just received the introductory package. Just email [groups@druidry.org](mailto:groups@druidry.org) and tell us of your intention!

If you are a Druid Grade member of the Order, and have found another Druid Grade member who will work with you, you can apply to open a Grove. Please email the Groves and Groups Coordinator at [groups@druidry.org](mailto:groups@druidry.org)

### **Naming and registering your group**

You can adopt whatever name you choose, so long as it isn't already in use. Have a look at the

names of groups listed on the website to get an idea of the sorts of titles used. Some groups choose names connected with their location, or align themselves to a particular deity, tree or animal. Whatever you choose, it is a reflection of your unique group spirit and may well evolve after you have been working together for some time. The word Grove can be used in your title when your Seed Group has been accepted as an OBOD Grove run by two Druid Grade members. If you would like other members to know about your group, you should register it by contacting the Groves and Groups Coordinator at [groups@druidry.org](mailto:groups@druidry.org). At this point you can decide whether or not you would like your group listed on the Order's website, which the public can see, or whether you would prefer contact details only be made available in the printed list sent out periodically to members.

### Where should we perform ceremonies?



Our Druid path connects us to nature and the elements, so ceremonies are often best held outside, although you may choose to work indoors if warmth, dryness, privacy or access for the physically challenged is needed. If you live near a wood or forest then there might be a grove of trees that is suitable. On private land, ensure you have the owner's permission for the whole group, to prevent misunderstandings (or breaking the law). Even if you are on public land, access to that area might not be automatic, it is best to be discreet, to not prevent others from their enjoyment of the area and to obey bye-laws and regulations. Some people are fortunate enough to have a secluded garden and understanding neighbours. Some groups have been fortunate enough to be able to plant a grove of trees that they then use for their rituals.

Working outside may mean a trek before your ceremony can begin, so come prepared. But the journey together, which may begin with a car ride and then a silent walk across the land, is as much a part of the ceremony as the circle itself. When you leave the grove or circle clear up any litter that others might have left before you.

In an ideal world we would all have a perfect grove in a beautiful setting. In reality this isn't always possible or practical. The important thing is to begin meeting regularly whether this is in someone's back yard or indoors. The group is the people first, and the location second, and it is often found that the right location somehow presents itself once a commitment is made.

### **Should ceremonies be public?**

The four solar festivals can be public ceremonies, although it is usually only the more seasoned groups who feel equal to performing in full daylight before casual observers. The four fire festivals tend to be more intimate events (particularly Samhuinn) with perhaps some invited guests.

## **IMPORTANT – What an OBOD Group is Not and Pitfalls to Avoid**

Some groups may be affiliated with other Druid groups, such as ADF, AODA, BDO or the Druid Network, and their ways of working may differ from groups that are solely connected to OBOD. Leaders should remember their responsibility to all OBOD members, and have clarity in the group about what they do, and why they do it. Members are also expected to take responsibility for their own path, so if you are thinking of joining a group, find out about its affiliations, and make sure you feel comfortable with the way they work.

Seed Groups or Groves are not therapy groups, though you may experience meetings as healing. They are also not 'teaching groups' although you may learn much from them.

A meeting should not be used as a means for an individual member to engage in their own agenda, such as gathering 'followers' for their own teachings, finding participants for their own workshops, or clients for their own healing services. Members should attend because they want to enjoy each others' company, celebrate the festivals, and explore Druidry and the spiritual path with others of like mind. If a member of the group happens to be a healer, or runs workshops, they can of course mention this to fellow members, but they should not be using the group as a means of 'recruitment'.

Leaders should not use the group to fulfill their needs for approval or domination: to be seen as 'all-knowing' or 'wise', or to engage in 'power-trips' whereby they act or feel superior to other members because of their leadership position.

A group leader should not suggest that they have a special relationship that another member does not have, with the Order or the OBOD office.

They should not ask for any favours or payment for anything related to the Order, or for a candidate's progress through the grades.

They should not offer to act as a replacement for the course Mentor that the member has been allocated.

They should not imply that they are in receipt of any privileges or teachings that are not available to other members.

Sometimes people join a group in search of emotional healing, and while a group can often help members through periods of stress and sadness, there is a limit to the support it can give to

someone who has a more ongoing problem of psychological distress.

It is the group leaders' responsibility to identify those members whose needs might best be met outside the group, and to suggest they seek professional help. While the leaders may be able to offer some help to the individual member, it is important that they avoid acting as their therapist, and instead recommend a professional counsellor or therapist.

OBOD groups are autonomous – which means they are self-organizing and self-determining. The Order has no knowledge of what occurs within any group, and has no control over what groups do.

If a group is not your 'cup of tea' or you find you are not enjoying meetings, or that it is really not meeting your needs, don't feel obliged to attend. You might even consider starting your own group that better reflects your tastes and preferences.

### **Resolving difficulties within the group**

Difficulty or conflict sometimes serves a deeper purpose, such as effecting transformation and bringing about learning. As Druids we recognize the naturalness of conflict and the potential it offers for growth, learning and transmutation. We understand the importance of taking time to reflect on what is at the heart of an issue. Resolving difficult problems can sometimes become the opportunity for deeper understanding and insight which may ultimately strengthen the group.

A useful question to ask, when difficulties arise, is: 'Is there a gift here, trying to manifest itself?' or: 'What is it that is seeking transformation?'

As Druids we appreciate the way in which everything in nature follows the cycle of birth, growth, decay, death and rebirth. Groups follow this cycle too, and a difficulty may be a symptom that the group is 'stuck' and that something needs to change to help it move into a new phase.

Differences of opinion are inevitable in any group, and sometimes personality clashes occur.

Druidry offers a down-to-earth realistic view of life that doesn't try to ignore the more difficult aspects of relating in a group. Sometimes differences can be resolved with sharing circles using the talking stick, at other times no amount of discussion seems capable of resolving an issue.

Sometimes groups dissolve and new ones form, or a group of members 'breaks away' to form another group. This is natural, and although this experience can sometimes be difficult, it is best to view it with trust and detachment, allowing things to settle into their new form, even if that means a loss of members to one group.

A group should not feel that they have to tolerate a disruptive person, though they need to deal with them fairly. If conflict arises within a group it might be appropriate to seek the confidential counsel of a trusted member from outside the group. If a resolution should prove impossible then referral to the OBOD office might be necessary.

### **If you have a problem or complaint...**

Whatever happens in or to the group and however you decide to structure your meetings, know these things. You are not on your own. You can always get in touch with the co-ordinator of OBOD Groups at [groups@druidry.org](mailto:groups@druidry.org) And you can always contact the office:

[office@druidry.org](mailto:office@druidry.org)

There are many other Seed Groups and Groves and if you come up against a problem you could also try getting in touch with another Seed Group contact or Grove leader to sound them out.

If you have a complaint about a group, or you try to contact a group and repeatedly receive no reply to your communications, let us know at [groups@druidry.org](mailto:groups@druidry.org)

**For more information:**

Grove and Seed Group listing at [www.druidry.org/community/groves-groups](http://www.druidry.org/community/groves-groups)

The OBOD Book of Ritual sent out in the Bardic Grade

The Groves and Seed groups area in the Members-Only Forums section on the [Message Board](#)

For Grove leaders, there is more guidance in Gwers 45 of the Druid Grade (Editions from 2010 onwards)

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