

Power Apps

Sample manual - first two chapters



Wise Owl
Training

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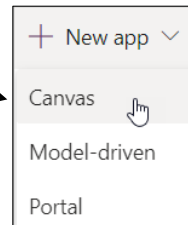
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CHAPTER 1 - POWER APPS OVERVIEW

1.1 Types of App

When you're creating apps in Power Apps, you have a choice of 3 types, as shown on the right:

Most people will choose a **Canvas** app.



These are used as follows:

Type of app	Notes
<i>Canvas</i>	With a canvas app you start from a blank screen, can link to any types of data source and have free rein to get your app to do whatever you want.
<i>Model-driven</i>	A model-driven app must be based on a Common Data Services model, usually Dynamics 365. You're much more restricted in what you can do, and many of the forms are created for you based on the structure of the model to which you're connecting.
<i>Portal</i>	A portal app must also be based on a Common Data Services model. Portal apps are the newest of the three types, and allow you to create apps for external users.

This courseware will focus exclusively on canvas apps.

Examples of Apps

Here are two simple apps you could create using Power Apps:

Film	Genre	Certificate	Action
A Few Good Men	Drama	15	Show
Apollo 13	History	PG	Show
Bee Movie	Animation	U	Show
Cabaret	Musical	15	Show

This app lets you list out your favourite films, change their details and even add new films. The films could be stored in a cloud-based Excel workbook, a SQL Server database linked by a gateway, a SharePoint list or any other data source accessible from the cloud.

Film: A Few Good Men

Genre: Drama

Certificate: 15

Save changes Cancel

Marmite - love it or hate it?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Vote now

This very simple app uses a five-star rating control, one of many such gizmos that make Power Apps apps such a pleasure to design and use. Clicking on the button takes you to a second screen giving your vote:

Thank you for voting -
you gave Marmite 3
out of 5

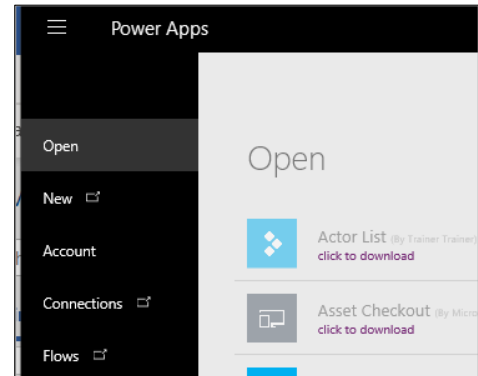
1.2 What you Need

To Design your Apps

You can run Power Apps either through a modern browser like Edge or Chrome, or else through a desktop program called Power Apps:

The desktop version of Power Apps will be deprecated soon. You don't need to bother downloading it; instead just go to:

<https://powerapps.microsoft.com/>



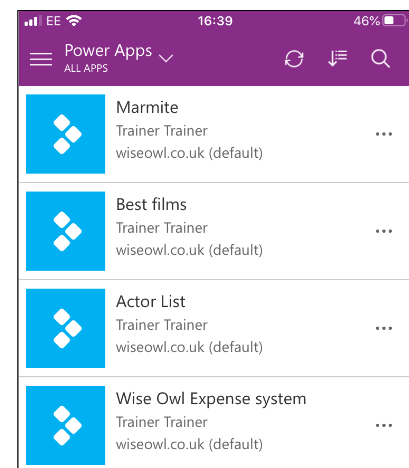
To Run your Apps

You can run your apps in any modern browser, and also on your Android or Apple phone:

a) Download the **Power Apps** app from the Google or Apple store.



b) You can run any app by scrolling up or down the list to find it, then tapping on it.



1.3 Getting Help

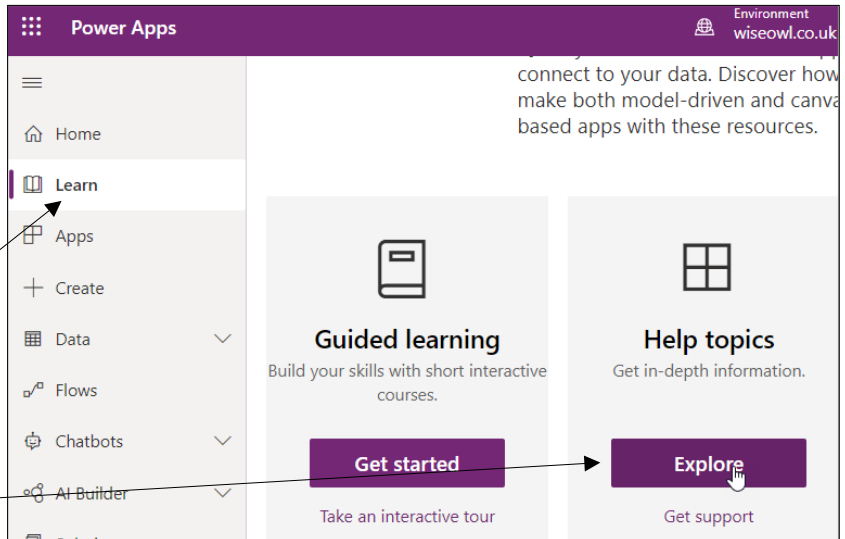
Here are the sources which Wise Owl found useful when learning Power Apps.

The Microsoft Website

Yes, really! Microsoft have put a lot of effort into providing tutorials on using Power Apps (the one on edit forms is especially good):

a) Click on this tab on the left-hand side of the Power Apps home page.

b) Click on this button to bring up the main help page.

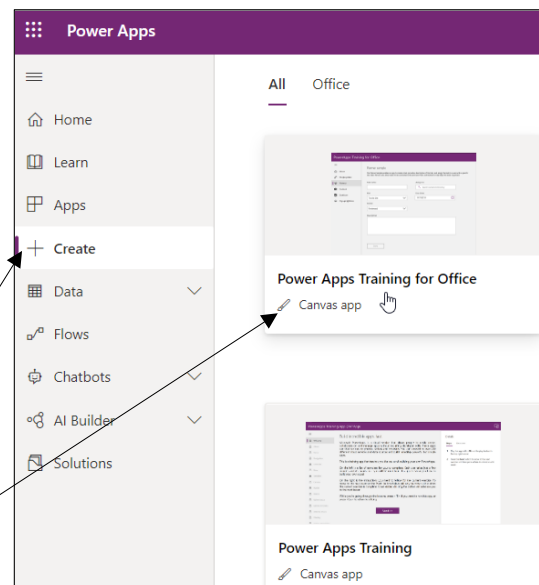


Opening Template Apps

There are a number of sophisticated pre-built apps that you can open and inspect:

a) Click on this button on the left side of the Power Apps home page, and choose to create an app.

b) Scroll down to see the apps already created for you to use, and choose one you like the look of!

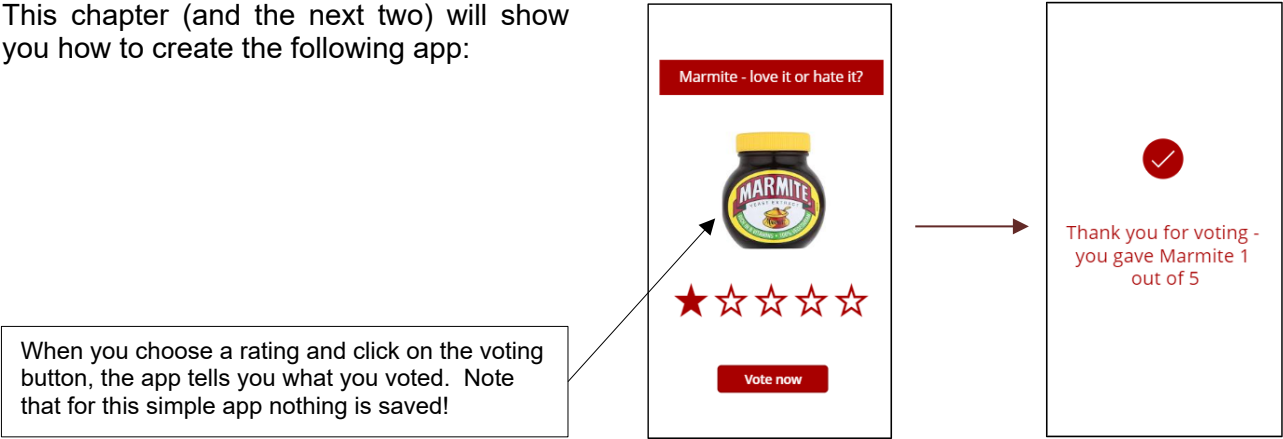


And finally, an honourable mention to Shane Young. There are many tutorials on Power Apps online, but Shane's were the ones we found most useful (plus he's engaging company, even if you will learn more about his dog than you want to!).


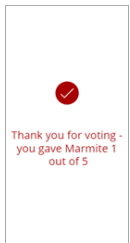
CHAPTER 2 - CREATING

2.1 Our Simple Starter App

This chapter (and the next two) will show you how to create the following app:



This app contains two *screens*:

Screen	Name we'll use	Notes
	scrVoteForm	This is the voting screen, where we record whether we like Marmite (the author doesn't).
	scrResults	This is the results screen, reflecting back our preferences.



*Note that we'll (mostly) use Modified Hungarian Notation to name things in our app (a fancy way of saying that the first 3 letters of the thing's name denote what sort of a thing it is – so **scr** for **Screen**, for example).*

2.2 Working with Apps

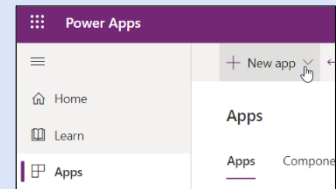
Creating Apps

Assuming that you're in Power Apps, here's how to create a new app from the home screen.

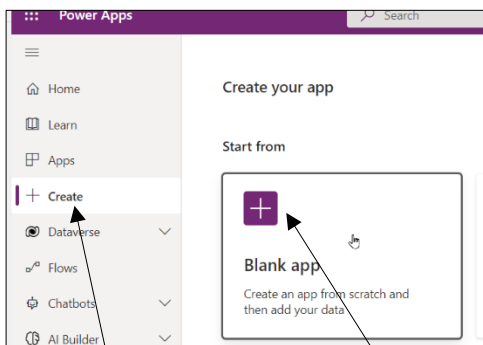


Wise Owl's Hint

You can also create an app using the **New app** button from the **Apps** menu. This gives menu options which do the same thing, albeit formatted differently for some reason.

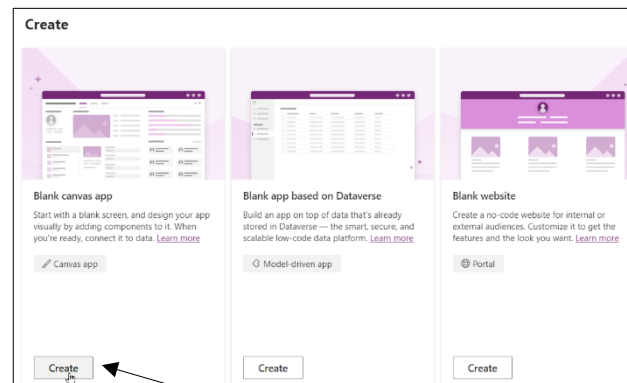


Choose to create an app:

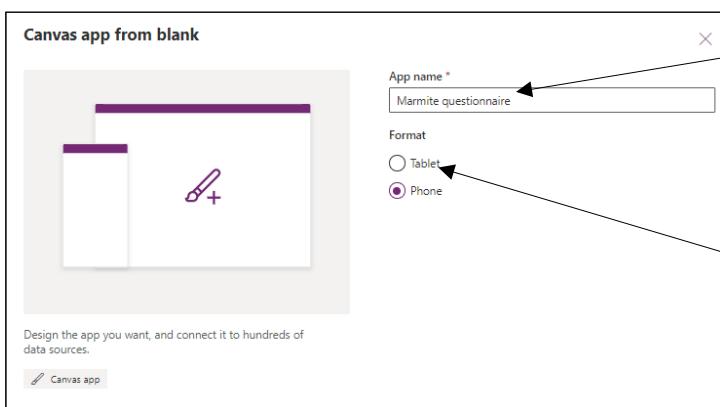


a) Choose this menu option.

b) Choose to create a new blank app.



c) Choose to create a canvas app (you can also see a good description of model-driven and portal apps here).



d) Give your new app a name (we've called this one **Marmite questionnaire**).

e) Decide whether to create a tablet or phone app (note that you can't change this later). If you're not sure, it's probably better to create a tablet app, since Power Apps will usually do a good job of shrinking a tablet app to display sensibly on a phone. Many people create two different versions of their apps (one for viewing on a tablet and one for viewing on a phone).

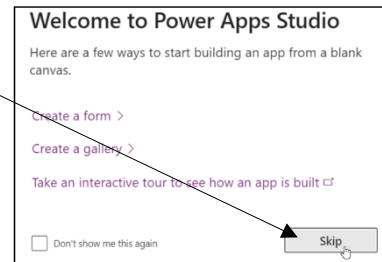


Wise Owl's Hint

For some reason Power Apps is more inclined to add search boxes at the top of screens when you create a mobile app using a template, as opposed to creating a tablet app using a template. Most of the examples in this courseware use mobile apps.

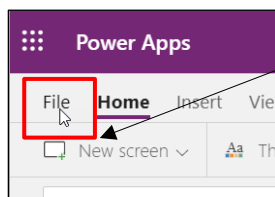
If you're successful, you can now see your app!

Presumably the fact that you're reading this courseware means you can skip the tutorial offered



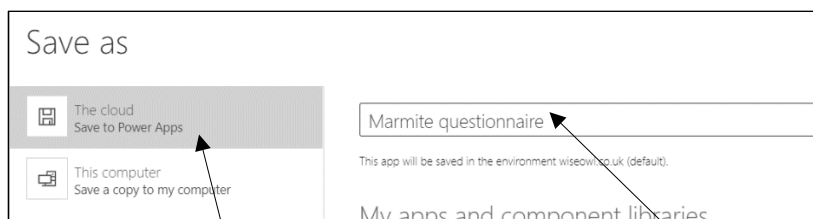
Saving your Apps

It's a good idea to save your app as soon as you've created it:



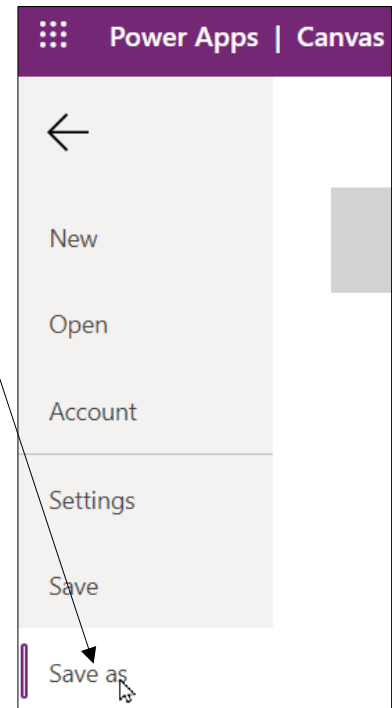
a) Choose to go to the **File** menu.

b) Choose to save the file with a new name.



c) Choose where you want to save your file (your local computer, or your cloud account).

d) Give your new app a sensible name.



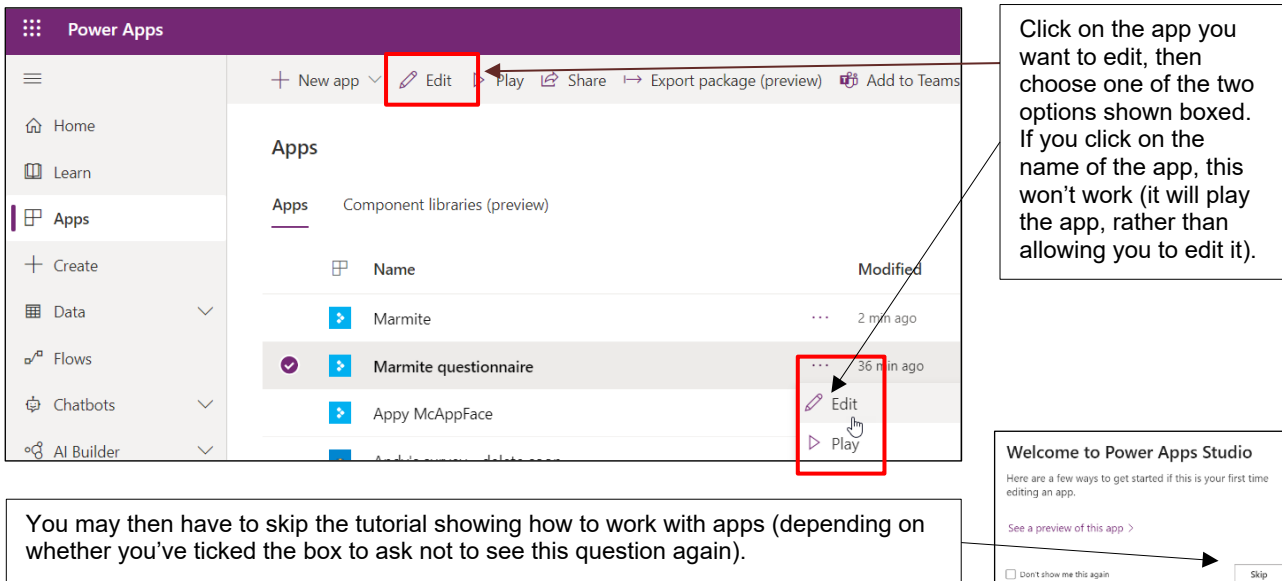
e) If you choose to save your file to Power Apps in the cloud (as you usually will), this dialog box will appear. Don't worry for now about why you might have different versions of your app!



Auto-save will prevent you losing much work if you close down your app without saving your changes, but be warned that this only kicks in once you've saved your file to start with.

Opening Apps

Once you've created one or more apps, here's how to open each:



Click on the app you want to edit, then choose one of the two options shown boxed. If you click on the name of the app, this won't work (it will play the app, rather than allowing you to edit it).

You may then have to skip the tutorial showing how to work with apps (depending on whether you've ticked the box to ask not to see this question again).

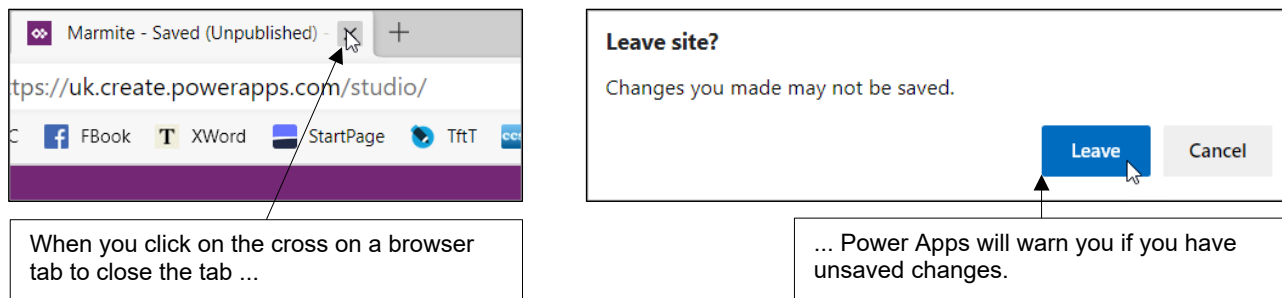
Welcome to Power Apps Studio
Here are a few ways to get started if this is your first time editing an app.
[See a preview of this app >](#)
☐ Don't show me this again



Important note: you can only edit one app at a time in Power Apps.

Closing Apps

To close an app, just close its browser page:



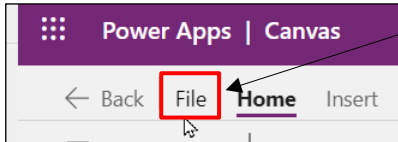
When you click on the cross on a browser tab to close the tab ...

Leave site?
Changes you made may not be saved.

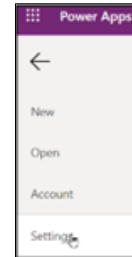
... Power Apps will warn you if you have unsaved changes.

2.3 App Settings

When you create an app, you can give it a name and an icon, and choose whether you want to view it in portrait or landscape mode (among other useful settings):



Begin by choosing the **File** menu, then choose **Settings** from the menu which appears on the left of your screen.



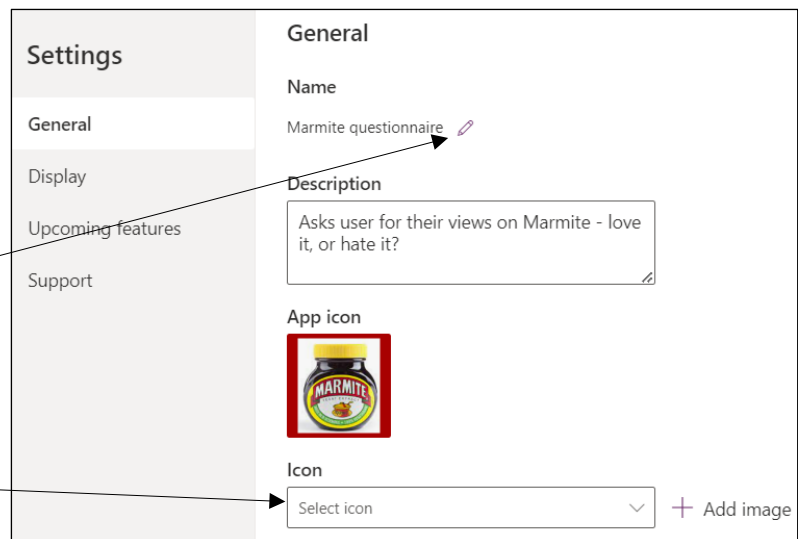
Changing the Name and Icon

Here's how to change the name of your app, and assign an icon to it:

Click on this link to change your app's name:



Choose an icon from the list (you can also browse to your own, as we've done here).

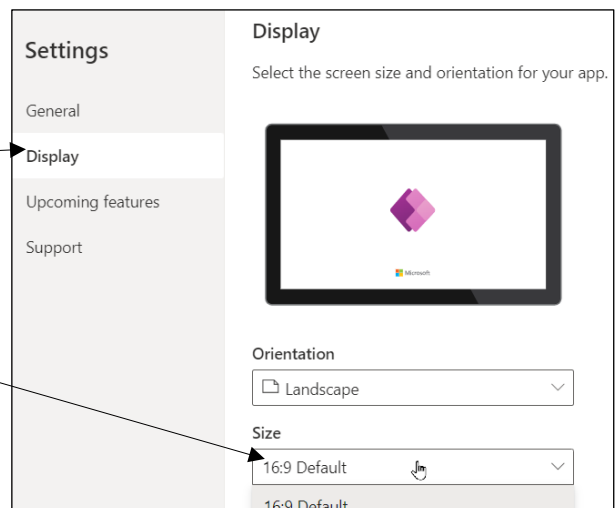
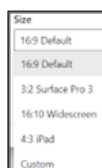


Setting Screen Size (Tablet Apps Only)

If you're building a tablet app, you can say how big your target screen is:

a) Choose to show the **Display** settings from the **File → Settings** dialog box.

b) Say what size of screen you're aiming for (you should also consider the settings shown on the next page at this point).



Changing and Locking Orientation

Apps are much easier to design if you can fix their view to either landscape or portrait:

- b) Choose whether to view it in portrait or landscape mode.

- c) Suppose you are designing a phone app, and a user runs it on their large laptop screen. What should happen? If you have **Scale to fit** turned **On** (as here), Power Apps will increase the size of all of your controls to fill the screen, which will probably look strange; if you have it turned off, Power Apps will use responsive layout to redraw controls on the screen according to its size. This will give better results, but will mean that you have to consider responsive screen layout throughout your app design.

- d) Locking your screen aspect ratio makes designing apps easier, but means your apps may look strange on (for example) square screens.

- e) Locking the orientation means that when a user rotates their phone, your app won't change. If you turn this option on, you'll need to confirm it:

Lock orientation

Locking the orientation may reduce the accessibility of your app for some users.

Cancel

Continue

- a) Choose to change the display settings for your app.

Settings

General

Display

Upcoming features

Display

Orientation

Landscape

Size

16:9 Default

Scale to fit

Scales the app to fit available space. Turning this off allows screens and controls to fill the available space.

☒ On

Lock aspect ratio

Locking this automatically maintains the ratio between height and width to prevent distortion.

☒ On

Lock orientation

Locking orientation keeps the screen in its current orientation, even when the device is rotated.

☒ On



For an easy life, turn all of the options on (as shown above). To design a professional app, you should probably turn all 3 options off and build responsive design into every screen of your app (no small undertaking), as described in a separate chapter later in this courseware.

2.4 The Power Apps Screen

Here's how the Power Apps screen looks:

The screenshot shows the Power Apps Canvas environment. The interface includes a top ribbon with tabs like Back, File, Insert, View, Action, Home, and Settings. A left-hand menu bar is visible, and a central 'Tree view' pane shows the hierarchy of screens and components. The main canvas displays a 'Marmite questionnaire' screen with a Marmite jar image, five stars, and a 'Vote now' button. A 'Properties' pane on the right shows settings for the selected 'iconExit' control. A formula bar at the top shows the formula `OnSelect = fx: kit(false)`. A zoom slider is located at the bottom of the canvas.

Click on this icon to hide or display the left-hand menu bar.

The Power Apps menu (here we're looking at the **Home** tab).

Tree view allows you to see each screen and its constituent parts.

The **formula bar** shows the value of current properties.

You can click on this icon to fit the contents of the current screen within its window again, or use the slider to zoom in or out.

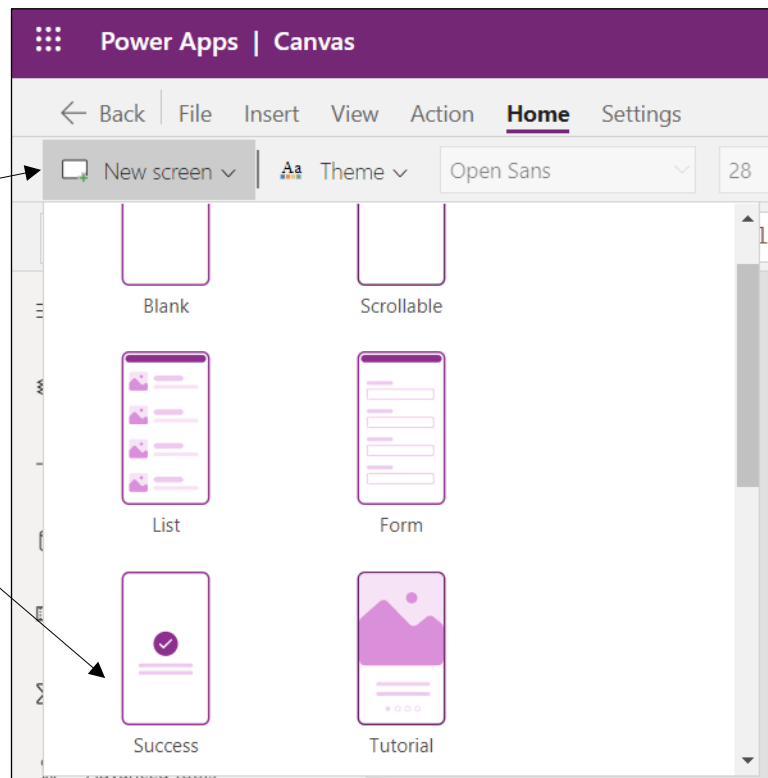
The **Properties** window allows you to see – and change – the properties of screens and controls.

Adding (and Moving) Screens

To add a screen:

- Choose to insert a new screen (regardless of what you currently have selected, Power Apps will insert the new screen at the end of the current list of screens).

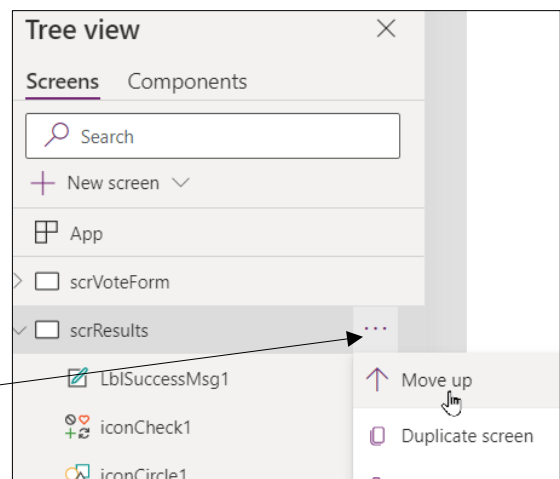
- Choose what sort of screen you want (for our app we used **Blank** for the first screen and **Success** for the second).







Moving Screens

Remarkably, you can't drag and drop screens to change their order, so instead use this menu:

Click on the symbol and choose to move a screen up (or down) the list.



WHAT WE DO

					
		ONLINE TRAINING	MANCHESTER OR LONDON	AT YOUR OFFICE	BESPOKE CONSULTANCY
OFFICE 365	Microsoft Excel	✓	✓	✓	✓
	VBA macros	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Office Scripts	✓		✓	
	Microsoft Access				✓
POWER PLATFORM	Power BI and DAX	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Power Apps	✓		✓	
	Power Automate	✓	✓	✓	✓
SQL SERVER	Reporting Services	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Report Builder	✓		✓	✓
	Integration Services	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Analysis Services	✓		✓	
CODING LANGUAGES	SQL	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Visual C#	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Python	✓	✓	✓	✓



