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**Why Get Involved in Your Local Green Space**

There are numerous reasons to participate in creating or enhancing your local green space.

By improving or creating green spaces, you contribute to making the area a more pleasant place to live. This enhancement directly influences the quality of life of the local residents, making their surroundings more enjoyable and healthier.

Moreover, your efforts help wildlife by establishing new habitats where they can thrive. This ecological benefit is a vital component of environmental stewardship and biodiversity conservation.

Participation in local green space projects also offers abundant learning opportunities. Whether you are interested in food growing or species identification, you can gain knowledge and skills related to your interests while working on these projects.

Involvement in these initiatives provides a tangible way to leave a positive, lasting impact on your community. It allows you to contribute meaningfully and sustainably to the betterment of your environment.

Furthermore, it empowers you to have a voice in what happens in the area where you live. By actively participating, you become an integral part of the decision-making process and help shape the future of your local green spaces.

Engaging with your local green space is not only beneficial for the environment and the community, but it also enriches your personal experience through learning and contributing to a collective goal.

**Forming a community group**

If you're considering starting a project or working on your local green space and you're uncertain about whether you need to form a community group or get others involved, here’s some guidance.

There are activities you can undertake on your own, such as litter picking. However, I always recommend engaging with your local community. Talk to your neighbours, family, and friends. You can even go door-knocking to reach out to people you don’t know to see who’s interested in getting involved in your project. This approach not only amplifies your impact but also enhances the rewarding experience of community work.

Engaging with others is crucial. I suggest just getting out there and seeing who’s interested because you never know where it might lead.

There are several types of community groups you can form:

1. Unincorporated Association: This is the simplest type of group to set up, ideal for volunteers who don't intend to own property as a group. It involves creating a constitution or a governing document that outlines the group’s rules and objectives.

2. Incorporated Group: If you want the group to be a separate legal entity from the individuals in it, you can form an incorporated group. This allows the group to enter contracts, own property, and bear debts independently of its members. For this, consulting a solicitor is advisable to ensure you're following the correct legal procedures.

3. Charity: Forming a charity involves more complexity. If you choose this route, professional advice from a solicitor is recommended to navigate the legal requirements and responsibilities.

By forming a community group and involving others, you can significantly enhance the effectiveness and enjoyment of your local green space project. This collective effort not only benefits the environment but also fosters a sense of community and shared purpose.

**Taking over land**

If you are part of a community group and have identified a patch of land that you wish to develop, whether it's for a community garden or transforming a disused area into a wildflower patch, here are the steps you should follow:

1. Identify Land Ownership:

The first step is to determine who owns the land. You can do this by:

* Talking to the council or local residents and businesses.
* Searching the land registry for ownership details.

2. Seek Permission:

If your community group intends to use the land for its purposes, buying the land is likely unnecessary. Instead, you will need to obtain the landowner’s permission. This will usually involve:

* Presenting a risk assessment and a detailed plan of your project.
* Ensuring your plan includes sustainable practices, such as who will water the plants and maintain the area in the long run.

3. Plan for Sustainability:

Make sure your project plan addresses the following:

* Budget considerations.
* A crisis management plan for potential issues.
* Clear roles and responsibilities, documented in a contract with the landowner.

4. Additional Considerations:

* Insurance: Evaluate the need for insurance to cover the activities and participants involved in the project.
* Fundraising: Plan for fundraising efforts to support the project’s financial needs.

By following these steps, your community group can effectively and sustainably transform a patch of land, contributing to the betterment of your local environment and community.

**Finding funding for your community project**

There are numerous sources of funding available in the UK for community projects. To effectively secure funding, follow these key steps:

1. Define Your Project:

Clearly identify what you want to achieve with your project. Many funders specialize in specific types of initiatives, such as those that support mental health or youth programs. Knowing the exact focus of your project will help you target the right funding sources.

2. Determine Your Budget:

Calculate how much money you will need to realize your project. Having a clear budget is crucial when approaching potential funders.

3. Set Up a Group Bank Account:

Ensure your community group has a dedicated bank account. This account should not be a personal bank account, but rather one specifically for your group’s financial transactions.

4. Utilize Funding Search Engines:

There are various online platforms and search engines designed to help you find suitable funding opportunities. These tools can filter through numerous funding pots to identify those that match your project’s needs.

By following these steps, you can efficiently navigate the funding landscape and secure the necessary resources to bring your community project to life.

**Fundraising ideas for your community project**

Many community groups need funding to kickstart their projects. Fortunately, there are various ways to raise funds. Here are some effective fundraising strategies:

1. Organise fundraising events:

Hosting events is a popular and engaging way to raise money. The type of event can vary based on your group’s skills and interests. Some ideas include:

* Quiz Nights: Gather the community for a fun trivia evening
* Charity Walks: Organise a walkathon where participants gather sponsorships
* Bake Sales: Sell homemade baked goods to raise funds

2. Creative fundraising activities:

Depending on your group’s creativity, consider unique fundraising activities such as:

* Sponsored Silences: Participants stay silent for a set period, gathering sponsorships for their effort.
* Hair Shaving: Volunteers shave their heads in exchange for donations.

3. Engage local businesses:

Local businesses can be excellent partners in your fundraising efforts. They might:

* Provide Community Funds: Some businesses have dedicated funds to support local initiatives.
* Offer Free Materials or Services: Businesses may donate materials or offer services like tree removal in exchange for publicity, such as a post on social media.

By leveraging these fundraising methods, your community group can gather the necessary resources to bring your project to life and make a positive impact.

**Raising awareness about your community project**

Publicity is a powerful tool for raising awareness about your community project. It can help attract more volunteers and garner support from local businesses and organizations. Additionally, effective publicity can inspire others to undertake similar projects in their own communities.

Here are some strategies to maximize publicity for your project:

1. Contact Local Media:

* Radio Stations: Reach out to local radio stations to see if they would be interested in featuring your project. A radio segment can be a great way to share your story and engage a broad audience.
* Newspapers: Approach local newspapers to cover your events. Journalists might be interested in attending and writing about your activities, giving your project exposure.

2. Share Your Story:

* Develop compelling stories about your project and its goals. Pitch these stories to various newspapers and media outlets to highlight the positive impact of your initiative.

3. Leverage Events:

* Invite media representatives to your events. Providing them with first-hand experiences can lead to more engaging and authentic coverage of your project.

By employing these publicity strategies, you can effectively raise awareness, attract support, and inspire others to take action in their own communities.

**Making your community space accessible to everyone**

To make your space as accessible for people as possible, you need to spot and remove barriers and create and support equal access.

Different people will need different things to get involved, so try and get as many people as possible to support with the planning of the space so that you can have as many perspectives as you can. You'll need to think about communication methods, physical barriers, and safety issues.

These might include:

1. Physical access:

* Ramps for wheelchair and buggy access
* Walkways and paths that are wide enough for a buggy or a wheelchair to turn easily
* Signage: Think about graphic signs, symbols, and braille
* Well signposted accessible parking
* Accessible toilets
* Baby changing facilities

2. Other access issues:

* Inclusion and safety for women, people of colour, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI+ community, older people, young people, and those from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds
* Communication: Think about different font sizes, Easy Read format, and other languages

You can find out more on the [Nextdoor Nature Hub](https://nextdoornaturehub.org.uk/).

You might not be able to make the space accessible to absolutely everyone, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't try. Try to do everything you can to make it accessible to as wide a range of people as you can.

**Learn more**

Learn more ways to Green Your Neighbourhood: <https://wildlifegardenproject.com/green-your-neighbourhood/>

To find out more about the subjects in this document, as well as information on insurance and bank accounts, visit the Wildlife Trust’s Nextdoor Nature Hub: <https://nextdoornaturehub.org.uk/>

**About Green Your Neighbourhood**

With thanks to National Lottery players, we have launched an exciting new campaign, Green Your Neighbourhood!

Green Your Neighbourhood will allow us to help communities across the UK to create or enhance their local green space, and is being made possible thanks to a grant of £10,000 from [The National Lottery Heritage Fund](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/).

The Wildlife Garden Project has worked alongside [Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust](https://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org/)to film community groups involved in[Nextdoor Nature Nottingham](https://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org/nextdoor-nature), the Trust’s movement for nature, to launch a series of films and a national campaign. Our mission is to make it easy for people like you to take ownership of your local green space and take action that will benefit your local area, your community and wildlife.