

Community Garden Starter Pack

Introduction

This pack aims to be an introduction to starting, developing and running a community garden or other community managed land-based project. It doesn't provide a blueprint of what a community garden should be or look like – such decisions are for your group and your community to make. Neither does it provide technical advice relating to specific gardening issues - FCFCG and other support organisations listed at the end of the pack can provide such advice. What it does do, in sections that have been deliberately kept short for ease of reading, is introduce the issues you're likely to face, provide general advice and offer routes to more specific information and help should you need it. The detail and depth in which you tackle each issue will depend on your site, your aspirations and the stage of development that your project is at.

Text in italics is described more fully in the Glossary.

A separate starter pack specifically for Scotland will be available in 2006.

This Community Garden Starter Pack converts into our City Farm Starter Pack with the addition of fact sheet No 17, *'Keeping farm animals: what do we need to know?'*

Feel free to photocopy anything in the pack you find useful.



The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

www.famgarden.org.uk admin@famgarden.org.uk

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Glossary

Support organisations



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What is a community garden?

All community gardens are unique, locally managed pieces of land that develop in response to and reflect the needs of the communities in which they are based.

Community gardens are as much about helping communities and people to grow as they are about plants and animals. They all grow plants but many also provide a wide variety of social, recreational, educational and environmental services, facilities and opportunities that are generated by and help meet local needs.

The usual driving force behind their creation, and the key to their success, is that through community gardens local people find appropriate solutions to local problems, and make a positive contribution to regenerating their communities.

Why start a community garden?

If you know of a piece of derelict, run-down or under-used land and think that your community would benefit from:

- a community café or art space
- a community composting or recycling
- a community meeting space
- community festivals
- a community shop or other community enterprise
- creative workshops
- educational school visits and after school activities
- English classes or other community education courses
- formal training, e.g. NVQ's
- girls' groups
- health promotion work
- nature conservation areas
- opportunities for volunteering
- play work
- rural crafts
- specific ethnic and cultural groups and activities
- sporting activities
- under five's groups
- work with and facilities for disabled people
- young gardeners/farmers clubs
- youth work

... and much more, then you should consider starting a community garden!





Will we be on our own?

No, you'd become part of the community gardening and farming movement that collectively:

- employs nearly 600 staff on nearly 1,000 sites across the UK
- actively supports and empowers thousands of volunteers (two thirds of the projects are run entirely by volunteers)
- attracts over 3 million visitors a year
- has a turn over of around £40 million
- and you could join the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens for additional support.

What is the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens?

FCFCG is a membership organisation for community managed gardens and farms.

FCFCG provides support, advice and guidance as well as acting as an advocate on behalf of its members; it exists to help meet the needs of community gardens, farms and similar projects, not to tell them what to do or how to develop - each community farm or garden is unique.

FCFCG strives to improve the quality of community gardening and farming available to everyone throughout the UK. We aim to support groups to find solutions to problems and concerns that are appropriate to their local circumstances and stage of development, promoting good practice at all times.

FCFCG offers newer groups help with:

- linking with established groups that understand your needs and can offer support (e.g. exchange visits)
- access to specialist experience and expertise; this may be a with a member of staff, a fieldworker based at a member group or another experienced and knowledgeable practitioner
- specific advice as your group develops, e.g. when trying to identify a suitable site or seeking funding for a particular project
- carrying out feasibility studies
- health and safety, animal welfare and child protection guidelines
- fact sheets and good practice guides
- model documentation for establishing a new group or charity
- newsletters

Our ethos at FCFCG is to base the advice and support we offer on experience gained within the movement and to work with you rather than imposing theoretical advice; with over 40 years' experience to call on we can usually provide relevant information and advice ourselves, or know someone who can.



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How do we get started?

Making decisions

It's a good idea to start off with a small group (a 'steering group') to steer ideas and activities and generate interest and support for starting the community garden. Later on you'll need to establish a more formal management committee elected from your 'membership'.

When a group decides to lease or own land, raise funds, involve volunteers or maybe have paid staff, it takes on legal and management responsibilities. It's essential to adopt a set of rules that say who is responsible for carrying out these duties, and how you will manage your activities. The most important rules governing the structure and organisation of your community garden should be set out in a constitution.

Visit other community gardens and ask about their organisational structures and constitution.

Roles that need filling

A well-organised group will:

- elect a chairperson, secretary and treasurer and delegate responsibilities and tasks as appropriate
- find out what skills members of the group have to offer; everybody has useful experience and skills to contribute
- make sure it has the necessary organisational skills to operate effectively and undertake training if needed - find out about courses for community groups from your local Council for Voluntary Service, or other community sector training providers
- seek out and set up a pool of advisers to help them, particularly for skills the group does not have or where professional advice may be required, e.g. solicitor, accountant, architect, horticulturist
- appoint a publicity or press officer to build contacts with the media, in particular with local papers, local radio, and regional TV and community newsletters – good press coverage will raise your profile with the local community, council and potential funders
- encourage people from all parts of the community to join it
- follow the rules contained in its constitution and Charity Commission requirements.

Who are our members?

This should be one of your first questions - and the answer is not always obvious. A supporter can be defined as anyone who wishes to be associated with your organisation and its aims and goals. Supporters are often people who are prepared to give time and talent as well as money, but are these people also your 'members'? Some groups call anyone who gives money a member. Some call anyone who happens to live in a specific area a member. Some call their visitors members, or have a membership scheme that people pay to join. You need to decide how to define your members, and include a definition in your constitution. Representatives from your membership may later become the management committee.

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The Constitution

A constitution is a legal document that sets out the rules for governing an organisation. It is necessary for your group to have one for the following reasons:

- to ensure the community garden's objectives are clear and agreed by its members
- to establish a management committee and define who can be on it
- to provide mechanisms for making decisions and resolving disputes
- to gain credibility with other organisations, potential supporters and funders
- to clarify liability, lines of responsibility and accountability
- they are required in order to become a registered charity.

The steering group should decide on a constitution, setting out the aims of your group and the rules for running it. You will appear more credible if you have a proper structure and are clearly representative of local people. FCFCG can provide a draft model constitution that you can adapt to your specific requirements.

There are a number of different legal structures and alternatives to a constitution. See the end of this section for places to find out more.

Charitable status

A charity is an organisation established for charitable purposes and registered under the Charity Acts, the most recent and far-reaching being the 1992 Charities Act.

The steering group should consider whether it wants to apply for charitable status. It may be necessary to become a charity if you decide to seek grant aid or donations or if you propose to hold land in trust for the benefit of your community. Some funding organisations will only donate to registered charities. A garden must have a written constitution in order to register as a charity.

Getting charitable status takes time and you will need advice and support in the process. To register as a charity the aims stated in the community garden's constitution must be charitable. To be considered charitable your group must meet one or more of the following charitable purposes, as defined by the Charity Acts:

- relief of financial hardship (poverty)
- advancement of religion
- advancement of education
- other purposes for the benefit of the community (those most relevant to community gardening include: promoting racial harmony; the resettlement and rehabilitation of offenders and drug abusers; the provision of recreational facilities which are open to everyone, or which are for particular beneficiary groups such as disabled people or the elderly; urban and rural regeneration and community capacity building; and promotion of health, e.g. through education, access to medical facilities or the pursuit of healthy recreation through sport).



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Companies

Some organisations choose, in addition to charitable status, to become a registered not-for-profit *company limited by guarantee*. This is often relevant where there is a large capital development or trading involved. At the time of writing, government is also considering introducing through a Charity Bill the new legal structure of Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This type of organisation will take on a legal identity of its own without having to also register as a company. A new social company is also now available, the Community Interest Company.

Management committee

Management committee members are responsible for ensuring that the organisation is managed properly, that its legal duties are met, and for promoting good practice in all of its activities.

Your group's constitution will set out how the first management committee will be appointed (usually through election at your first AGM), as well as how new members are to be appointed in subsequent years.

The management committee is responsible for and accountable to the members of your group.

Management committee members have specific legal duties and responsibilities and it is important that all who put themselves forward for election understand them.

For further information

- *Voluntary But Not Amateur* and *Just About Managing* are probably the best general publications for voluntary organisations, detailing procedures, different structures and issues that need to be addressed.
London Voluntary Service Council
Tel: 0207 700 8107
www.lvsc.org.uk
- The Charity Commission has additional models for organisations wishing to register as charities, either as an unincorporated association (GD3) or as a company limited by guarantee (GD1).
www.charity-commission.gov.uk
- To find your local Council for Voluntary Service contact the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS).
Tel: 0114 278 6636
www.nacvs.org.uk
- To find out about Community Interest Companies contact the CIC Regulator.
Tel: 029 2034 6228
www.cicregulator.gov.uk
- FCFCG has a model constitution for community gardens.



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How do we find a site?

Most community gardens start because an area of land is derelict or under-used, and people want to improve it. Others begin with groups wanting to find a suitable site for their project. Existing community gardens vary greatly in size from a few square metres to a park-sized area of several hectares.

If you don't have a specific site in mind, some possible land sources that may be available in your area for use as a community garden include:

- common land on a housing estate
- allotment plots
- hospital grounds
- land owned by a charity for public benefit
- land within existing parks and recreation grounds
- old churchyards and cemeteries
- school grounds
- urban fringe agricultural land
- waste ground and derelict sites.

A good starting point is to check with the local council what land holdings they have in your area, or whether your group can use part of an existing public facility. All councils have a Local Development Plan that sets out the authority's five-year planning policy for each area. This document is available to read at council offices and libraries. This may help you identify possible sites. If you already have a site in mind, the Local Development Plan will also tell you whether your authority has policies for the use of derelict open space. A community garden development can play a significant part in contributing to your local authority's stated objectives (see '*How do we negotiate for a site*' for more on this), and they should be able to provide good advice and support to your group. Ask to speak to the planning officer responsible for your area, who may be able to provide some useful additional information.

Draw up a list of possible sites. Get teams of 3-5 people to visit each site and report back to the steering group. Avoid trespassing and get the owner's permission if necessary for a site visit.

Having identified one or more possible sites consider the following questions:

- Is it a suitable size for what your group wants to do?
- Is it or could it be made accessible to everyone in your community?
- Is it or could it easily be made safe?
- Are there others interested in the site, e.g. other groups, businesses?
- Is there a current planning application for the site?
- What planning restrictions are there, e.g. listed building, road access, parking requirements?
- Are there rights of way or *easements* across the site?
- Are there services on site or easy to access, e.g. water, electricity, gas, sewers, drains, telephone/cable?

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- What was the site previously used for?
- Is the land *contaminated* by a previous use?
- Are there any plants or habitats that should be conserved?
- Who are the neighbours and are they likely to be supportive of a community garden?

If you find more than one site use this list to help decide which to investigate in greater depth. You may need additional advice and support (see '*How do we work with advisers?*'), including finding out who owns the site.

For further information

- The local development plan is usually held by the council's planning office. Most local authorities now have a website explaining how their services are organised.



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How do we negotiate for a site?

Do your homework and be well prepared before you have any formal meetings with the owner or the owner's representatives. The steering group should decide and be clear about what it wants and what it can offer before you arrange to meet any outside person or organisation. At the meetings avoid confrontation and conflict. Make a considered presentation of your ideas for the community garden: What do you want? What can you offer the owner?

What *do* you want?

You may want:

- a *licence* to allow short term (up to a year) improvements on the site which will inspire the community; *licences* can be renewed
- a long term agreement giving the group security of *tenure*
- a *lease* with a low rent
- as few restrictions as possible.

Most existing community gardens do not own the land they use; some are on *licence* but most are leased. The majority pay a peppercorn rent, i.e. a nominal sum.

What are you offering?

By putting the land back into use for community benefit, the owner will receive favourable publicity. For some owners, such as the local council, you can demonstrate that you will be helping them meet their service targets, e.g. education, facilities for children's play, leisure and recreation, composting, environmental improvements.

If the owner is the local council, it is important that your group understands how the council works, what its priorities are and what help it has provided to other community and voluntary organisations – this may give you an idea of what you could reasonably expect or request yourselves. You are likely to want the council not only to release the land to you under a lease agreement, but to give planning permission (if needed), for a community garden, provide advice, help and support and, hopefully, some funding. In some areas the responsibilities of councils are divided between two authorities, in this case you need to know which council is responsible for what.

To gather this information there are two important groups with whom you need to develop a friendly working relationship:

- 1** The elected councillors (regardless of political allegiance - all councillors will be interested in their areas and will be able to see the benefit of community gardens). The councillors most important to you are the ones who represent the area in which the proposed garden will be, and those who serve on the committees relevant to your garden, e.g. 'parks and open spaces', 'leisure services' or 'community development' (check your council's website to find out which committees are responsible for what in your area).
- 2** The council officers are the council's paid staff. They advise elected councillors and carry out council decisions. Find out from them where power lies, who has influence and where decisions are made.

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The ground rules of negotiation

- Whatever happens during negotiation, both parties hope to reach a mutually acceptable agreement.
- Each side is expected to be willing to move from its original position.
- Negotiation is likely to include a series of offers that give something of value to both sides.
- Firm offers must be distinguished from provisional offers. Firm offers, unlike provisional offers, must not be withdrawn once they have been made.
- A third party should only be brought into the discussion by mutual agreement.
- The terms of the final agreement should be clearly understood by both parties and put in writing.

For further information

- *Getting to Yes – The art of successful negotiation* by Roger Fisher. ISBN 1844131467
- Most local authorities now have a website explaining how their services are organised.



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How do we publicise and promote our garden?

Having established your group it is time to consider the ways in which you can promote what you plan to achieve to a wider audience, e.g. local residents, schools, libraries, community centres, shops, other local organisations, businesses, local authority officers, councillors and other local politicians.

Promotion of your group will help to:

- recruit other interested individuals (volunteers and members)
- raise awareness of what your group is aiming to achieve
- encourage people from all sections of your local community to get involved with your group
- attract support from a wider range of individuals and organisations
- attract funding and other forms of help.

First you need to do some research

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What local publications (newsletters, etc.) exist?
- What notice boards are there in your area?
- Where do existing groups and organisations get together?
- What schools are in the area?
- Which local groups and organisations regularly get positive coverage in local papers, or on local and regional radio, TV, magazine and news programmes. Why?
- Does anyone in your group, or anyone else you know have contacts with any of the above?
- Is there an organisation in your area, e.g. a Council for Voluntary Service that can help you with training and/or support in promotion and publicity?

If you have previously carried out this research, check that your information is up to date.

Make sure that press releases are checked with the group and that all members agree their content. Alternatively, agree within your group that you are happy to trust one person, or a sub-group, to be responsible for press and publicity and to act without checking each time.

Some ways you can promote your group:

- a simple event such as a family picnic which is open to the wider community (this could be in a local park if you have not yet secured a site)
- regular press releases for local newspapers
- an information leaflet with a tear-off name and address slip so that people can request further information or offer support
- posters
- articles in community and voluntary sector publications

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- a website which is regularly updated
- a simple newsletter
- having a stall at local events
- presentations to local organisations
- imaginative publicity stunts
- public meetings and other forms of local consultation.

In addition to the above, if you already have access to the garden site, or temporary facilities, review your publicity and promotional materials:

- Look at all your signs, notices, notice boards, leaflets and publications: Are they easy to read and simple to understand? Do they explain how your garden is managed, how people can enjoy it or become involved, and, if appropriate, become members?
- Remove any old material or out of date information.
- Do notices give positive or negative messages?
- Can your notices and signs be understood? Where possible use illustrations in addition to text.
- Is information available in languages other than English to suit your local community?

For further information

- *The DIY guide to public relations* by M oi Ali. Available from Directory of Social Change. www.dsc.org.uk
- The RNIB 'See it right' campaign aims to promote more accessible information for all. www.mib.org.uk and click on 'good design'
- The Allotments Regeneration Initiative have produced a factsheet *Promote the plot* detailing promotional ideas for allotment associations which are appropriate for community gardens too. Available to download free from: www.famngarden.org.uk/ari
- Friends of the Earth have produced several factsheets including *How to use the media* with advice on writing a press release and being interviewed and *How to design effectively*. Check out their website: <http://community.foe.co.uk/resource>
- The Media Trust works in partnership with the media industry to support the voluntary sector's communication needs. They have a programme of workshops and seminars. www.mediatrust.org



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www.famngarden.org.uk admin@famngarden.org.uk

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How do we manage our money?

Good financial management is essential because it allows your group to:

- plan, monitor and assess the development of your project
- ensure that money is being spent wisely and as agreed
- demonstrate that your project is well organised and an attractive proposition to potential funders and supporters
- meet legal responsibilities
- compile accurate reports to funders, supporters and other members of your group.

First of all find out what financial skills and experience you have in your group. If you feel your group needs additional support and advice, find out what organisations in your area offer financial services to community and voluntary groups. A number of areas have community accountancy projects that can offer direct services, training and advice. Check with your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), local council or library. Ask other established community groups how they organise their finances, who independently examines (or audits for larger organisations) their books and who gives them financial guidance and information.

General rules on handling money

- Always issue a receipt when money is received.
- Always obtain a receipt for any money paid out and get people to sign for any money they have received, e.g. expenses for a parking meter while on garden business.
- Always ensure that receipts are written in ink, not pencil. Include the date and a signature.
- Never keep more money than is necessary in the treasurer's home or on the garden premises. Make sure your insurance covers you for holding small amounts of cash (see 'What Insurance do we need?').
- Always pay income into the bank as soon as possible (if there's no local branch, many banks have arrangements with post offices).
- Never pay for anything from cash just received. Draw cash from the bank for expenditure (otherwise you'll get into bookkeeping difficulties which lead to mistakes in accounting for what you receive and spend).
- Open a separate bank account for the group so group money cannot be confused with an individual's money.
- Keep as many records and notes of transactions as you can, in one secure place, ideally off site.

The group *must* account for *all* money received and spent. These rules are essential and apply whether you are spending £50 or £50,000 each year.

What is budgeting?

A budget is a financial plan for a specific period, usually a single financial year (most organisations set their financial year from April to March). It's a tool that will help you in managing and controlling the finances of your

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community garden. For example, your budget will enable you to predict periods of difficulty, like not having enough money to pay a bill in a given month (a temporary cash flow crisis) - a problem many gardens experience. Making a good, and therefore useful, budget needs a thorough understanding of the garden's finances.

Preparing a budget

What follows may seem daunting but remember that outside help is usually available, or there may be someone in your group with relevant skills and experience.

There is a set of logical steps to preparing a budget; each step provides information for the next:

- 1** Look very closely at where you are now and make an 'Opening Balance' - this is a snapshot of the finances of your garden on a specific date. Set out and add up all monies you hold in cash and in the bank, plus any monies you are owed. Add up all the monies you owe to others (e.g. electricity bill) then deduct what you owe from what you have; this will tell you your opening balance.
- 2** Decide what developments your group has planned for at least the coming year. Better still have a 3-5 year plan listing the practical things you want to do, with estimates of what they will cost.
- 3** Prepare an 'Income and Expenditure Budget' - what money you expect to come in during the year and what you expect to spend, using appropriate headings, e.g. spending such as rent and rates, insurance and volunteer expenses, income such as grants, membership fees, sale of plants and fundraising events (use the same headings for your financial record keeping).
- 4** Prepare a 'Cash flow budget' - this is your Income and Expenditure Budget broken down into a plan of the flow of money in and out each month. Without a cash flow budget you may think you are better off than you are, e.g. having £400 in the bank in September, but forgetting you have the insurance bill of £400 to pay in October.
- 5** At the end of your financial year, prepare a 'Balance Sheet' summing up all your income and expenditure. This then gives you the opening balance for the next year. You may decide to have an accountant or auditor check your figures at the end of the year.

For further information

- *Voluntary But Not Amateur* and *Just About Managing* are probably the best general publications for voluntary organisations, detailing procedures, raising relevant issues and giving basic bookkeeping advice. London Voluntary Service Council
Tel: 0207 700 8107 www.lvsc.org.uk
- *Charity Accounts: charities under the £10,000 threshold (CC52)* and other leaflets are available free from the Charity Commission.
Tel: 0870 333 0123 www.charity-commission.gov.uk
- See also '*What are our legal requirements?*'

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How do we raise money?

Although fundraising and generating income is important, and the topic of getting money tends to dominate many community projects, it is not the answer to all your problems. Securing and spending money is only one of the ways in which your group can meet its aims. Obviously money is essential for some things but in-kind support (e.g. in the form of good advice, good volunteers and donations of materials and services) can meet many of your group's needs. It's important to remember the value of the voluntary time and energy given to your group by those who are involved in and support its activities.

Competition for funding

Every year there are more groups such as yours seeking support from a relatively static pool of funding - competition for funding is, therefore, increasingly stiff! If you expect others to fund your activities and help you to develop your garden it is important that you offer value for money and can demonstrate that your group is well managed. Ask yourself why, with so many worthy causes, should anyone give money to your group? Are you using the money you already have wisely and effectively? How can you demonstrate this to potential funders and supporters?

There are three distinct elements to fundraising:

- 1 Reducing your need for money
- 2 Raising money within your community
- 3 Securing funding from other sources such as charitable trusts, government, your local council, the lottery and companies

We will deal with each of these in turn.

Reducing your need for money

Any fool can spend money! Reducing your need for money comes down to your garden's forward planning, organisational systems and negotiation skills. Consider the following questions -

- Could you pay less for services or products you regularly use?
- Do you pay bank charges?
- Do you have clear financial controls that help prevent wasteful expenditure? (See '*How do we manage our money?*')
- Consider your insurance; is it appropriate and could you pay less? (See '*What Insurance do we need?*')
- Do you attract voluntary help and have good support systems for volunteers? (See '*How can we recruit and involve volunteers?*')
- Do you get preferential discounts from your suppliers?
- Do you practice the 5 Rs: Reduce, Re-use, Repair, Recycle and regularly Review?
- Do you encourage and make use of donations of services and resources (donations in-kind)?
- Are there any co-ops or buying consortiums that you can belong to?
- Do you get involved in bartering or belong to a Local Exchange Trading

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Scheme (LETS)?

- Are your financial systems and maintenance procedures effective?
- Do you get *rate relief* as a charity?
- Do you get involved with local *time banks*?

Addressing these questions and making changes could be real money savers!

Raising money within your community

This has three complementary elements:

- the donation of services and resources (donations in-kind) - how easy is it for people to donate services and resources to your group?
- income generation through the sale of services and goods and hire of facilities
- local fundraising activities.

Donations in kind – five ideas to consider

- 1 Set up a volunteers' notice board (similar to a job centre board) saying how people can get involved and help your garden. Advertise for any specific skills you need (remember to state when you need them, who they should contact etc).
- 2 Produce and distribute a 'wish list', asking for donations in-kind, e.g. plant cuttings, trees, flower pots, tools, timber, printing a newsletter, volunteers, skills, help with specific events or activities etc. Make it as easy as possible for people to give – be clear about what you want and include contact details, dates, times and location, etc.
- 3 Create as many opportunities as possible for people and organisations to donate to your group. If you don't ask and help people to give, you don't get!
- 4 Mention the things your group needs in a press release and as part of other publicity opportunities (see '*How can we publicise and promote our garden?*'). Most local radio stations have a 'community slot' or 'action line' where you could ask for the things you need.
- 5 Contact your local volunteer bureau for specialist services (see '*How can we recruit and involve volunteers?*').

Income generation - five ideas to consider

- 1 Most community gardens are wonderful locations for a whole variety of social events like barbeques, harvest suppers, picnics and games, barn dances, discos, treasure hunts etc. These can be community celebrations, valuable publicity opportunities, and by having an entrance charge - or other fundraising element - can generate income for your garden. Events can be related to the seasons and can also involve an activity of benefit to the garden, such as planting, digging a pond, harvesting etc.
- 2 Sell surplus plants, cuttings and produce
- 3 Sell items made on your garden (e.g. bird tables, window boxes)



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- 4 Process produce from your garden for sale (e.g. liquid feed made from comfrey plants or jams made from soft fruits).
- 5 Provide practical training using, where possible, recycled materials and charge a fee, e.g. 'come and build a compost unit' or 'make and plant a hanging basket using herbs'.

Local fundraising activities - five ideas to consider

- 1 Run fundraising and publicity activities or stalls at other local events, fetes, etc.
- 2 Set up a donation box at your garden in a prominent place with an enticing notice; make sure it is secure and emptied daily.
- 3 Set up a group of volunteers and supporters who are willing to give time to run or organise your fundraising activities. You could, for example, decide to hold four seasonal open days over a year to raise money, publicise what you are doing and attract new members and volunteers.
- 4 Think through a range of fundraising activities and critically consider which are likely to be successful for your group. Organising, running and clearing up after events takes time and effort; is the event likely to raise enough money to make it worthwhile? Examples of fundraising events include: jumble sales, car boot sales/stalls, raffles, fêtes, carnivals, tombolas, duck races, sunflower growing competitions, vegetable and flower shows.
- 5 Other local organisations or groups might be willing to co-operate with you in organising and running joint fundraising events.

Securing money from other sources

Fundraising can be hard work, time consuming and will have costs. It's important that you set aside the necessary time and resources to do it properly - rushed, inappropriate, inaccurate or poorly thought through applications are rarely successful and could ruin your relationship with a potential long term or regular funder. Remember, over 90% of fundraising is careful preparation, planning, relationship building and record keeping.

Only apply for funds to do the things that are included in your group's overall development plan (see '*How do we manage our money?*'). It can be tempting to apply for money simply because it is there, or because it appears easy to obtain. There is, however, a danger that your group might end up having to do all sorts of things that do not relate to the real reasons the group was formed in the first place.

It's usually much harder to raise regular revenue funding (running costs) than *capital funding* (e.g. land and buildings) – your development plan should take this into account.

Seek to develop a relationship with existing and potential funders. Keep good records of all aspects of your group's activities, remember to collect evidence of how well your project is progressing and don't be afraid to question and change those things that might not be going so well. Send newsletters or progress reports. Always complete any forms or monitoring that a funder asks you to, within the deadlines they require (see '*How do we monitor and evaluate our progress?*').



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Ensure the information you have on funders is up to date and accurate – funder's themes or focus may change from year to year, or they may close a particular fund.

The five stages of fundraising from external sources

- 1 Reach agreement about what your group wants to do and how you are going to do it. Draw up a clear overall three or five-year plan (see '*How do we manage our money?*').
- 2 Research potential funders thoroughly. What do they require? Is there an application form? Who and what will they fund? When do they accept applications? Is there a deadline?
- 3 Ensure each funding application is tailored to the individual funder – don't just send the same thing to everyone.
- 4 Submit your application in accordance with the specific requirements of the trust/company being approached, e.g. application form, time of submission, additional materials. If the funder does not provide a specific application form send a short personal letter, no more than one page, including an invitation to visit or meet and a summary of what you want funding for.
- 5 Follow up your application with a short phone call or note after any deadline has passed; unless the funder specifically requests no contact.

Preparing your application

All applications should include the "5 Ws":

- 1 Who? Describe your group.
- 2 What? Detail exactly what you want to spend the money on.
- 3 When do you need it? Allow several months for processing your application.
- 4 Where? Describe your local community.
- 5 Why? Explain who will benefit as a result of receiving the grant.

They should also include the "Big 3 Hs":

- 1 How are you going to achieve what you want to do?
- 2 How much will it cost in total?
- 3 How much funding are you requesting?

Other points to remember:

- Enclose some relevant support material (not too much) including where possible good visuals, e.g. photos or drawings, a detailed budget for the project and your last annual report and accounts (if your group is more than a year old).
- Always retain a copy of your letters/application forms in case the funder requests further information or clarification, and to enable another member of your group to answer queries if the original writer(s) are unavailable.
- Be prepared for rejection; an application may be turned down for a variety of reasons. It may be too weak, or miss the funder's specific priorities, or there may simply be no money left in that financial year or



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round of applications. Try to find out why it was rejected and consider applying for a different project after a year has lapsed.

- In addition to sending a thank you letter, keep funders informed as the project progresses; this will help to strengthen and further develop your relationship with them to potentially secure more funds. Send progress reports and other communications, if appropriate, e.g. annual report, invitations to events, photographs, children's work, publicity material and press releases that mention the funder. Two or three contacts per year is enough; too often and the funder may feel bombarded by the amount of paper they have to read.
- Be honest - spend money as agreed and consult the funder if it is necessary to make significant changes to the project they have funded – it can happen! Sometimes a garden may receive money from two sources, each for the same work. Get back in touch with one of the funders, explain and ask if you can spend the money on another specific piece of work; they are unlikely to say no.

Sources of funding

External sources of funding fall into four main categories:

- Charitable trusts
- The Big Lottery Fund
- Public funds
- Companies.

Charitable trusts

There are nearly 4,000 grant giving trusts in the United Kingdom (out of 185,000 registered charities), giving millions of pounds each year, but relatively few donate amounts over £5,000. You can find out about charitable trusts from:

- The Directory of Grant Making Trusts, published by the Charities Aid Foundation and the Directory of Social Change, provides more detailed information. Your local library may have them, or ask other local organisations.
- Some Councils for Voluntary Service, local libraries and other funding advice organisations provide information on appropriate local and national trusts, and will have information on fundraising training/seminars, sometimes with specific themes like how to make a lottery application.
- Community workers and similar local development workers are often a good source of help and advice.
- Other local community and voluntary organisations could also provide help. Look at their annual reports to see who has provided them with money and assistance.
- A number of lists of grant making organisations are also available electronically; access to the internet is available at many libraries, community colleges and community centres, or other organisations in your area may have access.



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- Some of the larger trusts and foundations have websites with useful information about the funding they provide, along with advice and guidance about making an application. It is important to read the guidance notes, and carefully complete all sections of any application form, if they have provided one.

The Big Lottery Fund

Information about the various types of grants available from the Lottery can be found on the Internet (paper copies are available on request). It is likely that there are other groups in your area who have successfully made an application; ask them for advice and guidance. Lottery seminars are regularly held and are a good source of advice and support.

Public funds

This includes receiving money in the form of grants, *service agreements* and other forms of contract from a variety of public sources such as: government departments, your local council, health authority or health trust, Welsh Assembly or Scottish Executive, etc. There may be other government-funded organisations operating in your area, which may, in turn, be able to fund or support your group, e.g. Groundwork Trusts, English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage and Environment Wales.

Companies

Local companies and local branches of national or international companies may be willing to support you. There are a number of ways in which they can help, such as:

- sponsoring an event
- donations in-kind (such as a second-hand computer, furniture and tools)
- giving preferential discounts on goods you buy from them
- making cash grants
- major companies often have a 'corporate citizenship' or grant-making arm themselves, often supporting groups local to their branches
- providing free use of their facilities or access to services and equipment
- loaning a member of staff on short-term *secondment* to help with a particular project or problem
- paying for some advertising in your newsletter or brochure.

For further information

- Funding websites include: www.access-funds.co.uk, www.volresources.org.uk/services, www.grants4.info, www.fundersonline.org, www.cibfunding.org.uk and www.grantsonline.org.uk
- Your local Council for Voluntary Service (or similar) may be able to help you find out about and apply for grants. Contact NACVS for your local office, tel. 0114 278 6636 or visit www.nacvs.org.uk
- The Allotments Regeneration Initiative has produced an information pack on fundraising for allotment associations which will also be relevant for



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community gardens. Visit www.famgarden.org.uk/ari to download a copy for free.

- Directory of Social Change publications include:
 - *Directory of Grant Making Bodies* - expensive at over £80 but very useful
 - *The Grant Making Trusts* CD-ROM
 - *A Guide to Major Grants Volumes 1 & 2*

Ask for a publications catalogue.

Tel: 08450 777 707

www.dsc.org.uk

(Reference copies should be available in your central library or at your local CVS).

- LETS - Local Exchange Trading Systems or Schemes - are local community-based mutual aid networks in which people exchange all kinds of goods and services with one another, without the need for money. Find out more from: www.letslinkuk.net
- TimeBank is a national campaign inspiring and connecting people to share and give time: www.timebank.org.uk
- The Big Lottery Fund: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk or tel: 0845 410 2030



The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

www.famgarden.org.uk admin@famgarden.org.uk

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What about membership?

If your community garden is, or intends to be, a membership organisation, it is important that you can demonstrate that:

- local people support the garden by choosing to become members
- through membership local people have a say in the garden's running and development.

Groups are often resistant to raising money from members - especially where local people (or many of them) are on low incomes, but there can be advantages:

- Money from members is dependable, which helps your cashflow, as long as you do what the membership wants. Think about your own area; do other voluntary and community organisations charge membership fees?
- Paying members tend to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the garden, they are less likely to drift in and out of involvement; more likely to be committed to supporting you.
- Membership demonstrates local support, especially to organisations that can provide help, funds, or donations in-kind so that they will, in turn, be more likely to support you.
- Garden members may give you access to useful contacts through their employers or other organisations to which they belong. This could lead to further offers of help, like donations in-kind; it's often who you know, and who knows them, that can help you in the future.

Setting membership fees

Once you've decided to charge fees you'll need to decide how much to charge. Even if you have fees now, when did you last raise them? Are they realistic? What proportion of your garden's running costs do they meet?

Membership fees should help to cover some of the running costs of your garden. It's not a good idea to set fees too low; it's better to set them at a level where you get some income from those who are able to pay, and can offer concessions to those who can't. When publicising membership, point out equivalents – for example, 10p a week makes over £5 a year, 50 members would generate £250 a year, or for the price of a pint of beer you can be a member of the garden for four months.

There are alternatives to fixed fees. You could:

- offer a range of ways to pay, e.g. weekly, monthly or yearly rate
- offer discounts if members provide volunteering services, such as delivering the newsletter
- have different rates for individuals, families, OAPs, those on low incomes, etc.
- charge affiliation fees to other local community and voluntary organisations
- get someone else, say an employer, to pay the fee.

But in all instances make it clear what the membership fees are paying for, e.g. "Your money will go to buy plants and materials, not admin costs."

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Getting new members

This could be the responsibility of existing members. Ask each member to find and recruit 3 to 5 new members a year. Talking to potential members is an important and effective way to promote your garden. You should mention your membership scheme on any other publicity you produce, along with contact details for anyone interested.

Membership records and renewals

As a minimum you need to know the name and address of your members and their date of joining. To report to funders and make sure you are attracting all members of the community you may also want to record details such as age, gender, ethnicity or income. It's also a good idea to ask for and keep records of skills members can share with your group.

Keep clear and accurate records; you are dealing with people's money and even small mistakes tend to upset people. Small and new groups can keep records and track renewals by hand using a card index file. Larger groups may need more complex systems.

Try asking your members to collect renewal fees from other members; this can help to form relationships and encourages the spread of information about your garden.

Larger community gardens, offering a wide range of services, may combine membership with additional voluntary giving schemes such as *covenants* and *give as you earn (GAYE)*, which give your supporters a means to further contribute to your group.

Remember: active members are your garden's most valuable resource. You will know from your records how to contact them and ask for help. Some of them will be future management committee members.

For further information

- Give as you earn (GAYE): www.allaboutgiving.org/giveasyouearn/uk



The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

www.famgarden.org.uk admin@famgarden.org.uk

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How can we recruit and involve volunteers?

Your most valuable resources are the people involved in your group. Whatever they do for the garden, and no matter how much time they spend, if they aren't getting paid they are volunteers - that probably includes you reading this now!

Community gardens can offer a wide variety of opportunities for volunteering, for the skilled and experienced and the - as yet - unskilled or less experienced. Volunteering can cover any activity and responsibility, from the volunteer chairperson with legal accountability and requiring a number of specialist skills, to the casual volunteer who agrees to deliver some leaflets three times a year.

Volunteers can be recruited from your own members and supporters, people who use your garden, other local residents, members of other local organisations, local school children or conservation work parties from organisations such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV).

Volunteering should be a mutually beneficial, enjoyable and rewarding experience – your group should benefit from the time, enthusiasm, skills and energy given to it by the volunteer, and the volunteer should be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by you to learn new skills, meet new people and make a positive contribution to the local community.

To ensure that volunteering on your garden benefits all concerned it's important to keep a balance between your group's capacity - ability, time and skills - to support and manage volunteers, and the amount of work that needs doing. Saying "yes" to everyone who wants to volunteer can cause problems. Some volunteers might have needs that cannot be met by your group. You need to offer friendly and informal volunteering opportunities whilst remembering your responsibilities to protect the public and the volunteers working with you.

Respect volunteers - set up systems

Once your group is established and certainly when you start practical work on your new community garden, consider recruiting regular and key volunteers in the same way as you would recruit a paid member of staff. Your group should consider the following systems:

- Volunteer job description (clearly defining the work that needs doing)
- Advertising (volunteer notice board, local community papers, volunteer agencies)
- Application process (including an application form and an informal but structured interview)
- References
- Criminal record checks
- Equal opportunities monitoring form
- Volunteer agreement – a written document expressing your commitment to the volunteer and what you expect from them
- How problems will be dealt with - simple guidelines relating to your group and the volunteer
- Volunteer handbook – a user-friendly leaflet containing information about your project and how you work

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- Induction - draw up a simple checklist of the things a new volunteer will need to know
- Regular supervision and support – a one to one discussion with the volunteer to find out how they are, thank them for the work they are carrying out, identify any problems and agree how they are to be overcome, assess any training needs and plan what they will be doing until the next supervision session.
- Training - this can take place at your garden or another venue and can be both formal and informal, however it should always be tailored to meet the needs of your volunteers. There are many organisations that can help you set up your own training, or provide training for you (see '*What training do we need?*').
- Records - keep information on how to contact your volunteers, when they are available, what skills, experience and interests they have, what they want to do and what they want to get out of it. Where someone is a regular volunteer consider keeping additional useful information, e.g. a contact in case of an emergency and any special medications. All records should be kept in a safe and secure place with restricted access to protect confidentiality; remember that individuals have a right to see their records if requested.
- Expenses - it should not cost people to volunteer so your garden should provide, where necessary, insurance cover, protective clothing, travel expenses, refreshments and a place to relax and have a cup of tea!
- Child and vulnerable adult protection - if your garden works with children or vulnerable adults, volunteers (and staff) need to be checked by the police (seek advice from your local Council for Voluntary Service or direct from the Criminal Records Bureau. We strongly recommend that volunteers and staff always have another adult present when working with children and vulnerable adults.
- More casual volunteers may require less formality than those in key roles but should still benefit from many of these systems.

Whilst some of the above will seem daunting, there is plenty of advice and support available for recruiting, inducting and supporting work with volunteers. Usually there will be an organisation in your area; the most common is a volunteer bureau or a Council for Voluntary Service (CVS). Many places have branches of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). Some local councils provide help and support or fund other bodies to do the job of providing volunteering advice and support. Ask other local groups where they've got help or support in recruiting volunteers. Volunteering England is a national organisation that could also help.

Developing a volunteer policy and investing time and energy setting up systems to recruit and support volunteers will help to ensure that both your group and all your volunteers have positive and rewarding experiences.

Remember - volunteering should be fun!

Make volunteering enjoyable - provide refreshments, organise social events and outings to other community gardens and treat your volunteers as the generous human beings they are!



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For further information

- Criminal Record Bureau (CRB): www.crb.gov.uk or tel. 0870 909 0811
- British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV): www.btcv.org
- National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS)
Tel: 0114 278 6636
www.nacvs.org.uk
- Volunteering England offer a range of resources for anyone who works with or manages volunteers as well as to those who want to volunteer. Publications include *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*.
Tel. 0207 520 8936
www.volunteering.org.uk
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Tel: 029 204 31700
www.wcva.org.uk
- Volunteer Development Scotland is Scotland's national centre for volunteering. Links to other useful sites including the Scottish clearing house for disclosures for volunteers.
www.vds.org.uk
- FCFCG has published a set of Child Protection Guidelines for city farms and community gardens, last reviewed in 2005. Available to download from our website.



The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

www.famgarden.org.uk admin@famgarden.org.uk

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What training do we need?

There are many definitions of training; a useful one within the context of a community garden and that applies to both people and plants is "to cause to grow in a particular way". Many of us make the mistake of viewing training as a cost rather than as an investment. Both your community garden as a whole and individual volunteers and staff will benefit from an investment in training and each other's growth and development. "If you think training is expensive try ignorance!"

Benefits to individuals and the community garden

- Your volunteers and staff are your key resource. Their ability to use their skills, knowledge, experience, enthusiasm and commitment to help your group meet its aims will determine how successful your garden will be.
- A group that cares about its volunteers and staff is one that recognises the importance of providing them with training opportunities that help them develop and contribute - if it doesn't, people may leave.
- Training provides the opportunity for people to upgrade and diversify their skills, and to move into more challenging roles on the project.
- Training enables your group to put into practice the policies and working practices that have been developed and agreed. For example, policies covering child protection, equal opportunities, or health and safety are worth very little unless practical training is provided so that all volunteers and staff can understand and implement them.
- When the group reviews its progress it should consider how training might help to maximise any anticipated opportunities and reduce any threats facing the garden. For example, training might be necessary before the introduction of new services or when founder members leave.
- As part of your general plan for the development of the garden it's a good idea to include a simple training plan, providing a framework for supporting your volunteers and staff.

The training plan – what are our training needs?

For a training plan to make sense it should fit into the overall direction your garden is taking, and take into account issues such as:

- What your garden/group is trying to achieve
- How you are going to achieve it (what you are actually going to do and a list of individual tasks)
- Who is going to do what
- Do they need training in order to do it?
- If yes, who will provide/fund the training?
- Make sure training is appropriate, e.g. if a problem is identified around poor use of a piece of equipment, the cause could be lack of training, infrequent maintenance or simply because it's too old and needs replacing

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- Sometimes it can be easier for an outside person to see what you cannot – FCFCG can provide advice and support to member groups around issues such as identifying training needs (see also '*How do we work with advisers*').

Training methods

Training does not have to be formal or classroom based; there are a wide variety of training methods that can be used on a community garden, for example:

- watching someone operate a piece of equipment and copying the action
- bringing a trainer in to run a session on financial planning, using practical exercises
- attending an off-site training session on health and safety with people from other voluntary organisations
- taking a self study course using television and study materials
- having a guided tour of another community garden.

You'll need to choose a combination of methods that suit the needs, skills and experiences of those receiving the training. We generally learn most effectively:

- when we want to
- when learning is seen as relevant to our needs
- by action, i.e. doing things
- by getting constructive feedback on results.

Or as a Chinese proverb puts it:

- I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand.

Evaluating Training

It's important to assess whether training is effective or not. Evaluate the training your staff or volunteers receive by asking two questions: are those who did the training still applying what they learned? Has anyone else benefited from the training they had?

Training can cause changes in practices both immediately and over time, so remember to carry out a follow-up evaluation (e.g. after 6 months), as well as during and immediately after the training (see '*How do we monitor and evaluate our progress?*').

For further information

- National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS)
Tel: 0114 278 6636
www.nacvs.org.uk
- Environmental Trainers' Network – a wide range of short courses for those involved in community and environmental work. www.btcv.org/etn



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The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

www.famgarden.org.uk admin@famgarden.org.uk

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Working with advisers

Why work with advisers?

Advisers with specialist knowledge, skills and experience may be invaluable to the development of your community garden. For example, a landscape architect could save you time, money and future problems by helping you turn your ideas into a sustainable, welcoming garden that can cope with future changes. A solicitor can check and advise on a proposed *lease* or contract and identify potential problems. A community worker could provide information about resources and services, or advice and support on local consultation. By obtaining relevant advice, it's likely that your group will save money, resources, time and effort.

Your supporters can also be your advisers

Your best advisers are often those people who are actively involved in supporting your garden, many of whom will have skills, knowledge and experience you haven't yet discovered! It's important, therefore to remember to ask the members of your group if any of them are able to provide the advice you need before seeking external advisers - you need to tap the great variety of local knowledge, skills and expertise that exist in every area, including yours!

External advisers and consultants

- It's good practice to speak with more than one specialist adviser before deciding who to use. You want someone who is good at their particular skill, but who will also listen to your group's ideas and not try to control you.
- There are a number of national, regional, and local organisations that can provide you with help, advice and support, or at least put you in touch with those who can (see '*Support organisations*').
- Start your enquiries by asking other groups in your area who they have used, how good they were and what the charges were.
- If you're asking advisers to do a lot of work for you, your group will need to agree a written brief, and later a contract which should include terms and conditions of payment. Even if an adviser agrees to carry out a lot of work free of charge, it's best for both of you to agree a brief, and for the adviser to clearly state what they are/are not willing to do.
- Whether you follow the advice you are given is up to your group – advisers are there to help and advise you, not to tell you what to do!
- Feel free to ask as many questions as you wish about the advice you have been given. If the advice you receive is very technical and difficult to understand, ensure that the adviser presents it in an easily understood form. The adviser is there to help, not confuse you!

Advisers on tap not on top

Do seek advice, particularly in regard to technical or legal issues, but remember that all major decisions and policies must be made by the community garden organisation, usually in the form of a management committee meeting. If an issue is contentious, publish the pros and cons

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beforehand, and hold a members' meeting to discuss the issue openly. Remember that important decisions need to be owned by your members/users.

Some sources of help and advice

- Local councils often provide general support through staff such as community development workers, and specialist advice through staff such as landscape architects, parks officers and tree officers, all of whom may be able to help.
- Local offices and local groups of national bodies can often help with advice and sometimes practically, e.g. with design and by providing volunteers to help with some of the heavy work (see '*Support organisations*').
- Local colleges or universities often have tutors and/or students keen to use their skills to support their local communities.

For further information

- FCFCG has a team of regional development workers and fieldworkers (experienced community gardeners who have received extra training from FCFCG) who can provide advice and support to FCFCG's members.
- Business in the Community manage a network of professional companies prepared to offer free help and advice - ProHelp www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/programme_directory/prohelp



The GreenHouse
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Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

www.famgarden.org.uk admin@famgarden.org.uk

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How do we manage health and safety?

Most of us would be shocked if it were suggested that any of our practices put peoples' lives in danger, but the reality is that some community gardens do not pay enough attention to health and safety issues.

The general duties of employers under the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act in ensuring the health, safety and welfare of their employees are outlined below. We strongly recommend that your garden - regardless of whether you have paid employees or not - apply these duties to everybody: volunteers, management committee members, garden members, other users and visitors.

What are the duties?

- To have a health and safety policy - have a working group that writes, implements, checks and regularly revises your policy. If you employ staff make sure they, or a staff representative, are part of the working group.
- To make the community garden environment safe with minimum risks to health - how often do you inspect and check the garden and its facilities? What problems have these checks identified and what have you done about it? A risk assessment checklist is available from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and is summarised over the page.
- To provide good information, instruction, training and supervision - what safety information is provided on the garden site? Can all users understand it easily? What health and safety training do you provide, e.g. how many of your volunteers (and staff) know how to dig or lift safely, or fill and push a loaded wheelbarrow?
- To provide preventative advice and appropriate first aid - how many of your volunteers, staff and members are qualified first aiders (or 'Appointed Persons')? When are they on site? What information do you provide to users, e.g. tetanus information? Does the garden display a clear notice stating where first aid is available? For the smaller community garden without facilities you should at the very least provide clear details of where to find the nearest phone for 999 emergency calls and other contacts.
- To provide appropriate welfare facilities - are any toilets and washing facilities clean and accessible? If there are no toilets on site can you negotiate for use of nearby facilities? Is there a comfortable and warm place where volunteers and staff can relax, make a cup of tea? Does this facility apply to non-smokers?
- To investigate accidents, industrial diseases and dangerous occurrences - where is your accident book kept? Is it accessible? Are there clear instructions about what to do, what needs to be recorded and who to contact?
- To have procedures for the safe use, handling, storage and transportation of articles and substances - the best policy is to minimise the use of dangerous substances on the garden (or even better not use any at all), particularly where children are involved, otherwise you need to state a clear policy and set of procedures for storing and using these substances.
- To provide insurance - what is legally required and what is recommended (see '*What insurance do we need?*')

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A simple 5-step guide to risk assessment

(Adapted from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)'s 'A Safer and Healthier Workplace')

- 1 Look for hazards.
- 2 Decide who might be harmed, and how.
- 3 Assess the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions you are taking are adequate or if more should be done.
- 4 Record your findings and take action where necessary.
- 5 Review your assessment at least once a year and when any major changes take place on your garden, e.g. building works.

Common danger spots in a community garden

1 Poisonous plants

If you don't have the expertise in your group to identify poisonous plants and fruits seek local advice, e.g. the local authority, an established gardening club, a local horticulturalist or landscape gardener. There are a number of books and official publications that can help and posters are available that display the most common poisonous plants. These plants may form an important part of your garden, but you need to manage them to prevent accidents particularly if children are involved or visit your garden. Make sure if you're growing poisonous plants that you, or who ever else is on site, knows what to do if an incident occurs.

2 Pathways and walkways

These are a major source of accidents. Keep them clear of obstacles and hidden dangers like trailing hoses or electric cables. If temporary obstacles cannot be avoided have a mobile sign pointing out the danger.

3 Use of wheel barrows

Do not overload; only move what you can easily manage. Load the barrow at the front over the wheel, not at the handles end. Avoid pushing the barrow over soft ground. Train staff/volunteers in their use.

4 Use of garden tools

These are also a major source of accidents, e.g. rakes and forks left lying face up on the ground. Proper storage and maintenance helps reduce accidents, as does training.

5 Power and electrical tools

Another major source of accidents. Where appropriate keep power and electrical tools locked and have a booking in/out system to monitor use; only allow those who have received appropriate training to use them. Some power tools require the user to be qualified to use them (e.g. a chainsaw or motorised strimmer) and that the appropriate health and safety equipment be worn. A qualified electrician must check all electrical appliances - even your kettle - annually.

6 Compost heaps

A compost heap that is not managed well can attract vermin. Signpost clearly what can/cannot be put on your heap and timetable regular maintenance into staff/volunteers' duties.



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7 Dogs

Many community gardens are dog free zones (with the exception of guide dogs). Dog faeces can have an impact on the land for up to 15 years. Faeces pose a particular set of health problems for young children and pregnant women. Remove dog faeces hygienically if it appears in your garden, or have a dedicated bin if you do allow dogs.

It's not possible to cover all health and safety issues here; we recommend that you visit other local groups and learn from them how they deal with the issues. You can also consult local professionals:

- Contact the Fire Safety Officer at your local fire station for advice and assessment of fire hazards on your site
- Your council's Environmental Health Officer can offer advice and support about food issues on your site (see also '*What are our legal requirements?*').

For further information

- The Allotments Regeneration Initiative has produced an information pack about health and safety on allotments much of which will be useful to community gardeners. Download one for free from www.famgarden.org.uk/ari
- Health & Safety Executive Publications
Useful publications include:
 - *Workplace health, safety and welfare - Approved code of practice (L24)*, for general advice
 - *COSHH: The new brief guide for employers (INDH 136 Rev)*, for when you might use any chemicals on the garden
 - *Everyone's guide to RIDDOR 95 (HSE 31)* for information about risk assessmentsTel: 01787 881165 for a publications catalogue
www.hse.gov.uk
- *Gardening Which?* magazine has produced a factsheet on poisonous plants to download for free. Visit: www.which.net/gardeningwhich/campaigns and click on 'poisonous plants'.



The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

www.famgarden.org.uk admin@famgarden.org.uk

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The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

What insurance do we need?

To operate a community garden you should have the following insurance cover:

- Public liability - to indemnify you against being held responsible for injury, disability or death of people visiting or taking part in your activities. £2 million cover should be obtained as a minimum; most groups are now insured for £5 million.
- Employers' liability - to indemnify you against being held responsible for accidents causing injury, disability or death of employees and volunteers.

It is also advisable to have the following:

- All risks policy - to cover the community garden property, such as equipment and perhaps money, against fire, flood, theft and any other specified risk. Many policies have a minimum claim level and/or an amount you have to cover on a claim such as the first £100.
- Other insurances - to cover you against any other risks considered important, depending on the activities the garden plans to undertake, e.g. a vehicle to carry materials or people for the garden, or for community garden work or activities that take place away from the garden site, or a group personal accident policy for all staff and volunteers.

You must display your public liability certificate and your employer's liability certificate in your main building if you have one or on your public notice board.

You are legally responsible from the day you take over the site, but we strongly recommend that you take out public liability insurance before any site work is undertaken, even if it's only temporary clearance work prior to signing an agreement, to protect your group against any mishaps on site.

Ask other local groups what type of insurance and level of cover they have, and what it costs them. Did they use an insurance broker and was the company helpful? Are they happy with their insurers?

Check all your legal agreements to see whether they require specific insurance cover, e.g. your *lease* (which may require a minimum public liability cover), any funding agreements and any temporary contracts that you have entered into, for instance hiring equipment or training people on placement.

Go to an insurance broker to get quotations and get them to explain to you in everyday language what is covered and in what circumstances, to ensure you have what you want. The FCFCG operates a preferential scheme with an insurance company that is familiar with, and has prepared, cover which is suitable to small community gardens.

Review your insurance every year and when you make major changes like employing a member of staff, buying equipment or investing in buildings. It's also important to ensure that you have enough cover; being under insured could make your policy practically useless.

For further information

FCFCG community garden members can benefit from our public liability insurance scheme. Full details on our website on the 'About FCFCG' page.

www.fammgarden.org.uk admin@fammgarden.org.uk

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What are our legal requirements?

It is essential that you comply with current laws. Each piece of legislation will have specialist organisation(s) - government appointed or voluntary - that can offer support, guidance and help to interpret the legislation applicable to your particular circumstances. For instance, the Criminal Records Bureau will advise on keeping police checks on volunteers and staff.

It's a good idea to seek advice and guidance on legal matters at the earliest opportunity. This applies even where you don't necessarily have to abide by the specific law, e.g. much employment law applies only when an organisation employs five or more people, but the principles are worth following even if you have one part-time member of staff and, where appropriate, can also apply to your volunteers. By involving officials, e.g. your local Environmental Health Officer, in discussions about the design of your project, you receive expert advice and have the opportunity to build a working relationship with people you might need to contact again in the future (and who might otherwise make unannounced spot checks to enforce legislation of which you may not be aware).

Employment

Even employees of small organisations and part-time workers have individual employment rights, such as entitlement to contracts, periods of notice, redundancy payments, claims for unfair dismissal, holidays, maternity and paternity leave etc. This is a complex and constantly changing field: up-to-date information is available from the Department of Trade and Industry's website or the book *Voluntary but not Amateur* (see For further information).

As an employer, you need to get the series of 'Leaflets for Employers' from the Inland Revenue, and bear in mind that trade unions actively involved in the voluntary sector (e.g. UNISON, TGWU, GMB and MSF) can offer helpful advice and often have a local office and advisers.

You cannot refuse to employ someone with a criminal record (The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) but as an employer you have the responsibility to protect vulnerable adults and children by making police checks through the Criminal Records Bureau and acting accordingly.

Fire

If you have - or plan to have - a building then invite the local Fire Safety Officer to assess your proposals, and the project site, to give advice and say whether or not you will need a fire certificate. It is good practice to seek general fire safety advice for the whole of the garden site whether you have buildings or not.

Food

If you intend preparing and/or selling food, either regularly or at one off events, then invite the local Environmental Health Officer for your area, employed by your local council, to give you help and advice.

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Finance

All groups should keep accounts and in most cases are legally obliged to do so:

- Registered charities, co-operatives and companies must, by law, keep proper books of account that have to include a statement of income and expenditure. This normally covers a 12-month period.
- Account books and statements must be kept for a minimum of seven years.
- Accounts must be independently examined by a suitably experienced person. Whether a professional audit is required depends on the type of organisation and the level of its annual turnover. If your organisation is a charity with £50,000 turnover or more we strongly recommend that you have a professional audit, although this is not a legal requirement.
- A registered charity must spend its funds in accordance with what is stated in its Constitution. If not, its trustees (usually the management committee) become personally liable and the Charity Commission could force them to repay any mis-spent money. Companies must stick to the aims included in their Memorandum of Association.
- Gardens employing staff are legally responsible for maintaining records showing income tax (PAYE) deductions, national insurance (NI) contributions and any statutory sick pay payments, and any maternity or paternity pay and pensions.
- Any community garden that trades, i.e. sells goods or services that are not directly furthering their constitution objectives, and has a taxable annual turnover of more than £58,000 (at April 2005) a year, must register for Value Added Tax (VAT) and keep detailed records. This figure is usually changed annually.

Legal agreements

Who is authorised to sign legal documents on behalf of your group will depend on the type of organisation you are registered or recognised as:

- Community garden bank accounts should have a minimum of two signatories on any cheque issued. The bank would expect that one is your Treasurer and the other should be someone else on the management committee, or a key member of staff. The bank will expect to receive an extract of management committee minutes at which signatories are decided. It is good practice to have three or four people as signatories of which any two can sign; extra security and accountability exists where three people need to sign of which one is usually the Treasurer.
- If you are a registered charity it is essential that the term 'Charity' or 'Registered Charity' appears on your cheques and any fundraising materials you produce. The registration number should also appear on your headed notepaper and any invoices you issue. Similar rules apply if you are registered as a company, *Friendly Society* or *Industrial and Provident Society*.



- Other legal documents, e.g. a *license* or *lease*, should only be signed by people authorised by the organisation. If you are a registered company then documents will usually specify Company Secretary or Chair etc. As a charity, or unregistered organisation, your management committee (or steering group if you haven't yet formed a committee) should decide who will sign legal documents. Everyone needs to understand the legal responsibilities contained within each document, but it is the individual who will be legally responsible (an unincorporated association or charity cannot itself enter into legal agreements; individuals act on behalf of the organisation).
- It is common practice for an 'upstanding' member of the local community (e.g. police officer or vicar) who is not a member of the management committee to become a 'holding trustee' and sign documents where assets (land and buildings in particular) are involved.

Other legal requirements

- If you store information about people on a computer you may need to register with the Registrar of Data Protection under the Data Protection Act 1984.
- You should not sell donated goods unless you either have them tested by recognised professionals, or display clear signs to the effect that the goods are donated and you cannot guarantee their quality and reliability.
- You should maintain an accident book and record all injuries that occur on the site. These can be purchased in most stationers or office supply stores.
- For the legal requirements of licences and leases see '*How do we find a site?*'
- For insurance requirements see '*What insurance do we need?*'
- For general health and safety requirements see '*How do we manage health and safety?*'
- For the legal status and rules of the organisation see '*How do we get organised?*'

For further information

- DTI website: www.dti.gov.uk
- *Managing Your Community Building*
Published by Community Matters
Tel: 0207 837 7887
www.communitymatters.org.uk
- *Voluntary But Not Amateur*, and *Just About Managing* are probably the best general publications for voluntary organisations, detailing procedures and raising issues that need to be addressed.
London Voluntary Service Council
Tel: 0207 700 8107
www.lvsc.org.uk
- Leaflets for employers and information about VAT and turnover levels available from the Inland Revenue: www.hmrc.gov.uk



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- For more information on the Data Protection Act: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk
- Criminal Records Bureau: www.crb.gov.uk or tel. 0870 909 0811
- The Liberty website www.yourrights.org.uk provides further information about the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.



The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA
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What records should we keep and why?

We need records:

- as evidence of decisions we make and what we want to achieve
- as a means of learning for the future
- to provide the committee, users of the garden, and supporters with evidence of what we have achieved
- to provide information by which activities can be reviewed, to support and manage the garden, and as the raw material from which we can produce reports
- to fulfil legal obligations, e.g. employment records or annual accounts.

Visual records

From the time you first start to think about developing your community garden keep a photographic record of the site. This will be invaluable for a variety of reasons:

- It will lift your spirits when the going gets tough - you can look back and see what has been achieved.
- It will provide useful visual information for publicity and funding applications.
- It will help new members to understand the project's development.
- Slides and videos can be used for presentations and talks to promote your garden, to help others trying to start their own community gardens and for training your management committee members, volunteers and staff.
- Video records can be useful, but keep as an addition to photographs, slides and drawings. A large collection of unedited video footage of the garden would be time-consuming (and possibly, dare we say, boring?!) to watch. Video needs to be edited into 5-20 minute presentations that have a purpose, e.g. the first five years of the garden, the garden in the four seasons, a successful training event, or a training video like health and safety in the garden.
- Keep sets of drawings, architects plans, designs etc as a visual record of all service layouts including water, electricity, gas, drains, sewers, telephone/cable and have all important elements marked, such as stop cocks, meters, drain covers and inspection points. This will help your maintenance programme and in case of an emergency.
- Keep planting plans, exercises and models made in designing the garden, student projects or anything else that provides historical records of development and may stimulate ideas in the future.

Written records

- Because many people may be involved in your garden in lots of different ways it's important that your record-keeping systems are comprehensive but simple, so that they help rather than hinder communication. See '*What are our legal requirements?*' for records that you must keep.
- Keep a 'day book' so that members, staff or volunteers coming to work or using the facilities know what has happened since their last visit,

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e.g. "Lock on tool shed has been changed; see Joe for your key". Record numbers and types of visitors to the garden to show who it is helping and help identify any groups you might wish to encourage.

- Keep a horticultural calendar, marking off what has been done and when, what has flowered and when, etc.
- Funders will also require you to report on how you have spent the money they have donated and the positive benefits to the local community that have resulted from their support. The task of reporting to funders will be made much easier if you keep appropriate records of the work, events and activities they have funded.

Contacts and members

Information can be kept on cards showing details for each contact or member: who they are, how they can be contacted, what they can do, when they are available, whether their membership fees have been paid etc. Remember that the Data Protection Act allows an individual to see personal information about themselves that is being stored; the main principles to follow are to keep information secure, only record the information you need, only record information you know to be accurate (not rumour or personal opinion) and only make it available to those who need it. Don't give anyone access to records unless they have a legitimate need to see the information. You may also wish to consider seeking signed permission from individuals if you want to store the information electronically, e.g. on a computer database.

Events and activities

If you hold events, keep a file recording relevant information, e.g. who designed the posters; where the bouncy castle came from; who was willing to help. Make notes of what went well, what didn't work and why, as well as numbers of participants, funds raised, etc. This will save a lot of time in the future and make it easier for new people to get involved in organising events. Keep records of activities in the same way.

If your event or activity was made possible by funders, make sure you keep note of the information they require, and report back within deadlines.

Comments book and suggestions box

Have a comments book and/or suggestions box in a secure, prominent place on site and encourage visitors and supporters to use it. Publicise your complaints procedure so visitors and supporters know how they can raise any concerns they might have and make sure you respond to any concerns raised within agreed time limits. Have one group member who regularly monitors these comments and brings a report to your management committee meetings.

Posters and notices

- Keep up-to-date copies of all policies and legal documents, e.g. whether it is permitted to use fertilisers; who can become members of the



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garden; who they should contact if they would like to volunteer etc. Make sure all staff and volunteers know where to find this information.

- Display key information in everyday language, e.g. whether dogs are allowed in the garden. Consider using drawings as well as text to communicate information whenever possible and translating information into languages appropriate to your local community.
- Try to avoid too many “don’t do” notices, as they can create an unwelcoming atmosphere. Too much information (notice overload) can be as counterproductive as too little.

For further information

- For more information on the Data Protection Act:
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk



The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

www.famgarden.org.uk admin@famgarden.org.uk

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Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

How do we monitor and evaluate our progress?

Monitoring is keeping records of quantities of things – dates, numbers and types of activities, numbers and frequencies of visitors, age/gender/ethnicity of visitors, quantities of plants produced/bought/sold, money spent, suggestions made, etc.

Evaluation is taking these facts and figures and using them to weigh up how good and effective your community garden is.

Effective evaluation will help you:

- To decide what to do in the future – e.g. whether to repeat certain activities or events.
- To improve what you do in the future – e.g. using visitors comments about what they liked or disliked.
- To learn from your mistakes and successes – e.g. running more of a popular event, or reviewing membership fees.
- To decide on future training or staffing needs – e.g. realising that you need a full-time shop manager or horticulturalist.
- To report back to your members, supporters and funders about your progress – e.g. that you achieved the membership levels you'd hoped for, or a new group of visitors enjoyed the garden for the first time.
- To chart your progress from month to month, year to year, e.g. for tracking financial growth.
- To report back to the organisations who are (or may consider in the future) funding your project – to demonstrate how resources are being used and the impact you are making.

A useful way to help you evaluate your garden is to use the concept of 'quality in service delivery'. In this context, 'service delivery' is anything your group or the garden does or provides for local people, and it's the views of the local people that tell you whether you've been successful or not.

There are four reasons for you to measure the quality of what your garden is offering:

- 1 To demonstrate to your members and supporters that you have achieved your objectives.
- 2 To learn by your experiences, positive and negative, in order to improve the experience of all who use the garden in the future.
- 3 To help those involved with the garden to manage its development and change.
- 4 To demonstrate value for money to those who give you grants, donations or sponsorship.

For further information

- The Charities Evaluation Service website has a basic guide to evaluation and monitoring which you can download for free: www.ces-vol.org.uk
- Commission for Racial Equality's website has information on ethnic monitoring, why it is important and how to do it: www.cre.gov.uk

www.famgarden.org.uk admin@famgarden.org.uk

Glossary

Definitions of terms that appear in *italics* in the text.

Capital funding	Money given to purchase fixed assets such as buildings and equipment (usually over £100), and start-up costs of a new enterprise including for small equipment such as hand tools.
Company limited by guarantee	A company without shareholders. Any profits are reinvested in the company. All members must guarantee to pay a nominal sum (usually £1, and almost always no more than £10) if the company becomes insolvent.
Contaminated land	Land on, or in which can be found, waste or chemicals that could be dangerous to the health of people working on the land or eating anything produced from it.
Covenants	Money pledged to a charity by a taxpayer (individual or company) for a period of 4 years or more, where the charity can reclaim tax paid.
Data protection	The storing of personal information is regulated under the Data Protection Act, which requires organisations to register for certain uses.
Easements	Special rights or restrictions that a property may be subject to. A solicitor assisting with the purchase of land should draw these to the attention of the purchaser before the transaction is completed.
Friendly Society	A mutual assurance association providing benefits for members and their families. They usually only deal with investments, rather than the running of projects.
Give as you earn (GAYE)	Donations to a charity taken out of a salary before tax, making it cheaper for the donor (or they may donate a greater amount!); employers have to agree to process the paperwork.
Industrial and Provident Society	Similar to Friendly Societies where members act together as a commercial trading organisation; commonly known as co-operatives.
Lease	Contract with a landowner setting out what both parties agree to do, and not to do.



Licence	A temporary agreement granting permission to occupy a premises to which the Landlord and Tenant Act does not apply.
Rate relief	Registered charities legally only have to pay 20% of local council business rates (but you have to apply in writing), and each council additionally has discretion to waiver all or part of that 20%.
Secondment	An organisation agrees to 'loan' a member of staff for a period of time to your project; salary and most other costs are borne by the donor organisation.
Service agreement	A contract for the supply of services, such as horticultural therapy training for adults with mental illness, made with a health authority or other public body.
Tenure	The right to property, granted by custom and/or law, which may include land, trees and other plants, animals and water.
Time bank	A way of matching the skills and experience of volunteers with organisations or individuals that need them.
Unincorporated association	An organisation governed by its constitution or rules and which does not have to register with any regulatory body unless it is legally charitable.



The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

www.famgarden.org.uk admin@famgarden.org.uk

Support organisations

These are some of the support organisations that may be able to offer you help or advice on issues raised in this pack. It's not an exhaustive list – ask other groups where they've found useful help and advice.

Allotments Regeneration Initiative (ARI)

Aims to increase allotment uptake by individuals and community groups.
The GreenHouse, Hereford Street, Bristol BS3 4NA
Tel: 0117 9631 551
www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari

Black Environment Network (BEN UK)

Established to promote equality of opportunity with respect to minority ethnic groups in the preservation, protection and development of the environment.
1st Floor, 60 High Street, Llanberis LL55 4EU
Tel: 01286 870 715
www.ben-network.org.uk

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)

Supporting conservation volunteering opportunities throughout the UK and across the globe.
Conservation Centre, 163 Balby Road, Doncaster DN4 0RH
Tel: 01302 572 244
www.btcv.org

Charity Commission

Harmsworth House, 13 – 15 Bouverie Street, London EC4Y 8DP
Tel: 0870 333 0123
www.charity-commission.gov.uk

Community Composting Network

Provides advice and support to community composting projects across the UK.
67 Alexandra Road, Sheffield S2 3EE
Tel: 0114 258 0483
www.communitycompost.org

Community Matters

The nationwide federation for community associations and similar organisations.
12 – 20 Baron Street, London N1 9LL
Tel: 020 7837 7887
www.communitymatters.org.uk

Community Service Volunteers (CSV)

The UK's largest volunteering and training organisation.
237 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NJ
Tel: 020 7278 6601
www.csv.org.uk

Companies House

Crown Way, Maindy, Cardiff CF14 3UZ
Tel: 0870 333 3636
www.companieshouse.gov.uk



Data Protection Registrar

Water Lane, Wilmslow SK9 5AX
Tel: 01625 545 745
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Development Trusts Association (DTA)

Encouragement and support for community enterprises and development trusts.
National Office, 3 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ
Tel: 0845 458 8336
www.dta.org.uk

Environmental Law Foundation

This London based charity is a network of lawyers specialising in environmental matters and giving free advice.
Suite 309, 16 Baldwins Gardens, Hatton Square, London EC1N 7RJ
Tel: 020 7404 1030
www.elflaw.org

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG)

Promotes, supports and represents city farms, community gardens and school farms throughout the UK.
The GreenHouse, Hereford Street, Bristol BS3 4NA
Tel: 0117 923 1800
www.famgarden.org.uk

Groundwork UK

Environmental regeneration charity with a network of local trusts working in partnership with local people.
85 – 87 Cornwall Street, Birmingham B3 3BY
Tel: 0121 236 8565
www.groundwork.org.uk

Health & Safety Executive

Information line: 08701 545 500
Publications: 01787 881165
www.hse.gov.uk

Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA)

Dedicated to researching and promoting organic gardening, farming and food.
Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry CV8 3LG
Tel: 024 7630 3517
www.hdra.org.uk

Industrial Common Ownership Movement

Non-profit membership organisation promoting and representing democratic employee owned businesses throughout the UK
Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester M60 0AS
Tel: 0161 246 2959
www.icof.co.uk

Letslink UK

Support for and information about Local Exchange Trading Systems.
12 Southcote Road, London N19 5BJ
Tel: 020 7607 7852
www.letslinkuk.org



National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS)

A network of Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) throughout England. Advice, information, publications, training, events, news and resources.
177 Arundel Street, Sheffield S1 2NU
Tel: 0114 278 6636
www.nacvs.org.uk

National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners

Promotion, protection and preservation of allotment gardening.
Hunters Road, Corby NN17 1JE
Tel: 01536 266 576
www.nsalg.org.uk

Northern Ireland Environment Link

Networking body for organisations in Northern Ireland with an interest in the environment.
89 Loopland Drive, Belfast BT6 9DW
Tel: 028 9045 5770
www.nienvironmentlink.org

Permaculture Association (Britain)

Promotes an ecological approach to design of gardens and gardening activities
Permaculture Association (Britain), London, WC1N 3XX
Tel: 0845 458 1805
www.permaculture.org.uk

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

Represent and campaign for voluntary organisations, volunteers and communities in Scotland.
Mansfield Traquair Centre, 15 Mansfield Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6BB
Tel: 0131 556 3882
www.scvo.org.uk

The Sensory Trust

Advice on inclusive design for public spaces. Projects, examples, publications, services and newsletter.
Watering Lane Nursery, Pentewan, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 6BE
Tel: 01726 222 900
www.sensorytrust.org.uk

Soil Association

Campaigning and certification organisation for organic food and farming.
Bristol House, 40 – 56 Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6BY
Tel: 0117 9314 5000
www.soilassociation.org

Thrive

National charity whose aim is to enable positive change in the lives of disabled and disadvantaged people through the use of gardening and horticulture.
The Geoffrey Udall Centre, Beech Hill, Reading RG7 2AT
Tel: 0118 988 5688
www.thrive.org.uk



Volunteering England

Works to promote volunteering as a powerful force for change, both for those who volunteer and for the wider community.

Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL

Tel: 020 7520 8900

www.volunteering.org.uk

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Represent and campaign for voluntary organisations, volunteers and communities in Wales.

Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF10 5FH

Tel: 029 204 31700

www.wcva.org.uk

The Wildlife Trusts

The UK's leading conservation charity exclusively dedicated to wildlife.

The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, Nottingham NG24 1WT

Tel: 0870 036 7711

www.wildlifetrusts.org.uk

Women's Environmental Network

Charity educating, informing and empowering women and men who care about the environment.

PO Box 30626, London E1 1TZ

Tel: 020 7481 9004

www.wen.org.uk



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www.famgarden.org.uk

admin@famgarden.org.uk