

*Involving
Communities
in Forestry. . .*



*. . .through community
participation*

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FOREWORD

"There is an exciting economic future for the forest industry in Britain, but it will only be realised in a sustainable sense if it is supported by appropriate policies and strategies which recognise the interests the community has in forests - beyond the production of wood."

I said this on appointment to the post of Director General of the Forestry Commission, and I am now delighted that the Forestry Authority is publishing this Forestry Practice Guide which gives sound advice to those owners and managers who seek to involve communities in forestry.

This Guide shows that involving communities can ensure that a much wider cross section of people will be able to draw on the full range of social, economic, ecological, cultural, and spiritual benefits associated with the sustainable management of our woods and forests, for present and for future generations in Britain. Woods and forests are incredibly rich places. Working with the community will not only lead to a more rounded understanding of the potential contribution that forestry can make but also in many cases may add to the commercial value for the present owner.

David Bill

Director General
Forestry Commission

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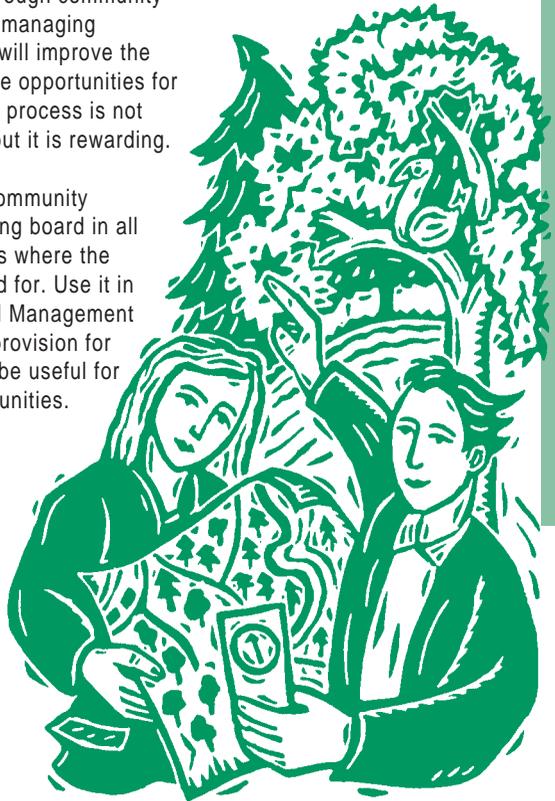
INTRODUCTION

Community woodlands are local woodlands for people to enjoy, where the needs and wishes of local people are important in planning and management. Woodlands, in which to walk, picnic or play, see wildlife or the changing seasons, or simply to view as part of the local landscape, have always been valued. But in the last decade or so, the value of such use has been better appreciated, not only in Britain but around the world. In Britain this formal recognition received a boost in 1988 when the Countryside and Forestry Commissions announced a joint programme to establish 12 new community forests by the year 2000.

For local people to gain real benefit from community woodlands, they need to feel part of the process. They need to be involved in developing the worth of the woodlands as an asset to the community. Involving people through community participation is fundamental to creating and managing successful community woodlands. Success will improve the environment in which people live and provide opportunities for individual and community development. The process is not always straightforward or easy to achieve, but it is rewarding.

This Guide provides advice on successful community participation. Use it as a checklist or sounding board in all Forestry Authority Woodland Grant Schemes where the Community Woodland Supplement is applied for. Use it in relation to existing woodlands where Annual Management Grant is being paid on the basis of special provision for access and recreation. This Guide will also be useful for Forest Enterprise woodlands close to communities.

If community woodlands are to fulfil their potential, managers must be as much concerned with the needs of people using woodland as with the needs of trees.



UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

What is community participation in woodland management?

Community participation includes any activity in which local people are actively considered as an integral and valued part of the woodland management process. The ladder of participation (adapted from American planner Sherry Arnstein, 1969) defines the levels of community participation from consultation to total community control. Usually, it is not possible to progress up the ladder, unless the previous level has been achieved. The levels from total agency or landowner control to information are not considered true participation.

It is important to find out at an early stage what level of participation local people want. This must then be reconciled with what the landowner wants, as well as the wishes of other partners, the resources available and the ability to deliver. Do not assume you know what local people want; ask them. Views on the appropriate level of community participation may develop over time and so goals should remain flexible, but the agency or landowner should work towards a greater rather than a lesser level of community participation, if real involvement is sought. Be aware though, that trying to force participation beyond the desire of local people can alienate the community and appear patronising.



Levels of community participation

Community Control

The community is in full control of a scheme and makes the decisions regarding resource allocation, use and management. Agency involvement is available, but at the direction of the group.

Full Community Involvement

The community is undertaking substantial aspects of the community woodland programme without significant input from the agency. The agency is increasingly taking a back seat and a local group may be established to formalise community involvement.

Partial Community Involvement

Members of the community who have become interested through consultation are encouraged by the agency to become involved with 'appropriate' aspects of the planning, implementation and management of the community woodland scheme.

Consultation

Members of the community are actively encouraged to offer ideas and options that can be incorporated into the scheme if appropriate.

Information

Telling people what is going to happen without recruiting support or offering the opportunity to comment.

Persuasion

Securing a commitment to an objective of community participation and a structure to achieve it within the agency.

Agency Control

A scheme is provided by the agency or land owner with no actual or intended reference to the community.

Adapted from Arnstein (1969)

The top down approach where an agency or land owner tries to generate community participation is the most vulnerable level to failure. Most examples of successful community participation have been initiated by local people and have been related to their specific needs in the local environment. Agencies must foster enthusiasm for local woodlands, which will hopefully result in the community deciding to become involved and then approaching the agency for help. This level of 'partial or full community involvement' is most likely to meet the needs of local people. Examples of community control of woodlands are rare. This is probably a reflection of the reluctance of agencies or landowners to release control, and a lack of confidence by local people in their ability to take overall control.

In most areas where there is a desire to create community woodlands, there is a whole culture of 'them and us' in which the 'authorities' make decisions and provision largely without reference to local people, and local people have no faith that their views will influence decisions. Community forestry seeks to reduce this divide and as initiatives progress, local people are likely to become more willing to participate as their involvement is seen to bear fruit. With the post-Rio 'Local Agenda 21' consultations taking place around the country, there are many opportunities to integrate woodland management into wider discussions about local sustainable development. The local authority is the usual host for such meetings.

Who is the community?

The first step in the process of community participation is to define the relevant communities. This is a difficult task. However, there are two principal types of community: 'communities of neighbourhood' and 'communities of interest'.

Where the focus of community participation is a particular site then an approach to the community of neighbourhood will usually be most appropriate. This community is defined entirely geographically, as those people who live around and use the site and there will often be no other community bond within this group. The principal interest of these people will be how the site can be managed to meet their needs and desires. One important role of community woodland initiatives is to draw local people together by this common focus and so create active and fulfilling communities of common interest around a woodland site out of passive communities of neighbourhood.

For community forestry initiatives set up on a town or city scale, community participation in the initiative is best developed through communities of interest. Each community of interest will have a different focus and different reasons for becoming involved with community forestry. The approach to each community of interest must be tailored to make clear how their participation and support is relevant to their interests as well as to those of the initiative.



Some communities of interest are relatively easy to reach. For example, schools, conservation volunteers, Scouts and Guides are often keen to play a role in a new project, especially where it is tailored to meet a specific interest such as the national curriculum or natural history. Other communities are much more difficult to reach. They may feel remote from the countryside, preoccupied with daily necessities such as employment or health and be cynical about money spent on what are perceived to be low priorities. Making the project relevant to them is a greater task and requires patience, persistence and commitment. Many who live in the urban fringe are not active citizens and may not associate with any community of interest. This is the most difficult group to involve but as support grows through contact with communities of interest, it will become easier to communicate relevance to all residents. Identification of individual opinion formers can be a key into otherwise inaccessible communities.

Examples of communities of interest

Landowning

Landowners & occupiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private and public Local Authorities Country Landowners Association Scottish Landowners Federation British Coal Railtrack Forestry Commission English Nature Scottish Natural Heritage Countryside Council for Wales Department of Transport National Trust National Trust for Scotland Regional Water Companies & Authorities Royal Society for the Protection of Birds The Wildlife Trusts Partnership
Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owner occupiers & tenants National Farmers Union Farming & Wildlife Advisory Groups Young Farmers Clubs
Woodland interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landowners and tenants Forestry Commission Woodland Trust National Trust National Trust for Scotland Local Authorities.

Business

Local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local companies and national companies Confederation of British Industry Rotary Clubs Chambers of Commerce.
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Citizens

Local environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents associations Parish or Community Councils Parish or Community meetings.
Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eg Anglers' Federation local fishing clubs British Horse Society local riding clubs

	<p>orienteering motor scrambling clubs.</p>
Leisure	<p>eg Regional Arts Boards painting clubs Ramblers' Association.</p>
Community farms	<p>National Federation of City Farms local city farms.</p>
Wildlife	<p>Urban Wildlife Groups County & Wildlife Trusts Watch Groups Royal Society for the Protection of Birds local natural history societies</p>
General environment	<p>eg Friends of the Earth Groundwork Trusts British Trust for Conservation Volunteers Council for the Protection of Rural England Assoc. for the Protection of Rural Scotland Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales Civic Trusts amenity societies environmental networks</p>
Education	<p>Parent & Teacher Associations school clubs Workers' Educational Association groups Universities & Colleges</p>
Children	<p>Pre-school groups schoolchildren youth groups</p>
Women	<p>Women's Guild Women's Institute Women's Rural Institute Townswomen's Guild</p>
Ethnic groups	<p>Black Environment Network</p>
Disabled groups	<p>Fieldfare Trust</p>
Sen. Citizens	<p>Help the Aged</p>
Religious groups	<p>Wide range, including Christian & non-Christian</p>

(Adapted from the Countryside Commission Advice manual for the preparation of a community forest plan)

A supply of land is critical for the creation of community woodlands, particularly in the urban fringe where landowners hope to develop agricultural and vacant land. With the policy of achieving new community woodlands by voluntary incentive the farming and landowning community is a most important community of interest. Farmers and landowners are members of the local community too and have their own rights and needs, perhaps to control access and uses of the land. If positive relationships can be fostered amongst land users, occupiers and neighbouring residents, more progress may be made in releasing land for new community woodland.

Why consider local people?

What makes community woodlands different from other woodlands is the opportunity for local people to become involved in the management process. This is a natural consequence of promoting woodland creation near to centres of population and in pursuing multipurpose woodland benefits. These benefits have been likened to the modern equivalent of medieval forest privileges where pannage and estovers have been replaced by recreation and leisure.

As well as the benefits participation offers to local people, there can be real benefits to landowners.

Participation:

- **Allows** conflict to be anticipated, defined and resolved at an early stage;
- **Enables** ongoing responsiveness to local needs and desires;
- **Develops** a positive image for an Initiative;
- **Harnesses** the ideas, commitment, energy and expertise of local people;
- **Builds** links between the 'authorities' and local people;
- **Helps** reduce vandalism in local woodlands;
- **Raises** local support which can influence potential funding agencies and sponsors;
- **Fosters** a greater awareness, appreciation and sense of responsibility for trees and the natural environment; and
- **Results** in greater support for forestry, through increasing understanding and involvement.



Of key importance in achieving these benefits is the need to develop a feeling of community ownership. This does not imply land ownership or a veto over the landowner's rights as an owner. It does imply allowing local people sufficient participation to develop a bond with community woodland. This bond increases the responsibility that local people feel towards a woodland, which can manifest itself in reduced antisocial behaviour, resident wardening and an increased willingness by local people to invest time and effort in voluntary work in the woodland.

Most woodlands in and around towns receive public funding through grants, or are linked with development subject to planning control. It is reasonable for the public to expect a benefit from the investment that ultimately they have made.



Participation to benefit woodlands or local people?

For many community woodland initiatives the **process** of popular participation will be as important as the **product** (such as new woodland planted, area coppiced, litter collected). Indeed in some projects the goal of community and individual development will be more important than output on the ground.



Wherever a community woodland project lies on this continuum, the objective will be to benefit both woodlands and local people. Through the community's stewardship of, and involvement with a woodland, multi-purpose objectives should be achievable on the ground. In return the woodland could become a focus for community development, local leisure and recreation provision. If these dual benefits cannot be realised the area should not be considered as a community woodland.

Community woodland initiatives should encourage the successful creation and management of woodlands, and promote active citizenship.

HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Effective communication

The importance of a tailored approach to community participation has already been emphasised. The way you communicate must also take into account the variety of individuals within any community of interest or neighbourhood. Using many communication media including meetings, radio and newspapers, audio visual aids, planning for real, face to face contact, newsletters and events is often most fruitful. These media should be used in a proportion appropriate to the local circumstance.

An over-professional, slick approach can alienate local people so communication should not be over polished and should use simple language. Stress equal opportunities and make a special effort to include under-represented groups in the community, using multi-language where necessary. Large community participation projects need skilled community liaison staff to tailor the approach to each community. Staff may need to be experienced in working with particular communities such as landowners and farmers or ethnic groups.

Remember that community participation is all about building relationships. Local people are more likely to become interested and express their views if there are friendly people on hand who have time to listen and chat, and who understand the issues that affect them.

Education and providing information

To know and to want is to act. People are much more likely to wish to become involved and to participate if they are aware of the benefits. Consequently, providing user-friendly information is a prerequisite for higher levels of participation, such as partial, or full community involvement. Provide information for both the formal education sector and for the wider public. Do this at two levels; general and site specific:

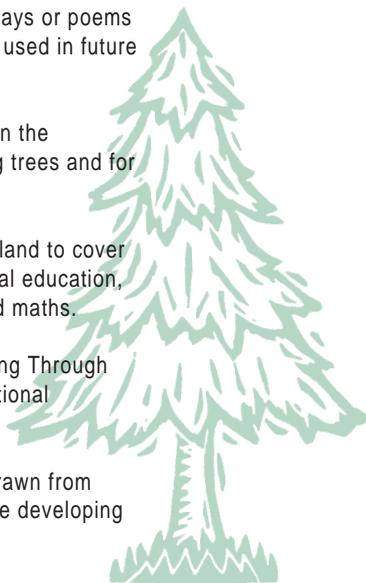
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- General educational information raises people's awareness of the contribution and benefits of trees and woodland in the urban environment. For example, a project may need to help local people appreciate the difference between neglect and low level management. Nature is often untidy and many people who are brought up to expect a neat and tidy city or townscape do not initially appreciate the informal appearance of thriving naturalistic habitats in cities and towns.
 - Site specific information on projects underway in the locality increases the interest of local people in the project and possible opportunities for involvement will help to promote positive attitudes. Dissemination of this information will be most intensive in the locality of the scheme and may take the form of leafleting, an article in the local press, or unstaffed displays in the local school, library or supermarket. Information should be presented in a lively and interesting way, making the most of points of human interest, such as historical connections with the site and cultural associations with the tree species.

Woodlands offer a wide range of educational possibilities for pre-school, primary and secondary schools, colleges, adult classes and interest groups. For example:

- School and other competitions, inviting designs for a woodland, suggestions for a name, posters, essays or poems on what it could be like. Winning entries can be used in future publicity materials.
- Schools or local interest groups adopting plots in the woodland for planting, managing and monitoring trees and for teaching, celebration, adventure and play.
- Developing work sheets around a specific woodland to cover aspects of natural history, biology, environmental education, history, art, religion, history, drama, English and maths.

'Trees in the School Grounds' produced by Learning Through Landscapes is a guide to using trees as an educational resource.

Forest Education Initiative (FEI) cluster groups (drawn from local forestry, timber and educational interests) are developing directories of woodland educational resources.



Consultation

Consultation is the first level of participation. It is the process of actively seeking other people's ideas and views before plans are fixed. How you consult depends on what you want to consult about and on the target audience. Don't, for example, hold an evening meeting in an area where some people are afraid to go out after dark. Successful consultation encourages local people to express their views without feeling put on the spot. Consultation must relate the proposals in a way appropriate to the audience, and the opinions and comments of local people must be recorded. People need to know that *their* views and ideas are taken seriously and will be used where possible. It is important to make clear the aims of consultation so that people do not commit themselves to a level of participation they cannot sustain.



Appropriate forms of consultation:

Working groups with invited representatives from the various communities of interest can be more productive than public meetings. If nurtured, groups may become involved in the implementation and management of woodland schemes and may eventually be encouraged to take a lead in the running of the site.

Staffed displays in public places can be an effective means of soliciting public comment on a proposal, particularly if the display material is lively and the approach is not intimidating.

Site meetings with local people promote discussion over proposals for a site. Plan site meetings with a core of invited community representatives but extend the invitation to all-comers through local publicity.

Person to person questionnaires can be good as a straw poll of local preferences and to establish a dialogue with local people. However, the results of a questionnaire will vary greatly depending on where and when it is carried out, and how the questions are phrased.

Less appropriate forms of consultation:

Public meetings may be well attended where contentious issues have arisen. However, an ongoing commitment to public consultation should prevent contentious issues from gaining prominence as they tend to generate negative feeling and prevent a proactive approach. In practice, most public meetings to discuss urban woodland development are poorly attended and those that do attend can have extreme and polarised views.

Postal questionnaires rarely result in a full and balanced response and are not effective at establishing contacts with local people.

Comments by post from community representatives do not help in building contacts with local people and written responses are usually less forthcoming than verbal responses.

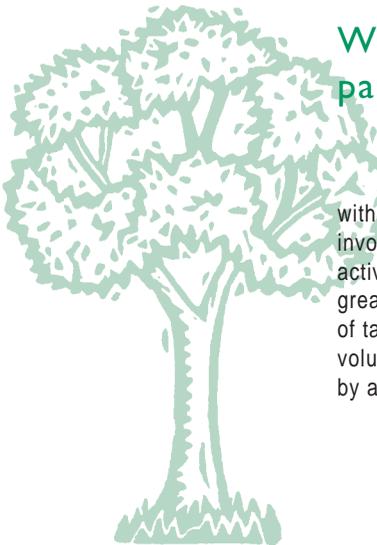
Visual props make consultation more interesting and help people decide on their views. Remember though that many people find it difficult to understand maps or interpret complicated diagrams. Use:

- Panoramic diagrams of the proposed woodland from key viewpoints.
- Models of the proposed woodland, or better still, hands-on models that allow different options to be explored.
- Comment cards and box that allow people to identify problems and potential solutions. Anonymity is preserved, allowing creative inputs even from those who do not normally like to speak in public meetings.
- Display boards showing options for the objectives or the appearance of a scheme, using stick-a-dots to allow people to express their preferences.

However it is done, it is important to recognise that consultation is key. It is the first stage in providing local people with the woodlands that they want, as well as being a way of drawing people into fuller participation in urban woodland projects. Without a mechanism for consultation, the progression from *working for*, to *working with* local people cannot be achieved.

What level of community participation?

By providing information, by educating and by consulting, some local people will be keen to become *more* involved with a community woodland project. Full or partial community involvement describes the involvement of local people in activities planned and organised *with* them. The move towards greater participation can be achieved only by gradual delegation of tasks as and when members of the local community and volunteers are ready to accept greater responsibility, rather than by a sudden withdrawal of professional help.



Activities around which community participation events can be organised include:

Seed collection and tree nurseries. Collecting and growing seed from local woodlands or notable trees is a good way of establishing a link between the existing tree resource and proposed new woodlands.

Tree planting has to take place in winter which is not a popular time for events and is likely to be attended only by specifically invited groups or particularly committed members of the community and volunteers unless other attractions can be provided.

Participation in aftercare. Participation in tree planting should, if possible, be followed up by participation in aftercare activities. Encourage local people to help with mulching, fertiliser application, litter picking and other maintenance activities. Establishing a continuity of participation on a site will help to foster the sense of community ownership and demonstrate the whole process of woodland creation.

Providing for wildlife. Activities such as pond creation and bird/bat box making and erection provide some of the most appealing opportunities for enjoyable public participation, but generally require a considerable amount of organisation both before and during the event.

Managing existing woodland. Activities based in existing woodlands are good for encouraging local people into involvement. Established woodlands are generally attractive places to spend some time and there is potential for the results of the work to be immediately obvious. Scrub clearance, glade creation and coppicing are the most common activities, but if the task is large, volunteers should supplement, not replace, the use of chainsaws and clearing saws by trained operators.

There are two main sources of volunteers:

- People from the local community. Winning their support can be time consuming and they may achieve little on the ground, but are most likely to offer a long term commitment to the project.
- Volunteers recruited through an organisation such as BTCV. They tend to be easier to organise, and groups often come with their own leader, equipment and experience. They are a good way of getting a job done but not of generating long term commitment to a project.



People volunteer for many different reasons and thus bring with them many expectations. But, always remember that one of the main reasons why most people become involved in this sort of activity is to have fun and meet people.

To get the most out of volunteers and to give back a rewarding experience:

- Ensure that the task is of real value to the environment and the community. Volunteers soon lose heart if they are being used just as cheap labour.
- Ensure that the reasons for the task and the methods of carrying it out are clearly explained. Many volunteers are keen to learn.
- Safety is paramount. Ensure the right equipment is provided and correct procedures are followed.
- Do not overwork people, let them work at their own speed and at tasks they feel capable of doing.
- Encourage people to contribute their own ideas and experiences to the project and where appropriate let them take responsibility such as leading the group.
- Provide training for suitable volunteers. As well as teaching skills, this increases confidence and self-esteem.
- Provide rest breaks, refreshments and always remember to say 'Thank you'.
- Try to vary the tasks and include social events. Make sure there is something for everyone.

Voluntary warden schemes are a good way of getting local people involved in woodlands as they offer responsibility and a measure of prestige to volunteers and hence often result in a long term commitment.

To get the best out of wardens and give back a rewarding experience:

- Ensure that wardens are clear about what is expected of them. A job description or informal contract may be appropriate.
- Provide training to ensure people feel equipped to perform effectively.
- Prevent people from feeling isolated by networking your wardens and running social events.
- Ensure that wardens always have someone to turn to if difficulties arise.
- Safety is paramount. Ensure that wardens are properly equipped and appreciate any hazards in their patch.
- Allow a warden's role to develop. New ideas and initiatives are essential to keep people's interest over long periods of time.





Community control

With active participation in the management of a woodland, the development from full community participation into community control ie community-led management can be almost imperceptible if handled sensitively in response to the desires of local people. Community control is generally only possible on publicly owned sites and will usually require the formation of a local management group. Individuals with the necessary skills, abilities and keenness should be encouraged to take on this responsibility. It is important that the agency is there to help at the request of the group. Any constraints to decisions and actions need to be explained to prevent disappointment and misunderstandings. Input may be required to prevent the management group becoming a clique and to ensure that all local people are welcome.

The benefits of community-led management can be great. Local people are empowered, are experiencing active citizenship and are managing a local resource for the benefit of local people. Agency staff are freed to concentrate on other projects and the cost of site management will be reduced. However, agency staff must accept that the end results may be very different from their own initial ideas and vision.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

Building relationships takes time

Community participation is time consuming because it is about:

- building individual relationships and trust amongst owners, any agency staff and local people;
- changing the views of local people about the merits of investing their time in involvement with a woodland site.

This can only be done at the pace set by local individuals and cannot be rushed. Continuity of community liaison staff is also critically important for building relationships. Moving a project up the ladder of participation takes years. With some projects full community involvement or community control may not be appropriate although some level of involvement is sought. With others it is unlikely that full community involvement or community control will ever become self sustaining without substantial input from the agency. Tapping into existing community and environmental groups is often the most realistic way of developing full community involvement or community control within the limited life span of most projects.

Resources for community participation

Community participation is time consuming, and can be expensive. You will not succeed with a community participation project without adequate resourcing, and finding funding can take as much time as the participation itself.

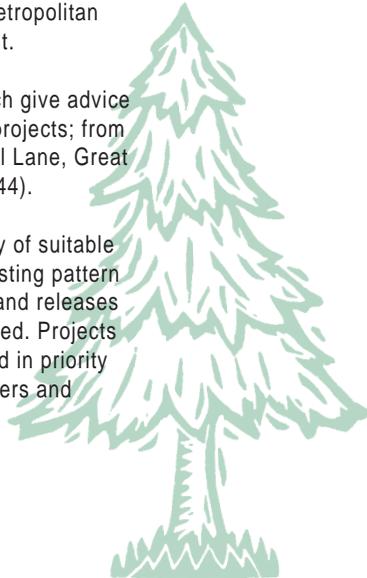
The Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme offers grants for woodland establishment and management, and substantial supplements are available where community involvement is a priority. Grants may also be available from local authorities, English Nature, the Countryside Commission, Rural Development Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Countryside Council for Wales, The Tree Council and The Prince of Wales Committee.

The recent Rural White Papers for England, Scotland and Wales strongly support the concepts of community participation and self-help. In Scotland a new Rural Partnership Fund will be established during 1996 and in Wales the size of the Volunteering in Wales Fund is to be increased by over 50%.

There is a large range of trusts that fund environmental work and the linking of projects to certificated training programmes may attract training grants. If a project is part of a larger initiative to enhance the environment and image of a region it may be eligible for grant aid from the structural funds of the European Union or one of the European Commission schemes such as LEADER. Potential sources of funding are greatly increased by linking environmental work to other community initiatives and social issues. There are several publications that will help you in your search for funds:

- 'A guide to major trusts', and 'Raising money from trusts'; from the Directory of Social Change, Radius Works, Back Lane, London, NW3 1HL.
- 'Finance from Europe - a guide to grants and loans from the European Union'; from local European Commission offices, listed in your telephone book.
- 'The Calderdale grants for trees booklet' - by R Lorrain-Smith, (annually updated); from Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council, Leisure Services Department.
- 'Interactive', and 'Network News', both of which give advice on getting help for community environmental projects; from Shell Better Britain Campaign, Red House, Hill Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6LZ (Tel: 0121 358 0744).

Cash funding is important, but so is the availability of suitable land and willing people. Projects based on the existing pattern of public land ownership or opportunistic private land releases are often not operating in the areas of greatest need. Projects should be led in a proactive way to search out land in priority areas both by seeking the cooperation of landowners and lobbying for public purchase of key sites.



Local community woodland initiatives are attractive to a range of potential sponsors. Securing sponsorship is a form of trading. The company or organisation interested in sponsorship will require the benefits that accrue from their involvement to exceed the cost of sponsorship. The benefits are generally in the form of publicity, 'green' image building and contact with a target audience. Sponsorship may be of most benefit to both parties when funding in kind is involved. This may involve the sponsor providing land for planting, trees, ground preparation equipment, etc or making staff, skills or facilities available to an initiative. In this way, the real cost to the sponsor is small in relation to the value to the recipient.

Certain national companies are dedicated to helping environmental projects and have set up specific initiatives to help dispense aid such as the Shell Better Britain Campaign, Ford British Conservation Awards, Forte Community Chest and Barclays Youth Action.

Some sources of further advice and support are listed in the appendix.



Measuring the success of community participation

Community participation should be reviewed periodically to assess effectiveness, value for money and lessons from hindsight. But how can something as intangible as community participation be measured? A clear understanding of the product and process concept will point to ways of doing this.

If your principal aim is achieving a 'product' then the output of volunteers on the ground can be measured. The indicators in this instance would be new woodland successfully established, area coppiced, length of footpath cleared or sacks of litter collected. Success in woodland creation should preferably be measured by the number of trees or area of woodland successfully established. The number of trees planted is meaningless if most of the trees die, as is the amount of money spent if the money is wasted. Measures should, as much as possible, relate to tangible improvements in the local environment.

If your principal aim is to get volunteers participating in the planting and managing of woodland then your success can be measured by the number of people or person-hours involved. For example, the number of people involved in community tree planting events, the number of committed volunteers, amount of volunteer hours worked, the number of volunteers trained or number of voluntary wardens.

If your principal interest is in 'process', then measuring success is more difficult because community involvement in forestry is primarily for community and individual development. The only objective method of assessing success in these cases is to determine changes in the attitudes, outlook and capabilities of the target group, often by interview or survey. This must be planned from the start of a project to allow the collection of base-line information for comparison. Surveys of this sort are notoriously easy to misinterpret so get professional help at the planning stage.

Whichever measures are used, make sure that success is evaluated only after a time period appropriate to the project. This may be several years or more for some process oriented projects.

Organising Events

Before organising an event define the target audience. The event and publicity must appeal to the target audience. A good turnout is most likely if the event is organised around an invitation to a particular community of interest such as a school or community group, with wider publicity extending an open invitation. This reduces the risk of poor attendance which can be a discouragement to those that do attend as well as a poor return on the effort of organisation.



For a successful event:

- Start planning three months ahead.
- Ensure the availability of key groups when setting the date.
- Choose weekend days between 10.00 am and 4.30 pm but avoid bank holidays and holiday periods when many will have made other arrangements.
- Make sure you have the necessary permissions for working on the site and inform or invite neighbouring residents.
- Establish clearly who has responsibility for organising particular aspects of the event. Ensure the availability of skilled supervisors and project staff known to local groups.
- Trees, tools, skips, etc. must be organised up to two months ahead.
- Arrange first aid cover and insurance. Volunteers working should be covered by public liability insurance (to at least

£250 000) for any damage or injury they may cause to property or to the public. Individual cover against personal accident is also advisable for regular volunteers.

- Organise publicity for the week before the event. Consider leafletting, posters and the use of local newspapers, although the importance of personal invitations and word of mouth should not be underestimated. Any publicity material should include information on the location of the event, suitable clothing and any need to bring tools or refreshments.
- The site should be well organised and prepared in advance of the event, ensuring that the work area is free from hazards and that ample parking is available. Take account of restrictions such as rights of way and wayleaves.

Plan events to maximise the enjoyment and satisfaction of volunteers. Encourage a relaxed informal atmosphere, for instance, by taking group photographs, providing refreshments, or having a 'bring your own' barbecue. At key events the effort of organising demonstrations, community artists, musicians or displays may be worthwhile to maximise local interest. Allow volunteers to help themselves to woodland produce as an additional reward for involvement.



You may be limited in what you can do on a site by statutory constraints, laws and regulations:

- Is the site in a designated area and, if so, does it affect you?
- Contact the local planning authority if people are staying overnight on site, if you are selling to the public from the site or if you are erecting permanent structures.
- Check with the service companies whether there are any underground services or wayleaves over the site.
- Contact the county ecologist or the local office of English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage or the Countryside Council for Wales if you think you may disturb protected species or alter their habitats.
- You will probably need a Felling Licence from the Forestry Authority if you are felling any trees of over 8 cm diameter.



- Tree preservation orders can cover stands of trees and whole woodlands. Check with the local authority before felling trees on a new site.
- A licence is necessary for driving agricultural vehicles on a highway and certification may be required for operating some machinery.
- Herbicides must only be applied by those that are trained and certificated.

Health and safety issues

When using volunteers ensure that they are properly trained for the task, and that the necessary protective clothing is available and used. Ideally at least one supervisor should be a trained First Aider and there should always be a comprehensive first aid kit on site. Supervisors should consider the action required in the event of a serious accident and should carry relevant telephone numbers at all times. Consider a mobile telephone for remote sites.

A range of safety guides covering most woodland operations are available and should be used to ensure safe working practices. They are available from:

- Forestry and Arboriculture Safety and Training Council (FASTCo)
Forestry Commission
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7AT
- Health and Safety Executive Books
PO Box 1999
Sudbury
Suffolk
CO10 6FS

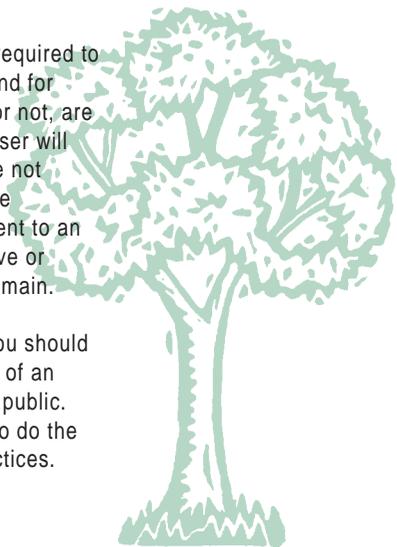
Tel: 0131 334 0303

Tel: 01787 881165

It is good practice to keep a record of safety checks that are undertaken and the action taken to reduce risks and make hazards safe.

Occupiers of land or organisers of events are legally required to take reasonable steps to ensure that people on the land for which they are responsible, whether they are invited or not, are safe from injury. Claims against an occupier or organiser will only succeed when negligence can be shown. You are not expected to be an expert on safety matters but you are expected to be aware of hazards that would be apparent to an experienced lay person. You must take steps to remove or reduce hazards or to warn people of hazards which remain.

If you engage volunteers directly to undertake work you should assume that you have responsibilities similar to those of an employer in ensuring the safety of volunteers and the public. You must be satisfied that volunteers are competent to do the work and be diligent in correcting unsafe working practices.



CASE STUDIES

The way in which community participation is organised will greatly influence the degree of success achieved. This section briefly describes some examples. Three examples from around the Cleveland area describe projects at different scales, and there are examples from other corners of Britain to give an idea of the rich variety of action.

The Loftus Development Trust

Loftus is a Cleveland market town of 5000 people. The Trust developed from a town Civic Trust and now supports four staff with funding from central Government, local authorities and the Countryside Commission. The Trust is involved with a wide spectrum of local projects including the design of new publicly funded developments, environmental improvement within the town, wardening of rights of way, and local countryside management. The Trust has recently raised the money to buy a local woodland which will be managed principally by local people for local people. The main mode of working is to organise public consultation exercises, community action and volunteer groups although, with core funding steadily reducing, the Trust is having to spend an increasing amount of time on activities to generate income. The independence of the Trust is seen as a key to building relationships with local people, who perceive it as being on their side.

Contacts for cases:

The Loftus Development Trust

Lucy Roberts
Community Development Worker,
Countryside & Community Forest
Loftus Development Trust
The Council House
25 High Street
Loftus
Cleveland
TS13 4HA

Tel: 01287 641342

Fax: 01287 643019

The Lingdale Revitalisation Group

Rob Lunan
Department of Economic
Development & Planning
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Cargo Sleet Offices
Middlesbrough Road
PO Box South Bank 20
Cleveland
TS6 6EL

Tel: 01642 231212 Ext 3827

Fax: 01642 444882

The Lingdale Revitalisation Group

The Group was set up by Lingdale villagers to promote improvement of the village environment after the closure of the local iron mines. The Group is totally initiated, led and run by local people and benefits from several key villagers who have committed themselves to the Group. The current focus is a 10 ha site from which a spoil heap was recently removed. The Group has sought help and resources from the Borough Council, the County Council and the Cleveland Community Forest, and a draft landscape plan has been formulated for the site. The Group has held well attended public meetings in the village hall at each stage of the planning process to gauge opinion and gather ideas. Being villagers themselves, the Group leaders have been able to find compromises between different ideas and available resources without alienating those with unrealistic ideas.



The Middlesbrough Beck Valleys Initiative

Initiated by Middlesbrough Borough Council, this project supports a full time officer, funded by the local authority through City Challenge, and by the Countryside Commission. A number of becks run through Middlesbrough from the surrounding hills and along their courses are strips of open space. In order to give local residents the opportunity to become involved in the management of these areas residents groups have been started along the courses of the becks. Because these narrow areas of open space support a variety of recreational uses, one of the main tasks of the officer is to find compromises between incompatible demands made by different residents (for example demand for a ball games area and a wild flower meadow on the same piece of land). Considerable effort is required to encourage residents to become involved and it will probably be some years before residents groups will run with no agency control.

The Middlesbrough Beck Valleys Initiative

Emma Coles
Beck Valleys Officer
Stewart Park
The Grove
Marton
Middlesbrough
Cleveland
TS7 8AR

Tel: 01642 300202
Fax: 01642 300276

The Guardians of Stoke Park

Like most Forest Enterprise (FE) Districts, South Downs has been involved with local people for many years through good neighbour activities, 'friends of' groups and liaison with special interest groups. Concerns expressed by local people over felling at Stoke Park Wood prompted the FE to arrange a meeting at a time and place convenient to local people, which resulted in the setting up of The Guardians of Stoke Park. The FE was initially asked to chair the group, but control has been subsequently handed over as local people have become willing to accept it. The group has resulted in a greater understanding by local people of woodland management practices, and a modification of felling plans to minimise the impact on woodland users. The group meets every two months and has expanded into organisation of events, guided walks and conservation working parties. The group uses the FE as a facilitator, benefiting from its contacts, advice and office facilities.

Newseat community woodland

The Guardians of Stoke Park

Fergus Moore
Forest Enterprise, South Downs
Bucks Horn Oak
Farnham
Surrey
GU10 4LS

Tel: 01420 23666
Fax: 01420 22082

The Newseat Community Woodlands

Douglas Clark
Conservator, Grampian Conservancy
Forestry Authority
Ordiquihill
Portsoy Road
Huntly
AB54 4SJ

Tel: 01466 794542
Fax: 01455 794986

A local landowner near Inverurie, about 20 miles north west of Aberdeen, decided to establish a community woodland. His agent drew up outline proposals, and discussed the details with various groups of people in the community. The outcome was so positive that now, about 3 years later, a 40 hectare woodland has been planted, complete with a small car park and an all abilities standard footpath, and there is also an interpretative leaflet. There are two features of the project which have already received wider recognition. Firstly, the woodland had to be deer fenced, and the specially designed access gate for pedestrians and wheel-chair users won the Scottish section of the BT Countryside for All Awards in 1994. Secondly, an oldcroft building on the site is to be converted into an Environmental Studies Centre. HRH the Prince of Wales heard about it, and was pleased to visit the project and to lay the foundation stone. Because the community and especially the schools have supported the project actively and continue to do so the owner is exploring ways of handing the management over to a Community Trust. Meantime, the search for fundraising and pledges of sponsorship for the Environment Study Centre continues.

The Friends of Plymouth Wood

Plymouth Wood is a 21 hectare Ancient Semi Natural Woodland situated in an inner suburb of Cardiff adjacent to the river Ely. The wood is owned by Cardiff City Council. The Friends were formed in 1993 and comprise a committee steering group of about 8 people, chaired by the local General Practitioner. A working group of more than 20 volunteers, local residents and some school teachers etc, meet once a month in the woodland to carry out tasks such as footpath improvements, tree planting, minor felling, habitat improvement and rubbish clearance.

Plymouth Wood currently receives support through the Woodland Grant Scheme and with Annual Management Grant for environmental improvements and the promotion of 'Walkers Welcome'.

The Friends of Plymouth Wood

Richard Cornock
(Hon Treasurer, Friends
of Plymouth Wood)
c/o Department of Sports & Leisure
Cardiff City Council
Heath Park
Cardiff
CF4 4EP

Tel: 01222 751235
Fax: 01222 822924





Dyffryn Clydach Volunteers

This voluntary environmental workforce is drawn from the community of Dyffryn Clydach, Neath Abbey, South Wales, and is financially supported by Dyffryn Clydach Community Council, local industry and public donations. The Volunteers were formed in 1989 to tidy-up local eyesores for the benefit of residents. They are enthusiastically lead by a local councillor, Steve Absalom, and have a structured organisation which sets objectives and plans work. Since establishment the volunteers have repaired footpaths and bridleways, taken part in the annual litter prevention campaign 'Keep Wales Tidy' which includes a litter warden scheme. Most recently they have taken on woodland management in sites owned by the Community Council. This was highlighted through the Wales national launch of the Woodland Improvement Grant at Coed-y-Graig, a multipurpose community woodland. There are 30 to 40 volunteers ranging from infant school age to retired adults. The Volunteers have strong links with local schools and are receiving requests for help from other communities outside Dyffryn Clydach. The Volunteers have won a number of Environmental Awards: in 1993 the Prince of Wales award for Achievement and first place in the 1993 Keep Wales Tidy campaign. In 1994 the volunteers provided a Christmas Tree shredding service and the chips were used to mulch plants on community sites.

Dyffryn Clydach
Community Woodland

Steve Absalom
101 Longford Road
Neath Abbey
Neath
SA10 7HF

Tel: 01792 813465

APPENDIX

There are many organisations who have begun to focus on involving communities in environmental work, and others who can offer advice and support:

BT Countryside for All
Fieldfare Trust
67a The Wicker
Sheffield
S3 8HT
Tel: 0114 270 1668

A project initiated by the BT Community Programme and managed by the Fieldfare Trust to establish guidelines and standards on good practice in access provision.

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)
36 St Mary's Street
Wallingford
Oxfordshire
OX10 0EU
Tel: 01491 839766

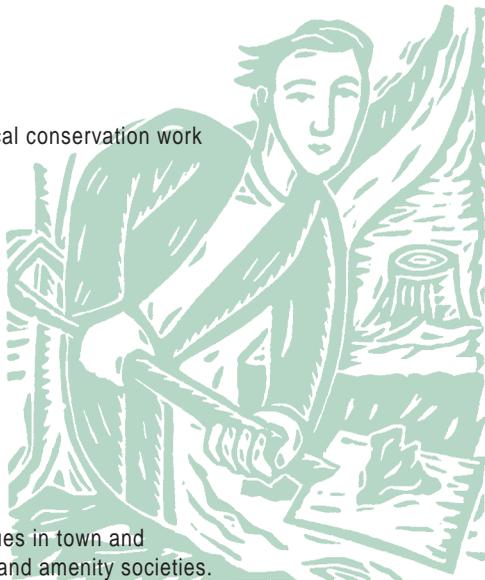
Scottish Conservation Projects Trust
Balallan House
24 Allan Park
Stirling
FK8 2QG
Tel: 01786 465359

Aim to involve people of all ages in practical conservation work in rural and urban areas.

Civic Trust
17 Carlton House Terrace
London
SW1Y 5AW
Tel: 0171 930 0914

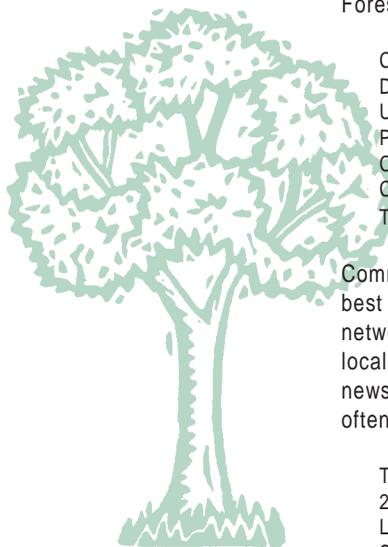
Scottish Civic Trust
24 George Square
Glasgow
G2 1EF
Tel: 0141 221 1466/7

Involved in conservation and planning issues in town and country. Co-ordinate over 1000 local civic and amenity societies.



Community Forest Unit
c/o Countryside Commission
71 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6ST
Tel: 0171 831 3510

Provides information and support principally for the 12 Community Forests which comprise the joint Countryside and Forestry Commission initiative.



Countryside Recreation Network
Department of City & Regional Planning
University of Wales Cardiff
PO Box 906
Cardiff
CF1 3YN
Tel: 01222 874970

Committed to exchanging and spreading information to develop best policy and practice in countryside recreation, through a network of the principal Government Departments, agencies, local authority associations and Research Councils. A free newsletter, pages on the Internet, workshops and conferences often feature items concerned with community participation.

The Environment Council
21 Elizabeth Street
London
SW1W 9RP
Tel: 0171 824 8411

Dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of Britain's environment for present and future generations. Through Environmental Resolve, promotes and uses consensus-building techniques, especially useful in reaching shared solutions to complex problems.

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)
National Agricultural Centre
Stoneleigh
Kenilworth
CV8 2RX
Tel: 01203 696699

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group - Scotland
Rural Centre
West Mains of Ingliston
Newbridge
Midlothian
EH28 8NZ
Tel: 0131 335 3999

Advisers are based all over Britain and can advise on practical conservation work.

The Fieldfare Trust
67a The Wicker
Sheffield
S3 8HT
Tel: 0114 270 1668

Promotes access to the countryside and environmental education; working *with*, not *for*, people with disabilities.

Groundwork Foundation
85-87 Cornwall Street
Birmingham
B3 3BY
Tel: 0121 236 8565

A network of local initiatives committed to working with others to tackle the problems of dereliction, to restore landscapes and wildlife habitats, and to make positive use of wasteland in and around Britain's towns and cities.

Rural Forum Scotland
Highland House
St Catherine's Road
Perth
PH1 5RY
Tel: 01738 634565

Provides the secretariat to the Forests and People in Rural Areas Initiative (FAPIRA) which seeks to promote ways in which local rural communities can benefit more from rural forests.



Tree Council
35 Belgrave Square
London
SW1X 8QN
Tel: 0171 235 8854

Aims to promote the improvement of the environment through the planting, nurturing and cultivation of trees. Organises annual Tree Week and Tree Wardening schemes. Runs an information service.

Other help may be available from the local branches of the Women's Institute, Women's Rural Institute (in Scotland), the Scouts, the Guides and the local authority arborist/tree officer.

The local authority environmental coordinator will be able to advise on the progress of Local Agenda 21 in your area. The Local Government Management Board is coordinating Local Agenda 21 in the UK.

Local Agenda 21 Project Officer
Local Government Management Board
Arndale House
Arndale Centre
Luton
LU1 2TS

The Board produces a range of publications on community participation, including:

'Planning for Involvement' (LGMB/Environmental Trust Associates) 1994.

'Community Participation in Local Agenda 21' LGMB 1994.

