

## Fact Sheet

### Reducing the need for money

Details of organisations mentioned in this factsheet are listed in *Useful Contacts*. For more information on the associations mentioned in the case studies, contact ARI.

Any fool can spend money! Reducing your need for money comes down to your association's forward planning, organisational systems and negotiation skills.

#### Saving money on materials

Allotment gardeners have a long tradition of reusing and recycling, here are some tips from around the country.

#### Reclaimed materials

Visit an industrial site or municipal dump and find out what is being thrown away. Many businesses throw away valuable materials. Contact construction companies, garden centres, landscaping firms, fencing and container suppliers. It is generally easier to get materials from private companies than councils, as councils may run their own recycling schemes.

Examples of materials you might be able to source in this way include:

- Fencing posts, pallets, wood, paving slabs, rocks, soil from construction or garden firms
- Plant pots from plant nurseries and buckets from florists
- Broken planks from scaffolding sites (remove nails for raised beds)
- Plumbing or construction piping for polytunnel or cloche supports
- Disused bus shelters from council construction contractors for greenhouses
- Wood chip for paths from wood chipping contractors/tree surgeons



Queen's Park Allotments, Glasgow

*Disused bus shelters from council construction contractors can be used to make great greenhouses*



Hangleton Playlink





- Large barrels from paint and detergent companies for water butts
- Discontinued wheelie bins from the council for water butts
- Unwanted tools from sheds of untenanted plots

Some of these items could be sold on to plotholders at a low price, e.g. water butts, refurbished tools and plant pots.

Note: it is illegal to use second-hand railway sleepers for raised beds, due to the toxic wood preservative used, but they can still be used for path and carpark edging.

### Donated materials

Try a bulk mail-out to businesses and shops that may be able to donate materials that you need. Offer the company some sort of publicity, e.g. a commemorative plaque on the shed they are providing, a mention in your publicity materials and invitations to your events.

Always ask for discounts and donations from companies, e.g. tools, seeds, trays, plants or refreshments for events.

### Opting for affordable designs

Sometimes you can save money by choosing an alternative design or approach. Other possibilities include:

- A flush toilet in a brick building can cost upwards of £15,000, whereas a septic or compost toilet in a reclaimed shed, built using volunteer labour, will cost a fraction of this (see ARI fact sheet *Affordable Toilets for Allotments*).
- Trialling crime prevention measures, such as getting to know the community beat officer, or talking to the culprits' parents is a lot cheaper than a high security fence.

Please note: considering a different design for your project is very different to opting for a builder who gives a cheap quote or uses cheap materials.

## Voluntary labour

Plotholders should be prepared to give up some time helping with any site improvements that have direct benefits to them. Arranging workdays combined with social events or refreshments may increase involvement. Do not be openly resentful with plotholders who do not get involved; they may have legitimate reasons not to and negative feedback could put them off helping in the future.



Atwood Allotment Site

*A compost toilet can be a more affordable option*



## Corporate volunteering

Many large companies now have 'corporate volunteer schemes' whereby employees volunteer to work as teams on community projects. Community Service Volunteers (CSV) are often looking for community projects around the UK that could use a team of eager helpers for a day, to form the basis of their teambuilding days for company employees.

For further information: Tel. (0207) 278 6601

Some community gardening projects organise teambuilding days directly with companies, which means they can charge them a fee (sometimes up to £400 a day), as well as making use of the free labour. This can be time consuming to organise the first time but easier in subsequent years. Contact large local firms of banks, insurance companies, supermarkets etc to discuss your ideas.

You could also suggest to the company that they 'sponsor' an allotment plot - renting a plot (and make a donation) as a stress reliever and source of exercise for their employees, with the association providing gardening advice, maintenance or company team workdays (all potentially at a price).

## Training and health opportunities

Some organisations may have volunteers who stand to benefit from the therapeutic or skill building elements of your project work. These include: Probation Service, Youth Offending teams, BTCV Green Gyms™, CVS clients and healthy living initiatives.

Many associations and local councils have used the Community Payback Scheme with great success. The Probation Service can provide a supervised group of workers to carry out infrastructure work on allotments sites under the scheme. Workers on placement are serving community sentences for low level crimes only and are usually first time offenders. Find your local probation service contact through the website: <http://localcrime.direct.gov.uk>

These partnerships are sometimes unpredictable - a lot hinges on the quality

## Walnut Avenue Allotment

**Association, Bury** is building raised beds with wheelchair access. They are using a free supply of recycled brick and wood donated by the local authority from Bury town centre, which is being revamped.

of the trainee/volunteer co-ordinator that comes with the volunteers, so spend time vetting the suitability of the co-ordinator first. Check that the sending organisation has suitable insurance.

## Business in the Community

Business in the Community has two programmes aimed at providing expertise free to local community groups and voluntary organisations. These programmes are called ProHelp and Cares. Support delivered through local groups across the country with member firms,



Roundshaw Allotments, Surrey

## Roundshaw Allotments, Surrey

have found their probation service to be a great help – clearing a derelict section of the site, providing a plot clearance service to tenants and building a toilet. The probation officer is so keen on the allotments he has taken on two plots with the young offenders.



**Our vision is to  
increase allotment  
uptake by individuals  
and groups**

**Contact ARI at:**

The GreenHouse  
Hereford Street  
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 963 1551

Fax: 0117 923 1900

[ari@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:ari@farmgarden.org.uk)  
[www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari)

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both large and small, undertaking one-off projects, contributing advice or entering into longer-term partnerships within the local community

Business in the Community also promotes "Give & Gain Day", a day dedicated to employee volunteering.

For more information on these programmes use the search facility from the homepage of their website: [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk).

## **Cares**

This is another programme run by Business in the Community in which employees give their time and skills to the communities in which they live and work.

Tel. (0207) 566 8650  
[information@btc.org.uk](mailto:information@btc.org.uk)  
[www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)