



Starter pack

Britain in Bloom - Organised by the Royal Horticultural Society

Communities improving local environments



Britain in Bloom is the largest horticultural campaign in Europe and each year involves hundreds of enthusiastic communities UK-wide, from the smallest village to the largest city, all making lasting improvements to their local environments through horticultural good practice, environmental friendliness, community involvement and sustainability. Contact us for more information on how to make your community bloom.

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Registered Charity No. 222879

For an alternative format of this leaflet please call 020 7821 3000, textphone 1800 1020 7834 4333 or email: membership@rhs.org.uk



www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom/

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Introduction

This Starter Pack is designed to tell you how the campaign works, whom to contact for advice and guidance, and how they might help to get your 'in Bloom' group started. It also gives you an insight into what the judges will be looking for when they visit your entry, and ways to let them know about other projects undertaken throughout the year. Finally there is advice on how to apply for grants and funding, and how to secure sponsorship.

We at the Royal Horticultural Society, and each region/nation 'in Bloom' committee, would like you to join us, so that together, we can make Britain more beautiful today and for the future.

Why should you get involved?

By taking part in the 'in Bloom', you can breathe new life into your local area by encouraging everyone in your community, young and old alike, to take pride in where they live, and to understand that they have a valuable contribution to make.

Communities involved see many benefits?

- Brighter, cleaner and greener local areas
- Increased civic pride as people engage with their local surroundings and get involved with planning and management of the local environment
- A boost to the local economy through increased tourism and enabling shops to stay open instead of closing due to lack of customers
- Regeneration of run-down, neglected or disadvantaged areas
- Co-operation between community groups for the benefit of all residents
- A way to get to know the people in your community and have some fun.



How does the campaign work?

Local Participation

Most communities begin by organising a range of events, projects and activities that involve local people, the Town or Parish Council (or other local authority), businesses, community groups and volunteers. These activities may include group litter picks, bulb planting days and projects with local schools.

Local competitions might be used to motivate people to participate. Categories may include the best front garden, best sunflower grown in a pot and the best shop frontage.

Regional/National Participation

Your local community will then enter the regional/national 'in Bloom' campaign within the appropriate category, which is based on the Electoral roll. For example, small village, village, or large village. The UK is divided into 12 English regions plus Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey.

While these regions/nations are not all administered in the same way, they do have similar structures in place to enable them to receive entries from villages, towns, urban communities and cities within their area.



(See page 22 for larger version)

The region/nation 'in Bloom' judging normally happens in June/July, with the winners announced at award presentations in August/September.

In some areas judging also occurs in spring. Entries are judged using set criteria against other entries of a similar size.

For information on the judging process in your region/nation, please contact your Co-ordinator (details on page 21).



UK Finals Participation

Each year your region/nation is able to nominate successful entries to represent them in the Britain in Bloom UK Finals, alongside other communities from across the UK (the number of entries nominated depends on the total number of entries participating in your area). The Britain in Bloom UK Finals are run by the Royal Horticultural Society.

To make sure that standards are maintained, this stage of RHS Britain in Bloom judging takes place in August the year after an entry qualifies. For example, an entry nominated to represent their region/nation in 2006 will be judged for the UK-wide judging in 2007.

Winners of the UK Finals judging are announced at a prestigious awards ceremony in September each year. Categories range from small villages to large cities and include urban and coastal categories.

Champion of Champions

Selected UK Finalist entries that have consistently achieved a Gold Award are given the title of Reference Town. They are invited by the Britain in Bloom judges to compete in this special category as part of the UK Finals.

European Participation

Each year two entries from the Britain in Bloom UK Finals are invited by the RHS Britain in Bloom judging panel to represent the UK in Entente Florale, the European horticultural campaign, alongside communities from 11 other European countries.



About Britain in Bloom

Britain in Bloom began over 42 years ago and since it started, has blossomed into the largest horticultural campaign in Europe. Every year hundreds of enthusiastic communities throughout the UK, from the smallest village to the largest city, take part in the campaign. Each community shares a common goal: to make lasting improvements to their local environments.

The Britain in Bloom campaign focuses on four core pillars; horticultural enthusiasm, environmental friendliness, sustainable development and community involvement.

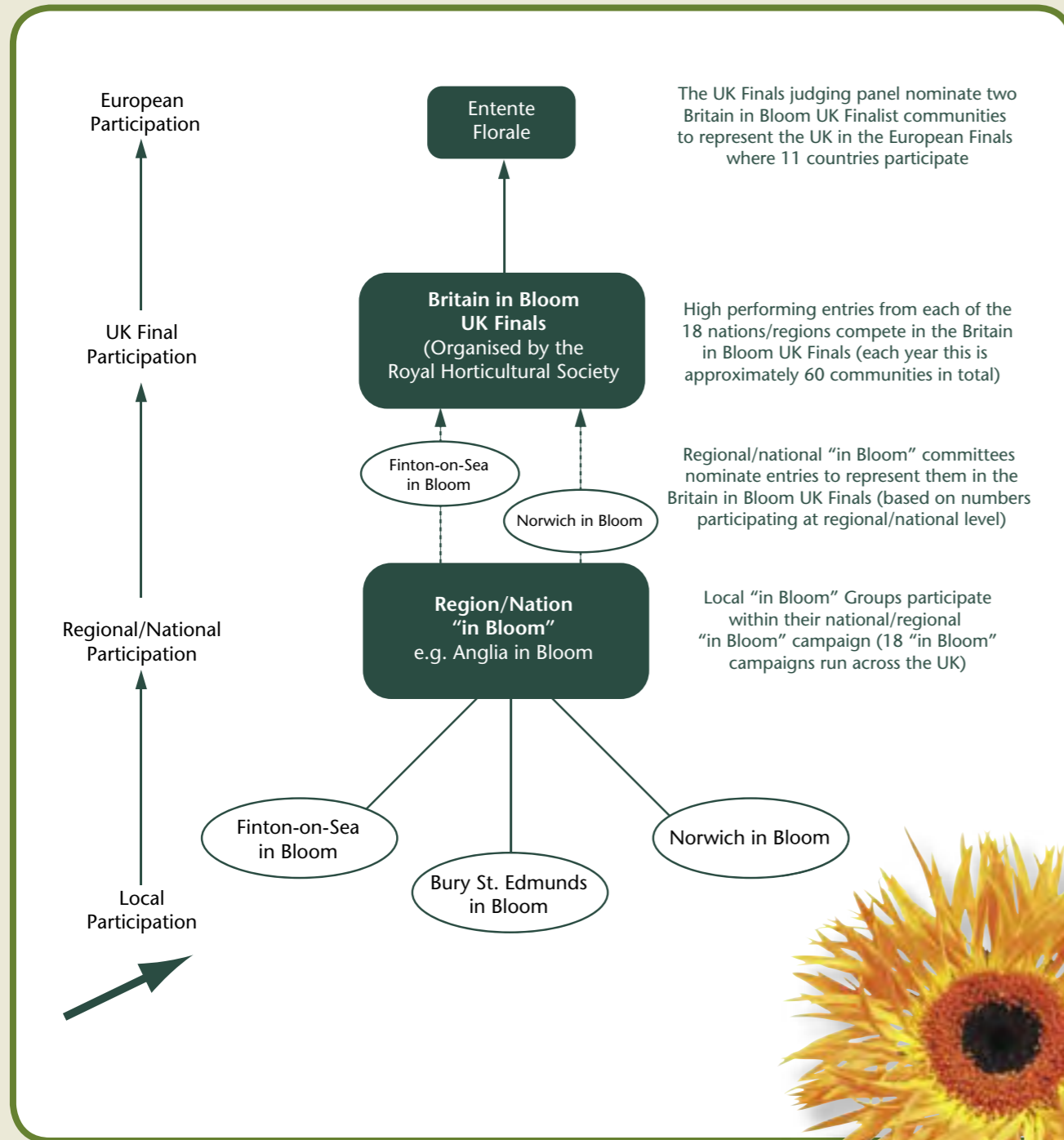
Britain in Bloom is not simply floral displays and making local areas look good for judging day. It is also very much about achieving sustained improvements year-round.

Imaginative seasonal and permanent planting of flowers, shrubs and trees is a large part of the campaign along with appropriate landscaping, conservation projects, recycling and cleanliness initiatives to reduce litter, graffiti and vandalism.

Please refer to the diagram on the next page for further clarification on the campaign's structure.



A schematic representation of the campaign



Please note that Anglia in Bloom has been used as an example of one of the 18 regional/national "in Bloom" committees.



How to grow a successful entry

The aim of this section is to give your group tips, hints and assistance on how to bring your entry to life and keep it flourishing in the future.

Once you and your community get started, you'll form your own ideas for improving your local area for the benefit of local people. However here are some pointers to help you on your way:

Step 1

Contact your regional/national 'in Bloom' Co-ordinator (details on page 21).

Step 2

Form an action group. This could just start with you, however the best results are achieved when an enthusiastic local action committee is formed to organise the entry jointly. Also by involving more people you will get to know others in your community, share knowledge and experience, and spread the workload! An action group can encourage participation across a wide sector of the community, attract support and sponsorship, and keep an eye on standards and progress. Think about involving your local Town or Parish Councillors, volunteer organisations, local businesses, residents, schools and local garden enthusiasts.

Step 3

Put together an action plan. This will help you decide what projects you want to do, how they will make a difference to your environment, and how you will go about them (including maintenance plans).

Step 4

Let your local community know what is happening and ask them for support.

- Announce that you are intending to put together an 'in Bloom' entry to celebrate how great your community is, and how you want to improve its potential. Consider sending out a leaflet to all homes in the area, giving a talk to existing community or residents' groups, or including some information in your place of worship or school newsletter. Seek residents' opinions on how they think the area could be improved or how they could get involved.
- Put up posters in your local shops and supermarkets, in libraries, leisure and community centres, in places of worship and village halls and on notice boards.
- Ask local traders, pubs, hotels and other businesses to get involved.
- Let your local authority know about your intentions. They will often be willing to assist in one way or another – they may even have some funding or resources to offer.
- Contact your local newspapers, radio and television, and give them details of how people can join in. (Tips on dealing with the media are available on page 16).
- Involve the young people in your community. They may be able to 'adopt a spot', taking on the responsibility for its planting, cleanliness and maintenance. Ask if it would be possible to work in partnership with your local schools to tie in some of the work being done in your projects with their National Curriculum requirements (For example in the areas of wildlife and conservation).



Where to focus your energy?

This will also help to promote an understanding of everyone's responsibilities for our environment and the plants and animals within it.

The RHS Education Department runs a free Schools Membership scheme to support all those using the 'outdoor classroom' to help deliver the National Curriculum. For more information go to www.rhs.org.uk/learning

- It's not all about flowers! Start a clean-up project in an area that attracts litter and graffiti, and look into both soft and hard landscaping options.
- Encourage your supporters to keep their own frontages neat and tidy, where possible using plants and shrubs to help you improve the whole area.
- Promote sustainable planting by recommending and using a range of plants, shrubs and trees that do not have to be watered daily and support wildlife habitats.
- Carry out work on behalf of older residents and at retirement homes.
- Create a competition (for example the best kept front garden) – a bit of healthy rivalry will help to generate better results.



Step 5

Develop a fundraising plan to help you succeed in financing your projects. You can generate money by having events like open gardens days, raffles and car boot sales or by attracting sponsorship or benefits in kind from local businesses. More information on funding is given on page 12.

Step 6

Leave no stone unturned and stay positive – it takes time to raise awareness of what you are trying to do and to start seeing results. By entering your regional/national 'in Bloom' campaign, you become part of a much larger Britain in Bloom community, making a valuable contribution and taking pride in your local environment.



The Four Core Pillars

The whole of the 'in Bloom' campaign focuses around the four core pillars of:

Horticultural enthusiasm
Community involvement
Environmental friendliness
Sustainability

For more information and tips about each of these pillars, ask your regional/national Co-ordinator to put you in touch with some well-established entries near you. You may even be able to arrange a visit to meet up and exchange ideas.

The Royal Horticultural Society and the regions/nations have a wealth of useful information available via their websites: www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom

(see page 21 for regional/national websites)



Horticultural Enthusiasm

Horticulture is at the heart of the 'in Bloom' campaign, and this section looks at using best practices to grow plants to the highest possible standards. It is also about using horticulture in appropriate ways, especially floral displays. We don't want your group to alter the character of your village – if displays help to enhance the area use them. If not, then concentrate on other 'greening-up' projects.

The RHS publishes a very helpful series of advisory leaflets under the banner of 'Conservation and Environmental Guidelines', which cover a wide range of relevant gardening issues. For more information contact:

The Science Department
 Royal Horticultural Society
 RHS Garden Wisley
 Wisley, Woking
 Surrey GU23 6QB
 Tel: 01483 224234
 Email: advisory@rhs.org.uk

www.rhs.org.uk/learning/research/conservation_and_environment.asp

There may also be an agricultural or horticultural college near you that you could contact and get to know a gardening expert, who may be able to offer advice on particular projects. Also consult your local authority, library and tourism office to find out about any local gardening groups that you could get in touch with to ask for assistance.

Community Involvement

We have already covered community involvement in the 'How to grow a successful entry' section, however it's worth mentioning again that the Bloom campaign aims to make lasting improvements to local areas for everyone to enjoy; young and old, residents and visitors, as well as for future generations.

Environmental friendliness and sustainability

Sustainability and sustainable development aims to give everyone a good quality of life today, whilst ensuring that the environment we leave behind supports at least as good a quality of life for future generations. It means that when choices, decisions and plans are made, we need to consider the economic, social and environmental needs of the area as a whole, and the possible impact.

In the beginning, your 'in Bloom' activities will face opportunities and challenges that can have impact on the environment. We sincerely hope that your group will choose to adopt environmentally friendly practices wherever possible, including recycling and reusing waste materials.



There are several simple techniques groups can use which are environmentally friendly:

Composting

Composting is the production of useful nutritious material for plant growth obtained from organic waste, such as from the kitchen and garden. It can be done on an individual household basis or via a community scheme. It reduces the amount of waste going into landfill sites, with cost savings to the local authority, and ultimately to the householder through local taxes. Community composting has the added advantages of a larger scale, and provides an opportunity for those who do not have gardens to participate.

Before going ahead with a community composting scheme, be sure to check with your local authority regarding waste management in your area. Under certain circumstances a community compost licence may be required.

Compost is also a very good alternative to peat and to peat-based growing mixtures. Peat should be avoided wherever practical, as the extraction of peat is destroying the remaining bog land environments and wildlife habitats, putting certain plants and wildlife at risk.

For further information please contact:

The Community Composting Network
67 Alexandra Road, Sheffield, S2 3EE
Tel: 0114 2580483
Email: ccn@gn.apc.org
www.othas.org.uk

WRAP – Waste & Resource Action Programme

The Old Academy,
21 Horse Fair, Banbury,
Oxon OX16 0AH
Tel: 0808 100 2040
Email: Helpline@wrap.org.uk
www.wrap.org.uk/

Or go to:
www.rhs.org.uk/research

Water-wise Gardening

Water is a precious resource and we should do our best to use it carefully. Those of us with water-meters have an added incentive to be careful.

Sprinklers use a huge amount of water and a lot of water is wasted. A strategically placed water butt will collect the rain for free as it falls. Lawn grasses will survive without water for long periods, even if they go brown. Letting grass grow a little longer in the summer will also help it stay green, and only water plants around the root where it is needed.

Moisture can be kept in the soil by mulching. This means covering the soil with a layer of sustainable, non-chemically treated organic matter (such as bark chippings, compost or manure), gravel or even plastic sheeting to prevent water from evaporating. This has the added value of keeping weeds down.

Water plants early in the morning or in the evening when it is cooler so that water does not evaporate in the heat of the day. Some plants need less water than others; plants that can tolerate dry periods include geraniums, lavender, grey-leafed plants, rosemary, ivy, sedums and other succulents.

For further information and advice on saving water contact your local water company or go to

www.rhs.org.uk/Learning/research/conservation_and_environment_water.asp

Conservation care and organic gardening

Wherever possible, use plants that are native to Britain. In general, native species support more wildlife than imported and exotic species. Early spring bulbs are important sources of nectar for insects and similarly seed heads, shrubs and berries provide food for birds. Leaving log piles will provide hibernation sites for frogs, toads and hedgehogs.

Most gardens will have a quiet corner where it is possible to build a nest box for birds or a bat box. Their presence can enhance your enjoyment of the garden and is a source of delight for children.

Organic gardening avoids using chemicals that harm some wildlife, contaminate the food chain and pollute watercourses. By avoiding the use of chemical pesticides you can attract creatures such as ladybirds, centipedes, frogs, toads, newts, bats and hedgehogs, which will feed on garden pests. Organically grown vegetables are generally considered to be better tasting and healthier, as well as promoting a balanced, natural ecosystem.

For further information contact:

Garden Organic
HDRA – Ryton Organic Gardens
Coventry CV8 3LG
Tel: 024 7630 3517
Email: enquiry@hdra.org.uk
www.hdra.org.uk

www.recycle-more.co.uk will inform you where your nearest recycling facility is, and also provide guidance on all aspects of recycling.



The Judging Process

The 'in Bloom' is a year-round campaign, however the judges will generally visit your community on one particular day, which will be arranged with you in advance. Judging takes place between late June and early August, with some regions/nations also judging in the spring. Please speak with your regional/national Co-ordinator for further details (contact details on pg 21).

Regional/national 'in Bloom' judges are highly experienced volunteers who dedicate their time to visit entries and carry out assessments. At the Britain in Bloom UK Finals, judges are selected and co-ordinated by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Judges use marking sheets that are tailor made for each category based on size. Every entry is judged across five sections, with marks awarded for successfully meeting criteria within each section. To get a good result, you need to maximise your potential within each section.

Following the judging and allocation of marks, all entries will receive an achievement award as recognition of the standard reached (bronze, silver, silver gilt or gold).

Most regions/nations use the UK Finals judging criteria. The five sections are:

Section A - Floral Displays (30%)

Considers the design and quality of floral features and displays such as hanging baskets, bedding schemes and tubs and containers. It also considers standards of maintenance (including lawned areas), evidence of spring displays and autumn colours, residential and community gardens and involvement by local businesses.



Section B - Permanent landscaping, including shrubs (25%)

Looks at the design and quality of shrubs, trees, borders, grasses and other permanent plantings in village green spaces (for example grass verges and ponds), and at the standard of appropriate maintenance.

Section C - Conservation and Recycling (15%)

Looks at the ways in which your group has used innovative ideas to create a positive impact on different areas of the community. This section considers things such as management of natural areas (for example hedgerows, woodlands, riverbanks etc), planting for wildlife and biodiversity and appropriate on-site information (such as notice boards or signage).

It also looks at domestic and garden waste management (for example kerbside recycling and composting), community involvement to encourage recycling to save natural resources (such as conserving water) and the involvement of young people in the community as appropriate.

Section D - Local Environmental Quality (20%)

This section focuses on the cleanliness of your local area and the absence of litter, dog fouling, graffiti, fly-posting, weeds in hard landscaped areas and the condition of street furniture. Steps taken to encourage community involvement to improve cleanliness will also be considered.

Section E - Public Awareness (10%)

Publicity and promotion of your group and the wider Britain in Bloom campaign is important and needs to be considered. The communication of information via methods such as posters, leaflets, websites, newsletters, calendars and via media coverage will be considered, as will fund-raising and sponsorship efforts.

Fundraising Opportunities

You will need some money to get your projects started, and the amount you require will depend on what you want to do! You may need money to publish a newsletter, for materials to tidy up a piece of land or to purchase some well-needed gardening equipment. Raffles and car boot sales are good ways of raising small amounts, but for bigger projects you may need to apply for a donation or a grant.

Before you set about raising money, decide what you want it for. If it is your intention to clean up a piece of land, then you may want to apply to local firms to donate money or equipment. It may be useful to find someone who works for a local firm or to put an advert in a local paper.

Obtaining money through grants is more complicated. There are many sources of funding for the activities you want to do. There is money available from Europe, local UK government, grant making trusts, private sector companies, local authorities and other award schemes. They have at least one grant programme for a specific purpose: some give large grants for major projects and some give small grants that would be appropriate if you want to buy tools, plants and other items.

There are several books available to help and guide you in making a successful application. You can check if your local library has any or you may wish to contact the following organisations:

The Directory of Social Change (DSC)
24 Stephenson Way, London, NW1 2DP
Tel: 020 7391 4800
Email: info@dsc.org.uk
www.dsc.org.uk

The DSC publishes a range of useful publications including:

- The Complete Fund-raising Handbook £16.95
- Tried and Tested Ideas for local fundraising events £14.95

Fundraising UK Ltd
www.fundraising.co.uk

This organisation hosts a helpful website linking to many potential sources of grants and information about them.

Fund Finder
www.fundfinder.org.uk

This is a computer programme that is a short cut for overworked fundraisers! You type in the characteristics of your project (such as how much you are applying for) and it prints out a list. You then need to look up directories for the addresses and further details, so you may need to buy these directories as well. However many local authorities and larger voluntary groups have this programme, and will let community groups and others use it.

Alternatively you may wish to focus on a more local level. It might be useful to think of businesses or organisations in your area that would be appropriate to contact. You can look through Yellow Pages, a local business directory in the library or even the local newspapers. Make a list of all the ones you think might be useful.



How to get funding

Step 1

Decide on your project/projects and consider how much money you require and what resources you will need. Remember add in all the costs involved or you may end up short of money!

Step 2

Make a list of all the businesses and organisations you would like to approach, and then prioritise the list in order of the ones you think might help you the most. One of the best ways of funding local projects is to build up relationships within your local area. Some organisations such as B&Q or banks will allocate funds from their local branches.

Step 3

Find out the right contact person or department to discuss your needs. For example your local authority may be particularly active in the environmental field and may be willing to work with you and even provide funds.



Step 4

Put together a short description of your group or committee and outline who you are and what you are intending to achieve. Try to think from the businesses' point of view about what you can offer them and how they might benefit.

Step 5

Make your approach. Try to be factual and understand your objectives before you make the phone call or write the letter.

Here are a few tips and hints to consider when you are ready to approach a sponsor:

- During the initial call make sure you either talk to or have the name of the person who can make the sponsorship or funding decision
- Give the name of your group and its status (i.e. whether you are a voluntary group or a charity) together with the main contact details
- Describe the purpose of your work with aims and objectives
- Show a timetable of work and when the likely date of completion will be
- Mention any special events you might have planned
- State clearly the amount of money or goods/services you are asking for



Step 6

Don't forget your group's own efforts – car boot sales, jumble sales, coffee morning and other sponsored events are tried and tested fund-raisers. They also have the advantage of binding the community together for a common purpose.

Finally, don't be afraid to aim high. It's amazing what can be achieved with a bit of enthusiasm and teamwork!

- Include any other additional funding you may already have secured or have been pledged
- List any local celebrities or well known characters who are supporting you
- Clearly outline the outcome benefits of your activities to the sponsoring business and how they can be acknowledged. Don't forget to include PR opportunities. As an alternative to donating money businesses may be willing to donate material or services, in return for publicity
- If you are submitting a financial report showing how you would spend the money, check the figures to avoid any embarrassing mistakes
- Keep copies of whatever you send to a potential sponsor
- Seek feedback on any failed bids or applications; this is a useful way of improving and making a more appropriate case next time.



Some possible sources of funding

Landfill Tax Credit Scheme

Purpose: To encourage the use of more sustainable waste management practices, including recycling, and to deliver lasting environmental and community benefits.

Range: Various depending on project

Contact: ENTRUST (The Environmental Trust Scheme Regulatory Body Ltd)
Acre House
2 Town Square, Sale
Cheshire M33 7W2

Email: information@entrust.org.uk
Web: www.entrust.org.uk

Local Heritage Initiative

Purpose: To help local groups investigate, explain and care for their local landscape.

Range: £3,000 - £15,000 to cover up to 60% of total project costs

Contact: LHI Information
The Acorn Centre
51 High Street
Grimethorpe
Barnsley S72 7BB

Tel: 01242 521 381

Email: lhi@countyside.gov.uk

Web: www.lhi.org.uk

Co-op Community Dividend

Purpose: To enable self-help, voluntary or co-operative groups to undertake a range of schemes including tree planting.

Range: £100 - £5,000

Contact: Head Office Co-operative Group (CWS) Limited
PO Box 53
New Century House
Manchester M60 4ES

Tel: 0161 834 1212

Web: www.co-op.co.uk

Awards For All

Purpose: To help fund projects that involve people in their community; bringing them together to enjoy arts, sports, heritage and other community activities.

Range: £500 - £5,000

Contact: 1st Floor, 1 Plough Place
London EC4A 1DE

Tel: 0845 600 2040 or
020 7842 4020

Web: www.awardsforall.org.uk

Heritage Lottery Fund

Purpose: To support a wide range of projects involving the local, regional and national heritage of the UK.

Range: Various depending on project

Contact: 7 Holbein Place
London SW1W 8NR

Tel: 020 7591 6000

Fax: 020 7591 6001

Email: enquire@hlf.org.uk

Web: www.hlf.org.uk

B&Q Better Neighbour Grant

Purpose: To enable community groups to undertake improvement projects.

Range: Store goods and materials to the value of £300.

Contact: The Environmental Officer or Store Manager at you local B&Q store

Web: www.dyi.com

New Opportunities Fund

Purpose: Applications are welcome from local community groups, voluntary organisations, not-for-profit community businesses and local authorities in partnership with community groups. Priority is placed on helping disadvantaged communities and projects that actively involve local people making a real difference to their environment and to their quality of life. The projects should promote sustainability and local economic development and demonstrate they have lasting benefits for communities.

Range: Various depending on project

Contact: 1 Plough Place
London EC4A 1DE

Tel: 0207 211 1800

Email: general.enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk

Web: www.nof.org.uk

Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts

This umbrella group operates the following:

- The Hanson Environment Fund
www.hansonenvfund.org

- Biffaward
www.biffaward.org

- Cred Programme
www.cred.rswt.org

- Seed Programme
www.seed.rsnc.org

Range: Various

Contact: Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts
The Kilm, Waterside
Mather Road
Newark NG24 1WT

Tel: 0870 036 1000

Email: grants@rswt.org

Web: www.rsnc.org

Community Fund

Purpose: To support charities, voluntary and community groups throughout the UK and UK agencies working abroad. To help meet the needs of those at greatest disadvantage in society and to improve the quality of life in the community.

Range: Varied depending on project.

Contact: UK Office
1 Plough Place
London EC4A 1DE

Tel: 020 7842 4000

Email: enquiries@community-fund.org.uk

Web: www.community-fund.org.uk

BTCV People's Places Award Scheme

Purpose: Open to community groups in rural and urban areas across England. It offers individuals a chance to make a difference to their community by transforming a derelict, underused or unsightly building or area of land into an environmental community resource and involving local people in its sustainable development.

Range: Various depending on project

Contact: People's Places Unit
BTCV, Conservation Centre
163 Balby Road, Doncaster,
South Yorkshire, DN4 0RH

Tel: 01491 821 621

Email: people-places@btcv.org.uk

Web: www.btcv.org/ppawards

Big Lottery Fund

Purpose: The fund distributes money from The National Lottery through a variety of programmes such as 'People and Places' (Wales) and 'Reaching Communities' (England). New programmes are being developed so check the website for details.

Range: Various depending on project

Contact: Head Office
1 Plough Place
London EC4A 1DE

Tel: 0845 410 2030

Email: general.enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk

Web: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

WALES

Enfys Grant Scheme

Purpose: Aims to support community led initiatives and enable disadvantaged communities to develop large scale funding.

Contact: New Opportunities (Welsh Fund)
13th Floor, Capital Tower,
Greyfriars Road
Cardiff CF10 3AG

Tel: 0870 607 1666

Email: help@wcva.org.uk

Web: www.wcva.org.uk

Welsh Church Fund

Purpose: Formerly the Dyfed Welsh Churches Fund, the Welsh Church fund is available in a number of areas within Wales. Grants are given to help towards the advancement of education and religion, the relief of poverty, libraries, museums and other purposes beneficial to the community.

Range: Various

Contact: Community Grants & External Funding
Carmarthenshire County Council
Business Resource Centre
Parc Amanwy, New Road
Ammanford SA18 3ED

Tel: 01554 742182

Email: SDoughton@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

SCOTLAND

Forward Scotland

Purpose: For projects aimed specifically for community benefit.

Range: Up to £500

Contact: Forward Scotland
6th Floor, Portcullis House
21 India Street
Glasgow G2 4PZ

Tel: 0141 222 5600

Email: enquiries@forward-scotland.org.uk

Web: www.forward-scotland.org.uk

How to involve the media

Press, radio and television are very important in spreading the message of the 'in Bloom'. As much publicity as possible is needed to encourage people throughout the UK to get involved.

When planning an event, tell your local newspaper all about it. Events involving a large number of people or a particular 'newsworthy' idea may also interest your local radio or television station.

The following guidelines will help to ensure you talk to the right person and get your message across in the most effective way.

Newspapers

Newspapers usually have two main departments – Advertising and News/Editorial

Advertising

Advertising costs money but the message you wish to promote is guaranteed to appear on the day you choose. News will appear free and features nearly always appear free, but these will only be used if the editorial staff decides to include it. Unfortunately you cannot 'book' news or a photograph, only suggest you may have an event worth featuring.

Advertising may be helpful to you if you want people to attend or take part in an event you are organising. You can either take out an advertisement on your own, or choose an 'advertorial'. The newspaper will give you some editorial space free in return for supporting advertisements from a group of individuals or businesses.

If you want to place an advertisement:

- Think well ahead – the paper has to have time to prepare your advertisement
- Plan what you want to say and roughly how you want your advertisement to look
- Keep it short and to the point. Space costs money!
- Include date, time, venue and contact names and numbers
- Check costs – advertisements are measured in single column centimetres.

NB. Local newspapers often have free "What's on" columns which advertise details of events from small groups. National newspapers and Teletext also run guides. Some of these may ask for a small charge.

News/Editorial

The Newsroom at your local paper will usually be pleased to hear of your activities and events involving people within their readership area, particularly as you are helping to improve the local environment. Sometimes they will send a photographer and/or a reporter to attend an event, but some, especially local free papers, are often run on a shoestring budget so this is far from guaranteed. If you can provide good written copy (a press release) and provide a picture, this will give you a better chance of coverage. It is always worth thinking: "Is what I'm talking about newsworthy enough?" If not, could it be part of a useful feature? One of the best ways of ensuring media coverage is to keep in regular contact with the environmental correspondent, who tends to write both news and features.



Some tips if you are contacting the newsroom to run a story:

- Contact the newsroom or ask for 'reporters'. Ideally do this a couple of days prior to the event
- Make sure your 'news' sounds interesting and is worthy of attention. Explain it in as few words as possible
- Ensure that a good spokesperson is available for the press to contact (including telephone numbers)
- As far as possible, think about general current events before issuing the release (for example a news release about London in Bloom during the week of a Royal Wedding would get little or no coverage). However if you are able to pin your story to a current event, you have much better chance of coverage
- Remember deadlines! Find out when your weekly newspaper goes to press (usually Wednesday or Thursday) and what time your evening newspaper goes to print (usually around 10am). If you send a press release right on deadline, they will not have time to cover it
- Have the five W's ready for the reporter: 'Who', 'What', 'Why', 'Where' and 'When'.

If you want a reporter or photographer to attend an event:

- Consider when you want the reporter to be there. It may make a more interesting story or photograph when you have something to show and talk about, not when you are just starting the event
- Be prepared to be flexible. If the newspaper cannot attend the event why not 'stage' something before or after?
- Give the reporter/photographer your full attention if they do attend. They have a job to do and deadlines to meet and cannot be expected to wait around
- Be prepared to write a short report if the newspaper cannot attend. This will usually be used if sent promptly whilst the event is still 'news'
- Keep in touch with your press contact. They may be interested in writing a follow-up piece.

Local radio and television

If you think your event will be of interest to radio and television, many of the editorial guidelines for newspapers listed above apply. In particular:

- Give at least a couple of days notice to the newsroom
- Be concise and interesting in what you have to say
- Be prepared to be flexible to fit in with schedules and programme timings
- Designate a spokesperson. Make sure they are knowledgeable about your group and projects and that they are good presenters. Consider if they are the best spokesperson for the campaign?
- Think about whom to target. 'Talk' radio is often attractive because they will nearly always want your story and they will offer you plenty of airtime to cover it
- Who is your audience? The five 'W's and a real understanding of the radio's target audience will also be essential in gaining radio coverage.

Press releases

We have given you some advice on how to get newspapers, radio and television involved with your entry, and suggest that you keep them involved by issuing regular press releases. To ensure that your press release stands out, we recommend that:

- An obvious point, but one that is often overlooked – always write 'Press Release' across the top of the page and put the date together with any logo or crest
- Include the date to be released (for example 'For Immediate Release', or 'Embargoed until 11 December 2005')
- Get the message across with an eye-catching and punchy headline, typed in bold
- The first two paragraphs should cover the five 'W's - 'Why', 'What', 'Who', 'When' and 'Where'
- Try to include a quote or testimonial from yourself, a sponsor, a local dignitary, volunteer or celebrity

- Be sure to acknowledge any donations or sponsorship you have secured and perhaps offer a sponsor quote
- Another obvious one – always finish the release by writing 'Ends' at the bottom, or if you are using a second sheet include 'More follows' at the bottom of sheet one.
- Include a main contact name and phone number in case a reporter wants more information
- Ensure that the contact person is available. Include mobile numbers wherever possible as often deadlines are tight and a missed call could lose you the publicity.

Attach a separate sheet titled 'Editor's Information' which gives some brief background information on your group or committee. Link it with the region/nation 'in Bloom' and the UK-wide Britain in Bloom campaign through the Royal Horticultural Society for extra recognition. Media information and background on the campaign and the Royal Horticultural Society can be obtained by contacting the Britain in Bloom Press Officer on Tel: 020 7821 3006.

Finally, keep as many press cuttings of your releases as possible in an album or scrapbook. It will help you with your 'in Bloom' entry and is useful when approaching sponsors, as it shows the level of local coverage you have achieved.



Case Studies

Broughshane (Northern Ireland)

Broughshane is a large village in Northern Ireland and is a regular participant in the UK Finals run by the RHS. The village has used participation in the Bloom to make their local area a better place for local people. Their 'in Bloom' Improvement Committee has been going for 17 years and has completely transformed Broughshane from an unknown village, to being probably the best-known floral village in Northern Ireland – "The Garden Village Of Ulster".

There is a tremendous sense of community spirit as 27 groups work together inclusive of all ages, gender, and religion, disabled and able bodied. As a result, everyone in the village has benefited, and lasting partnerships have been formed with the county council.

Valerie Blake, Improvement Committee Co-ordinator said, "Thanks to our 'in Bloom' involvement, we now have thousands of tourists who come to see our horticultural displays each year. Eight additional Bed & Breakfasts have sprung up due to the increase in tourists, and visitors going to the Antrim Coast & Glens now stop and spend money in the village instead of driving through. Private businesses have invested over £3 million in renovations and extensions to businesses in the last 10 years, and the only 2 derelict buildings in the village are now being renovated by the community. We are very proud of our achievement in Translink Ulster in Bloom and Britain in Bloom, and would encourage others to get involved."



Garstang (North West)

Garstang is located in northwest Lancashire and has been involved with the 'in Bloom' since 1987. Their 'in Bloom' committee involves many community partnerships and encourages everyone to get involved, including pre-school children.

Garstang in Bloom works on a number of projects including the Millennium Green, which consists of 4.5 acres of land that is managed as a nature and conservation site by local people. The area includes a series of walks with disabled access, featuring good pictorial signage, seating and supporting leaflets. Training has been provided to volunteers who conduct walks for youth groups and the general public, and undertake hedge planting, hay making and installing owl boxes and otter ladders. The group is currently designing, with the help of the Countryside Rangers and volunteers, a wildflower garden with sponsorship from Partnership for All.

Norah Hoyles, Chairman of Garstang in Bloom says, "The Millenium Green attracts over 100 people a day who use the space for a variety of activities such as dog walking. Many people are involved with Garstang in Bloom, such as the high school and primary school children who have created a wet garden, and this helps people take pride in the area. We also encourage people to help with litter picks and planting sessions. The end of these events are quite social, discussing next week's activities with a glass of wine."



Contacts

For more information about the "In Bloom" activities in your region/nation, please contact your relevant Co-ordinator from the following list.

1. Translink Ulster in Bloom
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2. Beautiful Scotland in Bloom
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3. Wales in Bloom
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4. Northumbria in Bloom
(covering Northumbria, Tyne & Wear, Durham and Cleveland)
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5. Cumbria in Bloom
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6. Isle of Man in Bloom
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7. North West in Bloom
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8. Yorkshire in Bloom
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10. Heart of England in Bloom
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12. Thames and Chilterns in Bloom
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Nations/Regions

