

# Care For your Area *Resources*

## Community Webnet - Scotland

Community Webnet is a one-stop shop for Scottish community groups carrying out projects which improve the quality of life for local communities. The site contains a wealth of resources to help you carry out projects in your community, learn from the experience of others and share your own experiences. The resources section has information on:

- Getting Started
- Managing Your Project
- Other Useful Stuff
- Developing a Project Idea
- Monitoring
- Legislation

An example of the material available is on the next page, information provides by BTCV Scotland.

Community Webnet provides a members directory so registered users can access other members contact information to share information and ideas. [www.communitywebnet.org.uk](http://www.communitywebnet.org.uk)

**Informal Learning Pack**  
Updates 2007



# Care For Your Area

## Getting Started - An Environmental Project

People become involved in practical environmental action for a number of reasons. Typically these include:

- A particular environmental problem has arisen which needs tackling at a local level.
- A number of individuals in a locality are interested in environmental issues generally and wish to do something practical to help.
- A local landmark, building or area of wildlife or historical interest has become neglected.
- Individuals want to meet and work with others interested in conservation and the outdoors within their own community.

You might not feel confident in establishing a new group since there may seem to be too many things to consider before even starting, or you might think the problem is someone else's responsibility. However, much good work can be achieved by local people. The best way to begin can be by gaining experience with an existing group. Find out which groups are active in your area, such as residents, tenants or community associations, conservation volunteer groups or branches of national voluntary organisations, which you could join. It may be that none of these groups are tackling the kind of work you are interested in, but you should meet some like-minded people and you will gain some group organisational experience. Should you find that there is no group in your area prepared to become involved in practical conservation work but you feel there are enough interested individuals who wish to take practical action, then perhaps you should start your own group?

While it is not impossible to organise things on your own, it is easier to spread the workload amongst a group of people. One of the many benefits of working in a group is to be able to share responsibilities, with different people undertaking different parts of the work. Many local conservation groups have originated from contact with national voluntary organisations, local countryside trusts, statutory agencies, local authorities or community councils. The resources they can offer (particularly in staff time) can considerably reduce the amount of organisation needed, although it could restrict your group's independence and initiative. The answer is probably a close relationship and a good understanding with other organisations, but not total dependence. It would still be useful to take advice from a number of sources right at the beginning of your project. Whether you are establishing a new group or taking over responsibility for an existing one, it is worth taking time to establish good practice right from the start. No matter how small you think your conservation project, it could easily grow into something bigger. It will be much easier to manage growth and change if the organisation has been efficient from the start, and this includes making sure that you keep records and have a structure to your group. These are aspects of project organisation you will need to consider if you want your group members to get the most out of their involvement.