



1. ABOUT IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

1.1 WHAT IS IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

The It's Your Neighbourhood campaign provides an opportunity to smaller community groups to get involved in the wider RHS Britain in Bloom campaign.

It's a unique scheme for volunteer-led community gardening groups which are focused on cleaning and greening up their local area, whether that's the street or estate where they live, the back alley they share, or the local community centre's outdoor space.

It's Your Neighbourhood is an inclusive, non-competitive scheme, which welcomes groups of all kinds, as long as they fit the criteria outlined below. There is no charge to participate.

The campaign's focus is on bringing members of the community together to make a positive change to the place they live, work or spend their leisure time. Participating groups are asked to focus on its three core pillars of:

- Community Participation;
- Environmental Responsibility; and
- Gardening Achievement

While participating groups are not judged against each other, they are visited by It's Your Neighbourhood assessors who provide valuable feedback and helpful advice on how to develop current activities and encourage on-going improvements. Based on the visit, each community will receive a certificate of achievement reflecting how well participants have met the It's Your Neighbourhood aims as included in the three core pillars. There are five levels of achievement in the campaign - Establishing, Improving, Developing, Thriving and Outstanding - and groups who have done consistently well over time may be nominated to receive the It's Your Neighbourhood National Certificate of Distinction.

1.2 WHO CAN ENTER?

It's Your Neighbourhood is open to groups of all sizes and a variety of projects, as long as they are focused on cleaning up and greening their local area and as long as they are:

- A group;
- Hands on;
- Involved in community gardening;
- Engaging and/or getting input from the community;
- Benefiting the community;
- Volunteer-led;
- Sustainable over time; and
- Owned by the community and the community takes responsibility for the work.

Some examples of It's Your Neighbourhood groups are:

- A residents' group/association;
- A friends group connected to a local green space, park or garden;
- A group of neighbours;
- A gardening group in a hospital / residential home / sheltered housing complex;
- A youth club/Scouts, Brownies or Girl Guide groups; and
- A community allotment group.

1.3 WHAT KINDS OF PROJECTS DO IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUPS CARRY OUT?

The projects that It's Your Neighbourhood groups do will be entirely decided by the local situation. The group will choose their project based on the local needs and environment and what might benefit their local community. These will be the most important considerations when deciding on a project.

Some examples of what It's Your Neighbourhood groups have done are:

- Restoring a churchyard;
- Converting a derelict area into useable green space;
- Taking over the improvement and maintenance of green spaces on their estate;
- Transforming a residential back alley into a community meeting space and garden (often reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour in the process);
- Adopting a square, roundabout or brownfield space and renovating it;
- Redeveloping all the front gardens on (part of) a street using any number of schemes (hanging baskets, window boxes for growing herbs etc.);
- Forming a Friends group to look after (part of) the local park; and
- Uniting local retailers to transform the high street/shopping area.

1.4 WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION?

By participating in It's Your Neighbourhood your community will benefit from:

- National recognition for your group's work;
- Part of a Scotland-wide campaign, and the chance to network with other groups across the country;
- Cleaner and greener surroundings;
- Developing a sense of community and creating positive interaction between community members;
- Safer environments for the enjoyment of local people;
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour;
- Increased local pride as people take ownership of the improvements to the area;
- Positive effects on the local economy, such as increased commercial enterprise;
- Helping the environment, through recycling, energy conservation, reducing litter, improving/adding green spaces and other sustainable practices; and
- Greater community contact/building relationships with the local authority.

2. HOW DO WE GET STARTED IN IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

If you're just starting out, here are a few ideas for how you can take your project forward. KSB can also put you in touch with other It's Your Neighbourhood and Beautiful Scotland groups in your area, so that you can share ideas and develop new partnerships. And don't forget to visit the individual group pages on the It's Your Neighbourhood website for ideas and inspiration:

www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/environmental-quality/its-your-neighbourhood/entrant-support/2013-entrants/

Step 1: Establish a group

Form a group and decide on a name (e.g. Kingston Road Community Garden). Establish a leadership structure and ensure you have the key roles filled (i.e. Secretary, Chairman, Treasurer). It is important that there are a few key people willing to get the group going. You don't have to sign up all potential volunteers, but you should at least have some to help get you started.

Step 2: Identify a project

What is your group going to do? Please bear in mind that even though the final aim of your project may be quite ambitious (e.g. creating a community garden from a derelict plot of land) it is not an expectation that you complete the project in the first year or even the first three years. Assessors don't expect to see only finished projects; they also look to help guide you along the way and support you in developing your project further. It is as much about the journey as the end goal.

Step 3: Put together a constitution/action plan

Most groups will start out by drawing up a governing document or constitution, setting out what they hope to do and how. This document will help everyone to stay clear about the group's aims. It is also required when applying for funds. You can find lots of model constitution templates online, which can be amended to suit the objectives of your group.

Once you have this in place, you may also wish to put together an action plan. This will be more of a practical list of the activities you will need to do to achieve the objectives laid out in your constitution. This plan will help you decide what projects you want to do and how you will go about implementing and maintaining them.

Step 4: Let your local community know what is happening and ask them for support

There are a number of ways to start the process of raising local awareness and support, and this should be maintained as your project develops. Some ideas to get you started:

- Inform your community council or local authority, let them know about your intentions and ask them how they might get involved. Your local councillors are good people to have on board; they will be able to talk about your project to a wide audience within the community.
- Make a big announcement! Consider sending information to your local paper; sending out a leaflet to all homes in the area; giving a talk to other community or residents' groups and local schools; putting up posters in your local shops, supermarkets, libraries, leisure/ community centres, places of worship and village hall notice-boards. There is advice about engaging with the media in **Section 8**.
- Seek the community's input; hold an open meeting where people can share ideas for things that they would like to see and sign up to your volunteers list.
- If your group works on land owned by a housing association, ask them for support, either financially or in-kind (perhaps they could provide you with tools or services to help you achieve your aims). *Britain in Bloom: Transforming local communities* is a useful reference document when speaking to housing providers and is available to download from www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom

Step 5: Develop a fundraising plan

There are a number of ways you can raise funds for your project, including:

- Organising your own fundraising events, such as open garden days, raffles, cake sales and car boot sales;
- Securing sponsorship or benefits in-kind from local businesses;
- Applying for grants; and

- Approaching the local authority - some may have funds available to support community groups in their area. It should be clear from the council's website who you should contact for further information.