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Ways to Care for Your Local Area

Your surroundings

If you are responsible for any open space think about greening them and keeping them well maintained. If it's just a yard you could still have some plants (dig a bed or bring in planter troughs) or even a tree or two. If you have got room to plant then:

- Plant low-water or drought resistant plants to minimise maintenance and water use (garden centres and conservation groups can advise)
- Put in some insect attracting plants and bird boxes

These actions will create a more attractive workplace and will in the long term help improve the biodiversity of the area.

Parks and open spaces in the nearby community

Civic responsibility starts here! Discuss how the office might support local projects to improve the local environment. You might want to organise or support a clean-up of local green space – as an organisation based in the area you might be well placed to try and get support from other businesses.

Parks are an important feature in many areas. There may be a 'Friends of the park' group you could work with. This could make a good team building activity – you could involve trustees too. Contact your local parks department – your local council should have an officer who is responsible for the parks in your area.

If you are planning a major project you will find help useful:

- Green Space is a registered charity that promotes the planning, design, management and use of public parks and open spaces and works to improve parks and green spaces by raising awareness, involving communities and creating skilled professionals. (www.greenspace.org.uk)
- CAFE Space is the part of CAFE aiming to bring excellence to the design and management of public spaces in our towns and cities. (www.cafe.org.uk)

Engagement in local community action

Supporting local community activities may well be just what your organisation is about, so look for ways not just to promote them, but also to take part. If there are local fun days,

environmental-themed Council events, tree planting sessions etc. look for ways in which you might be involved as an organisation. There may be fundraising opportunities if you get involved in local sponsored events. You can also encourage staff to look for volunteering opportunities.

You may also want to make contact with local environment and conservation groups. They may have ideas (and even funding) for local action and your office might be able to build new links between these groups and local community groups.

Funding

Funding for this type of work may be available from a wide variety of sources. This may be quite different to the funding that your group gets if it is working on social development issues. Local conservation groups may be able to advise on what to get funding and also can offer advice on how to cost out such projects. Local business is often interested in providing funding for projects and may be a useful source.