



## Fact Sheet

### Reducing the need for money

Details of organisations mentioned in this factsheet are listed in *Useful Contacts*.

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



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

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

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 ploholders 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

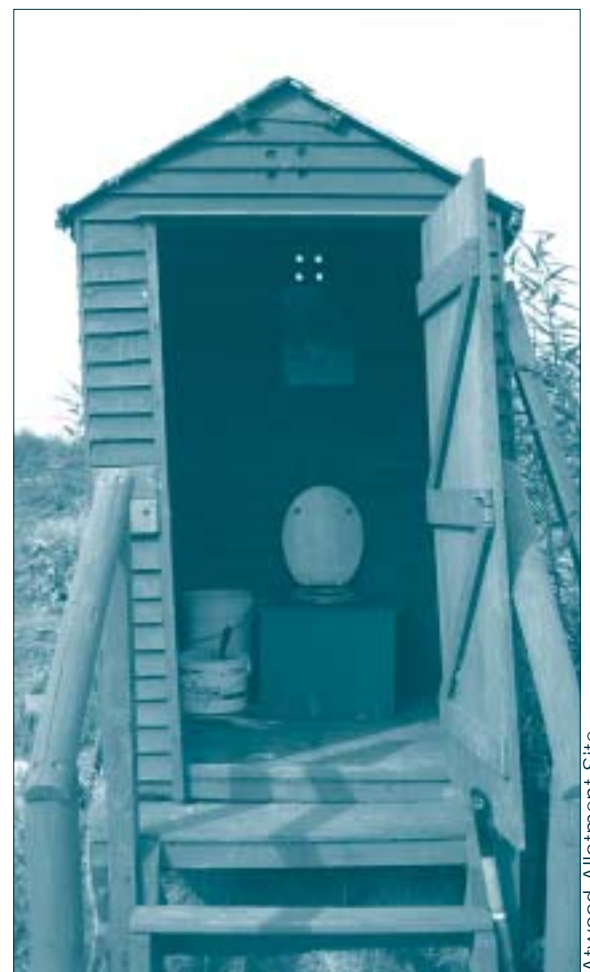
Sometimes you can save money by choosing an alternative design or approach. Other possibilities include:

### Newton Abbot Allotment

**Association** found a short-term solution to their car parking problems. They discovered that by covering those plots earmarked for parking with carpet, they provided a good parking surface until they can raise funds for a tarmac carpark.

- A flush toilet in a brick building may cost £15,000, whereas a septic or compost toilet in a reclaimed shed, built using volunteer labour, will cost under £2,000 (see ARI factsheet *Installing an Affordable Toilet*).
- 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, which can cost over £20,000.

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.



Atwood Allotment Site

*A compost toilet can be a more affordable option*

## Voluntary labour

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Plotolders 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 plotolders who do not get involved; they may have legitimate reasons not to and negative feedback could put them off helping in the future.

### Corporate team building

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. Contact Lesley Nicholls.  
Tel. 020 7643 1427  
lnicholls@csv.org.uk

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: youth offending teams, BTCV green gyms, youth employment schemes, primary care trust healthy living initiatives and CVS clients.

These partnerships are sometimes unpredictable - a lot hinges on the quality 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 have a programme called ProHelp, a national network of over 1,000 professional firms who give their time and expertise for free to local community groups and voluntary organisations. ProHelp support valued at over £6 million each year is delivered through 40 local groups across the country with member firms, both large and small, undertaking one-off projects, contributing to advice surgeries or entering into longer term partnerships within the local community.

For details of your local group:  
Tel. 0870 600 2482  
nicki.della-porta@bitc.org.uk  
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 8785  
fiona.hague@bitc.org.uk www.bitc.org.uk



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.