Community Networking Project Final Report

November 2003

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A report by GreenSpace

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Abstract

The Community Networking Project Final Report is the result of two year's research into the resources and abilities of 1,000 community groups across the UK which have an active interest in parks and green spaces. This movement is currently held back by a lack of information concerning their activities and opinions, and this report establishes a new level of baseline data. While the work conducted by groups is diverse and proactive, this report highlights that in order to become sustainable, many groups should extend their interests into new areas and seek to engage wider audiences, most notably ethnic minority groups.

As part of this, there is a requirement to expand networking between groups and other organisations, increase the financial stability of their everyday existence and develop their overall skills and knowledge base. It is important that this is supported by a continued commitment from the policy-makers, which broadens the range of capacity-building and training schemes open to groups, develops the number and variety of revenue funding schemes and continues to support the growth of regional networking forums. This report reveals a highly competent and committed movement of community groups, who make a vital contribution to our parks and green spaces through thousands of hours of unpaid work.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Community Networking Project

The Community Networking Project (CNP) has been running from November 2001 and is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) until the end of March 2004.

The objectives of the project are:

- To compile a National Register of contact details of those community-based organisations across the UK with an interest in parks and green space;

- To research the resources and abilities of these existing community-based groups across the UK;

- To increase the efficiency and ability of such groups to function effectively (capacity-building).

The CNP is contacting all community groups who work with parks and green space across the country, creating a National Register of their contact details. The National Register will be the first nationwide register of community-based groups that are concerned with the management of parks and green space and will promote networking between the groups, provide a base to disseminate examples of good practice drawn from around the country and act as a support system to raise the capacity of the groups.

GreenSpace (formerly the Urban Parks Forum) currently hold nearly 3,500 groups on the database. Of this figure, over 1,700 groups have agreed to share their contact details as part of the Register and we are continuing to contact those who have not yet responded. The main aims of this Register are to contribute to communication and networking, to reduce isolation between groups and help them to share experiences and solutions to problems. For the National Register to be an effective tool for community groups, it needs to include the most up-to-date contact details of these groups. It will therefore provide a facility for groups to register or update their details online.

1.2 Methodology

GreenSpace has assembled a database of community group contact details. These were primarily drawn from contact with local authorities across the country, who were asked to supply contact details of any community groups who worked with urban green space within the council's area of jurisdiction. There were a further number of organisations who assisted with the creation of the initial mailing list (listed in the thanks and acknowledgment section).

Between March and December 2002, Community Networking Project (CNP) questionnaires were sent to those community-based organisations across the UK that have an active interest in parks and green space.

A comprehensive questionnaire was sent to each of the groups on this mailing list. A copy of the questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix 1. To date this has been the main research tool of the CNP, and has been the primary method of contacting groups to learn more about their work and the resources available to them, and to determine if they would like to be included on the National Register.

A further questionnaire was sent to approximately 500 community groups, asking them some details concerning successful funding applications they had made in the past five years. These findings are analysed as part of this report (Section 4) and a copy of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2. Section four analyses details of 205 different applications to national funding streams.

The report focuses on all community-based organisations who have an active involvement or interest in parks and green space. These took the form of 'friends' groups, environmental and heritage conservation groups, Tenant and Resident Associations, park watch and user groups as well as numerous other types.

A dedicated MS Access Database was designed to store and analyse the results. Full results of the analysis can be viewed in Appendix 3. This report analyses the findings of the first 1,000 community groups to return the questionnaire. Further groups have kindly returned the questionnaire but these have not been included in the analysis for this report.

GreenSpace has estimated that there are at least 4,000 community-based organisations associated with urban green space across the UK. The data that informs this report is therefore based on approximately 25% of the total number of groups across the country, and therefore can be assumed to be a representative sample of community group activity in parks and green space.

1.3 Structure of report

Chapter Two of this report details the findings of the analysis of the main questionnaire, which is subdivided into thematic chapters. Chapter Three then explores one particular question within the questionnaire which prompted extensive debate: 'what additional resources would groups like to see offered to them?' The original questionnaire identified funding issues as a topic that required further investigation, which is the subject of the fourth section. This analysis is based on an additional questionnaire which was sent to approximately 500 community groups who were involved with successful applications to grant funding for their projects (copy in appendix 2). The report is then concluded in Chapter Five with a number of practical recommendations. This section focuses on potential areas for further research and investigation, aspects which may benefit from increased resourcing and highlights broad policy recommendations for local and national government as well as the support bodies who work with these community groups.

The report can be read in individual sections for those who have specific interests, but can also be read as one continuous document.

Community Networking Project Final Report

November 2003

The Group
Chapter 2

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2 The Group

This section analyses the main findings of the questionnaire through a number of thematic headings.

2.1 Types of groups

Most groups stated that they were 'friends' groups (41.3%). The next notable group was environmental conservation (33.2%), and then Tenant and Resident Associations (8.7%).

The results can be seen in graph 2.1.

For the purpose of this report, the groups are classified as follows:

'All groups' - this includes the full 1,000 community group returns.

'Friends' groups - these were groups who took the name 'friends of ------ Park/Cemetery etc'. They are groups whose primary remit is to act as a voice for the green space and frequently act as a link between the local authority and the wider community. They are commonly involved with the larger more traditional civic parks.

'Environmental conservation' groups (this group shall be referred to as 'Env Cons' throughout this report) - these groups have a wider conservation remit than 'friends' groups. Their main objective is to improve the local environment, which often takes the format of urban green space, with a frequent ecological bias to their work (eg. habitat management).

'Tenant and Resident Associations' (this group shall be referred to as TARAs throughout this report) - these groups have a broad focus and are established to look after the broad interests of a residential area. Green space therefore is not necessarily the group's primary interest.

Throughout this report, analysis will focus on these four group categories.

Graph 2.1 Types of groups
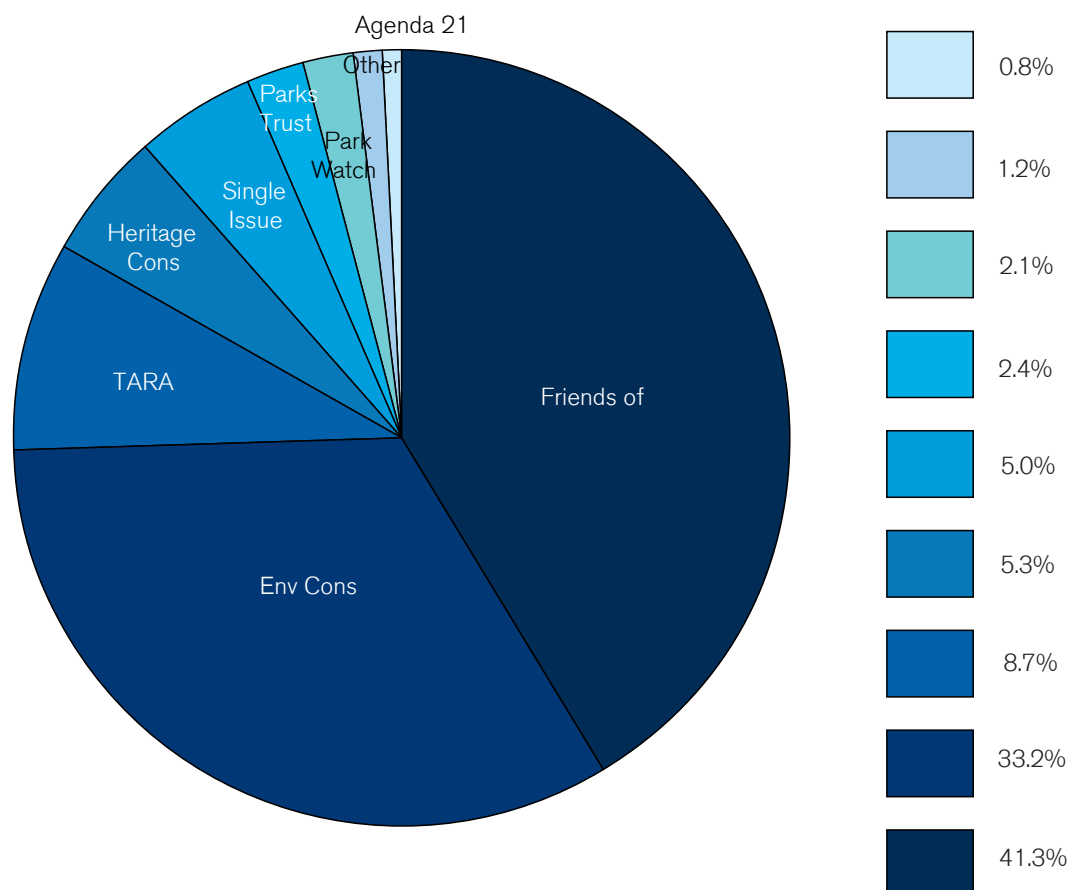
2.2 General group data

This first set of questions considers some general details about the group and their work. Details of membership, age and location of the groups as well as areas of work provide an introduction to the nature of community group interest in urban green space across the country.

2.2.1 Age of group

The vast majority of groups were formed since 1990 (70-90% dependent on category). In each case there was a peak in the number of groups being formed in the late 1990s (1998-2000) and a decline in the number being formed after this date. The first six years of the 1990s saw a consistent increase in the number of groups being formed each year. 'Friends' groups appear to be younger than other groups (only 8.7% formed before 1990 and a larger number formed in 2000 and 2001).

Graph 2.2 shows the percentage of 'all groups' and 'friends' groups formed in each year since 1990.

These trends in the numbers of groups being formed may be due to a number of external factors. This rise in the late 1990s may be partly attributable to the development of Best Value within local government. Best Value requires council services to undergo a complete review process. In order to achieve this, local authorities must undertake significant consultation with the community, including with community groups or 'friends' groups. This consultation must be meaningful and continuous, leading to an open and honest two-way communication channel.

The emergence of the Heritage Lottery Fund's Urban Parks Programme (now the Public Parks Initiative) in 1997 could also have led to an increase in the number of groups being formed around that time. In order to make an application, a commitment to community consultation has to be demonstrated, often practically realised by the formation of a community group. While much community consultation will involve informal, unconstituted bodies such as consultative committees and focus/user groups, many local authorities have set up new community groups to support a bid to HLF, many of whom continue after the completion of the lottery bid. The long-term involvement of such groups in restoration projects will contribute towards the overall sustainability of the park and help to maintain good standards. These groups most commonly take the form of 'friends' groups.

Graph 2.2 Age of groups
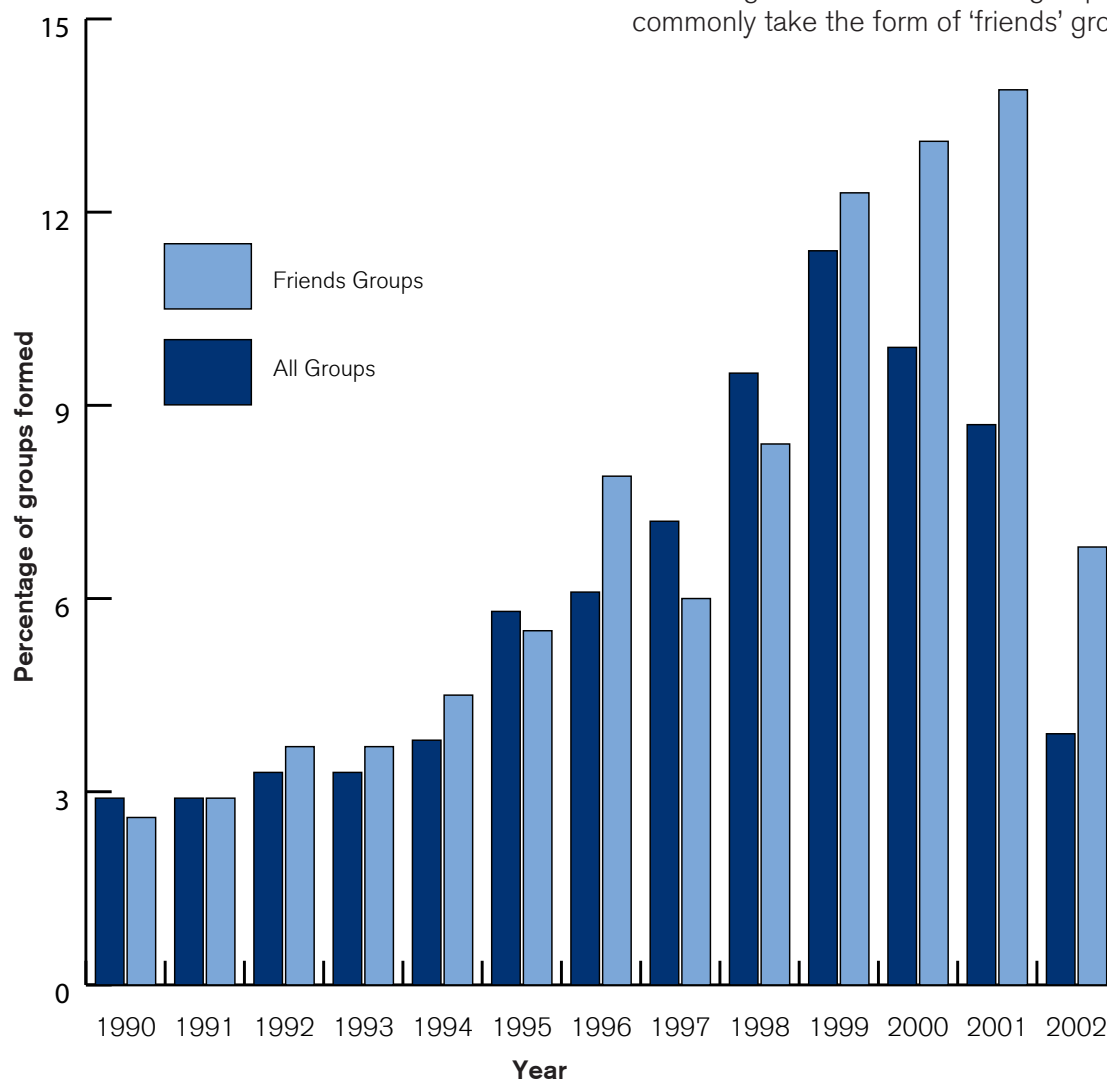
The fact that there was a lower number of groups being formed in the early 1990s could be considered an anomaly given the rise of the environmental movement and development of concepts of Sustainable Development around this time: the late 1980s and the early 1990s witnessed the United Nation Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) and the publishing of the Brundtland Report in 1987 and the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. However, the environmental consensus at this time was very much focused on the global ecological environment, and it was only in the later 1990s that the focus moved towards local environments (of which green space is a crucial component), with the development of initiatives such as Local Agenda 21, which could be reflected in the rise of the number of groups being formed in and around 1998.

Very few groups were formed before 1990: 21% for 'all groups' and even lower at 9% for 'friends' groups. The fact that so few groups are any older than 13 years highlights a potential life-cycle pattern that once groups form they may disband when the reason for their existence has been resolved. Graph 2.3 also identifies a clear peak about three years ago, which then began to decline in 2002. This perhaps illustrates a life-cycle of around three years for many community groups.

As these results seem to suggest a dynamic and regular turnover of groups, it is a possibility that many groups come to an end in any given year. As a result of the creation of our original mailing list of 3,500 contact details, GreenSpace has learnt that 56 groups have since disbanded (through follow-up questionnaires to non-responders). Given that these details were originally supplied predominantly by local authorities at the start of 2002, we can make an assumption that these groups were in existence at that time (as the authorities were asked to supply details of active community groups they currently work with - see section 1.2). Through contact with groups over the past year, we have become aware of 56 groups that have come to an end throughout 2002; given that 38 groups were formed in that year, the apparent increase in the number of groups may be offset against those groups which disbanded.

This question provides a snapshot of the current numbers of community groups working with green space. There would be a great deal of value in conducting similar research in 5-10 year's time to assess the long-term trends in age variation as well as research into the reasons for the formation of groups.

2.2.2 Constitutions

A constitution is a set of rules that defines how the group is run and will include the name, geographical area of operation and aims and objectives among other details. Constitutions help a group to be formally recognised by bodies such as local authorities and other organisations that they work with. Constitutions are often a necessity when making applications to funding bodies, who often state as one of their principal criteria that groups must be constituted. Each category of group type recognised the necessity of having a formal constitution in place. 75% of 'all groups' possessed a constitution, 78% of 'friends groups', 66% of 'Env Cons' groups and 83% of TARAs had constitutions in place.

It is possible to conclude that the age of the group (section 2.2.1) does not have a great deal of effect on whether a group has a constitution in place or not. Those with a constitution in place had an average age of only one year older than those groups who did not possess a constitution (11 years old compared to 10).

...these results seem to suggest a dynamic and regular turnover of groups....

2.2.3 Membership

As well as being a potential source of income, the membership of the group allows the involvement of the wider community in decision-making, helping to determine the development of the group in terms of its activities and its structure. Members will be able to join community groups (often for a fee) because they share a common concern for the aims and objectives of the group. The practical degree of involvement of a member is a free choice of the individual, ranging from taking part regularly at meetings, being involved with the committee, working on practical volunteer days or simply receiving newsletters and showing support by contributing a membership fee.

The average membership of groups was high, 'all groups' having 134 members on average; 'friends' groups had 132 while 'Env Cons' groups were slightly lower at 110. TARAs however, were much higher at 231. The higher figure for TARAs could be because of their broader work remit, such groups typically encompass everyday issues that affect people's quality of life (green space is one of many issues affecting this), such as education, health, housing and crime as well as the local environment.

The questionnaire also asked about the number of members who were actively involved with the work of the group. This refers to those who sit on the committee or those who actively volunteer with group activities, whether practical or organisational. A smaller percentage of the total number of members are involved actively. For 'all groups', 32% of members are actively involved in the work of the group. For 'friends' groups, this fell to 30%. It is slightly higher for 'Env Cons' groups at 36% but is considerably lower for TARAs at 18%. The slightly higher figure for 'Env Cons' groups may be seen because of the increased opportunities for active involvement as a result of the predominantly practical nature of their work (see section 2.2.7).

2.2.4 Trend in membership

Encouraging results were seen when groups were asked if membership numbers of the group was increasing, stable or decreasing. For each of the group types, less than 10% of groups felt that they had a declining membership, highlighting a continued interest in their activity as a group: over 56% of 'all groups' actually noted an increase in the number of their members.

The results for 'all groups' can be seen in graph 2.3.

When the trend in membership is compared to the findings for the age of groups, the possibility that groups may have a limited lifespan becomes apparent (section 2.2.1). Those groups who have an increasing membership base may therefore be younger than those who see a decrease in membership, possibly reflecting the beginning and end of their lifespan. This is confirmed to a certain extent when the age of groups is analysed for each of the categories of membership: those with declining memberships are the oldest (1990 - an average age of 13 years) while those with increasing memberships are the youngest (1994 - an average age of 9 years); those with stable membership are 11 years old on average (1992). While this trend is not heavily pronounced, it highlights a possibility that group membership declines with the increasing age of the group.

...less than 10% of groups felt that they had a declining membership...

Graph 2.3 Trend in membership

Declining (8.9%)

Stable (34.8%)

Increasing (56.3%)
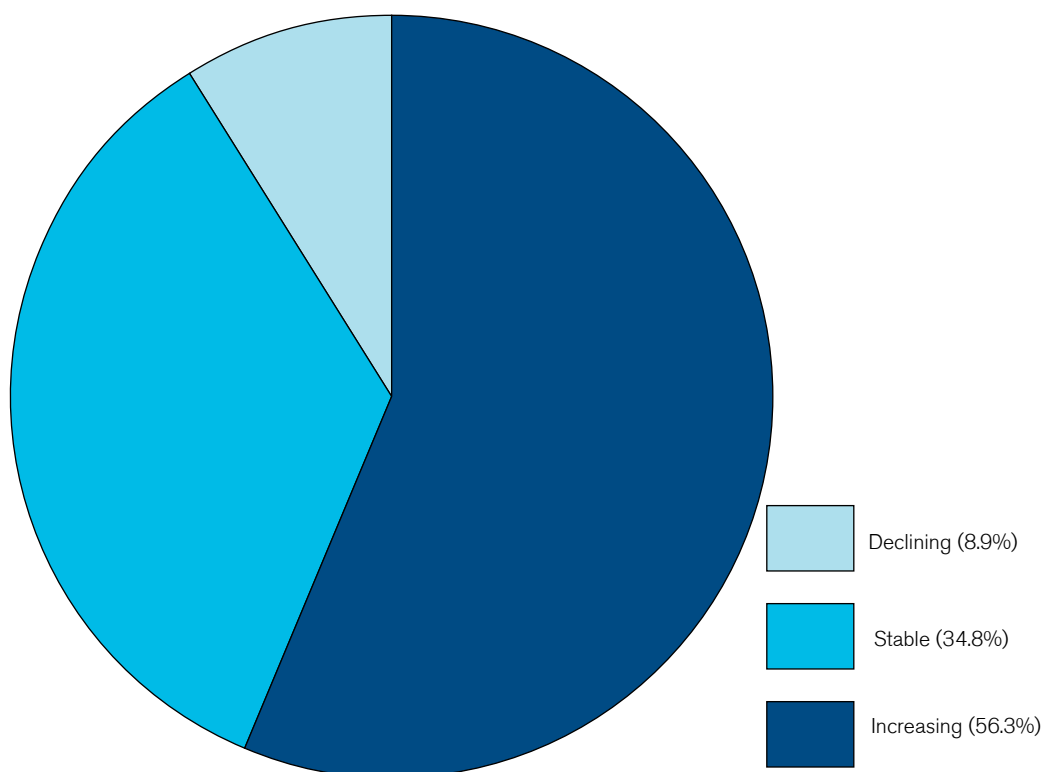
How much is all this work worth?

Working on our estimation that there are approximately 4,000 community groups with an average membership of 134 involved with urban green space across the UK, total membership may be approaching 500,000 individuals across the UK.

It is possible to place an approximate economic value on this work. Working on the figure that 32% of 'all group' members are actively involved with group work, this represents approximately 160,000 active individuals across the country (32% of the estimated 500,000 total individuals). The most common frequency of work parties on the site (for 'all groups') is 'other' (section 2.3.4), although this is not quantifiable for this purpose as it may represent anything from daily to infrequently. Monthly was the most common frequency amongst 'friends' groups and 'Env Cons' groups and so will be used here.

It is unlikely that every active member takes part on every work day, so a conservative estimate would assume activity six times a year (every other month) for a likely duration of four hours for each visit (representing half a day's work). This equates to 24 work hours per active member each year. The number of work hours given across the UK can therefore be calculated at 3,840,000 (24 work hours x 160,000 volunteers). Using the basic wage figure for over 22 year olds of £4.50 per hour , this work force represents an economic value of approximately £17.3 million each year.

This figure is likely to be a conservative estimate and crucially does not seek to overshadow the wider social and cultural benefits of community involvement, which cannot be given an economic value. To make a less conservative estimate, we can work on the assumption that active members will take part on each work day (ie. monthly, rather than every other as the first figure used). This will create an economic value twice that of the first figure of £34.6 million. We can therefore assume that the annual economic value of the work of community groups in parks and green space across the UK ranges somewhere between £17 and £35 million.

What advantage does charitable status bring?

There are numerous benefits to becoming registered as a charity. This report only highlights those which have become apparent throughout analysis of the questionnaire, and this section is by no means an exhaustive appraisal of the advantages of registration.

Those groups registered as charities tend to have higher incomes and make greater numbers of applications to funding streams than those groups who are not registered as such. These trends are fully explored in section 2.6.5, and are likely to be because a number of funding bodies (especially Charitable Trusts) require the applicant to be registered as a charity or apply through a charitable organisation. Charities are also likely to secure additional funds because they can easily receive donations from various sources and promote an organised and stable image to potential funders.

The occurrence of charitable status has a degree of influence on the membership levels of groups. For 'all groups', the average membership figure for those registered as a charity was 224 compared to 109 for those not registered as a charity. Charities are typically more reliant on membership for financial stability and sustainability as an organisation so are more likely to see higher membership levels.

The process of applying for charitable status will involve the group justifying its existence and focusing its aims and objectives, as well as highlighting those people that benefit from the work of the group. As part of this, the group is more likely to be increasingly proactive when promoting membership to the wider community, demonstrating that as wide an audience as possible benefits from their work. Involvement with promotion and encouragement of use of the site is greater with groups registered as a charity (75% of them engage with this activity) compared to groups who are not registered as a charity (57%).

The percentage of active members was however lower in those groups registered as charities compared to those not registered (26.1% compared with 36%), which could be due to the increased numbers of paid staff which are associated with charities, which could negate the need for so many active volunteers.

The decision to become registered as a charity is one a group should consider carefully. While there are numerous benefits to obtaining such status, it may not be suitable for each group and will often consist of a substantial administration process.

1

2.2.5 Charitable status

Voluntary community groups can chose to become registered as a charity with the Charity Commission. The vast majority of groups were not registered as a charity. The average for 'all groups' was 22%. This fell to 14% for 'friends' groups and TARAs, while 25% of 'Env Cons' groups were registered as a charity. These figures demonstrate that while some groups have found charitable status useful, the majority can exist successfully without such status.

There appears to be some relationship between the adoption of charitable status and how established the group is. This can be seen when charitable status is compared to the age of group, with groups registered as a charity having an average age of fifteen years compared to ten years for those who are not registered as a charity. Charitable status can therefore be considered as a possible end point for some groups whereas others may not wish to achieve such status. For those who wish to become registered as a charity there is a potential opportunity to capacity build their ability to do so.

2.2.6 Region

For the analysis GreenSpace used the official government breakdown of England into nine regional areas . The countries of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are interpreted as separate areas (see Appendix 4 for a map of UK regions). In terms of the number of community groups in each region, for 'all groups' the top three were the South East of England, London and the North West of England (making up approximately 50% of the total number of groups between them). 'Friends' and TARAs were ranked London, the North West and then Yorkshire, while 'Env Cons' groups were ranked the South East, Yorkshire, and then the South West of England.

The dominance of the South East and London can be most likely attributed to the fact that these areas are the largest population centres of the UK, and will therefore be more likely to have larger numbers of people involved with urban green space. Also important is the fact that these regions are the most heavily built up within the UK, and there is a potential corresponding need and desire for urban green space than more rural areas of the country.

Questionnaires were sent across the whole of the UK, although only 6.8% of 'all groups' (and as low as 4.7% for 'Env Cons' groups) came from outside of England. Because the original list of contact details was obtained principally from local authorities (section 1.2), the response rate by the local authorities will affect how many groups we could contact in each region. Responses within England (65%) were marginally higher than Wales (64%), Scotland (56%) and Northern Ireland (50%). While this goes some way to explaining why we have heard from fewer groups outside of England, the local authority response rates are not different enough to fully explain this difference in regional weighting.

The results for 'all groups' can be seen in graph 2.4.

Graph 2.4 Geographical location of groups

Colour	Percentage
	1.3%
	2.5%
	3.0%
	3.5%
	6.7%
	7.1%
	7.1%
	8.5%
	12.2%
	13.0%
	16.9%
	18.1%
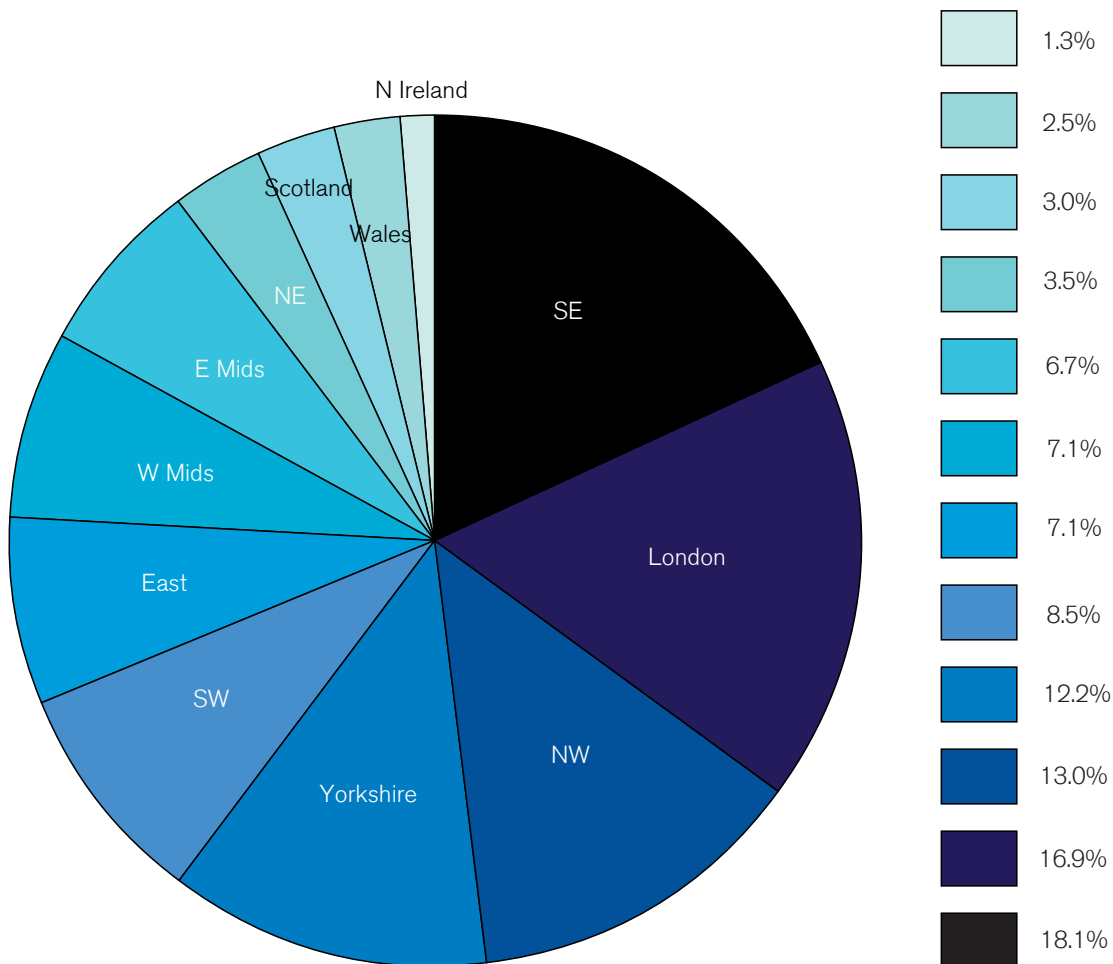
2.2.7 Type of work conducted by the group

This question presented the group with a list of 14 types of work they may be involved in, and asked them to tick as many or as few that were relevant to their work. For both 'all groups' and 'friends' groups, the most common areas of work were 'promoting and encouraging the use of the site' and 'improvement tasks' (eg. physical improvements to the site), with over 60% of groups engaging in these work areas. 'Env Cons' groups were more engaged in practical improvement tasks and help with maintenance, implying that they are more task-led, while TARAs were predominantly interested in fundraising and organising events. From this is appears that TARAs are more concerned with using the site as a resource for the promotion of their own activities rather than viewing the site as the principal reason for their existence, such as with 'friends'.

Graph 2.5 shows the results for 'friends' groups, 'Env Cons' groups and TARAs.

There is a notable drop-off in interest in activities such as capital projects, political lobbying and site security by each category. These are still very valuable areas of work for a group, and there is potential for increasing these activities with well-directed support, encouragement and capacity-building for specific work aspects with the community groups.

There is, however, a much larger percentage of 'Env Cons' groups who are involved with 'direct management ' of the site. This could be because of the trend of such groups to become involved with sites where they are more likely to have a greater opportunity to participate in the management of the site (eg. scrubland and urban woodland compared to town centre traditional parks). Far fewer 'Env Cons' groups work with traditional parks than 'friends' groups (8% compared with 41% respectively); also greater numbers work with less formal sites, with 25% of 'Env Cons' groups working with woodland sites and 17% with grassland compared with 18% (woodland) and 8% (grassland) for 'all groups' respectively (see section 2.3.1). There are also a number of organisations such as BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) who are available to provide support to this type of group, further increasing their effectiveness and capabilities.

2.2.8 Work priority

While the previous question asked about all the areas of work interest, this question asks them to specify only one type of work area which is the most important to them. This question asked the group to rank in order of importance 1-4 the top work priorities of their group, out of eight choices. In each case the work interest that was ranked the top priority (ie. 1) was recorded.

The overwhelming result was that environmental conservation came out as the dominant priority of each group type. 51% of 'all groups' ranked this a top priority, while the figure rose to 80% for 'Env Cons' groups. This trend would be expected given the environmental bias of 'Env Cons' groups. This trend could also illustrate quite a broad interpretation of the term 'environmental conservation', to include general maintenance of good standards as well as nature conservation. The least important for groups were single projects, entertainment and art (with less than 6% of any groups interpreting these as work priorities).

The results for each category of group can be seen in graph 2.6.

...environmental conservation came out as the dominant priority of each group type.

Graph 2.5 Type of work conducted by groups

Legend:
- TARAs
- Env Cons
- Friends groups

Y-axis: % of groups engaging with activity

X-axis (Activity): Promotion, Improvement tasks, Organising events, Preservation, Consultee, Fundraising, Maintenance, Interpretation, Capital projects, Political lobbying, Site security, Direct management, Customer surveys, Operation of facilities

Graph 2.6 Work priority

Legend:
- TARAs
- Env Cons
- Friends groups
- All groups

Y-axis: % of groups with this priority

X-axis (Work priority): Env Cons, Site security, Heritage, Recreation, Children, Single project, Entertainment, Art

2.2.9 Priority groups

Most groups felt that their work benefited certain priority groups of people. The most popular groups to benefit were young people, with over 55% of groups in each category feeling that their work specifically benefited this group of people. Older people were also seen to benefit from the work of community groups, with over 50% of each group type feeling that their work benefited them.

The most notable trend within this question was that minority ethnic groups were the category which benefited least from the work of community groups. For each type of group, approximately only 20% felt that their work specifically benefited ethnic minority groups. It is concerning that 80% of groups felt that their work did not benefit ethnic minority backgrounds (and presumably do little to engage this frequently marginalised sector of society). This highlights that there is a clear need for community groups to work more closely with minority groups in areas where they are prevalent in local society, ensuring representation by responding to the needs of the entire community. Linking with events and festivals such as the annual Mela is an ideal way to reach such groups and involve them more centrally in the work of the group.

It should be noted that results for this specific question might be exaggerated by the respondent's liberal interpretation of 'specifically', with many groups feeling that their work benefited all priority sectors because the park or green space was 'open to anyone', with free public access. While this may have been true in a number of cases, it does not detract from the findings that minority ethnic groups have limited involvement with green space community groups at present. If there was a degree of 'overestimation' of involvement within this question, it only serves to highlight that this lack of involvement may actually be more pronounced than the figures suggest.

...minority ethnic groups were the category which benefited least from the work of community groups...

2.3: Site details

The second part of the questionnaire asked some specific questions about the nature of the site that the group work with. Groups were given the opportunity to provide details of more than one site if this was relevant to their situation. The vast majority of groups work on one site only (93%), and only 7% of groups work on more than one site (which can be up to eight in some cases).

2.3.1 Type of site

For both 'all groups', 'friends' groups and TARAs, the most common type of site worked on was the traditional park, although it was much more pronounced with 'friends' groups (41%) than 'all groups' (26%), TARAs (31%) or 'Env Cons' (only 7.7%). The term 'traditional park' refers to typical urban parks, commonly created between the 1870s-1950s, and possessing a central place in the geographical and social life of the urban space. 'Env Cons' groups by definition are likely to be more involved with practical ecological and habitat conservation. For this reason, a greater involvement than other groups with woodland (25%) and grassland sites (17%) is seen, where such practical work is more possible than with formal traditional parks.

The types of site are shown in graph 2.7 for each category of group.

Graph 2.7 Type of site worked on by the group
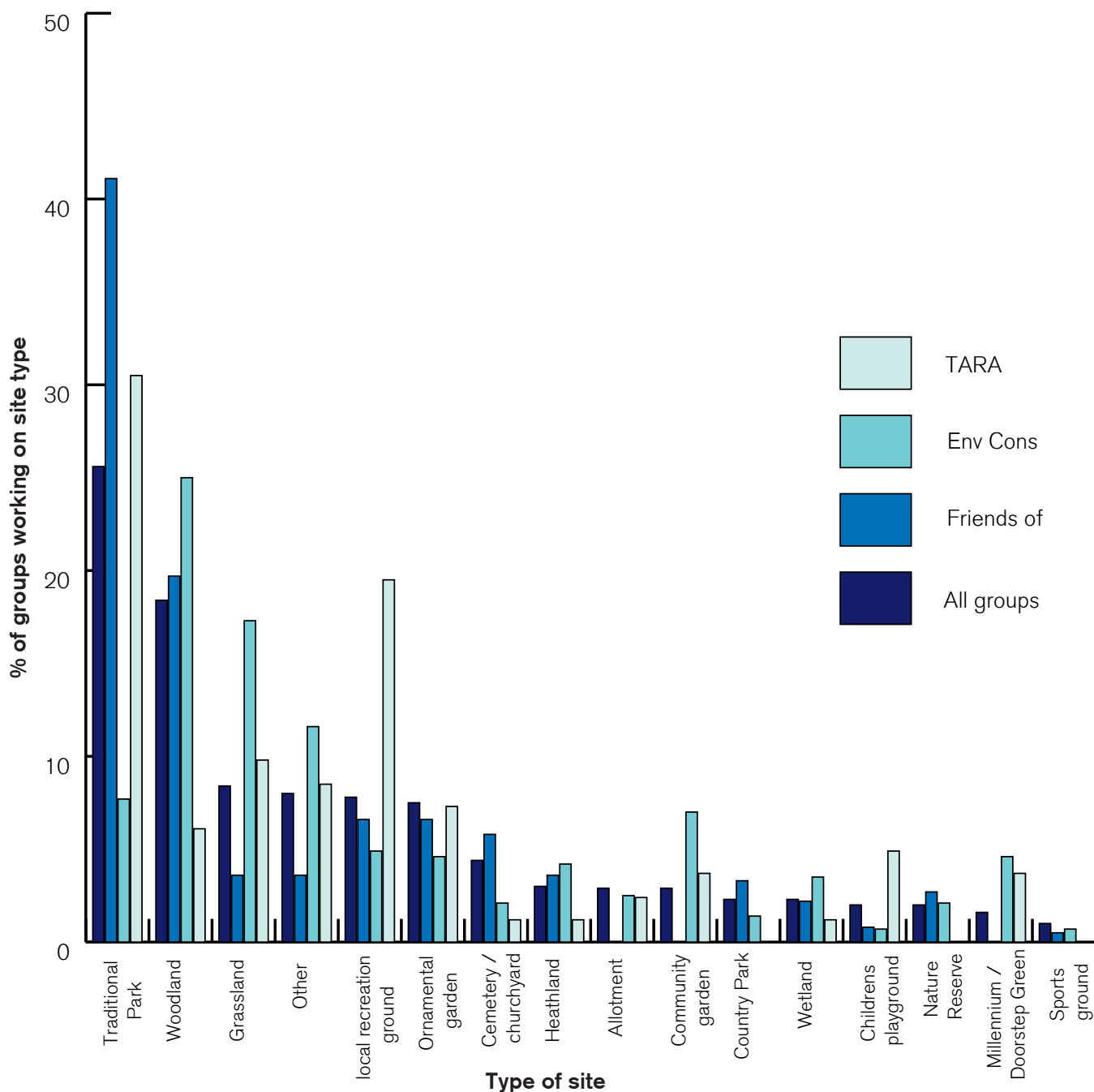
2.3.2 Size of site

The average size of site worked on by groups was large. For 'all groups', 'friends' and 'Env Cons', the size ranged between 47 - 49 hectares (ha). Only with TARAs was the size considerably smaller, at 6.2 hectares. The smaller size for TARAs may be because the park or green space is only one part of their work and often not the principal reason for their existence (unlike 'friends' groups). This may mean that they are more likely to work with smaller sites, such as pocket parks, village greens, verge areas or incidental areas of green space. While TARAs still worked predominantly with traditional parks, they worked with local recreation grounds and children's playgrounds (6.4ha and 1.4ha respectively) far more than any other type of group, and woodlands (39.6ha) far less than other types of group (section 2.3.1), possibly due to their association with distinct residential areas.

The types of site worked on by groups (section 2.3.1) were analysed in terms of their average size in hectares.

The results for each type of site can be seen in graph 2.8.

2.3.3 Site designations

The questionnaire asked the group to state whether they thought their site was of historic interest. Guidance was provided in the questionnaire as to what constituted historic interest, including any sites on official lists (for example, the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England) and where historic character is visible, encouraging the participant to use their local knowledge and judgement when considering their answer. Over half of 'all groups' (56%) and 'Friends' groups (65%) consider that the site they are associated with is of historic interest. The figure falls to 48% for 'Env Cons' and 37% for TARAs.

When historic interest is correlated with the type of site, it becomes immediately apparent that certain types of site worked on by groups have a greater degree of historic interest than others in the opinion of the groups. 87% of churchyards and cemeteries, 83% of country parks, 69% of traditional parks and 69% of woodlands are seen as being of historic interest. This can be compared with 37% of local recreation grounds, 30% of community gardens, 21% of allotments and 0% of sports grounds possessing historic interest.

The results for all of the sites can be seen in graph 2.9.

This question also asked whether the group knew of formal designations relevant to the site. These could include statutory designations such as SSSIs, Local Nature Reserve status or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) status. 'friends' groups were the highest with 43% and TARAs the lowest at 18%. Given that 'friends' groups work largely with traditional park sites (graph 2.7), the high number acknowledging that their site has a formal designation suggests that formal, traditional parks remain important sites of ecological and wildlife value, something which is also confirmed in graph 2.9.

37% of traditional parks have formal designations, while 49% of woodland sites and 38% of grasslands possess such designations. This figure rises to 74% of heathlands and 75% of nature reserves.

The results for all of the sites can be seen in graph 2.9.

For both historic interest and formal designations, 'friends' groups came out as the highest while TARAs were the lowest. The higher figure for 'friends' groups may be explained by the fact that a higher percentage of 'friends' groups work with traditional parks and woodlands than TARAs (61% compared to 37% respectively). As has been seen (graph 2.8), traditional parks and woodlands are far more likely to have historic interest and specific designations than sites such as recreation grounds or sports grounds often simply due to their age. This is complemented by the fact that a higher percentage of 'friends' groups regard heritage (which has clear connection with historic interest) as their main work priority (15%) compared to TARAs (4%).

The English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England4 lists nearly 1,450 sites around the country, including public parks, cemeteries, garden squares and hospital grounds. GreenSpace's survey identified 608 sites of green space around the UK which the community group regarded as possessing historic interest. While many of these sites may not be formally recognised by such registers as that of English Heritage, it nonetheless demonstrates the significant contribution of green space to the UK's heritage (many sites may still be important in terms of local but not national heritage).

Graph 2.8 Size of site worked on by the group

Y-axis: Size (hectares)
X-axis: Type of site

Categories: Country Park, Heathland, Other, Traditional park, Woodland, Nature Reserve, Grassland, Wetland, Ornamental Garden, Local recreation ground, Allotment, Cemetery / churchyard, Millen. Green / Doorstep, Children's playground, Sports Ground, Community garden
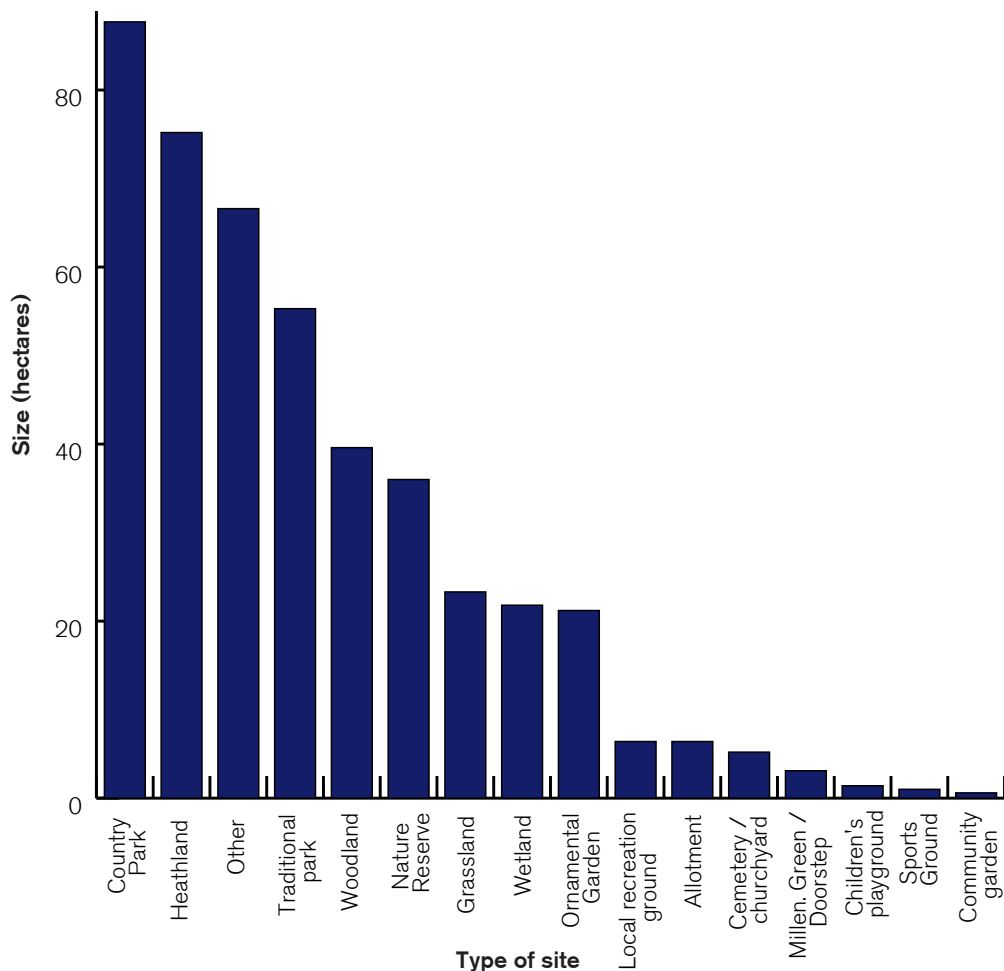
Graph 2.9 Type of site and site designations

Y-axis: % of sites with historic interest or formal designations
X-axis: Type of green space

Legend:
- Formal designations
- Historic interest

Categories: Cemetery / churchyard, Country Park, Ornamental Garden, Woodland, Traditional park, Heathland, Wetland, Nature Reserve, Grassland, Community garden, Other, Local recreation ground, Millen. Green / Doorstep, Allotment, Children's playground, Sports Ground

2.3.4 Frequency of working parties

This question asked about how frequently the group undertook practical work tasks on their site. The notable trend that emerged was the irregularity of these work days: for 'all groups' the most common frequency was 'other' (weekly was the most frequent interval

provided, so 'other' could also include daily, twice weekly, fortnightly etc). This demonstrates that a large number of groups do not feel that regular and scheduled work days are appropriate for their volunteers, rather responding to demand and preferring to remain flexible. This is most likely a response to the availability of volunteers who can give their time, many of whom may work or have other commitments. Monthly was the most common frequency for 'friends' (30.3%) groups and 'Env Cons' groups (37.5%).

2.3.5 Site ownership

For each group category, the vast majority of groups worked on sites that were owned by the local authority. This was as high as 98% for TARAs and even the lowest, 'Env Cons', was still high at 86%. Of note was the very low number of community groups that owned the land themselves. Only 11 sites (0.9%) out of 1,000 returns possessed the legal ownership rights. This shows that while legal ownership certainly has its benefits, it is not a necessity in order for a group to continue its activities, with many groups preferring fewer responsibilities. The very high figure for local authority ownership illustrates the fundamental relationship between the authority and community groups.

...the vast majority of groups worked on sites that were owned by the local authority... this illustrates the fundamental relationship between the authority and community groups.

2.4: The group and their local authority

2.4.1 Communication with the local authority

Results for this question were again promising and groups felt that they were generally kept well informed by the local authority on issues that affect their green space. 57% of 'all groups', 61% of 'friends' groups, 55% of 'Env Cons' groups and 50% of TARAs felt that they were always or regularly kept in contact by their local authority. While very encouraging this indicates that there is considerable scope to improve information provision and form better relationships, although this is dependent on the resources available to the local authority as well as the extent to which community involvement is viewed as a priority (see chapter 3 for a full exploration of the additional resources requested by groups).

Graph 2.10 shows the results for 'all groups'.

Graph 2.10 Communication between the local authority and the group

- Never (3.6%)
- Rarely (8.4%)
- Sometmes (31.1%)
- Regularly (45.3%)
- Always (11.7%)
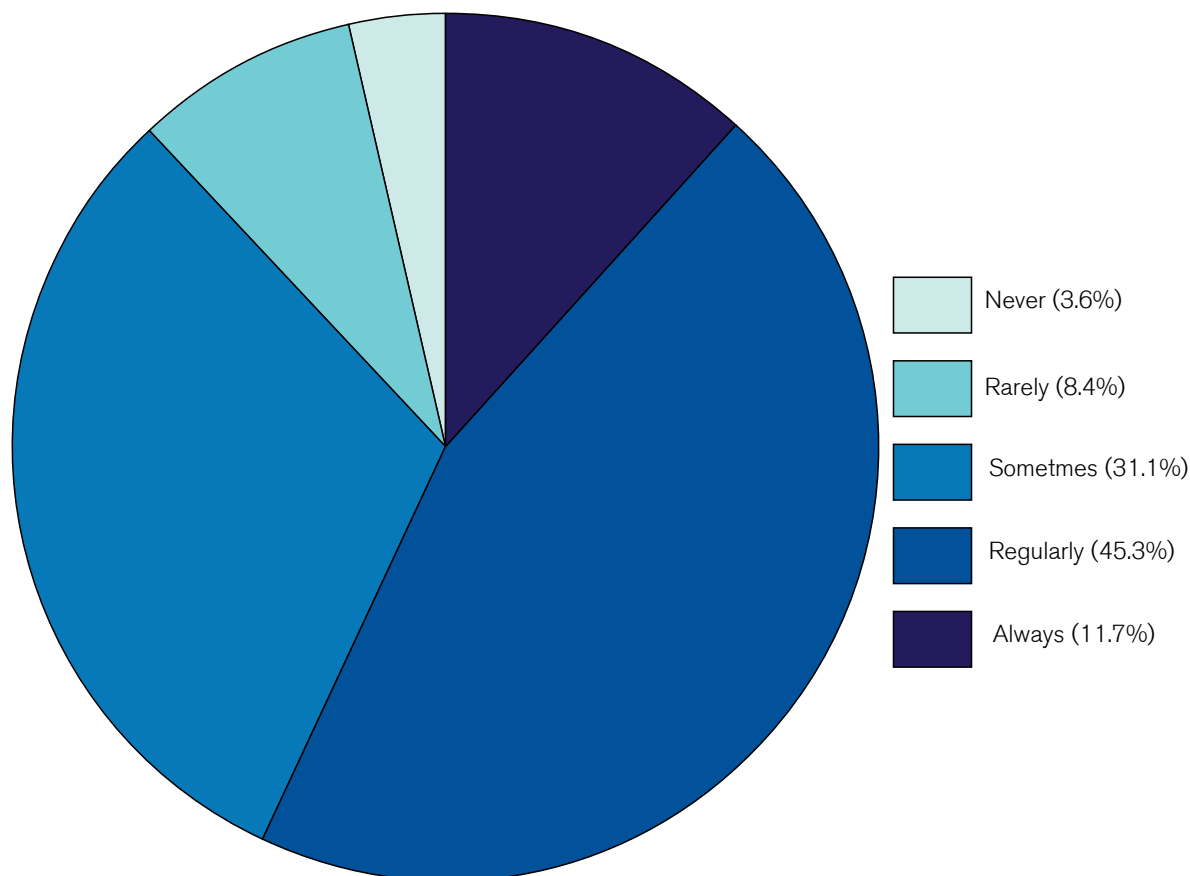
2.4.2 Type of local authority support

The most frequent types of support given to community groups were advice (with between 60-73% of groups receiving this) and staff time (40-62% of groups). Training, and office and storage space were the least common types of support offered to groups. The trend here reflects a possible resource implication of providing the different types of support, with advice and staff time being met from existing resources while training and office facilities are resources which demand budget increases.

Graph 2.11 shows the results for each category of group.

2.4.3 Frequency of formal meetings with the local authority

This question asked about the frequency of formal meetings (ie. those that are scheduled, organised and minuted) the group had with their local authority. Of note was the number of groups that do not have formal meetings with the authority, ranking the highest for 'all groups' (28%) and for TARAs (28%). The most common frequency for 'friends' groups was quarterly and monthly, and quarterly for 'Env Cons' groups.

The fact that such a large number of groups do not have formal meetings with their local authority is not necessarily a cause for concern. Formal meetings excludes informal correspondence, such as phone conversations, or informal meetings, which could make up the majority of contact for many groups who are perhaps keen to avoid the formal approach. Also, the lack of contact in the form of formal meetings can be taken as a positive in that the group can function effectively in the absence of a formal support structure from the local authority. A formal meeting with the landowner may often indicate adverse relationships, taking place for reasons such as conflict over use of the land.

For those groups who never have formal meetings, 65% of them still have an excellent or good relationship with their local authority and only 6% have a very poor relationship. This can be compared to nearly 70% of 'all groups' who had an excellent or good relationship (section 2.4.4) and less than 5% of 'all groups' (section 2.4.4) who had a very poor relationship. This significant evidence of a very good relationship with the local authority in cases where there are no formal meetings confirms that a trend of few formal meetings is not necessarily negative.

However, a bad relationship with the local authority can increase the chances of the group not having a formal meeting with them, even if it may be advantageous to the group. For those groups ('all groups') who said they have a 'poor' or 'very poor' relationship with their local authority, 57% said they never had formal meetings with their local authority. In such cases, the relationship may have deteriorated to such a degree that the group feels they are unable to approach the local authority or work with them (or vice versa), which is clearly a very bad situation.

2.4.4 Relationship with the local authority

The results of this question were very favourable, with nearly 70% of 'all groups' feeling that they had a good or excellent relationship with the local authority and a further 24% feeling that they had a reasonable relationship. For each group category, less than 5% of the groups felt they had a very poor relationship. Such positive relationships are very encouraging for the work of the groups; it is also somewhat of a necessity as the local authority is the landowner in the vast majority of cases (section 2.3.5).

The findings of this question are very encouraging, although there is still room for improvement as a poor or very poor relationship is still a highly undesirable situation and may reduce the effectiveness of activities and working by the group. There is also potential to move the 24% of groups who felt they had a reasonable relationship with their local authority into the excellent or good categories.

Graph 2.12 shows the results for 'all groups'.

Graph 2.11 Type of local authority support

Legend:
- TARAs
- Env Cons
- Friends of
- All groups

Y-axis: % of groups receiving support
X-axis: Local authority support type (Advice, Staff time, Premises, Postage, Training, Office / stores)
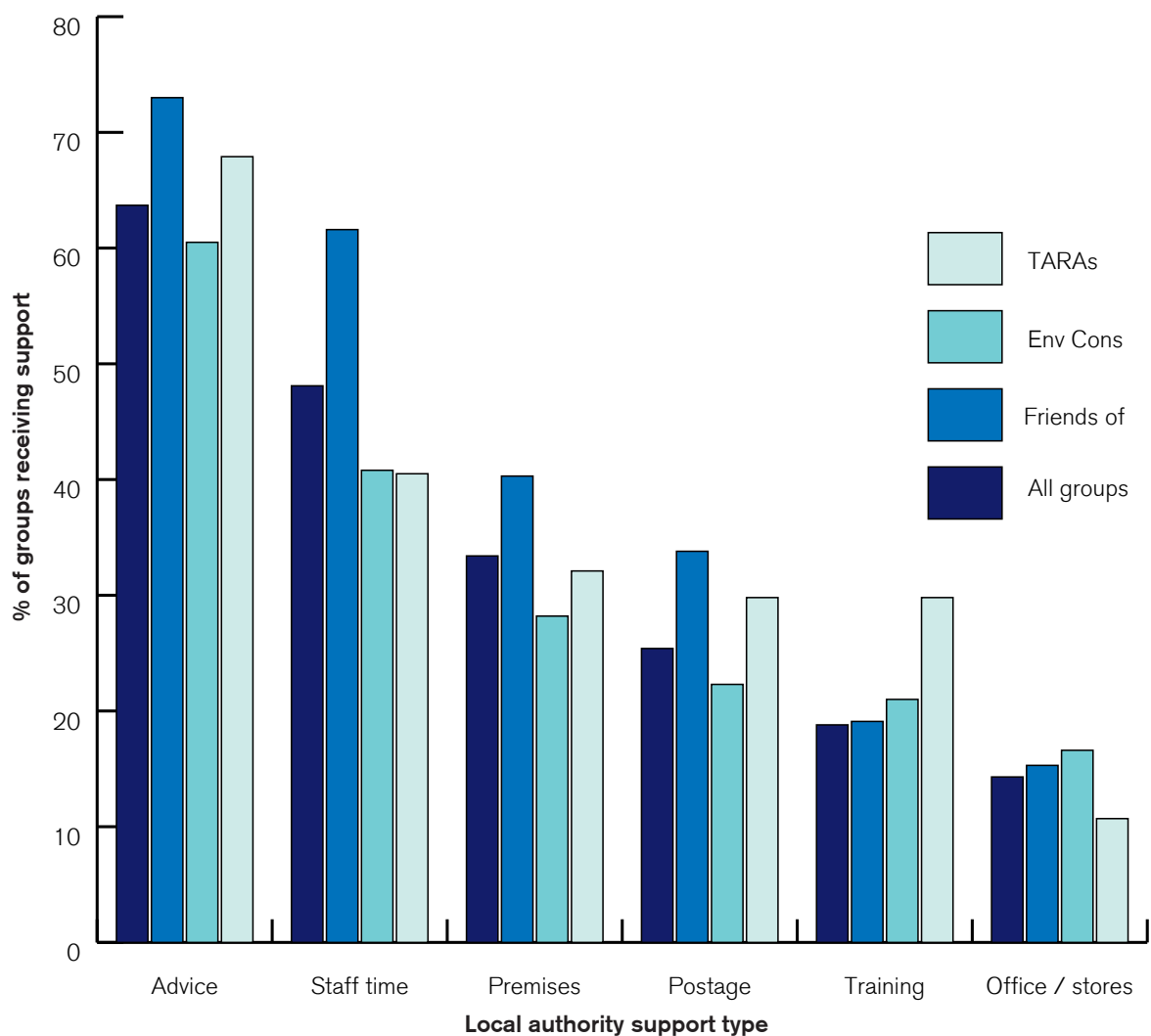
Graph 2.12 Relationship between the local authority and the group

Legend:
- Very poor (2.5%)
- Poor (4.8%)
- Reasonable (23.9%)
- Good (45.2%)
- Excellent (23.5%)
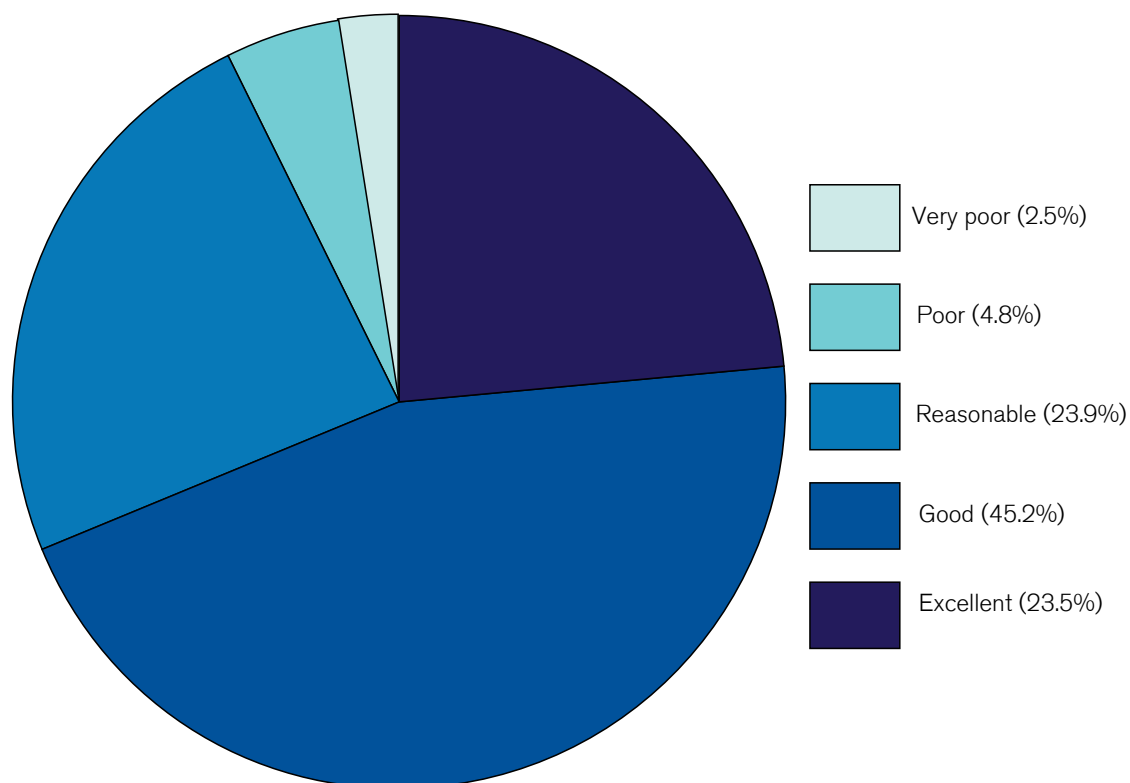
What makes a good relationship between the group and the local authority?

It is possible to gain some idea of what constitutes a good relationship between the group and the local authority. When analysed alongside the findings for communication with the local authority (section 2.4.1), there is a clear correlation between how a group interprets their relationship with their authority and how well informed they are kept. Of those groups that said they had a good or excellent relationship with their local authority, 74% said they were also kept informed by their authority either regularly or always. This can be contrasted with those groups who said they had a poor or very poor relationship with their authority, of which only 8% said that they were always or regularly kept informed by their local authority. Conversely only 4% of groups who said they had an excellent or good relationship with their local authority said that they were never or rarely kept informed by them. 68% of those groups that said they had a poor or very poor relationship with their local authority also said they were never or rarely kept informed by them.

A poor relationship with a local authority is here closely correlated with poor communication between the local authority and the group (see end of section 2.4.3 also). In order to promote a positive relationship with the community group, local authorities should aim to keep them informed of policies and developments that affect the group and their work.

2.5 Networking

With so many community groups working with urban green spaces across the country, there are countless examples of good practice demonstrating successful and innovative community groups and projects. Community groups frequently exist largely in isolation from one another, and are not aware of some of the excellent work being done by other groups. There is great value in the sharing of experiences and solutions to problems groups experience, and good networking can avoid 're-inventing the wheel' and wasting resources. It was therefore deemed necessary to assess the current level of networking between groups and organisations, and what support bodies they are in contact with.

2.5.1 The extent of networking

Approximately half of groups were in contact with other community-based park and green space groups (48% of 'all groups' and 51% of 'friends' groups). TARAs were the least active networkers, with 37% of them in contact with other groups. While this clearly demonstrates that groups recognise the potential value of linking with other similar groups, it also shows that there is a great deal more potential to increase the extent of this networking amongst the remaining 50% that are currently not in contact with other groups.

Graph 2.13 Networking with special interest groups
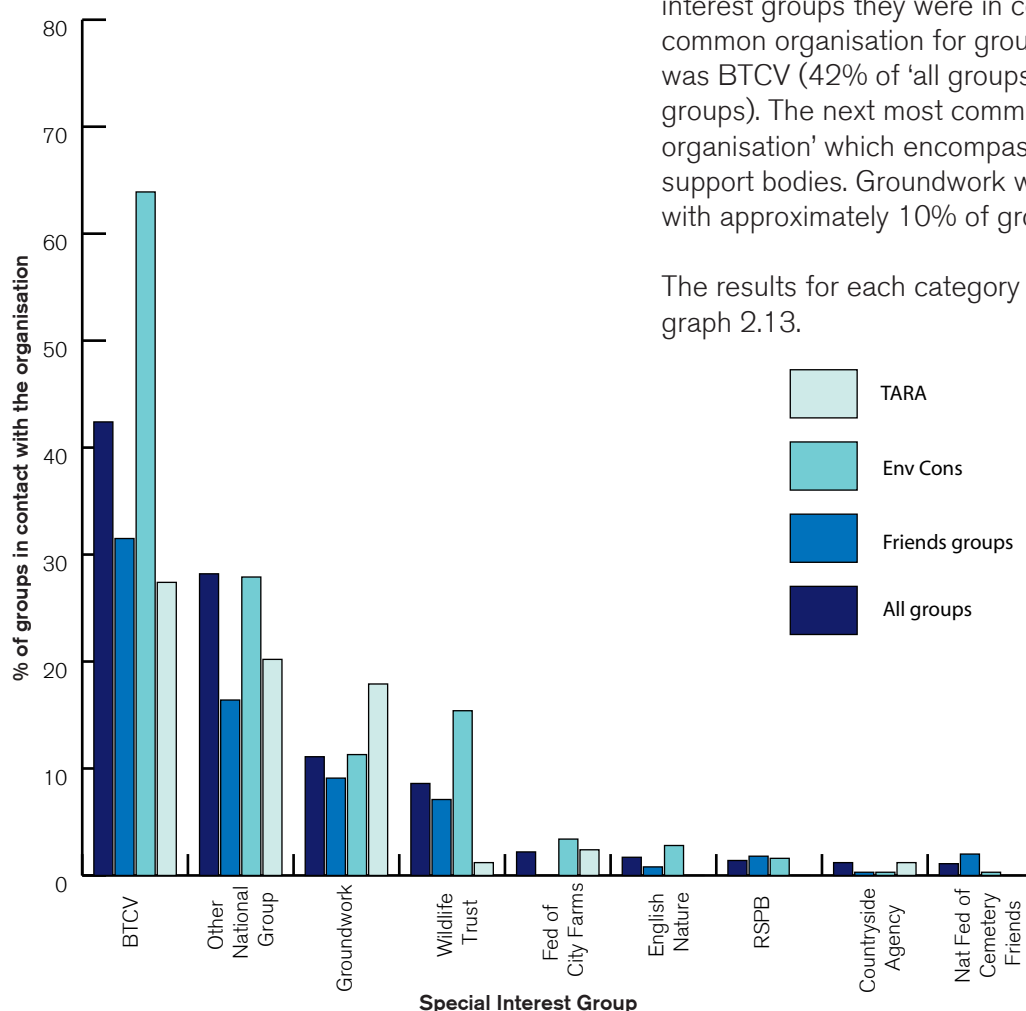
The questionnaire also asked about the contact groups had with other special interest groups, such as BTCV, Groundwork and the Wildlife Trusts. 69% of 'all groups', 63% of 'friends' groups, 84% of 'Env Cons' groups and 52% of TARAs were in contact with at least one such organisation. The higher figures than seen by the previous question may be partly attributed to the fact that organisations such as BTCV are well-known nationally. They also have an extensive local presence through regional offices and support mechanisms for nature conservation activities; they are also commonly known through contacts within the local authority. The much higher figure for 'Env Cons' groups than other group categories can be understood by the nature of their work. The majority of support organisations will often have a specialist and clear focus on environmental conservation, such as BTCV and the Wildlife Trusts. Such groups have a stronger conservation focus than other group categories, and therefore are more likely to be involved with such environmental conservation bodies as opposed to 'friends' groups, whose work remit may often be too broad to warrant contact or membership with BTCV (see section 2.5.2 and graph 2.13).

2.5.2 Types of special interest groups

As a follow-up to the previous question, the questionnaire asked the groups to specify which special interest groups they were in contact with. The most common organisation for groups to be in contact with was BTCV (42% of 'all groups' and 64% of 'Env Cons' groups). The next most common was 'other national organisation' which encompassed a variety of different support bodies. Groundwork was the third most popular with approximately 10% of groups in contact with them.

The results for each category of group can be seen in graph 2.13.

2.6: Financial information

Prior to this research, very little was known about the financial situation of groups, especially how much money they survive on and where the funding comes from. Such information can reveal a great deal about the long-term sustainability of the groups. With increased emphasis on community involvement in local and national parks and green space policy, it was important to establish some baseline data about funding and the finances of groups. The last part of the questionnaire asked some questions regarding financial information, and completion of this section was voluntary. Further analysis of external fundraising and grant applications by groups can be found in section 4.

2.6.1 Group income

The breakdown of income was very similar between each category of group. Analysis of this question highlights the fact that a large number of groups manage themselves on a very small annual income. 41% of 'all groups', 42% of 'friends' groups, 39% of 'Env Cons' groups and 38% of TARAs had an annual income of less than £500. At the same time, approximately 20% of groups had an annual income of over £5,000, demonstrating that a sizable number of groups across the country operate with relative financial security. It is important to remember that this does not represent disposable income, and much will be committed to ongoing revenue costs, such as insurance, administration and so on.

This considerable disparity is interesting, and it is unclear why there are fewer groups receiving mid-range incomes. This could be because the breakdown in income brackets in the questionnaire included some quite broad categories, something that was unavoidable, as it was considered too intrusive to ask for precise incomes.

It should be noted that these annual income figures may include grants for capital works to the site so may not accurately represent an average annual income.

The results for each category of group can be seen in graph 2.14.

2.6.2 Annual income source

For each group, the greatest source of income was membership, then local authority grants and thirdly fundraising events. The fact that membership was ranked highly demonstrates that the groups can generate a large percentage of their own income, independently of external funding bodies and demonstrates an element of sustainability. This does not seek to dismiss the importance of other funding sources as they can act as a valuable source of larger incomes to undertake capital improvements to the site, as well as to build the capacity of the group. This will be explored further in section 4.

The results for each category of group can be seen in graph 2.15.

2.6.3 Annual income duration

The questionnaire also asked about the duration of each of these sources of income. Approximately 50% of each category of group had income that lasts for less than 12 months. This indicates the short-term turnover of income in a large number of groups. While many will have longer term and more secure incomes, many are operating on a 'hand-to-mouth' survival basis, and existence is frequently tenuous, especially given the fact that so many groups exist on such low incomes in the first place (see graph 2.14). This highlights the need for funds which can enable long-term stability within the group, such as training, capacity building and employed staff such as fundraisers in some cases (see chapter 3 for full analysis).

'Friends' groups had the greatest percentage of their annual income lasting for less than 12 months, with approximately 60-70% of incomes from the local authority, national agencies and 'other' lasting for less than one year. When compared with other group categories, 'friends' groups had the greatest percentage of their annual income (29.5%) drawn from the lowest category (up to £250; see section 2.6.1). 'Friends' groups therefore appear to be the least financially stable of the group categories in terms of the amount and duration of their income.

Graph 2.14 Annual group income
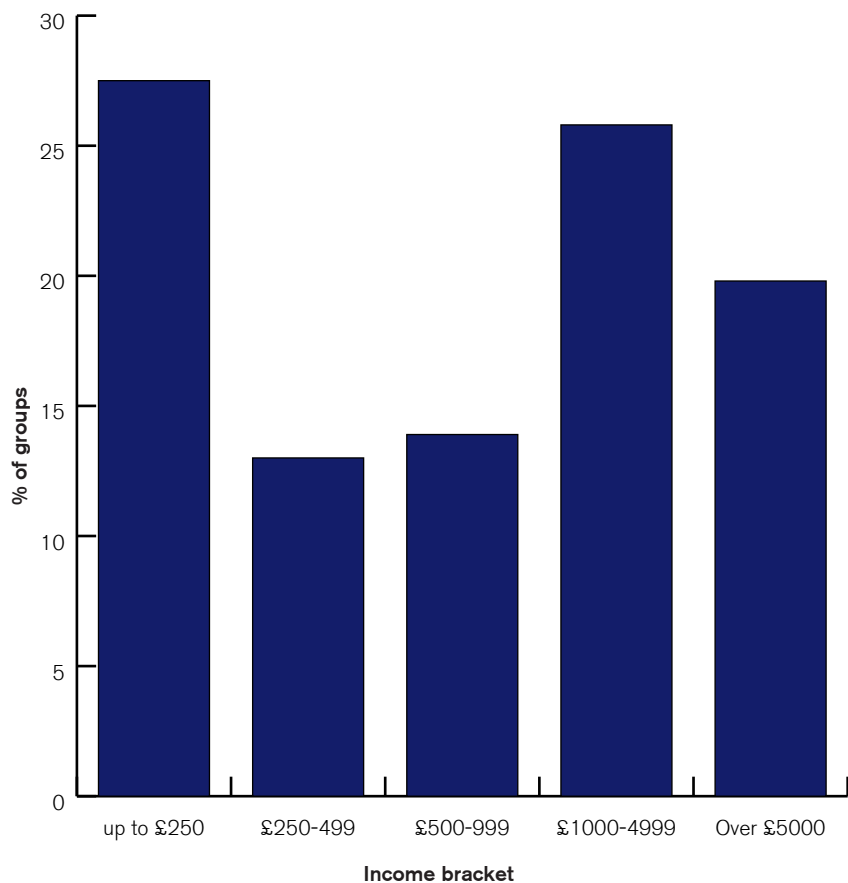
Graph 2.15 Annual income source
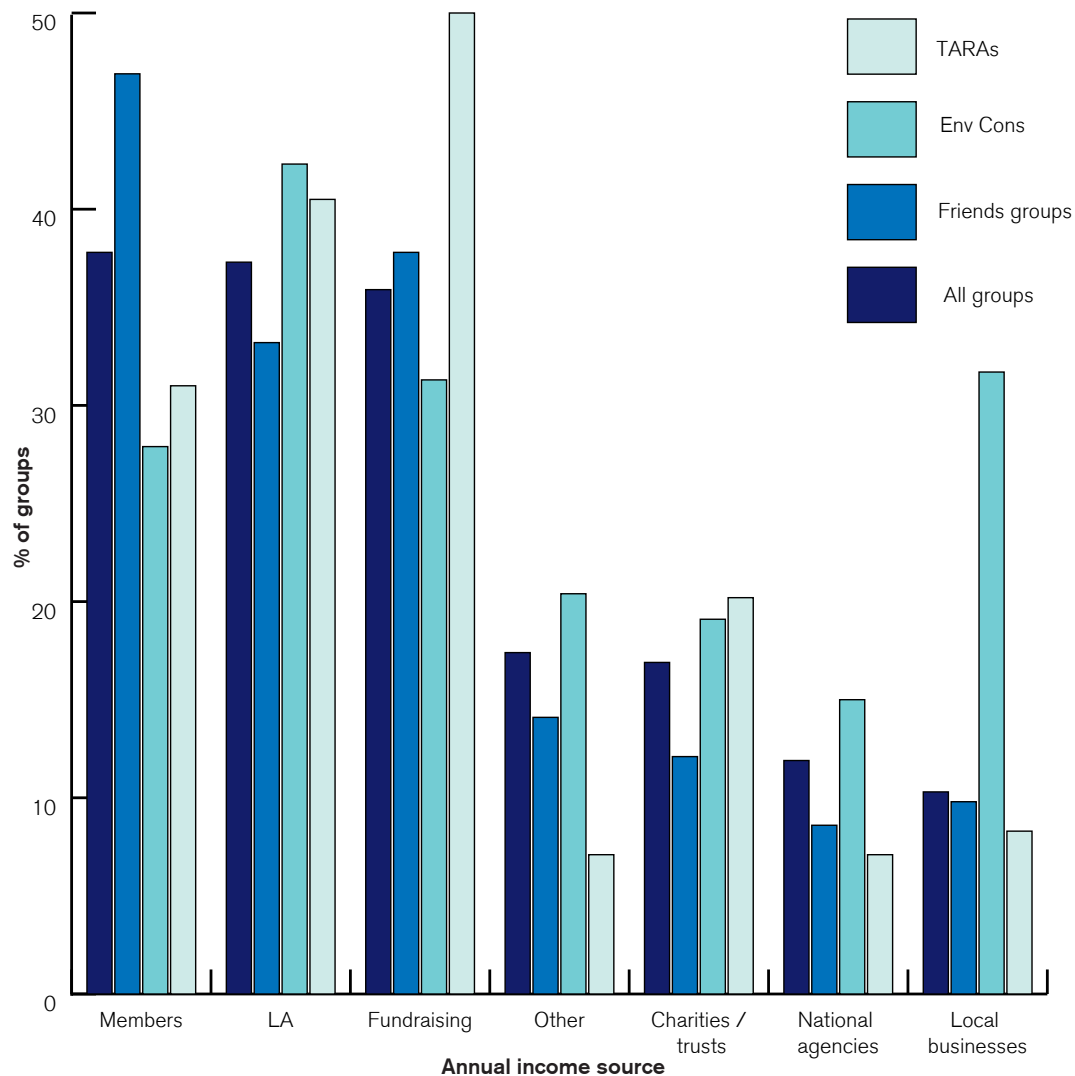
2.6.4 Applications to grants or funds

A large number of groups recognised the necessity to apply for external grants or funds in order to make themselves sustainable in the long term and supplement their regular income. Local authorities were by far the most common source of funding applications by groups with over half of each category of group making such applications in the past 12 months. The large number of applications can be attributed to the fact that the local authority is the dominant body groups are in contact with (as they are the landowner in 90% of cases - see section 2.3.5). The grants are most likely to be small subsistence awards to aid the start-up of the group or cover basic administration costs.

More significant awards are likely to come from lottery board or from national agencies, to which fewer applications were made by groups (approximately 20-25% of groups made such applications). This may also reflect the amount of time necessary to make such applications, which will often be to fund large capital and longer-term site projects (such as the Public Parks Initiative by the Heritage Lottery Fund). This premise is backed up by the fact that approximately only 25% of groups are actually involved in capital projects as part of their work (section 2.2.7). There is potential for groups to make a greater number of applications to the larger funding schemes such as the lottery board or national agencies.

The results for each category of groups can be seen in graph 2.16.

Graph 2.16 Applications by groups to grants or funds
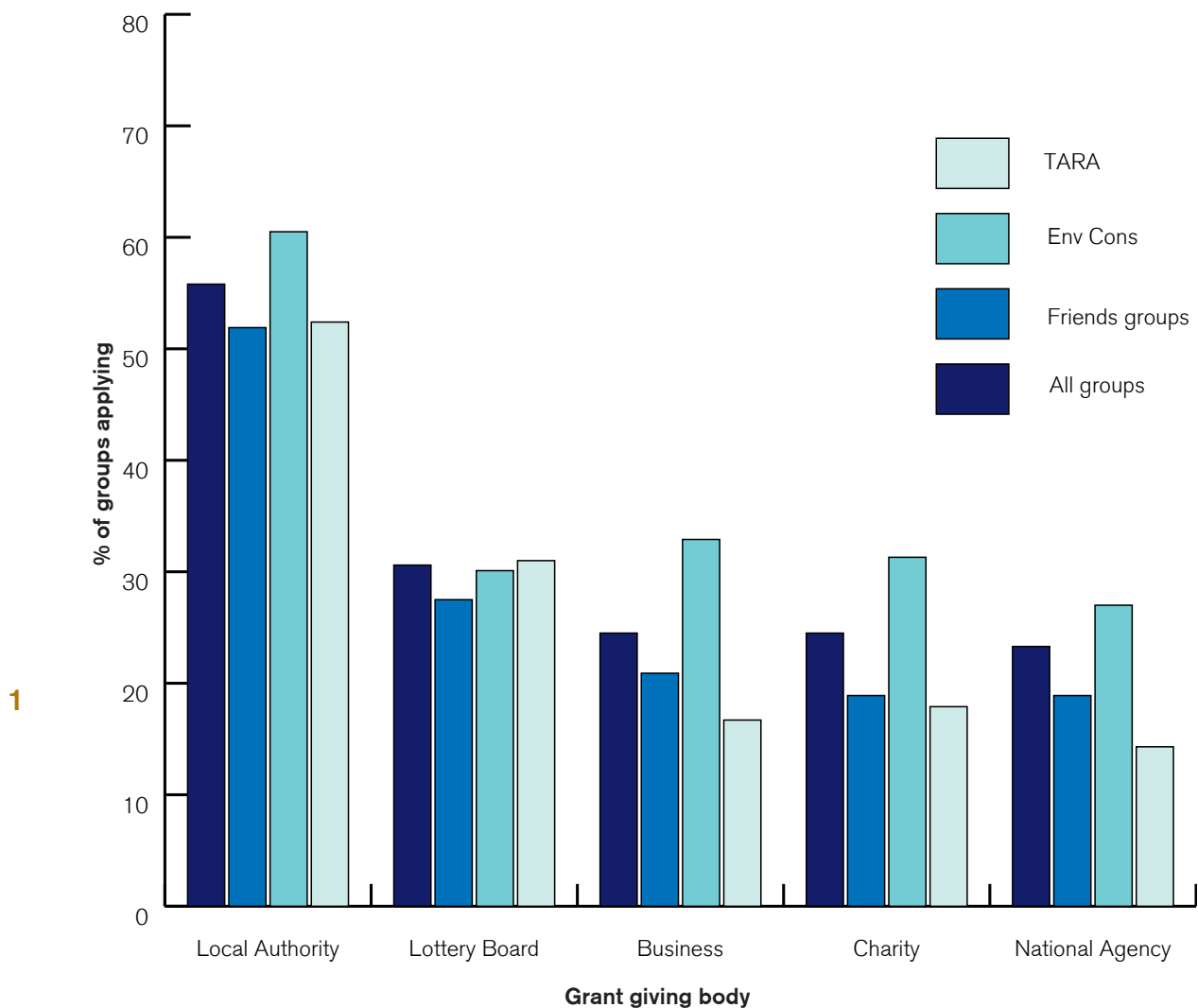
2.6.5 Charitable status

Approximately 20% of groups are registered as a charity (section 2.2.3). Analysis was conducted to determine the effect of such status on the income of 'all groups'. In general, charitable status meant that the income of the group was higher than those who were not registered as such. For those groups that are registered as a charity, a much lower number had an annual income in the lowest bracket (up to £250) and a larger proportion had an income bracket of over £5,000. This trend is likely to be because charities will qualify for a wider variety and greater number of grant awards than those groups who are not registered. Also, funds from Charitable Trusts require the applicant to be either registered as a charity, or apply through another body who is registered. Groups registered as charities will also be able to receive donations from individuals and organisations more easily.

While it is difficult to say whether charitable status is the driving factor behind the higher incomes or such status comes after the group becomes more established and financially well off, it is evident that success breeds success in this case.

The results for 'all groups' can be seen in graph 2.17.

For those groups that were registered as a charity, a greater number of applications were made to the various funding bodies than groups that were not registered. This trend is again attributable to the fact that many grant award bodies may require the group to be a charity in order to qualify. This is reflected in the findings of this question, with 48% of 'all groups' who are registered as a charity making applications to charities, compared to only 18% of groups that are not registered as a charity. Funding bodies may also be more confident in making an award to a group with charitable status, taking this as a demonstration of their capacity and ability.

The results for 'all groups' can be seen in graph 2.18.

Graph 2.17 Effect of charitable status on group income

Graph 2.18 Effect of charitable status on group applications to grants or funds
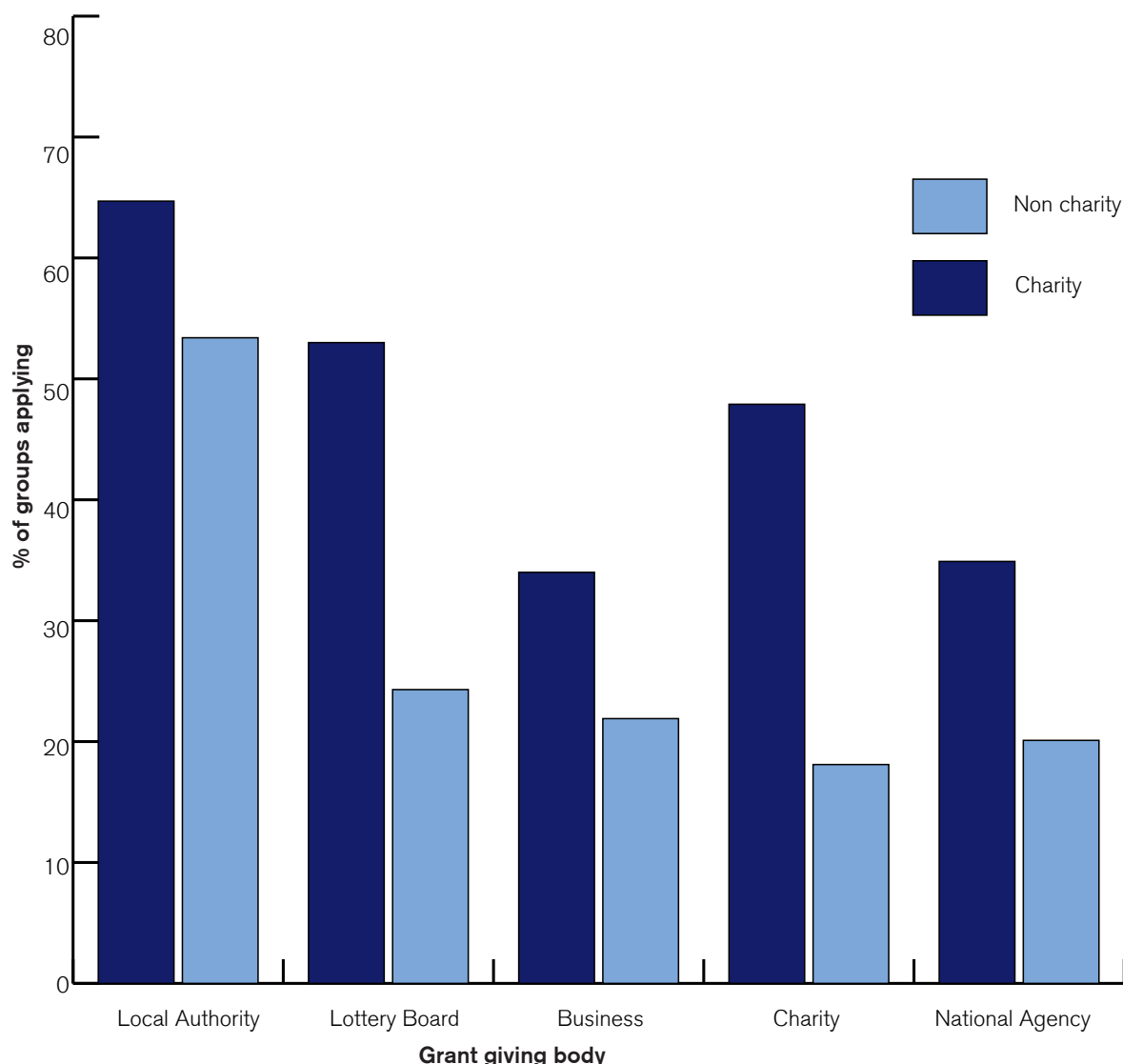
For those groups with a constitution in place, a larger number of applications to funding bodies were made than those groups who did not have a constitution. In order to make a successful application to almost any funding body, whether the local authority or a major national funding stream, a constitution is a necessity. Therefore, groups without a constitution limit themselves in the number of funding applications they can make.

The results for 'all groups' can be seen in graph 2.20.

2.6.6 Constitutions

Section 2.2.2 revealed that approximately 75% of groups had a constitution in place. Those groups who had a constitution in place tended to have a higher income than those who did not have a constitution. As with the influence of charitable status on group income, higher numbers of groups with constitutions in place had incomes over £5,000, and much lower numbers had incomes in the lower brackets (up to £250). Many funding bodies will not give money to groups without a constitution in place, as these are often seen as a sign of basic organisation, representing a certain level of capability and accountability within the group.

The results for 'all groups' can be seen in graph 2.19.

2.6.7 Age of group

Those groups in the highest income bracket (over £5,000) tended to be older than those groups in the lowest income bracket (up to £250), with an average age of 14 years (1989) compared with eight years (1995). This may be because older groups have had time to become more established, developing financial and business plans over time, and are also more likely to know of a greater number of contacts for general support, advice and potential funding streams. The age of groups did not have any significant influence on the number of applications made to different sources (section 2.6.2).

Graph 2.19 Effect of constitutions on group income

Legend:
- No Constitution (light blue)
- Constitution (dark blue)

Y-axis: % of groups
X-axis: Income bracket (up to £250, £250-499, £500-999, £1000-4999, Over £5000)
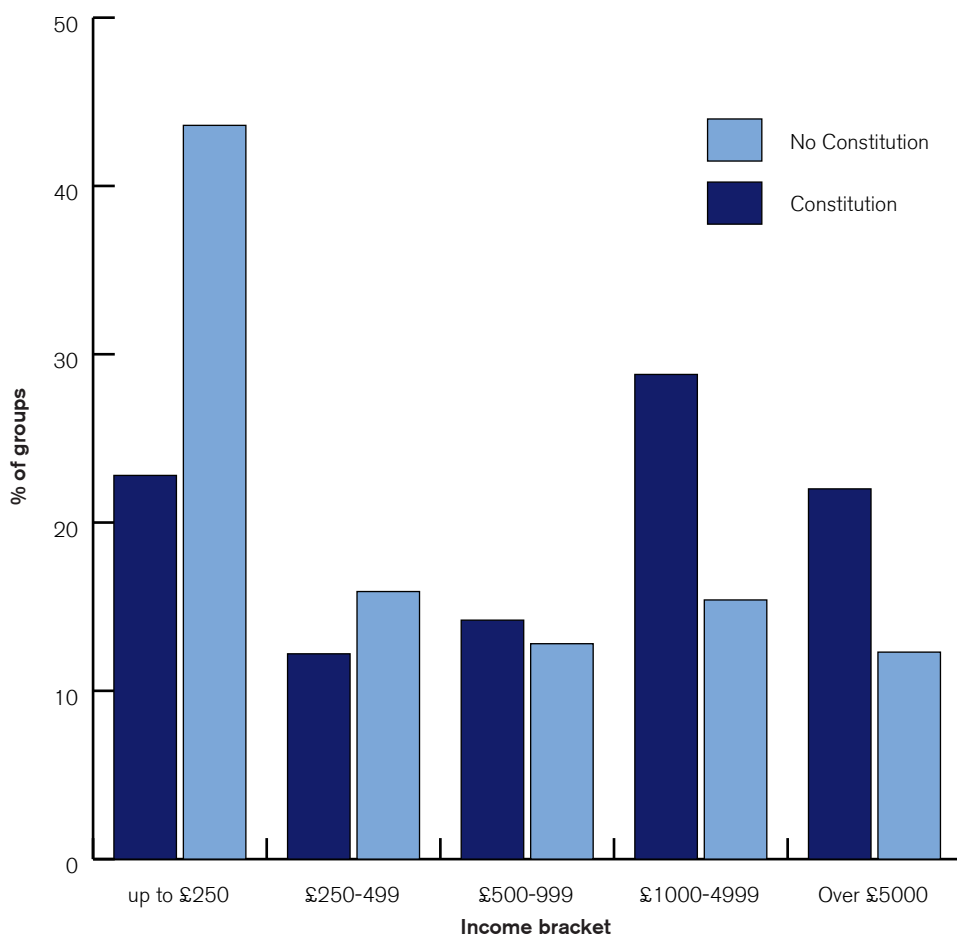
Graph 2.20 Effect of constitutions on group applications to grants or funds

Legend:
- No Constitution (light blue)
- Constitution (dark blue)

Y-axis: % of groups applying
X-axis: Grant giving body (Local Authority, Lottery Board, Business, Charity, National Agency)
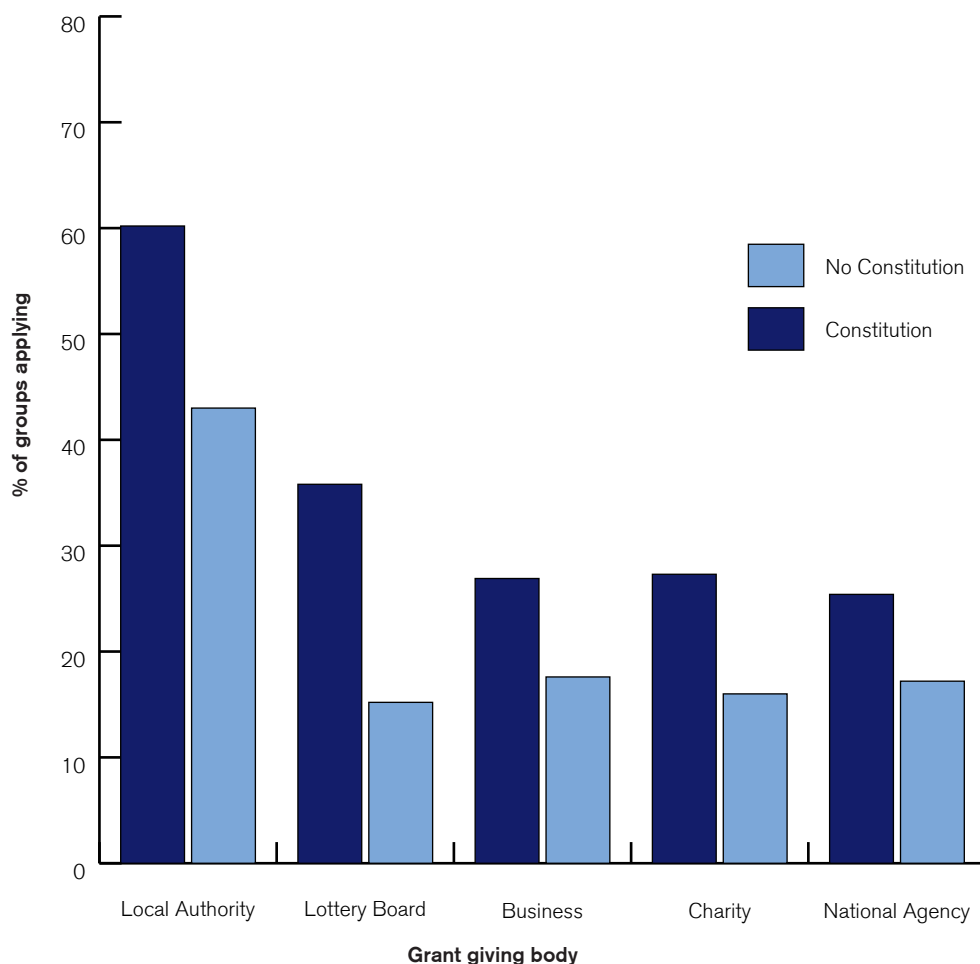
Community Networking Project
Final Report

November 2003

Additional Resource Needs
Chapter 3

A report by GreenSpace

green
space
incorporating the Urban Parks Forum

3 Additional resource needs

3.1 Resource requirements

This section presents the analysis of additional resource needs identified by community groups. The questionnaire asked groups to describe the additional resources and local authority support that would be the most useful for the group's activities, to enable them to work effectively. The information provides a snapshot of current group needs, because these needs will change over time. However, although individual group needs will change, the aspects in terms of the resources needed are likely to remain similar for any group working in parks and green space.

Some groups identified preferred funding for park improvements instead of resources that would benefit the group, and these account for a relatively high proportion of the groups studied (section 3.2.1). Some groups have achieved sustainability and expressed that their group does not require any additional resources. These groups account for 1.7% of the total number of groups studied. This perhaps illustrates a well-resourced group or it could also be argued that groups should never stop looking for further resources, training and development.

Answers that groups provided were classified under broad categories for each resource, to enable ease of analysis as well as to highlight the types of resources most requested by groups. As with the rest of the report, the information has been analysed for both 'all groups' and 'friends' groups. Groups usually provided more than one answer, corresponding to a request for more than one resource. Therefore the following results for each category are shown as percentages and these represent the total number of groups' requests for that resource.

The question was designed in an 'open' format, to enable groups to suggest a wide variety of additional resources they required. This meant that many different categories of answers were produced, leading to some lower percentages. However a small percentage can still correspond to a comparatively large number of groups.

A full results table can be found in Appendix 3.

3.2 Principal resource categories

Section 3.2 shows the three broad categories that group requests fell into, including funding for park improvements, funding for the local authority to enable them to provide resources for groups and group development (which includes the elements of capacity building required by groups). The following descriptions provide further detail for each resource category, as specified by the 1000 community groups studied.

3.2.1 Funding: Park Improvements

11% of 'all groups' and 9% of 'friends' groups stated that they require capital funding in order to undertake improvement activities to further develop and enhance the site they work with.

3.2.2 Funding: Local Authority Resources

15 % of 'all groups' and 19% of 'friends' groups stated that they wanted resources such as increased local authority staff time, provision of information about the site and other aspects such as funding, and other more tangible aspects such as office space, use of photocopying facilities and training. Many of these resources are reliant on the support of the local authority, and as their budgets for provision of park services are increasingly diminished there is a good chance that local authorities will require additional resources to offer these services.

While this is largely dependent upon the financial resources of the local authority, it also relies on the commitment and enthusiasm of staff members. Section 2.4.4 revealed that groups frequently had good and excellent relationships with their local authority, highlighting that groups may be able to encourage and work with their authorities to bring about some of these additional resource requests.

3.2.3 Funding: Group development

34% of 'all groups' and 31% of 'friends' groups highlighted that their main problem was securing revenue funding to cover the cost of all of the activities of the group, and to develop the capacity of the group to ensure new and existing activities can be undertaken effectively. Revenue funds were needed primarily to cover the cost of insurance, hire of premises, a dministration, and training (see section 4.3 for a full analysis of applications to revenue funds). Other suggestions included capacity building to facilitate structured decision making between committee members to improve effectiveness, for example through learning new skills (including management training, conflict resolution and stakeholder dialogue).

Section 2.4.2 revealed that support in the form of training, office facilities and storage were the least frequently supplied forms of support by the local authority, going some way to explain the resource requests seen here.

The additional resource requests made by groups can be seen in graph 3.1.

Graph 3.1 Principal resource requests
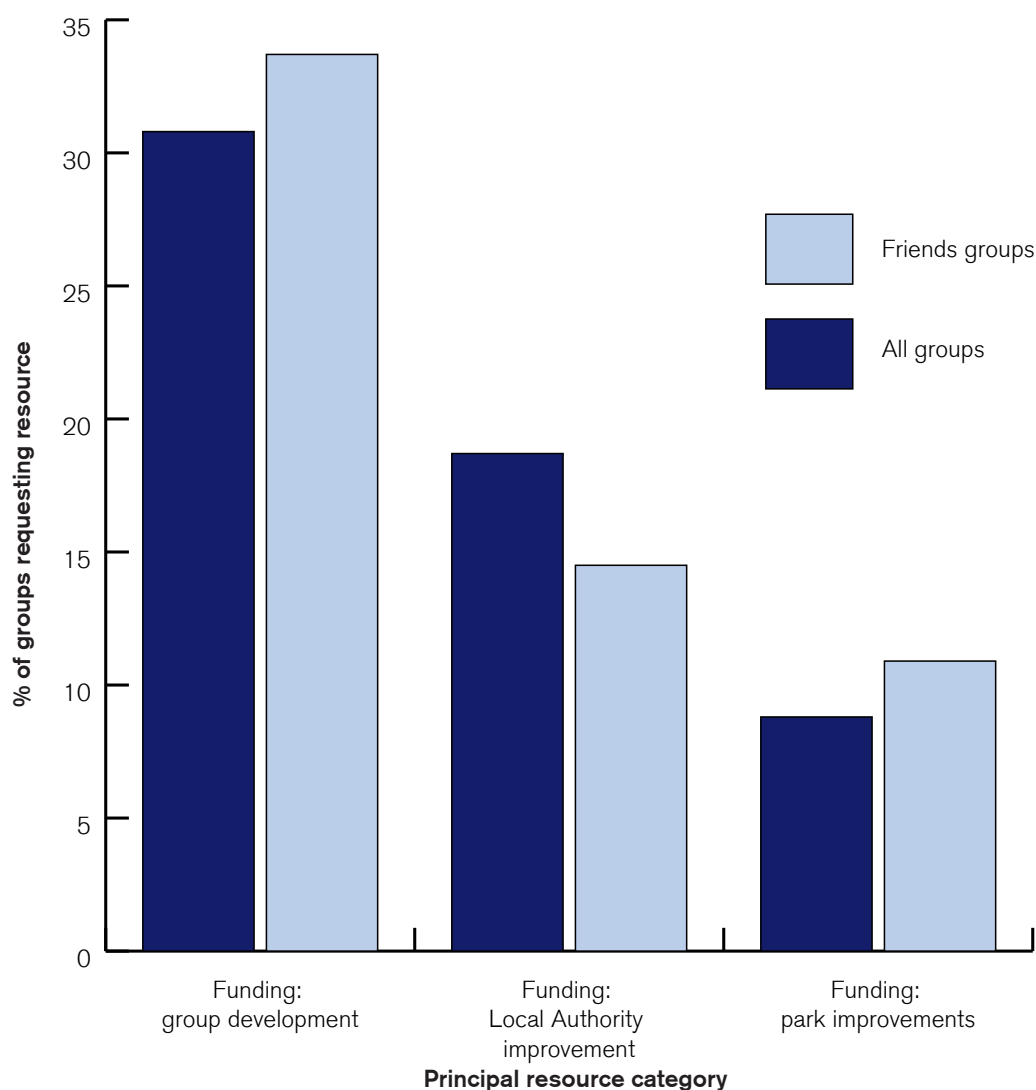
3.3 Requested resources and implications

This section analyses in detail the individual resource requests, which fall into the category of 'group development' (section 3.2). These resource requests for capacity building are broken down into the following categories.

3.3.1 Funding: Advice

As well as requesting additional funding, many groups specified that they would prefer to be given guidance about how to successfully complete funding applications, as well as being provided with advice about appropriate funding sources. This information highlights that an element of capacity building and targeted information provision would enable groups to make their own applications without having to rely on other individuals to provide information and complete forms. 5% of 'all groups' and 8% of 'friends' groups believe provision of funding advice would be a useful addition to their work.

Section 4.2 highlights the groups' studied current capabilities of successfully achieving grant awards from external funding bodies (not including local authority grants). 34% of the applications made by the groups studied in this area of research were successful capital grants to make improvements to the site. Section 4 fully analyses 205 examples of successful funding applications made by groups, which demonstrates a level of ability and organisation within the group. With the right information and maybe some encouragement, groups are clearly capable of applying for funds. This suggests that there is scope to build the capacity of groups in this area, and this would increase efficiency across the fundraising sector.

3.3.2 Information & Advice

10% of 'all groups' and 8% of 'friends' groups requested a variety of different types of information. Types of information and advice requested by groups were divided into broad categories and these are listed below:

- Nature conservation management through for example habitat management, hedge laying, and ditch creation;
- Ideas such as for capital projects and community events;
- How to start a community group, including long-term group development and capacity building; Site information that may be provided by the landowner or local authority, as well as site plans;
- Legal advice; Partnership involvement usually during the development of funding bids or project proposals (partners to be approached may include statutory agencies, local groups and businesses);
- Scientific, ecological and archaeological surveys;
- Tools and equipment particularly in terms of advice on maintenance or operation;
- Group transition to charity or trust status;
- Specialist professional advice on a variety of issues including sustainability, horticulture, design, planning, management, and construction;
- General information has been requested for catering, IT skills development, negotiating leases, business plans, and fundraising strategy;
- Social surveys, which may include site, visitor, and local residents surveys;
- Information packs regarding topics such as ecology, wildlife, and heritage.

Section 2.4.1 suggests that the majority of groups are kept well informed by their local authority. To compare, 57% of 'all groups' felt that they were always or regularly kept informed by their local authority, and 10% of 'all groups' felt that information provision on a variety of subjects was lacking. This trend suggests that further improvements in information provision may be achieved to further enable groups to carry out activities in an efficient manner. Section 2.4.2 revealed that advice was among the most frequently provided type of support given to groups by local authorities. Despite this figure being encouraging, it is clear that groups still require further advice and information on a range of topics. The quality and comprehensiveness of the advice will also vary considerably between different local authorities.

There is also a clear relationship between how well informed groups are kept by their local authority and the quality of the relationship between the group and the authority (section 2.4.2).

Section 2.4.2 highlights that advice and staff time are the most frequent types of support provided by local authorities, where the majority of local authorities provide this assistance through their existing staff resources. There is an opportunity to encourage local authorities to further improve information provision, often locally specific, as well as other national organisations that may provide more detailed guidance on certain subject areas. The value of networking with other groups and organisations is explored and emphasised in section 2.5.

A particular type of advice that was requested by a large number of groups was legal advice. The percentage figures for legal advice contribute towards the overall figures for 'information and advice' provide above. Much legal advice sought by groups is with regards to changes to the site, planning regulations, site use changes for proposed developments, lease negotiations, and insurance issues. 2% of 'all groups' and 2% of 'friends' groups specifically stated that legal advice would be advantageous.

Legal advice, and the extent to which it is required, will be specific to a particular problem. Once the issue has been resolved there will no longer be a need for such advice. This may suggest why the number of groups requesting this specific advice is low, as it reflects a snapshot of those groups currently dealing with these matters. Legal advice can be expensive depending on the time needed to resolve the issue, and maybe funded through the group's revenue funds. Additional funding sources to enable groups to cover these costs would be useful in the long term, and legal advice support through information provision on standard topics may be beneficial. There may be scope to improve the provision of legal advice to community groups through the local authority and other special interest groups.

3.3.3 Volunteers

Volunteers in this case relates to the number of active volunteer members that undertake physical activities for the group, rather than overall membership of the group. Groups mainly wanted increased numbers of volunteers, usually from their local area, to undertake practical conservation tasks, and run events. More specifically groups found that their 'committee' lost volunteers over time, and required new members to fulfil committee roles. Of the groups studied, 8% of 'all groups' and 8% 'friends' specified that they would like to recruit more active volunteers.

Section 2.2.3 highlights group membership and the number of members that actively participate in the activities of the group (those who sit on the committee or those who actively volunteer with group activities, whether practical or organisational). The average percentage of active members for the various types of group was approximately 30% of the total number of group members. This figure reinforces requests for additional volunteers suggesting there is scope to achieve greater participation from the wider community (as well as from the membership of the actual group) in the group's activities.

Furthermore, section 3.3.4 found that groups often wanted advice on publicity in order to attract greater participation from members and volunteers including those from neighbouring towns and young people. Improved support by local authorities to provide the administrative resources needed by groups for promotion, as well as providing contact information that will allow groups to target their marketing efforts, may assist groups further by reducing their revenue costs (section 3.3.5), and ultimately gaining more volunteers and becoming more sustainable.

3.3.4 Marketing Resources

Groups often stated that a lack of resources was delaying efforts to undertake marketing and promotion publicity for recruitment to group membership, events, consultation, visitor surveys and attracting volunteers for site improvement tasks. The resources requested by groups to undertake these activities include design and reprographic support, translation services, photocopying, IT, colour printing and postage. 1% of 'all groups' and 8% of 'friends' groups stated that resources are needed to produce brochures, leaflets, posters, newsletters and other promotional materials. Some groups also stated that they would like to improve interpretation on the site as well as promote their work, and again required resources and expertise in order to complete this activity.

Section 2.4.2 describes the most common resources and types of support provided by local authorities and identified that premises, postage & photocopying and office facilities were those resources least frequently supplied. Providing resources such as these has many resource implications for the local authority particularly in terms of costs, but would enable more effective group activity.

Section 4.3 describes the types of revenue funding applied for by groups, and states that nearly 15% of the groups studied in that section have applied for funds to undertake outreach work, and a further 12% of groups received funds to assist with publicity costs. The number of groups requesting revenue funds for marketing clearly suggests that there is a need for funding, as well as resources to enable groups to complete marketing activities.

3.3.5 Administration

A large proportion of groups require administration support, this is shown through the results of 'all groups' at 8% and 'friends' groups at 10%. This support is simply through access to photocopiers, fax machines, IT, and support for postage costs. These administration aspects often account for a high proportion of group's annual revenue costs, and this highlights one potential method of reducing the costs incurred by improving local authority community resources for use by groups. Current provision for administrative support and office facilities is deficient and varies between local authority services (Section 2.4.2). Furthermore, Section 4.3 highlights that 17% of groups have successfully received external revenue funding to undertake administrative activities, suggesting that there is a clear need for funding sources to enable groups to complete basic areas of their work.

Where high proportions of total group budgets are spent on revenue costs such as administration, people can be dissuaded from donating money to the group, or even cancelling membership if they feel the group is too bureaucratic. While administration costs are a necessity, some of the cost could be (and often already is) offset by local authorities.

3.3.6 Tools & Equipment

Groups specified that they need access to various types of tools, plant, specialist machinery and other equipment. Of the groups examined in this report 9% of 'all groups' and 6% of 'friends' groups highlighted equipment as a vital requirement to enable the group to carry out practical activities. Equipment is essential to enable groups to carry out improvement and conservation tasks on site. Groups also highlighted a need for funding in order to allow them to maintain their equipment. This may be through tool maintenance and equipment care and use courses, repairs, maintenance, safety testing, fuel, plant hire and the cost of materials e.g. sapling trees. Groups also stated that they required materials to carry out educational activities, and site improvements to enable them to host events.

This section highlights the potentially vast resource requirements by community groups working with parks and green space, although the extent of the resource needs is dependent on the type of activities the group undertakes. Section 2.2.8 identified that the most common work priority for groups is environmental conservation, and to undertake practical tasks often requires certain specialist equipment. An example is a chainsaw, which will have cost, insurance and licence implications. BTCV offer equipment hire and there is scope for local authorities to provide equipment and this is often currently provided through the Parks and Countryside Service. A network of community groups working for the same priorities in a geographical area may create an opportunity for organising a tool bank or library, where groups can pool resources to share equipment. These can often be organised by the local authority.

3.3.7 Premises & Storage

A common resource requested by groups was premises to hold meetings and office space with use of facilities and storage for equipment. Both premises and storage space were provided to the group relatively infrequently: 33% of 'all groups' had premises provided to them by their local authority and only 14% had storage space provided by their authority (section 2.4.2), 'friends' groups had slightly improved provision in these areas. This may explain why this was such a high resource request by groups because 6% of 'all groups' and 8% of 'friends' groups felt that having premises and storage provided was a priority need. This information suggests that there is an opportunity to improve relations and increase community participation with local authorities by increasing the use of civic spaces for community group use.

3.3.8 Training

4% of 'all groups' and 4% of 'friends' groups stated that they require training, which is often quite specialised and can be categorised as follows:

- Fundraising;
- Events to encourage community participation;
- Grave / monument recording for cemetery-based groups;
- Volunteers - Use of equipment, practical conservation tasks, health & safety, first aid, food hygiene;
- Group capacity building e.g. IT skills development;
- Free and low cost training.

Section 2.4.2 identified training as being infrequently supplied by local authorities, however this training need can be met when groups are affiliated to BTCV or the Wildlife Trusts who may be able to offer low cost or free training. Section 4.3 revealed that 17% of groups have applied to external funding bodies for revenue funds to cover the cost of training. This presents a potential opportunity for local authorities to work in partnership with training organisations to provide equal training opportunities across the country, as well as ensuring there are appropriate funds available to cover the deficit.

3.3.9 Insurance

Over the period of study, the issue of insurance for groups was compounded when BTCV withdrew their scheme, which originally cost approximately £35 per year and covered many activities. After a review the insurance scheme was re-instated, and now costs approximately £130 at the basic rate with additional charges for extra activities. While this is a large increase in cost for the community groups, it is still a highly competitive package.

While insurance is a necessity for any group wishing to undertake practical work on site, this payment can frequently be interpreted as bureaucratic, being absorbed into general group budgets, illustrating the often unattractive image of much revenue spending. This issue is compounded by the fact that there are few opportunities to apply for funds to cover revenue costs (see section 4.3). BTCV are one of the few organisations that recognise this necessity, offering the Chestnut Fund, which is designed to cover the cost of insurance for new groups.

Groups described their problems with covering the cost of insurance in this section of the questionnaire. Many groups use a substantial proportion of their annual income on insurance, and other groups halted activities and events until they could find the funds to cover the cost of public liability and personal accident insurance. Of the groups reviewed 5% of 'all groups' and 6% of 'friends' groups specified they would like assistance to cover these costs.

Networking may provide useful contacts to assist groups when dealing with insurance issues. There is an opportunity for groups, covering a specific geographical area, to form an umbrella organisation with representatives from each group. This will enable insurance to be gained for the umbrella group, and therefore insure the work of all the groups under the one central organisation. Section 2.5.1 highlights that 48% of 'all groups' and 51% of 'friends' groups already network with similar groups in their area.
Further encouragement of the remaining groups that are not currently networking, as well as providing advice such as the potential benefits of networking may be one solution to the insurance problem. There are also numerous other benefits of networking with other groups, such as the formation of tool banks (section 3.3.6).

3.3.10 Membership

3% of 'all groups' and 5% of 'friends' groups operating membership schemes stated that they would like to improve membership levels to their group to provide both further income to cover the group's activities and also to attract more active volunteers. This can be correlated to the marketing needs of groups where 8% of 'friends' groups identified that promotion resources are needed to publicise the existence and activities of the group (see section 3.3.4).

Overall the general status of group membership is encouraging. This is highlighted in section 2.2.4 where fewer than 10% of groups stated that membership is declining and nearly 35% of 'all groups' and 51% of 'friends' groups had stable membership and over 36% of 'all groups' noted increases in membership. This shows that groups and their activities are relevant and popular, by attracting interest from the wider community. While the overall picture of the trend in membership is positive, the 10% of groups who have declining membership are still a major area of concern.

Some groups would also like to increase the number of active members e.g. those that can carry out committee roles and group activities. Section 2.2.3 demonstrated that while group membership was high, only around 30% of group members fulfilled an active role. There is therefore a potential to increase the level of involvement by members, to assist with activities and make the group more sustainable. Section 3.3.3 revealed that groups also requested more volunteers, reinforcing this general desire for increased support by people from the wider community for the work of the group.

3.3.11 Networking opportunities

4% of 'all groups' and 3% of 'friends' groups specified that they would like contact with other groups in their area, as well as groups that faced similar issues. Section 2.5.1. explored the extent of networking as identified by the groups studied. The section highlighted that nearly half (50%) of 'all groups' and 'friends' groups were already in contact with similar park and green space groups.

This data shows that there is potential to increase networking with those groups not already in contact with other groups, and that groups with existing networks appreciate the value of networking. In this section, groups also identified that they would like the opportunity to share ideas and locate information, which is a vital part of networking. Some also suggested that the ability to contact groups in their area might potentially increase opportunities to pool resources and equipment. Networking can help to resolve some of the issues which seem to be extremely daunting for groups to face alone, such as insurance (section 3.3.9) and the availability of tools (section 3.3.6).

...groups also identified that they would like the opportunity to share ideas and locate information.

Graph 3.2 Revenue resource requests

Chart: percentage of groups requesting resource (y-axis, 0 to 12) by Resource request (x-axis). Two series: Friends groups (light blue) and All groups (dark blue).

Categories: Administration, Funding advice, Marketing, Information, Volunteers, Premises & storage, Insurance, Tools & equipment, Membership, Training, Networking.
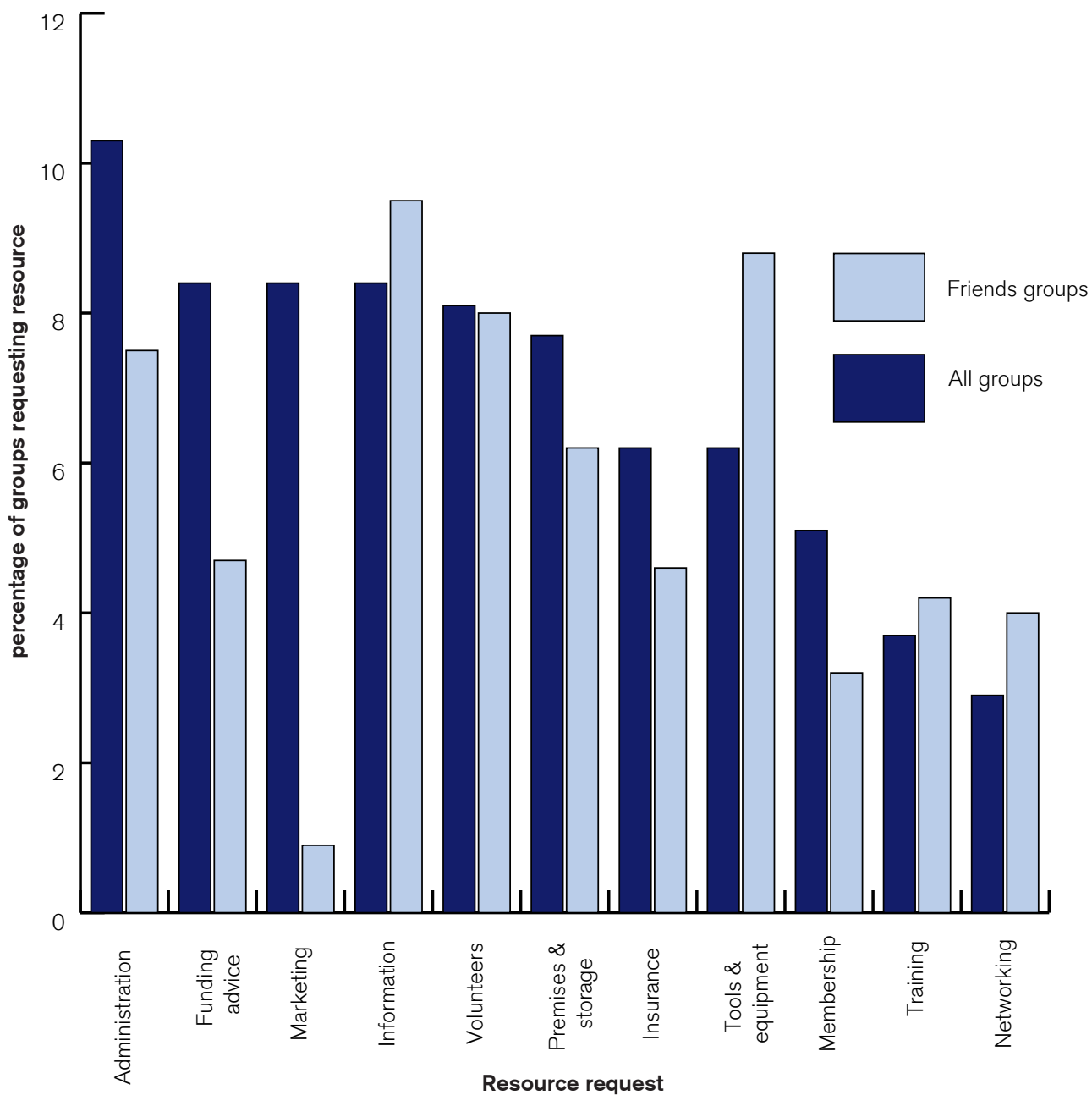
Community Networking Project Final Report

November 2003

Funding Applications
Chapter 4

A report by GreenSpace

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4 Funding applications

4.1 Funding applications

This section includes analysis of successful funding applications made in the past five years by community groups who replied to the additional questionnaire (see section 1.2 for an explanation of this part of the methodology; the questionnaire can also be found in appendix 2). This only includes applications to national (as opposed to local or regional) funding bodies and does not include applications made to local authority funding streams.

This section analyses 205 different applications to funding streams and includes all types of community groups working with parks and green space (the breakdown into 'friends' groups, 'Env Cons' etc of the previous chapters is not used here). It should be noted that this questionnaire asked only about those applications which were successful and therefore does not consider the total availability of funding streams open to groups. However, this method was deemed the most accurate means to analyse the funds open to community groups working with green space.

It should also be remembered that this section is not based on the total availability of funding schemes, but a sample of successful examples made by community groups. This will mean that the percentages for revenue and capital grants are not a true reflection of the current provision of funding schemes available, rather an indication.

The vast majority of successful funding applications were for capital grants (81% which corresponded to 174 individual awards) compared to 19% for longer term revenue grants (41 successful applications).

The results can be seen in graph 4.1.

Grpah 4.1 Capital and revenue grants

Revenue grants (19.1%)

Capital grants (80.9%)
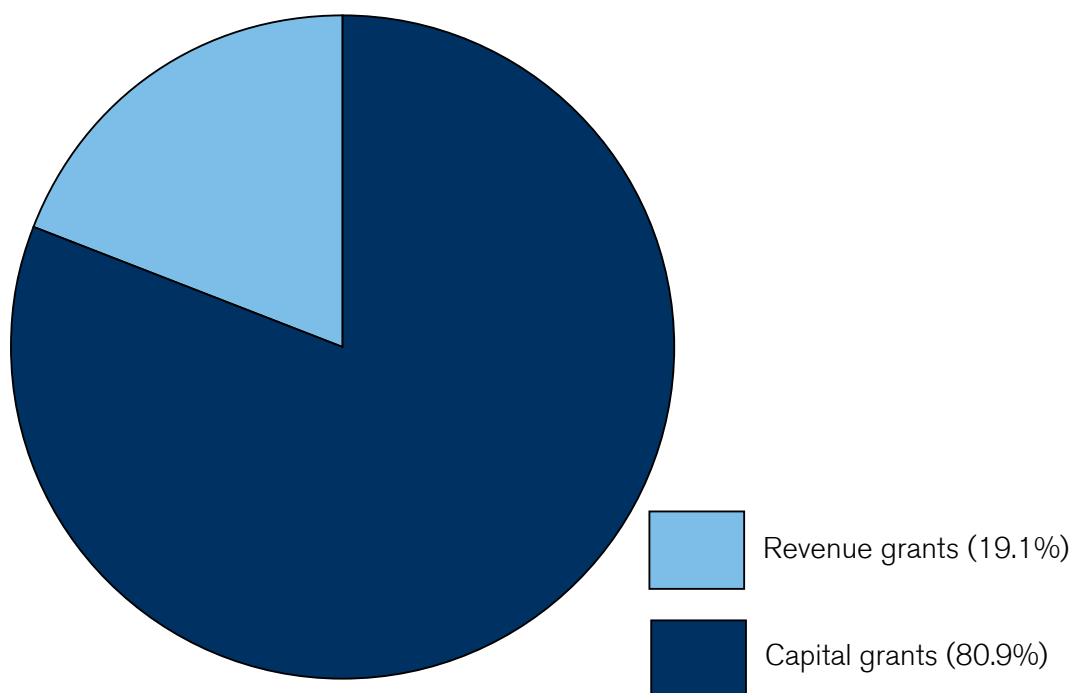
To determine the difference between the capital and revenue funding, it is easier to begin with an explanation of revenue funding. 'Revenue' funding pays for the regular and routine tasks which are needed to keep a group or organisation in existence. These 'everyday' costs concern the general ongoing costs of running a group or a facility, such as a park cafe. An easy way to appreciate 'capital' funding schemes is by describing them as anything else outside of the usual 'revenue' activities of a group or organisation. They are about making improvements, rather than the usual revenue work. Such improvements will often take the form of projects which are designed to develop, restore or improve the park or green space, a certain area, or a feature within the site. As a result, they often have distinct timescales and outcomes.

The vast majority of successful applications for grants were for capital one-off projects (81%). Most funding bodies seem to cater for this type of project-specific funding programme rather than revenue funding, whose dynamic outcomes and ongoing timescales can often be harder to accommodate (ie. administration costs or ongoing training schemes). Many funding schemes have specific aims and objectives, and they will therefore only fund projects and causes that directly contribute towards these (much revenue funding is often not of direct visible benefit to the site, such as insurance or postage costs and it is therefore harder to evaluate the success of such funding).

The fact that less than 20% of all successful funding applications were for revenue grants identifies a potential niche in the market and demonstrates a clear need for more funding schemes to accommodate these long-term revenue projects which are much more to do with the sustainability of the group than short-term (but equally valuable) gain. Section three of this report clearly identified the substantial demand from groups for funding for such revenue costs, for example promotion and marketing of the group (section 3.3.4), insurance (section 3.3.9) and general administration (section 3.3.5).

There is a clear need for more funding schemes to accommodate long-term revenue projects...

4.2 Capital grants

These include project-specific grants, including the development of features in parks and green space, general restoration projects and material improvements.

The different types of capital grants successfully applied to can be seen in graph 4.2.

Most capital grants were for 'capital green space improvements' (34%), which include general park restoration projects. When community groups were asked to specify additional resources that would help their group, only 11% of 'all groups' requested funding for park improvements (section 3.2.1). The question asked about additional resources groups required rather than actual and physical improvements they wished to see in the park or green space. This may go some way to explaining the difference between the percentage of groups successfully applying to funds for capital green space improvements (as seen here) and the percentage requesting funding for park improvements (section 3.2.1) which is much less. However, most 'capital' grants in this section fall into the category of 'funding for park improvements' (section 3.2.1).

Capital grants for soft infrastructure (11%) were the next most popular, and these include shrub provision as well as the installation of benches and fencing. Such improvements are often very good for community groups who wish to produce quick, simple and highly visible improvements to the park or green space. These 'effective projects' are a useful way to make the work of the group known to the wider community and attract interest in the group.

The next was ecological conservation (10%), with developments such as bat and bird boxes, bird hides and pond dipping platforms being made with the grants. This reflects the high number of groups working in the field of environmental conservation: 33% of groups in the survey classed themselves as 'Env Cons' (section 2.1) and environmental conservation was the top work priority for all types of groups (section 2.2.8 and graph 2.6).

7% of groups made applications for play and recreation equipment, including provision of multi-sports areas. Funds for hard infrastructure (7% of groups), such as vehicle purchase, CCTV installation and shed purchase were the next most popular and a further 6% of groups applied successfully to capital funds for the development and improvement of paths and paving areas to improve access.

Grpah 4.2 Breakdown of capital grants
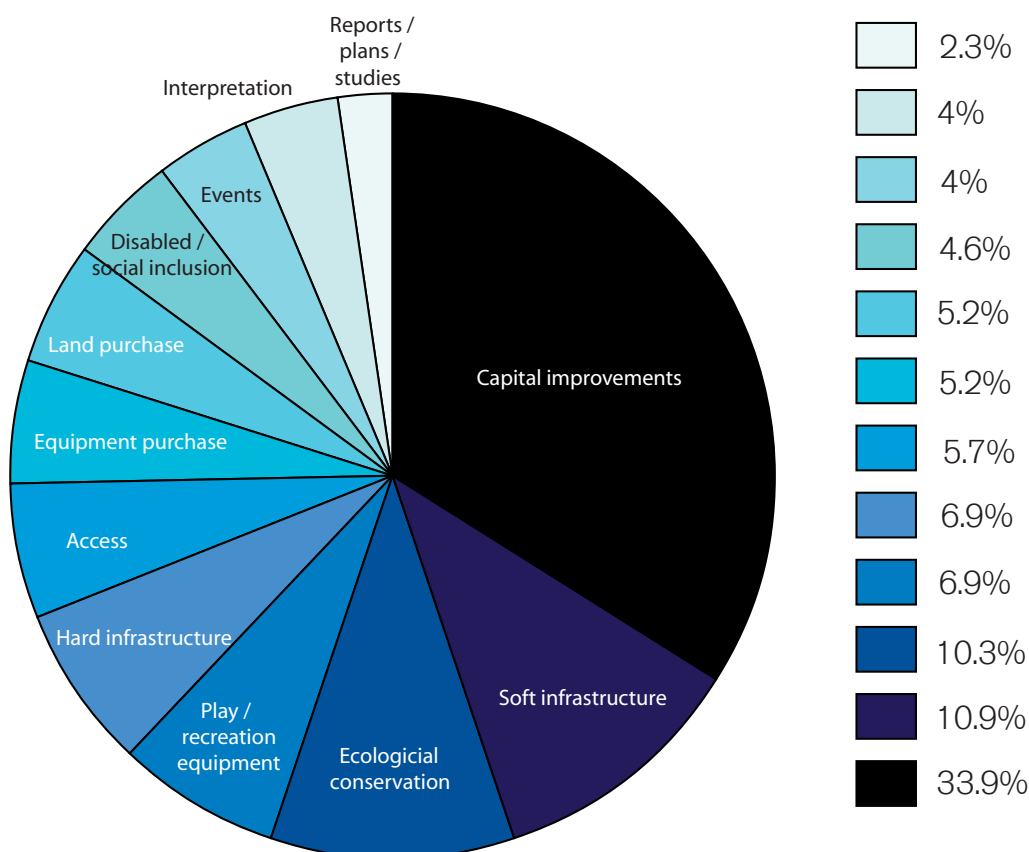
5% of groups made applications for equipment purchase, including tool and safety purchase as well as vehicle maintenance. Equipment purchase can be compared to the findings of section three which asked groups to specify additional resources they required. In that section 6% of 'all groups' specified that they required 'tools and equipment' (section 3.3.6), which closely corresponds to the figure of 5% of 'all groups' successfully applying to funds for equipment purchase.

5% of successful applications were for land purchase. This figure represents a large number of groups given the potentially high costs of purchasing land (this does not include leases, rather actual legal ownership). Section 3.3.2 revealed that legal advice for groups was requested by a number of groups, which included advice on lease negotiations, proving that groups are considering the issue of land purchase as part of their work.

5% of groups made successful applications to provide disabled access and other initiatives to address social inclusion. This can include the creation of sensory gardens, accessible viewpoints and paths.

A small number of groups made applications to funds to run events (4%), ranging from work events to community music events. Section 2.2.7 revealed that as much as 55% of 'all groups' currently see the organisation of events as one of their work areas. The difference between the percentage of groups already running events (55%) and those applying for funds to run them (4%) is presumably because the groups bring in income for the events from sources other than grants and funding bodies (eg. fundraising from previous events or membership). This indicates that these groups are not necessarily dependent on external grants in order to run events, showing a good level of sustainability. Events are good opportunities to attract further support for the community group and publicise its aims and objectives, as well as encouraging greater use of the site.

4% of applications were for interpretation, which included examples such as book publications, display boards in the park or green space and interpretation centres, again emphasising the recognition of the need to reach the wider community and provide educational facilities.

Money from successful funding applications spent on feasibility studies, reports and plans was the least popular at 2.3% of groups. This included management plans, site plans and feasibility studies for further funding applications. While this percentage is very small, the occurrence of funding for such studies shows that a number of groups are planning to conduct further, and potentially highly substantial improvements to the site (for example the Heritage Lottery Fund's project planning grants are a precursor to their main grant programme, the Public Parks Initiative).

Funding for capital improvements can make considerable physical improvements to sites and enhance the work of community groups. Capital improvements are a very good way to publicise the work of the group to the wider community, but they cannot be implemented without a certain degree of capacity and resources within the group itself (which explains the high number of requests for capacity-building and 'revenue' type resources explored in section 3).

Some larger amounts of money are particularly daunting to new or small groups, and although excellent support often comes from local authorities and other organisations, there is a potential risk that capital improvements will be 'one-offs' or poorly maintained if they are carried out by an under-resourced community group. Section 2.2.1 suggested that groups may have a limited lifespan and section 2.6.3 revealed the unstable financial nature of many of the groups, especially 'friends' groups, which compounds the problem of the lack of revenue funding. This indicates that groups require funds for their day-to-day survival as well as for capital projects.

As well as reinforcing with revenue funding, the long-term sustainability of the groups and the capital projects they undertake can be improved by fully involving them in the management of the park or green space, for example allowing them to sit on a steering group or board as part of the long term strategic management of the site. This depends on individual circumstances and the degree of involvement the group wishes to have.

4.3 Revenue grants

These include general subsistence grants, for the day-to-day running of the group, to maintain its existence, and ensure its ability to function effectively, including staff employment and salaries, training and general administration costs. These grants were not project-specific.

The different types of revenue grants successfully applied to can be seen in graph 4.3.

The most popular type of revenue grant was for staff and salaried positions, with 39% of applications to revenue grants being made for this purpose. This demonstrates that a large number of groups are established enough to start to consider employing paid staff. This is highly encouraging as it means the group will become more sustainable and have greater ability to achieve more.

Training was the next most popular, with 17% of groups applying to revenue funds for training in terms of first aid, general capacity building and development of specific skills. This highlights that a substantial number of groups have a desire to gain more skills to enable them to further their activities.

Funds for administration and everyday running costs made up a further 17% of groups. A large amount of a group's funds are put towards the everyday running costs necessary to keep the group in existence. Given the small amount of money groups exist on (section 2.6.1), any supplementary income for basic costs would be useful.

There was also a large number of revenue applications being made for marketing purposes: 15% of groups made applications for outreach (including involvement of the wider community in the group's work), and 12% of groups made applications for publicity purposes (including the production of leaflets and newsletters). Both these figures encouragingly demonstrate the group's recognition of the necessity to reach the wider community and inform people of their work and the site. Section 3.3.4 reinforces this in that a large number of groups desired further resources for marketing and promotion of their work and the site.

There is a clear need for groups to be more representative of their wider community in certain cases, and actually increase their support base (ie. membership) in others. Section 2.2.9 showed that the majority of groups do not make provision for 'priority groups' (older people, young people, women, minority ethnic groups and the disabled) and section 2.2.4 revealed that while membership is generally sustainable, 10% of groups are still experiencing a decline in membership figures.

Graph 4.3 Breakdown of revenue grants

Legend:
- Publicity
- Outreach
- Admin / general
- Training
- Staff / salaries
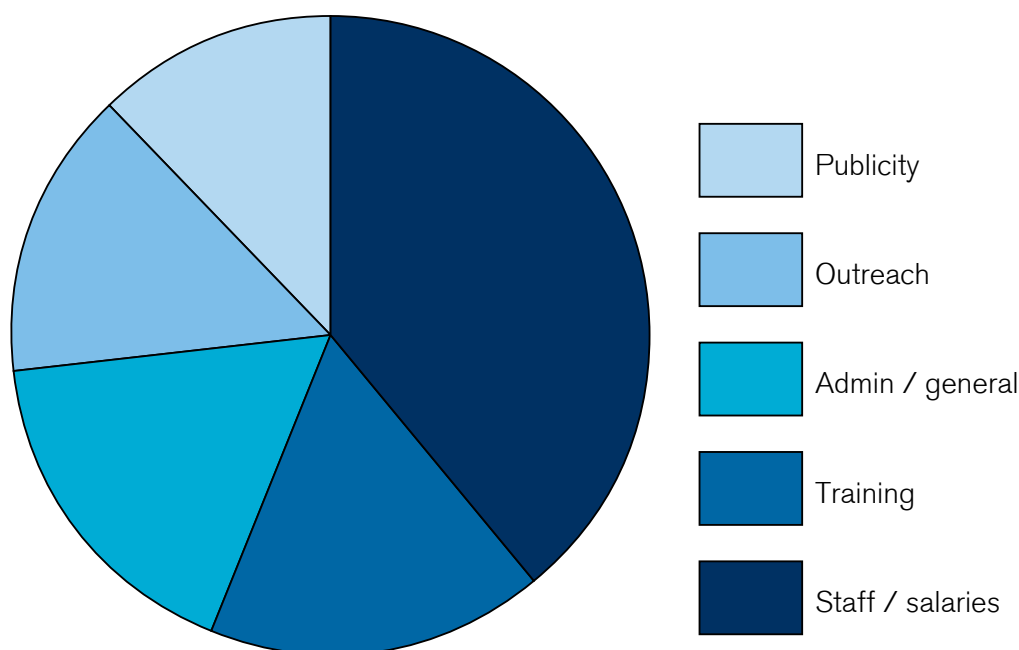
Community Networking Project
Final Report

November 2003

Recommendations, Contact and Endnotes
Chapter 5

A report by GreenSpace

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5 Recommedations

Analysis of this questionnaire has highlighted a number of areas which require further research in order to confirm or deny potential trends. This section also makes suggestions for further support which can be directed towards community groups to make their work more efficient, as well as identifying implications for policy directed at parks and green space and the community groups who work with them.

5.1 Research priorities and further research

As well as revealing a great deal of useful information, analysis revealed some areas which could be explored in further detail. Many of these were unavoidable consequences of designing a short questionnaire which people were willing to complete and return, and others were omitted because they were felt too intrusive (for example questions of a financial nature).

The majority of questions were 'closed' questions (ie. tick boxes rather than 'open ended' questions where groups can chose their own language to answer) to produce a questionnaire that was quick and easy to fill in. As a result of this, groups were not always provided with an extensive opportunity to justify the reason for some of their responses. In some cases, this led to the answers (and therefore trends) they provided creating further questions and potential areas of research.

5.1.1 The age of groups

Section 2.2.1 highlighted that the vast majority of groups were less than thirteen years old; the late 1990s saw a peak in the number of groups being formed each year. The main unavoidable omission from this question was that it could not find out about the number of groups who came to an end each year. It is of course very difficult, if not impossible, to find out contact details of those who worked with a group which was in existence in the past, but this information could be gathered by working closely with local authorities. GreenSpace currently has details of 65 groups who have disbanded since the CNP began. It would be of great value to find out the reasons why these groups came to an end (ie. resource limitations or the fact they had achieved their objectives), to assess the long-term sustainability of community groups and the resources which could aid longevity. It would be of particular interest to evaluate the factors which contribute towards a group coming to an end, identifying the potential pit falls and factors to avoid.

As the trends of groups over time (why they come to an end and how long they exist for) are unclear and difficult to fully understand, there would be a great deal of value in conducting similar research to this questionnaire in five to ten years' time to assess the long term trends in the age-variation of the groups. If this was done, the findings could be compared with the results of this report, as the questionnaire used in this study can only ever explore the current situation of community groups, presenting a snapshot in time of community group activity in parks and green spaces.

Section 2.2.5 brought to attention the possibility that groups had a limited lifespan, and only existed for a set period of time (the findings suggested a possible lifespan of somewhere around ten years). The research in this report was of insufficient detail to confirm or deny this potential trend, so further research into why groups came to an end is necessary, which needs to be explored in the context of declines in membership levels. This would enable confirmation of whether groups have a limited lifespan and the factors behind any trends.

5.1.2 The socio-economic breakdown of group members

The questionnaire explored the types of priority groups who benefited from the work of the community group (section 2.2.9) and this revealed that ethnic minority groups benefited the least. In order for community groups to work effectively they must ensure that they represent the whole community, through their membership, the events they run and the volunteer days they organise. It is important for a community group to act as the voice of the park or green space for the wider community rather than an operating as an elite group of people. For this reason, it would also be interesting to start to explore some of the reasons behind this lack of involvement of priority groups (particularly ethnic groups) and make a more detailed assessment of how well community groups currently represent their wider communities.

In order to accurately assess the involvement and representation of the wider community, more information on the socio-economic characteristics of the group itself as well as the overall community they work within is necessary. The questionnaire did not ask any questions regarding the social or ethnic breakdown of the actual group membership as it was felt this was too intrusive. It would be interesting to know more about the class, age, financial income and ethnic background to groups and their membership, principally to investigate which sectors are underrepresented, and where resources could be targeted more usefully as well as the areas which need greater promotion.

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) are computer programmes used to analyse geographical data (eg. the location of roads, cities or maps showing population densities etc) with statistical data such as the results from this questionnaire. In this instance, a GIS could be used to explore relationships between the location of different groups and factors such as areas of population density, areas of deprivation, and information about the built environment, which could quickly reveal the occurrence of trends between groups and various socio-economic data. There are considerable cost implications to an extensive GIS analysis however, which was one of the reasons it was not used in the analysis for this report.

5.1.3 More detailed financial information
The questions that were asked regarding the finances of the groups (section 2.6) were kept to a minimum due to their potentially personal nature. It would have been interesting to find out a greater background to the groups which had the highest and lowest incomes as well as those with charitable status, assessing whether or not there were any external factors which influenced income.

There was some misinterpretation as to the type of income specified in these questions. The question asked the group to categorise the 'total amount of your annual income'. Results for this question varied a great deal as some groups were fortunate enough to have been awarded large capital grants in the previous financial year, which, while relevant to the question, were not always representative of a typical year. A further exploration into 'subsistence' (eg. everyday running costs) and 'disposable' (eg. monies to be spent on projects and improvements) income levels would be interesting.

5.1.4 More detail on making applications to funding bodies
The additional questionnaire sent to 500 groups asked some questions about successful applications groups had made to funding bodies in the past five years. The information gathered was crucial and contributed towards the development of section four of this report. However, more information on some of the barriers and difficulties groups faced in the process would be useful, as well as the solutions they developed to overcome these. This could be developed into guidance documents and form the basis of advice for other groups making applications to similar funds.

For the purposes of this report, the questionnaire only asked about successful funding applications. More comprehensive information could be learnt from an analysis of unsuccessful applications by groups, as this would identify the potential pitfalls and mistakes a group should avoid. These would be developed into guidance documents.

5.1.5 Geographical distribution of groups
Section 2.2.6 highlighted that a disproportionately low number of groups came from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (7%). It was highlighted that the slightly uneven return of the original questionnaire by local authorities (which were used to create the original mailing list of community groups across the country) may be partly attributable for the lower response from outside of England. Approximately 65% of local authorities returned these original question-naires, leaving 35% of councils around the country who did not pass on the contact details of their community groups. However, the assistance of many other support organisations such as BTCV, who work across the UK, helped to develop a more representative original mailing list.

While the analysis explored a number of potential reasons for this distribution, the real reasons remain unclear and require further investigation. The application of a GIS here would be very useful, which could create an immediate analysis of the areas deficient of community groups which could be related to socio-economic data.

It is important to develop further links with regional support bodies in these countries to try and learn more about community activity within these areas.

5.2 Recommendations for community groups

5.2.1 Increase community group interest in a wider range of activities

Section 2.2.7 asked the group about the type of activities they were involved with. While a wide range was identified, there was decreased interest in a large number of activities, such as capital projects, political lobbying, site security and direct management (graph 2.5). While this is not suggesting that groups should be forced to widen their work remit beyond their capabilities or areas of interest, it highlights that local authorities and the support organisations who work with them would benefit from raising the awareness of these valuable areas of work and encouraging participation in these new activities. While many groups may be put off from activities such as direct management due to perfectly legitimate time commitments and lack of need, others may feel they are unable to conduct such work tasks due to a lack of training, support or resources, aspects which could be remedied.

5.2.2 Increase community group involvement with ethnic minority groups

The most notable area of concern identified from section 2.2.9 was the lack of provision for, and involvement of, marginalised ethnic groups in the work of community groups, with approximately only 20% of groups feeling that their work specifically benefited this section of society. This highlights that there is a great deal of potential for community groups to extend their work to this sector. This may often be difficult or not appropriate where the community group operates within locations with few minority groups, although there is potential to reach this under-represented group and broaden appeal through events and festivals.

Community groups in general should always try to ensure that their work as a group represents the wider community, and benefits as wide a cross-section of society as possible. One of the benefits to any type of green space is its appeal and relevance to everyone, and this should always be remembered and reflected in the aims and objectives of a group. While the majority of groups will work with the aim of representing the wider community, some may not to a sufficient degree, particularly with regard to marginalised ethnic groups.

5.2.3 Increase support for networking between groups and with other support organisations

Section 2.5 analysed the extent to which groups were in contact with other groups and support organisations. While the findings were promising, with approximately 50% of groups in contact with other local community groups, it also reveals that there is a great deal of room for improvement, particularly when working with other regional and national groups.

In particular, while nearly 70% of groups were in contact with at least one special interest group (sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2), the number of groups in contact with specific organisations is comparatively low. These specialist interest organisations (such as BTCV, Groundwork and the Wildlife Trusts) can offer a wealth of information to groups, as well as material and financial benefits (such as competitively priced insurance in the case of BTCV), and there is clearly great benefit to being associated with them.

A major objective of the Community Networking Project is to increase opportunities for networking between groups, reducing the isolation many currently feel (currently creating a National Register of contact details of these community groups enabling them to locate and make contact with other groups in their area - see section 1.1). GreenSpace is working closely with local authorities across the country to develop regional forums of groups, and this is something which requires further attention and support from local and national government.

Section 2.2.5 revealed the possibility that groups experienced a limited lifespan, as well as sections 2.6.1 and 2.6.3 demonstrating the weak financial position experienced by many groups. Networking, both with other community-based groups and support organisations, can help to make groups more sustainable (sections 3.3.9 and 3.3.6 explore some of the financial benefits to networking in terms of insurance and tools and equipment).

5.2.4 Increase the long-term stability of community group income

Approximately 50% of community groups relied on income sources that lasted for less than 12 months (section 2.6.3). There is a real need to improve the long-term stability of income for these groups, providing them with a greater degree of security and the confidence that they can make meaningful change in their green space. This is reinforced by the findings of section 2.2.5, which seemed to suggest that the life span of groups might be somewhat limited and dynamic in nature. Without long-term financial stability, groups may not be inclined to undertake major projects involving timescales greater than a year, as they could be unsure of their long-term financial security and ability to complete these long-term projects.

5.2.5 Increase the general capacity of community groups

Very high numbers of groups requested further resources to help them improve their capacity (the general ability, efficiency and effectiveness of their group). Section three explored this fully, identifying that 34% of groups requested resources for capacity-building. The most popular requests were those for advice for making funding applications, general information and advice and increased numbers of volunteers to help with the work of the group. This indicates that a large number of groups feel that they need to improve their skills and knowledge base, which while indicating that groups clearly have a high level of ambition, also highlights that the current level of resources provided to them is perhaps insufficient. It should be remembered that the majority of group members are likely to have little or no experience of green space activities, and many of the necessary activities (especially financial matters, although even the everyday tasks) can seem daunting and difficult in the absence of simple advice or training.

5.3 Recommendations for local and national government and other support organisations

Given that an analysis of this size and extent has not been conducted before, a great deal of the findings are directly relevant to the organisations that work with the community groups as well as local and national government.

5.3.1 Improve the capacity-building schemes open to community groups

Section 3 of the report analysed requests by community groups for further resources. Rather than simply requesting that more money be available to them, groups frequently made requests to help with the long-term sustainable development of their group, including capacity building, in the form of advice, marketing resources, training and more volunteers. The fact that groups are increasingly concerned with their long-term development and their future rather than just short-term money needs to be reflected in new funding initiatives and the support directed to these groups (there is a lack of availability for such funding schemes, as was illustrated in section four of this report).

5.3.2 Increase the number of revenue funding schemes

Section 4 of the report analysed a large number of successful funding applications. 81% were for capital projects and the remaining 19% were for revenue projects. Given the extensive demand for capacity-building resources (ie. 'revenue' type resources) identified in section 5.3.1 and section three of the report, there is a perhaps a mismatch between the 'supply and demand' of funding sources. Again, it is important that there is increased development of long-term revenue funding options for groups, to respond to the need. More money for capital projects must be complemented by capacity-building and improved revenue funding for community groups, otherwise investment risks being unsustainable in the long term.

5.3.3 Further development of regional forums

Section 2.5 revealed that community groups were currently engaged in an encouraging level of networking with other community-based groups as well as special interest groups. Various benefits to networking have been highlighted throughout this report, and one of the ways that this can be further developed is through regional forums. A support structure in the form of a regional forum of community groups, local authorities and other interest groups is a vital resource for groups. They help to share experiences, to learn of new support systems and funds, to stay up-to-date, and to feel that they are part of a network which will act as a source of help and advice throughout their development. Forums such as this will also counter some of the financial problems currently seen by groups (sections 2.2.6 and 5.1.4) as well as improving dialogue between the various groups.

It is important that forums develop as positive and progressive areas for partnerships between the groups, local authorities and other interested organisations. While they can be used to resolve problems and challenges faced by groups, they should not be dominated by individual circumstances, which can frequently become deadlocked situations and create a negative and destructive atmosphere.

The development of forums depends a great deal on the level of demand from the community groups themselves. This has worked incredibly well across the whole of the Manchester area (the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and GreenSpace organised the first event of its kind in the country in April 2003 and saw attendances from over 350 individuals). The idea is expected to be replicated with similar success in London in October 2003 with an event organised by GreenSpace and the London Parks and Green Spaces Forum, which will act as a model for the rest of the country. While it is crucial to develop these events in a bottom-up approach, for practical reasons the lead needs to come from local authorities and the other support organisations working with community groups.

6 Contact

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Endnotes

1   Analysis of community involvement in HLF PPI restored parks and gardens since 1997 Green Space   April 2003

2   Department of Trade and Industry Employment Relations www.dti.gov.uk/er/nmw/Englishregions Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

3   English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England

4   Public Park Assessment   Urban Parks Forum 2001

Appendix 2
Full questionnaire results

Chapter 2: The Group

Types of group		%
Friends of	397	41.3%
Environmental cons	319	33.2
Resident / tenant	84	8.7
Heritage cons	51	5.3
Single issue	48	5.0
Parks trust	23	2.4
Park watch	20	2.1
Other	12	1.2
Agenda 21	8	0.8

Question	All groups 100%		Friends of 41.30%		Env Cons 33.20%		TARA 8.70%	
Membership								
Total membership	134		131.8		110.5		230.9	
Active Membership	43		39.2		39.8		40.9	
% Active	32.1		29.7		36.0		17.7	
State of membership								
Declining	89	8.9%	30	7.7%	32	10.1%	8	10.0%
Stable	347	34.8	199	50.8	187	59.2	54	67.5
Increasing	562	56.3	164	41.8	97	30.7	18	22.5
Charity	215	21.5%	57	14.4%	78	24.5%	12	14.3%
Constitution	744	74.4%	309	77.8%	210	65.8%	70	83.3%
Formation year								
Prior to 1990	208	21.4%	33	8.7%	81	26.3%	23	29.49%
1990	28	2.9	10	2.6	10	3.2	3	3.85
1991	28	2.9	11	2.9	10	3.2	0	0.00
1992	32	3.3	14	3.7	11	3.6	0	0.00
1993	32	3.3	14	3.7	14	4.5	0	0.00
1994	37	3.8	17	4.5	15	4.9	3	3.85
1995	56	5.8	21	5.5	27	8.8	2	2.56
1996	59	6.1	30	7.9	13	4.2	6	7.69
1997	70	7.2	23	6.0	24	7.8	7	8.97
1998	92	9.5	32	8.4	32	10.4	12	15.38
1999	111	11.4	47	12.3	33	10.7	9	11.54
2000	96	9.9	50	13.1	21	6.8	7	8.97
2001	84	8.7	53	13.9	14	4.5	4	5.13
2002	38	3.9	26	6.8	3	1.0	2	2.56
Average year	1992		1996		1991		1997	

Question	All groups		Friends of		Env Cons		TARA	
Region								
SE	185	18.1%	47	13.0%	80	25.3%	6	7.3%
London	173	16.9	83	22.9	32	10.1	28	34.1
NW	133	13.0	62	17.1	26	8.2	11	13.4
Yorkshire	125	12.2	61	16.9	39	12.3	9	11.0
Sw	87	8.5	20	5.5	34	10.8	6	7.3
East	72	7.1	26	7.2	23	7.3	4	4.9
W mids	72	7.1	16	4.4	26	8.2	6	7.3
E Mids	68	6.7	15	4.1	31	9.8	3	3.7
NE	36	3.5	12	3.3	10	3.2	2	2.4
Scotland	31	3.0	9	2.5	9	2.8	2	2.4
Wales	26	2.5	11	3.0	6	1.9	0	0.0
N Ireland	13	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	6.1
Involvement								
Promotion	665	66.5%	286	72.0%	200	62.7%	37	44.0%
Improvement plans	661	66.1	244	61.5	257	80.6	43	51.2
Maintenance	607	60.7	211	53.1	234	73.4	39	46.4
Fundraising	563	56.3	224	56.4	159	49.8	52	61.9
Organising events	552	55.2	234	58.9	172	53.9	48	57.1
Preservation	537	53.7	233	58.7	176	55.2	35	41.7
Direct management	445	44.5	103	25.9	216	67.7	22	26.2
Consultee	424	42.4	233	58.7	89	27.9	41	48.8
Interpretation	407	40.7	159	40.1	161	50.5	11	13.1
Site security	309	30.9	110	27.7	101	31.7	22	26.2
Capital projects	264	26.4	117	29.5	67	21.0	24	28.6
Political lobbying	214	21.4	117	29.5	44	13.8	23	27.4
Customer surveys	188	18.8	96	24.2	40	12.5	22	26.2
Operation of facilities	113	11.3	41	10.3	30	9.4	6	7.1
Priority Groups								
Young people	570	57.0%	222	55.9%	174	54.5%	48	57.1%
Older people	525	52.5	195	49.1	162	50.8	49	58.3
Females	417	41.7	151	38.0	128	40.1	40	47.6
Disabled	411	41.1	147	37.0	129	40.4	32	38.1
Minority ethnic	245	24.5	90	22.7	66	20.7	25	29.8
Work Prioritiy								
Env cons	505	50.5%	174	43.8%	255	79.9%	28	33.3%
Site security	107	10.7	51	12.8	11	3.4	15	17.9
Heritage	99	9.9	60	15.1	3	0.9	3	3.6
Recreation	78	7.8	27	6.8	11	3.4	6	7.1
Children	74	7.4	41	10.3	8	2.5	17	20.2
Single project	45	4.5	14	3.5	6	1.9	6	7.1
Entertainment	26	2.6	9	2.3	4	1.3	5	6.0
Art	14	1.4	4	1.0	1	0.3	1	1.2

Question	All groups		Friends of		Env Cons		TARA	
Type of site								
Traditional park	261	25.6%	150	41.1%	22	7.7%	25	30.5%
Woodland	187	18.4	72	19.7	71	25.0	5	6.1
Grassland	86	8.4	13	3.6	49	17.3	8	9.8
Other	82	8.0	13	3.6	33	11.6	7	8.5
Local recreation ground	79	7.8	24	6.6	14	4.9	16	19.5
Ornamental Garden	76	7.5	24	6.6	13	4.6	6	7.3
Cemetery / churchyard	45	4.4	21	5.8	6	2.1	1	1.2
Heathland	31	3.0	13	3.6	12	4.2	1	1.2
Allotment	30	2.9	0	0.0	7	2.5	2	2.4
Community garden	30	2.9	0	0.0	20	7.0	3	3.7
Country Park	23	2.3	12	3.3	4	1.4	0	0.0
Wetland	23	2.3	8	2.2	10	3.5	1	1.2
Children's playground	20	2.0	3	0.8	2	0.7	4	4.9
Nature Reserve	20	2.0	10	2.7	6	2.1	0	0.0
Millen. Green / Doorstep	16	1.6	0	0.0	13	4.6	3	3.7
Sports Ground	10	1.0	2	0.5	2	0.7	0	0.0
Size of site								
Hectares	49.14		48.9		47.4		6.2	
Acres	67.25		84.4		67.7		15.7	
Designations								
Historic interest	608	55.6%	260	65.1%	153	48.0%	31	36.9
Specific formal designations	405	37.0	161	43.1	108	33.9	15	17.9
Freq of work parties								
Other	293	29.7%	98	28.6%	87	30.2%	20	29.0%
Monthly	285	28.8	104	30.3	108	37.5	6	8.7
Weekly	199	20.1	47	13.7	68	23.6	13	18.8
Never	123	12.4	57	16.6	3	1.0	18	26.1
Annually	88	8.9	37	10.8	22	7.6	12	17.4
Site ownership								
LA	1097	91.2%	342	93.2%	250	85.9%	83	97.6%
NGO	14	1.2	9	2.5	2	0.7	1	1.2
Parks Agency	7	0.6	5	1.4	1	0.3	0	0.0
Private individual	19	1.6	2	0.5	6	2.1	0	0.0
Private company	15	1.2	2	0.5	8	2.7	0	0.0
Trust	18	1.5	2	0.5	9	3.1	0	0.0
Other	12	1.0	2	0.5	2	0.7	0	0.0
Church	7	0.6	2	0.5	3	1.0	0	0.0
Group	11	0.9	1	0.3	7	2.4	1	1.2
Millennium Green	3	0.2	0	0.0	3	1.0	0	0.0

NB. The total number of sites exceeds 1,000 (1,097) due to the fact that groups sometimes worked on more than one site.

Type of site	Historic Interest	%	Formal Designations	%
Cemetery / churchyard	39	86.7%	23	51.1%
Country Park	19	82.6	12	52.2
Ornamental Garden	54	71.1	22	28.9
Woodland	129	69.0	91	48.7
Traditional park	179	68.6	97	37.2
Heathland	18	58.1	23	74.2
Wetland	12	52.2	12	52.2
Nature Reserve	10	50.0	15	75.0
Grassland	42	48.8	33	38.4
Community garden	14	46.7	5	16.7
Other	31	37.8	27	32.9
Local recreation ground	29	36.7	16	20.3
Millen. Green / Doorstep	4	25.0	2	12.5
Allotment	6	20.0	6	20.0
Children's playground	3	15.0	2	10.0
Sports Ground	0	0.0	1	10.0

Type of site	Size of site (ha)
Country Park	87.7
Heathland	75.2
Other	66.6
Traditional park	55.3
Woodland	39.6
Nature Reserve	36
Grassland	23.3
Wetland	21.8
Ornamental Garden	21.2
Local recreation ground	6.4
Allotment	6.4
Cemetery / churchyard	5.2
Millen. Green / Doorstep	3.1
Children's playground	1.4
Sports Ground	1
Community garden	0.6

Question	All groups		Friends of		Env Cons		TARA	
Relationship with LA								
Excellent	235	23.5%	89	23.0%	74	24.4%	14	17.1%
Good	452	45.2	184	47.5	140	46.2	38	46.3
Reasonable	239	23.9	85	22.0	74	24.4	21	25.6
Poor	48	4.8	21	5.4	9	3.0	6	7.3
Very poor	25	2.5	8	2.1	6	2.0	3	3.7
Kept informed by LA								
Always	115	11.7%	46	12.0%	35	11.7%	7	8.5%
Regularly	446	45.3	189	49.3	128	43.0	34	41.5
Sometmes	306	31.1	113	29.5	93	31.2	34	41.5
Rarely	83	8.4	27	7.0	28	9.4	5	6.1
Never	35	3.6	8	2.1	14	4.7	2	2.4
LA Support								
Advice	637	63.7%	268	73.0%	193	60.5%	57	67.9%
Staff time	481	48.1	226	61.6	130	40.8	34	40.5
Premises	334	33.4	148	40.3	90	28.2	27	32.1
Postage	254	25.4	124	33.8	71	22.3	25	29.8
Training	188	18.8	70	19.1	67	21.0	25	29.8
Office / stores	143	14.3	56	15.3	53	16.6	9	10.7
Freq of formal meet								
Never	277	28.5%	82	21.7%	105	35.8%	23	28.4%
Quarterly	267	27.5	113	29.9	79	27.0	20	24.7
Monthly	207	21.3	113	29.9	35	11.9	18	22.2
Annually	113	11.6	30	7.9	41	14.0	10	12.3
Bi-annually	76	7.8	30	7.9	24	8.2	6	7.4
Weekly / fortnightly	26	2.7	7	1.9	9	3.1	4	4.9
Other	6	0.6	3	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Networking								
Park groups	477	47.7%	204	51.4%	148	46.4%	31	36.9%
Special interest groups	692	69.2%	250	63%	267	83.7%	44	52.4%
Special interest groups								
BTCV	424	42.4%	125	31.5%	204	63.9%	23	27.4%
Other National Group	282	28.2	65	16.4	89	27.9	17	20.2
Groundwork	111	11.1	36	9.1	36	11.3	15	17.9
Wildlife Trust	86	8.6	28	7.1	49	15.4	1	1.2
Fed of City Farms	22	2.2	0	0.0	11	3.4	2	2.4
English Nature	17	1.7	3	0.8	9	2.8	0	0.0
RSPB	14	1.4	7	1.8	5	1.6	0	0.0
Countryside Agency	12	1.2	1	0.3	1	0.3	1	1.2
Nat Fed of Cemetery Friends	11	1.1	8	2.0	1	0.3	0	0.0

Question	All groups		Friends of		Env Cons		TARA	
Financial Info								
Income (all groups)								
up to £250	239	27.5%	91	29.5%	67	24.8%	17	22.1%
£250-499	113	13.0	38	12.3	38	14.1	12	15.6
£500-999	121	13.9	54	17.5	36	13.3	14	18.2
£1000-4999	224	25.8	90	29.2	68	25.2	20	26.0
Over £5000	172	19.8	35	11.4	61	22.6	14	18.2
Income (charity)								
up to £250	17	8.4%	5	9.4%	2	2.7%	0	0.0%
£250-499	17	8.4	4	7.5	7	9.6	1	8.3
£500-999	22	10.8	6	11.3	10	13.7	1	8.3
£1000-4999	63	31.0	25	47.2	23	31.5	4	33.3
Over £5000	84	41.4	13	24.5	31	42.5	6	50.0
Income (non charity)								
up to £250	96	14.4%	98	35.4%	77	37.7%	17	22.1%
£250-499	222	33.3	39	14.1	33	16.2	12	15.6
£500-999	99	14.9	46	16.6	26	12.7	14	18.2
£1000-4999	161	24.2	64	23.1	45	22.1	20	26.0
Over £5000	88	13.2	30	10.8	23	11.3	14	18.2
Income (constitution)								
up to £250	154	22.8%						
£250-499	82	12.2						
£500-999	96	14.2						
£1000-4999	194	28.8						
Over £5000	148	22.0						
Income (no constitution)								
up to £250	85	43.6%						
£250-499	31	15.9						
£500-999	25	12.8						
£1000-4999	30	15.4						
Over £5000	24	12.3						
Grants or funds								
Local Authority	558	55.8%	206	51.9%	193	60.5%	44	52.4%
Lottery Board	306	30.6	109	27.5	96	30.1	26	31.0
Business	245	24.5	83	20.9	105	32.9	14	16.7
Charity	245	24.5	75	18.9	100	31.3	15	17.9
National Agency	233	23.3	75	18.9	86	27.0	12	14.3
Grants or funds (charity)								
Local Authority	139	64.7%	35	61.4%	53	67.9%	6	50.0%
Lottery Board	114	53.0	24	42.1	43	55.1	6	50.0
Business	73	34.0	15	26.3	32	41.0	4	33.3
Charity	103	47.9	16	28.1	47	60.3	3	25.0
National Agency	75	34.9	11	19.3	34	43.6	1	8.3
Grants or funds (non charity)								
Local Authority	419	53.4%	172	50.6%	140	58.1%	44	61.1%
Lottery Board	191	24.3	85	25.0	53	22.0	26	36.1
Business	172	21.9	68	20.0	73	30.3	14	19.4
Charity	142	18.1	59	17.4	53	22.0	14	19.4
National Agency	158	20.1	64	18.8	52	21.6	12	16.7

Question	All groups		Friends of		Env Cons		TARA	
Grants or funds (constitution)								
Local Authority	448	60.2%						
Lottery Board	266	35.8						
Business	200	26.9						
Charity	203	27.3						
National Agency	189	25.4						
Grants or funds (no constitution)								
Local Authority	110	43.0%						
Lottery Board	39	15.2						
Business	45	17.6						
Charity	41	16.0						
National Agency	44	17.2						
Annual income source								
Members	378	37.8%	186	46.9%	89	27.9%	26	31.0%
LA	373	37.3	132	33.2	135	42.3	34	40.5
Fundraising events	359	35.9	150	37.8	100	31.3	42	50.0
Other	174	17.4	56	14.1	65	20.4	6	7.1
Charities / Trusts	169	16.9	48	12.1	61	19.1	17	20.2
National agencies	119	11.9	34	8.6	48	15.0	6	7.1
Local businesses	103	10.3	39	9.8	101	31.7	7	8.3
Annual income duration	<12 mths		<12 mths		<12 mths		<12 mths	
Members	158	51.6%	73	51.8%	46	57.5%	10	45.5%
LA	154	49.4	63	63.0	58	49.6	8	27.6
Fundraising events	134	47.5	60	53.6	44	53.0	12	34.3
Other	60	42.3	31	67.4	18	35.3	3	60.0
Charities / Trusts	70	51.1	21	56.8	27	54.0	4	28.6
National agencies	45	43.7	18	62.1	14	35.9	3	50.0
Local businesses	39	56.5	13	50.0	18	66.7	3	75.0

Chapter 3: Additional Resource Needs

Principal resource	%	%
Funding: group development	30.8	33.7
Funding: LA improvement	18.7	14.5
Funding: park improvements	8.8	10.9

Capacity building requests	%	%
Administration	10.3	7.5
Funding advice	8.4	4.7
Marketing	8.4	0.9
Information	8.4	9.5
Volunteers	8.1	8.0
Premises & storage	7.7	6.2
Insurance	6.2	4.6
Tools & equipment	6.2	8.8
Membership	5.1	3.2
Training	3.7	4.2
Networking	2.9	4.0
Legal advice	1.5	1.9

Chpater 4: Successful Funding Applications

Capital grants	174	80.9%
Revenue grants	41	19.1%

Capital grants	
Capital green space improvements	33.9%
Soft infrastructure	10.9
Ecological conservation	10.3
Play / recreation equipment	6.9
Hard infrastructure	6.9
Access	5.7
Equipment purchase	5.2
Land purchase	5.2
Disabled access	4.6
Events	4
Interpretation	4
Studies / reports	2.3

Revenue grants	
Staff / salaries	39%
Training	17.1
Admin / general	17.1
Outreach	14.6
Publicity	12.2