Pocket Parks of Northamptonshire: A Toolkit
The Toolkit draws ideas, information and best practice from many sources.

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Great care has been taken in the production of this Toolkit but Northamptonshire County Council accept no liability for loss, damage or other unsatisfactory results from implementing the recommendations in this pack. All information should be judged on a case by case basis. And further help and advice sought form the Pocket Park Officer.

The links, address and contact details are provided for information and do not necessarily indicate endorsement by Northamptonshire County Council. Every effort was made to ensure that the links, addresses and contact details were correct at the time of publishing.

Front Cover photograph: Viewing the Pond at Kettering General Hospital Pocket Park.
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Introduction

This guide has been written to help you establish a Pocket Park in your local community, for the benefit of the people and wildlife that live in your neighbourhood. The guide is divided up into five sections. It is designed to help answer specific questions and where it can’t it will point you in the right direction to get further help.

Northamptonshire County Council has been working in partnership with local communities since the early 1980’s to help establish Pocket Parks across the County. Pocket Parks are helping to protect and conserve local wildlife, heritage and landscape – caring for the countryside on our doorstep.

Section 1: About Pocket Parks

You will find all the history and reasons to create a Pocket park and benefits of having a Pocket park.

Section 2: Setting up a Pocket Park

This is a large section and is broken down in to sub sections.

You will be able to find a list of recommended stages when setting up a pocket park. And look at the main areas in depth.

Section 3: Funding

You will need to obtain funding for you Pocket Park you can find some ideas and suggestions on how you may go about this.

Section 4: Case Studies

Look at some case studies of successful Pocket parks

Section 5: useful information

A full list of useful contacts and organisations can be found.
About Pocket Parks in Northamptonshire

Pocket Park Scheme

The Pocket Parks Scheme is operated by Northamptonshire County Council with the specific aim of helping local people own, manage and care for public green spaces in their local community. The scheme is managed by the Pocket Parks Officer whose role is not only to help new Pocket Park groups establish but to support existing groups with expert help, advice and encouragement.

What are Pocket Parks?

Pocket Parks are green spaces owned and managed by local people (volunteers). They provide free open access to the countryside for all, at all times.

They help protect and conserve local wildlife heritage and landscapes. Large or small, rural or urban, the cultural, social and environmental benefits and numerous.

Between 31st March 2009 and April 1st 2010 the annual volunteer hours contributed to the Pocket Park scheme across the Pocket Parks is estimated at nearly 19,000 hours per year.

Pocket Park Vision

Rolling countryside, hedgerows and picturesque villages characterise Northamptonshire. However, much of the countryside is inaccessible to the public as it is either in the ownership of private estates or used as arable farmland. The county has no Outstanding Areas of Natural Beauty, no National Parks and few sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Before the development of the Pocket Parks Scheme, free public access to the countryside was restricted to the rights of way network, country parks, Forestry Commission woodlands and some nature reserves.

Pocket Park History

Alan Teulon MBE, the former Head of Countryside Services at Northamptonshire County Council, created the Pocket Parks Scheme in the early 1980s, in response to both the need to provide greater access to the countryside and the demand from local people asking how they could care for and protect areas of local green space important to them.

From the start, the scheme was a community-led initiative and by 1990, 18 Pocket Parks existed. At that point,
the scheme was expanded to include urban areas and the permanent post of Pocket Parks Officer was created to both manage and develop the scheme.

The Scheme was so innovative that it became the forerunner of the Countryside Agency's Millennium Greens and Doorstep Greens initiatives in the 1990’s. It also incorporated many sustainability and biodiversity principles, long before they became mainstream policies. The scheme was awarded the national R.I.C.S. Conservation of the Countryside award (1995), and has been recognised as a model of best practice with the award of Beacon Status Improving Urban Green Spaces in April 2002. Many individual Pocket Parks have also won awards, including Green Pennant Awards.

The Pocket Parks Scheme continues to develop and expand - we now have over 80 Pocket Parks in the county.

Benefits of Pocket Parks

Large or small, urban or rural, the cultural, social and environmental benefits of Pocket Parks are numerous.

Culturally they ...

reinforce a positive link between local authorities and communities

provide venues for heritage and cultural activities

are cultural assets and a lasting legacy to future generations

Environmentally they ...

ensure sustainable and economic management of green space

conserve and improve wildlife habitats through positive management

raise environmental awareness and the promotion of biodiversity through education and practical conservation projects

Socially they ...

provide free public access to community green space

allow local people to make decisions on things affecting their environment and community

help make safer and more sociable communities through greater contact and interaction

improve the health, fitness and psychological well-being of people

equip people with the skills and self-confidence to tackle new challenges

offer children a safe place to play and learn

assist with the regeneration of run-down areas

contribute to the maintenance of existing facilities and acquisition of new ones

promote green tourism and the local economy
Section 2: Creating a Pocket Park

What must a Pocket Park provide?

In order to meet the aims of the scheme and be supported a Pocket Park must provide:

- Every day, all day public access
- Safe and easy access – appropriate gates and paths etc
- A welcome sign with the park’s name and supported by NCC
- Finger direction Posts on lamp posts in the local area
- A notice board to let people know about events and management
- Positive management of wildlife habitats (to increase biodiversity or to halt declines in accordance with the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan)
- A land tenure agreement between land owners and Pocket Park committee
Identifying a Suitable Pocket Park Site

Pocket Parks can be created in a great variety of different green spaces – Disused railway lines, old quarries or former gravel pits, derelict urban land or un-worked farmland, landfill sites, old orchards or disused cemeteries, riverside fields or abandoned millstreams and ponds. Local authorities in particular often have areas of land that they manage that may be suitable for converting into a Pocket Park.

When communities express the desire to establish a Pocket Park, ensuring a suitable site is of paramount importance. The Pocket Park’s Officer will help communities with the evaluation of a site.

If deemed suitable communities are encouraged to purchase suitable sites from either the local authority where land purchase is not possible then a long term lease, licence or management agreement is required.

When a site is found, contact the Pocket Park officer who will make a site visit to assess the suitability of the area and provide support through the whole process.
Pocket Park Action Plan

- Find a site
- Find the Owner
- Site Assessment by Pocket Park Officer
- Negotiate Public Access
- Contact Parish/Town Council and ask for support in writing
- Carry out site survey, Photographs Site and Record species present (wildlife Trust)
- Negotiate Land Tenure Agreement
- Apply to District Council for Planning Permission
- Organise Local Support (set up Pocket Park management Group, hold public consultation)

- Complete all paperwork and governing documents
- Prepare 5 Year Management Plan (with help)
- List cost to set up projects (including land acquisition, legal costs, trees, fencing, tools, signs, paths etc)
- Apply for funding (lottery, landfill etc)
- Launch Project Locally (press releases)
- Hold official Opening (as local councillors to official opening)
- Encouraged and maintain Commitment and Enthusiasm
Forming a Group & Public Consultation

One way to form a group and to ensure that a good cross section of the community is involved from the outset is to hold a public meeting which is widely promoted.

A group is needed in order to:

- Ensure continuity of knowledge and experience
- Make decisions that will affect the Pocket Park
- Apply for grant aid
- Encourage new people to become involved in the project
- Spread the work load.

Some general points when organising a meeting are:

- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- Who will be speaking?
- Who is the target audience?
- When is it best to hold it?
- Where is the best venue?
- How are you going to advertise it?

Remember:

- Decide how you wish to conduct the meeting.
- Nominate a facilitator or chair person for the evening
- Come prepared and know what you are going to say
- Let people know the purpose of the meeting and invite them to contribute.

Be welcoming and friendly as well as democratic. Listen to what people have to say and give people an opportunity to put forward their ideas. It is vital to find out if they like and will support the proposal. Value contributions and encourage people to say what they feel.

If possible, encourage people to volunteer for what they enjoy doing and are good at. There may be many people present at the meeting, probably too many to make an effective management committee. Not everyone will want to be part of the committee but they may want to be part of the wider volunteer group. Around 6 to 8 people is a good number for the committee.

The key roles are Co-ordinator which is someone with plenty of energy and commitment who can stir people into action, plus a Secretary and Treasurer to deal with the paperwork and finances. Others in the committee can be recruited to help organise work parties, events and activities or arrange publicity/press or obtaining tools or fund raising.
Group Structure

The first decision to take when you set up a new Pocket Park group there are two options. If you chose option two, the most likely option as this will open up more opportunities when applying for grants.

1) Working group of the Parish Council/Town council
The parish council owns the land, manages the park, organises the work, and controls what gets done, handles the finances (including accounting for receipts and payments through the council’s books) and puts all the money through the council’s bank account.

If this structure is used then you are unlikely to need to create separate governing documents, as the parish council will already have them. This structure may restrict what grants you can apply for.

2) Independent group (structure needs to be decided)
A group is established, separate from the parish council/town council and with its own constitution that owns or leases the land (can be from the parish council), organises the work, controls what gets done, handles the finances and puts all the money through their own bank account.

The parish council/Town council can maintain a modicum of “control” via the terms of the constitution (e.g. “the committee shall include one representative from the parish council”), the terms of the lease agreement and via any conditions that the council wishes to impose with any grants made to the pocket Park group.
Group structure

There are many different options when forming a group. You can be a voluntary organisation without being a charity. From a legal perspective there are basically two types of voluntary organisation; Incorporated and Unincorporated. You are advised to get legal advice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Structure</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Ownership, governance and constitution</th>
<th>Is it a legal person distinct from those who own and/or run it?</th>
<th>Can its activities benefit those who own and/or run it?</th>
<th>Assets “locked in” for community benefit?</th>
<th>Can it be a charity and get charitable status tax benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unincorporated association</strong></td>
<td>Informal; no general regulation of this structure; need to make own rules</td>
<td>Nobody owns: governed according to own rules</td>
<td>No: can create problems for contracts, holding property and liability of members.</td>
<td>Depends on own rules.</td>
<td>Would need bespoke drafting to achieve this.</td>
<td>Yes if it meets the criteria for being a charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust</strong></td>
<td>A way of holding assets so as to separate legal ownership from economic interest.</td>
<td>Assets owned by trustees and managed in interests of beneficiaries on the terms of the trust.</td>
<td>No: trustees personally liable.</td>
<td>Trustees/directors no, unless trust, court or Charity Commission permit.</td>
<td>Yes (if trust established for community benefit)</td>
<td>Yes if it meets the criteria for being a charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limited company (other than community interest company)</strong></td>
<td>Most frequently adopted corporate legal structure can be adapted to suit most purposes</td>
<td>Directors manage business on behalf of members. Considerable flexibility over internal rules.</td>
<td>Yes; members' liability limited to amount unpaid on shares or by guarantee.</td>
<td>Yes (but no dividends etc to members if it is a company limited by guarantee)</td>
<td>Would need bespoke drafting in articles (which could be emended by members)</td>
<td>Yes if it meets the criteria for being a charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community interest company (CIC)</strong></td>
<td>New “off-the-peg” limited company structure for social enterprise with secure “asset lock” and focus on community benefit.</td>
<td>As for other limited companies, but subject to additional regulation to ensure community benefits</td>
<td>Yes members’ liability limited to amount unpaid on shares.</td>
<td>Yes, but must benefit wider community as well. Can pay limited dividends to private investors.</td>
<td>Yes, through standard provision which all CICs must include in their constitutions.</td>
<td>No, but it can become a charity if it ceases to be a CIC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Governing Documents

Getting your paperwork in order is crucial part of setting up a Pocket Park; they will be the basis on how your group works. These documents will also need to be provided when applying for grants, bank accounts and insurance.

Constitution

The group should have a constitution; it contains rules to guide your group. If you are going to apply for grant funding, you will probably need a written constitution, to show funders that you are an organised group. Unless you are going to be a registered charity or a limited company, there are no legal rules about what your constitution should say. Once you have written and agreed the constitution, it becomes the 'governing document' of your group, and it should set out clearly how you intend to run your group. A good constitution can help to resolve disputes and enable new members to participate fully in the running of the group.

The contents of your constitution may need to be adapted depending on how you form as a group

Volunteer Policy

A Volunteering Policy sets out your organisation's approach and commitment to volunteers. It should include things like recruitment, induction and training, expenses, support for volunteers, equal opportunities and problem solving procedures.

Equal Opportunity Policy

Although not required by law it is good practice to create an Equal Opportunities Policy to show that you are actively opposing discrimination

It is important because:

- A number of individuals, groups and communities in this country face discrimination.
- Groups can ignore or discriminate against particular minority or disadvantaged groups, quite unintentionally.
- Writing an equal opportunities policy will help you think about the practical things that you can do to make sure that your group is equally open to everyone, and that all people involved will be treated with the same respect.
- It will show that you are aware of discrimination and are willing to take measures to stop it happening within your group and the services that you offer.
- Most funders require you to have an equal opportunities policy
Child Protection Policy

If working with children and young people it is recommended that a, comprehensive Child Protection Policy is operating. A Child Protection Policy is one of the most important ways of conveying that your organisation values children and young people by seeking their protection, safety and well-being.

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Everyone has a responsibility to report any concerns they may have about a child welfare to an appropriate officer.

Criminal Records Bureau Checks (CRB)

The coalition government are no longer going to carry through with the plans of the Labour government with regard to changing the law relating to CRB checks and the new vetting and barring procedures.

The new government is hoping to reduce bureaucracy for voluntary organisations and charities so imposing a strict structure regarding ensuring all volunteers undergo these checks would not be in the spirit of what they are trying to achieve.

The system will remain as it is at present for the time being. CRB checks will still be required for those volunteers carrying out regular activity where they will be unsupervised with a vulnerable member of the community.

Regulated Activity is defined as any activity of a specified nature that involves specific responsibility with children or vulnerable adults as defined by Statute, frequently, intensively or overnight.

Frequently: regularly once a week or more often

Intensively: 4 days or more in a 30 day period

This information was correct May 2011. Please check the Law as it is updated
Land Matters

It is not worth investing energy and resources in a project unless you can secure ownership or a long leasehold, licence, or management agreement to safeguard its purpose for a number of years. Northamptonshire County Council can provide a copy of a specimen lease.

**Freehold** the best option is to possess the land outright for the purpose of a Pocket Park. In some cases it may be necessary to consult the District Valuer for a land valuation, for which there will be a charge. Sometimes freehold land is donated or bequeathed to the local community.

**Leasehold** A lease will mean that you will not own the land outright, but you will be able to use it for an agreed purpose for an agreed time period. We recommended a minimum of 25 years, but each case must be judged on its merit. The lease will state your responsibilities to the landlords (the person or company that owns the freehold on the land)

**Licence** A licence does not entitle any form of ownership, but it will allow the development of a Pocket Park on a specific piece of land. It is a commonly used approach in urban projects where land values are much higher and a Pocket Park group will find it difficult to raise enough money to buy or lease land.

A drawback of the licence approach is that it does not give exclusive possession of the land, i.e. the land may serve a dual purpose.

**Management Agreement** this is similar to a licence, but not as binding. It gives volunteers the right to manage the land for a stated period for a specific purpose. A management agreement can run for 25 years, but will usually contain an escape clause that will allow either party to pull out of the agreement upon a certain period of notice.
Registering your land with the Land Registry  If your group manage to obtain a freehold or leasehold (for more than 7 years) you must register the land with Land Registry.

You will need to have the land valued by someone official e.g. an estate agent. And obtain a letter to state something like ‘I certify that the land is valued at........' (There is no official form for this)

Stamp Duty  Since December 1 2003 if land is purchased, leased or even just occupied, the Stamp Duty Land Tax rules may apply.

Law of possession  in limited circumstances (and provided that at least 10 years possession or management of the site can be shown) you may be able to apply for ownership of ‘ownerless' land.

You are strongly recommended to get independent legal advice on whether or not any of the rules or regulations will affect the transaction and what reliefs and exemptions may apply.

Planning Permission  This maybe required if the development of the Pocket Park involves a material change of use of the land, e.g. from agricultural use to public space.

Your District/Borough Council Planning Section can advise you on whether you will need to apply for planning permission and if they do, they can also advise you on how to do it. You should expect to pay a fee for this.
Health and Safety and Risk Assessments

There are hazards everywhere in our daily lives including Pocket Parks. The important questions you need to answer are whether the hazard is significant and whether you have it covered by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is small. Writing a risk assessment will help you answer these questions and show to your insurers that you have thought about the hazards and risks in your Pocket Park.

The law

Volunteer-only organisations do not have a statutory duty to carry out risk assessments. However, it is recommended that all voluntary groups carry out risk assessments.

The Health and Safety Executive recommend a 5 step approach to risk assessment.

1. Look for the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed, and how
3. For each hazard, evaluate the chance, big or small, of harm actually being done and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done.
4. Record the significant findings of your risk assessment, e.g. the main risks and the measures you have taken to deal with them.
5. Review your assessment from time to time, and revise if necessary.

Some health and safety terms:

Hazard: something with the potential to cause injury or damage i.e., something that could be dangerous

Risk: the probability of the hazard causing harm, combined with the degree of seriousness of the consequences. In other words, how likely, and how bad?

Duty of care: the duty of care is a common law duty to take reasonable care to avoid causing harm to others.
How to carry out a risk assessment

In any human activity, there is an element of risk. Three factors are central to determining whether or not the level of risk is acceptable or tolerable:

1. The likely hood of coming to harm
2. The severity of that harm
3. The benefits, rewards, or outcomes of the activity

You will need to think about carrying out two types of risk assessments.

1. Site (assessment for someone using the park for recreation)
2. Jobs/tasks/events (Specific conservation tasks, litter picking, tree planting etc)

When carrying out a risk assessment don’t do it on you own have two or more of you walking round the Pocket Park, think about the different members of your community who will use the Pocket Park. Use reasonable and common sense the aim is to help you carry out tasks and enjoy the Pocket park not to prevent things from happening.

The entire risk assessment exercise is worthless if you do not take actions based upon it or follow the controls you put in place.

For each risk identify a measure or measures that will either eliminate the risk or reduce it to acceptable levels.

Review your assessments

Once you have completed your risk assessments don’t just put them back in a folder never to be looked at again, they are a working document. They will need reviewing once a year unless something changes before then. Once review then date and sign the documents. If you are going to start doing a new type of task as your project develops then do a risk assessment for it.

It is good practice to add H&S onto agendas at meetings.
Insurance

Public liability insurance is essential and covers visitors to the site. Personal Accident insurance covers volunteers working on the site. There will be an annual cost for these, so funds will need to be raised to cover them.

Where possible, insurance should be arranged through your parish or town council or residents association, which can add the Pocket Park to their existing policy. This is likely to be cheaper than approaching a broker and it helps to bind the ties between the management group and the council.

If this is not possible then you will need to contact an insurance broker who will be able to find the policy that best suites your needs. You can join BTCV for a fee and have the benefit of being able to pay for insurance through their underwriters Zuric.

Public Liability Insurance

This is also known as third party insurance and should explicitly mention volunteers. This insurance protects the organisation from claims by members of the public or anyone who comes into contact with the organisation. It also protects damage to property.

Personal Accident Insurance

This covers volunteers in the event of injury, accident, assault or death for which the organisation has no liability. There is likely to be an upper age limit on this form of insurance. This does not mean that people above this age cannot volunteer, but they should be aware that they are not covered for accidents where the organisation has not been at fault. Injuries to them arising from negligence would still be covered under liability insurance cover.

Tips

- Check the upper and lower age limits of your policy if recruiting younger and older volunteers.
- Make sure your insurance provider is aware of all the activities your volunteers will be carrying out. E.g. do you need cover for use of power tools?
- When talking to the providers explain that Pocket Parks generally have low use i.e. low visitor number.
Management Plans

Formulation and writing management plan is one of the first things you will need to consider if your Pocket Park is to succeed and develop. The purpose of a management plan is to help the management committee to make decisions and to help them plan out a work/events program. It will also be useful when deciding how much funding you need to apply for and also can be used as a document to show potential funders.

Once a draft plan has been prepared, it will need to be circulated around the committee for everyone’s comments and approval, before the finished version can be completed. Make copies of the final version and give one to all of your committee members and anyone else who provides valued support.

The management plan will act as a guide for action in the years to come. It will be particularly useful when awkward decisions are needed, when applying for grants and as an introduction to new people wishing to become involved in the project.

The plan is a working document. It is easier to update and roll forward on year at a time at the end of each year, rather than waiting until its expiry and starting a fresh one.

Include in your management plan the following sections.

- Statements of overall aim of the project
- Description of the site, which may include photographs
- A note on any physical features including items such as location, size, access and surrounding land use
- Maps of site
- Photos of site
- History of the site
- Ownership/tenure details
- An evaluation of education, recreational, heritage, conservation and wildlife potential, including a species list
- Objectives with reasons
- 5 year work plan
- Useful local contacts and other sources of information
Habitat Creation and Management

One of the aims of Pocket Parks is to increase the biodiversity at the site. Specialist knowledge of Habitat management and creation is needed and there are many sources of information available to you to help with the practical management of your Pocket Park. The volume of information in relation to habitat management and creation can not be covered in this document. However the Pocket park officer can give you specialist advice on habitat creation and management. This type of information will have been included in your management plan.

You may wish to think about creating:

- Bat boxes
- Beetle banks
- Bird boxes
- Butterfly mounds
- Copses
- Fruiting thickets
- Hedgerows
- Orchard
- Pond (s)
- Sensory garden
- Wetland areas
- Wild area (brambles etc)
- Wildflower meadow
- Woodlands
- Long grass area
- Butterfly and insect garden/mounds
Access for all

**Disability and the Equality Act 2010**

People have many different types of disabilities that may make accessing certain places difficult.

When creating and designing your Pocket Park think about how you can reasonably make your park accessible to all of your community. Not only do you need to think about paths and resting places and bench types, don’t forget about font size on information boards and leaflets. Also think about enhancing people’s enjoyment through sensory areas e.g. a specially designed raised bed.

Duty to make reasonable adjustments

These duties to make reasonable adjustments are owed to disabled people at large and are not simply relevant to each individual disabled person who wants to access a service provider’s services. Some of the factors which might be considered in determining what reasonable adjustment include:

- whether taking any particular steps would be effective;
- the extent to which it is practicable;
- the financial and other costs;
- the extent of any disruption
- the extent of the service provider’s financial and other resources
- the amount of any resources already spent on making adjustments;
- the availability of financial and other assistance.

Contact the Pocket Park Officer who will be able to give you more in-depth information on ‘access for all’ including information produced by the [Fieldfare Trust](#) who work with people with disabilities and countryside managers to improve access to the countryside for everyone.
Interpretation boards & notice boards

It is important that people visiting your Pocket Park can contact your volunteer group so by having a contact number and name displayed on your notice board is always a good idea.

It's also useful to have a map and some information on the history and the different species that can be found in your Pocket Park.

The Pocket Park officer can help advise you on different styles of interpretation and notice boards.

Finger Posts

Pocket Park finger posts can be purchased from NORDIS. You need to obtain permission from the highways department before any signs can be installed. The Pocket Park officer can help arrange this. Decide on a selection of lamp posts in the area that you would like to attach a fingerpost to.
Keeping thing going

Work parties

These are best arranged at regular intervals, so that everyone knows when something is happening, e.g. the first Saturday in every month. In the early stages, when there is a lot to do, people may need to put in more time. Obtaining the right balance between workload and commitment is important. Too much work, but equally too little work may put people off.

Remember volunteers are giving their free time and they want something from their experience; to build on their skills, confidence or to make new friendships. Having the right tools and equipment for the job and knowledge of how to use them makes participation easier and safer.

It is important to keep the momentum of the group going. A good way to do this is to make a record of the project, noting down important mile stones and achievement. Taking photos and looking back on the changes is also another good way to keep enthusiasm going. You could also arrange social events to celebrate successes – A one year birthday party since the park opened!

Contact and interaction with each other is essential. To help achieve this, why not hold your planning meetings in each other’s homes or the local pub, so you can get to know each other in a more relaxed setting rather than a cold village hall.

People like to be acknowledged for their contribution. Thanks them when they leave and collect the details of all new helpers for future contact, including next work days and updates.
An ongoing success

Use the pocket Park
Use of the Pocket Park gives it a purpose and increases its community value.

Hold an opening Ceremony
Invite everyone who has contributed, plus those who you hope may help in the future. Celebrate your achievement together. Organise refreshments, activities, music and press coverage.

Hold fun social and fund-raising events
Have one big event at least once a year to keep people in touch and to raise the Pocket Park groups profile.

Keep up the press coverage and publicity
Do not assume people know about the Pocket Park or how to join the group. Try to obtain an editorial or features in local newspapers and parish magazines etc. Put up a poster in the park letting people know how they can get involved.

Welcome people
whether they are users or helpers, the Pocket Park is there for everyone.

Consider outside assistance on major tasks
if there is a very heavy or technical task beyond the scope of your volunteers, consider contacting the BTCV, or use a contractor.

Keep the site tidy
Litter tends to attract more litter. By keeping the site tidy and clear of any graffiti or vandalism, it acts as a deterrent. Where persistent offences take place, you may need help from your District Council Environmental Health Department or the police Safer Community Team in your area.
Wildlife designations

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are the country's very best wildlife and geographical sites. They include some of the most spectacular and beautiful habitats.

You need to contact your local wildlife Trust if you want to see if the site has any such designation, if the site does have such designations you will need to get permission from Natural England before any work can progress.

Scheduled Ancient Monument Sites and Monument Record Held by the County Council with responsibility for heritage in your area will tell you if your site is covered by this designation. If the site does have such monuments you will need to contact English Heritage before any work begins.

Tree Preservation order (TPO) to find out if your trees are protected, contact the local Planning Authority (LPA) - usually the local borough, unitary or district Council. If your trees are protected, you need written permission to remove them, or to do any tree surgery.

You may ask your LPA to consider making a TPO for trees that you would like protected.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and amended by Schedule 11 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, by principal local authorities.

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it.

Two Pocket parks have LNR status granted in 2008 they are Greens Norton and Tiffield. To find out more about LNR please visit

Local Wildlife Site (LWS) are identified and selected local for their substantive nature conservation value, taking into consideration the most important distinctive and threaded species and habitats within a local regional and national context. They are non statutory designation.

Found on both public and private land, LWS vary in size and shape.

Some Pocket Parks are LWS and we hope that other aspire to become LWS. To find out more about LWS contact your local Wildlife Trust.
Section 3: Funding

Once you have decided you are going to create a Pocket Park you will need to decide how this project will be funded, this can be in conjunction with completing the management plan.

You will need to break down the likely cost of each element in the Pocket park e.g. 50 hedging plants, one notice board etc and create a budget for the overall fundraising target.

Once you have an overall fundraising target, you need to think about how to raise the money. You could consider:

- Applying for grants or awards;
- Organising your own fundraising events;
- Getting sponsorship for a run etc
- Selling badges, cards, t-shirts or other merchandise
- Collections, donations and raffles;
- Writing to local businesses (as for cash donation or single item donations depending on business maybe they would like to sponsor a bench for example)

Applying for grants or awards;

It can be useful to appoint one or two people in your committee to be responsible for applying for funding.

This will probably be one of your main incomes at least in the first year. Good planning will increase your chances of being successful when applying for a grant. Make sure that you get as much input and help for people as you can. Be clear about why you want the grant and what you hope to achieve for your community

Grant giving organisations will often only cover capital costs, which may include items such as land acquisition, fencing, gates, benches, plants, information boards, signs, pond liner and tools etc.

Grant giving organisations are changing and being updated all the time, members of the pocket Park scheme receive regular updates of grants available to them.

The Pocket Park officer can help you with your grant application.

Income and expenditure

Once a Pocket park has been opened, the maintenance costs are the responsibility of the local community. In many cases, a parish/town council or residents association have been part of the Pocket park creation process. As a result, often they will allocate an annual sum to help cover these costs such as the annual insurance cost.

See section five for funding organisations.
Section 4: Case Studies

Silverstone – Brickle

Created in 1993 Brickle Pocket Park Silverstone was a former brickyard. It contains large pond and marshland in the area where clay for the bricks was formally dug.

The landowners, having failed to get planning permission to build, agreed to sell the land for £20,000. Following an assessment by the District Valuer, this was reduced to £5,000. Silverstone Parish Council then purchased the land and a Management Committee of local volunteers was formed to manage the land on behalf of the Parish Council.

Clay was dug from the site for about 60 years until 1900. Part of the site was then used as a timber yard up until about 1960 and the adjacent area was developed for new housing. The site then became a tip for hard-core and soil until the early 1980s when it was fenced off and left to nature. It became overgrown and also attracted fly-tipping.

The site is now a natural haven, which gives visitors the feeling of discovering a secret garden. There a many paths leading round the site, with picnic benches, native hedges, a meadow, composting area, ponds, wetlands and many mature trees.

“Through the Pocket Parks Officer the scheme provides the stimulus and expert knowledge which is needed for the local management groups to carry out their voluntary activities sensibly and successfully. It provides a vital link with important sources of knowledge and information. We are encouraged by the interest shown by regular visits by the Pocket Park officer”

Ivor Floyd – Brickle Pocket Park Co-ordinator
Hartwell – Ashwood Acre

Ashwood Acre, opened in 2009, has been developed as a wildlife friendly park on a former agricultural land next to the village cemetery.

Since the spring of 2008 the bare field has become a small park with a laid path, fruiting thicket to attract birdlife, a mixed copse, mixed hedging, bee and butterfly bank, woven willow structures as well as a number of specimen woodland and heritage fruit trees. The park boundaries are well established with dense mixed hedgerows.

The aim was to create the park as an area for quiet enjoyment, recreation and education for the benefit of members of the community of all ages while maintaining and further developing the current ecological diversity of the site to encourage plant and animal life.

Local residents are encouraged to join in working together to support, care for and enjoy the area.
Section 5: Useful Contacts

Access for all

*Accessible Countryside for Everyone*

Fieldfare Trust

Paths for all

Sensory Trust

Councils

*Borough Council of Wellingborough*

Corby Borough Council

Daventry District Council

East Northamptonshire Council

Kettering Borough Council

Northampton Borough Council

Northamptonshire County Council

Conservation Organisations

*Amphibian and Reptile Conservation*

*British Dragonfly Society*

*British Hedgehog Society*

*BTCV Northamptonshire*

*BTO*

*Buglife*

*Bumblebee Conservation Trust*

*Butterfly Conservation*

*Frog Life*

*Hare Preservation Trust*

*Mammal Society*

*Nature Net*

*Plantlife*

*Pond Conservation Trust*

*RSPB*

*Tree Council*

*Wildlife Trust*

*Northamptonshire ACRE*

Education

*British Ecological Society*

*Forest School*

*iSpot*

*Plantlife*

*Science & Plants for Schools*

*Woodland Trust/Nature Detectives*
Funding

Grantscape
Lottery
WREN
Northamptonshire Community Foundation
GrantScape

Policy

Health and Safety Executive
NSPPC
Volunteering England

Volunteering

Community Groups
Corby Volunteer Bureau
Daventry Volunteer Centre
Direct Gov
Kettering Voluntary network
Nene Valley Community Action
South Northamptonshire Volunteer Bureau
Volunteering England
Wellingborough Volunteer Bureau