The CSGN Community Project Fund

Evaluation of the funded projects 2013 -2014
(incorporating report on provision of advice and support to selected grant recipients)
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**Executive summary**

This report provides a light touch evaluation of the projects funded by the 2013/14 CSGN Community Project Fund and describes and reviews the advice and support given by a support consortium to a selected group of fund grant recipients. 26 environmental community projects across the central belt of Scotland received a share of the £60,244 Community Projects Fund.

The evaluation is based on pre- and post-project questionnaires submitted by the funded groups and the review of the support programme is based on feedback from consortium partners and supported groups.

The 26 community projects were carried out by a variety of local organisations, the biggest single group being Primary Schools/Primary School classes and nurseries – 8 projects in total. Of the 18 remaining projects another 7 focused on involving a Primary School(s) in their environmental activities and one organisation was a baby and toddler group. Three projects involved High School pupils and 7 worked with children from the local community, mainly of primary school age, but not during school hours.

The report shows that children and young people’s involvement played a big role in the majority of the projects, as was the stated intention of the CSGN fund. The focus was on the 5-12 age group, with only a few projects involving 12-16 year olds.

10 groups (38%) told us they had no previous experience of greenspace projects; this group consisted mainly of Primary Schools and nurseries.

Prior to the projects commencing 16 groups (62%) were expecting challenges such as the weather coupled with the timing of the project and resources both in terms of volunteer time and finance. As expected the weather was a challenge for a lot of projects – preventing physical work taking place and volunteers and young people taking part in activities when planned. The timing of the CSGN funding (awarded in November for completion by the end of March) also made this more of an issue.

The groups felt their project improved the green network in a range of ways; most mentioned physical interventions/creation of infrastructure and enhancement of biodiversity.

When asked what advice they would give to other groups thinking of doing a similar project groups highlighted many different aspects. The advice ranged from very practical advice relating to timescale and process to advice highlighting how worthwhile and beneficial for the community the CSGN project was.

A consortium of support organisations (see Appendix 1), led by greenspace scotland, was asked to provide advice/support to 8 projects identified by CSGN to further develop their work with children and young people. Of these, 6 projects took up the offer of support. Feedback from both the groups supported and the support consortium partners was positive in the main, but some of the groups expressed surprise that they had been "singled out". We would recommend that a capacity building and support programme is structured in such a way that groups are given an offer of project planning support in the pre-application phase of the grant programme. The outcome of this support will then form part of their application to the grant fund and should ensure a higher quality of applications.
1. Introduction

The CSGN Community Projects Fund, supported by Forestry Commission Scotland and administered by Central Scotland Green Network Trust, provided one-off grants of up to £3,000 to support small-scale projects at a grass-roots level to improve their local greenspace and enhance the quality of their environment. The 2013/2014 Fund aimed to increase use of and foster community pride in local greenspaces and was directed at ventures which benefited children and young people under 16 years old, or which involved this age group in the project.

26 environmental community projects across the central belt of Scotland received a share of the £60,244 Community Projects Fund in December 2013 and had to complete their projects (spend) by 31 March 2014. For a breakdown of projects by CSGN Region see Appendix 1.

2. Summary of activities

The 26 community projects were carried out by a variety of local organisations, the biggest single group being Primary Schools/Primary School classes and nurseries – 8 projects in total. Of the 18 remaining projects, another 7 focussed on involving a Primary School(s) in their environmental activities and one organisation was a baby and toddler group. This means that more than half the projects (16) funded by CSGN in this round mainly benefitted children up to the age of 12. Of the remaining projects three involved High School pupils and 7 worked with children from the local community, mainly of primary school age, but not during school hours.

In Ayrshire, the 7 groups funded included two nurseries, two Friends of Groups (one for a park and one for a plantation/woodland), two Tenants and Residents Association-led projects delivered by the same association, but working with two different primary schools and one baby and toddler group. The nursery projects both created safe and natural environments adjacent to the nurseries where children attending can play and learn outdoors. Friends of the Plantation planted several large trees in Holm Plantation and Friends of Eglington Park have increased the length of hedgerows and associated habitats within the Country Park.

The Onthank Tenants and Residents Association project created signs for entrances to growing/greenspaces in the area linked to the Commonwealth Games and provided hanging baskets, raised beds and tools. The baby and toddler group created a wildflower garden.

In Glasgow and Clyde Valley, 9 projects were funded. The groups included four primary schools, a woodland group, an allotment site, a local nature reserve group, a social enterprise and a local centre for under-fives. The Primary School projects focused on improving greenspaces within or adjacent to the school grounds to support learning, create produce for cooking and promote healthy eating. One school wanted to establish a market garden in the grounds of the school. The woodland group and nature reserve group, both supported by East Dunbartonshire Council, increased their activities with nearby primary schools. The social enterprise worked with local primary schools to develop a new greenspace on a piece of vacant land and the allotment group provided a site for use by the local primary school. The Ferguslie Pre-five Centre Dragon's Allotments developed a piece of waste ground into a growing space and outdoor learning area.

In Central Scotland, four groups were funded including two local environment action groups – one involving high school pupils in enhancing a piece of ‘orphan’ land in the heart of a shopping centre, the other increasing activities with a nearby Primary School. A local nature reserve group supported by Scottish Wildlife Trust was given funding for interpretation
panels and a Primary School used their funding to build a bespoke shed featuring planting along the roofline and a rain garden.

In the Lothians and Fife, 6 groups were funded including a Friends of Park group, a city farm, Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust (ELGT), two local action groups, and a Muslim cultural centre. The Friends of Park group increased their work with the local Primary School and ELGT transformed woodland near a community hub. The two local action groups improved greenspaces in their communities, one developing a piece of derelict land. The Muslim Cultural Centre also brought a piece of derelict land back into use.

**Case study 1: Onthank Tenants and Residents Association**

Onthank Tenants and Residents Association, East Ayrshire was awarded grants for two separate projects. The Association was awarded £1,500 to improve the entrances to Onthank and Mount Carmel Primary Schools and three further spaces in Onthank. The grant was used to supply 10 large trees. Both schools have adopted a tree each and will follow its development as part of their learning.

Onthank Tenants and Residents Association were also awarded £3,000 to work with children from the Primary Schools to create designs for two planting areas based on the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. The grant helped with the purchase of plants, planting boxes and tools.

The children in the community were involved from the outset by creating a drawing for the Commonwealth Games and the winning drawings were displayed by the planters where the flowers have been planted. The children were also invited to take part in planting the plants in the planters.

“The advice I would give to other groups is to always make sure approval has been given by the local authority prior to carrying out any sort of project in the community. Involve as many people as possible and get them to take pride in where they live”

The Residents Association feels that Commonwealth Games in Bloom has given the area and community a nice brighter outlook for everyone to enjoy. “On the day of planting several members of the community came over and commented on how nice it was to see something good being done in the community”

“I have received many positive comments from residents and the place over the last four years has come on leaps and bounds, trees, planted and baskets and planters have made a huge impact thanks to CSGN and EAC funding” David Murray, Housing Officer
3. Involvement of Children and Young People

The 2013/2014 Community Project Fund was directed at projects which benefited children and young people under 16 years old, or which involved this age group in the project. It was therefore interesting to find out how young people benefitted and to what extent they were involved in the creation and decision making around projects.

3.1 Confidence in involving children and young people

Prior to the projects commencing groups were asked if they had worked with children and/or young people before and how confident they felt involving children and young people in their projects.

Only one group stated that they had not worked with children and young people in projects before and when asked on a scale of 1 to 5 how confident they were involving them in this project (with "1" meaning "not very confident" and "5" meaning "very confident") they reported to be very confident. This was the case for the majority of the other groups as well – the average score being 4.7 (with 20 of the groups answering "5", 4 groups "4" and just 2 groups "3"). This perhaps is not surprising as so many of the projects were led by primary schools, nurseries or groups who had previously worked closely with primary schools.

Post-project confidence in involving children and young people in projects had increased to an average of 4.8 (with the mode and median both being 5). Whilst no major change was experienced, three groups increased their confidence score by 1 point and 1 group by 2 points, one group stayed at the same confidence rating and one group decreased (but this may be due to developing a greater understanding of what was required during the delivery of the project).

We also asked the groups how they intended to involve the children and young people in the projects before they began and many had plans to involve them in the decisions and design of the projects. There was also a focus on involving children and sometimes their families in “hands on” planting and growing experiences and on education/learning about the outdoors.

3.2 Activities for children and young people

During the projects children and young people were involved in much the same way as the groups had planned. Activities for the young people included planting seeds, bulbs, trees and helping care for them. A lot of projects also included the young people in discussions regarding the choice of plants and where to place them and some helped create paths. For the Baby and Toddler group an important aspect of the activity was to get muddy, digging and playing in the bark as it was being laid down!

“Our children and young people have been involved in choosing and purchasing plants, laying the bark pathways and in the wall restoration”

“All children within the nursery have been involved in planting seeds and caring for them”

“22 children from Lochwinnoch Primary Eco-committee were involved in the creation of the grove including setting out positions, planting the trees and bulbs and adding tree protection”

Some of the projects managed to involve the young people in the wider project development, such as carrying out surveys and engaging with others through the project. In one project the young people were part of developing the theme for a mural and in another it was the young people who sourced suitable materials, arranged to purchase these and contacted local businesses to gather donations.

“Initially the children monitored the litter dropped by carrying out surveys and found that most of it was dropped at night and weekends”
“Our pupils were involved in all stages of the project from initial discussions with our Eco Committee, the pupil council, the staff and survey of pupils regarding their eating habits”

“The children were involved from the start – initially with a playground competition – looking for the children’s ideas for ways to improve the green space”

Some projects took a more intergenerational approach to activities involving families and community members of all ages in the project.

“The children, their families and the community all worked extremely hard to unload the wood and throughout the day managed to build 16 raised beds. We obtained a Silver Award from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities for the good work of the project in educating young children and families about the benefits of growing, harvesting and eating fruits and vegetables”

“The Gate 55 Magic Woodland programme was successful in reaching families at the Centre who would not usually have regular access to woodland areas”

3.3 Comment
Overall, we can conclude that children and young people’s involvement played a big role in the majority of the projects as was the stated intention of the CSGN fund. The focus was on the 5-12 age group, with only a few projects involving 12-16 year olds. The latter is a difficult group to involve in environmental action especially out with school hours and groups would possibly benefit from specialist youth work support to do this effectively.

All but one of the funded groups had previous experience of working with children and/or young people and were confident about working with them. As CSGN wishes to increase the extent and range of these types of projects there may be opportunities to explore the development support needs of other less experienced and confident groups to enable them to contribute to CSGN activities and participate in similar funding programmes.
Case study 2: St Albert's Primary School

St Albert's Primary School, Pollokshields, Glasgow was awarded £3,000 to undertake development of their growing space to support learning, create produce for cooking and to promote healthy eating. The grant was used to purchase materials for three raised beds, compost bays, a herb spiral wheel and lectern mounts displaying research by the pupils.

“Our pupils were involved in all stages of the project from initial discussions with our Eco Committee, the pupil council, the staff and survey of pupils regarding their eating habits through to the actual building of the raised beds and compost bays. They will continue to be involved in the growing project through the work of the gardening club where they will be involved in adding more fruit and vegetable plants to the raised beds, producing the compost for the school as well as the care and maintenance of the garden area”

Local charity Urban Roots worked with the pupils and parents to build the raised beds for growing food which the school plans to use for cooking and/or sell in a mini farmers’ market to the school community. One or two of the raised beds will be used for growing wildflowers thus increasing biodiversity in the school grounds and helping to provide bees and hoverflies with a food source.

Urban Roots and the pupils also created three composting bays making it possible for the school to make its own compost rather than having to buy it every year for gardening work. Having the three composting bays also means that the school can re-use uncooked food from the dinner hall and packed lunches, as well as empty cardboard boxes, waste paper, grass cuttings, twigs and the plentiful supply of fallen leaves from the many trees in the grounds.

The lectern mounts with the children’s own research will further enhance learning about the natural world. The pupils will be researching and writing about the trees, plants, birds, herbs and other wildlife in the school grounds, the environmental problems they face, the medicinal qualities of the herbs trees and plants and some of the folklore connected with them and their other uses.

“I would encourage anyone to do a similar project to ours, as it develops new knowledge and skills in both adults and children who don’t have access to natural spaces or gardens of their own, as well as a sense of purpose and increased confidence in their own abilities. It is great team building work and further develops social skills in a relaxed outdoor setting. It also infuses children with joy and creates in them a sense of wonder and respect for the natural world”
4. Experience of greenspace projects and support received

We also asked groups if they had been involved in greenspace projects before the receipt of the CSGN grant and 10 groups (38%) told us they had no previous experience of greenspace projects. The group consisted mainly of Primary Schools and nurseries, but also an allotment group and a community initiative indicated that this was new to them.

We were interested to hear what if any support and advice the groups received to develop their projects and proposals for the CSGN Community Project Fund and from whom. Five groups (19%) told us they had received no support/advice, whereas 21 groups (81%) had received help from a variety of sources with Local Authority staff being the most frequently mentioned. Groups also received support from local and national environmental charities/consultancies and their local CVO or Housing Association. Some staff in the Primary Schools/nurseries had previously had forest kindergarten training or outdoor learning support.

5. Confidence in managing project activities and budgets

When asked before the project commenced how confident they were in their ability to manage project activities and budgets, most groups told us they were confident or very confident. The average score was 4.3 (with "1" meaning "not very confident and "5" meaning "very confident"). The scores ranged from 1 to 5, with median of 4.5 and mode of 5. Only one group gave themselves a "1" and two groups gave themselves a "3".

After the projects were delivered the average score had risen to an average 4.4 (median and mean both 5). Over one-third of groups increased their confidence rating (8 groups by 1 point and 2 groups by 2 points – these 2 groups where in the cohort receiving additional support, see Appendix 3). Surprisingly, 5 groups reduced their confidence score after completing their project. Further investigation would be required to understand the reasons for this: it may be that the groups forgot their pre-start score, or were initially over-confident (and/or provided the response on their initial rating that they thought the funder would want to hear), or developed a more realistic understanding of the challenges of this type of project and their capabilities as the project progressed.

A couple of groups mentioned that managing the budget had been a challenge and also that working with contractors could be difficult.

"Working with contractors has been a challenge as we found they were not always appearing as they had promised (due to wet weather hindering their work) and that became stressful as the deadline loomed"

"Managing the budget has been a challenge; so far, we are within budget and should have the remainder invoiced soon"

It should also be noted that although groups felt confident managing the project budget a lot did not manage to spend their full grant within the time-scale. This could possibly be avoided by being clearer on costs and about how long activities take to complete.
6. Challenges in delivering the projects

Prior to the projects commencing we asked the groups if they expected any challenges in delivering their projects. 10 groups (38%) did not foresee any challenges, but the other 16 (62%) were expecting challenges such as the weather coupled with the timing of the project and resources both in terms of volunteer time and finance. A couple of groups expressed concerns that their sites would be affected by anti-social behaviour (litter and vandalism). A nursery and a Primary School expected it to be challenging to engage enough parents in their projects. The nursery also mentioned the staff ratio requirement when leaving the nursery.

Post project we asked the groups again if they had experienced any challenges and how they had overcome them. As expected the weather had been a challenge for a lot of projects – preventing physical work taking place and volunteers and young people taking part in activities when planned. However, most had overcome this by re-scheduling and keeping CSGN informed of delays. “Legalities” and the local council were also mentioned as a challenge causing delay as was staff ratios and transport of younger children to sites. For the groups working with Secondary Schools the constraints of the timetable were a challenge.

Groups working across a whole community found it challenging to ensure that the needs of different groups were met. It was overcome through communication and being creative in the design of the site.

“The challenges were designing a garden that can meet the needs of a diverse group within the community. We needed safety and sufficient interest for 0-3 year olds as well as sufficient scope and protection of plants and vegetables that older members of the community can work on and be proud of. We overcame these challenges by communication with all partners and people in the community which allowed creativity in its design”

7. Green Network improvements

The groups were asked how their project improved the green network. The answers to this broad question were very varied, but most focused on physical interventions/creation of infrastructure and enhancement of biodiversity.

“The site was formerly a brown field area”

“The land was previously derelict and an eyesore, the new garden will be a pleasant green space where vegetables and other plants will grow”

“We have transformed a grassy piece of land into different and more interesting areas including: a wetland, a forest of 700+ trees”

“One or two of the raised beds will be used for growing wildflowers thus increasing biodiversity in the school grounds and helping to provide bees and hoverflies with a much needed food source”

“Before starting, our school grounds did not have any flowers to attract bees or butterflies. The grounds were mostly tarmac with the limited green space left unused. Now thanks to the CSGN grant we have been able to buy 7 raised beds – which now support both flowers and vegetables”

Some of the groups reported how the CSGN funding has enabled them to create social and attractive spaces that are easy to access for local people. This was achieved by installing pathways, clearing sites of litter and debris and planting wild flowers, trees and plants. Groups also marked their achievements by inviting everyone in the local communities open days and celebration events.
“The grant has enabled us to create a space which is accessible by all members of the community by installing pathways. The variety of plants we were able to purchase will create seasonal interest, attract and retain wildlife and create interest due to the variety of shapes, colours and textures.”

“The environment around our hall which is within an industrial/commercial area is already a more attractive place for work and fun as a result of this project and it will be more colourful and attractive when the wild flowers and plants are fully established.”

“As part of our local green network we have and will continue to create a more attractive environment around the hall and the local area and we have provided an opportunity for our group and local people to experience nature on their doorstep.”
Case study 3: Larbert and Stenhousemuir Environmental Response Group, Falkirk

Larbert and Stenhousemuir Environmental Response Group in Falkirk was awarded £3,000 to support pupils from Larbert High School to enhance a piece of ‘orphan’ land in the heart of Stenhousemuir Shopping Centre. The grant was used to purchase plants, seating and create onsite interpretation to encourage local people to explore nearby greenspaces and heritage.

“The pupils of Larbert High School were central to the project throughout. They consulted with the community at a special meeting on the site, they attended community council meetings and they reached people via the school website and twitter. They designed and managed the project throughout and took part in the delivery of every aspect of the project” says the Chair of the group, Alan Schofield

The Employment Training Unit of Falkirk Council delivered the construction work allowing the young trainees to gain new experience and deliver something local and community orientated.

The main challenges experienced by the group were around timing and weather. The secondary school timetable only allowed limited time for the pupils who were doing the planning and consultations and as delivery was dependant on many things coming together by way of material donations and organising/coordinating work the timeframe for the project was extended somewhat.

Weather at this time of year was also very restrictive for outdoor work: “we had work days cancelled and postponed. We overcome them by keeping the funder informed and extended timing discussions/agreements”.

When asked what advice the group would give others thinking about embarking on a similar project the enthusiasm is clear: “It is a challenge and is not easy but the results are worthwhile! The degree of satisfaction to see something from concept through to full delivery is amazingly satisfying and very rewarding. Be aware that plans may have to change and allow for a degree of flexibility and keep everyone informed. Use twitter to keep the community involved, it is a very effective way to communicate such projects”
8. Key learning for other groups
We asked the groups what advice they would give to other groups thinking of doing a similar project. The advice ranged from very practical advice relating to timescale and process to advice highlighting how worthwhile and beneficial for community the CSGN project was.

8.1 Be realistic about timescales
“Allow extra time and extra money as nothing seems to run to either your timescale or budget!”

The groups were keen to stress that others had to be aware that plans may have to change and to allow for a degree of flexibility and to keep everyone informed. It is important to plan the project well in advance and to keep things as simple as possible with tight control of finance. Working with schools requires a good lead in time in order to get all the pupils involved.

8.2 Practical advice
“The advice I would give to other groups is to always make sure approval has been given by local authority prior to carrying out any sort of project in the community”

The practical advice was very varied reflecting the many different projects the groups undertook. Advice included

- Cost all the work including installation
- Evidence the work carried out including photographs
- Ensure that storage facility has ample ventilation for airing and drying suits and clothing
- Start it as soon as possible as it can be difficult to carry out work due to the weather in winter
- We limited participation to slightly older children (P3 and up) and this was useful as well, as the work involved demands a certain level of concentration and commitment over several hours
- Make sure that you can get a large carved log seat onto site!
- Be very aware of Health and Safety issues as can be potentially dangerous

8.3 Get information out to the community
“Get information out to the community advising about the work being carried out”

Groups recommended publicising projects both before and after. Informing people what is going to happen could attract volunteers and also allow any concerns or issues to be raised by the wider community. Once completed it is a good idea to follow up with a press release or use of social media updating the public on what has been achieved.

“Use twitter to keep the community involved, it is a very effective way to communicate such projects”

8.4 Involve the community
“This was an easy project and we felt that it was a good one to get more local people interested in the Friends of Group as well as getting involved in the improvement of their Country Park”

Involving the wider community in the projects was important to most of the groups. If the project is planned thoroughly and groups make sure the community is invested in the project will mean there are plenty of volunteers to complete the work.

Groups highlighted how projects should involve families and the community to share ideas and skills and involve as many people as possible to get them to take pride in where they live. Getting the whole community involved and especially giving the young people a sense of ownership of their project means they will take an on-going interest in it.
8.5 Approach local businesses, local partners and charities

Many of the groups were successful in reaching out to local business, partners and other charities, both local and national for support, advice and further input. One group had donations from local farmers of old tractor tyres which were used as planters and for small children to climb in and out of. Another group was overwhelmed with amount of seeds the bee and butterfly charities provided them with. Other charities also provided volunteer input and hours to support the projects.

“We secured a donation of trees from the Woodland Trust and had secured volunteer input and assistance from the Council Voluntary Organisations GRAFT project team”

“That time spent planning and communicating with partners and key people in the community assures that a fit for purpose garden and green space is created and that interest is kept for all who would like to benefit from the green space”

8.6 The benefits are far greater than expected

“The benefits of this allotment are immeasurable from aiding people’s health by providing a place to grow food and exercise. This is also adding to the feeling of community spirit where people are meeting and befriending neighbours who would otherwise never get the chance”

The groups were pleased to see all sorts of benefits created by their projects, also sometimes benefits they were not expecting. Anecdotally, the health of people involved in the projects both physically and mentally saw an improvement and projects developed new knowledge and skills in both adults and children who had no access to natural spaces or gardens of their own.

By creating “learning by doing” tasks young people got a sense of purpose and increased confidence in their own abilities. It was also great team building work and further developed social skills in a relaxed outdoor setting.

“It is definitely worth doing. With the support from CSGN we have started a bit of a buzz in the school regarding the way we use the outdoors for learning. With the changes we have been able to make – we have opened up lots of outdoor learning opportunities that many children would otherwise not have had any experience off”

8.7 Just do it!

“The best advice would be to do it as I feel we have created a valuable community resource and a source of ecological education for our local children and young people”

The groups are very clear that despite challenges in the projects others should not give up at the first hurdle but try to find a solution and keep going. The degree of satisfaction in seeing something from concept through to full delivery is amazingly satisfying and very rewarding.

Others should apply for grants and funding that could support their project. Working with CSGN can be recommended:

“I would thoroughly encourage any group thinking about starting a project with CSGN help to do so. I have found CSGN easy to work with and they were always very helpful when I contacted them with any questions or queries”

Several groups also mention that they would be happy to share the knowledge and skills they have developed during the process with other groups.
Case study 4: Methilhill Community Children's Initiative, Fife

Methilhill Community Children's Initiative, Fife, was awarded £1,500 to transform a piece of waste ground into an outdoor learning garden for children and young people. A community survey in 2012 identified the need for clubs and activities and once created the garden will provide a location for schemes to encourage appreciation of nature and promote physical activity and well-being.

"The best advice would be to do it as I feel we have created a valuable community resource and a source of ecological education for our local children and young people" says Shirley, the manager of the project, but plan thoroughly and make sure the community is invested in the project which means plenty of volunteers to complete the work. Allow extra time and extra money as nothing seems to run to either your timescale or budget!"

The challenges experienced by the group were mainly related to delay in completing legalities to allow the physical development of the space. The group report tells us that the delay was useful in some ways in that it allowed more time for planning, however, it also meant that once the development began it was spring so the weeds grew fast!

Local children and young people have been involved in choosing and purchasing plants, laying the bark pathways and in the wall restoration. The project has assisted Methilhill Community Children's Initiative in developing a green space which the local community can access.

The learning space will offer opportunity to study nature, be active outside and learn socially as a community. The stone wall restoration is on-going and provides a source of knowledge and skills development for young people.
Appendix 1: CSGN Community Project Fund 2013/14

Projects which received awards (by CSGN Region)

Ayrshire

CPF13-01  Onthank Tenants and Residents Association, East Ayrshire has been awarded £1,500 to improve the entrances to Onthank and Mount Carmel Primary Schools and three further spaces in Onthank. The grant will be used to supply 16 large trees, timber planters and hanging baskets which the children will plant up.

CPF13-15  Onthank Tenants and Residents Association, East Ayrshire has been awarded £3,000 to work with children from Onthank Primary and Mount Carmel Schools to create designs for two planting areas based on the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. The grant will help with the purchase of plants, hanging baskets and tools.

CPF13-31  Galston Baby and Toddler Group, East Ayrshire has been awarded £2,975 to support Galston Wild Things, a project to create a wildflower garden from waste ground at the back of Barrmill Hall, complementing an earlier project. The grant will fund the construction of a path, storage and a water butt, topsoil, seeds and equipment for children and adults.

CPF13-12  Friends of the Plantation, North Ayrshire has been awarded £2,995 to work with local school children, Duke of Edinburgh Award participants and the community to plant several large trees in Holm Plantation, which links Ardrossan and Saltcoats.

CPF13-23  Friends of Eglinton, North Ayrshire has been awarded £3,000 to increase the length of hedgerows and associated habitats within Eglington Country Park, to increase biodiversity and to create a learning opportunity for local schools both through practical delivery and through curriculum activity. The grant will support the purchase of plants and compost.

CPF13-02  Newton Primary School Nursery Class, South Ayrshire has been awarded £1,514 to create a safe and natural environment where children attending the nursery can play and learn outdoors. The grant will be used to purchase timber planters, benches, storage and play features.

CPF13-08  Doonvale Nursery, South Ayrshire has been awarded £1,570 to develop a Secret Garden on a former orchard and allotment next to the Nursery. Having surveyed the garden and worked out what they would like to do, the children will be have waterproof clothing and tools to help them develop a new growing space.

No of projects supported: 7

Total grant offered: £16,554
Glasgow & Clyde valley

**CPF13-20 Merkland Local Nature Reserve Management Group**, East Dunbartonshire has been awarded £3,000 to install three carved log seats, one for each of the local primary schools, at key sites in the Reserve. Pupils will be involved in the design of each seat and will have opportunities for outdoor learning and play as part of the development process.

**CPF13-21 Cairnhill Woods Group**, East Dunbartonshire has been awarded £3,000 to create a wood sculpture trail through the woodland. Children from Westerton Primary School will help to design the sculptures and carved timber seats and will have opportunities for outdoor learning and play as part of the development process.

**CPF13-03 Germiston Allotments**, Glasgow has been awarded £1,600 to buy equipment and seeds to improve this newly created allotment site. The activities will involve children from the local primary school which also has a plot and the children and grandchildren of other plot holders.

**CPF13-18 St Albert's Primary School**, Glasgow has been awarded £3,000 to undertake further development of their growing space to support learning, create produce for cooking and to promote healthy eating. The grant will be used to purchase materials for three raised beds, a compost bay, an herb spiral wheel, a polytunnel, water butt and tools.

**CPF13-32 Eastfield Primary School**, North Lanarkshire has been awarded £1,503 to improve the green space within the school boundary in order to develop the children's awareness of nature and biodiversity by giving every class a growing space and by building a bog garden. The grant will be used to buy timber for raised beds, a cold frame, compost, a bird box with camera and bird feeders.

**CPF13-05 Ferguslie Pre-five Centre Dragon's Allotments**, Renfrewshire has been awarded £1,992 to further develop a piece of waste ground which the community has begun to transform into a growing space and outdoor learning area. Local children have already identified the possibility of growing and selling vegetables from the garden to encourage the use of seasonal, locally grown food. The grant will be used to purchase waterproofs and wellington boots.

**CPF13-10 Eadha Enterprises**, Renfrewshire has been awarded £1,501 to create an Aspen Grove, a place for outdoor learning, on a piece of vacant land in Lochwinnoch. Children from Lochwinnoch Primary School and local volunteers will help create the Grove. The grant will be used to purchase trees, plants and bulbs and materials for a planting event in early 2014.

**CPF13-30 Kirklandpark Primary School Parent Council**, South Lanarkshire has been awarded £2,250 to create a market garden in the grounds of the school. The Strathaven in Bloom group will work with pupils throughout the project and volunteers from Strathaven Academy will also help out. The grant will go
towards the purchase of a polytunnel, compost bins, water butts, tools and seeds.

**CPF13-11**  
**Linvale Primary Eco Group**, West Dunbartonshire has been awarded £3,000 for its Diamonds Grassland project on part of the grounds of the Primary School in Clydebank. The grant will be used to install entrance features, a willow den and tunnel, a fire pit and to buy bird feeders, tools and water proofs, so the children can help in the creation and maintenance of the garden.

**No of projects supported**: 9  
**Total grant offered**: £20,846

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**Central**

**CPF13-09**  
**Larbert and Stenhousemuir Environmental Response Group**, Falkirk has been awarded £3,000 to support pupils from Larbert High School to enhance a piece of 'orphan' land in the heart of Stenhousemuir Shopping Centre. The grant will be used to purchase plants, seating and create onsite interpretation to encourage local people to explore nearby greenspaces and heritage.

**CPF13-22**  
**Carron Dams Local Management Group** and **The Scottish Wildlife Trust**, Falkirk have been awarded £1,980 to install two interpretation panels to tell the unique story of the Carron Dams Local Nature Reserve. Children and staff from the adjacent Larbert High School are already regular users of the site and will help with the development of the design and content of the boards.

**CPF13-27**  
**Westquarter Wildlife Group**, Falkirk has been awarded £1,551 to engage with 8 local teenagers in hands-on work to improve the amenity and wildlife value of the Westquarter Glen. The grant will fund a storage shed, hand tools and personal protective equipment.

**CPF13-33**  
**St. Bernadette's School, Natural Play Group**, Falkirk has been awarded £2,700 to build a bespoke shed as part of its Power of Play Project featuring planting along the roofline and a rain garden to catch run-off from the roof. Pupils have been involved in the design of the project and the school is keen to share with others its experiences of natural play.

**No of projects supported**: 4  
**Total grant offered**: £9,231
Lothians & Fife

CPF13-13 *Friends of Montgomery Street Park*, Edinburgh has been awarded £1,500 to employ a graffiti artist to work with local primary school children to design and paint a mural on an unsightly electrical substation as part of a clean-up and activity day in the Park.

CPF13-26 *Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust*, Edinburgh has been awarded £2,873 to transform a Millennium Woodland next to the Gate 55 community hub in Westerhailes into a Magical Woodland. The funding will support, predominantly volunteer delivered, woodland management, path improvements and planting of hedgerows and bulbs. A number of parent/toddler groups, children’s groups and the local school will all be involved in the project.

CPF13-29 *Gorgie City Farm*, Edinburgh has been awarded £1,740 to create an African Key-hole Garden. The Garden will be constructed by the Farm’s Nature Detectives and will be centrally located to encourage learning and engagement in it by visiting schools and families. The grant will be used to buy tools, materials and site signage.

CPF13-04 *Methilhill Community Children’s Initiative*, Fife has been awarded £1,500 to transform a piece of waste ground into an outdoor learning garden for children and young people. A community survey in 2012 identified the need for clubs and activities and once created the garden will provide a location for schemes to encourage appreciation of nature and promote physical activity and well-being.

CPF13-06 *Fife Muslim Educational and Cultural Centre* has been awarded £3,000 to develop a food growing project on a piece of vacant land with the produce used in the children’s club and an old people’s lunch club. The grant will be used to hire a driver and digger to prepare the site ready for planting.

CPF13-24 *CLEAR Buckhaven*, Fife has been awarded £3,000 to plant 22 large trees and install bird, bat and bug boxes in a number of green spaces around Buckhaven. Local primary schools and a parent-and-child group are all keen to participate in the project. The grant will be used to buy trees, stakes and equipment.

**No of projects supported: 6**

**Total grant offered: £13,613**
Appendix 2: Case studies prepared by the Big Partnership

1. Gorgie City Farm Creates Outdoor Learning Garden

Gorgie City Farm in Edinburgh has created an African style keyhole garden for the benefit of the local community following a recent funding award of £1,740 from the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Community Projects Fund.

The farm received the financial backing to support youth groups in the design, planning, construction, planting and maintenance of the garden. The innovative design in the shape of a keyhole incorporates a central basket where compostable waste is placed and permeates the surrounding vegetables, providing the crops with organic nutrients.

Located in a built up and densely populated area of Edinburgh, the keyhole garden has contributed to enhancing the greenspace in the city.

The Nature Detectives youth group was involved in the research, planning and design and the landscaping was completed by 20 young people from Big Hearts Community Trust. Visiting school and nursery children then took part in sowing seeds and planting crops in the garden.

Tracy Cudworth, Community Garden Project Manager at Gorgie City Farm, said: “The new garden has become a key feature of education tours around the farm, where people are encouraged to replicate the ideas demonstrated in the garden around sustainability and the solutions found to horticultural challenges in other countries around the world.

“It provides a highly engaging and attractive feature for learning about biodiversity and as the garden matures it will become a focus for exploring issues of healthy eating and local community growing.”

2. Methilhill Community Children’s Initiative Creates Outdoor Learning Garden

Methilhill Community Children’s Initiative in Fife has created an outdoor learning garden for the benefit of local children and young people following a recent funding award of £1,500 from the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Community Projects Fund.

Methilhill Community Children’s Initiative received the financial support to transform a piece of waste ground into an outdoor learning garden to provide a greenspace resource for the local community. The new learning space offers the opportunity to engage with nature and encourages physical activity and community spirit.

The installation of pathways in the design of the space means it is accessible to all members of the community and the variety of plants purchased will create seasonal interest in the site and will help to attract biodiversity.

Shirley Faichney from Methilhill Community Children’s Initiative said: “Local children and young people have been involved in the creation of the learning space from choosing the plants to laying the bark pathways and restoring the wall. We have created a valuable community resource and source of ecological education for our local children and young people.”
3. Friends of the Plantation Increases Tree Planting in Holm Plantation

Friends of the Plantation has increased tree planting in Holm Plantation which links Ardrossan and Saltcoats following a recent funding award of £2,995 from the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Community Projects Fund.

Friends of the Plantation received the financial support to continue a programme of planting more trees in Holm Plantation through working with local school children, Duke of Edinburgh Award participants and the community.

Pupils from Ardrossan Academy and St Matthew's Academy planted 26 trees with assistance from North Ayrshire Council’s Streetscene team and members of Friends of the Plantation.

Peter McNamara, Chair of Friends of the Plantation, said: “Not only has the funding helped us to continue our tree planting programme in North Ayrshire but it also helped to engage young people in the environment, getting them involved in planting and educating them about tree species.”

4. Doonvale Nursery Creates Outdoor Learning Space

Doonvale Nursery in South Ayrshire has created an outdoor learning space following a recent funding award of £1,570 from the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Community Projects Fund.

Doonvale Nursery received the financial support to develop its ‘Secret Garden’ on the site of a former orchard and allotment next to the nursery.

The funding was used to purchase waterproof clothing for the children, tools to help them develop the new growing space and a dry storage facility for drying the waterproof clothing. The nursery children were involved in all aspects of the project, ensuring the correct conditions were created for wildlife, and planting the fruit and vegetables.

Arnie Cartwright, Owner and Manager at Doonvale Nursery, said: “The waterproof clothing is great and allows children to use the new space in all weather conditions, supporting a healthy lifestyle. The new garden also brings multiple benefits for the children, encouraging outdoor learning and natural play and inspiring them to engage with nature through the provision of bird boxes, bat roosts and hedgehog shelters.”

5. Linnvale Primary Eco Group Creates Outdoor Learning Garden

Linnvale Primary Eco Group in Clydebank has transformed a piece of grassy land into an outdoor learning garden following a recent funding award of £3,000 from the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Community Projects Fund.

Linnvale Primary Eco Group received the financial support to upgrade the space on the grounds of the primary school in Clydebank in order to engage pupils in nature and the outdoors, through the creation of an outdoor learning environment.

The CSGN funding was used to install entrance features and a learning circle and to create a wetland area and a forest of over 700 trees. The group also planted wild flowers and bulbs and purchased bird feeders and bird houses, as well as waterproof clothing and tools, in order that the pupils could help in the creation and maintenance of the garden.
Carol Guthrie, Class Teacher at Linnvale Primary School, said: "The project has been fantastic in providing shelter for wildlife and food supplies for insects and birds, to encourage biodiversity and it not only involved the pupils in the creation of the space, engaging them with nature and the outdoors, but it has also resulted in a valuable outdoor learning resource for the school."

6. Eastfield Primary School Creates Outdoor Learning Garden

Eastfield Primary School has upgraded the greenspace within the school boundary to create an outdoor learning environment for pupils, following a recent funding award of £1,503 from the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Community Projects Fund.

The school has transformed the space to include raised beds which provide a growing space for each class, as well as bird boxes and bird feeders. The pupils have been involved throughout the process, helping to develop their awareness of nature and biodiversity and encouraging them to think about growing food and healthy eating.

Carol Stewart, Eco Coordinator at Eastfield Primary School, said: "The new outdoor learning garden is fantastic, providing the children with the chance to understand nature and the environment. The pupils have all commented on the increase in small birds now coming into the school grounds and they are very excited about the buddleja plants which are an excellent source of food for bees and butterflies."

7. Germiston Allotments Makes Improvements

Germiston Allotment Association in Glasgow has upgraded its newly created allotment site for the benefit of local children following a recent funding award of £1,600 from the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Community Projects Fund.

Germiston Allotments received the financial support to buy equipment and seeds to improve the allotments. Located on a former brownfield site which lacked suitable cultivation conditions, the purchase of new tools enabled the removal of vegetation from the area’s perimeter and the preparation of the soil for planting, as well as the purchase of 175 established bushes which provide shelter for the exposed site.

The allotments involve children from the local primary school which has a plot, as well as the children and grandchildren of other plot holders, helping to educate the youngsters on the benefits of eating healthy produce and of engaging in outdoor activities.

Stephen Blair at Germiston Allotments, said: "The benefits of this allotment are immeasurable from aiding people’s health by providing a place to grow food and excercise in to creating a feeling of community spirit by allowing people the opportunity to meet and befriend their neighbours."
Appendix: 3 The CSGN Community Projects Fund – support programme

This was the third round of CSGN Community Project funding. The fund opened for applications on 16 September and closed on 28 October 2013. Following a judging process on 11 November, and letters of grant offer were issued to the successful projects from 13 November.

In a parallel process, Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) asked greenspace scotland to prepare a proposal for providing support to Community Fund grant recipients. greenspace scotland established a consortium (consisting of greenspace scotland, Grounds for Learning, Play Scotland, TCV Scotland and Youth Scotland) to develop the proposal and a grant application was submitted by greenspace scotland to FCS on 30 October 2013. A grant offer was received from FCS on 14 November 2013 which greenspace scotland accepted on behalf of the Consortium.

This section of the report describes and reviews the advice and support given by the consortium to a selected group of CSGN Community fund grant recipients. The review is based on feedback from supported groups and consortium partners.

1.1 Advice and support programme

As the consortium was not awarded funding until after the community grants had already been started to be issued to community groups, it was necessary to make a slight change to the process set out in the grant application and proposal. The consortium’s proposal had set out a scheme whereby groups would receive an outline of support and advice which could be provided and they would be able to ‘opt-in’ through submitting a ‘request for support’ form. Instead the CSGN Community Projects Fund judges assessed all the awarded schemes and based on their knowledge of the projects, they identified 8 projects which they felt could benefit from support to better involve/benefit children and young people.

The Consortium agreed to work with groups that were prepared to accept an offer of external support. For the groups identified by the judges, receipt of grant was not contingent on accepting the offer of support.

Following a triage process by greenspace scotland and discussion with the support organisations each partner was allocated one or more community groups to support/advise. When working with groups partners were able to bring in support from other consortium partners if relevant and/or signpost to other relevant support organisations locally and nationally.

1.2 Supported projects

One of the 8 projects identified by CSGN declined their funding award due to personal circumstances and left the process. Another project did not take up the offer of support, so a total of 6 projects were supported by the consortium.

- **Fife Muslim Centre (Glenrothes)**
  The Fife Muslim Centre was awarded £3,000 to develop a food growing project on a piece of vacant land planning to use the produce used in the children’s club and an old people’s lunch club. The grant was used to hire a driver and digger to prepare the site ready for planting.
Friends of the Plantation (Ardrossan & Saltcoats)
Friends of the Plantation was awarded £2,995 to work with local school children, Duke of Edinburgh Award participants and the community to plant several large trees in Holm Plantation, which links Ardrossan and Saltcoats.

Merklands Local Nature Park (Kirkintilloch)
Merklands Local Nature Park was awarded £3,000 to install three carved log seats, one for each of the local primary schools, at key sites in the Reserve. Pupils were involved in the design of each seat and were given opportunities for outdoor learning and play as part of the development process.

Cairnhill Woods Group (Westerton, Bearsden)
Cairnhill Woods Group was awarded £3,000 to create a wood sculpture trail through the woodland. Children from Westerton Primary School helped design the sculptures and carved timber seats and were given opportunities for outdoor learning and play as part of the development process.

Westquarter Wildlife Group (Falkirk)
Westquarter Wildlife Group was awarded £1,551 to engage with 8 local teenagers in hands-on work to improve the amenity and wildlife value of the Westquarter Glen. The grant funded a storage shed, hand tools and personal protective equipment.

CLEAR Buckhaven
CLEAR Buckhaven was awarded £3,000 to plant 22 large trees and install bird, bat and bug boxes in a number of greenspaces around Buckhaven. Local primary schools and a parent-child group were involved in the project. The grant was used to buy trees, stakes and equipment.

1.3 Summary of support provided
Groups were allocated support following a triage process based on the information provided in the CSGN application form and the support organisations in the consortium outlining the type of support/advice they were able to offer.

1.3.1 Fife Muslim Centre
Fife Muslim Centre was offered support from Play Scotland as it was felt the group could benefit from support to develop strategies to effectively involve children and young people in the garden project.

However, when Play Scotland met with the group’s representatives it became clear that were not yet at the stage of involving children and young people in the planning. Instead the group asked for support to identify further funding that would allow them to utilise the garden area more fully. They were willing to take advice on the set up of the garden area and to be put in touch with advisors that might be able to support this. They were also open to developing the garden into an area suitable for community use, rather than the regimented raised bed plan that they had first thought of.

Subsequently, Play Scotland identified two funding streams that the group would be eligible for and contacted Grounds for Learning to explore what advice they could give the group on the developing the garden area. The group was encouraged to make links to the local CVS. Through greenspace scotland potential links to Faith in Community Scotland were explored, but unfortunately there is no development work taking place in Fife. There was however a chance for the group to apply to the Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund, which they were made aware of. Play Scotland also assisted the group in reporting to CSGN at the end of the project.
1.3.2 Friends of the Plantation
Youth Scotland assisted Friends of the Plantation. Discussions with the group showed that they were already well-advanced in involving every aspect of the local community. However, as a result of a meeting on site with two group members and North Ayrshire Council’s Environmental Liaison officer, Youth Scotland agreed to fund the delivery of Dynamic Youth Awards accreditation for involvement of young people and to help develop the group’s youth work approach.

The group was also signposted to other grant opportunities that would support increased involvement of young people and a youth work approach, and the accreditation of the achievements of young people that were already engaged with the Plantation project.

1.3.3 Merklands Local Nature Park and Cairnhill Woods Group
Merklands Local Nature Park and Cairnhill Woods Group were both supported by TCV Scotland. The support to the Merklands Group included help with drainage work for the pathway through the woodland. Support for the Cairnhill Woods Group took the form of a training session for staff at the nearby Westerton Primary School.

The training for the staff at Westerton Primary school aimed at building the capacity of all staff at the school to use the local woodland as a space for environmental education and as a place for connecting children to their local greenspace. It is hoped that the staff will build knowledge and skills in delivering learning activities connected to the curriculum using nature and natural materials as teaching aids and Cairnhill Woods as an outdoor classroom.

1.3.4 Westquarter Wildlife Group
Westquarter Wildlife Group wanted to work more closely with two primary schools nearby, but were not quite sure how. Grounds for Learning were, therefore, chosen to support the project.

After discussions with the group, Grounds for Learning delivered a half day workshop in the woods within the Glen attended by two members of the Westquarter Wildlife Group, a trainee Ranger with Falkirk Council, two teaching staff (one from each school) and twelve P6 pupils (six from each school).

The workshop focussed on a series of practical play and learning activities that could easily be adapted for children of different ages and were also replicable for the children to undertake with family and friends if they visit the Glen in the evenings or during the weekend. The activities were based around making use of, and connecting with, the natural environment rather than being heavily reliant on resources carried from school.

The workshop was followed up with additional advice, support and resources emailed to all the adults who attended focussing on risk benefit assessment in natural settings, further activity ideas, communicating with parents, behaviour management techniques, useful resources to carry etc.

1.3.5 CLEAR Buckhaven
CLEAR Buckhaven applied to the CSGN Community Project Fund for a project focusing on planting semi-mature trees along key paths and in one of the town’s greenspaces. In addition, the project involved building bird and bat boxes to put up in trees already on the sites. greenspace scotland helped CLEAR Buckhaven to highlight how the project actively links to the already established programme of work with children and young people in the town.

During term time the two part time members of staff run weekly environmental sessions with Buckhaven Primary School and Buckhaven High. In addition to working with young people through the schools, CLEAR has also established links to the Youth Club and the out of school club of Buckhaven Primary and St. Agatha’s Primary. It has been more challenging
to get activities underway as adult to child ratios restrict outdoor activities for these groups, but creative solutions are being sought.

It was also suggested that the next step for CLEAR in terms of involving young people in its work is to involve them in the research, design, activities and maintenance of the planned community wildlife garden at Starkis Wood. This will increase their feeling of ownership and engagement.

1.4 Feedback from support organisations and groups supported

Feedback from both the groups supported and the support consortium partners was generally positive. The feedback can be clustered under the following headings:

1.4.1 Selection and support process

The groups were not made aware that further support could accompany an offer of grant during the application phase, so when the 8 projects were chosen for support to involve children and young people, they were surprised. Groups also felt it was unclear what the criteria for the selection was and were unsure why they had been "singled out".

One group told us that when they applied they had a well-worked up plan; they had done it twice before and so by the time they got the grant they knew exactly what they would be doing. In their opinion any offers of advice and support would be more useful in the development /pre-application stage in the future.

1.4.2 Timescales

The timescale for providing the support/advice was very short and included the Christmas period. This put pressure on groups that wanted to involve external partners in training sessions such as school teachers and some of the support had to be postponed to a more suitable time for everyone.

1.4.3 Support activities

All the groups supported found the advice, guidance and training they received useful. For all groups it was a positive experience to make links with a national intermediary and to be able to tap into information and resources available.

3 of the 6 groups reported an increase in their confidence in managing project activities and budgets, compared to one-third of ‘unsupported’ groups (assessed using pre- and post-project self-completion questionnaires on a scale of 1 to 5, with "1" meaning "not very confident" and "5" meaning "very confident"). Two of the supported groups reported an increase in confidence of 2 points on the scale – the only groups in the programme to do this.

In some cases, it was difficult to assist the groups to involve children and young people in their current projects to a higher degree. This was either because children/young people were already very involved (but groups hadn’t communicated this) or the project planning was already well underway. However, the training/advice given will make a positive impact on any new projects the groups undertake.

Using a similar assessment scale, 2 of the 6 groups reported an increase in their confidence in working with children and young people (only 2 other groups in the programme reported an increase) and one of the ‘supported’ groups reported an increase in confidence of 2 points on the scale – the only group in the programme to do this.

One group reduced their confidence rating for both working with children and young people and managing projects activities and budgets. The support partner suggests this is because
the group developed a more realistic understanding of the challenges of this type of project and their capabilities as the project progressed.

**Case study 5: Friends of the Plantation**

Friends of the Plantation, North Ayrshire was awarded £2,995 to work with local school children, Duke of Edinburgh Award participants and the community to plant several large trees in Holm Plantation, which links Ardrossan and Saltcoats.

Pupils from the Ardrossan & St. Matthews Academies learned about the different species of trees about to be planted and helped with digging the holes, planting the 26 mature trees and back filling with compost etc. they were assisted by North Ayrshire Council's Streetscene team and members of Friends of the Plantation.

Through the CSGN support programme Youth Scotland had discussions with Friends of the Plantation. As a result of a meeting on site with two group members and North Ayrshire Council's Environmental Liaison officer, Youth Scotland agreed to fund the delivery of Dynamic Youth Awards accreditation for involvement of young people and to help develop the groups youth work approach.

The group was also signposted to other grant opportunities that would support increased involvement of young people and a youth work approach, and the accreditation of the achievements of young people that were already engaged with the Plantation project.
1.5 Learning points and recommendations

The review highlighted a number of learning points which has led the support consortium to suggest the following recommendations should CSGN wish to offer support to applicants of future grant funds.

**Learning point 1:** Due to the timing issues described previously, several groups expressed surprise that they had been “singled out” for support as this was not mentioned as part of the application process that groups might be offered support.

**Recommendation:**
- Make it clear in any future grant application information provided to groups that support might be offered to them to improve their projects or take into account the specific focus of the funding (in this case children and young people)
- An “opt in process” at pre-application stage could be more empowering for the community groups and could lead to more effective projects being funded

**Learning point 2:** Groups were happy with the support/advice they received and will be able to use their new skills and knowledge in future projects.

**Recommendation:** A capacity building/support programme running in parallel to a grant scheme could result in higher quality projects in the long term, but might not have a significant and immediate impact on projects already funded and underway.

**Learning point 3:** The support agencies enjoyed their contact with the groups and the intelligence it gave them in terms of innovative and exciting projects taking place.

“I really enjoyed my interaction with the Wildlife group, and with the two schools involved. Our support was very positively received and it’s clear the group are working hard to enthuse and engage the community with the Glen”

**Recommendation:** All of the partners expressed an interest in willingness in working with CSGNT and partners to develop further programmes of advice, support and capacity building.

**Learning Point 4:** In two cases the support allowed for training sessions with staff from local primary schools which leads to confidence in using “outdoor class room approaches”

**Recommendation:** A lot of local groups would like to establish better links to their local primary schools and help teachers use the outdoors, but they do not have sufficient capacity or knowledge to train the teachers themselves. Setting up a flexible training programme where local groups and primary school staff can learn together as part of the grant fund would address this.

**Learning point 5:** The timescale for providing support was very tight; the groups were busy delivering the funded project and it was hard to bring external partners together within the timescale.

**Recommendation:** The best time for support and advice is not when the groups have planned a project and submitted a grant application to support this project to happen. It would be more effective if groups were supported in the planning process and would allow for incorporating sessions with external partners at a mutually suitable time.
1.6  Support programme - overall recommendation

We would suggest that a capacity building and support programme is structured so that groups are given an offer of project planning support in the pre-application phase of the grant programme. The outcome of this support will then form part of their application to the grant fund and should ensure a high quality of applications.

Appendix 4: Support consortium partners

greenspace scotland (lead)
5 Alpha Centre, Stirling University Innovation Park Stirling FK9 4NF
Email: info@greenspacescotland.org.uk
Website: http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/

Grounds for Learning
c/o KSB, 1st Floor Glendevon House, Castle Business Park, Stirling FK9 4TZ
Email: gfl@ltl.org.uk
Website: http://www.ltl.org.uk/scotland/

TCV in Scotland
Balallan House, 24 Allan Park, Stirling, FK8 2QG
Email: scotland@tcv.org.uk
Website: http://www.tcv.org.uk/scotland

Play Scotland
Midlothian Innovation Centre, Pentlandfield, Roslin, Midlothian EH25 9RE
Email: info@playscotland.org
Website: http://www.playscotland.org/contact/

Youth Scotland
Balfour House, 19 Bonnington Grove, Edinburgh, EH6 4BL
Email: office@youthscotland.org.uk
Website: http://www.youthscotland.org.uk/home.htm