



Empowering our communities

**National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces
[UK]**



How can local park users and their communities be fully involved in their green space as real partners?

The experience of the Friends Groups' movement throughout the UK ...



A vibrant grassroots movement

- Community self-organisation
volunteering and action
- 7,000 local Friends of Parks
Groups
*all over the UK but particularly concentrated
in urban areas, such as those shown*
- A National Federation
co-ordinating and representing the movement



Community action

- what can park users do to help?

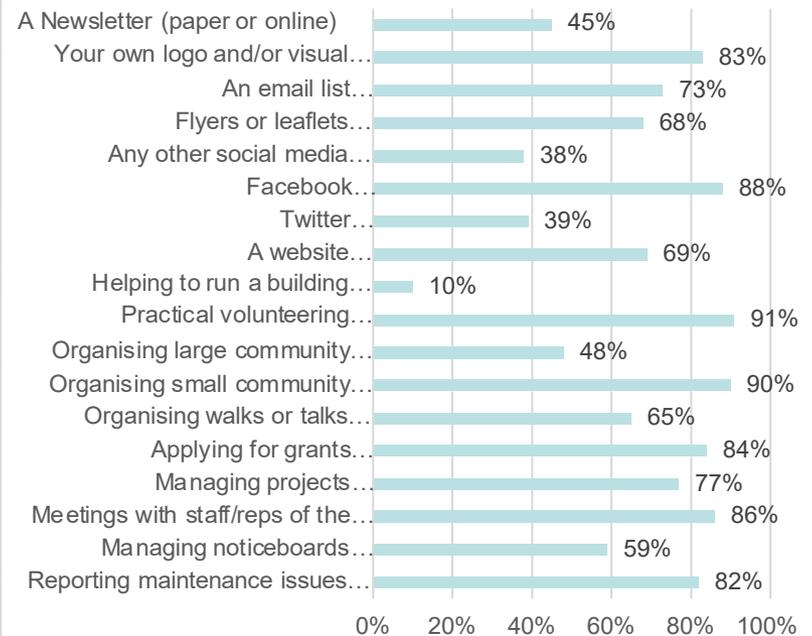
Acción comunitaria: ¿qué pueden hacer los usuarios del parque para ayudar?

- A wide range of activities
 - Daily eyes and ears
 - Better promotion
 - Organising events
 - Help with maintenance
 - Access to extra funding and expertise
 - Ideas and vision for improvements
 - Help to protect green space
 - Strong community voice

A strong and active Friends Group may be able to do all of that – and more!



What Friends Groups do



Community action

How can we ensure it makes a real difference?

- Strong, independent community organisation
- Good connection with park users and the local communities
- Good relations with managers
- Remember every group, every community and every green space has its own history and character

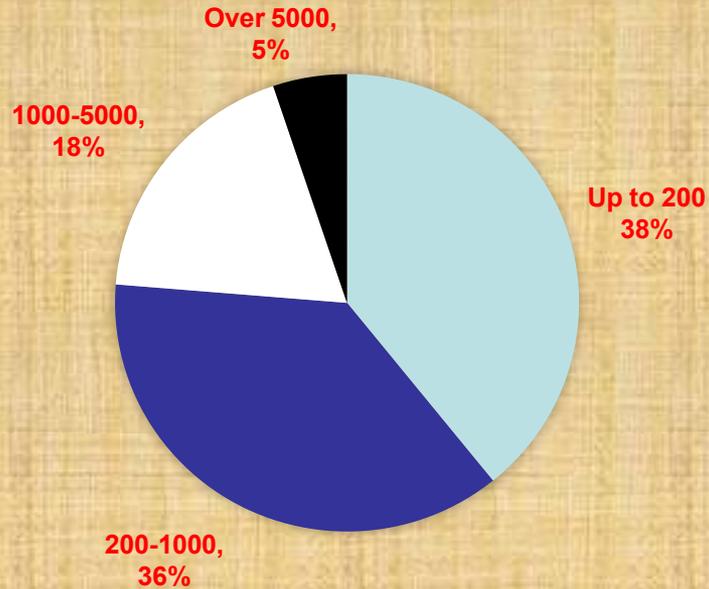


Partnership with Management

- Friends Groups need encouragement, support, and access to guidance and training
- Equipment, meeting and storage space
- Good communication and collaboration
- Mutual respect and understanding
- Spread good practice
- Develop popular and realistic vision
- Celebrate achievements



GROUP HOURS OF VOLUNTEERING PER YEAR



Huge benefits of 'Friends Groups'

- For volunteers and members

- For green space

- For managers

- For communities



Facing the challenges together

- Underfunding and falling budgets
- Community cohesion and involvement
- Improvements and adaptation needed
- Protection from inappropriate development

A BBC mini-documentary on some of the challenges:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yjvb9MxxDrw>

Community involvement and empowerment is essential for greenspace - now and in the future



THE UK FRIENDS GROUPS MOVEMENT: CO-ORDINATION, REPRESENTATION & SERVICES



THE MOVEMENT

- 7,000 local Friends Groups
- 70 Area Friends Forums

NFPGS PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

Key community-facing partners

- Keep Britain Tidy (Green Flag / Love Parks)
- Fields In Trust
- The Conservation Volunteers
- Groundwork UK
- The Gardens Trust
- National Federation of Cemetery Friends

Other national greenspace organisations include:

- National Trust
- Association for Public Service Excellence
- Parks Management Forum
- Countryside Management Association
- Local Government Association
- Key Cities
- Natural England
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Future Parks
- Greenspace Scotland
- Natural Resources Wales
- Llais y Goedwig
- Woodland Trust
- The Wildlife Trusts
- British Association of Landscape Industries
- Landscape Institute
- Social Farms and Gardens
- Parks and Green Spaces APPG (Westminster)
- Open Spaces Society
- Town & Country Planning Association
- Trees for Cities
- Campaign to Protect the Rural Environment
- ParkRun
- Grassroots Football

Cross-sector alliances

- Parks and Green Spaces Network
- Parks Action Group (currently on hold)

National (and global?) co-ordination

- **Organising nationally**

- Supporting the grassroots
- Community voice
- Raising public profile
- Promoting standards
- Liaison with Sector
- Lobbying Government
- Charter for Parks



- **Can we develop international links and collaboration - through the World Urban Parks network?**



Further info...



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