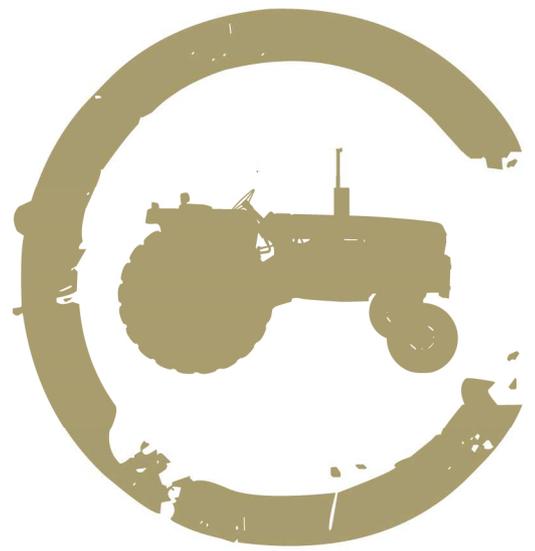


SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



Community Supported Woodlands and Hedges

Wood fuel and other benefits from small woodlands and hedges
A Tool-kit for Communities - v1.0 July 2013

Chapter 9: Building or buying-in skills and competencies

Prepared by Kate Royston and Dave Readman (Cotna)
Robbee Smole Sustainable Business Solutions
For Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



CORDIALE was selected under the European Cross-border Cooperation Programme INTERREG IV A France (Channel) – England, co-funded by the ERDF.

Robbee Smole
Sustainable Business Solutions

TamarValley
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Chapter 9 Building or buying-in skills and competencies

The group and its members may be missing some necessary expertise to undertake all their required tasks. Thought should be given as to how and where to build the group's skills and competencies, and when to 'buy-in' needed expertise.

Skills will be needed to initially survey the woodland / hedge and develop a management plan. A list of relevant contacts and organisations can be found in the appendices. The landowner may also be a useful contact, and these skills may also be a role offered by a support hub.

9.1 Building the group's own skills and competencies

Practical skills can be developed through individual's participation in local training courses and workshops. These may be offered by organisations such as local Wildlife Trusts, Rural Skills college (e.g. Duchy College in Cornwall), specialist hedge groups such as the Devon Hedge Group (<http://www.devonhedges.org/DevonHedges.pdf>) and rural skills trusts, such as that in Devon. The Small Woods Association also run courses nationally (<http://win.smallwoods.org.uk>).

In any woodlands or hedge group it will be useful to have a trained chainsaw operator. Other useful skills to get work started include basic hand tool use and maintenance, tree and species identification, tree felling and coppicing.

9.2 Getting the jobs done that the group can't manage [yet!]

Some tasks may be too specialised or demanding for the community group. It is therefore worthwhile developing a local network of helpful contractors who understand the group and its working methods. Such contractors will need to charge for their services but this should be seen as a necessary development of the wood or hedge resource that will have a longer-term benefit to the group.

As an example, a tree surgeon may be needed to climb up and make safe dead limbs overhanging a path; the cut wood will be available to the group and is ready cut and seasoned. By sharing the cost of the contractor within the group this is an affordable way of getting a difficult job done and getting a further supply of firewood at cost price.

Other jobs may be suitable for a digger and driver that require payment. However, this can make a huge difference in a very short space of time e.g. for easier access to the woodland or hedgerow and to free the group's time for other tasks.