

## The Green Valleys Community Interest Company



Across our region, in many different communities, groups are achieving significant results in reducing carbon emissions and fossil fuel dependency, delivering environmental improvements and creating better places to live. The Green Valleys believe that if we work together we can share these successes, develop better projects and quickly achieve significant and lasting benefits across all our communities.

We share common challenges and a shared belief that we must all act, but can sometimes feel isolated, daunted by the challenges ahead or simply unable to identify the best way forward. It need not be this way. The ideas and enthusiasm of our communities are extremely effective and are capable of achieving real results. But sometimes, we all need a bit of support, some advice, a helping hand or a bit of reassurance. What better way to provide this support than by sharing our successes, our ideas and our solutions between ourselves?

So, we are inviting groups to join us as Members of The Green Valleys. The strength of local and independent groups is beyond question but this is an opportunity to bring those local groups together to become part of something larger.

By working together, we believe that we will become stronger, more capable and better able to deliver lasting benefits to communities across our region.

### **What does becoming a Member Group mean?**

- Your group will become a key part of our wider network of other Member groups.
- Membership has no cost and groups will not incur any financial liabilities for becoming a Member.
- Member groups retain their independence, with you own constitutions and governance are still free to plan and deliver whatever projects you think are most important for your community. It is this strength that The Green Valleys feel is important to share, not to take away.
- Member groups will be encouraged to share ideas and benefit from the skills and experiences of other groups.
- Groups will play a central role in developing the group membership and the support services from The Green Valleys
- Many groups brought together under with a single purpose can be more successful in affecting change, such as lobbying for local services.

The following benefits are also available to Member Groups:

- Each group is registered as a Member of the Community Interest Company, which entitles the group to a vote at General Meetings.
- Access to the Members Group area of The Green Valleys website, which will

entitle you to download various written materials and guidance available only to member groups.

- Direct email and phone access to The Green Valleys staff for advice and support
- Access for your group to display within the exhibition space of The Green Valleys at various events, such as country shows.
- Your group may borrow tools, video equipment and other items owned by The Green Valleys.
- Access to The Green Valleys image database and free use of these images for your groups' own website leaflets etc.
- Input into the direction and services provided by The Green Valleys via specific Member Group events
- Your group can use The Green Valleys logo, a brand associated with successful projects

### **Community woodland group services**

The Green Valleys also offers specific technical services to community groups that undertake woodland management.

- Training for new groups covering safety and woodland management skills
- Preparation of site management plans
- Assistance with securing Felling Licenses and other basic permissions
- For existing groups, access to The Green Valleys staff for a minimum 1 day each year to cover issues requested by the group such as a safety refresher, help training new members or advice on further woodland operations.
- Access to training events and information about courses run by other organizations.
- Access to generic Risk Assessments for woodland work

### **Funded Member Services**

Some services that The Green Valleys offers is highly technical and are expensive to provide so these services cannot be offered free of charge. However, through the free advisory service offered to groups we will help you identify the need and funding for such services.

- Hydro power Area Studies and Feasibility Studies
- Advice on developing formal group governance structures
- Seed capital and loan funding
- Legal & lease service
- Business & financial planning
- Help and advice on making grant Applications
- Event Planning

## **Requirements from Member groups**

Member Groups will be the core of The Green Valleys. As such, all groups are asked to accept some basic responsibilities to help create a shared identity and purpose throughout The Green Valleys and all its Members.

Your group agrees to:

- Help deliver The Green Valleys aims (see below for list)
- Share skills and experiences with other member groups wherever possible.
- Keep an up to date list of your own members.
- Keep your website or social media pages (if you have them) up to date, in particular the group contact details.
- Allow The Green Valleys to share your group contact details with other Member groups to encourage networking.
- Provide help and ideas to develop The Green Valleys through Member Group events and the CiC membership.
- Record and share data requested by The Green Valleys, such as volumes of wood fuel generated, volunteer hours etc.
- Use The Green Valleys Logo on group websites and published material, or otherwise publicise that your group is part of The Green Valleys.
- Not loan out assets of The Green Valleys such as tools, or to provide written materials and images to non Members.
- Use, care for and store any assets loaned from The Green Valleys in accordance with the loan agreement.
- Spend and account for grant aid received by The Green Valleys in accordance with any procedures required by the grant provider.

## **Acceptance and removal of Member groups**

Groups wishing to become Members must complete the application form and membership will be accepted by decision of the CiC Board. Groups may only be removed as Members of The Green Valleys by a majority vote of the other Members at General Meetings.

## **Access to services**

Some services will always be subject to availability, such as requesting tools that might currently be on loan to another group. We will endeavor to continue to develop the list of benefits, subject to funding. For example, purchasing new or additional tools to meet demand from the groups. The loan of some tools may be restricted to those with an appropriate qualification e.g. chainsaws. A simple loan agreement form must be signed for each loan. The Green Valleys may limit the scope of services provided to Member groups should any problems arise. We would always aim to resolve any problems through positive dialogue with Member groups.

## **The Green Valleys' aims:**

- The generation and use of sustainable energy coupled with the reduction of energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions
- Implementing, supporting and advising on projects or works that deliver sustainable improvements to the local environment
- The promotion and delivery of education and training into communities to support the objectives of reducing energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions plus increasing local environmental awareness
- The promotion and delivery of commercial enterprises that support the objectives of reducing non-sustainable energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions whilst creating local employment opportunities
- Acquiring and distributing funds, guidance and support to the Member\* groups and other community interest projects that support the objectives of reducing non-sustainable energy usage and greenhouse gas emission and deliver sustainable improvements to the local environment

*\* Articles of Association actually state "to the local big green challenge groups"*