

***Room to Grow:***  
**Facilitating meaningful  
participation within urban forestry  
processes and structures**

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FOREST & LANDSCAPE



THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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AN BORD NA TÁBHARMOICTE, IASCACH AGULSIA

# Outline

- Public involvement in urban forestry
  - Need and dilemma
- Two case studies
- Success factors regarding structures and procedures
- Lessons for 'forestry serving urban societies'

# The Urban Forest: A Different “Forest”



# Public involvement is...

“...to give citizens opportunities to influence management and planning through input that are systematically analysed, evaluated and incorporated in the decision process and decision as far as possible”

*Slide courtesy of Tove E. Boon*



# Public involvement in urban forestry

- Call for involving people in decisions on their living environment
- Range of benefits
  - Support and 'buy in', empowerment, meeting user needs, etc.
- Dependent on context
  - Participatory culture, social set-up, issue at hand, ...
- Many different 'tools' available



# Facing a dilemma ...

- Decision-making processes and structures are rigid and formal
- Participation is organic and fluid
- How to design 'official' processes or structures for urban forestry to provide space and flexibility for public participation?



# Two case studies

- European NeighbourWoods R&D project (1999-2004)
- Irish NeighbourWoods scheme (2001, rev. 2008)
- Identifying 'critical success factors'



NEIGHBOURWOOD SCHEME  
MANUAL



# NeighbourWoods

- Accessible, 'close-to-home' woodlands
- Developed with and for local communities





# Selecting the right tools

- Find ways to raise interest and engage
- Target audiences – e.g. children
- Continuum: from informing to collecting information, towards full participation









# Policy makers and facilitators

- Get central decision-makers on board
- Keep them up-to-date and up-to-speed
- Possible role of facilitators as 'go-betweens'
- Benefit from long-term relationships



# Champions

- Key people underpinning projects
  - Movers and shakers, respected and connected
- Important role of politicians – but could also be others



Photo: Renate Spaeth





# Flexibility

- Each local situation unique
  - Different neighbourhoods having different levels of experience, resources, capacity and expectations regarding local participation
- Develop a 'rolling strategy'
  - Select from 'toolbox', be sensitive to local context



# Step-by-step progress

- High expectations and ambitious deadlines
- Better to have step-by-step, modular process
- E.g. funding scheme: applying for new element every year



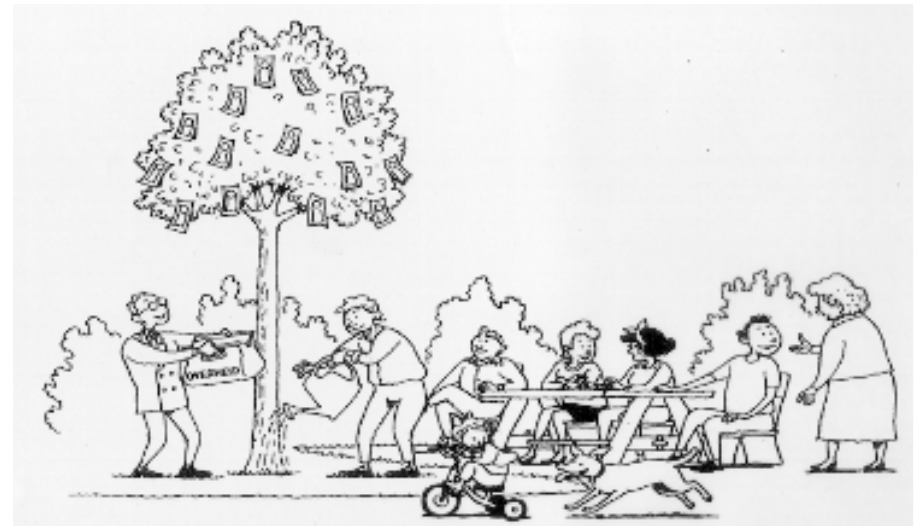
# Ease of engagement

- Not too complex or bureaucratic
- Common language rather than jargon
- Open to all



# Funding package

- Need for funding from different sources – grant scheme often as 'seed money'
- Calls for joint thinking and action
- Involvement/commitment of additional funding bodies





# Marketing

- Raise awareness among relevant groups
- Catchy name – such as NeighbourWoods
- Clear communication: why, whom, how, when?

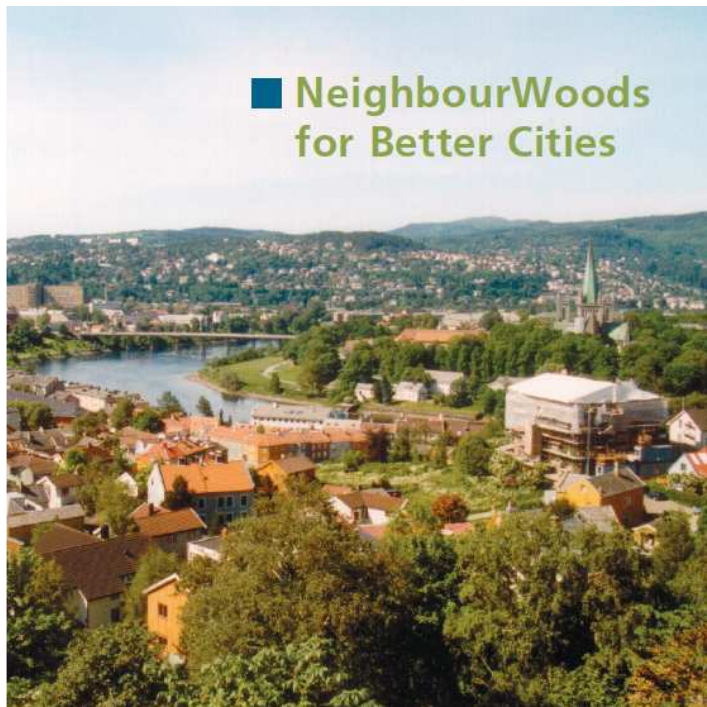


Photo: Rik De Vreese

# Technical know-how

- Involve appropriate knowledge and skills – also to avoid disappointment!
- Role of professionals
- Handbooks and guidelines

**Wider application**  
This innovative project takes a new, long-term, holistic approach to the revitalisation of historic and neglected woodlands. Practical measures, management, or planned public access, well researched interpretation, education schemes were all implemented as a result of their joint work. Well researched community involvement and outreach through an effective stakeholder partnership. Well researched and targeted on all levels according to need of woodland. The findings of this research will be shared to be widely applied.

**Further information**  
**National Urban Forestry Unit**  
The unit is a not-for-profit organisation established by the National Urban Forestry Unit (NUFU) is a not-for-profit which provides a national focus for the exchange of information and good practice in urban forestry. If you would like further information on the above including our full time based staff or to get in touch with us please contact:  
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Website: [www.nufu.org.uk](http://www.nufu.org.uk)

**The South Yorkshire Forest Partnership**  
The South Yorkshire Forest is one of the 12 Community Forests in England. It seeks to create high-quality woodlands for the benefit of people and the environment, and to provide new opportunities for leisure, recreation, cultural activity, education and training, along with a comprehensive package of local and national regeneration.  
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**Contact:**  
Paul Walker, Education and Interpretation Co-ordinator for the Interpretation aspects of the project  
Rita Cook, Project Manager for other aspects of the project

**Further reading**  
James M. Worwood (2011) *Shelford's Woodland Heritage: Green Tree Publications*  
James M. Worwood (2011) *Sheffield's Woodland Heritage: Green Tree Publications*  
James M. Worwood (2011) *The Making of the South Yorkshire Landscape: Wharfedale Books*  
Richard G. (2011) *The History of the Country: Dore*  
Richard G. (2011) *Tree and Woodland in the British Landscape: Dore*


Photography & design: South Yorkshire Forest, Mr James & Jill Warkentin

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**Urban Forestry in Practice**  
**Revitalising neglected historic woodlands**



**CASE STUDY 47**



# Lessons for forestry serving urban societies

- Urbanisation calls for changes in forestry
- Different role for foresters
- Urban forestry showing the way – e.g. public participation
- What are the processes and structures needed?
- What are the mindsets and skills needed?

Thank you!

*Thanks to all the people behind the  
two NeighbourWoods initiatives –  
also for their illustrations*