

# *Citizens are designers*

Supporting citizens to  
become designers of local,  
place-based change.



# Citizens are designers design process

# DISCOVERY

ASK A QUESTION



CREATE A WORKING GROUP

START YOUR RESEARCH



GO EXPLORING



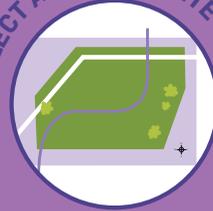
PAUSE, DISCUSS AND CREATE A VISION



IDENTIFY SKILLS AND RESOURCES



SELECT AND MAP A SITE



GATHER SKILLS AND RESOURCES



DESIGN - DECIDE AND DRAW



DEVELOP SIMPLE SYSTEMS



WORK TOGETHER



CELEBRATE AND EVALUATE



SHARE AND CONNECT



# DESIGN

This resource is for anyone with an interest in getting to know more about their local surroundings and developing ideas to make changes that help their community to flourish.

Follow this step-by-step guide, involve others and keep it fun!



## Ask a question

Start by asking a question. Is there a problem you want to take on? Are you aware of any needs where you live, that might be addressed by a small group effort?

An example question might be “Can we create spaces for local people to grow food together?”

## Create a working group

Invite at least one other person with an interest in your question to join you.

## Start your research

Decide where to go in your neighbourhood to explore your question and gather information. Look at a map and plan a route, get ideas from everyone in the group.

Gather your kit – things you will need to record your findings and to enjoy your walk: pens, paper, camera, notebook, tape measure, jars or bags to collect things in, plant finder and compass apps, tea and snacks.





## Go exploring

Meet up and follow your route, or you can also let your route emerge as you move around. Take note of what's around you, look up, down, listen, touch, keeping in mind your question.

Ask local residents that you encounter. Record and gather data as you go.

## Pause, discuss and create a vision

Stop at sites you think have potential. Can you see an opportunity? Discuss what you'd like to do and assess whether a site is suitable for your needs. Be creative and think about some different approaches.

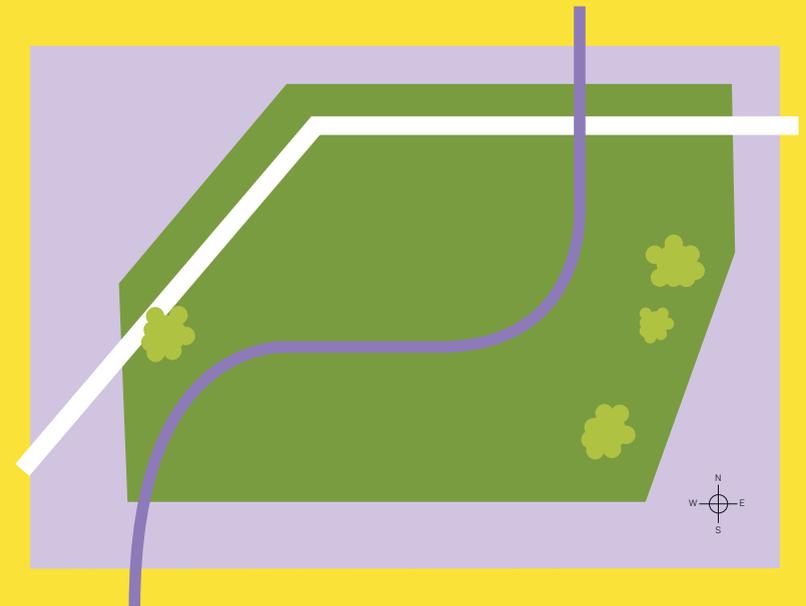
Discuss ideas and create a shared vision. Who is likely to benefit from the project?

Don't be too ambitious, start small. You can add more to the project as you go.

## Identify skills and resources

Make two lists:

1. The skills and resources you already have.
2. The skills and resources you might need.  
Include locally available materials, local people and their experience, plants and information such as who owns the land.



## Select and map a site

Choose your favourite site and use the site fieldnotes checklist (p8) to make notes. Draw the site shape on base map template (p10), adding useful measurements. Add a compass rose or north arrow and include plants and features you want to keep.

# Site fieldnotes

Use all your senses: smell, touch, hearing, sight and taste. Get a feel for the space.

Take note of the following aspects:

- Is there easy access to the site?
- Who owns it? If you don't know make a note to find out later.
- Is there existing vegetation, trees, hedges, shrubs or wild flowers?
- What are the site conditions such as wind exposure, sun, shade and slope?
- Are there signs of people, animals and wildlife?
- Can you spot any potential problems?
- Can you see an opportunity?
- Any useful resources (water, wood etc.)?
- Anything else you notice?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for taking site fieldnotes. It occupies the right half of the page.

# Base map

Draw your base map, a quick sketch of your site shape and measurements. Plot a compass rose or north arrow on the map.



## Gather skills and resources

Source the skills and resources required, share the task, try to use what you have around you. Make connections and build trust. This will take time. Ask others for skills and resources ideas.



## Design - decide and draw

Decide on your design solution. Make drawings of your planned solution to bring your ideas, skills and resources together.



## Develop simple systems

Agree what you will do, when will you do it and who will do what. Simple systems help make your design happen, keep the momentum going and ensure the project can be sustained in the long term.



## Work together

Bring your design to life creatively and resourcefully. Lead by stepping back and supporting others to participate. Invite a diverse group of people from the local community to join in.



## Celebrate and Evaluate

Celebrate all that has been achieved, particularly any new relationships made and positive change in the neighbourhood.

Have you created an easy to manage place-based solution for your neighbours to enjoy?

Discuss what went well, what didn't go well, whether there are any next steps or things you would do differently.

## Share and connect

Share your project and its outcomes with the wider community. Use local press and social media.

*Ready for your next project now?*





This open-source resource was first developed by Sarah Macbeth and Anna Locke of Transition Town Hastings for the Care and Citizenship project.

This generic version uses illustrations commissioned by the Making It Happen project and adapted from the Humaaans library. Individuals and community groups are encouraged to widely distribute and make use of the resource and the accompanying illustrations.

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