1. Organise your group to do a community survey asking shopkeepers and shoppers if they would like to get involved in a ‘bag for life’ project. Listen and respond to their reservations. Point out the advantages to bags for life:
- In the long term, they use less natural resources than disposable bags
- They reduce the amount of street litter and waste
- They reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill
- They save money for shopkeepers
You might wish to chat to some of the other ‘bag for life’ projects we have funded to see how they have run their project. Contact details for these groups are listed below.

2. Research the type of ‘bag for life’ that is most suitable for your local community. Balance the cost of the bag with its size and strength, the size of your budget and how many you think you can sell. Make sure you compare the cost of bags from manufacturers with strict sustainability policies. The Waste Education Officer can supply you with some contact details of bag suppliers.

3. Think about the picture design that you will have on the bag. You could run a competition among the local schools or community to generate a great design and also build interest in the scheme. Contact local schools and communities to scope out interest before putting your application together.

4. Decide with your group how you will roll out the scheme. Will shopkeepers buy the bags upfront from your group in bulk? How much should they sell the bags for? What profit will the shopkeepers make? How much profit will you make?

5. Decide how your group will promote the ‘bag for life’ scheme. Will you hold waste awareness raising events to get people interested and promote other ways of reducing, reusing and recycling?

6. Decide how your group will deliver the bags. Do you have the resources and time to ensure you will be able to deliver them all to the shopkeepers?

7. Now you are ready to apply for a Waste Action Grant. Contact the Waste Education Officer on: 0131 469 5070 or wasteaction@edinburgh.gov.uk to discuss your application.

**CONTACTS**

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Case Study: Marchmont & Sciennes Business Association

Who are they?
A collection of small independent shopkeepers and businesses in the Marchmont & Sciennes Area who wish to foster and promote the development of the business community and who work together on issues of mutual concern; some fun, some serious.

What project did they do?
They applied to the Waste Action Grant Programme for funds to undertake a ‘Bag for Life’ project in their area. After initial research, the group realised that between just four local fruit and vegetable shops they generated 46,000 plastic bags every month. Their project focussed on encouraging local shopkeepers and traders to sell sustainable cotton bags to reduce the amount of plastic bags being generated. Nine traders committed to participate in the project prior to the launch, with more taking part once the bags had been printed. The group organised a community competition for the bag’s design, which was won by a sixth year James Gillespie’s High School pupil. A community litter collection day is also being planned raise the profile of the project as is a brightly-coloured and informative shopping guide.

How much funding did they get?
The group received the full grant of £2,500.

What did they spend the funds on?
Most of the grant went on the cost of 3,000 sustainable cotton bags. The time of the volunteers involved was not funded through this grant, neither were the advertising and promotional activities.

How did their project work?
The Association purchased 3,000 sustainable cotton bags and used an eye-catching logo designed by competition winner, Gwen Morris, to brand the bags. Prior to the launch of the bags, nine traders had committed to participate by buying stocks of 200-500 bags at a cost of £1.06. A further six traders participated after the launch of the bags. The shop keepers were invited to sell the bags to the public for £1.50, making a profit of 44p per bag.

Any top tips or feedback?
- If you are running a competition for your logo design then you will need some help to get the logo print ready. It is worth including a design fee for this aspect of your project.
- It is worth checking the colourfast guarantee on the bag order before you go to print, just to make sure you are covered if the logo colours on the bags run in the wash.
- It is worth planning that it can take about 12 weeks to have the bags made and delivered by boat (most bags are made overseas).

Contact group
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