



**Friends of  
the Earth**

# How to: make the most of Friends of the Earth

**The Capacity Building team wants to help local groups to be as effective as possible. In this pull-out, we introduce you to the team and show you the many ways Friends of the Earth can support you with your work**

Friends of the Earth is committed to supporting local campaigning; we call this Capacity Building and we're deploying new staff and resources for this important work. We know that most regions still need more support but, rest assured, we are getting on with it... The focus for the Capacity Building team is the issues you've helped to identify over the last couple of years, which fall into three main areas:

- helping you function at your best as a local group;
- helping you take action and make a difference locally;
- improving how we as an organisation communicate with you.

**To give you a flavour of our new resources, we have introduced:**

- a training officer and a training programme;
- a coaching programme to support co-ordinators;

**The purpose of our work is to help you in your campaigning. We can best do that if you tell us how you're doing. If you can, please do fill in the survey we've just sent to co-ordinators with the Partnership Agreement.**

- a *Community* website for local groups to network and get resources;
- network developers have been appointed to support groups in the South East, East of England, London and Wales – more will be appointed in other regions;
- a streamlined information service, giving you one place to go for general questions;
- an expanded annual Conference.

**Our biggest projects right now are:**

- developing easy actions for you on the climate campaign;
- piloting a new resource to help groups grow;
- rolling out co-ordinator coaching to more co-ordinators;
- delivering the first year of the training programme;
- designing another great annual Conference.

**The first 30 local groups to return the slip on page 22 could get £100 towards a digital camera for their group. See Dr Know for more details.**

## The Capacity Building team



1, 2 The Capacity Building team is led by Tom Kenward and Nicole Barton.

3, 4 Raoul Bhambal and Jenny Thatcher, Local Activism Co-ordinators: helping to make the actions you take on campaigns easy and effective.

5 Bleddyn Lake, David Babbs and  
6 Rebecca Smith, Network Developers: support local groups directly across Wales, London, the East of England and the South East respectively.

8 Naomi Hunt, Activist Information Officer: first port of call for local groups.

9 Penny Markell, Training and Development Officer: helping groups gain new skills and knowledge.

10 Claudia Sartori: manages the Youth and Education network of local campaigners and is developing new support mechanisms for co-ordinators.

11 Jonathan Nichols, Electronic Communications Coordinator: manages Community website and provides help on internet and email matters.

## Questions, questions

**We ask the questions so you don't have to. The team gives you some answers to some of your most common challenges.**

**Q** “We just can't get new people to stick around and really get active. How can we make progress?”

**Claudia:** You need to decide what tasks there are for people to do and what skills people need to carry them out. After each meeting, Manchester local group writes all the tasks on a board and people choose which they will do. Explore people's reasons for joining your group and make sure you are meeting their motivations.

**Penny:** Come to a recruitment and retention training day. Ensure you are welcoming people effectively and that your meetings are clear and interesting; try to identify easy, non-intimidating activities for new people; build on their interests and skills. Nominate a friendly “greeter” to meet with new people. Induction evenings for new local group members are being held in London (coming to other regions soon).

**Q** “There's too much to do. We just don't know what to focus on. How do we start?”

**Jonathan:** To get the maximum impact you may find it helpful to spend some time planning what you can do most effectively, rather than trying to do everything. See our pull-out, *How to campaign strategise*, for a handy list of things to consider.

**Bleddyn:** There is a lot to do so step back, take a deep breath and consider some important points: Do people in the group want to work on that issue? (If not, then it can become boring and they will drift away.) How will it resonate with local people? What do you want to achieve in the campaign? Knowing this is vitally important before you start any campaign.

**Q** “I’m totally overloaded and no-one ever seems to volunteer for help. What can I try?”

**Tom:** What do they say about “if you want something done, give it to a busy person”? Work we’ve done with co-ordinators on coaching and mentoring shows that once you start to say “No”, other people may start to take things on. Coaching gives you time to talk through key challenges you are facing. People who have attended have reported improved morale, clearer planning, better delegation and more people involved. As long as you keep doing all the work, most people will probably let you!

**David:** Some people like spending hours in front of a computer researching and writing; some like to get out on the street and talk to people; some get most excited organising events. The more different tactics you use, the more people you’re likely to get involved.

**Penny:** If you’re a fairly new co-ordinator, come to a Co-ordinator Induction event. This will help you to think through your role and your responsibilities, and to share challenges and ideas with other co-ordinators.

**Q** “We’ve been going for years and we’re all just really tired. We don’t want to stop because we’re worried no one else will take it on; anyway, we still want to make a difference. How can we re-energise?”

**Claudia:** Allocate a meeting to look at all the tasks that your group is currently doing or wants to do, and choose the top three of each. Now you can focus on what you all want to do most. Hammersmith & Fulham local group did a similar exercise and has been really pleased with the focus it has given the group. See *How to energise your local group*.

**David:** Working with neighbouring groups can be a great way to cheer yourselves up. Try meeting up for a social or organising a joint action. Meeting up at a regional meeting or Conference can also re-focus you.

**Rebecca:** It sounds like you haven’t got enough fresh people coming in – you need to look at how much time you spend on recruitment and make sure your group is welcoming and accessible. While it may feel difficult to reduce the time spent on your other work, remember that investing time in recruitment now is likely to result in more successful campaigning in the future.

**Q** “We’re planning a stall but don’t know what to have on it. How can we make it eye-catching?”

**Naomi:** Local groups are entitled to a range of free publicity resources to make your stall look great, including posters, table covers, T-shirts, leaflets and banners. Order these from the *Look the business* catalogue. Also check out the *Local groups trading catalogue* which is full of environmentally sound products – from pencil cases made of old tyres to organic cotton T-shirts – that you can sell on stalls. They bring in some funds and also act as great talking points with the public.

**Jonathan:** Don’t forget that do-it-yourself posters and templates for publicity materials are available on the Community website (<http://community.foe.co.uk>); use these to develop materials specific to your area.

**Q** “We’re often out and about but don’t get covered by the media. How can we change this?”

**Rebecca:** Media work should never be an afterthought – plan how you are going to use the media when you plan your campaign. Decide what your three key messages are and in any media work (press release, interview, etc) don’t try to get across any more. Make sure you send press releases in good time for deadlines. Come to a Media training session, and pick up some handy tips in *How to use the media*.

**Bleddyn:** Have a look at what is covered in the local newspaper or on local radio and TV stations – what have those stories got that you haven’t? Are they more colourful? Do they have a good local “hook”? Don’t forget that the letters page of a local newspaper can be an effective way of getting your points across.

Invite a local journalist to talk to your group; if you know what they want then you can do something about it. They can tell you if your press releases are catchy, and whether your events/stunts are what the media are looking for. Always follow up a press release with a phone call. And if the media does not cover your activity, take photos, write a report, and submit it to the press yourself.

**Details of all resources are given on page 14**

# Resources

Whatever your challenges, here's a list of things you can attend, send off for, join up to, and read, which can help your group become more effective

## Training and development

**Co-ordinator induction:** 9 April in London; 4 June in Birmingham.

**Recruitment and retention training:** 21 May in London.

**Media training:** 16 April in London.

Details of training and induction sessions and other related events are available from Penny Markell on 020 7566 1660, [pennym@foe.co.uk](mailto:pennym@foe.co.uk), or <http://community.foe.co.uk/resource/events/>

For handouts and writeups of past training days see <http://community.foe.co.uk/resource/events/past/>

## Publicity and fundraising materials

*Look the business* and the *Local groups trading catalogue* can be ordered from Naomi Hunt on 020 7566 1677 or [localgroups@foe.co.uk](mailto:localgroups@foe.co.uk). They are also available on-line at <http://community.foe.co.uk/publicity/> and [http://community.foe.co.uk/local\\_groups/trading/](http://community.foe.co.uk/local_groups/trading/) respectively.

Do-it-yourself posters and templates for use as publicity materials are at <http://community.foe.co.uk/publicity>.

## Pull-out guides

*Change your world's* pull-out guides are available from the community website, at [http://community.foe.co.uk/resource/how\\_tos/](http://community.foe.co.uk/resource/how_tos/) or call Freephone 0808 800 1111 to have free print outs sent to you. See *How to: reach target audiences; energise your local group; campaign strategise; use the media; and run better meetings.*

## Discussion

Ask other local group members and co-ordinators how they've met the challenges – there's a discussion forum at <http://community.foe.co.uk/discussion>.

## Website

Make sure your group is connected to the national [Friends of the Earth website](http://foe.co.uk) at <http://foe.co.uk>, so that local people can find you. You need to up-to-date this information yourselves, but you don't need any particular web skills. To register for this system, send the email address from which updates will be made – along with the contact name and the name of the group – to [localgroups@foe.co.uk](mailto:localgroups@foe.co.uk). You'll then receive instructions on how to carry out the updates.

Your page will be very simple, giving the co-ordinator's contact details, where and when you meet, an introduction to the group, and a bit about your current campaigns. You can always link from this page to a more detailed website hosted elsewhere which you could set up for your group. Take a look at <http://www.foe.co.uk/abergavenny> as an example.

## Conference

Get a team together to attend **Conference 2005** this September. See how on page 15.

## Inspiring reading matter

The more people you get involved, the more you can achieve and the more fun you can have. *Save cash & save the planet* is a new book full of real-life accounts of this maxim holding true. Packed with tips for greening your life and lessening the impact on both the environment and your bank balance, it's a fresh and accessible read, guaranteed to re-energise even the most tired local group members. Ordering details are on page 24.

