

# How to: CELEBRATE SUCCESS



**Friends of  
the Earth**

**Celebrating success is a great excuse for a party. But as Network Developers Howard Whitehead and Tim Atkinson explain, recognising your achievements is also a vital part of any group's long term success and sustainability.**

Local groups can be busy places with volunteers often short of time. Campaigners are often so committed that by the time a campaign finishes we are already thinking of the next challenge. Pausing to give yourself a slap on the back and congratulate yourself on a job well done can often seem like a luxury there isn't time for.

## **CELEBRATION**

But celebration is an intrinsic part of every successful group. It keeps people motivated to stay involved in the group. It raises awareness of what you do with the public, and more importantly it shows your community that your group is a positive force for change they can be involved in. It can generate publicity and interest in your group. It gives you a platform to build on for your future work. It can also help your group feel more together as a team of friends. And sometimes it's just nice to have a celebration for its own sake.

As our historic Climate Change Bill passes into law this month, there has never been a better excuse for a party. Although Westminster might seem a long way away for many of you, it's important to not only remember your part in this story but also remind the people in your communities about the amazing, world changing success you have been a part of.

## **INSPIRATION**

One of the main reasons people join local groups is because they want to make a difference and contribute to a better environment and a fairer society. They are far more likely to stay involved and stay passionate if they feel that they are taking steps towards achieving change in their local area.

Taking time to reflect on what you have achieved every meeting or two can be a really useful way to keep people motivated and inspired. This doesn't have to mean announcing a winning campaign at every meeting. Just get into the habit of reviewing your month and congratulating yourself on your hard work – whatever that might be.



## EVERYDAY CELEBRATION

Some simple ideas on how to bring a culture of celebration and recognition to your group.

- **Meetings and campaign actions** are always better with refreshments. Don't be shy of dipping into local group funds for this morale boost.
- **Add a slot to your meeting agenda** for local group members to share good news – it doesn't matter whether it's group-related or personal, as long as it's positive.
- **Celebrate members' birthdays** at group meetings with cards and cakes.
- **Thank your unsung heroes** – ring a member who's done a lot for the group to thank them and let them know that they are appreciated. Treasurers, we're thinking of you!
- Each month, **Birmingham Friends of the Earth's** newsletter includes an **interview with one of their members**. In this way, everyone's contribution to the group is recognised and local activists get to know more about each other.

Developing the everyday celebration habit may also help you informally keep track of morale and energy levels in the group – you'll be able to identify when people need a boost, so you can plan inspiring social activities.

## RAISING AWARENESS

Don't be afraid to celebrate publicly! Tell newspapers, other local groups in your area, your Network Developer and local politicians about your activities. Getting a reputation as a group that achieves things will do wonders for your standing amongst decision makers and the media. People regularly seeing your group in the light of achievement and success is a powerful magnet to getting them involved.

## WHEN TO CELEBRATE

Although the end of a campaign might seem like the natural time to celebrate your successes, it's also really beneficial to programme regular celebration into the ongoing plans for any campaign – especially longer ones where the end might seem a long way off. Try to get into the habit of celebrating milestones as well as results, for example the 50th reusable bag handed out or the 200th postcard signed. This will not only give the campaign a sense of progression and movement, but it can help break down a daunting campaign aim, into smaller, more manageable objectives for your group.

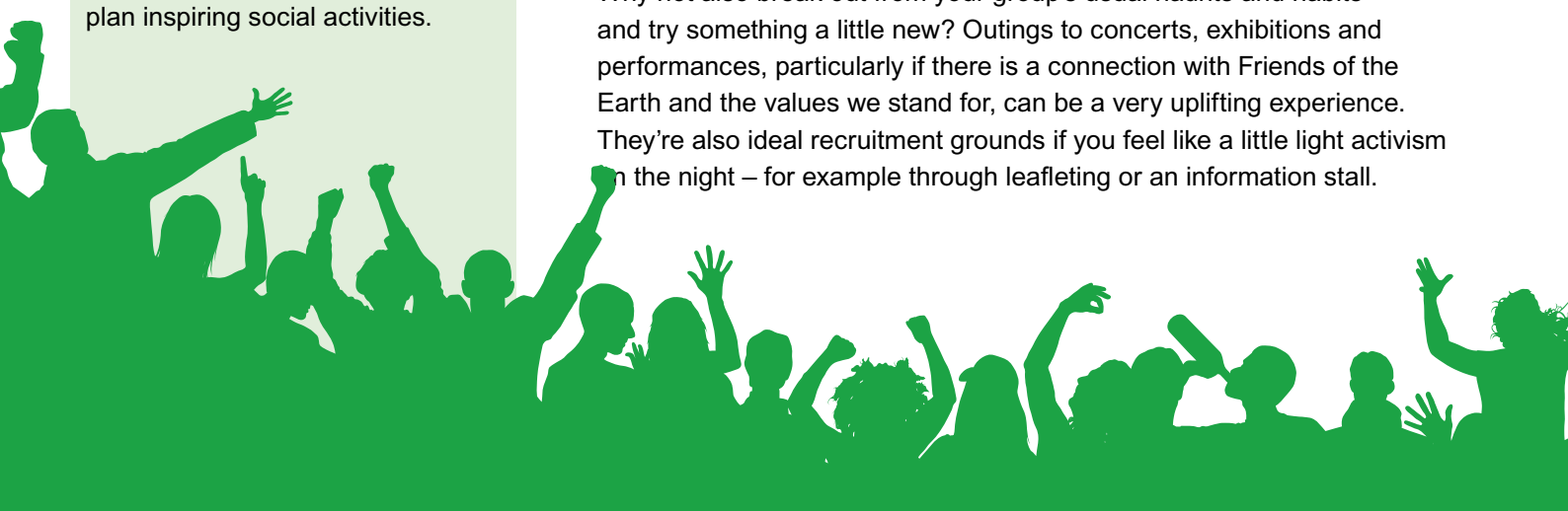
## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Celebration can be a natural time to reflect and learn from what worked well and not so well in campaign. A sense of achievement can also spur the group on to the next level and give you the confidence to try something more challenging in the future. Looking back at a journey you have all taken can bring home what your group can accomplish.

## ORGANISED FUN

Many local groups replace meetings with social events during the summer months or in December. Whatever form this social takes – a party, a meal, an inspirational speaker or a film screening – it's an ideal way of recharging the group's batteries and bringing people closer together.

Why not also break out from your group's usual haunts and habits and try something a little new? Outings to concerts, exhibitions and performances, particularly if there is a connection with Friends of the Earth and the values we stand for, can be a very uplifting experience. They're also ideal recruitment grounds if you feel like a little light activism in the night – for example through leafleting or an information stall.



**Shouting proud:** Darlington scored local press coverage when they won an Earthmover award.



## COMMUNICATING YOUR SUCCESS

You should think about telling your local media about your group's success stories, and including them in your newsletters, blogs or websites.

Some local groups also bring a scrapbook of campaign successes to meetings and stalls to show visitors just how much the group has achieved. Group photos can be easily uploaded to websites such as Facebook and Flickr and have the potential to reach a wide audience online (*see Dr Know p.23 for more ideas about getting your photos online*).

You can also share your achievements with other Friends of the Earth groups - and get ideas from their successes.

Here's a quick reminder of how to spread your good news around the network of over 230 local groups:

- keep the Local Group Activity Table updated with your group's news (*see next page*);
- send news and photos to a) your Network Developer, b) the Activist Information Officer for *Change Your World* or c) the monthly Regional Update emails;
- share your successes online by posting on our Community discussion forum;
- nominate your group for an Earthmover award in a range of categories. Nominations open in March each year;
- bring your good news to our annual Conference or regional gatherings – some local groups create inspiring visual displays of their achievements.

Local groups are also organising creative events like this for themselves: the **Leamington & Warwick** group are currently organising their second Climate Change Gig of 2008.

If you plan them in advance, parties to celebrate major campaign victories or group anniversaries are good events to invite local contacts and national supporters to attend. You'll have a better networked group for it and you may attract new active members. Remember: nothing succeeds like success!



The **Southwark** group celebrated the end of their award winning 'Homes Going Green' project with a party at a local café. **Penistone** group held a similar event with plenty of cake to celebrate the success of their Carry-a-Bag campaign. Because they invited local organisations, attendees and councillors it was a great opportunity to network, build on their success and recruit new members – as well as being great fun.

The **Review of the Year** is packed full of each year's inspirational campaign triumphs by local groups and national campaigners. Order it on DVD and screen the film at your own meetings - just call Steve Cain on 020 7490 1555 (ext 2021) for a copy.

**Annual Review 2008:** why not take a look back over a year of campaigning at your next meeting?

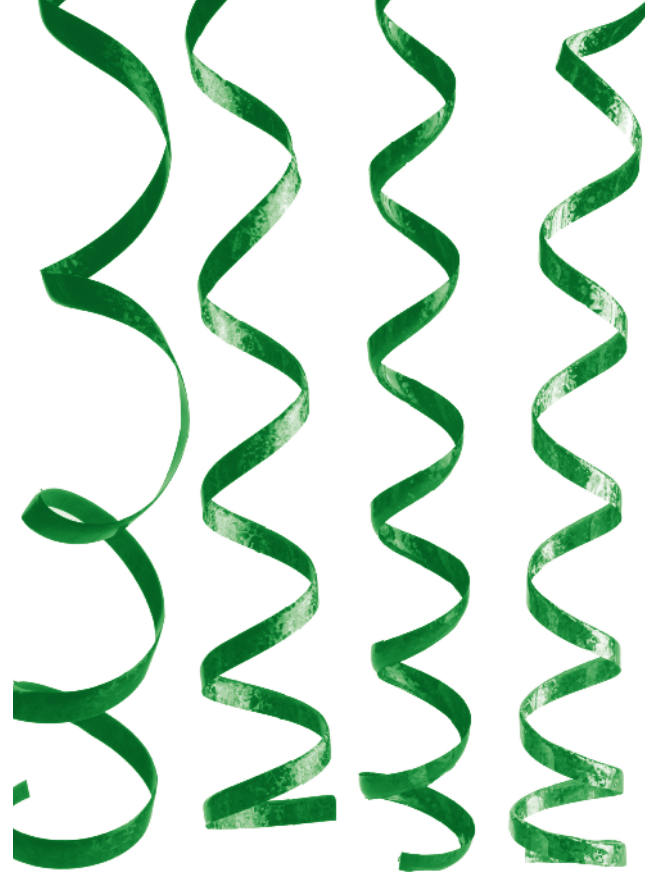
## BIG ASK CELEBRATION PACK



To commemorate the fantastic achievement of our local groups on the Big Ask campaign, your group will be receiving an INSTANT PARTY PACK

to help you celebrate the passing of the Climate Change Act. The pack includes:

- A DVD telling the story of the Big Ask campaign and how local groups made a difference
- A BIG ASK SUCCESS POSTER for 2009 and beyond.
- PARTY SNACKS to enjoy at your group meeting.



### WANT TO MAKE A SUGGESTION?

How does your local group incorporate everyday celebration? How does your group let its hair down in style? We've set up a debate on the Community forum so you can tell the rest of the network and ask any follow-up questions: <http://snipurl.com/4kcum>

## RESOURCES

### Local Groups Handbook

Every group should have a copy of the handbook. It contains case studies, practical advice and resources to help you run your group. Chapters 1 (Inspiration) and 4 (Action) contain further ideas on celebration, while Chapter 4 (Profile) will help you get your successes into the public domain. Or see it online at [http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local\\_groups/resource/handbook.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/resource/handbook.html):

- Chapter 1: Inspiration
- Chapter 3: Action
- Chapter 4: Profile

### Community discussion forum

<http://www.foe.co.uk/forum>

### Local Group Activity Table

Tell the network about your achievements and be inspired by others at [http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local\\_groups/index\\_activities.shtml](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/index_activities.shtml). Contact the Activist Information Officer on 020 7566 or [localgroups@foe.co.uk](mailto:localgroups@foe.co.uk) for the password.

### Facebook social networking website:

Search for 'Reading Friends of the Earth' under 'Groups' at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) for an example of a local group page. You can use Facebook to post news of your successes, share photos and invite people to events'

### Local Group websites

It's never been easier to set up your own group's website to share news, events and photos with your members and the general public. We've set up a new and simple system for you – there's a great example at <http://www.foe.co.uk/wanstead>. See Dr. Know on p.22 for all the details or email [localgroups@foe.co.uk](mailto:localgroups@foe.co.uk) or 0207 5661677.

### Other How tos

Previous pull-outs are available to download at [http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local\\_groups/resource/how\\_to\\_guides.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/resource/how_to_guides.html)

*Write a killer press release* (Issue 64: April/May 2007)  
*Get your letter in the paper* (Issue 60 : Aug/Sept 2006)