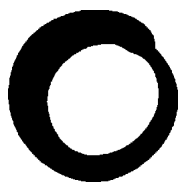


How to win

Saving wildlife sites



**Friends of
the Earth**

Written by Alan Stanley on behalf of Friends of the Earth

Edited by Helen Barron

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Friends of the Earth inspires solutions to environmental problems, which makes life better for people.

Friends of the Earth
26-28 Underwood Street
London N1 7JQ
Tel: 020 7490 1555
Fax: 020 7490 0881
Email: infoe@foe.co.uk

website: www.foe.co.uk

This is an extract

A full copy of How to win: Saving wildlife sites can be downloaded from Friends of the Earth's website.

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/local/saving_wildlife_sites/

7 The basics of organising a campaign

At it's simplest, campaigning is about getting organised to change something. We have the right to be involved in decisions that change our lives and our environment and unless we exercise that right, those in positions of power can do what they want with a minimum of public opposition.

This section deals with the basics of how to get started and get organised. It provides basic information on how to use your power to change things and to win.

1 Find people to give you people power

Campaigns are rarely won by individuals; they are won by groups of concerned people.



Top Tip

The more people you involve in your campaign and the more tasks which can be shared, the greater your chances are of campaign success.

Getting more people involved in your campaign will:

- give your group greater credibility
- enable you to get your message across to a greater number of people
- provide you with a larger pool of people with particular skills or interests
- give your group a regular income, for example if people pay a small membership fee.

Once you have found a group of people with similar concerns, you need to get together and decide on a plan of action. You will need to:

- clarify your aims
- decide how much time you can all spare and how often you want to meet
- decide on a campaign name
- make a list of people the group can approach to write letters, attend meetings, or make telephone calls
- write down a list of other contacts who might be useful.

Having established a core group, you now need to let others know you exist, know how to find you and a bit about your campaign. Campaign publicity should always state what your group does, how to contact you, how to join and what people can expect when they join.

2 Make meetings work... with time for fun too

Meetings are your public face. At a meeting you will be judged by people who are interested in your campaign. If people come to one meeting and never again, your meetings are not working for new people. And if your meetings are not working for new people, they are probably falling well short of the needs of the rest of the group too.

Regular campaign meetings should be the most effective time your group spends together. Making your meetings work effectively for everyone is a clear sign your group is thinking ahead, wants to succeed in its campaigns, and is attracting new members.

Developing a standard yet flexible format for meetings will allow your group to do everything it wants, and needs, to do in two hours and still have time for an after meeting social/drink.

*** Top Tip**

Good meetings can make all the difference between a group feeling motivated and dynamic or getting stuck in a rut. The success of your group meetings is in your control.

3 Get organised: the basics of setting up the campaign

Now that people are interested and working together, the next step is to establish a campaigning organisation. Getting your organisation right will make your campaigning more effective – it will help your group achieve objectives, save time, win campaigns and thrive in the longer term. Time spent now on getting the best structure for your group will pay off many times over in the future. To keep a group running it is important you work as a team:

- have realistic expectations
- have a common sense of purpose
- have a common sense of identity
- encourage involvement
- encourage people to be active and voice their opinion
- value everyone's contributions
- recognise limitations
- make time for fun.

4 Depend on more than one person

Groups can fail if one job involves far too much work – don't leave it all to the chair or co-ordinator. Depending on one person is unfair to the individual concerned, may lead to them doing a bad job or burning out, and can disempower other members of the group. An active campaign group could divide the co-ordinator role between two or more people. Useful appointments include:

- A campaigns co-ordinator who co-ordinates the work of small task-groups (if they exist) or individual campaigners; represents the group externally (eg, on council forums or in the media); monitors media coverage; oversees the group's strategy and steers new members towards appropriate campaigns.
- A group organiser who receives information on behalf of the group and distributes it promptly; is the first point of contact with the public; maintains group resources; ensures meetings are recorded and action points followed up and steers new members towards appropriate organisational jobs.

Other potential roles include a press officer, membership secretary and a treasurer. Another way to organise your group is to split roles into individual tasks which means more than one person can do what would otherwise be one person's job.



Top Tip

Above all, ensure you structure your group to meet your campaign needs.

5 Manage your membership

Members come and go so always be on the lookout for new blood. Public meetings and events are good places to recruit members. Build on your group's successes and keep your messages locally relevant in order to attract members.

- When holding or attending public meetings, build in time to call for more active and general support.
- Advertise tasks for specific roles on large sheets of paper – like Wanted posters. This enables people to approach you, as well as allowing you to target specific skills.
- If you have set up an event with the aim of getting media coverage for your campaign, build in a call for new members. If you know the event is definitely being covered by the local paper/radio/TV, follow it up with letters to local papers about your campaign, ending by asking for help and funds.
- Build on success – people are attracted to groups that are seen to be successful.



Top Tip

When dealing with members of the public be positive and sell your successes. As the saying goes, nothing succeeds like success.

6 Draw up a campaign plan

A campaign plan should help increase your group's chances of success and identify the most effective course of action to take. In real life nothing is straightforward. Situations change rapidly, and campaign plans need to be redesigned as necessary. The following are the basic steps:

- decide on your campaign aim and objectives – your aim spells out what the campaign wants to achieve overall, objectives are the stepping stones for how you get there
- identify your targets – the people or institutions which can bring about the changes you are campaigning for
- develop your key messages

- know your facts
- choose your tactics – your choice of tactics depends not only on who your target is, but on the issue, the timing, what stage the campaign is at, opportunities for influence and how much pressure you want to apply
- mobilise the public – the majority of campaigns are won because of public pressure. Look for easy, straightforward ways the public can get involved in your campaign
- develop a media strategy – when planning campaigns, consider how to use the media to get your messages across, and gain maximum exposure at prime opportunities
- draw up schedules for main activities/events
- draw up a summary of what needs to happen by when with clear priorities. Know who your allies are, and work with them – who else is doing something similar to you? Can you link up with other community groups?
- identify fundraising opportunities – every campaign opportunity is a possible fundraising opportunity
- review, evaluate and monitor your campaign When and how will you judge whether the campaign has been successful?
- “We won!” – when you do have a campaign victory, take time to celebrate your success. Victories are significant milestones, and marking them can re-energise your campaign. Always be prepared to win.

7 Money – getting it and managing it

The first rule of fundraising is that, ‘You don’t get what you don’t ask for’. Do not be afraid to ask for funds to run your campaigns. There are several ways of raising money for your campaign and they are not all mutually exclusive. For example you can organise a fundraising event, hold a street collection or run a raffle. You can also fundraise from trusts – there are more than 20,000 grant-making trusts and foundations in the UK. While most mainly give to national organisations a significant number are for local grant-making bodies. The Directory of Social Change produces guides about local trusts and ways to fundraise.

Once the money starts rolling in, you'll need to work out how to manage it. There are financial and legal issues to consider. For example, there is a legal obligation to record all monies received and notes must be kept of who has given personal donations.

Top Tips

Managing money

- **Appoint a treasurer.**
- **Get a bank account.**
- **When you receive or pay out money record it at once and write out a receipt.**
- **File receipts – keep all receipts in an envelope, filed or clipped together.**
- **Balance the books at the end of the month or quarter.**
- **Annual accounts – the point of balancing the books is to make sure that at the end of the financial year the group's account books and bank account tally.**
- **Legal issues – most voluntary groups will be characterised under the heading of "Clubs, societies and associations". Some may be registered as separate legal entities. Unfortunately there is no automatic exemption from tax. The Inland Revenue Guidance leaflet IR46 sets out the position with regard to Income and Corporation tax and can be obtained from your local tax office.**

8 Get the message across

As campaigners we are competing for people's attention in a noisy, busy world and against large media and advertising budgets. You do not need a big budget to get people's attention. What you do need to do is thorough planning and preparation:

- **What do you want to say? Before you set up a street stall or print a leaflet, try to write down the basics of your message in one or two short sentences. Unless you can explain your campaign to someone who knows nothing about the issue, it will seem small, complicated and irrelevant.**
- **Why are you telling people? What exactly do you want people to do when they have seen your poster, read your leaflet or have visited your street stall? Whenever possible, your communications should contain a clear call to action – such as**

joining your group, sending a letter, boycotting a product, donating money or attending a public event.

- Who are you telling? “The public” is a fuzzy term. Your communications will be much more effective if you target specific people.
- How are you going to tell them? Once you have worked out who your audience is, and your basic message, decide on the best way to get it across. Stalls, posters and leaflets are just a few ways of communicating to the public. There are many other techniques, such as using stickers or postcards. The main thing to remember is that everything should back up your core message, be attractive, succinct and grab attention.

Top tips **Good communications**

- **Use direct language – specific, active words instead of generalised or vague expressions.**
- **Keep your language active – it is better for getting people’s attention. One trick that keeps your language active is to use the shortest possible verb in a sentence.**
- **Keep it short and simple. If you can cut text, do it!**
- **Be positive when you communicate – turn things around to give a positive outlook. Use the active voice and be precise.**
- **Avoid jargon – don’t assume your audience knows everything you do. If you avoid jargon, you’ll keep more people with you.**
- **Be imaginative – you can get your message across through clever puns, adapted commonsense sayings, metaphors and rhetorical questions. But avoid clichés.**

9 Look good

To communicate a campaign message you need to think about how design can help you. For example, if you want to produce a leaflet, newsletter or poster, your job will be to make your product so attractive that it stands out or entices someone to pick it up. You will need to make it easy to use by arranging the text and pictures so that people are guided through the publication without confusion about which section they should read, or look at, next.

Whether you are designing your own materials or commissioning a designer it is important to establish what the aims of the publication are. This is known as a brief.

To do this for a poster, work out:

- the purpose of the poster – is it promotional or is it going to communicate a hard-hitting message?
- who is the poster aimed at?
- where will the poster will be displayed?
- how will the poster be reproduced (eg, photocopying/printing)?
- are there any logos to be included?
- how will people know who is talking to them? What details, phone numbers and web addresses will be included?

(Ways to encourage people to read your campaign messages are covered in Friends of the Earth's *How to win – a guide to successful community campaigning*.)

Try your leaflet or poster out on your audience before it is printed. Check for spelling mistakes or wrong phone numbers – ask your tester if they can tell you what the key message is. You may find your family's first impressions very helpful.

10Get basics of media work

Media coverage is by far the quickest, cheapest and most effective way to reach the people you want. A local newspaper is read by thousands. A national news programme is watched by millions. Even the most committed person distributing leaflets cannot reach so many in so short a time. Media coverage can also raise the profile of your campaign and help put pressure on decision makers.

Top tips **Media basics**

- **Every media organisation works to deadlines – find out what they are.**
- **Find out the names of key journalists in your area, what areas they cover and if you can, their pet subjects.**
- **Know what they want. Journalists want news stories – a key ingredient is something involving local people or local personalities. Other elements include controversy; previously unpublished facts.**

The media finds out about many stories from press releases so you need to know how to write them. Simple rules to follow to increase the chances of your press release being read by the news editor are:

- use headed paper – make up a press release template, which you can copy and reuse
- use the campaign logo (if you have one) and the name of your group in large writing at the top
- give key details – put the date and time of publication at the top
- think pictures – if your press release advertises a demonstration or other visual event, write "Picture opportunity" on it, and give a date, time, and clear address (with map if necessary) of the event
- stay in touch – put full contact details at the bottom of each page with telephone numbers
- put the page number at the top of each page of your release
- make it interesting – try to grab the news editor's attention with a clever, appropriate headline
- put all the key facts in the first paragraph – the first sentence of every news story tells you who, what, when and where; the rest of the story will expand these facts and try to answer the questions why and how
- use short sentences and clear English throughout – avoid jargon
- include a snappy quote from the key campaigner
- add a section called "notes to editors" at the end if you need to – this is for more detailed information, explanations about toxic chemicals, acronyms, references and so on
- keep the press release to two sides of A4 in a fairly large typeface maximum – aim to use just a single side of A4
- distribution by fax is by far the best method
- follow it up – ring key journalists (or news desks) to make sure they have received it, and find out if there is anything else they want to know

- take a look at the site you are trying to save and try to pick out the elements that will appeal most to the public – some species are more charismatic than others, for example.

*** Top Tip**

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*** Top Tip**

Media coverage is by far the quickest, cheapest and most effective way to reach the people you want.

For more information on TV and radio work see Friends of the Earth's *How to win – a guide to successful community campaigning*.