

**campaign
collective**

Hear My Voice

**A guide for first time local
campaigners**

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Who this guide is for

Have you ever wanted to fix something, save something or stop something happening in your community but you're not sure where to start?

This guide is designed to support campaigners who want to take action on a local issue, people who may never have thought of themselves as a campaigner or never felt the need to campaign before.

Whether you want to get a new road crossing, improve your local park or save a much loved community venue - our guide will give you the tools you need to campaign and the tips to win.

If you are inspired to campaign on an issue and make use of this guide, we'd love to hear how you get on. Maybe we can include you in a future edition and feature you on our website. Just get in touch with us at contact@campaigncollective.org.

About us

Campaign Collective is a social enterprise which helps charities, social enterprises, NGOs, public service organisations, not-for-profits and other campaigners benefit from affordable professional communications advice and support.

We work with organisations to get their voices heard by the people that matter to them. We focus on the positive impact we can make, not on profits.

Campaign Collective makes a positive contribution to society through both our campaign work and by investing our profits into our [social purpose fund](#), which is used to subsidise support for micro charities and community organisations, as well as help develop the next generation of communications professionals.

Bringing People Together

If you want change in your community and feel fed up or frustrated at something that's happening or not happening, the chances are at least one other person will feel the same way. You have allies.

One of the ingredients for a successful campaign is finding ways to get them involved and turn anger into positive action!

When we are passionate about something, we want to lend a helping hand and put our experience to good use. If you can harness this power, you're on to a winner.

Bring people together and mobilise!

Step One

get your initial group together in person or in an online meeting

Step Two

agree what you want to achieve

Step Three

work out how everyone can help share the workload

Know what you want

This sounds simple, but it's important that everyone is clear about the end goal. It's worth spending time agreeing what it is that you want to achieve and writing it down.

For example, if you want a new pedestrian crossing, do you have a specific location in mind? What are the improvements you'd like to see in your local park?

Map out the stakeholders

Make a list of who else might be interested in adding their name to your call for action or be able to help – neighbours, school parents, sports clubs, shops and businesses, your local pub, trade unions, fire station, police, your Ward Councillor, MP, your local paper.

Have a think about how they can help – will your local pub let you meet up in a function room for free; will a local business put up a poster; will the local police lend you a speed gun to measure traffic speeds?

Now you have your supporters lined up with you, the next step is to work out who has the power to give you what you want.

It's also worth thinking about who might be opposed to your call for change and what their arguments might be.



Who has the power to give you what you want?

Navigating the decision-making landscape can be tricky, but it's important to ensure that your campaigning efforts are targeted at the right people or lots of time and energy could be wasted.

Government has many layers from parish councils to mayors of combined authorities, national assemblies and

parliaments. Each has a constitution that outlines how you can engage with them. You can find it on their website, usually under a section called 'the Council and Democracy' like this one for [Manchester City Council](#). This is where you can find out how to submit a question, a petition or speak at a meeting. That is one starting point for your route to change.

Engaging directly with your elected politicians is another good starting point. They already know how the system works and it's their job to represent you and advocate for you.

You have elected representatives both locally and nationally, and you can either email them or meet them at their local advice surgeries. This table has links to find your political representatives:

photo credit: Chris Curry

UK Parliament
[Find your MP](#)

Local Authority
[Find your Councillors](#)

Scotland
[Find your MSP](#)

Wales
[Find your MS](#)

Northern Ireland
[Find your MLA](#)

If you are trying to influence a private company, you can find contact details on the [Companies House website](#).

Your route to change could be as simple as making a request through the right channels. That's why it's always best to make your concerns known directly to the people who have the power to say 'yes!' In other cases, pressure has to be

applied through a series of escalating actions such as petitions, mass emails, speeches, media work, demonstrations, publicity stunts or some gentle, creative craftivism.

In the next few pages, we've set out how you can use different campaigning techniques to raise awareness and apply pressure.

Using social media

In 2023, it was estimated that about 85% of the UK population now uses social media. It's a good platform to share information, connect with others and grow campaign networks.

Creating engaging social media content can raise awareness of your campaign and increase your chances of achieving a positive outcome.

Choosing which social media channels to use



YouGov regularly produces information on the most popular social networks and who uses them. It's worth a look when deciding which social media to use to promote your campaign to the right audience. [The most popular social networks in the UK | Technology | YouGov Ratings.](#)

Building and engaging audiences

Bear in mind that it takes time to build an audience. It's often a lot easier to go into the established space of your audience, rather than pull them into a new space you have just set up.

Vary your content. It needs to be interesting and tailored to the social media platform you are using. Keep messages short and to the point. Mix things up by including links to articles, videos, blogs and infographics. Photos and videos are popular across all social media platforms.

Remember that genuine, authentic engagement is highly valued on all platforms, so reply to people who ask questions or make comments, don't just broadcast your message.

Five Top Tips

- 01** Work out where your audience is.
- 02** Have a clear message.
- 03** Go into their online space.
- 04** Post interesting content.
- 05** Engage with enthusiasm and compassion.



photo credit: Angela Compagnone

How to make a short film

Mobile phones and tablets make it easier to make a short film that you can post to your Facebook group, YouTube and other social media feeds.

Plan ahead

Plan what you want the outcome to look like. Is it a film about a place, people or both? Make a list of all the things that you want to include. If you bring in another volunteer to do the recording then a list of film footage you need will help them plan their filming so you get what you want.

If it's a film about a place, for example to highlight the overdevelopment of a local area, you might want some footage from a distance to give a sense of perspective and some close-ups to show the problems this might cause from a neighbour's house. If you want to save a community asset, see if you can get lots of supporters lined up in front of it or action shots of them using the asset.

If it's about a problem lots of people are experiencing, you might want to have a number of different people talking to camera (known as vox pops). Get interviewees to sign a disclaimer form allowing you to use them on film. You only need one minute of film – two at the most but get plenty because you only want to use the best bits of footage.

When you do interviews and voice-overs, be aware how much sound is around you. It might help to do one or two interviews in a quiet room and you can use them as voice-over material for a different shot in the film.

Equally some background shots are helpful to cover over your edits. You can edit the film on your phone or download software. Try Windows Live, Movie Maker, iMovie, Adobe Premiere Clip, CapCut, Vimeo or Canva.

It's also important to ensure your video has subtitles. This makes it more accessible for users, but also helps when people are scrolling through content, often with the volume turned off. You can add subtitles easily with the software mentioned above.

Top Tip

Check whether filming in landscape or portrait will work best for the platform where your audience is.

Building support through petitions

Once you have a few people on your side, you need to show that this is an issue a lot of people care about. Petitions remain a tried and trusted way to show you have a lot of support and get people in power to listen to you.

Top Tip

Aim for broad appeal and share - the success of petitions is all about the numbers!

A close-up photograph of a dictionary page. The word 'advocacy' is prominently displayed in a large, bold, black font. Below it, the definition is given as 'n. [mass noun] 1 public support for or representation of a particular cause or person, especially by an advocate or lawyer'. The text is slightly blurred, suggesting a shallow depth of field. The background is a light, neutral color.

advocacy /advəkeɪ
■ n. [mass noun]
1 public support for or representation
of a particular cause or person, especially
by an advocate or lawyer
outspoken advocacy
no friends
ession

photo credit: Ineskoleva

The Petition

You can use the template overleaf for going door-to-door, at the school gates or on street stalls.

For sharing on social media try an online system such as [change.org](https://www.change.org) or [38 Degrees](https://www.38degrees.org).

If you want to influence [Parliament](#), devolved authorities or your Council, you can also set up a petition on many of their sites.

Click [here](#) for an example from Brighton and Hove City Council.

Petition Template

ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION: e.g. Parents for Road Safety is a group of local parents who want to make it safer for our children to cross roads in the centre of Anytown.

PETITION TEXT: We the undersigned petition [INSERT NAME OF THE ORGANISATION YOU WANT TO DO SOMETHING] to [INSERT WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO]

Name	Email	Date

By signing this petition, I agree that Parents for Road Safety can stay in touch with me about this campaign. I understand that my data will not be used for any other purpose.

Presenting your petition

Once you are happy with the amount of support, you need to arrange to present your petition. Get in touch with the Democratic Services team of the relevant authority to check dates of meetings or if you have an elected representative on side, ask them to help with this.

The secret of successful petitions is often in the follow up. You want a definite answer about what will happen next. Politicians 'noting' a petition usually means that's as far as it goes. Ask your elected representative to take part in the debate and call for a report or some other action.

Staying Legal

Data protection (GDPR)

If you are going to collect names, addresses and emails of people who support your campaign add a statement to the petition to say that signatories agree to you staying in touch with them and that you will not share their information for another purpose.

Street stalls

You can set up a street stall on any public land providing that it does not cause an obstruction. Be aware that land owned privately or under a PFI scheme means that, legally, you can be asked to move.

Using the media

Local media and online communities are a good space to raise the profile of your story.

Although many newspapers have moved online, some still print hard copies and they are well read by local residents and politicians.

People who drive to work may have the radio tuned to a local station listening out for traffic news. Huge numbers are now part of community Facebook groups or follow bloggers and influencers on social media. This includes local journalists and Local Democracy Reporters.

Start by building a list of local media and try to make personal contact with them.



photo credit: ContentWorks

Contacting journalists

You can phone or email, but it is often easier to set out the main facts and your quote by email. If you make initial contact by phone assume the entire conversation is 'on the record' and could be published.

Keep your emails brief when contacting local journalists. Add a punchy description of the issue to the subject line, e.g. Residents want to save local swimming pool.

Your email should cover:

- The who, why, what, when and where about the campaign – including details of any meetings or publicity stunts. e.g. Protest on 27th June at St. Mary's Leisure Centre.
- The main points of your argument e.g. the Council wants to close the local swimming pool but we're a seaside town and our children need somewhere to learn to swim.
- A quote: Trish Jones, spokesperson for the campaign said: ' We are shocked that the Council is thinking of closing down our pool. We live by the sea and our kids need to learn how to swim for their own safety. Learning to swim is an essential, not a luxury. We will fight this every step of the way!'
- Your contact details: Trish Jones 07912 345 678



photo credit: Curated Lifestyle

Media interviews

- Once you've emailed an outline of your story, be available for an interview.
- Prepare by thinking about the questions you are likely to be asked and how you will answer them.
- Get your important messages in early – interview time goes quickly and can be cut short.
- If you're on the radio, try to create a picture in the mind of the listener and talk about people, rather than in facts and figures.
- Always stay calm and reasonable.
- Smile – it even sounds better on the radio!

Photos

- Most local press and blogs will now accept photos taken on smartphones. Take pictures in the highest resolution possible.
- Action shots – even if posed – are better than a group of people staring at the camera.

Next steps

If you get coverage, share on social media and tag in the journalist and publication. Build a good relationship with the journalist by thanking them and updating on next steps.

Organising a demonstration

The message isn't getting through and the people in power aren't listening – it's time to escalate your campaign to the next level.

A visible demonstration will raise public awareness of your campaign. It will also interest the media.

It galvanises supporters into action and gives them a chance to show they care. They meet other like-minded people and feel part of a movement for change.

You can add names and contact details to your supporter database for the future.

Having high profile supporters along to meet everyone and say a few words will encourage people to join you.

If the weather looks bad, consider a public meeting indoors instead.

The demonstration

It can be as simple as standing outside the Town Hall or at a location that is the focus of your campaign. This might be where young people want a new skate park as in this photo.

Get your creative thinking caps on – you want something simple that is easy for supporters to do and will make for an eye-catching photo. Pictures with everyone wearing the same colour or holding up signs have impact.



Staying Legal

Demonstrations:

Marches:

You can demonstrate on any public land providing that it does not cause an obstruction. Be aware that land owned privately or under a PFI scheme means that you can legally be asked to move. You need to let the police know and agree the route with them.

Public Order Act:

It's illegal to lock-on or be equipped to do so and interfere with national infrastructure. You can find out more on Liberty's website.

Stay in charge of your demonstration – don't allow it to be photobombed or hijacked by other causes.

Top Tip

Organising a public meeting

A public meeting is a good way to explain your issues in more depth and allow people space to ask questions. It also offers a chance to provide entertainment and generate a feel good factor around the campaign. You can sign up supporters and the event itself might generate publicity.



Planning

Organising the mechanics of a public meeting is fairly straightforward – but there are a few tips and tricks to ensuring a good turnout.

- 01 Planning** – choose a date – Monday to Thursday evening is best. Allow plenty of time to get organised, find speakers and publicise your event. Check for clashes such as school holidays or Council meetings.
- 02 Audience** – you want the room to look full, so you need to make a realistic estimate of how many people may come along. Use a free ticketing system like Eventbrite or Brown Paper tickets to encourage sign up, and monitor numbers.
- 03 Speakers** – get a strong Chair and decide who will speak for the campaign. If you can get a high profile speaker too, it will add to the event.
- 04 Materials** – if you have the funds, hand out leaflets that explain the campaign and include a QR code so that people can sign up there and then. A home-made banner makes a great backdrop or can be draped over the speakers' table. Talk to your craftivists!
- 05 Make it fun** – if you can add music, songs, poetry or a film, it will liven things up and make people feel good.

Top Tip

Make it accessible. Use a PA system if you can. It's annoying for people if they can't hear the speakers clearly.

Next steps

- Decide what you want from the meeting and make it clear from the start what the meeting is about so people don't go off on tangents.
- If you want people to sign up and support you, get their details before they drift off.
- Be clear about next steps and what you want people to do.

Staying Legal

Defamation:

A defamatory statement is one which injures the reputation of another person. It can be spoken or written. Speeches can attack a policy but should not attack a person.

Publicity Stunts

Out of all the creatives you could do for your campaign, this is probably one of the higher risk activities, but also one that has the potential to raise the most awareness.

For a stunt to go well, you want to try and cover off as many of the following as possible:

- 01** Have a strong message
- 02** Know a good photographer or be able to afford one
- 03** Be able to take video content of your stunt (in landscape, not portrait)
- 04** Have one or two journalists interested before the stunt takes place

If your group is doing the stunt, make sure you have:

- 01** One person to coordinate the stunt on the day
- 02** One person to take or coordinate photos
- 03** One person to take some film footage to put on social media and share with journalists



Number 10 Downing Street

Handing a petition into Number 10 is a great way to raise awareness of your issue. It's also something you can speak to your MP about if you're in regular contact with them.

You can find out more about organising this kind of stunt on the Working for an MP [website](#).



Craftivism – the art of gentle protest

Craftivism is a non-threatening way of engaging with others through craft activities. It is a gentler way of campaigning but can be very effective.

You can cross-stitch a message to make a mini protest banner; create footprints out of felt, make bunting, facemasks or posters to promote your cause. You can use slogans, inspirational quotes, ask a question or make a statement. You can be serious or humorous. You can post, hand deliver or hang your creation in a public place. This is about campaigning using creativity to get your message across. Whatever you create, it is likely to stand out against all those emails your elected representative receives!

You can do it alone or as a group. Craftivism as a group offers the chance to chat and can create a feeling of solidarity. Working as a group, you might be able to make that banner we mentioned for the public meeting.

You can use craftivist activities to generate awareness of issues by organising small creative sessions in a public place such as outside the Town Hall, your local MP's office or a company.

When people stop and ask you what you are doing, it offers the opportunity to have a conversation in a quiet and non-threatening way.

Here's an example of an action we created for The Big Issue's activists who wanted to support their [Stop Mass Homelessness](#) campaign.

You can find out more about craftivism and the Craftivist Collective on their website, which also offers a range of ideas, kits and books.

Top Tip

Ask for donations to get started. Many people have bits and pieces of craft materials at home.

Staying Legal

You can undertake your craftivist activity on any public land providing that it does not cause an obstruction. Be aware that you can legally be asked to move if you are on land owned privately or under a PFI scheme.

Top tips from other campaigners

"Don't confuse access with influence! Sometimes you are more powerful sitting round the table with your campaign target."

Sometimes, you may be more powerful outside the room, taking public action and winning attention for your cause."

Lianna Etkind,
Partnerships & Campaigns Manager,
Living Wage Foundation

"Don't try to do it alone - winning change isn't always easy, so building a team around you is vital - they'll bring different skills and experience to your campaign, provide a different perspective on how to overcome a problem - and it's always better to celebrate with others when you win."

Tom Baker,
Director of Politics, Participation and Campaigns, Save the Children

"What you want seems obvious and easy. With luck it is. Usually it isn't. To achieve your goals, take care of yourself so you can sustain the effort. Life events will get in the way and you'll need the stamina. It can be done if you are kind to yourself."

Duane Raymond, Founder of FairSay, Campaigning Forum and PostBug

"You can make a huge impact in the world. Learn from others, gaining the skills you need. It's usually more effective to focus your attention on one issue or method of creating change, rather than trying to do everything well."

Marianne Macdonald,
Executive Director, Animals Aotearoa

"Don't be afraid to ask for help - recognise what skills are missing in your group and recruit to fill those gaps. Strength is learning from others and letting people take the lead when it's their area. Try and step back and take a break too. Listen to when others are struggling and let them guilt free take a break - if they care they will come back and if not thank them for taking part."

Sarah Turner, Chair, Supporters Trust at Reading



Photo credit: Monkey Business Images

Case study – Wilson Avenue



Photo credit: [@leksandr Horbach](#)

What was the issue?

Traffic was speeding on Wilson Avenue and there had been 12 serious accidents, with one death and eight serious injuries. Residents' property had been damaged by vehicles going out of control. The road was dangerous to cross to reach the park and nature reserve on the other side. Residents were fed up with the situation and wanted to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.

Who had the power to resolve it and who were the other key stakeholders who could influence the decision?

- The local Council had the power to resolve the matter.
- Stakeholders included the police, other residents, Ward Councillors, the Chair of the Transport Committee, Council officers and the media.

Why was this campaign successful?

The campaigners were clear about what they wanted and identified who could help them work out both where the power lay and the route to make change happen. They built support from over half of their neighbours and evidenced this through a survey. They took their campaign into the Town Hall through the democratic processes and ensured their Ward Councillor spoke up on their behalf.

What were the key stages of the campaign?

- 01 Securing help to navigate the Council processes** – local residents approached their Ward Councillor for help following another traffic incident. The Councillor supported residents to survey their neighbours and bring a deputation (make a speech) to the Transport Committee.
- 02 Building support** – the survey of 100 residents received 75 responses, of which 60 backed the speed reduction. It was important to get more than half the residents supporting the campaign.
- 03 Generating awareness** – the residents contacted the local press to make them aware of the campaign and their speech planned for the Council committee meeting. The campaign achieved sympathetic media coverage.
- 04 Making a speech to the Council's Transport Committee** – a representative of the residents in Wilson Avenue came to the Transport Committee and made a speech. The speech was supported by the Ward Councillor at the meeting.
- 05 Influencing the people with the power to make change happen** – Sussex Police would not support the changes due to the "semi-rural" nature of the road, but it was the Councillors on the Transport Committee who had the power to make the decision. Council officers recommended reducing the speed limit.
- 06 Implementation** – the traffic order was approved a few months later and reported in the local press marking a success for the local campaigners.

Case study – Reading Football Club



Photo credit: Luke Adams



Photo credit: Micah Elwood

What was the issue?

In the summer of 2023, Reading FC was threatened with going out of business, following years of mismanagement by its owners. Like most other football clubs, it is an incredibly important part of the local community and the threat led to a rapid mobilisation of fans. The 'Sell Before We Dai' campaign was launched, which aimed to force the sale of the club and help secure its future.

Who had the power to resolve it and who were the other key stakeholders who could influence the decision?

- Mobilising fans under one banner was key – pulling together groups like the Supporters Trust at Reading (STAR), Club 1871, Elm Park Royals and The Tilehurst End.
- Other stakeholders included the local council, MPs and the media.

Why was this campaign successful?

The campaign was an example of how to draw on expertise within a group of volunteers, which included HR professionals, accountants, civil servants and PR & public affairs experts. The campaign was also an example of not needing to have consensus among a group, while still being able to maintain the campaign. For instance, some members chose to help organise and support non-violent direct actions, whereas others supported other actions such as the march.

What were the key stages of the campaign?

- 01 Securing support from the local council:** the group applied for an Asset of Community Value (ACV) to be placed on the football stadium, in order to allay concerns the stadium could be sold off separately from the club. ACVs are land or buildings where, in the opinion of the local authority, the current use furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.
- 02 The start of nonviolent direct action:** some fans chose to disrupt the matches by throwing tennis balls onto the football pitch. This helped to galvanise fans and raise awareness in the media about the plight of the club.
- 03 Organising a protest march:** 1,500 fans marched from the town centre to the football stadium on a match day. It involved two local MPs, local councillors including the council leader, and a former player.
- 04 Crowdfunding:** the group funded its activities through a crowdfunding campaign, raising several thousands of pounds among fans. This enabled the group to organise several protest actions, which included taking an advertising van outside the Houses of Parliament to highlight the ownership problems at Reading FC and football as a whole.
- 05 Engaging national politicians:** gaining the support of local MPs enabled the group to meet with other MPs, including the shadow sport minister. When a football governance Bill in Parliament was published, the group was asked to provide input and one person called to give evidence to a committee.



Acknowledgements

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Sarah Corbett and the Brighton Argus, for giving us permission to include their photos.



photo credit: Markus Spiske

campaign collective

“You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.”

Mahatma Gandhi.