



How to set up a local campaign group and campaign successfully

Have a clear vision

- Be clear about what you want to achieve
- Choose a name for the campaign group (consider 'Save' or 'Protect' rather than 'Stop' – it is more positive). And make sure it's obvious from your campaign name what you're trying to achieve.
- Set a realistic goal for your campaign (and time-frame) – it is often better to start small.
- Think of a clear, simple message that communicates your aim (something that would look good on a T-shirt/a banner/a placard).

Gather your evidence

- Read up on the background, key players, relevant legislation and council or government policy.
- If your campaign is in response to a planning application, get advice on how the planning system works. Remember - passion is important to motivate your community and has a role to play in influencing councillors etc. But you will need hard planning arguments to have any chance of winning your case.
- Put together a concise, objective argument for your campaign (be prepared to answer difficult questions about the importance of your campaign). This will normally involve arguing that relevant provisions of the Local Plan and/or of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are not being fulfilled, or are being infringed.
- Try to offer solutions, so what would you like people to do differently?

Be organised

- Elect a core Working Group to steer the campaign (eg Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer).
- Open a bank account as you may need to raise a fighting fund! Donations, membership fees or fund-raising events are some of the ways of raising money.
- Do you have any group members with particular knowledge, skills, experience or enthusiasm? How can you use this?
- You may want to obtain charitable status for your campaign group, in which case you will have to qualify as a charity and register with the [Charity Commission](#) (see the [pros and cons of becoming a charity](#)).

Secure your support base

- Promote the campaign group locally to broaden support base / recruit members. For example, you could:
 - Hold a public meeting to launch the campaign;
 - Put news items in Town or Parish newsletter;
 - Have a stall at local events;
 - Set up a website and keep it updated;
 - Establish contact details, ie postal and email addresses, / telephone numbers so you can keep people informed. But remember Data Protection rules, so for example don't use peoples details for other purposes unless you have asked them if you can (see the 8 [Data Protection Principles](#)). Also be sure to keep any personal details securely;
 - Organise a petition, knock on people's doors, produce leaflets and posters, write a letter to your local paper, get the local press to run a story on your campaign);
 - Remember that the local press are interested in a different, good and straightforward story and that pictures can help; and
 - And anything else you think might help!

Make useful allies

- Enlist the support of your Town/Parish Council, local councillors, Mayor, supportive politicians and businesses/local celebrities and other charities with similar aims.

Know who to lobby

- Identify your routes of influence (eg: local MP / councillors).

Communicate

- Set up an email account.
- Consider having a social media presence eg Facebook page / Website / Twitter account - in today's world, these are vital tools but you will need a dedicated person to manage the accounts, and someone you can trust.
- Contact local media - it is important to have a good relationship with local reporter(s).
- Produce a leaflet / a banner / placards / posters.
- Take photographs (if you are campaigning against a proposed housing development, 'before' and 'after' images can be a powerful campaigning tool / photographs of local objectors are useful too – don't forget to include young faces in your images!).

Organise a petition

- This is one of the most simple and effective ways to demonstrate the level of local support for your campaign (you can have copies for people to sign in local shops and businesses).

Hold an event

- This is a good way to inform people about your campaign, to encourage supporters to get to know each other and to raise support of funds. You could use the event to launch the campaign.

Hold a demonstration

- A successful public demonstration, whether it is a march, a media stunt, or a picket line, can provide a fantastic visual image for your campaign.

Fundraising

- Think about what you may need funds for! Leaflets, printing and arranging events costs money. But if you are going to need expert advice you will need a lot more!
- Hold a local fundraising event, for example a pub quiz, a sponsored event or a BBQ.
- Consider setting up a Just Giving account to manage your fundraising.
- In some circumstances, CPRE Oxfordshire may be able to help with managing/holding funds on your group's behalf.

Make sure people know what they have to do

- Help your supporters back your campaign with easy 'asks', such as signing a petition or sending an email. Follow this up with more challenging asks, such as promoting the campaign on social media, giving money, writing to their local MP or joining a demonstration/rally.
- If you are campaigning against a proposed development, securing a large number of letters of objection is important (at a hearing in front of a Planning Inspector the 'number of objections' tells him/her, more than any other mechanism the degree of local opposition) – circulating a draft letter for signature (by post or email) can be helpful in gathering objections.

Get Expert Advice

- Barrister or Planning Consultant (this will cost money!).
- Need not Greed Oxfordshire: www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk
- Campaign to Protect Rural England - [Planning Help](#) (8 simple steps to take if you want to find out more about a planning application, and support or challenge it).
- Campaign to Protect Rural England, Oxfordshire: www.cpreoxon.org.uk (CPRE is able to offer local campaign support, but you may also wish to join CPRE in its work to protect rural Oxfordshire).
- CoVOP (Community Voice on Planning): <http://covop.org/>

Assess how you are doing

- Don't forget to assess how you are doing *throughout* your campaign (ie number of members, number of 'hits' on the website, media coverage, etc).
- Assess what works eg where have you been successful? And what tactics are not working? What still needs to be done?
- Build on your successes and rewrite your action plan.
- Celebrate/publicise your successes with your members/supporters!

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