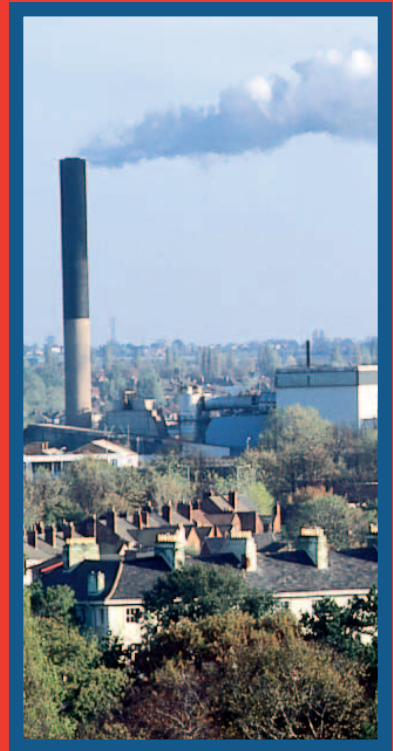


How to win

Campaign against
incinerators 



FRIENDS *of the*
earth
for the planet for people

Written by Sarah Oppenheimer on behalf of Friends of the Earth

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Friends of the Earth works to protect and improve the conditions for life on Earth, now and for the future.

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The basics of Part 4 organising a campaign

At its simplest, campaigning is about getting organised to change something. We have the right to be involved in decisions that change our lives and unless we exercise that right, those in positions of power can do what they want to with a minimum of public opposition. We want change – whether it’s getting a pedestrian crossing near to the local school or tackling a local incinerator – so people are getting together with other people and making their views known.

This section deals with the basics of how to get started and 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. 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

⊙ ⊙ ⊙ **Top Tip** ⊙ ⊙ ⊙

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Campaign against incinerators

- ⊙ give your group a regular income, for example if people pay a small membership fee.

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

Top Tip

Good meetings can make all the difference between a group feeling motivated and dynamic, or a group feeling stuck in a rut.

3 Get organised: the basics of setting up a group

Now that people are interested and working together, the next step is to establish a campaign group. 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 in the future. To keep a group running it is important that 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 Spread the work load

Groups can fail if one job involves far too much work which tends to be either the chair or co-ordinator. Avoid depending on one person. It 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:

Campaign against incinerators

- ⦿ 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 that 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. Overall, ensure you structure your group to meet your campaign needs.

⦿⦿⦿ **Top Tip** ⦿⦿⦿

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 such as "Wanted" posters. This enables people to approach you, as well as allowing you to target specific skills

Part 4

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

⊙ ⊙ ⊙ **Top Tip** ⊙ ⊙ ⊙

To recruit members, build on your group's successes and keep your messages locally-relevant.

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

Campaign against incinerators

- ⊙ 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”. Don’t 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 to roll in, you’ll need to think about how to manage

Part 4

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. Other tips include:

- ⦿ 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

⦿⦿⦿ **Top Tip** ⦿⦿⦿

Don’t be afraid to ask for funds to run your campaigns – you don’t get what you don’t ask for.

local tax office.

8 Get the message across

Campaign against incinerators

As campaigners we are competing for people's attention in a noisy, busy world and against people who have large media and advertising budgets. You do not need a big budget to get people's attention though it can clearly help. What you do need to do is pay attention to 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?

Top Tip

To get your message across, plan and prepare well ahead.

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 eg 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. For example, if your message contains a health aspect, why not display leaflets at the local gym or swimming pool? If food, the obvious place is outside a supermarket.

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 your message over. 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, be succinct and grab attention.

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

Top Tip

When designing materials for your campaign, establish up front what the aims of the materials are. This is known as a brief.

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 supposed to be. 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 the poster is aimed at?
- ⊙ where the poster will be displayed?
- ⊙ how the poster will be reproduced (eg, photocopying/printing?)
- ⊙ are there any logos to be included?
- ⊙ how people will know who is talking to them, what details, phone numbers and web addresses will be included?

Find out if your leaflet or poster is going to work well by trying it out on your audience before it is printed. Don't just check that there are no spelling mistakes or wrong phone numbers. Ask your tester if they can tell you what the key message is. You may find that your family's first impressions are very helpful.

Campaign against incinerators

10 Get your message across through the media

Media coverage is by far the quickest, cheapest and most effective way to reach the people you want to hear your message. 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 include:

- ⊙ every media organisation works to deadlines. Find out what they are
- ⊙ know who 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 use again and again
- ⊙ 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, put the words “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

Part 4

- ⊙ 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 using 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 short – two sides of A4 in a fairly large typeface is really the maximum. Aim to use just a single side of A4

⊙ Top Tip ⊙ ⊙ ⊙

⊙ send it out – distribut

Get your message out to the media – it’s the quickest, cheapest and most effective way to reach large numbers of people.

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.

For more information on all the issues covered in this section, see Friends of the Earth’s *How to Win – A Guide to Successful Community Campaigning*.