

Our Bright Future Introduction to campaigning



Step 1: Listening

The first step is listening. This way you create strong relationships with your community, you will find potential allies for the campaign, and will start to understand what the problems are in your community and what motivates people.

In community campaigning, that process of gaining an understanding of the community through conversation is called a 'listening campaign'. Successful campaigning begins by building relationships with people and organisations so that you can work together.

It's highly likely that more than one issue will come up in your listening campaign! Try to find the most popular common issue.

Step 2: Bringing people together

The next step is to bring together the people who have strong relationships with a lot of people, those people will be your campaign leaders.

Remember that whilst different people will probably have slightly different interests, by bringing them together they can find out what they have in common.

Just getting people into one room can be quite a task! So good planning and lots of personal contact is key. Providing drinks and food can really help!

Once you have identified your leaders and a shared common interest, it's time to agree what to act on. It is essential at this point to be specific about your campaign, so you'll need to identify the problem, issue and solutions together.



Step 3: Pick your issue

A good campaign starts with an issue that is deeply held and widely felt.

Deeply held – are the people affected sufficiently concerned or angry or passionate about the issue to want to engage with, and take part in the campaign?

Widely felt – does the issue affect enough people across the whole community?

Make sure you also think about what you and your team is passionate about - after all, you're the ones who will be making it happen.

Step 4: A creative and realistic solution to the problem

Finally, you need to come up with a creative and realistic solution. Ideally it should be possible to explain it in a single sentence. If you can't easily explain your solution in a sentence, then you probably need to break it down more. Remember you can collapse several things into a single ask.

By proposing solutions to specific issues and winning, you increase the participation and leadership of people in your campaign team, and you also move towards tackling the bigger problem.

Is the campaign worthwhile and winnable?

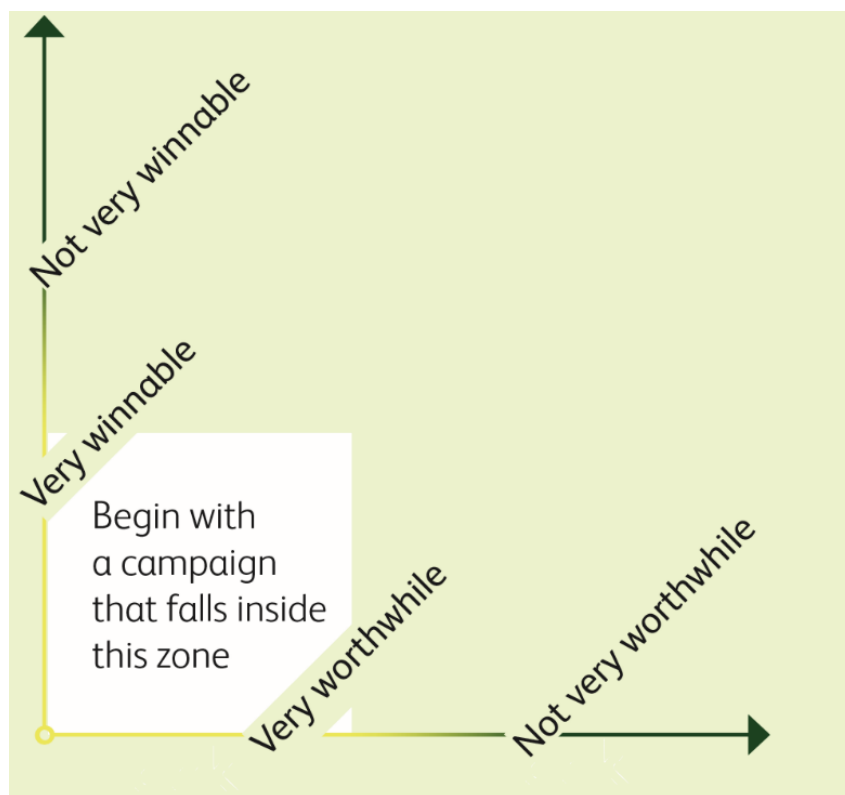
It's important to consider whether your community campaign is both worthwhile and theoretically winnable. This decision needs to be taken by the group/team rather than just by any one person to ensure that you are all in agreement on the direction your campaign is taking. Sharing the decision making will help your team to be inclusive and make sure that everyone can commit time and energy to the chosen campaign.

Questions to ask to determine if the campaign is winnable:

- Is your proposal consistent with the stated values of the campaign target?
- Is your proposal consistent with public opinion? Can you frame it so that it resonates with the values your community holds?
- Is your target likely to be particularly receptive because of an upcoming opportunity?
- How close is the target to you, geographically and in terms of relationships? (the closer the target to you in relational and geographical terms the more winnable your campaign)

Questions to ask to determine if the campaign is worthwhile:

- How many people will benefit if you win? (generally, the more people who benefit, the more worthwhile)
- Does your proposal tackle the root cause of the issue in a long-term way, or is it a temporary sticking plaster?
- Considering that everything is part of the environment, will this local action contribute to helping the global environment?



Step 5: Write your campaign plan

Follow these headings to create your own campaign plan.

Aim	A short statement setting out what you hope to achieve because of the campaign
Objectives	Statements which define specific steps to be taken which together will help you to achieve this aim
Campaign target	The one person who has the power to make the change. This will tend to be the specific person who can make the decision. This is the person you are seeking to have a face-to-face negotiation meeting with
Allies	Other named individuals and groups that are, or could become, supportive of your proposal because of your actions
Timelines	Key dates for meetings of the group to plan and prepare the actions, and dates of the actions themselves
Tactics	The actions you will take to get a reaction from your campaign target and that will lead to the achievement of your aim.

Or, put more simply:

Aim and Objectives	What
Campaign target and Allies	Who
Timelines	When
Tactics	How

Step 6: Evaluation

Evaluating an action or negotiation is an important part of organising community campaigns. It's a chance to assess whether the action has generated a reaction. It's also an opportunity to learn from the experience and use any opportunities that arise from the action to bring about social change within the community.

When you're planning any action, or negotiation, make sure that you plan a brief evaluation meeting straight after it (or as soon as you can), so that you don't forget what happened.

1. Check in	<p>Everyone who helped to plan and deliver the action should be there, if possible</p> <p>Ask the group to describe in one word how they feel after the action. This is a form of assessing the general mood in the group after an action</p> <p>Make sure this is short and snappy. If the group is large, call on a few people to save time</p>
2. Recap the main elements of the action	<p>Go through the main 'parts' of the action, such as the opening words, what a local councillor said, the closing remarks etc.</p> <p>Probe people's responses with questions such as, 'how did we do at laying out our proposals, who stood out?' 'How did the interaction with the target go?'</p> <p>Acknowledge and applaud those who played roles in the action</p> <p>Other points to cover: any press coverage, logistics/parking, music, visuals, timings</p>
3. Assess what was accomplished	<p>Actions and negotiations should generate a reaction. Assess whether the main goals of the action have been met</p> <p>Consider whether the action or negotiation has created any change</p> <p>Consider whether your action could have had any unplanned consequences – positive or negative</p> <p>Part of the purpose of an action is to develop your group's confidence and skills to build your power. So, ask yourselves, are you more powerful than you were before the action?</p>
4. Learning and conclusion	<p>What lessons can be drawn from the action that could contribute towards future campaigns?</p> <p>To summarise the evaluation, ask participants to grade the action e.g. A (the best) to E (the worst)</p> <p>What would you do differently next time?</p>