



# how to campaign and lobby

a **CNet**  
guide for  
voluntary and  
community  
groups



**CNet**  
EMPOWERING  
COMMUNITIES

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*You can also download a copy of this booklet and others in the series by going on our website:*  
[www.cnet.org.uk](http://www.cnet.org.uk)

## 1. So why Campaign?

Campaigning is about changing things for the better, by identifying a problem, making decision makers aware of the problem and then persuading them to take action to resolve the problem.

But before you or your group launch into a campaign, be aware it can take time and you need to be committed plus things won't always go to plan, so you need to ask yourself a number of questions;

- ★ Is this issue really important to me?
- ★ Does it affect my family, my friends and me or where I live or work?
- ★ How will I feel if I don't try to do something about it?
- ★ What can I do about it?

You also need to make sure that there is a real need to set up a campaign, i.e. are you sure there are plans to build a large supermarket on the local sports field or is it just a rumour, in other words do your research (see the section on research).

There are also times when a matter or concern can be resolved without the need for a campaign, the local authority or developers might be happy to talk to you about your concerns and amend their actions accordingly.

Also check to see if there are any groups already in existence challenging the same cause. If that is the case maybe you could join forces, if not and you are still keen to do something about a particular issue the earlier you start up a campaign the better your changes are of influencing the final outcome, as although it is not impossible it is harder to make an influence once an official decision has been made.

## 2. Setting up a Group

If you feel that there is something worth campaigning for in your neighbourhood, then there's a strong possibility that there'll be someone else who'll have similar opinions, so do a little delving around and;

- ★ Talk to your friends, neighbours and family. Find out if any of them are prepared to take

action with you, see if any of them know anyone else who might be interested.

- ★ Look at getting publicity for the group, if people hear about you, they may contact you to see how they can get involved. (See section on publicity).
- ★ See if there is already a group campaigning about the issue, it's easier to join an existing group than starting from scratch, it also saves time.

## 3. Getting the Group Organised

So you've set up a group. Now you need to focus yourselves by identifying the group's objectives and allocate roles for your members.

### Identifying your objectives

Make sure the whole group agrees on your aims and is involved in setting them. Work out a set of specific and tangible goals, this helps in keeping your group focused.

### Name your group

Give your group a name. Be creative, use an acronym or a play on words this will help put your message across, it could also make people curious and want to either join you or find out more about the group.

### Have specific roles for your members

A group can disband if the workload isn't distributed evenly. Look at the roles your group needs and divide them amongst the members. Try to match the jobs with the skills members have, define the roles of each job to avoid confusion.

The actual roles will depend on who's in your group, but you could include the following;

**Campaign Co-ordinator:** to organise the campaign and oversee the strategy.

**Group Organiser:** to receive information and distribute around the members and also to make sure meetings are arranged and minuted.

**Publicity Officer:** to liaise with the media and could also represent the group at external events and meetings.

**Membership Secretary:** to coordinate the membership, by recording their membership and collect any subscription fees.

**Treasurer:** to look after the group's finances. Draw up a constitution – draw up some basic rules on how your group should be run and the responsibilities within it, e.g. how does the group come to a decision, how often will you meet. This will form the basis of a constitution. If you decide to apply for funding, this is a document, funders will ask to see. Contact your local CVS for help in putting one together. See the Useful Contacts section for details. They can also help in the other aspects of setting up a group. Also see CNet's booklet 'How to Develop your Community group'.

### **Make your group contactable**

Make sure people can contact you, have an address, this could be the address of someone in the group, preferably, the coordinator's, group organiser's or publicity officer's address. If you are able to use a room or an office in a community centre, you may want to use their address. Seek permission from the centre manager first though, so they are aware that post may be sent there. You could also consider setting up a post office box (PO Box). If you've got the know-how you might want to set up a website as well.

### **A bank account**

This is essential if money is coming into the group, speak to your local CVS on advice on setting one up.

### **Campaign timetable**

Plan dates and times of your meetings and events and find out dates for other meetings that may affect your campaign such as council meetings and deadlines for funding applications.

## **4. Publicity**

Effective publicity might help you gain more members or lead to better relations with others in the community; it could also help ensure that your group is seen as more legitimate or professional. Be creative, the most effective publicity campaigns are the ones that stand out in the crowd. Decide on your audience, if you are campaigning in a village or an estate, then posters and leaflets would be effective, where as if you were looking at campaigning across the district, then as well as

posters and leaflets, look at getting articles in Newspapers and interviews on local radio and television. Also think about the resources you have available, a large established group might well have enough members to push leaflets through everyone's letter boxes, whilst a small group would be struggling, so this is where building links and partnerships comes in useful i.e. passing leaflets onto another group and asking to hand them out to their members and groups, or even producing them for you. Outlined below are some handy tips for effective publicity;

★ **Posters** - make sure they are big enough to read; usually A4 or A3 will do and make sure that they stand out. Make them short and snappy, with eye catching art work and give a telephone number for more information. Colour posters are very noticeable but can be expensive to copy. By using a clever design or logo and coloured paper, single coloured posters can be just as eye catching. Computers can produce very high quality posters but so can someone with an artistic flare.

★ **Leaflets** - can give more information than posters, but like the posters they need to be eye catching and the text needs to be snappy and to the point, bear in mind that the question your reader will be asking is 'what's in it for me'.

★ **Newsletters** – can now be produced quite easily from most computers and can be an effective way of getting your campaign across, but they can also contribute to the ever growing pile of junk mail that arrives on our door steps, so you need to think who your target audience will be.

★ **Local Media** – people are often wary of journalists, but generally speaking, those on local papers and radio stations are interested in what's going on in their local area. However, remember your story will be competing with several others, so again make it eye-catching and think about whether there's a good photo opportunity there, remember the old saying - 'a picture paints a thousand words.'

Whatever information you produce as part of your campaign it needs to be checked and double checked, you need to get your facts right, do not

make claims or accusations that you cannot prove. If you write something that cannot be backed up, the credibility of your campaign could come into question and it could land you a very large law suit and there is no legal aid for libel cases and in such cases it's up to you to prove what you have written is true. This was the case for a couple of people who were involved in producing a 'What's wrong with McDonalds' leaflet. They were taken to court by the company and it resulted in them being ordered to pay £60,000 damages as they were unable to prove all the allegations made against McDonalds.

So when putting material together bear in mind the following;

- ★ *Don't exaggerate your claims* – a factory may produce certain chemicals; however for you to suggest that babies will be born deformed as a result may get you into trouble.
- ★ *Don't rely on the literal meaning* - if someone was guilty of shop lifting once, calling them a thief in a way which might suggest that they are still doing it, could give rise to a libel charge. So be wary when referring to events in the past.
- ★ *Be aware of innuendos* – comments you make may not appear defamatory at face value, but greater knowledge of that person or situation may make the remark problematic because of the innuendo, for example to say that Fred Smith drives a 4 wheel drive, might sound harmless enough. But people who know that Mr. Smith is the chairperson of the local public transport committee, the innuendo of the statement is that he is hypocritical.
- ★ *Quoting what others have said* – publishing defamatory remarks about organisations and people within them can also lead to you being sued for libel, so don't repeat them unless you can prove them.
- ★ *Drawing up unprovable conclusions* - don't draw unverifiable conclusions from basic facts. For example seeing someone sat in their front garden when you go past in the morning and then seeing them there when you go past again in the evening, doesn't mean that they've been sitting there all day.

- ★ *Repeating rumours* – it is inadvisable to repeat rumours unless you are in position to verify them. Adding 'allegedly' is not enough to get you out of a libel suit, if it goes that way.

Bradford CVS run a range of training courses which include producing effective posters, leaflets and newsletters as well as effective media skills as do BRC and CNet contact them for details of their training (See the Useful Contacts section) Also see CNet's booklet 'How to Sell Yourself' for further tips and advice on dealing with the media and producing effective posters, leaflets and newsletters as well as presentation techniques.

## 5. Holding a Public Meeting

Holding a public meeting is another way to get people involved and to gauge the feeling of the local community. This section gives you some useful tips.

### Organising a meeting

Make sure the meeting has a clear purpose and has a clear agenda set out, decide on a date, time and venue for the meeting, then publicise it throughout the neighbourhood (see Publicity section), for maximum effect.

### Choosing a venue

Where you hold the meeting is very important. It must be easy to reach, with decent parking, a room in a local community centre, church or school are often available for booking, check the DIVA website ([www.divabradford.org.uk](http://www.divabradford.org.uk)) or contact your local CVA for details on community venues. A function room in a pub or club is somewhere else you might consider.

The room should be a reasonable size but not too big. Try not to use a theatre style room with fixed seating, this can be too formal, if you have control of how the chairs are set out, you can create an informal setting which will encourage people to participate. See CNet's booklet 'How to Sell Yourself' for further information on communication and presentation techniques and tips on presentations skills.

### Chairing the meeting

You or someone else needs to chair the meeting, their responsibilities would be to:

- ★ Open the meeting.

- ★ Make sure the meeting sticks to the agenda.
- ★ See that everyone who wants to, gets a chance to have their say and that no one dominates the meeting.
- ★ Stop personal attacks.
- ★ Doesn't allow the meeting to drag on meaninglessly and draws it to a close.

### Keeping a record

You also need someone to record any decisions and proposals that are made, if any actions are necessary and who is going to act on them.

See our booklet 'How to Develop your Community Group' for further information on chairing and recording a meeting.

### Use of a speaker

At your public meeting it is essential that someone is prepared to make their voice heard and make a speech. This could be the founder member of the group or the Chair rather than an invited guest (though they could be used in addition to), as an invited guest may not be as well informed as your group member.

An effective speech is important for a number of reasons, as it could inspire and gain new support, build morale amongst existing members and be a good way of presenting your case in official quarters.

Public speaking need not be as daunting as it seems, you just need to be aware of the following;

- ★ *Introduction* – you need to engage the audience immediately, so the first sentence is vital. This could be done by starting with a quote, statistic or fact.
- ★ *Know your facts* -research your subject.
- ★ *Give it the personal touch* – your audience will identify with you and your cause if you add stories and anecdotes, be careful though.
- ★ *Conclusions* – when concluding your speech Don't begin with 'in conclusion...' - this will more then likely result in the audience stop listening. Instead quickly sum up all your points and finish with something positive or upbeat about the possibility of changing things or with a question.
- ★ *Keep to time* – rehearse your speech before the event and time it.

Finally avoid the following;

- ★ Speeches that go on too long.
- ★ Mumbling – make sure your audience can hear you.
- ★ Don't read from a script without looking up, you need to make eye contact with the audience.
- ★ Don't waffle – keep focused.

There's further information about tips for public speaking and presentations in our booklet 'How to Sell Yourself'.

## 6. Building Links

Effective networking is a key campaigning skill and it's something that can give a boost to your group and gain you useful contacts. It can also raise your profile and make your group more credible because you'll represent a more diverse cross section of the community.

Contacting other organisations in your area is also a good way of tapping into existing networks. The more groups and organisations you link in with the more help and advice you could get, from providing activists, to helping with resources, (room hire, photocopying, etc.). Groups such as Resident and Tennant Associations, local businesses, schools, youth clubs and community groups can be useful allies as could local councillors and MPs. Also check and see if there are other groups that are well established in other parts of the district, who are campaigning on similar issues that might be able to give you useful pointers, such as what pitfalls there could be.

## 7. Planning a Campaign

Now you have a group with active members all buzzing with excitement and wanting to 'change the world' you need to come up with a 'Cunning Plan' to achieve your aims. The best way to do this is break your ultimate goal into smaller chunks, don't start by staging a mass protest through the streets, start with putting a petition together (see the section on Petitions). The progress of each campaign is different and not always predictable, expect the unexpected however there are a number of things you can do as part of your campaign to help it run as smoothly as possible, these are outlined in the following sections.

## 8. Research

In order to run a successful campaign you need the right information and you need to know how to use it effectively in reports, leaflets and any other publicity you produce. You should know everything there is to know about your issue, including all the background information, the major players, the relevant government policy legislation and if necessary any planning guidelines. The more information you've got, the better the chance you will be listened to. It's also useful to have a list of groups, organisations and key people who are in some way or other connected to your cause, whether they are affected, involved or like minded. Research can also help you to;

- ★ Stay on top of developments surrounding your issue.
- ★ To look at new ways of tackling your issue.
- ★ Find more evidence to support your campaign.
- ★ Highlight groups and individuals that may be less sympathetic to your campaign as well as those who may be like minded.

Sources of information can come from numerous places, if your campaign is local, the Council will hold a lot of information.

The council meeting diaries, agendas and minutes are available for public view. They also run local consultations and host scrutiny panels on a range of issues, such as road safety or the sighting of new businesses (see the section on Public Consultations). These panels call on councillors, council staff and on other people to give evidence about the issue under scrutiny. They then collect the relevant evidence and then give their recommendations. All this information is available to the public.

The council also has a number of departments that cover education, the environment, housing, leisure and recreation, the community and social services and these departments will have policies, reports and statistics which could prove useful in your research.

The council will also have information on trading standards, food safety and consumer protection. Have a look on their website for further information: [www.bradford.gov.uk](http://www.bradford.gov.uk)

If your group is campaigning about a product or a service, it would make sense to get in touch with the relevant regulatory body.

Here are some examples;

- ★ *Advertising Standards Authority*  
[www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk) - holds information on advertising standards
- ★ *British Standards*  
[www.bsi-global.com](http://www.bsi-global.com) – holds information on the required standards and specifications on a whole range of products.
- ★ *The Audit Commission*  
[www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk) – is an independent body that ensures that public money is spent efficiently. It also commissions reports and surveys on a whole host of areas, such as local government performance or housing standards.
- ★ *Companies House*  
[www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk) – is the government's company registry and information source. One of its roles is to provide information to the public about a company's status, annual returns and accounts. It also holds information on companies that have dissolved and on directors that have become disqualified. You can find the names and addresses of companies and for a small fee get hold of key documents and reports and company director's details.

Government departments are another source of information. They have news on the latest government initiatives, legislation, publications, reports statistics as well as information on any up coming consultations. All this information is available on their websites. Below is a list of these departments and a brief outline of what areas they are responsible for.

- ★ *The Ministry of Defence*  
[www.mod.uk](http://www.mod.uk) - is responsible for the armed forces, the defence policy and arms acquisition.
- ★ *The Department for Health*  
[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) - is responsible for the health of the public; it also has information on hospitals, league tables, research on the policy and results for treatment of various diseases,

information on the latest research and statistics.

- ★ *The Foreign and Commonwealth Office*  
www.fco.gov.uk - is responsible for foreign affairs; it also has a library with a collection that goes back to the 18th century which includes historic reports and parliamentary papers. It also has a list of all foreign representation and embassies in London.
- ★ *The Home Office*  
www.home.gov - is responsible for the internal affairs in England and Wales. It provides research reports, statistics, policy development and news on crime, policing terrorism, drugs, immigration, citizenship, race, passports and community affairs.
- ★ *The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform*  
www.berr.gov.uk - provides information for business, employees and consumers on consumer policy, employment regulations and business support. It is also responsible for science and technology, manufacturing and energy.
- ★ *Her Majesty's Treasury*  
www.hm-treasury - is responsible for the UK's public finances. They also have information on taxation, work and welfare, pensions, public-private partnerships and documents on financial services.
- ★ *The Department of Work and Pensions*  
www.dwp.gov.uk - is responsible for benefits and welfare for people of working age, pensioners, families and people with disabilities. It also provides research and statistics for this area.
- ★ *The Department for Constitutional Affairs*  
www.dca.gov.uk - is responsible for issues around justice, courts magistrates, judges and QCs, freedom of information, access to justice and people's rights.
- ★ *The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*  
www.defra.gov.uk - is responsible for animal health and welfare, environmental protection, export and trade, farming, fisheries, food and

drink, horticulture, wildlife, countryside and rural development.

- ★ *The Department for Culture, Media and Sport*  
www.culture.gov.uk - is responsible for tourism, sport, gambling, racing, arts, broadcasting, the creative industries, libraries, galleries, museums and the National Lottery.
- ★ *The Department for Children, Schools and Families*  
www.dfes.gov.uk - is responsible for education and training and provides information on school standards, performance tables, the national curriculum, higher education policy plus all the latest research and statistics on education.

Other sources of research that you could tap into, could be from charities, pressure groups and think tanks, groups such as:

- Age Concern* - www.ageconcern.org.uk
- The Children's Society* - www.childrenssociety.org.uk
- Friends of the Earth* - www.foe.co.uk
- and *Green Peace* - www.greenpeace.org.uk

All can offer help and advice in their subject area.

They also produce useful downloads on a range of subjects from campaigning to fundraising.

This research can be done in many ways, surfing the net, (contact your local library or community centre if you don't have internet access), visiting the local library and public buildings, phoning round and reading newspapers and magazines, many of them have features and opinions as well as in depth accounts and details. Media UK has an extensive list of contacts for newspapers, magazines, radio and television - www.mediauk.com

*BRC (Bradford Resource Centre and Community Statistics Project* - see Useful Contacts), can help you undertake research. As well as researchers to help you, BRC has broadband internet access available and houses a useful library containing campaign and current affairs information along with a range of council documents, magazines, reports and pamphlets, as does CNet also contact your local CVS.

## 9. Using Official Legislation to help your campaign

Doing your research and familiarising yourself with legislations could produce a double whammy for your campaign, for example you could discover a long forgotten local by law that prohibits development of a particular piece of land you are trying to protect.

So where can you find this information then? Well you could start with the information held with the council. They produce forests of documents, from planning reports, to local history information as well as council and committee minutes, statistics, reports, research studies, policies and guidelines, by- laws and tourist information. Much of this information is now available to the general public due to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. So this information can be gained from either your local library or the Central Library in Bradford or by going on the council's website: [www.bradford.gov.uk](http://www.bradford.gov.uk) .

If you don't have internet access yourself, most local libraries have internet services available to the public or contact your local community centre. Bradford Resource Centre also has this service.

To find out information on central government legislation, such as Bills and acts of Parliament, look up the houses of Parliament website: [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) . Also on this website there is information on what Green and White Papers are being discussed.

A Green Paper is a discussion paper that a particular governmental department might issue. It sets out proposals that are still in a planning stage and invites comments from the public. A White Paper is the second stage in this process, so it could be worth your while checking to see if there are any public consultations going on that may be connected to your campaign (see the section on Public Consultations).

Also on this site are transcripts of debates that happen in the Houses of Parliament, these are updated every day, this could be useful when trying to identify an MP or Minister who could help your cause (see section on lobbying your political representative).

## 10. Petitions

A petition is a formal request made to the Government (Central or Local), to someone in authority or an organisation. It is used to show the strength of feeling on an issue by getting as many people as possible to add their signature to the request. They are a good way of gaining extra support as well as building a network of followers, they can also influence a decision. However they have no legal force and no one is legally bound to do anything requested in a petition, no matter how many people sign it.

When you are thinking of putting a petition together you need to decide who you want to receive it, as different organisations and institutions have different requirements for it's wording. For example, if it is going to the Houses of Parliament, there is a definite format (described later), but in general keep it short and direct and include the following;

- ★ Address whoever you are petitioning.
- ★ Write a short statement outlining the problem.
- ★ Use the Phrase: 'we the undersigned'.
- ★ Clearly request what you want doing.
- ★ Include the name and address of everyone who has signed it.
- ★ Each sheet should have the request written on it.

So such a petition could look like this:

*To: Any Town Council*

*Recent research done by Bradford and Airedale PCT, shows that an apple a day keeps the doctor away.*

*We the undersigned therefore ask Any Town Council to provide free apples to all people living in the Any town area.*

*Signature  
Name  
Address  
Signature  
Name  
Address*

Petitions going to the Houses of Parliament should follow a particular format, which includes the following:

- ★ The petition should be clearly addressed to the House of Commons and indicate who it is from.
- ★ It should then contain at least one paragraph stating the reasons why you are petitioning the House.
- ★ It should then contain a clear request to the House which is within its powers to grant.
- ★ The petition should then be signed off.

So such a petition could look like this:

*To the House of Commons*

*The Petition of Mr. M. Uppett and others,*

*Declares that Farmers shouldn't have to put all their eggs in one basket.*

*We the petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons make money available for farmers to buy more baskets.*

*Yours sincerely, the Petitioners*

*Signature*

*Name*

*Address*

*Signature*

*Name*

*Address*

## 11. Public Consultations

Public consultations are a way you can influence national and local policies before they are put in place, this might include issues that you are campaigning about, so it might be worthwhile putting your point of view forward in such a consultation.

- ★ **Local Consultations** - Most major changes to council provisions and services as well as other organisations that provide services can not go ahead before they first consult with the public, these would include;
  - ★ **Education** – Local Education Authorities (LEA) have to consult on school closures and individual schools would have to do the same on issues around sale of school buildings or land.
  - ★ **Policing** – local police forces consult on specific policies, such as how they are planning to tackle drugs. They also are obliged to consult on a yearly basis on its policing plan.

- ★ **Planning** – Every proposal for a local development has to undergo a period of public consultation. The council's planning department is responsible for this.
- ★ **Health** – new strategies for mental health care and closure of hospital units have to be put forward for public consultation by the Primary Care Trust (PCT).
- ★ **Transport** – any changes to the local transport plan, i.e. major road works or change in public transport provision has to have a consultation process before it can proceed.

### National Consultations

Have become an important part of the policy making process, but despite this, there is no obligation to consult on everything as sometimes the Government needs to respond quickly to certain issues, particularly if they think national security is at risk, however, when the government publishes a Green Paper (see the Using Official Legislation to Help Your Organisation), it begins the formal period of consultation on the proposed policy and the Government then has an obligation to follow certain procedures, which include;

- ★ Have a reasonable timeframe for the public to have their say.
- ★ Clearly set out the questions they wish to address.
- ★ Publish the relevant documents in a concise and simple form.
- ★ Distribute the documents and information as widely as possible.
- ★ Analyse the results fairly and record the decisions finally taken.

You can find out about up and coming consultations by going on the Houses of Parliament website: [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

## 12. Lobbying your Political Representative

Politicians have an obligation to represent the interest and concerns of everyone in their constituency, so it could strengthen your cause if you get their backing. Remember without your vote, they don't have a job. Theoretically your concerns are their concerns, they want to be kept

informed, know how good a job they're doing, because they need your vote in the next election. They have access to policy makers and committees and they can:

- ★ Speak in City Hall or Parliament during debates to highlight your cause.
- ★ Change Government policies.
- ★ Change the law.

A politician voicing support for a cause is more often than not, considered newsworthy by the media and because they (Politicians) have obligations to their constituents, they might support your campaign by either speaking at a public meeting or by writing a public statement or both.

There are a variety of politicians whom you can lobby, each have different powers, so make sure you check what those powers are before you contact them.

#### **What an MP can do for your Campaign**

If your campaign is something local to your area, contact your local MP, Bradford is divided into 5 Areas or Constituencies, Bradford North, West, South, Shipley and Keighley. They are elected for 5 years. Your local library will have details on who your local MP is and how to contact them locally or look up [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) .

If your campaign is addressing a long established issue, you could contact an MP who has already demonstrated an interest, as they may be more sympathetic to your cause. There may also be a cross party group of MPs already working on your issue.

Don't forget though that Parliament only addresses issues relating to central government. You can though lobby MPs to:

- ★ Vote or block a new law in Parliament.
- ★ Mention your campaign in a Parliamentary debate.
- ★ Present a petition to Parliament
- ★ Put forward a question in Parliament
- ★ Propose an Early Day Motion in Parliament (a request for an emergency debate in the Commons).
- ★ Write to a more prominent MP or Minister on your behalf.

#### **What a Councillor can do for your Campaign**

Bradford Metropolitan District is divided into 30 Wards, each have 3 sitting Councillors who serve for 3 years. Within some of these wards there are Town or Parish Councils as well, this the case in Clayton and Ilkley for example. Your local library will have this information and who your local Councillors are and how to contact them or look up: [www.bradford.gov.uk](http://www.bradford.gov.uk) and look under the council and democracy.

You can lobby a Councillor to:

- ★ Vote in a certain way at Council meetings
- ★ Change the council's spending priorities.
- ★ Change the council's services
- ★ Try to reverse council decisions that have already been made
- ★ Set up an advisory or working committee on an issue.

If the council is hung, i.e. equally divided between 2 or 3 political parties (Bradford has been for a number of years), you may find councillors particularly keen to respond to your campaign. And if you or your group run a successful campaign, your cause might be made into a council election issue.

#### **What a MEP can do for your Campaign**

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are elected on a regional basis. England, Scotland and Wales have been divided into 11 Regions each electing a different number of MEPs dependant on the number of voters in the region. The Bradford District is included in the Yorkshire and Humberside Region which elects 6 MEPs. These MEPs represent the region as whole rather than specific districts within it. Your local library will have information on who the region's MEPs are and how to contact them or look up: [www.bradford.gov.uk](http://www.bradford.gov.uk) and look up under the council and democracy. You could also look up [www.europarl.eu.int](http://www.europarl.eu.int) for further information.

One the main tasks of a MEP is to vote on laws in the European Parliament. They also sit on Parliamentary committees, where they scrutinise and modify new European laws before they are passed.

You can lobby an MEP to;

- ★ Represent your opinion in committee discussions on new laws.
- ★ Put you in touch with other MEPs interested in your campaign's issue.
- ★ Vote in a certain way on legislation.

Many European laws relate to the economy, making your MEP a useful person to lobby if your campaign relates to economic issues.

**How to contact a representative**

The best way to get in touch with your representative is by letter, even if your main aim is to arrange a meeting with them. You can send it by e mail, but generally people respond less frequently to emails than to letters and if you try ringing there is a very strong chance you wont get to talk direct to the person you want and you are more likely to be offered a time to meet them in person rather than talking to them over the phone (this is usually the case for MPs and MEPs).

Use your group's headed note paper; if you have it, it gives it a professional touch. If you haven't got any, make sure your address is on the letter, so they can work out which constituency you're operating from (and so they can reply).

Personalise the letter, you're less likely to get a response if you send a bog standard campaign letter. Keep it short, possibly one side of A4 paper. In it say who you are, what your concerns are. Try to connect your request to how they can specifically help, for example if they sit on a particular committee which addresses your issues, explain how your request relates to the committee's responsibilities. Send supporting information with your letter as well to add weight, things such as photos or press clippings.

**Meeting a representative**

Before your meeting do your homework, make sure you know what their role is, as well as what party they belong to, what position they hold, what other campaigns are they involved with and are they members of any council or parliamentary committees. Go on: [www.bradford.gov.uk](http://www.bradford.gov.uk) for councillor information and [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) for information relating to MPs and: [www.europarli.eu.int](http://www.europarli.eu.int) for information on MEPs. You can also find this information at your local library.

Put together a pack explaining what your campaign is about, which you can hand to them at the beginning of the meeting. Think about the arguments against your case and try to prepare responses and include them in the pack.

It's also a good idea to bring another member of your campaign to the meeting; they can take notes, whilst you speak and so you've got a record of anything that might be agreed.

This representative should listen to your requests and respond but remember they won't necessarily agree with what you have to say.

After the meeting write back and thank them for attending your meeting and note the action they are considering or have agreed to take and offer any further information they might help. Below is a possible template for such a letter:

On headed paper.

*Dear...*

*We appreciate your meeting with our group on .....*

*We have put in writing the information you gave us regarding .....*  
*(a copy is enclosed).*

*If this information is incorrect please let me know as soon as possible, as I'm sharing this information with those unable to attend the meeting and I want to give them an accurate account of what was said.*

*Many thanks*

*Yours .....*

**13. Organising a Protest**

So you've set up your campaign, done your research, contacted councillors and or MPs, done a petition, your next step might be to organise a protest. This could strengthen your campaign, raise funds and attract media coverage, it doesn't need to be confrontational, plus it may help to start a dialogue between your opposers and your campaign. However give it some thought before you decide to organise a protest, as the timing may not be right, it may put people off or may not be appropriate.

Here are some other pros and cons to think about:

**Pros:**

- ★ A sizeable march demonstrates strength of feeling.
- ★ Large numbers are not needed to make stunts and vigils effective.
- ★ A vigil can be held anywhere, for example this could include outside the offices of the developers you are opposing.
- ★ A good speaker at an event can turn those that are not sure whether or not to support your campaign.

**Cons:**

- ★ A protest might attract troublemakers seeking a window of opportunity.
- ★ If the weather is bad, people may not turn up.
- ★ If there is a poor turnout, people may assume that you only have limited support.
- ★ There maybe opposition if you are demonstrating or holding a vigil outside the offices of the developers you are opposing.
- ★ You may need Police permission to demonstrate and they may refuse.
- ★ If you organise a rowdy demonstration, it may put moderate supporters off or it could give you bad publicity.
- ★ The media coverage you get for your protest may not be complementary.

**Types of protest**

There are numerous ways to protest in the interests of your campaign, when deciding which one or ones to choose consider the following points;

- ★ What do you want to achieve by holding a protest?
- ★ Do you want to influence decision makers, show the strength of your support or raise awareness of your campaign?

When you are clear what you want to achieve, look at the following forms of protest:

**A Vigil**

Is when people stay awake during the night to highlight a cause. They work best when:

- ★ It is carefully organised in advance, so there's no confusion when the vigil is actually
- ★ There is a core of people.
- ★ It is held in a high profile and well chosen public venue.
- ★ It lasts for several hours.

**A Sit-In**

Is when a group enter a space (for example a road, run way or field) or a building and sit down for a period of time in protest. Often this would be until the problem is addressed, for example it may be done until a meeting is agreed between the campaigners and representatives of the party that the campaign is aimed at.

**A Demonstration**

Is an outdoor gathering which is used to show the support for a campaign. It's a very effective way of protesting if it is well publicised in advance.

**A Stunt**

Is an eye catching one off gimmick or event that is designed to gain maximum attraction from the public and the media, to highlight your cause. They need a lot of careful planning otherwise if it goes wrong you may gain the wrong sort of publicity from the media and it'll harm the reputation of your campaign.

**A March**

Through your town or City can give you a bigger audience than many other forms of protest, however it is the one form of protest that you need to give the police advance notice of (6 days\*) and you need to let them know the following information;

- ★ If you are demonstrating support for or against the views of another group.
- ★ If you are publicising a cause or a campaign.
- ★ If you are marking or commemorating an event.
- ★ The date of the march.
- ★ The time the march is intended to start and where the meeting point for it is.
- ★ The route.
- ★ The name and address of the organiser.

The police do have the power to impose conditions on the march but you can challenge them if you wish.

Most marches and demonstrations pass off peacefully and without incident, however sometimes individuals may join a march with the sole purpose to cause trouble. You need to keep an eye out for this as if the march or demonstration gets out of hand it can affect the reputation of your campaign.

### The legislation regarding protests

Under the Human Rights Act you have a democratic right to protest, however your protest may be subject to conditions set out in a number of measures and laws and may also be affected by police powers and standards of public order. So again it will worth your while doing a little research into your rights and responsibilities.\*

Under the Public Order Act of 1986\*, police have no power to ban a public assembly, i.e. a meeting where 20 or more gather in a public location at least partly outside. Vigils, public meetings and demonstrations may all be classed as public assemblies and you don't have to give advance notice to hold one and providing you do not completely block off the public highway and act peacefully and without any threats of violence, you generally will not be committing any crime.

However as part of the 2005 Serious and Organised Crime and Police Act,\* people can be banned from demonstrating in any area designated by the Government. One of these designated areas is the square kilometre around Parliament and anyone wishing to protest there must first of all receive authorisation from the Metropolitan Police at least 24 hours before the event and you can be arrested if you protest without this permission even if you do it on your own.

The definitions of major public order offences you and your group may be accused of by protesting, such as riot, threatening behaviour and affray are also defined in the Public Order Act, whilst the police powers to arrest and detain suspects are defined in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.\*

If you assemble on private land without permission, it could be considered that you are committing the act of trespass, generally this isn't a criminal offence, however you could be sued for damages (very few cases are taken up) or you can be asked to leave and be forcefully removed if

you refuse, but you will not be committing a crime and so shouldn't be arrested. However there are some circumstances where trespassing can be seen as a crime, this is the case of aggravated trespass. This is where you trespass on land and do something which is intended to intimidate, disrupt or obstruct someone engaged in a lawful activity. An example of this could be if you are protesting in the grounds of a factory and you were stopping lorries from delivering goods or leaving and you were intimidating the workforce as they were coming to work or leaving.\*

*\* Please note: the above information on Acts of Parliament was correct at the time this publication went to press, however since then things may have changed. For the most up to date information on Acts of Parliament check the following website: [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) .*

## 14. Taking Legal Action to Win a Campaign

Before you decide to go down the route of taking legal action, you need to ask yourself whether or not this is the best use of your resources and will such a case help achieve your campaign objectives. It can be very costly with limited prospects of success, as well as being extremely time consuming and emotionally draining. Taking legal action can though be the best option for raising the profile of your campaign or your last chance of success.

### Reasons for taking up legal action

- ★ Sometimes legal action is the only way to make the local Council, Government or developers listen, a solicitor's letter could let them know you are serious in aims.
- ★ Bringing legal action could make people realise your campaign is serious.
- ★ A legal action is local news, so could result in increased media coverage for your campaign.
- ★ It's a last resort after everything else has been tried.

### Reasons for avoiding legal action

- ★ Low prospect of success.
- ★ Can be very expensive.

- ★ Diverts campaigning resources away from other group activities.
- ★ Very time consuming.
- ★ It can be exhausting and emotionally draining for those involved.

### Types of legal action to take

There are a number of paths to take, depending on what your campaign is about, these include, criminal prosecution, civil litigation or a judicial review. Most campaigns are aiming for a judicial review, this is an opportunity to ask the courts to examine a decision of a public body and to usually quash that decision, if it has been made unlawfully, i.e. not taking into account material considerations, taking into account immaterial ones acting in a procedurally unfair way or acting outside of the decision makers powers.

In the case of judicial reviews, it's best to act promptly. Seek legal advice immediately a decision is taken if you are deciding to take legal action otherwise you risk having your application struck out. Better still do it when you think that a decision is about to be made. The court doesn't decide if the decision was a good one, instead it decides on whether or not the decision was properly reached, therefore if you win such a case, the high court will order the decision maker to revisit its decision and consider the issues. This might result in them arriving at the same decision but in a procedurally lawful way which cannot be challenged. So you might have won the argument but lost the battle and also wasted a lot of time and money.

### How to pay for legal costs

Before you decide to go down the road of taking legal action, make sure you have a good idea of the costs involved. There are two main sets of costs, your own legal costs for expert witnesses, barristers and solicitors and the costs of the other party or parties, which you will usually have to pay if you lose your case, which will often cost a lot more than your own, especially if the other side is a large company with a big legal budget. If you win, although you won't have to pay the other side's costs, you'll still have to pay 25% of your own costs.

This cost can vary considerably. A full judicial review for instance may cost in the region of

£10,000 to £15,000 for each party, so if you were challenging a developer and the local council, you may have to foot a bill of £45,000. OUCH !

### Ways to fund legal action

There are a number of ways you could look to fund your legal action. These include:

- ★ Public funding – this used to be called Legal Aid.
- ★ Conditional Fee Arrangements – Also sometimes known as a 'no win, no fee' arrangement.
- ★ Insurance – even if you go for a 'no win, no fee' arrangement, you are still liable for the other side's costs if you loose, so one way of dealing with this possibility, is to take out an insurance policy.
- ★ Setting a fighting fund – to help raise money and the campaign's profile.
- ★ Being part of a group – and share out the costs between the members.

So in a nutshell, don't rush into taking legal action, weigh up all the pros and cons and if you do decide to go down this road, do your research (see the sections on research and on using official legislation to help your campaign) and make sure the information you are acting on is reliable and accurate, otherwise you might find yourself subject to a law suit (see the Publicity Section).

If you do think of taking legal action, it might be worth contacting Bradford Law Centre (see Useful Contacts Section), to get some advice before you actually embark on that route.

## 15. Key Points for Campaigning

Every campaign requires a different approach; this booklet has looked at the numerous generic elements that make for a successful campaign. Summarised below are five key points that make for a successful campaign, no matter what the cause is.

### 1. Aims

Decide whether a campaign is really necessary, there could be times when a matter can be resolved without the need for a campaign. The council or a developer might be happy to talk to you and amend their actions. If this is not the case and you decide a campaign is necessary set your objectives from the start and make sure everyone in your group agrees these objectives, so you are all singing from the same song sheet. The main reasons why campaigns fail is that that people are not clear what they want to achieve or they set unrealistic objectives.

### 2. Information

Get accurate information and evidence to support your cause. You need evidence that will convince people of your argument. It is vital that its information you gather is what the media, the public and the decision makers want and understand.

### 3. Audience

Decide who you need to influence and think about which campaigning methods will be the best. Now that you know what you want, you need to consider who will make the decisions that will make your campaign successful, i.e. will it be the health authority, the local council or central government, or is it a combination of them.

### 4. Timing

Make sure you know when key decisions will be taken, such as Council scrutiny or committee meetings. Make sure people you are trying to influence are properly briefed well before the date of any vote.

### 5. Partnerships

Involve other people and groups who share your views and may be able to support and help your campaign. It's more likely you'll succeed if there are a lot of people working towards the same goal. The decision makers will be more likely to listen to

your concerns if they see that a number of different interests are represented. It might be worthwhile approaching local figures such as the Lord Mayor or celebrities for their support. These people will make it much more likely that you get media coverage as well.

## 16. Useful Contacts

### **CNet**

01274 714144  
[www.cnet.org.uk](http://www.cnet.org.uk)

### **Bradford CVS**

01274 722772  
[www.bradfordcvs.org.uk](http://www.bradfordcvs.org.uk)

### **Keighley Voluntary Service**

01535 665258  
[www.keighleyvs.org](http://www.keighleyvs.org)

### **Bingley Voluntary Action**

01274 781222  
[www.bingleyva.org.uk](http://www.bingleyva.org.uk)

### **Shipley CVS**

Contact Bingley  
Voluntary Action

### **Ilkley and District CVS**

01943 603348  
[www.ilkley.org/cvs](http://www.ilkley.org/cvs)

### **Bradford Resource Centre**

01274 779002/3  
[www.brc-net.org.uk](http://www.brc-net.org.uk)

### **and**

### **Community Statistics Project**

[www.communitystats.org.uk](http://www.communitystats.org.uk)

### **Bradford Law Centre**

01274 306617  
[www.bradfordlawcentre.co.uk](http://www.bradfordlawcentre.co.uk)

### **Bradford Central Library**

01274 433600  
[www.bradford.gov.uk](http://www.bradford.gov.uk)

### **Bradford Metropolitan District Council**

Main Switchboard: 01274 431000  
[www.bradford.gov.uk](http://www.bradford.gov.uk)

### **COEMO (Consortia of Ethnic Minority Organisations)**

01274 488872  
[www.coemo.co.uk](http://www.coemo.co.uk)

### **Action for Black Community Development (ABCD)**

01274 775535  
[www.visible.org.uk](http://www.visible.org.uk)

### **Diva data-base**

01274 433656  
[www.divabradford.org.uk](http://www.divabradford.org.uk)

### **Bradford Telegraph and Argus**

01274 729511  
[www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk](http://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk)

### **Bradford Community Broadcasting**

01274 771677  
[www.bcb.yorks.com](http://www.bcb.yorks.com)

### **Bradford Vision**

01274 435480  
[www.bradfordvision.com](http://www.bradfordvision.com)

### **BBC Action Network**

[www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork)

## 17. Community Empowerment Network

### *What we do:*

#### **CNet**

CNet is a Community Empowerment Network. We work with agencies across Bradford to ensure that the views of voluntary and community groups and individual advocates are heard on key decision-making partnerships.

#### **Partners**

We work with a number of partners across the District to help plan and improve the delivery of services.

#### **Individuals**

- ★ We offer support and training for individuals who want to engage in community advocacy and public decision making.
- ★ We promote the benefits of getting involved in groups and networks.

#### **Groups**

- ★ We support groups by providing small grants to enable them to fund an idea or project which will benefit the community.
- ★ We link groups to networks and encourage them to share information and good practice.

#### **Networks**

- ★ We work with existing networks and get actively involved in the development of new ones.
- ★ We distribute a wide range of information for networks to share with their members.
- ★ We provide meeting facilitate and resources.

#### **How to find us**

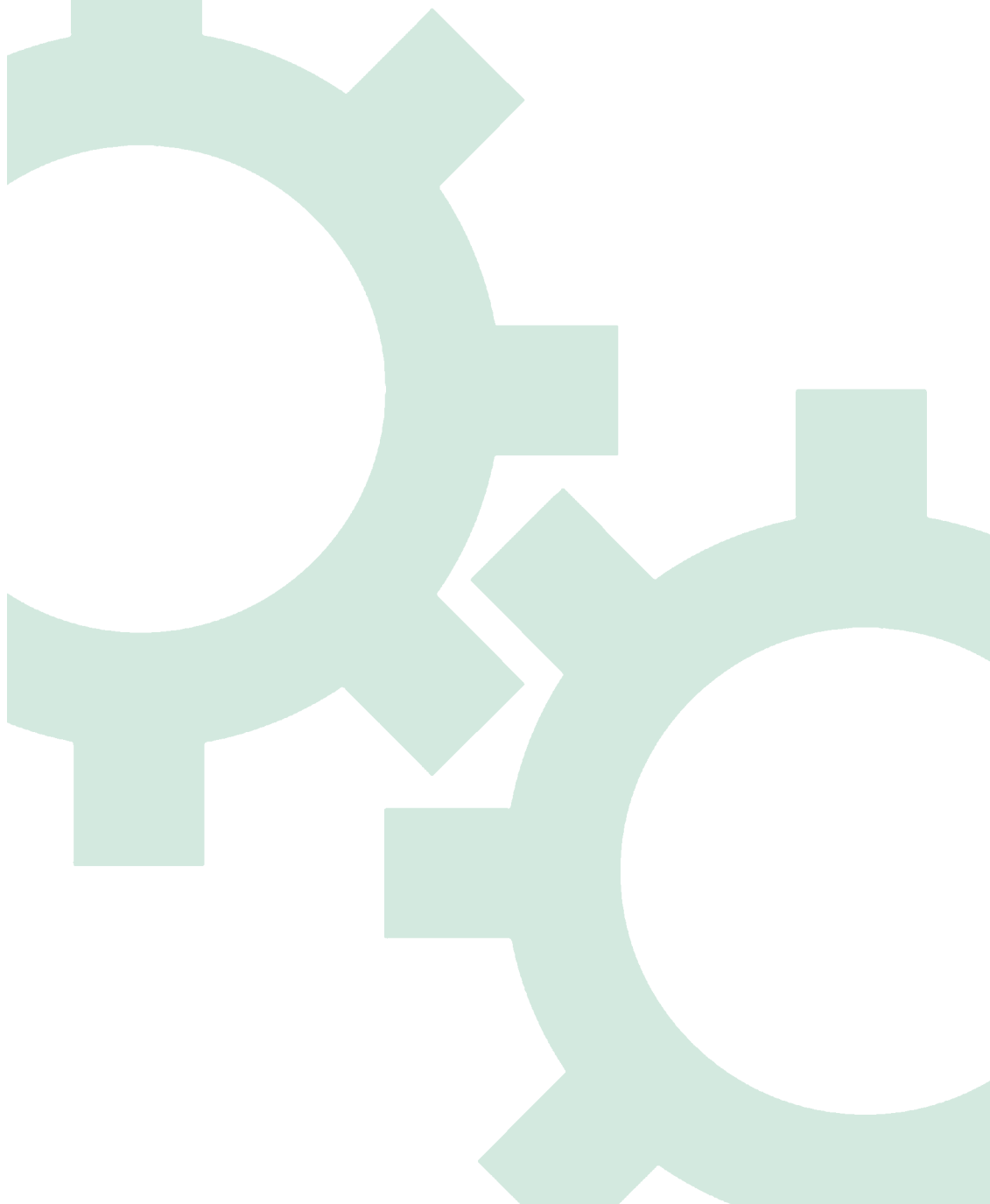
385 Canal Road,  
Frizinghall, Bradford,  
West Yorkshire BD2 1AW  
Tel: 01274 714144  
Fax: 01274 714140

Email: [contact@cnet.org.uk](mailto:contact@cnet.org.uk)

Check our website: [www.cnet.org.uk](http://www.cnet.org.uk)

You can also download a copy of this booklet and others in the series by going on our website.

Thanks go to BBC Action Network in putting this booklet together. visit their website for further information on campaigning:  
[www.bbc.co.uk.dna/actionnetwork](http://www.bbc.co.uk.dna/actionnetwork)





**CNet**  
EMPOWERING  
COMMUNITIES