

4. RUNNING A WDM CAMPAIGN

It is a local group's job to take WDM campaigns out into your local community - to the media, the public and to the decision makers who you can hold accountable. WDM always provides you with the necessary briefings and local action packs to guide you in planning your local campaigns.

A typical campaign pack would contain a whole range of ideas from the very simple action card to the more extravagant photo stunt. We will always ask you to think about imaginative ways in which you can raise the profile of a campaign locally, and share ideas that we can pass on to other groups.

Whilst you are out there campaigning in your region, you can be sure that many other groups are doing the same across Britain. What might seem like a small action is contributing to a powerful nationwide lobby.

OBJECTIVES

When campaigning, be sure to work towards defined objectives, which could include:

- To educate, persuade and put pressure on your campaign targets (e.g. your MP, a corporation etc)
- To obtain media coverage
- To engage with and educate the public about the campaign in order to get their support
- To raise awareness about WDM locally

Then look at the resources you have available in terms of time, people and equipment.

STREET STALLS

One effective way to distribute campaign literature is by running a street stall. You can often get lots of action cards signed quite quickly, as well as getting the opportunity to talk about our issues with totally new people.

You do not need permission to set up a stall on publicly-owned land (ie all ordinary streets), you just need to ensure that you aren't blocking the pavement by doing so. In any case it is best to set up where there is a wider space so that people can stop to look at your stall.

It is important to make your stall look attractive and tidy. If you are using a paste table, try getting a piece of coloured material to cover it. Bring a range of materials, but not so many that the eye is overwhelmed, and lay them out so that the most important materials are most noticeable.

It is best to focus on getting one particular action card or petition signed. Before you start, get all the group members together and think about how you are going to approach people. What's the simplest and most interesting line you can use to approach people with? If you have more than two people helping with the stall, some of you can use clipboards and rove around the stall getting sign-ups.

If you run a street stall in the town centre during shopping hours you can reach lots of people. The downside can be that people are in a hurry and not inclined to stop. So it is also useful to run stalls at events where people have more time, or where a greater proportion of them are likely to be sympathetic. Keep a look out for such events locally, including fairs and festivals.

STUNTS

Because the issues we deal with can often seem complex and remote, WDM activists have to be creative in getting the message across to both the press and the public. This can involve dressing up around a theme, using props or incorporating some kind of fun, interactive element to a stall you are running. Stunts can be used to attract the general public to take action, or to encourage the local press to cover your story (see section 6 for more on using your local media).

WDM campaigners will often come up with ready made stunts for particular campaigns and provide some of the props you need. However, there is nothing to stop you from inventing your own at other times – especially if group members are theatrically or artistically minded.

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND TALKS

It is often a good idea to put on a public meeting to raise the profile of a particular campaign. WDM staff



Members of WDM groups in London bring some creativity to communicating our 2009 trade campaign.

are always available to give an expert talk about the campaign, provided enough notice is given. Public meetings are a great way to involve new people and those already in your group who are only able to be involved occasionally.

You will need to advertise the details of your event widely at least two weeks in advance using noticeboards, email lists and leaflets in cafés and other local venues. Colleges and universities, community centres, churches and libraries should all be covered. More tips for running a successful event can be found in the appendices.

It can also be really useful for members of the group to give a short talk about a campaign to a meeting of another local organisation, such as a local political party, trade union branch, or trades council (a federation of trade union branches in a local area). WDM staff can give you advice on the key points to cover in such a talk, which should be no longer than ten minutes.

LOBBYING

Writing letters to a government minister or your local MP or MEP can have real influence, especially if the

same person gets lots of letters. WDM often provides template letters for local groups, although it can be even more effective if groups rewrite them and incorporate their own local details.

Many MPs actively seek a dialogue with local campaigners and are happy to have face-to-face meetings with groups such as WDM. See section 6 on lobbying politicians for more details.