

# YOUR WILDLIFE

# CAMPAIGNING

# TOOLKIT



**Suffolk**  
Wildlife Trust

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Photo: Guy Shurrock

# How to start campaigning

**Campaigning is about taking action and making positive change for nature happen. Suffolk Wildlife Trust campaigns to protect nature, restore habitats, raise awareness of issues impacting wildlife.**

You can support one of our **campaigns** or start your own. There's no right or wrong way to advocate for nature, but you can use the guidance below as a starting point.

## Identify your motivation

Are you worried about the declining insect populations in your local space? Are you frustrated with plastic pollution in a nearby park? Do you feel passionate about raising awareness of toad crossings? The first step of **campaigning** is identifying what's important to you, to motivate you and shape your campaign's goals.



## Do your research

Before launching a public campaign, it's important to do as much research on the issue as you can. What change needs to happen? What decision-makers (see page 4) have the power to make things change? What existing work is being done to tackle it? Can you build upon this or collaborate with other groups? It's vital to get your information from credible sources and be aware of potentially biased or misinformed opinions, particularly on social media.

## Finding your people

A lone starling dancing through the air is a joy to watch, but a murmuration takes your breath away. The same is true for campaigning; individual action shouldn't be ignored, but the greatest impact comes when people work together. Find others who align with your campaign by starting with your immediate network; your friends, family, neighbours, colleagues, etc. You can gather wider support by reaching out to people and groups who are affected by the issues you're campaigning for. For example, speaking with a wild swimming group about a river pollution campaign.

## Getting your message across

Your campaigning activity will be dependent on what you're trying to achieve, but there are lots of ways you can go about it. If your target is a decision-maker, you can ask people to meet with or write to them. If you're trying to change public attitudes or influence behaviour change, you can organise events or create eye-catching signage (see page 7 for more).

## Milestones of success

Change doesn't happen overnight; so be prepared for a long fight. It's important to set out smaller milestones to show that you're heading in the right direction and to maintain momentum. This is why it's important to find your motivation at the beginning of a campaign, as it's this desire to make a change that keeps you going.

## Be safe and respectful

Not everyone will align with your campaign, or agree with your views. While this can be frustrating, it is a fundamental part of **activism**. It's important to set out a clear 'Code of Conduct' for people representing your campaign, ensuring that respectful public interactions (both in-person and online) and safety are the priority.



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# Decision-makers and people of influence

**Tip** See our decision-maker table on page 5 for examples of who has power locally.

**It may feel daunting to speak with people in authority, but it's important to remember that they are just people like you and me.**

**Sometimes, it's difficult to know who has the decision-making power for the issue you're campaigning about. We've put a guide on the next page to help you get started.**

## Tips on speaking to decision makers

It's important to:

- Assume they want to help you
- Have a clear call to action: what do you want from them?
- Anticipate questions and prepare answers
- Be respectful
- Avoid jargon and speak in plain language

## Face-to-face meetings

- Assume they know nothing about the issue and set the scene for them
- Be welcoming and enthusiastic
- Stick to the key points as they are often short on time

## Writing a letter or emailing

- Use a recognisable sender address such as the campaign group name or a key contact name
- Include personal stories and photos to make it more engaging
- Add a catchy subject line that is attention-grabbing but still relevant. Avoid **click-baiting**

## Example structure:

State the problem.

Back it up with facts and figures - reference sources of key information.

Share why it's important they get involved by making the problem relatable to them or the people they represent.

Give a clear call to action and outline your expectations.

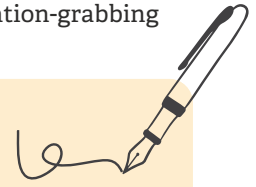


Photo: Christine Luxton and Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP at Martlesham Wilds.



## Social media

This is a great way to publicly contact decision-makers and organisations. Tag them and other related organisations in your posts and encourage people to share these to gain traction. You can even create a campaign #hashtag to create an online movement and find others showing support. See page 7 for examples.

**Tip** It's important to remember that not all decision-makers hold power alone. This is where you need to gather public support and amplify your campaign message (see page 6 and 7).

# Decision-makers and people of influence

Who to contact and how they can help your campaign.

| Who?   | How to contact   | What can you ask?   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Members of Parliament (MPs)</b>   | Find any MP's details on the <a href="#">UK Parliament website</a> .   | Support or oppose legislation, raise issues in Parliament, influence the local council or make changes to legislation (especially if they are from the Governing party), support campaigns publicly and write to ministers and government departments. See page 6 for more information about MPs.                 |
| <b>Local Councillors</b>   | Find your councillor on the <a href="#">Gov UK website</a> by putting in your postcode.  | Vote on council matters and policies, influence environmental decisions, influence spending decisions and budgets, write to someone important (e.g. MPs or Ministers), champion issues publicly and politically, and set wildlife-friendly requirements for housing developments.                                 |
| <b>Company CEO or Director</b>   | Visit the company's website to get an email or phone number, or you could message them on LinkedIn.  | Change company policies and practices, make environmental commitments, invest in sustainable alternatives, use their influence publicly, engage with communities and support projects, and support funding initiatives for campaigning.   |
| <b>Chair of Boards</b><br><small>(Charities, trusts and public bodies)</small> | Find a contact via the organisation's website.   | Boards ensure that executives act in the best interest of the company, providing checks and balances on management decisions and shaping corporate strategy. They can set strategic direction and governance, approve or oppose major decisions, hold executives to account and change organisational priorities. |
| <b>Head-teacher</b>  | Search for a school using <a href="#">Suffolk InfoLink</a> or visit the school website directly. Ask for your message to be sent to the headteacher. | Embed wildlife-friendly features into the school, embed outdoor learning into the curriculum, approve campaigns and partnerships with environmental groups, support teachers in <a href="#">extra training</a> , start eco-clubs, and supporting climate action plans.  |
| <b>University Vice Chancellor</b>  | University Leadership pages<br>e.g. <a href="#">The University of Suffolk</a>  | The Vice Chancellor acts as the operational head of a university, making most major decisions. They can set up university-wide strategies, pledge to meet environmental commitments, support research priorities, and approve investment decisions.   |
| <b>Local newspaper editors</b>   | Visit the newspaper website<br>e.g. <a href="#">Eastern Daily Press</a> ,<br><a href="#">East Anglian Daily Times</a>                                | Provide coverage of issues and campaigns, amplify local voices, and hold decision-makers to account.  |



You can also contact individuals and organisations indirectly by gaining media coverage.

# Members of Parliament

## Who are Members of Parliament?

Suffolk is split into **8 constituencies**. Each one has a **Member of Parliament (MP)** representing it, elected by the public. MPs are aligned with **political parties** and are elected at least every 5 years during **General Elections**.

MPs spend their time in their constituency and in Parliament. They represent local concerns and have the power to share these higher up to advocate for change.

It may seem daunting speaking to MPs, but they are just people who have a desire to make changes for their constituents. You can ask your local MP to support Suffolk Wildlife Trust campaigns, or your own campaigns.



## Attending an MP's surgery

The most direct way to contact your MP is to attend an **MP surgery**; this provides an opportunity to speak on a one-to-one basis with your representative. Here you can share your concerns for wildlife and suggest how your MP can help. Surgeries are usually held weekly, and details can be found on your MP's website.

### Tip

You might only get a short time slot with your MP so make sure you prepare what you would like to say. Deciding on one clear ask will help you to stay on topic and get your point across.

## Writing to an MP

Sending a letter is the government's recommended way to contact your MP. You can address your letter to:

**(Your MP's name)**  
**House of Commons,**  
**London,**  
**SW1A 0AA**

You can also contact them by email. MP email addresses can be found on the [MP directory](#).

### Tip

If you are contacting the MP for your constituency, you must include your address at the bottom of your letter or email so that they know you are part of their constituency. If you don't, they might not respond.

## Creating petitions

When there is a government policy or proposal we would like to change for the benefit of nature, we launch a **petition**. We ask our supporters to get involved by signing the petition. If the petition reaches 10,000 signatories, the government must respond. If it reaches 100,000 signatories, the proposed policy change will be considered for debate in parliament.

You can set up your own petitions as part of your campaign via the [official parliament petition website](#) or by looking into third party platforms. There are advantages and disadvantages of these, so it's a good idea to research them.

You also need to ensure your petition meets the **minimum standards** to be considered by Government.





Hedeghog mural: Ali North

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# Amplifying your message

**Gathering public support and raising awareness about your campaign is often key to success, as it puts pressure on your target decision-makers and people of influence.**

## Ways to campaign

There are lots of ways you can share your campaign with the public. You can do this in-person and digitally, or a combination of both. Here's some ideas...

- Host a talk or event at a community space - this could be a **bioblitz** or a **nature matter**.
- Write to your local paper.
- Post content on social media.
- Run a petition.
- Create and hand out leaflets in public spaces.
- Work with a local artist to bring your campaign's end goal vision to life.
- Get creative with **craftivism** (see page 8).
- Door-knocking.
- Build evidence with **citizen science** initiatives.
- Invite local press to a PR stunt.



## Tip

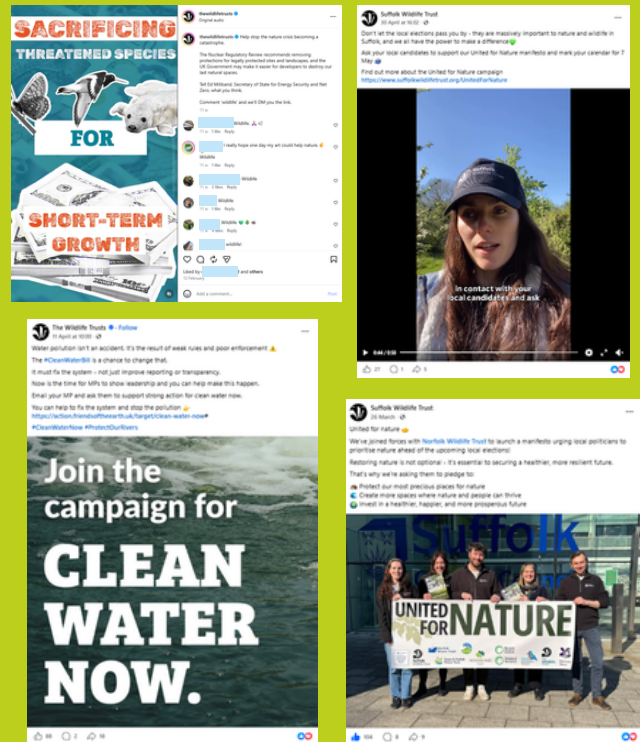
Enthusiasm is infectious! If those around you see how excited you are to take part in a campaign, there is a good chance they'll want to too.

## Social media

Social media platforms can be very powerful for spreading campaign messages, as they can allow you to reach more people than you might be able to engage in-person, and new audiences.

They are also a great way to publicly reach decision-makers. Tag your MPs, councillors or local businesses in your social media posts with your campaign's call to action. This allows others to see what you're doing and get involved.

## Example posts





Hedgehog mural: Ali North

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## Social media

There are lots of different types of content you can create to share your campaigning message and rally support. These can be videos, sometimes known as **'reels'** or **'Tik-Toks'**, sharing photos or stories or you can create eye-catching **graphics**.

### Tip

Remember to use social media to share campaigning activities and successes, as well as to stress the urgency of your call to action.

General advice for creating content:

- Avoid AI-generated content.
- Stress the urgency of the campaign.
- Make content feel personal using stories and real people in photos and videos.
- Utilise local Facebook groups for targeting key audiences.
- Give a clear call to action (e.g. sign a petition? Send an email to an MP?).
- Don't make videos or your text too long. If needed, break it down into shorter components.

## Craftivism

**Craftivism** (crafting + activism) is the use of crafts (painting, collaging, sewing, etc) to peacefully raise awareness for positive environmental change. It's a way of sparking conversations and sharing your campaign message in a slower, thoughtful and creative way.

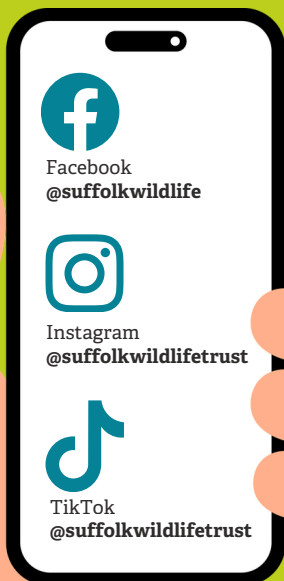
You could create badges to wear or give away, paint envelopes to send to decision-makers, crochet key species, embroider campaign messages and more!



## Get involved with our community

Share your campaigning work with us and help to amplify Suffolk Wildlife Trust's campaigns.

Follow our pages and tag us!



## Accessibility

Campaigns rely on people power, so it's important to consider how you can make your campaign as inclusive and as accessible as possible.

Make sure your messaging is free from technical language and don't assume prior knowledge. Think about how easy it is for people to get to your events (is public transport available?) and if there are opportunities for all community groups affected by the issue.



Toad photo: Darin Smith

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# Glossary

**Activism** - The action of campaigning to bring about change.

**Bioblitz** - People (scientists, naturalists, volunteers) working to record as many different species within a defined area in a given time.

**Campaign** - A planned set of activities carried out over a specified time frame to achieve social or political change.

**Campaigning** - Organised efforts to raise awareness or promote action concerning an issue.

**Citizen science** - The collection and analysis of data relating to the natural world by members of the public, typically as part of a collaborative project with professional scientists.

**Click-baiting** - The practice of creating digital content with sensationalised or misleading headlines designed to entice users to click on a link.

**Constituency** - A group of voters within a specified area who elect a representative to a legislative body (e.g. the Government).

**Craftivism** - A form of activism that uses traditional crafts like knitting, sewing and embroidery to promote change.

**General Election** - An election held to select representatives to a legislature from constituencies throughout the country.

**MP's surgery** - Sessions where MPs can invite their constituents (people who live in the area they represent) to make appointments to meet with them to discuss issues affecting them or problems they are facing.

**Member of Parliament** - A person formally elected to the UK national legislative body or other similar legislature elsewhere.

**Nature natter** - A listening event, typically held at a community space, organised to hear the attitudes and priorities of a local community.

**Petition** - A formal written request, typically signed by many people, appealing to authority in respect of a particular cause.

**Political party** - An organised group of individuals who share common ideologies and work together to gain and exercise political power within a government system.

**Reels** - A short-form video clip used on social media, typically used on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook.

**TikToks** - Short-form video clips created and shared on the social media platform Tik Tok, often featuring music, effects or creative edits.



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