



CAMPAIGNER NETWORK TOOLKIT

5) How to campaign with others

How to campaign with others

Working with others is at the heart of our campaigning work here at The Vegan Society. Our campaigns would not have the same strengths or successes without the support of the many people we work with.

Some reasons why you might want to build your network:

- ◀ You might not have the capacity to do it alone
- ◀ You can have a far greater influence
- ◀ You can reach a different audience – not just preaching to the converted
- ◀ It can be more fun!

The following steps will help you map your own community, identify potential allies, and build a support network of activists to help you campaign more effectively in your Campaigner Network group.

- ◀ Link with other vegan, animal rights, environmental supporters. Once you've made contact, hold an informal meeting to chat about your interests and how you could support each other – it could be the foundation of a fruitful partnership.
- ◀ Local charities and community groups: NGOs, church groups, residents committees, the local library or school, the WI... Communities are full of groups brimming with active citizens who have the passion and skills to campaign. What are you doing that might interest them? What issues do they have in common with The Vegan Society? Animals? The environment? Human justice issues? Find your angle and approach with something they will find hard to resist. Be clear what you want to achieve though. Is this a one off action? Or will this form the foundations of a longer-lasting alliance? Volunteer hubs, libraries and local councils often keep details of local groups.
- ◀ Champions and community leaders: Who shares your vision? Who has influence where it counts? Champions are anyone who will fight your corner. It could be your local MP, a proactive school

teacher, or a council officer. Individuals with time, power, knowledge, or influence are really useful to make contact with – so do a little digging and make some good contacts.

- ◀ Self-promotion: Next time you hold an event, print some flyers and posters or write to the local press. Many papers have event listings, and a good photo and well-written press release will help you get a story in local media. Don't forget to include your contact details so potential activists can get in touch. Lots of successful recruitment happens at public events, so make sure you have information available about how people can get involved (see our Campaigner Network toolkit leaflet on Speaking to the Local Press for further information.)
- ◀ Social networking: If you want to reach new audiences or involve more local people in your activities, set up a Facebook fan/group page. Creating a virtual Campaigner Network group is a fast way to recruit and communicate with interested people, and invite them to your events (see our Campaigner Network toolkit leaflet on How to Promote a Campaign for further information.)
- ◀ Putting it together: Building a network takes time so it's worth developing an action plan. Consider: who you are going to prioritise and why; what campaign/action you will use as your hook; what you want to achieve from working with them; what they will gain from the experience; how long-term the relationship should be; and what resource will be required to maintain it.

What can you do as part of an alliance?

It's up to you. Sometimes it's good to approach an ally with a really easy thing to do and go from there. Or you can offer a few options, including some bigger things to do. Ideas include:

- ◀ A joint press release on an issue, or a joint letter to the editor of your local newspaper
- ◀ Writing a piece for a newsletter or journal
- ◀ A joint media stunt
- ◀ An event, talk, or fundraising activity
- ◀ A stall on a shared issue in a town centre, fair, or carnival

- ◀ Getting more signatures, even high profile ones, on a letter to a local influential person, for example, an MP or the Chief Executive of a local company
- ◀ Producing joint materials.

Getting things started

Are there any local events or conferences where potential allies are likely to be present? Bring contact details of your Campaigner Network group and information on current Vegan Society campaigns that you can give to potential allies. Or invite people along to a group meeting or an event that has already been organised. It can be extremely rewarding to work with other people with different approaches and ideas!