

Toolkit

**fun
palaces**

CAMPAIGNING

Welcome to the Fun Palaces Campaigning Toolkit

The Campaigning Toolkit gives ideas on how to stand up for issues you care about in your local area.

It focuses on organising a campaign and can be applied to any issue you want to change.

We have our own ideas, so please do use this toolkit. But you live in your community, you know your own people best, YOU are the expert – go for it!

When people come together, we have power: the power to change things. Instead of asking “what's wrong with this place, what's missing?”, let's start asking “what can we change, who's already here, what can they do, and what do they care about?”

Often there's so much in the world that we want to change, and we at Fun Palaces know that the system and the way society is organised needs changing to achieve a fairer world. But focusing on smaller campaigns in your local area, that are more achievable, is key to making bigger change. They can help us to feel connected in our local areas and build skills and networks to create bigger change. They also, hopefully, make the local area a better place.

Contact

If you want to talk to us about anything to do with campaigning, or Fun Palaces' campaigns, email us at hello@funpalaces.co.uk and we'll be in touch as soon as we can.

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Campaigns Planning:

A campaign involves a set of activities, which are planned, and together create pressure to achieve a specific goal.

Good campaigns are well planned. Whilst leaving some room and flexibility in case you need to react to changes is helpful, having a thorough plan is important. So, spend time as a group thinking through your campaign strategy as well as your group's values.

Planning needs to be well-balanced with actually doing the work! It's no use to spend all your time in meetings, planning, but it's also not always helpful to jump straight in without planning and working through the group's ideas first. Having a clear plan means everyone in your group is on the same page so you can work together effectively, with shared purpose and shared responsibility. And by planning ahead, you can ensure you have enough capacity for your activities, and that you can, potentially, anticipate and plan to mitigate issues.

Mobilising and Organising

Organising is a word that is frequently used in campaigning spaces. Put simply organising is the process of building long-term power as a group, by creating deep, meaningful relationship and developing leaders: giving people the skills to go from participating in an action to creating actions to make change happen.

Mobilising is another word that comes up in these spaces. Mobilising usually refers to using the power that exists, which often means reaching and engaging an existing supporter base, e.g. asking people to sign a petition or attend a protest.

Whilst mobilising creates a display of power for a specific occasion and is useful, without moving to organising, people can be left without a sense of direction, or you may find it becoming difficult to keep people engaged with the campaign. So, whilst you do need to mobilise people in your local area, organising is key, because turning passive support into active involvement is how you create power. Good campaigns consider how supporters can become more actively engaged (through a stepped approach) and have support systems in place to allow people to do this. By starting with lower-effort tasks, e.g. signing a petition, you can work to engage these supporters in getting more involved, and take on higher-effort tasks, e.g. door knocking, or organising a Fun Palace.

Identifying the Issue and Objectives

1. Explore your environment, local area and context

Do some research on the issue, analyse the situation and local context. You may need to think beyond your initial knowledge about the issue. Through word of mouth or searching online, you may find out more information.

By researching and contextualising, your group can make informed decisions about your campaign strategy.

2. Ask why is this happening?

Is there a particular reason there is this issue? Is it a recurring issue, or ongoing? When did it start? Why did it start?

3. Keep in mind these two questions as you campaign:

- a. Who are you organising?
- b. Why are you organising?

4. Set your objectives:

Objectives are the specific things that mean your goal is achieved. The objectives of the campaign should be specific and achievable.

The objectives could be big or small, depending on the issue you're campaigning on. For example, stopping a library closure, or fixing broken play equipment in a park. They could also be less tangible but still try to break down the issue into specific objectives. Breaking down your objectives into mini goals can help make the campaign more achievable, as well as streamline your focus and energy, and potentially increase the impact you have.

From this you can start to think about your key messages – which we explore more below.

Identifying Power

Here is a list of questions to help identify who holds power in relation to your issue – use the internet and community networks to find the answers:

- Who might be supportive?
- Who might not be supportive?
- Who is the target? This is the person who has the power to change the situation. It may be a CEO of an organisation, a council leader, etc.
- What have the press said?

Sometimes visually mapping this can be helpful. [You can use this power mapping tool for this.](#)

It will help your group develop a thorough understanding of organisations and people who may or may not have power as well as who may or may not be supportive of your campaign. It can also be helpful to identify the relationships between key people/organisations, as well as identify further questions or research needed to leverage power.

This is useful to complete as a group to build a collective understanding of the power dynamics. It may also be helpful to invite anyone with knowledge or interest in the issue, particularly if they are familiar with local communities involved or affected by the issue. With more people, you'll get more diverse perspectives and connections which is useful in developing a well-connected, resilient campaign.

Tip: try not to spend too much time deciding the exact location of a person/organisation on the map – there is not a 'right' or 'wrong'. Instead, the

focus should be on how the people and organisations relate to each other and how their power around the issue interacts.

Building Capacity

There's two parts to campaigning: the outward faces actions and building capacity as a group. Don't underestimate the importance of capacity building - be sure to give time to this!

Create a plan for how you will build momentum and keep it going. Successful campaigns think about how to encourage involvement in your group, and create a culture where people feel like they belong and can contribute. Important to this is having fun!

Lots of people in your local community may hear the word campaigner, activist or change-maker, and think 'I'm not an activist' or 'am I a campaigner?'. Some people also hear "activist" and picture a placard, a megaphone, someone being very loud. So, they decide it's not for them and take a step back.

But often change doesn't look like that. It can look like people showing up to fix issues in their community, applying pressure to decision-makers in creative ways, and ultimately change happens because people show up, regularly, often over long periods of time, with a clear direction, strategy and objective.

Don't forget about your 'local genius' and involving your local community! Fun Palaces call it "**local genius**", not local talent. Every community is already full of brilliant people, and you don't need to bring in external experts.

It's all about noticing the genius that's already on the doorstep; different people, having different skills and that's great! This is a community lens you can use for spotting and mapping it in your area, so you don't default to people's job titles:

- **Gifts of the head** – these are things that a person knows about and also enjoys sharing this information with others: think local history, a language, how the planning system works, wildlife, etc.
- **Gifts of the hands** – these are things a person knows how to do and would willingly share with others: think cooking, fixing bikes, coding, sewing & repair, growing things, playing an instrument, wrangling babies to give tired parents a rest, etc.
- **Gifts of the heart** – these are the things a person is passionate about or deeply care about: think the local canal, supporting refugees, the youth club, the dawn chorus, the environment, etc.

Identifying tools and tactics

Tactics are the activities you will do to help make change happen. Think creatively and plan ahead.

You may need to spread the word to raise awareness or get more people involved: check out our [publicity toolkit linked here](#), and here's some more things to try:

- Use **social media**: put out callouts on Facebook (especially hyper-local Facebook groups), Instagram, TikTok, Nextdoor

- Put up **posters** at local shop, cafes and post-office noticeboards
- **Leafleting** at the “bumping places”: bus stops, outside train stations, the corner shop, the launderette, the café, outside the local school. If you’re face-to-face in a neutral spot, with a cup of tea on offer, even better.
- **Door knocking**, going door-to-door to have conversations with local people about the issue.
- **Word of mouth**: tell everyone, everywhere you go!

Tactics you may want to try:

- Petitions/Open Letter
- Street stall
- Public meetings/forums
- Social media
- Press releases
- Street theatre
- Making a Fun Palace
- Letter-writing campaigns
- Protest/demo/mass action

You can also get creative! Your group will know your local area best, and how they will respond to tactics. Rather than only reacting to the issue, try to be proactive: look for opportunities, think outside the box, build your capacity and create a plan with tactics.

You may wish to use more than one tactic at a time but avoid spreading your capacity too thin. Focus on select targets and tactics so that the group’s energy is channelled effectively and you can influence effectively.

Take time to think about the art of communicating. Having well-crafted campaign messages is key, so that your supporters can articulate your campaign and its key messages memorably, concisely and clearly. This can be difficult when you have a complex issue you want to explain so working through these as a group and deciding your messages together is important. Sometimes keeping the message simple is more effective.

Create time further down the line to check in as a group about how the campaign is going. You may need to adapt the plan because the situation has changed, or a tactic isn’t working. Assess the impact your strategy is having on achieving your objectives. Maybe it’s time to escalate the pressure you’re applying? The list above, on the whole, starts off with low pressure and increases – but again, be creative and respond to your local context!

Campaigning and Fun Palaces

The Fun Palaces HQ team are really keen to support campaigns happening in local areas. If you're working on a campaign locally, please let us know. You might even make a Fun Palace as a campaign tactic! Or a Fun Palace may lead to people coming together, becoming aware of a particular issue and wanting to make a change.

Maybe your Fun Palaces isn't just about bringing people together for fun, maybe it's about standing up for something too. Here's some examples of Fun Palaces which have combined change-making with fun-palacing:

- In Rugby, a young people's advisory board surprisingly ran an entire Fun Palace about teeth and dental hygiene, because that was what they wanted to talk about, not what an adult would have chosen for them.
- Over in Manchester, Longsight Library put on a day that included printing your rights with lino-printing.
- In Gillingham, a Fun Palace made feminist zines to celebrate six local women, the suffragist and peace campaigner Dame Kathleen Courtney among them.
- [Queer Britain Museum](#), the country's first LGBTQ+ museum, teamed up with Traveller Pride for LGBTQIA+ people who are also from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Together in their Fun Palace, they made cut-up poems, splicing lines from great GRT poets in with great LGBTQIA+ poets so each finished poem held both at once, the same way the people making them did.
- In Stirling, people painted tiles that locked together into one enormous oil spill, their response to the fight over North Sea oil.
- In Hoxton, [Cardboard Citizens](#) screened More Than One Story, a film series made with The Big Issue to take apart the stereotypes about homelessness.
- In Bristol, [Eastside Community Trust](#) paired a coat swap and a repair cafe with energy advice, so people could get their homes warm before winter.
- In Redruth, [Eleanor Allen](#) and the team at The Ladder put out a lovely invitation: come and help us paint our scruffy old back door. No painting skills needed, just turn up and help decide how to turn one gloomy corner into something the whole town had a hand in.

Campaigning around Culture

We'd also be interested in hearing about and supporting campaigns which look to advocate for and create local cultural democracy – find out more about what this is below.

'Culture' is one of those words that can feel heavy or confusing. It sounds like something that happens in grand theatres, hushed galleries, or prestigious museums. But at Fun Palaces, we believe culture is much closer to home. It's on your doorstep, in your library, across garden fences, right there on your balcony or in your home.

Our new campaign, [Culture: It's What We Make](#), is an invitation to redefine the word entirely – in true Fun Palaces style. Because culture isn't just something we attend or consume: it's how we live, and how we choose to gather. It's about how we experience the world, and how we live and belong in it.

Culture lives in our actions and our memories. In the food we cook, the music we listen to, the games we play, the traditions we pass on, the way we protest. And culture is always evolving because it's shaped by the people and communities who live it.

We all make culture: it's made in the everyday moments we share, random or organised, and Fun Palaces is all about cultural democracy. So we're spotlighting your stories as Makers.

If cultural democracy sounds like a mouthful, think of it this way: **it's the idea that EVERYONE gets to decide what counts as culture.**

Culture definitely doesn't have to be perfect – often it's better when it's not. And when we choose connection over perfection, we aren't just making, we are participating in democracy, community and culture.

Get Involved with Fun Palaces' Campaigns:

Are you a Maker? Whether you're a knitter, a bike-fixer, a community-starter or skilled in other ways, we want to hear from you and share your story. Have you considered starting your own campaign locally? We're here to help!

Are you interested in change making? Want to help shape our campaigns?

- Take a look at our [campaigns webpage linked here](#)
- Email us at hello@funpalaces.co.uk, and let's talk about how we can share your **Maker Story**; or to get involved with our **Campaigns Working Group**.

External Resources

There's plenty of resources and guides out there on the internet that go into more depth! You may wish to a look at:

- <https://seedsforchange.org.uk/guides>
- <https://seedsforchange.org.uk/podcast>
- <https://commonslibrary.org/featured-resources/>
- <https://www.dsc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/9781784821241-Speed-Reads-Campaigning-PDF.pdf>