

How our meetings work

This is an introduction to how our meetings work, and how we reach decisions. Please have a read and ask us questions if something is unclear.

→ We work through **collective decision-making** where everyone gets an equal say, in an open and transparent fashion. Meetings are central to this process and we have formed a working group called **Facilitation**, which will help to make meetings and decision-making effective and inclusive.

→ We have **monthly meetings** where all the groups involved in organising the camp come together to share information and make bigger decisions. The various working groups will also meet during these meetings.

→ The facilitation group will prepare a proposed agenda for each monthly meeting – please email us agenda items at least two weeks in advance. Make sure you attend the meeting if you put an issue on the agenda.

→ Details of meetings, agendas and minutes will be posted on our website, www.climatecamp.org.uk and sent out on our announcements list (to subscribe to this list email info@climatecamp.org.uk)

Consensus

We are using consensus decision-making, a creative decision-making process that aims to find solutions that are acceptable to everyone. Why do we use it?

■ Consensus **brings together the best from everyone's ideas**. This ensures that all opinions, ideas and concerns are taken into account. Decisions are reached in a **dialogue between equals**, who take each other seriously and who recognise each other's equal rights.

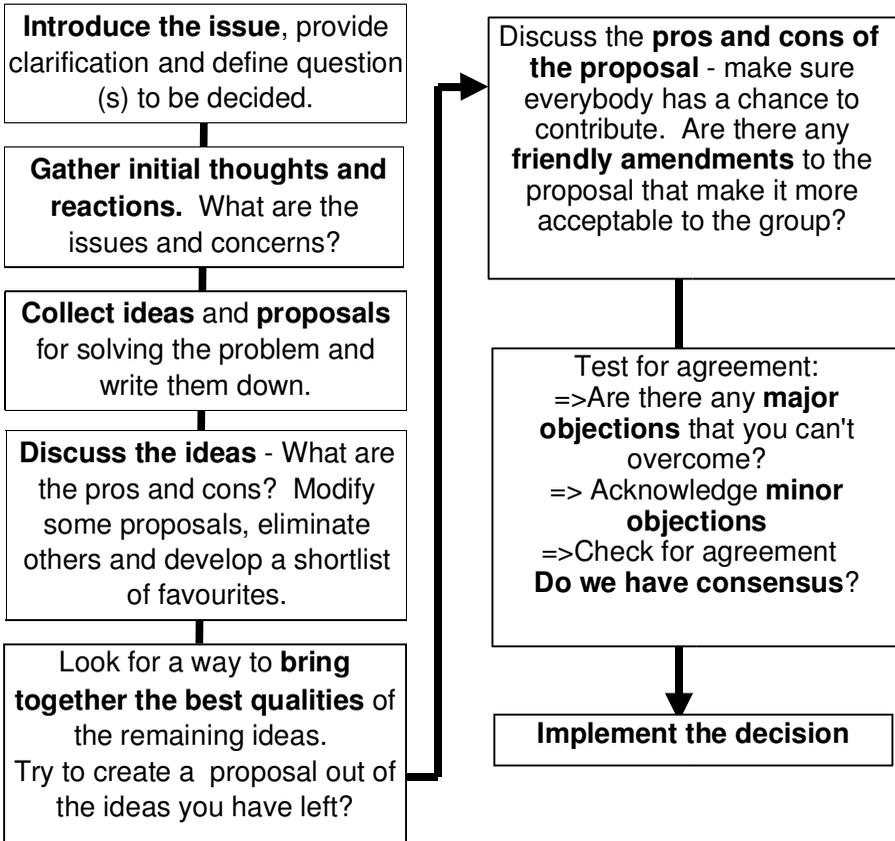
■ Because, in consensus, we all actively agree to the final decision we're much more **committed** to turning it into reality.

Facilitators

look after the structure of the meeting, making sure everyone has an opportunity to contribute, and decisions are reached.

Everyone is invited to help as part of the facilitation team for each meeting – we'll be running workshops where you can learn or refresh your facilitation skills.

Consensus Process



Objections in Consensus

The major objection (block or veto): Using your veto will stop the proposal going ahead, so think carefully before doing it. But don't be afraid to veto when it's relevant. A veto means: "If this decision went ahead I could not be part of this project."

The minor objection (stand aside): There will be times when you want to object but not to veto. In those situations you can 'stand aside'. Standing aside registers your dissent. It shows that you won't help implement the proposal but that you're willing for the group to go ahead with it.

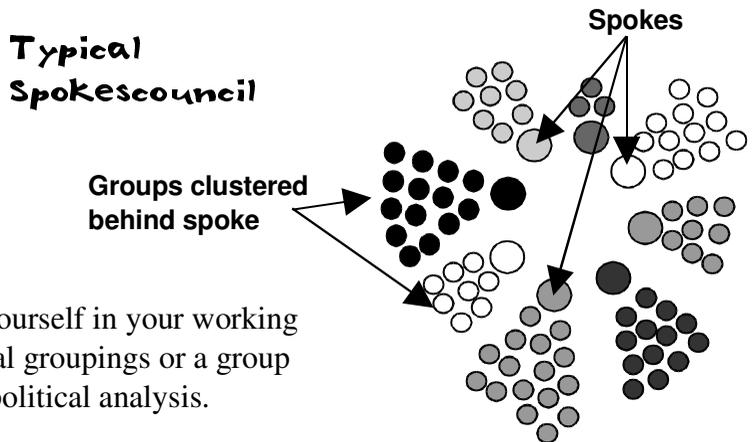
This process works well in smaller groups of up to 20 people and is what we will be using in our working group meetings.

Consensus in Large Groups

Many of the decisions will be made in very large meetings, where we will often use a **spokescouncil**. This is a system that enables hundreds of people to work together as democratically as possible, allowing the maximum of opinions and ideas to be heard in an efficient way.

In a spokescouncil, the meeting breaks up into smaller groups who discuss the issues and come up with proposals and concerns. Each group then sends a delegate (or *spoke*) to the spokescouncil meeting, where all the spokes present the proposals and concerns of their group. The spokes then come up with proposals that they think might be acceptable to everyone and check back with their groups before a decision is taken. A group can also empower their spoke to take decisions within certain parameters.

Groups can sit in a cluster behind their spoke during the spokescouncil so that they can hear what is being discussed and give immediate feedback to their spoke.



You might find yourself in your working groups, in regional groupings or a group based on shared political analysis.

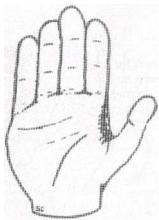
To work effectively in a spokescouncil you need to respect the role of your spoke. Your group can choose to use the spoke as a voice – feeding back to the group your collective, agreed thoughts. Or you might empower your spoke to make certain decisions based on their knowledge of your small group. Being the spoke is not easy – it carries significant responsibility. You might like to rotate the role from meeting to meeting, or agenda item to agenda item.

Guidelines for taking part in meetings

- Be respectful and trust each other. Don't be afraid to express your ideas and opinions.
- Don't assume that someone must win and someone must lose. Look for the most acceptable solution for everyone.
- Think before you speak, listen before you object. Listen to others' reactions, and consider them carefully before pressing your point.
- Remember that the ideal behind consensus is empowering versus overpowering, agreement versus majorities/minorities.

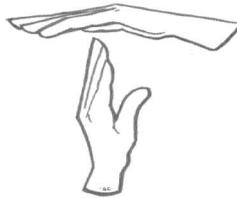
Hand signals

We are using the following handsignals in meetings – this makes meetings run more smoothly and helps the facilitators spot emerging agreements. Facilitators may introduce other handsignals if necessary.



I want to contribute to the discussion

Raise a hand or forefinger when you wish to contribute to the discussion.



Technical point

Make a T-shape with your hands to indicate a proposal about the process of the discussion, eg “lets have a break”.



'I agree' or 'Sounds good!'

Silent Handclapping. Wave your hands with your fingers pointing upwards to indicate your agreement. This gives a very helpful visual overview of what people think. It also saves time as it avoids everyone having to say “I'd just like to add that I agree with...”.

To get involved in the Facilitation Group or if you have questions, feedback or suggestions for us, talk to us or email us at

facilitation@climatecamp.org.uk

Find out more about consensus decision-making and facilitation at

www.eco-action.org/blinc