

**Friends of  
the Earth**

# How to: run a kick-ass stall

**Running a stall is one of the core activities of any local group and it's worth putting in some time to make it as effective as possible. Friends of the Earth's Network Developer for the North of England, Neil Kingsnorth and South Cheshire Friends of the Earth's Janet Perry share some tips**

When your group last ran a stall, how much time did you spend in advance talking it through and planning it? For most groups the answer is probably "not a lot" and yet a stall is the public face of your group, a route to new members and the first place that members of the public take action on our campaigns. So it's worth a bit of time getting it just right. Follow the simple steps in this pull-out guide and you could enter a whole new world of successful street campaigning.



South Cheshire Friends of the Earth

## Resources

Friends of the Earth can provide you with various materials – from T-shirts and tablecloths to posters and pens – to make your stall look better and to keep you better informed.

See *Look the business* and the *Local groups trading catalogue* which can be ordered from Naomi Hunt on 020 7566 1677 or [localgroups@foe.co.uk](mailto:localgroups@foe.co.uk). They are also available online from [http://community.foe.co.uk/local\\_groups/running\\_your\\_own/resource](http://community.foe.co.uk/local_groups/running_your_own/resource).

# The six Ws

**To get your stall just right, you need to plan in advance. It's simple and won't take long – just run through these questions at your next group meeting**

## 1 WHY are you doing the stall?

The first question you need to ask yourselves is what is the message you're trying to convey? Are you doing it to raise funds? Get more members? Publicise a campaign? Or get people to take action? Chances are you want a bit of all of these, but try to identify one main reason and concentrate on that. Having a theme makes your stall look better and is easier for the public to understand. Once you know the theme, design your stall around it.

## 2 WHAT will the stall look like?

Always use a Friends of the Earth tablecloth and T-shirts to make your stall look professional. **Take along literature on your theme and leave the information about other campaigns at home.** Sticking to your theme ensures you won't confuse the message you're trying to convey; avoid the temptation to turn your stall into a library. Take some leaflets about your group and a general leaflet about Friends of the Earth. Is there a local angle? Try to think of how you can tie your stall to a local issue, as that's more likely to interest passers-by.

### TOP TIP

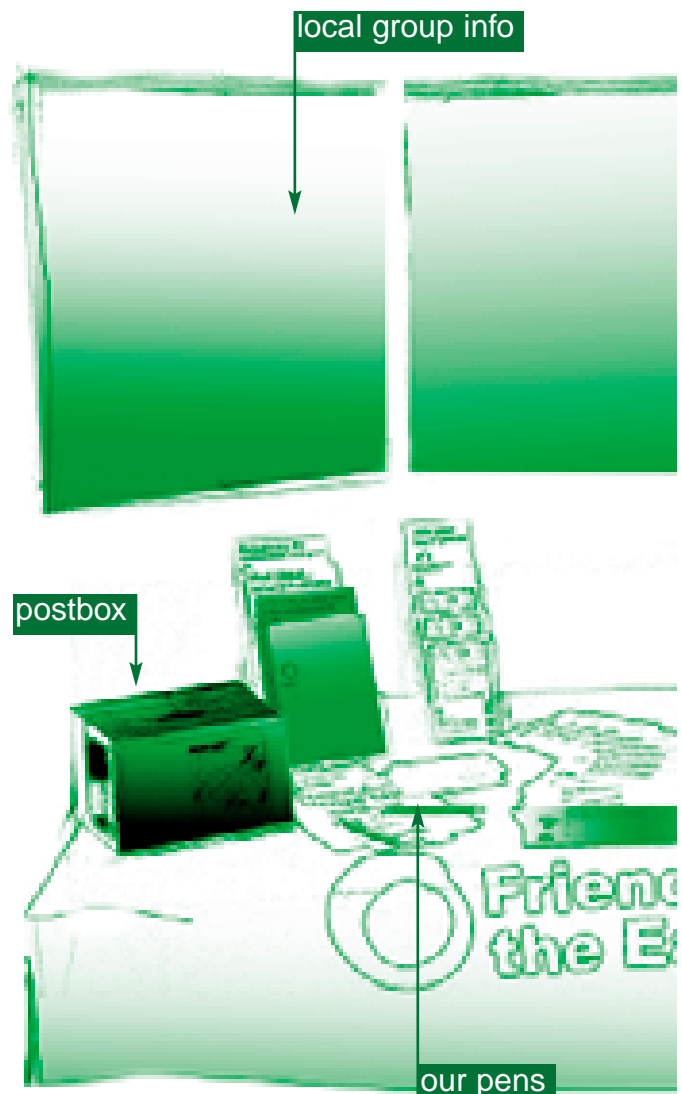
**Many groups buy plastic leaflet display stands that stand up on the table. A few of these can hold several different leaflets and booklets and make the stall look neat and professional.**

## 3 WOW – how can the stall look that extra bit special?

Think about how you can make the stall as eye-catching as possible. Models, costumes, posters, display boards or banners all add to the visual impact of a stall. It doesn't have to be expensive or complicated. Get your group to spend a few minutes brainstorming ideas for an eye-catching idea that encapsulates your theme. Remember to ask around other groups in your area – they may have already produced the perfect model.

### CASE STUDY – “Is your lunchbox causing climate change?”

This was the question that greeted visitors to the South Cheshire group's stall at a local agricultural show. The group displayed three lunchboxes, one with local organic food, one with supermarket mass-produced packet food and one in-between option. Each detailed the contents and the total cost. It highlighted the fact that a healthy, local alternative can be cheaper than the supermarket option and made people think about food miles. It was also an eye-catching display and brought people to the stall where the group could then give them information about the Real Food campaign.





## 4 WHERE are you going to do it?

Think about the theme you've chosen and then ask yourselves, is there anywhere in your town that fits with that theme? For example, if you want to do a stall on food, is there a good spot near a supermarket or local market? Alternatively, think about the busiest spots in town and see if you can do a stall there. Check with your council – you may need to book the space.

Find out about the carnivals, fêtes, fairs, agricultural shows and festivals in your area and see if you can book a stall at some of them. As well as having a large turn-out of people these events are often great fun.

## 5 WHEN will you do it?

Find a day that's best for everyone and think about whether there are any national days (eg Buy Local Day) or national events (such as a big demo in London) that might work as a hook to attract the media. You also need to think about the best times to run the stall. Think about when your chosen spot is busiest and discuss amongst yourselves when people are free to help out.

## 6 WHO is going to help out?

Last of all, you need volunteers. Stalls can be great fun and really rewarding and it is well worth everyone in the group getting involved at some point. However, not everyone likes talking to the public, so try to match shy members of the group with more experienced ones to help them get used to the experience. If someone really doesn't want to talk to the public, see if they could help in another way – by helping to set up the stall or even dress up in a costume. This can attract people to the stall, where someone else can talk in more detail.

### TOP TIP

**Plan a rota: South Cheshire group's co-ordinators Tania and Janet plan a rota for volunteers so as to make sure the right people are matched up and that no-one has to work the stall for too long.**

## Top tips

### ARTBOX

South Cheshire Friends of the Earth takes a well-stocked Art Box to all of its stalls. The box contains everything the group might need, such as pins, sticky tac, sellotape, glue, pens, marker pens, string, scissors and so on, so stall holders are prepared for any eventuality.

### POSTBOX

Find a cardboard box, cut a slit in it, paint it red. Now, you have a postbox for people to post their signed postcards in. It's a great way to make your stall stand out.

### COMPETITION

Run a simple competition to attract people to the stall, eg "What is the average distance we travel by car to shop for food each year?". Just a small prize is often enough to attract people and then you can chat to them about the campaign.

### PROMOTE YOURSELVES

Make sure you remember to take your local group membership leaflets along with you, in case anyone wants to find out about joining your group.

### PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Let your local newspaper and radio station know about your stall – it's a photo opportunity that they may well take up. If you have a digital camera, take a few pictures of the stall yourself and send it straight to the paper afterwards, along with a short story about how the day went and why you did it. Don't forget to send your photos to us too. See *How to fake it as a photographer in Change Your World 38* for tips.

### THANK YOU

The stall's done and it's been a success. To make sure people are just as keen to get involved next time, thank everyone at your next meeting or, even better, ring round them all soon afterwards to say thanks and tell them how successful it was. Members of the group might have all sorts of ideas about improving on things that didn't quite work or how to make it even better next time.

## ON THE DAY

### Keep your eye on the stall

There's nothing worse than a messy old pile of leaflets. Try to give your stall a tidy every now and then to make it look as good as new.

### People power

You only have a few seconds to grab someone's interest. Wear the Friends of the Earth T-shirts to look professional and try to appear confident, even if you're not. Smile and try to be open with your body language (so, don't cross your arms for example) and try using some "stoppers" to grab attention. Examples include:

*"I don't want your money but could I ask you just one question?"*

*"Do you have 10 seconds to answer a really quick question about climate change?"*

*"Do you have a doorstep recycling bin?"*

*"Do you think the Government is doing enough about climate change?"*

*"Can you spare a moment to help our campaign to protect the orang-utan?"*

There are more examples in the *Big Ask Climate Change Action Guide* or at [http://community.foe.co.uk/resource/event\\_presentations/bigask\\_public\\_message.pdf](http://community.foe.co.uk/resource/event_presentations/bigask_public_message.pdf)

### Work the outfield

Don't just rely on people approaching you – work your outfield. Draw people to your stall by approaching people passing by at a distance.

### CASE IN POINT: The busy mother scenario

South Cheshire group try to imagine a mother walking past with two kids in tow, bags of shopping and ten minutes left on her car-parking ticket. They ask themselves how they would grab that person's attention. If you can get her to sign, you can get anyone to! Give it a go to help you focus.

### Go armed with the facts

Try to go to the stall armed with some killer facts that blow people away, such as "the ten warmest years on record have been since 1990." South Cheshire Friends of the Earth prepare a Frequently Asked Questions sheet with answers to some common questions as well as a one-page briefing on the campaign for volunteers working the stall. It's distributed to members in advance so that everyone's prepared on the day.