

‘Friends Of’ Groups and Case Studies: Approaching Your Green Space Campaign



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**Welcome to the 'Case Study'
section of the LPGSF website.
We hope you find it interesting
and informative.**

The PROTECT DUNDONALD REC (PDR) campaign – CASE STUDY

With special thanks to Lorraine Maries for her invaluable information and advice



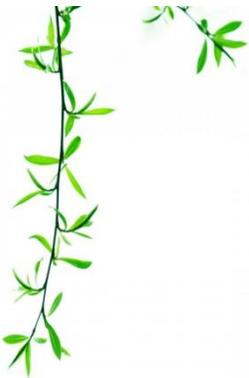
BACKGROUND

What was the scenario?

- Part of the historic Dundonald Recreation Ground, Wimbledon was threatened by developers wishing to expand a primary school on the site
- Campaign felt they were at an immediate disadvantage due to difficulties faced not appearing ‘anti-school’ – there were *other* schools which could have expanded
- Over *three years* of campaigning, fundraising, profile-raising and pursuit of legal matters
- Labour council of Merton ultimately overruled campaign group and development will go ahead
- *Central government policy* a key factor inhibiting green space protection

What next for PDR?

- Calls for possible amendment of the Localism Act ensuring Local Authorities can’t iterate ‘need for housing development’ as verbatim over community wishes on green space



Running your own campaign: advice from Dundonald Rec

COMMUNICATION:

How do we get our message across?

Active online/website presence is important as a start point; for active supporters create a PDF onto which you update any developments immediately.

- **Social media:** Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and more are useful for disseminating messages *quickly* and to a *wider audience*
 - o **Short response time:** reply to emails within 48 hours to show commitment and severity of cause
- **Newsletter:** This doesn't have to be a weekly or even bi-weekly event, but *must* be produced every time something is news-worthy. Needs to be *clear, concise, factual* - efficient distribution is also key.
- **Scalar:** smaller committee – more committed supporters (e.g. get behind legal battles – use the local community for protests)
-
- **Early consultation** between both sides is vital, especially to resolve any potential communication issues

- **Committee:** must be *committed* and *persistent*: PDR campaign was projected to take one year, 4 years ago (and is ongoing). 6/7 people minimum: bringing people in halfway through campaign is difficult.
 - o **Skills needed in committee:** *research; promotional (inc. designing and writing); interpersonal communications with supporters, authorities, opposition, bodies; fundraising, newsletter distribution*
- **Fundraising:** ability to handle fiscal side; ability to deal well with *media, communication and community cohesion*. Large sums tend to give weight to such campaigns, rather than small donations – target your core supporters, make them aware of any progress/obstacles
- **Early correspondence:** between other local green space groups vital; word-of-mouth and good relationships allows for other skills to be utilised
- **Money:** often need *more than you realise*. Be aware of hidden legal costs, costs to run campaign, putting on events
- **Incentivising:** *phrasing and mindset* - how you approach your community makes the difference to their willingness to participate

ORGANISATION:

What needs to be done?



Running your own campaign: advice from Dundonald Rec

BE AWARE OF:

What vital things do we need to know?

BE AWARE OF...

The Freedom of Information Act

BE AWARE OF...

- **Legal arguments:** inevitable throughout scrutiny of the planning process. Includes obstacles such as *historic legal covenants* which are restrictions tied to usage of land which may be challenged by council ([see table 5.1](#))
- **Two-pronged attack (1):** it's not enough to just mobilise one argument; the more affected, the more support your campaign will garner.
- **Two-pronged attack (2):** *'Why this space should be saved//and why *whatever* shouldn't be built here'* – Merton used arguments of least green space in borough and demographics surrounding schools which supported their claims ([see figure 5.4 for 'how to build' your arguments](#))
- **Facts:** it's a waste of time protecting urban green space unless there's a clear *argument*, which needs clear *facts*. Gather as much evidence as possible.
- **From informal to formal:** if you don't have a club which uses the green space – *make one*. Green space is more easily protected if it is well used.

- **NIMBY-ism** –easy rhetoric by opposers to use against your campaign: mobilise structured, well-thought out arguments rather than complaints
- **Political motivations:** local councils are *politicised*: in Merton, Labour opposition to Tory Free Schools policy led to expansion of the borough's comprehensive primary schools.

- Integral to accessing information to help your case
- A useful tool to be mobilised allowing misendeavour to be rooted out by opposing interest
- Can be applied to any public authority

MANAGING THE MEDIA:

How to deal with a public campaign

- **Active localism:** creating local interest can be key to managing media, facilitating interest from local, to regional, to even national news
- **Journalists:** communicate with journalists independently from other supporters, without relying just on press releases. Keep close contact with selected journalists so they can be informed of developments, prioritising stories for them to generate publicity
- **Local radio:** More likely to be featured on radio programmes than television due to less need for investment, so perhaps focus efforts here first. Radio targets a certain demographic – older population may be more likely to back campaign financially. ([see page 8: 'Running the Campaign'](#))

Running your own campaign: advice from Dundonald Rec

SO WHAT NEXT...

...for the Protect Dundonald Rec campaign?

- The ultimate aim of the group, despite their overall campaign failure, calls for possible amendment of the Localism Act ensuring Local Authorities can't iterate 'need for housing development' as verbatim over community wishes on green space.
- A desire to get the threats faced by green spaces in London discussed on a national policy level
- Need to put the rest of Dundonald Rec into a trust in order to protect any more of the green space from development

SO WHAT NEXT...

...for YOUR campaign?

- **MOBILISE** a strong, committed campaign group
- **DEVISE** a strong fundraising, communication and legal plan
- **BEGIN** making your presence felt



SAVE OUR SCRUBS: campaigning to protect Wormwood Scrubs from redevelopment – CASE STUDY

(www.saveourscrubs.org.uk)

BACKGROUND

What is their aim?

- Ensure that any proposed or actual development around Old Oak interchange, to the North of Wormwood Scrubs, respects the present character of the scrubland and park as *'a common land for the enjoyment and recreation of all Londoners'*

Maintain its:

- **Diverse habitat**
- **Managed wilderness**
- **Series of local nature reserves** ([see table 5.2, p.21 for material considerations](#))

What are the threats facing Wormwood Scrubs?

- Generally most threatened by transport links and development such as the proposed High Speed Two rail link between London and the West Midlands, Manchester and Leeds (HS2), Crossrail (which will run from Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, via Central London, to Essex and the South East), and the already existing London Overground which has proposals for expansion. The campaigners allege that such developments, which will hinder the nature and character of the Scrubs, have been manufactured solely to accommodate the needs of developers without recognition of the Scrubs historical character.

Scrubs lie inside the **Mayoral Development Corporation** for Old Oak Common and Oak Royal. Old Oak Common is situated between Harlesdon and Acton and is known for railway depots: Wormwood Scrubs Park and prison lie the South.

DEVELOPMENT

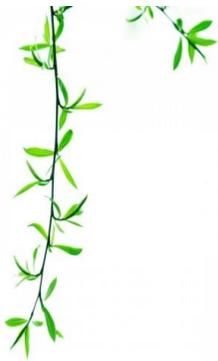
What are some of the key arguments FOR development?

- Quicker journeys
- More route options
- Less crowding along Central London tube and mainline routes
- Would support regeneration plans for the Old Oak/Wormwood Scrubs area, which it is argued will generate 55,000 jobs, and 24,000 homes

'By 2026...[Old Oak] will [potentially] be one of the best connection railway stations in the UK' with HS2 and Crossrail, as well as National Rail services, intersecting here.

If the campaign manages to restrict the development of a London Overground station, developers have suggested that regeneration of the area could be restrained.

SoS petition aims to give a 'voice' to those threatened that can't speak out, e.g. **wildlife**



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GREENERY AND WILDERNESS

- The main type of vegetation is woodland in adjoining Holland Park, with scrub occurring as thicket here and along some transport thoroughfares such as the railway sidings and Grand Union Canal. It is also more prominent around the edge of Little Wormwood Scrubs park.
- Kensington and Chelsea 2002 ecological survey recorded scrubland in the area as ‘occasional’ due to prevalence of woodlands. There is a widespread example of scrub/grassland across Little Wormwood Scrubs Park, which is also denoted as a ‘Site of Local Importance’ with the proposition to re-designate it as a Borough Grade II.

Old Oak Common and Wormwood Scrubs parkland area as a ‘Green Corridor’:

- On the west side of the British Rail Western Region Land the remaining importance of wildlife to the site has been recognised through designation as a ‘Green Corridor’.
- Little Wormwood Scrubs Park, the Grand Union Canal, Kensal Green Cemetery and Kensal Green Gasworks site make up this green corridor.

THE CAMPAIGN

- Save Our Scrubs campaign stress they are NOT anti-development: more interested in encouraging a sensible and relevant use of space according to local needs and desires.
- They are promoting a re-think of the proposed luxury flats being built in this specific area, which will impact upon the natural environment as well as heightening land costs. North West corner is currently a haven for biodiversity and wildlife: development into a ‘finance-scape’ notates the area with a hegemonic monetary value.
- A re-consultation of the plans taking into account local needs is also advocated.

What is a ‘green corridor’? And why is it important? ([see figure 5.4, p.20 on the value of parks](#))

A long, usually fairly thin strip of vegetation in an urban setting and mostly situated along transport routes, e.g. train tracks. Frequent mobility and an array of species mean these areas are highly populated with various vegetation and animal species – contribute to



Friends of Havelock Rec, 2008



‘Friends Of’ campaigns

A key feature of many modern campaigns – not just Friends Of groups – is the mobilisation of a ‘Change.org’ or ‘38degrees.org.uk’ petition. By using an online platform to collect signatures and distribute the message via social media or email, support for any campaign is exposed to a much wider audience, publicity and therefore potential

‘FRIENDS OF...’ GROUPS: Havelock Rec

‘FRIENDS OF’... HAVELOCK REC

Active since January 2015

Where and what is Havelock Rec?

- Situated in the South East of Bromley, Havelock Rec is an open grass playing area in the midst of residential housing development in the peripheral London Borough of Bromley
- A remnant of ‘Shooting Common’ of the 1800s, all of which (except for Havelock Rec) has now been developed on
- It is also known as ‘the Brickfield’ due to the presence of a large brick factory which resided on the site until the 1930s.

The winning campaign (for more supporting information see fig. 5.4, p.20; ‘Expanding Your Campaign’, p.9)

- Due to a local primary school being housed in temporary buildings nearby, it was proposed by the council that approximately half of Havelock Rec be given over to the construction of a permanent, two-storey primary school for 630 pupils.
- Opposed on the grounds of loss of rare open space in a built-up environment; lack of traffic access and emergency vehicle access needs; increased congestion and pollution
- Advantages for Friends Of group: council already noted lack of open space in Bromley, and ground conditions due to presence of old Brickworks on the site may have made the venture economically unviable
- Key factor in success was *community participation*: mobilised social media and internet resources spread the campaign’s argument; a clear logo and message encouraged participation; 5000 window posters were distributed (see ‘Running the Campaign: social media’, p.8)
- Backing from local Members of Parliament (MPs), Bromley Town Councillors and local residents outside of the campaign enabled a victory for the Campaign group.



'FRIENDS OF...' GROUPS: Lordship Rec

'FRIENDS OF'... LORDSHIP REC –

Active since 1992

Where and what is Lordship Rec?

- The largest green open space in Tottenham, Lordship Rec is a historical site which used to house Downhills Manor and estate. In the past it has featured allotments, ornamental and boating lakes, been the host of local show events, multicultural festival events and planted woodland.
- Successful Friends Of Lordship Rec group have recently been awarded: Fields in Trust 'QEII' status, 'most improved' out of 1500 Field in Trust-state open areas, Green Flag award since 2013 and a London-in-Bloom Gold Award

'Friends Of' campaigns

Although Lordship Rec were not facing any imminent threats as such, the mobilisation of such an active friends group has improved the green environment, made available plethora of diverse community groups for residents and organised events to celebrate the area's history and culture.

Lordship Rec, *Friends of Lordship Rec*,
n.d.



A successful 'Friends Of' group...

- Improvements made to the Rec area include an 'Eco-Hub', a new addition to the Rec run by the community with both cafe and toilet facilities. There is a new staff depot to ensure continual monitoring of the area, as well as restoration of the Shell Theatre and the creation of the community-based Shell Performing Arts Collective.
- It also contains a model traffic area, first implemented in 1938 designed to encourage safe use of the roads by children

- Friends of Lordship Rec have managed to counteract funding cuts – meaning a lack of staffing and maintenance costs – to ensure Lordship Rec remains at the heart of community life in Tottenham.
- SecureD £5Mn in funding - £4Mn of which was from Lottery funding - derived from work towards partnerships with local Haringey council and other sources.
- More trees, meadows and flower beds have been planted, adding to the biodiverse and aesthetic qualities of the area whilst encouraging gardening and maintenance skills.



'FRIENDS OF' GROUPS: Hervey Road

'FRIENDS OF'... HERVEY ROAD SPORTS FIELD

Active since summer 2007

Where and what is Hervey Road?

- Hervey Road Sports Field is situated in Blackheath, Greenwich ([see figure 5.4, 'Recreation', p.20](#))
- It's green space was used as a sports field since 1890-2002, until funding declined, the area was unattended and vandalised
- In 2006, a proposed development of a special needs school on the existing site had been suggested – due to extensive lobbying these plans never came to fruition
- With Greenwich part of the Olympic boroughs, it was hoped that funding secured from the London Marathon Charitable Trust would be used to restore and improve the facilities at Hervey Road Sports Field

(Another) successful 'Friends Of' group...

- Hervey Road Sports Field faced threats from the re-development of special education school, Willow Dene, from its existing site to the Sports Field. The boarding up of indoor facilities on the site as well as
- The local residents, London Mayor (Ken Livingstone at the time) nor Sports England had been consulted, despite plans being developed under the guise of 'no decision has been made'
- The campaign was ultimately successful due to a number of funding grants being made towards it, as well as recognition that Hervey Road falls within an Olympic legacy borough.
- Despite the proposed plans being drafted in 2006, it took until Summer 2014 for the council to finally decide that the site was unsuitable for the rebuilding of a school: the campaign persevered until their funding grant could be kept.



Save Hervey Road Sports Field, n.d.

Successful mobilisation:

Key to success of a campaign is the right steps being taken early on. Actions such as setting up a community bank account, contact with societies such as Field in Trust, mobilisation of key impacts through fact (e.g. traffic pollution through traffic counts) and recording a variety of usages all strengthen a green space argument.