Local Group Campaign Ideas

The campaigns below are a few ideas for how local groups can promote Proportional Representation. There are many more. Feel free to get in touch with us if you want more advice: local@makevotesmatter.org.uk . Under "resources" you will find links to materials related to these approaches - many of them are included in the Local Group Toolkit folder.

For up to date information on the campaign, you can check our regular Campaign Updates or visit the Media Coverage section of our website.

You can also find the full text of the Good Systems Agreement, our historic cross-party consensus on Proportional Representation.

1. Lobbying local MP(s)

Concept: Local group organises meeting(s) with local MP(s). Meeting is attended by a wide range of constituents, including representatives of all local parties. MPs who oppose PR or are undecided are lobbied to support it through discussion and evidence of broad support amongst constituents / public. MPs who support PR are asked to join the PR Alliance, agree to raise electoral reform with the local party branch or facilitate the local group's attendance at a local party branch meeting. The group can inform Make Votes Matter of their MP's position, to be added to the interactive map.

Resources:

- Draft letter requesting a meeting with MP on behalf of local group
- 'How to lobby your MP at a meeting

2. Public lectures, debates & conferences

Concept: Local community is invited to a public event at which experts and advocates (and opponents) of proportional representation are invited to discuss and debate issues around electoral reform. Aimed at engaging and educating the wider public, and can be used as a hook for audience members to become involved in campaigning. Event can involve a single speaker with Q&A, or can be an all-day conference with many contributors, or anything in between.

Resources:

- Black Votes Matter event blog and leaflet

3. Fun meet-ups

Meet up for some electoral "refun" - invite fellow campaigners round for an evening of inspiring electoral reform / democracy videos with pot luck food and drink, or quiz night with the locals. Or you could organise a party with live music and games (e.g. the Lottery Election Game) as a

fundraiser. Alternatively do something creative and have a banner making session ready for a demo or local event! Examples include Big Ben, Decrometer and Equal Votes

4. **Festivals & Fairs**

Concept: Local group attends a cultural / political event to communicate to the public about the need for electoral reform. This could involve operating a fixed stall or moving about leafleting. Opportunity to get interested people to sign up to the national / local campaign, and to engage with any particular local campaign (e.g. a petition aimed at a local MP).

Resources:

- Resources page

5. **Street leafleting / street stalls**

Concept: Team of local activists leaflet and talk to the community in a busy local location. Opportunity to sign people up to local and national campaign, and to engage with any particular local campaign (e.g. a petition aimed at a local MP).

Some local groups have expanded this concept to be a roadshow of events

Resources:

- Resources page
- Writeathon guide
- MVM all activist calls (details will be confirmed prior to, and following national action day events)
- For inspiration on stalls have a look at some examples from our 'Make Noise for PR' action day

6. **Protest / creative action or stunt**

Concept: Local activists hold a demonstration, possibly synchronised with other demonstrations across the country, or in response to a particular local development (outside council meetings, MPs surgeries, etc.). Alternatively, carry out a creative action to attract publicity - e.g. a "lottery election", simulated suffragette-style chaining to railings; popping balloons in place of unrepresented voters on a "map" of the UK, etc. Other ideas include using music/sound to create a noise, or dance, or anything visual using props like a decrometer, big ben. This can be part of national action days, or in response to local events.

A really good way to do this might be to join groups with cross over interest - e.g. climate change groups, or social justice events

Resources:

- Resources page

7. Writing to local press and blogging

Concept: Writing letters or articles about lack of representation and the solution for publication in local press and media. Works well in conjunction with any of the campaign ideas in this list. Can also be used to advertise forthcoming meetings or events. Potentially signed by a coalition of local parties, public figures, prominent businesses and organisations.

Also consider calling in to talk-radio shows, either locally or nationally. Hearing public support for PR on a range of media outlets is a key way of raising the profile.

Alternatively, you could write and publish your own blog - there are lots of free sites for doing this. Read MVM's blog posts for inspiration.

Resources:

- You can see examples of letters in local press on the coverage section of the website
- Here's a sample press release.

8. Schools and education

Concept: Running sessions in schools, colleges and universities to provide basic education on elections, electoral systems and democracy. Material could be provided to teachers, or local group members could seek appointments to attend schools for a lesson / assembly themselves. Mock elections used to engage students in voting processes under different systems. Many local groups also have attended university fresher fairs

Resources:

- Schools engagement resources
- Universities toolkit
- Consult our website for a range of talks, podcasts and articles that have been conducted, alongside our youtube and also the roadshow of excellent talks and debates from our Labour for a New Democracy campaign

9. Lobby elected officials / candidates to pass motions in support of PR

Concept: Persuade your local council, or parliamentary candidates of any / all local parties, mayoral candidates, etc. to pass a motion or otherwise signal their support for PR. Cross-party support sends a strong signal and attracts media attention, and can be used to place public pressure on opposers of reform.

Resources:

- CLP motions to National Policy Forum

- Trade union motions
- Motion to Newcastle council to support PR

10. Speaking about PR local party or community group meetings

Concept: Local activists attend local party branch meetings - particularly Constituency Labour Party (as the key "undecided" party with regards to PR) to make the case for PR. Could be framed as a "for" and "against" debate, concluding with a vote on a motion. The same approach can be taken to political or community groups (e.g. Momentum branch, Fabian Society, Quakers Meeting, Residents' Associations).

Resources:

- Labour for PR webpage
- Invite a speaker
- Attend training and support via our cross party speakers program

11. Conduct Special Regional events

Concept: Join forces with nearby MVM groups, and plan events. These can be great ways to galvanise activists, and help create a movement of people.

e.g a talk on PR by a local MP; a walk for PR;

12. Get involved with Local PR campaigning

Concept: Local councillors are often passionate about PR, and as part of our councillors network we can help create more 'noise for PR'

Some local groups have created survey's to explore local councillor's views on PR. This could be an excellent way of engaging the local public.

13. Improve Diversity by engaging with BAME/Disability/LBGT groups

Concept: Reach out to people who may not be significantly represented in the movement for PR locally and nationally. Offer a talk on including their voices in the movement for PR. This may involve having to creatively consider relevant issues for different communities. The MVM diversity lead and team can be approached to help plan such events.

14. Social Media Campaigning

Concept: To use social media for the group to network with others. This can be a great way to broaden the reach of the group, and discuss local issues with people who might not get involved in other ways.

Many groups have set up facebook pages, alongside twitter etc. If you are new to this, or just not so confident the please review our beginners guide to social media and our social media guide