



#TeamWilder Toolkit: Involving your Community

We all know that many hands make light work, and #TeamWilder has proved that when people are involved and feel part of something, that's when the magic happens! There are many reasons for involving your community in co-creating and taking action for nature, whether to build support, reduce conflict, invite diverse thinking, or simply because you need some help. This toolkit provides the theory, techniques and top tips to authentically involve your community in taking meaningful action.

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1. #TeamWilder Spectrum of Participation:

Participation specialists use the term '**Spectrum of Participation**' to describe different levels of involvement in something – at one end we have people being told that something is going to happen (not participation at all) and at the other we have the people taking responsibility for making things happen. In between we have varying degrees of involvement & varying degrees of where power & control lies too.

On their own these are not #TeamWilder				This is #TeamWilder!		
Giving information	Gathering information	Inviting action	Consulting to be influenced	Deciding together	Acting together	Supporting others
You tell people what is planned.	You gather information that may or may not influence your decisions.	You set up activities and invite others to take part.	You offer options or seek opinions and information that inform your decision making. You feedback on how you came to those decisions.	You listen to understand others' needs and they provide ideas and options, then decisions are made collaboratively on the way forward, and actions are co-designed.	You enter into partnerships to carry out action for nature. Partners may decide together to take on specific actions or to work collaboratively as one.	You work in a community organising way to help others do what they want to for nature. They take the lead supported by us.
Examples: • Newsletter • Public display • Social media post • Press release	Examples: • Survey • Questionnaire • Door knocking • Poll	Examples: • Litter <u>picking</u> • Tree planting • Engagement activity at a public event	Examples: • Consultation event • Public meeting • Survey • Questionnaire • Door knocking (all with feedback)	Examples: • Listening exercise with a group or at a public meeting • Planning/design workshop involving others	Examples: • Partnership project • Community event or activity • Working together to transform a public space for nature	Examples: • Listening to understand • Co-designing action • Providing advice and guidance • Coaching and training
Control is retained by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust				Control is shared, delegated or lies elsewhere		
Nonparticipation				Substantial participation		

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To take a #TeamWilder approach in your community you will look to engage people at the light green, yellow and orange end of the spectrum (deciding together, acting together and supporting others), but it's important to say that it is not about one approach being better than another, it's about what is right in each situation.

Each stage on this spectrum has a role to play and inviting people to take part in activities that foster nature connection is an important first step, particularly if your community are not aware of the wildlife that they have around them. You may also need to do some gathering of information first to help with your community mapping before you begin to really listen and involve people.

It's also recognised that not everyone in society will be able to operate at the orange end for a variety of reasons, it's about us providing those opportunities for those who can and supporting others in ways that enable increased participation in decision making as well as action.

Where you can embed the #TeamWilder way of working you will see increased participation and shared ownership developing to support your community led action.

2. Top tips for involving your community:

Questionnaire/Survey	
Pros: • Can gather large quantities of data in a short timeframe • Can gather detailed responses to specific questions • can collect anonymous feedback • If respondents are completing the questionnaire themselves, they can choose not to answer any questions they don't want to without feeling pressured to do so • People can complete in their own time - which may mean it is more accessible for people to fit around their commitments and lifestyle • Using online surveys means that analysing the results can be much quicker and save you time	Cons: • Not very personal – difficult to build relationships • Time consuming to create and process • Can exclude people who struggle to read and write • You can end up with lots of information but not enough time or resource to analyse it or know what to do with it • If the questionnaire is poorly designed, it might give you useless information! • Using online surveys can exclude people who do not use the internet
Things to consider: • Consider what questions will give you the answers you are looking for • Consider how best to carry it out (paper survey, online, using social media, face to face) • Ask open questions (open questions usually begin with words such as: what, why, how, describe, and explain) • Use plain English • Consider barriers and how you can overcome them e.g. different languages, accessible versions	



- Clearly communicate what will happen next
- Consider feedback mechanism (how will you share outcomes and next steps?)
- Pilot your questionnaire first - test it out on a few people from your target audience/community to check if the questions you are asking are easily understandable by them and giving you the answers you need.
- Depending on the information being sought it might make sense to use a range of types of question – too many open questions could put some people off

Door knocking

Pros:

- Can reach people who would be missed using other methods
- Allows you to have great conversations and build relationships

Cons:

- Time consuming to cover a large area
- You can miss people depending on time of day
- Some people love to talk - which can be great but also might mean they take up lots of your time talking about things that are off-topic
- Can be tiring and dispiriting if you are out for a long time going door to door with few decent conversations

Things to consider:

- Plan your approach & questions beforehand
- Take someone with you & stay outside
- Keep it friendly and casual
- Spend time building relationships & find common ground
- Avoid making promises but write down concerns and complaints & pass these on
- Communicate what will happen next - bring a leaflet for an event/meeting so you have something for people to follow up with
- Establish a way for people to contact you & when you make a good contact, make sure you have a way of keeping in touch so you can follow up (remember GDPR)
- Plan how you will capture what people say - are you taking notes, or a survey? Make sure you let people know if you are taking notes or voice recording the conversation and get their permission first

Stall at a local community event

Pros:

- Reach a wide local audience
- Great for building relationships and networks

Cons:

- Limited attendance can lead to you missing people out
- Need support from others to deliver

Things to consider:

- Could include elements of giving information as well as gathering information and co-design
- Keep it simple and inspiring
- Activities are a great way to draw people in



- Events are a great place for conversations & listening to community – make sure you have enough people on your stall
- Consider how you will capture information – survey or more visual and interactive activity e.g. writing on leaves and hanging them on a tree.
- Consider what you'd like people to take away/do afterwards
- Establish a way for people to contact you & when you make a good contact, make sure you have a way of keeping in touch so you can follow up (remember GDPR)

Participation event e.g. tree planting or litter picking

Pros:

- Attractive for people to join in
- Provides a hook to gain interest or support

Cons:

- Can have limited participation
- Activity/ideas are not those of the wider community
- Could be difficult for people with limited physical mobility to join in

Things to consider:

- Advertise well & use existing networks to promote through other groups & organisations
- Plan the day and time to maximise participation
- Consider needs of participants e.g. PPE, facilities, refreshments
- Communicate the 'why' - i.e. the purpose of the activity
- Consider how you will help to build community ownership and longevity
- Use opportunity to discuss ideas for what you could do next as a community
- Celebrate your achievements e.g. press releases, social media posts, local newsletters
- Say thank you!

Community consultation event

Pros:

- Allows you to share ideas or plans and have constructive two-way conversations about them
- You may get new ideas and meet people who can support the project

Cons:

- Takes time to organise and spread the word
- Mediation may be needed to allow all voices to be heard

Things to consider:

- Spread the word to make sure everyone feels included/invited
- Keep it fun!
- Work with community partners and other groups/organisations to deliver more activities to give people a reason to come & make it really enjoyable
- Could include elements of giving information as well as gathering information and co-design
- Choose a venue that is as accessible as possible and provide clear directions and signage for people who may be unfamiliar with the area
- Make your consultation or participation element interactive, quick and easy for everyone to take part in
- Offer refreshments
- Consider how you will keep people informed & involved



Community meeting/workshop

Pros:

- Allows you to explore ideas or plans as a group and decide together what you will do
- You may get new ideas and meet people who can support the project

Cons:

- Takes time to organise and spread the word
- Mediation may be needed to allow all voices to be heard

Things to consider:

- Spread the word to make sure everyone feels included/invited
- Consider who is missing and how you will include them. Think about who has the knowledge, contacts or influence?
- Create a structure/agenda and share so everyone understands what will happen
- Plan in plenty of time/space for everyone to contribute
- Keep it as interactive and participatory as possible by using flipcharts, sticky notes, felt pens, sticky dots – be as creative as possible
- To design a space you can use mood boards, invite people to draw or get even more inventive!
- Consider how you will keep people informed & involved
- Choose a venue that is as accessible as possible and provide clear directions and signage for people who may be unfamiliar with the area

Listening exercise

Pros:

- Enables you to really get to know and understand your community
- Participants feel listened to and heard which generates positive feelings about the project or activity
- Can be a great way of exploring a particular issue or idea in more detail or a wide range of issues around a site/area/proposal etc
- Can be used to capture a range of different views on a topic, and/or to capture commonalities between people

Cons:

- May need some training to feel confident facilitating this
- Can generate lots of discussion that may not fit with your key aims or agenda and lead to conversation moving away from focus of exercise
- Issues that are raised may require lots of unpacking/signposting during or after the exercise
- This method sometimes captures those with the loudest or more confident voices and it can be hard to engage quieter people in this type of process.
- Can be time consuming and difficult to analyse the results afterwards

Things to consider:

- Plan your questions carefully
- Refresh your understanding of listening techniques
- Use open questions & never use leading questions (open questions usually begin with words such as: what, why, how, describe, and explain)
- Allow plenty of time so you are not rushed



- You may find it helpful to have a dedicated scribe to record
- If all parties are happy, you could use an audio recorder or film it
- Ensure everyone involved understands how the information will be used & agree next steps
- Think about how you will encourage everyone to be involved, in particular those quieter members of the group
- To keep it simple you might want to plan a limited number of questions or prompts for the group to discuss
- If you are talking more than the group, you're doing it wrong!

Collaborative partnership project

Pros:

- When done well, your community will have been listened to and involved in every step of planning and co-design
- Everyone feels invested in this idea and has shared responsibility and ownership over making it happen

Cons:

- Can become complex with multiple priorities
- Takes time to build relationships and work collaboratively as one

Things to consider:

- Check that you are not leaving anyone out – important to consider who else you need to involve and reach out to them to ensure their views are also heard
- Clarify roles and responsibilities so it's a real team effort and nothing gets missed
- Consider needs of participants e.g. PPE, facilities, refreshments
- Celebrate your achievements e.g. press releases, social media posts, local newsletters
- Thank all partners and supporters
- Consider how you will keep partnership relationships going and agree responsibilities going forward

Community-led action

Pros:

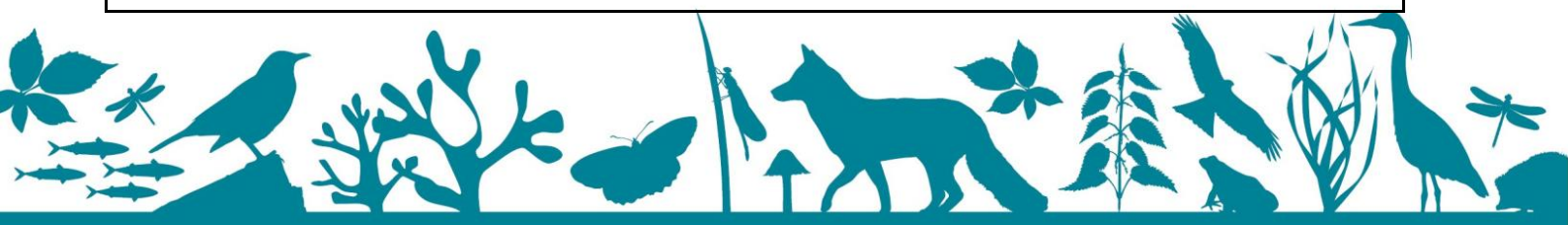
- When done well, your community will have been listened to and involved in every step of planning and co-design
- Genuinely meets community need
- Everyone feels invested in this idea and has shared responsibility and ownership over making it happen
- Creates legacy to ensure continuation of project into the future

Cons:

- Requires a number of people from community to take ownership so it doesn't become only one or two people's responsibility

Things to consider:

- Check that you are not leaving anyone out – important to consider who else you need to involve and reach out to them to ensure their views are also heard
- Allow people to choose their own roles and responsibilities – so it's a real team effort
- Consider needs of participants eg. PPE, facilities, refreshments
- Celebrate your achievements e.g. press releases, social media posts, local newsletters
- Say thank you!



3. Community Mapping:

Before you begin, it's useful to map out who your community is. **Community stakeholder mapping is a process for identifying people and organisations that can influence or are affected by a project or activity, and how they are connected to each other.** It can be a useful tool for getting started with community-led change and can help ensure that the right stakeholders are engaged at the right time.

Things to consider:

- Who are the key stakeholders in our community?
- Who are we networked with already?
- Who has an interest (or a stake) in the issue we wish to address?
- Who might be impacted?
- Who has the knowledge, contacts or influence?
- Who is missing or under-represented?

Then map your community stakeholders - this could be done in a number of ways by using:

- A **geographical map and sticky notes** - write the names of community groups, stakeholders and local organisations on sticky notes, then stick them on the map where they are based or operate
- A **large piece of paper** or flipchart - write down all known groups/contacts. Arrows can be drawn to create connections between those who have links with one another, or they can be grouped together in categories (e.g. voluntary, religious, educational etc)
- A **list or spreadsheet** to capture all the key community groups, stakeholders and local organisations in the area – this can be useful for capturing contact details, keeping notes from conversations and tracking progress

This information can then be used to identify who you will talk to/listen to and who you will involve in your actions. The grid below can be used to help you determine how you will involve the different groups, organisations and individuals on your map.

High ↑ Levels of influence ↑ Low	Consult Make sure these people have a say	Engage Actively involve these people in designing and doing	Partner Work together with these people to achieve shared goals
	Consult Make sure these people have a say	Engage Actively involve these people in designing and doing	Engage Actively involve these people in designing and doing
	Inform Keep these people up to date	Consult Make sure these people have a say	Consult Make sure these people have a say
Low → Levels of interest → High			



A helpful way to use this is in the group with others so you can discuss each one and agree where they sit. You can create this grid on a flipchart and write every community group, stakeholder, local organisation or individual on a different sticky note. Discuss each one in turn and place them on your grid. This will help you to decide how to involve different people. Consider who has the most interest in and influence over what you wish to achieve and approach them first with a view to collaborating.

4. Community Organising:

Community organising is the work of bringing people together to take action around their common concerns and overcome social injustice. Community organisers reach out and listen, connect and motivate people to build their collective power.

Staff from Yorkshire Wildlife Trust have had the benefit of expert training from the National Academy of Community Organising and we highly recommend looking at the incredible resources on their website which have been designed to support people to embrace this way of working.

<https://www.corganisers.org.uk/>

The aim is always to really **listen to a communities' needs and aspirations**, bring together people with **shared interests**, identify **common goals and develop a strategy** to achieve them. This may involve helping to develop the community's **knowledge, confidence and sense of collective power**, and/or motivating them to **act together** to achieve their goals and build their power.

It is vital that action is **co-created** so that communities have real **ownership** to be able to continue their actions long term. The action they take may be something they can achieve themselves through working together, or it may involve campaigning for a change of policy or law. These actions are collectively described as **social action** – organised activity that seeks to improve places or situations for people (and in this case nature too).

The **Community Organising Framework** is a great place to start to find out more about this approach, more information can be found here:

<https://www.corganisers.org.uk/what-is-community-organising/our-framework/>

Active Listening:

Community Organising starts with listening – use active listening techniques to really listen to understand different people's needs and perspectives.

Use open questions – they are deliberately designed to seek a fuller response. Community organisers use lots of open questions to explore the thoughts and feelings of people in the community and encourage them to reflect upon their responses. Open questions make sure the person we are listening is free to speak their mind and discuss the things that are most important to them. Open questions usually begin with words such as: **why, how, what, when, where, how, describe, and explain.**

For more information, the National Academy of Community Organising has a fantastic resource on their website which details how to organise a listening campaign.

<https://www.corganisers.org.uk/training/learning-resources/organising-effective-listening-campaigns/>

This toolkit has been created with credit to the National Association of Community Organising and the Connect: Partnerships at their best toolkit developed by The National Trust.

