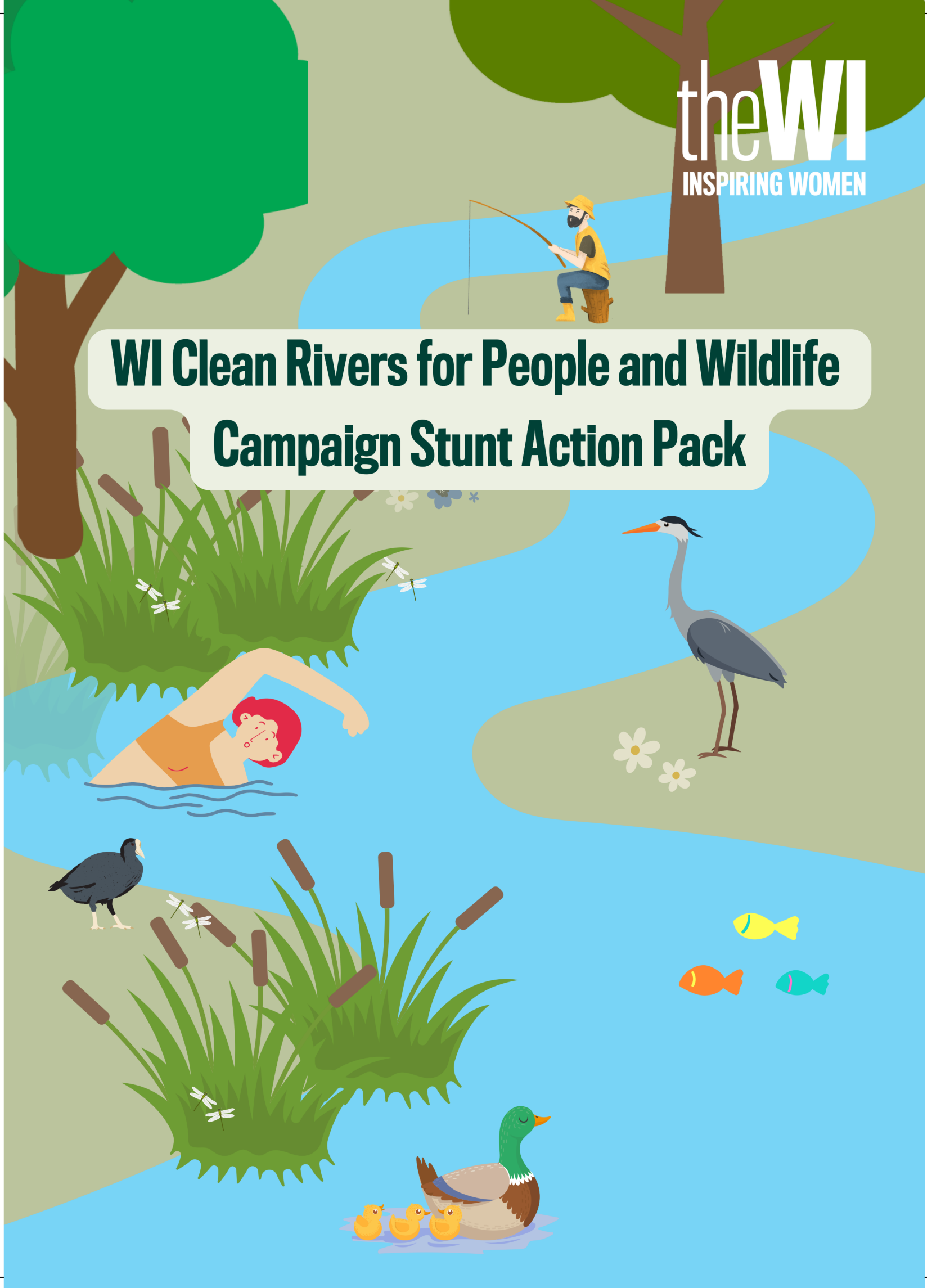


WI Clean Rivers for People and Wildlife Campaign Stunt Action Pack



What is a campaign stunt?

A campaign stunt or action is one of the many techniques that campaigners can use to build public awareness of campaigns and to help a cause or issue stand out from the crowd.

Organising a stunt can be a great way to:

- Raise awareness of your campaign and build community support
- Gain national, regional and local media interest in your campaign or message
- Make decisionmakers aware of your campaign and encourage them to take action

The NFWI Public Affairs team have used stunts to build public awareness for WI campaigns. For example, during the build-up to COP26 in 2021, the NFWI co-organised the 'WednesdayforWomen' stunt in Parliament Square which saw the statue of leading suffragist Millicent Garrett Fawcett adapted to raise awareness of the effects of climate change on women and girls.

As a WI member you may have already participated in or organised a stunt yourself. During the 2019 'Time is Now' lobby of Parliament, WI members used alarm clocks to 'sound the alarm' for climate action, and to ask the UK Government to legally commit the UK to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.



How could organising a stunt help my Clean Rivers campaign?

As part of the 'Clean Rivers for People and Wildlife' campaign, WI members are being encouraged to take part in the WI Week of River Action from the 11-18 September 2023.

As this is likely to be the first big opportunity for WIs to take action to campaign for clean rivers, we are asking WI members to draw public attention to the importance of clean rivers for people and wildlife by organising a campaign stunt in your local community.

This will help to engage members of your community in the WIs newest campaign and could help to build cross-community support for your designated bathing water campaign. Going forward, demonstrating cross-community support will be vital to convincing decision-makers to grant designated bathing water status to an appropriate stretch of river in your area.

Organising an eye-catching stunt in support of a designated bathing water can help to secure local media coverage for your campaign and catch the attention of decisionmakers and people outside of your usual networks.



How to take action

Ideas for stunts, actions or photocalls

The Big River Splash

WI members, local swimming groups, paddleboarders, other water users and local environmental groups could come together to swim in a local appropriate stretch of river that could be designated as a bathing water.

Climate Ambassador Sue Smith, Cropredy WI, organised her own stunt in January 2023 to raise awareness of sewage pollution in her local river. Sue partnered with other local community groups and helped to make a splash with her own sewage hat!



Make your own 'Loch Mess' Monster

Your WI and local community could work together to create your own 'Loch Mess' monster to be locally displayed in appropriate stretches of river that could be designated as a bathing water.

The Loch Mess monster could be designed to incorporate common elements of river pollution, like sewage pollution, nutrient pollution, chemical pollution or plastic pollution. You could craft the monster using waste household materials, or work with a local artist to help create the installation.

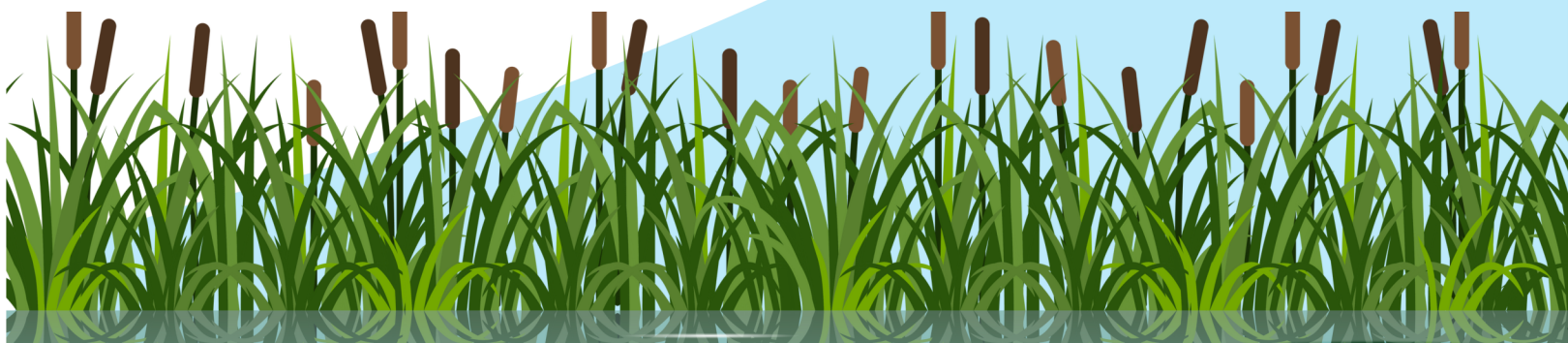


Organise a 'River Rescue' Walk

Organise a riverbank walk that highlights stretches of local river affected by river pollution. As you walk, you could hold signs and placards which illustrate the human and biodiversity need for clean rivers.

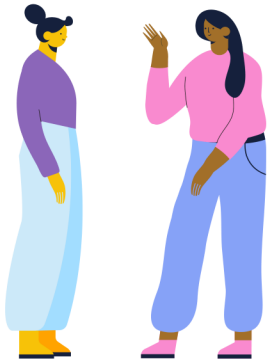
Local rivers are often community hubs. You could reach out to groups who know and love the river- like anglers, paddleboarders and swimmers- to join together and represent how important your local river is for your community.

If your local riverbank isn't accessible, you could organise a 'wave of change' walk through your local area. Dress up in blue and make your own river action placards!



How to take action

Ideas for stunts, actions or photocalls



Hold a campaign street stall in your community

Organise a street stall in your local area to gather community views on why your local river is important to them. You could ask passers-by to write down their views on a piece of paper which could be used to make a 'steady stream' of messages.

Use the [NFWI Public Affairs teams' street stall checklist](#) to help you plan for your stall. This can be found on MyWI.

Remember!

Once you have decided on your activity, spread the word around your local community. You could do this by using our promotional resource pack, which includes posters, social media graphics, placard ideas and a template invitation letter to your local press.

You can also ask your local press to send a photographer to your event.

Find out more on MyWI.

After your stunt...



Thank people for attending



Tell decisionmakers what happened at your event, its impact, and your message



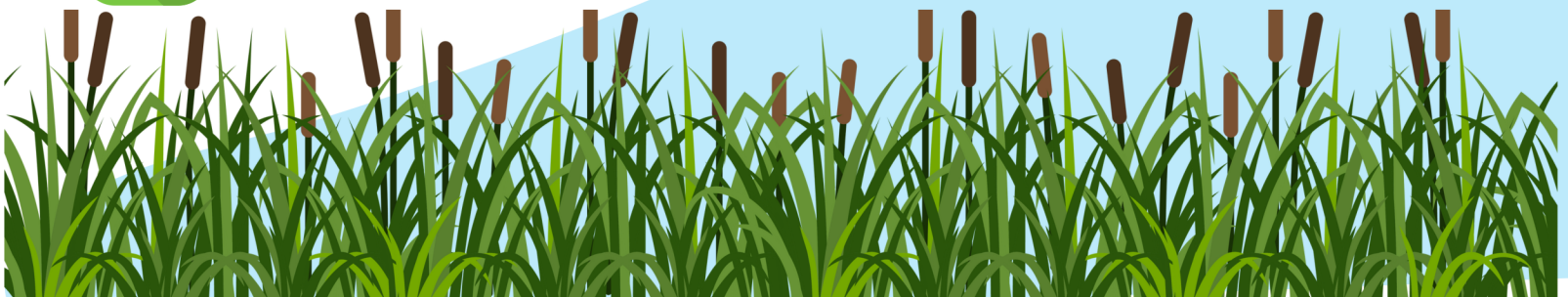
**Send pictures of your stunt to the NFWI Public Affairs team for a chance to be shown in WI Life!
Email pa@nfwl.org.uk with your images.**



Send a press release and photograph to your local press letting them know what happened at the event



Tell WI members and community members what happened at your event, how to get further involved, and arrange a follow-up meeting to discuss your next steps



Seven top tips for organising a campaign stunt or action



Understand what you want to achieve

Will the focus of your stunt be on attracting media coverage of your campaign? Perhaps it will be focused on building public support or maybe it will be focused on engaging decisionmakers in the campaign? Having an idea of what you want to achieve from your stunt can help you decide what to do.



Keep it simple

Try and convey one key message with your stunt. That could be that you want decisionmakers to remove pollution from our rivers, or alerting people the fact that bathing water designation mean that rivers are monitored for pollution. Communicating one key message will make sure the purpose of your stunt is more easily understood by the public and by decisionmakers.



Find a suitable location for your stunt

Make sure that the location is safe and easily accessible for those attending. Some public places can require you to get permission to formally use them. This permission can be granted by a local landowner or from your local authority.



Who's coming?

Decide who will be attending your stunt. Will it be WI members and like-minded local groups, or will you be advertising your stunt more widely? If you are inviting local media, find out whether any WI members or members of local community groups would be comfortable providing quotes to the media about why you are campaigning and what you want to happen.

Make sure you invite the press in advance so they can attend in-person should they wish. You may wish to invite your MP and local Councillors to your stunt too.



Will your stunt involve props?

Stunts often involve props, banners and signs to help turn heads and tell a story. You could use placards, costumes, art installations- anything which will help to add colour to a story and make people smile. Printing companies can help you create banners and placards for you to have at your event. The NFWI Public Affairs team has created printable placards, banners and a SOS for Rivers craft project for you to use at your stunt. These are available on MyWI.



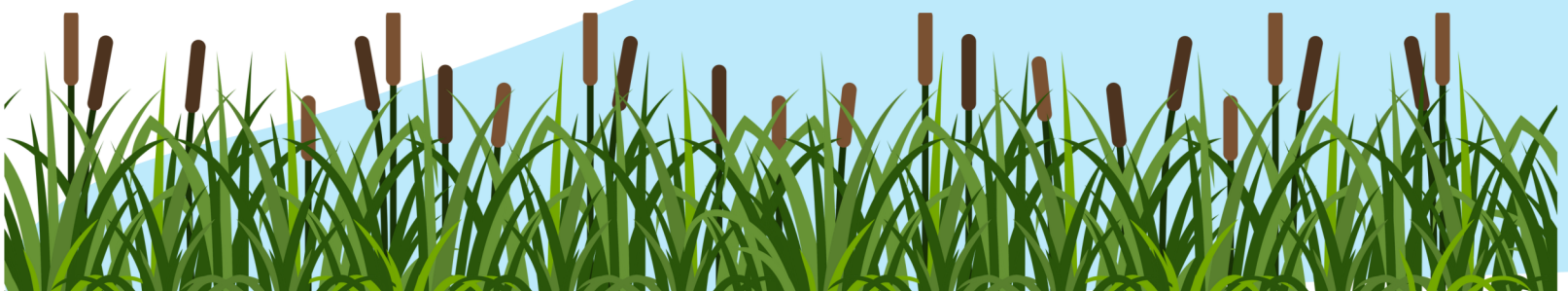
Will you use social media?

Social media can be a powerful tool to build digital awareness of your campaign. Use our promotional resource pack for inspiration for social media posts that you could use to draw attention to your campaign, and for suggestions for types of content you could highlight on the day of your event.



Be safe and have fun!

Stunts are a really fun and engaging way of getting your important campaign message across, so you will no doubt have a great day! Make sure your stunt is safe and accessible for all your attendees. As part of your preparation for your stunt, double check with your insurer to make sure that your WI is protected in the very rare event that anything goes wrong.



Useful resources

- Surfers Against Sewage's Bathing Water Toolkit - www.protectingwildwaters.org.uk
- WI Clean Rivers Promotional Toolkit - available on MyWI
- Craft instructions- DIY Clean Rivers banner and crochet dragonfly (available mid-July 2023 on MyWI)
- MyWI Webinar- How do Designated Bathing Waters clean up our rivers?
<https://youtu.be/DLHggdwXO9E>
- River Action UK- www.riveractionuk.com
- The Rivers Trust- www.theriverstrust.org

Other ways to get involved

In our experience, taking part in a campaign stunt can be a fun, creative and engaging way to build public support for a campaign or issue. However, we understand that organising or taking part in a campaign stunt may not work for everybody.

If taking part in a stunt isn't for you, there's still lots of ways to get involved in the Clean Rivers for People and Wildlife campaign. Check out the [Climate Ambassador hub on MyWI](#) to find helpful resources on how to [organise a campaign street stall](#) in your local community, a [decision-maker lobbying guide](#), and a checklist to help you [organise environmental talks and discussions in your WI](#).

We have also produced Clean River craft projects, which you can craft and use at your stunt, or send to your MP. These can be found on MyWI and will be available for download from mid-July 2023.

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