



17 (ish) tips for Incredible Edible Activists



Getting things done locally can be a slow frustrating process; here are some top tips that I have learnt at my auntie's knee!

1. **Apply the thin end of the wedge**, You may have 16 things you want to get done, drop 15 for now and concentrate on one small, simple, possibly inadequate, but doable issue.
2. **Ask for the earth not the moon**, Make sure what your asking for is within the askees power. Magic is not possible.
3. **Don't devote all of your time/energy on winning over politicians.** local governments consist of a few hundred elected officials and many thousand officers. Go figure who makes the majority of the decisions!
4. **Don't overstate your case**, be calm reasonable, measured and friendly. Your passion is a driver but it's often counterproductive to allow it to show (this is England after all!).
There are lots of bonkers people out there that make a career out of harassing council officers who have no choice but to respond professionally. Do try not to appear too mad!
5. **Find a friend**, an insider in the council is worth their weight in quality compost! Look in community engagement/community safety teams; any department prefixed by the word community is worth a try. Gardening is a key tool for community cohesion specialists.
6. **Learn the language.** Local government officers have a secret code that contains the directives they must fulfill. Finding the form of words to couch your request is the key. Find an off duty council officer who is a gardener to help you with this.
7. **Parish councils may add support** to your case but their hands are tied and for most things its the city/county level where decisions are made.
8. **Don't be a lone voice**, find others who share your aims, prefferably in an area that has problems, Deprivation, minorities, disabled, children, etc, these all have targets attached for local authorities

9. **Lighten their load.** Show the council that what you plan to do reduces their work load and costs, and that its sustainable, the community will run it for ever!
10. **Harness institutions.** Councils like handing things over to bodies, church groups charities etc. If necessary become a body, community association, local food group etc, you will find help with constitutions, insurance etc on this site.
11. **Kill em with kindness,** your appreciation for the smallest most pathetic step in the right direction should be rewarded with a truckload of appreciation and national press coverage. Stroke the dogs belly and it will be your friend for life.
12. **Smother your enemies with love,** they can't oppose you because you are so dam nice to em!
13. **Work on establishing precedents.** With a few notable exceptions, all but the most senior council officers are apprehensive of doing the wrong thing and are most comfortable following what's been done before.
14. **Work in partnership.** A partnership between your group and others including the council has a special resonance with the local authority mindset.
15. **Carrot not stick.** Show em the rewards for doing what you want, positive aprobation is a rare and treasured thing for the beurocrats, they will come back for more. Threats don't often work.
16. **Get the press on your side,** they love a campaign and green issues are hot just now. Get loads of faces in the picture. Write the piece yourself. Make it positive, mention several organizations working together.
17. **Link in with other issues,** healthy eating, exercise, digging as a sport, education etc
 - 17a) **Be patient but persistent,** the wheels grind slowly, but they do grind.
 - 17b) **Be reliable and safe.** Do what you say your going to do and don't wash your smalls in public, be a safe hand for council officers to work with, in time they will begin to trust you.
 - 17c) The article Newstart magazine <http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/resources/press-media-links> should impress council officers especially those involved in regeneration, use it. In fact use all the media links, media aprobation oils the wheels somethink lovely!
 - 17d) **Be lucky and think HUGE!**

