



**Hampshire &
Isle of Wight**
Wildlife Trust

HOSTING **WILDER** CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES

A representative selection of students learn from expert speakers and make their own recommendations for changes that could be made to their school, local community or more broadly across our two counties.





**WILDER
SCHOOL**

A citizens' assembly is a group of people gathered together to learn about and debate an issue of local or national importance. In June 2019, the House of Commons held the first citizens' assembly on climate change, specifically to address how the UK can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The group of people selected were representative of the country and were given the opportunity to make recommendations which were presented to the government for consideration in September 2020. The House of Commons' citizen's assembly inspired the Trust to encourage schools, colleges and universities across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to host their own mini-assemblies, where selected student groups would learn from expert speakers and make their own recommendations for changes that could be made to their school, local community or more broadly across our two counties.

Before you start

This guide is written with schools, colleges and universities in mind, but you could adapt it to run something similar with your local youth or community group.

Preparing the assembly

Step 1: Choose a topic

Choose a topic that is important to you - there are a huge range of topics to consider. You can make them specific to your school, local community, county or country. Topics you could consider are:

- Biodiversity loss
- Connection to nature and why it's important for people and wildlife
- Human health and wellbeing and how nature can help
- How we can create more space for nature



For a wilder Hampshire & Isle of Wight



WILDER SCHOOL

- What should be taught about the environment, climate change and biodiversity loss
- What we eat and the global food chain
- What we buy
- How we travel
- Where our energy comes from

Step 2: Gather your speakers

Speakers should be well informed about the topic at hand and you should make sure each speaker has experience in a different field. The Wildlife Trust can send a member of our engagement team to be one of your speakers. We also know a few people who might be willing to come and speak (charges might apply for these people). You might want to put out a call to your parents, staff and the local community to find speakers. You could always encourage students to learn about a particular topic and become speakers.

Speakers can choose to take one of two roles - they can be an informant, explaining the range of views that exist about a topic, or an advocate, presenting their opinion or the opinion of the organisation they work for. Speakers should be prepared to talk for 5-10 minutes.

Step 3: Gather your students

Citizens' assemblies bring a group of people together who are representative of the country so your student group should be representative of your school, college or university. You could choose to set aside a whole day to allow everyone to take part or choose specific students.

Step 4: Set some ground rules

Your assembly should be a place where everyone feels comfortable and safe to share their views, where everyone listens to each other and where everyone's opinions are respected. Agree your ground rules as a group.

Hosting the assembly Step 5: Present the issue(s)

Your speakers will share their presentations with the assembly. Include time for your students to ask questions.

Step 6: Discuss solutions

Discuss what you've heard and what you think the solutions are to the problems you've discussed. You might want to split into smaller groups to help the discussion but should gather together again to finalise them. Come up with a list of recommendations based on your discussions.



**WILDER
SCHOOL**

Step 7: Vote on best solutions

Vote on the different recommendations that have been proposed. You could do this with a simple show of hands or a secret ballot, if you want to keep everyone's answers private. Pick your top voted recommendations. Depending on the topic you might have only a few to choose from, or many. Somewhere between three and five recommendations is best.

Step 8: Share results

If you've decided to make your topic about something specific to your community, you might like to share your recommendations with your headteacher, governors or local council. If you've made recommendations on a bigger scale you could share them with your local MP.

Don't forget to share them with us, too!

And that's it! Let's make a wilder Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

Share with us

Facebook: @Hampshire&IsleofWightWildlifeTrust

Twitter and Instagram: @HantsIWWildlife

Use the hashtags: #TeamWilder #WilderSchools

For further reading:

To see how a citizens' assembly works, visit: climateassembly.uk and look at their plans and videos of the talks.

Part of #TeamWilder

This guide is brought to you by TeamWilder an initiative led by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Become part of the team and join a growing movement of people taking action locally.

Please visit: hiwwt.org.uk/team-wilder

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Beechcroft House, Vicarage Lane,
Curdridge, Hampshire SO32 2DP

01489 774400
Wilder.Schools@hiwwt.org.uk
hiwwt.org.uk/wilder-schools



**Hampshire &
Isle of Wight**
Wildlife Trust

Registered Charity Number 201081

Image: Water Vole © Alex Berryman. Cover image: Long tailed tit © Jon Hawkins - Surrey Hills Photography