



Garden Organic - The (not so) great garden grab!

Garden Organic (G.O.) is the UK's leading organic growing charity, based in Warwickshire.

G.O. launched the 'Save Our Gardens' campaign, in conjunction with Conservative MP Greg Clark, in March 2007 to eradicate a process known as 'garden grabbing' - where property developers buy large detached houses, flatten them and then squeeze a small estate of new homes on the same plot.

The only way to stop this from happening is to close a legal loophole that defines the garden as a Brownfield site. With a Bill designed to change the garden definition receiving its second reading in the House of Commons on 15 June, Garden Organic approached Prova PR, tasking it with three objectives:

- To highlight the extent of garden grabbing on a national level
- Raise the profile of the organisation and its chief executive, positioning both as experts on the subject
- Drive people to the organisation's website to sign an online petition and also to lobby their MP to be present at the reading of the Bill

Planning

Planning was key in the success of the campaign. Activity had to tie into the Parliamentary calendar and processes, whilst also ensuring a strong and steady supply news and opinion between March and June. Prova invested time gaining insight into the processes of Parliament as well as forging links with governmental offices and Ministers.

Implementation

The implementation of the campaign was based on a strong media relations campaign which would educate the media and the public about garden grabbing and the true extent of the problems it brings. Focus and planning was key due to the large number of journalists the story would interest – we needed to hit those publications that would help drive support for the campaign.

The campaign was launched in the same week that the new Wembley stadium was handed over and this gave Prova its hook – equating the number of gardens lost by 2016 to the equivalent number of Wembley football pitches. This was released under embargo with briefings set-up with national press with Dr Susan Kay Williams from G.O., Greg Clark, Conservative MP and Labour MP Chris Mullin - MPs from opposite ends of the political spectrum gave the story even more strength.

Creativity

Due to the low budget and lack of facts and figures, creativity was always going to be core to the success of the campaign. A number of hooks were devised at the outset, linking into key events such as the opening of Wembley Stadium and the starting of Big Brother. Facts and figures were converted into everyday equivalents to help the media and public visualise the problem, such as:

- ***Garden space equivalent to 2,755 Wembley football pitches will be wiped out by the year 2016, and***
- ***Big Brother is squashing you! – Big Brother style living tensions caused by shrinking plot sizes***

Prova also pushed for cross party support on the matter, which came from high profile Labour MP Chris Mullin and Tory MP for Tunbridge Wells Greg Clark. This coming together of political rivals helped strengthen the launch angle and gave a number of voices to the media debate.



Results

The results are phenomenal for a four-month campaign.

- Between March and June, Prova generated over 71,509,882 opportunities to see and 20,000,000 opportunities to hear. 4,000 people signed the online petition.
- The campaign was covered in nine national papers, and numerous regional and local papers, including a full page in the Express and The Daily Telegraph property section. Other national coverage included, two large articles in The Daily Mail, further articles in the Telegraph, a full page in the Mail on Sunday's property section and a double page spread in the Times property supplement.
- BBC Gardeners World has filmed a one-hour garden grabbing special using Prova's material and case studies
- Radio coverage was also strong.
 - On launch day, coverage was achieved on both the Today Programme and Radio 5 and 23 regional BBC radio breakfast shows
 - These radio stations returned for comment and interview across the duration of the campaign
- Online coverage was also strong with two large pieces on BBC online as well as exposure on key gardening websites and blogs. Coverage was also achieved in numerous trade publications including Garden News and Amateur Gardening.

The garden grabbing debate is now being widely discussed in the national and regional media. Because of that, the public are now more aware and educated regards the process and the problems it can pose both socially and environmentally. The press now view G.O. as the expert and thought leader on the subject, regularly quoting facts and figures from Garden Organic.

To find out more about Prova call 01926 776900 or visit www.provapr.co.uk