



Building relationships with Nature Champions



Wednesday 23rd October, 2-3pm

Step 1. Identify organisational long-term goals relating to your species/habitat that will benefit from political support

Step 2. Identify your aims that will become more likely to be achieved with political support

Step 3. Identify an appropriate MSP Nature Champion

Step 4. Identify which types of support the MSP Nature Champion may provide through building a more accurate profile

Step 5. Set and define realistic (SMART) desired objectives from your engagement with the MSP Nature Champion

Step 6. Identify relevant measures, targets, activities, resource requirements, leads, timescales and ways of monitoring progress

Step 7. Undertake activities and receive feedback

Step 8. Record engagement and feedback

Step 9. Adjust MSP profile, revise objectives, targets, activities or timelines



What do we want to achieve?

- How can we be more strategic about building relationships with Nature Champions?
- What are key aspects should we consider when stewarding relationships with Nature Champions?
- Explore a simple framework, 'EMBRACE', that can be adapted for your interactions with MSPs.





Quiz Time!

Visit [menti.com](https://www.menti.com) and enter the code:

5983 7505



What do we want for these relationships?

We want MSP Nature Champions to feel:

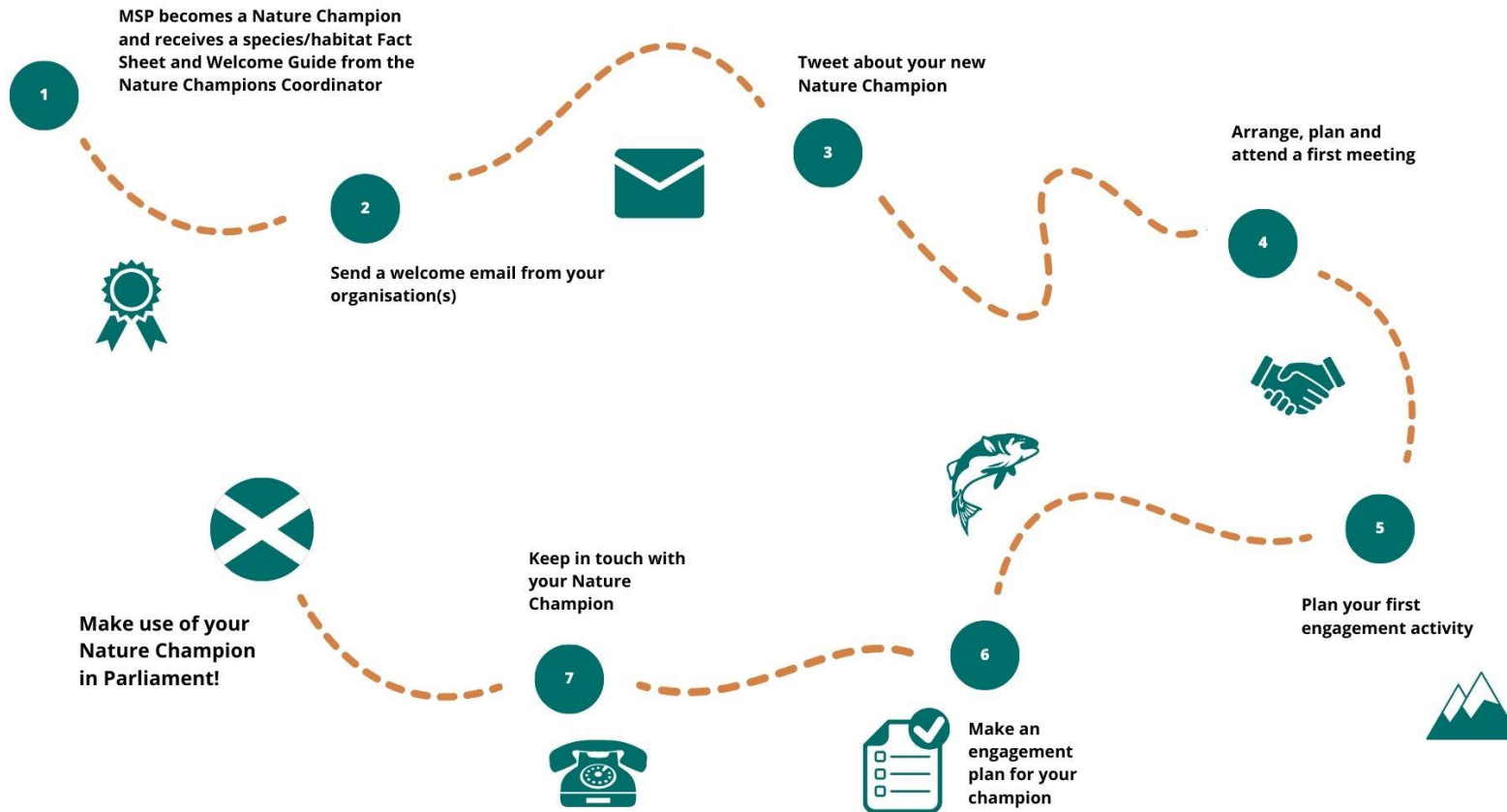
Informed

Connected

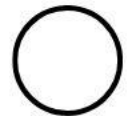
Valued

Your relationships with Nature Champions are not just your own!

Good Relationship Stewardship



Met MSP for first time in Parliament



Invited to site visit



Asked a PQ in relation to topic highlighted in site visit



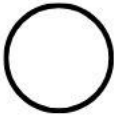
Contacted regarding new campaign. Received email from staffer



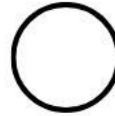
Wrote article for local newspaper



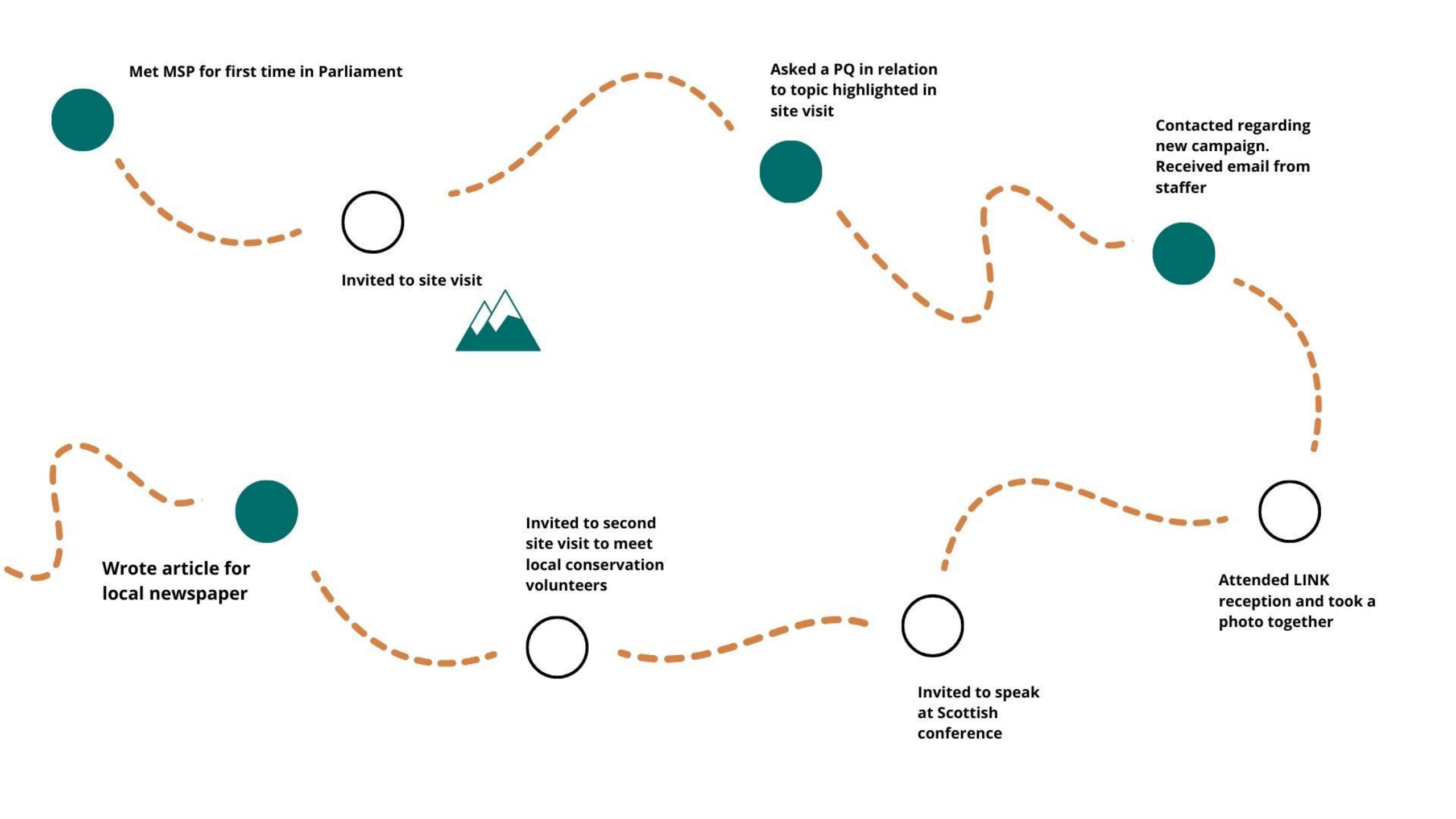
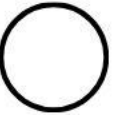
Invited to second site visit to meet local conservation volunteers



Invited to speak at Scottish conference



Attended LINK reception and took a photo together



Good Relationship Stewardship

Communication

Accessible

Appropriate

Consistent

Timely

Informative

Nuanced

Reliable

Engagement

Reliable

Active (over
reactive)

Consistent

Personable

Safe /
Comfortable

Interesting

Mutually
beneficial

Gratitude

Consistent

Active

Proportionate

Considered



Do you have a good example of positive communication, engagement or gratitude that helped build your relationship with an MSP Nature Champion?

E ngage

M otivate

B uild a Rapport

R espond to needs & barriers

A sk

C elebrate

E xpand

Engage

General

Be friendly

Be respectful

Ask open-ended questions

Positive body language

Mirror communication

Be accommodating

Be organised

Be yourself!

Build relationships with gatekeepers!

Specific

Bridge policy interests

Offer value

Offer insight

Offer novelty

Keep it local

“Am I right in saying that you’re on the Cross-party Group for children and young people? Have I told you about the practical conservation work that we’re doing with excluded young people in your constituency?”

“I noticed that you’d supported X’s motion regarding deep sea ecosystems, have you heard about our recent research around X?”

“Did you know that your constituency is the only place in Scotland where you can find X?”

Motivate

Frame!

- Identify the goal, what are their values, what is in their best interests?
 - How does this relate to their species/habitat?
 - **Who cares? Why is it important?**
 - How did this relate to the local picture?
 - How does this relate to the bigger picture?
 - How does this relate to their party positions?
- Well researched, with evidence and examples!

Build a Rapport

General

Active listening

Look for commonalities

Ask open-ended questions

Positive body language

Mirror communication

Respect their boundaries

What is their background?

Be empathetic

Take a genuine interest

Respond to Needs & Barriers

- Ask for their views, ask for feedback!
- What are their concerns?
- Are there areas of conflict to consider?

“We wouldn’t be able to support the Motion as it is, but X MSP would be happy to speak in the debate to highlight some of the issues that you have raised.”

“I’m afraid I wouldn’t be able to attend a visit in that constituency, is there something we could do in my own locale?”

Ask

- What do *you* want?
- What help can they provide?
- What is appropriate?

“We’re trying to build awareness for X through X, would this be something that you would support?”

“Next month will be World Bog Day, would X MSP be interested in joining us on a visit in her constituency to mark the day?”

“There is a debate taking place next week and we’re very eager to ensure that X topic is mentioned. Are you planning on attending this debate and would you consider highlighting this? We would of course provide you with a briefing.”

Celebrate!

- Thank your Nature Champions after interactions.
- Raise awareness of their support.
- Give (appropriate) tokens of thanks; e.g. a Christmas card, a badge, a picture of their species/habitat, your organisational merchandise!



Plantlife Scotland @PlantlifeScot · Jul 12

Wonderful day with our [@NatureChampions](#) for Twinflower, Alexander Stewart MSP! Thanks for spending the day hearing about [@N_T_S](#) and Plantlife's work saving Twinflower 🌿



↻ 3

♥ 8

📊 246



Expand

- Sow seeds for future engagement that overlaps with their interests.
- Offer help for the future.
- Share material after an interaction.

“Dear X,

Thank you so much for joining us on the visit to X last week...

I wanted to share more information about X, which we briefly discussed on the trip...”

E ngage

“Have you seen that...”

M otivate

“The issue is...”

B uild a Rapport

“Have you ever...”

R espond to needs & barriers

“What do you think?”

A sk

“Would you consider...?”

C elebrate

“Thank you so much...!”

E xpand

“Next time we could...”

(D ocument)



Role-play time!

Engage

Motivate

Build a Rapport

Respond to Needs & Barriers

Ask

Celebrate

Expand



Engage
Motivate
Build a Rapport
Respond to Needs & Barriers
Ask
Celebrate
Expand

One of you will play an MSP and one of you will play yourself. The person playing themselves will engage the MSP with a particular issue or topic, raise awareness of that issue or topic and invite them to support them in an appropriate way. Use the EMBRACE method to help guide your interactions. After you've completed your interaction, swap over!

Things to consider for the person playing the MSP: what are your needs and barriers? What are your interests? What is your party line?



Feedback please!

Scan the QR code or use the link in the chat.

Resources

- [Nature Champions Guide for MSPs](#)
- Nature Champions Guide for LINK Members
- [Scottish Parliament Recess Dates](#)
- [Scottish Parliament Guidance on Lobbying](#)
- [Scottish Parliament Lobbying Register](#)
- [Guidance on registering gifts for MSPs](#)
- [Top 10 lobbying tips – Directory of Social Change](#)
- [ODI – A Guide to Policy Engagement and Influence](#)

