



# GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK: GETTING YOUR LOCAL POLITICIAN INVOLVED

## What's covered in this resource?

The purpose of this resource is to provide you with the tools and techniques for engaging with your local politician in the lead up to, and during, the Great Big Green Week 2022.

We'll cover:

- Why engage your local politician as part of Great Big Green Week?
- Contacting your local politician
- Inviting your local politician to your Great Big Green Week Event
- Preparing to meet your local politician
- How to get further support



## Why Engage your local politician as part of Great Big Green Week?

The Great Big Green Week is a week-long climate festival taking place from 24th September - 2nd October 2022. Local events will take place all over the UK involving many different people, all passionate about tackling climate change! Not only will the week dominate the media, but it will also help influence and inspire local politicians to take action and compel them to advocate for a particular area in their work. Through engaging your local politician, you can build a strong relationship based on common ground that will allow you to shape the climate agenda.

## Contacting your local politician

As part of the Great Big Green Week, we advise you to invite your local politician to an event or arrange a meeting with them to move climate change higher up their agenda. A meeting prior to the Great Big Green Week is a chance to tell your local politician about all of the week's activities, and how much community support there is for local climate action and inspire them to get involved.

## Researching your local politician

It is important to make all of your interactions as personal as possible. To do so, research a bit about the individual and what might be important to them. Some of the key things to consider when researching your local politician include their constituency/ward seat majority, portfolio role and their professional background. Useful sites to use when researching your local politician include, [They Work For You](#), [Parallel Parliament](#), local news outlets and social media.





Don't be afraid to mention this information to your local politician in your meeting because it will show them that you have taken the time to do your research. We understand that this can all seem a bit daunting, so we have created an in depth resource on [how to research your local politician](#) - although this document is predominantly MP-focussed, the same principles apply for other local politicians. We are on hand to assist or undertake research for you, just get in touch via email at [info@hfff.org.uk](mailto:info@hfff.org.uk).

## Getting in Touch with Your Local Politician

Once you've researched your local politician, you should have a good idea of where you can find [common ground](#). Following your research, you can write to your local politician to request a meeting via email, or to invite them to an event. MP's contact details are available [here](#) whereas for other local politicians you may have to use a search engine.

Ensure that what you write is personal, and if you attach a formal letter to your email (preferably as a pdf) alongside the body of your email you are likely to get a better response. To personalise your letter you can include a 'thank you' for their recent work as it is a great way to begin building a positive relationship with them.

For more detailed [guidance on writing a letter](#) to your local politician please see our in depth letter writing guide or contact us at [info@hfff.org.uk](mailto:info@hfff.org.uk).

## Invite your Local Politician to your Great Big Green Week Event

Inviting your local politician to an event as part of Great Big Green Week is a great way to engage with them, and demonstrate that there is a local mandate for action on climate change in their constituency. Before inviting your local politician, your event planning should be underway, and preferably in the final stages. You can read more about planning an event for the Great Big Green Week [here](#).

You should invite your local politician to an event in a similar manner as you would ask for a meeting; through a letter. Our template letters for inviting a local politician to an event can be found [here](#). It is important that you try to make this letter as personal as possible to each local politician.

How you frame your invitation should also be specific to each local politician. You should take into account the values and interests of each local politician you invite to do this. It would also be useful to try to frame the event around local issues wherever possible.

## Preparing to Engage your Local Politician

Although people are often apprehensive about meeting their local politician initially, people are universally enthusiastic about the experience afterwards. Ultimately, local politicians are people tasked with serving the areas they represent. Meeting residents of their





constituency/ward who are passionate about an issue, and who are clear on how the local politician can help, is a real highlight of their job!

The email inboxes of local politicians often get swamped by batches of campaign emails saying similar things. While this can helpfully indicate to a local politician the strength of feeling about a particular issue, they usually don't have time to be able to respond meaningfully. **Meeting your local politician allows you to have a dialogue rather than just a one-way exchange.**

## Gather a group

Meeting a local politician as representatives of a group can help your engagement be as effective as possible. If you're planning a local politician meeting as part of Great Big Green Week, we find that a group of 2-4 people is best - it allows you to have a clear and focused meeting which can become harder with larger groups. We advise allocating someone to record notes whilst the others lead the conversation.

You should always let your local politician's office know how many people will be attending in advance. Also, consider who you are representing and let your local politician know; within your group there may be different ages and political persuasions so this provides a local politician with a broader representation of their constituents.

## Preparing your 'Ask' in 3 Steps

An 'ask' is what exactly you are asking your local politician to do. Some examples of appropriate requests to ask of your local politician include attending an event, writing to a minister or supporting a campaign. Having a defined, specific and achievable 'ask' will mean that your local politician is much more likely to take action!

Preparing an ask has three steps. Firstly you should **choose your focus** to ensure you can talk in detail about one topic. Whilst deciding this, it is important to consider which issues you may have common ground on. For Great Big Green Week your ask may be inviting your local politician to speak at a local event or write a media piece.

Secondly, **how to frame your focus** around values your local politician already holds. Frame your meeting around an issue which is of interest to your local politician, or can you focus your event on a topic which sparks interest?

Finally, **Set your asks!** you need to prepare exactly what you are going to ask of your local politician.

To achieve a 'SMART ask', your 'ask' should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timely





If you're arranging an event and inviting your local politician, having an 'ask' as one of the event's key objectives can help to provide a strong direction to your event. Choosing your ask can be challenging so feel free to use our [guide on developing asks](#) or get in touch at [info@hfff.org.uk](mailto:info@hfff.org.uk) for further guidance.

## Meeting Preparation and Following Up

When preparing for the meeting itself it is important to write up an agenda to ensure the meeting does not run off track. At the start of a meeting it is useful to have an 'elevator pitch' which includes the purpose of the meeting, why the local politician should be interested and maps out how the meeting will be structured.

Once you've met with your local politician, it is important to follow up to ensure all the actions of the meeting have taken place. We find the best way to effect change is multiple engagements. We also have guidance on [how to follow up with your local politician](#).

## How to get further support

This resource is only one piece of the puzzle, and we'd love to use our 8 years of experience to support you and your community to engage your local politician. If you're using this resource to write a letter or arrange a meeting, you can request our support through [hfff.org.uk/yournextstep](http://hfff.org.uk/yournextstep). If you would like help regarding an event with a local politician, please get in touch with the Events team at Hope For The Future at [events@hfff.org.uk](mailto:events@hfff.org.uk). Hope For The Future also runs training workshops in effective local politician engagement, which are open to all.

[You can view our upcoming training sessions here.](#)

## Who is Hope for the Future?

This resource was created by Hope for the Future for the Great Big Green Week. The team at [Hope for the Future](#) (HFTF) exists to support you in building an effective relationship with your local politicians in order to encourage them to take action on climate change. We deliver and develop training and resources on how to have effective and compassionate conversations with local politicians (including MPs and Councillors) about climate change.

