

THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK

The Power of Engaging your Local Politicians



The Great Big Green Week (GBGW) is an annual, week-long climate festival, this year taking place from **10th - 18th June 2023**. It is the UK's biggest-ever celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature.

Local events will take place all over the UK involving many different people who are all passionate about tackling climate change and protecting nature. Not only will the week dominate the media, but it is also a **significant moment in the year to raise our voices to influence and inspire local politicians to take action for climate change and nature**. We can use Great Big Green Week as a vital moment to urge our politicians to champion a particular area, such as home energy efficiency or biodiversity, in their work. This is especially important now, thinking ahead to the 2024 General Election Campaigns and shaping the future climate agenda. The more they hear from you, the higher climate change will rise on the Government's agenda both locally and nationally.

Who are Hope for the Future?

At Hope for the Future (HFTF), we recognise that it's not always easy to get your voice heard with local politicians for positive action. That's why we're here to help. We are a climate communication and democratic engagement charity with 10 years of experience supporting people across the UK to build effective relationships with their local politicians to take action on climate change and nature. This resource will provide you with the tools and techniques you need to engage with your local politicians in the lead-up to, during, and after Great Big Green Week 2023.

To find out more about Hope for the Future and our work you can visit our website at: www.hftf.org.uk


Why it's important to engage your local politicians this Great Big Green Week

You have a powerful role to play in educating your Members of Parliament (MPs) and Councillors. You can inform them about local and national issues, as well as providing a constituency mandate for action - the more people that raise their voice, the more powerful the message. Through facilitating hundreds of meetings with local politicians, we know that they often feel as though their constituents have a general concern about climate, but often little guidance as to what action voters would like to see. **Your voice matters** in translating this general message into tangible and concrete action that your MP can take.



Great Big Green Week is a great opportunity to invite your local politician to an event you're running or attending, or arrange a meeting with them to move climate change and the environment higher up their agenda. Meeting your local politician prior to Great Big Green Week is a chance to tell them about all of the week's activities happening in your local area, and how much community support there is for local climate action, encouraging them to get involved.

Local politicians represent you, your community and your needs. They are decision-makers and work alongside those who have the power to call for the funding and policy changes needed within councils, government and more, to fulfil your requests. Talking to your local representatives about climate change helps to provide them with a mandate to act and can help you achieve the change you want to see.



“As an MP, it’s very easy to stand up in the Commons amidst lots of other MPs to not be absolutely certain whether or not you’re speaking on behalf of your constituents, and [my constituents have] been terrific in actually saying there are people who really do care about these things.”

Jamie Stone, MP for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross in a conversation with his constituents

At Hope for the Future, we’ve supported thousands of people over the last 10 years to speak to their local politicians about climate change and the environment, and we have a track record of helping people see real, tangible action in parliament, as well as within local councils and more. You can see just a few examples of this positive action below.

Campaigning for Clean Air in Oldham

After receiving Hope for the Future's training and support, a group of Bangladeshi women from Oldham, called the Climate Connections Women's Group, organised an event in December 2022 to focus on their children's right to clean air in their local area. The group's artwork was displayed around the venue which showcased "life in rich countries" and the "impact on poor countries" while highlighting the need to plant more trees.

Local Councillor, Abdul Jabbar, Deputy Leader of Oldham Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon attended the event where he heard the women's group's concerns and ideas on reducing air pollution in the area and implementing 'schools streets'. He acknowledged that 'school streets' are a contentious issue on the council and community support is an important part of implementing them. As a result of the Women's Groups work so far, Cllr Jabbar has now committed to meeting the women to discuss reducing air pollution on school streets.

There really is power in involving your local politicians in your community conversations about local action for climate and nature. If you're interested in asking your local politician to attend your event, you can use our helpful guide and checklist on our website.



“If every MP had constituents effectively and positively advocating for climate action, even small changes in individual MPs’ knowledge and approach to climate policy could have a drastic impact on action in Parliament as a whole.”

Sarah Jordan, HFTF’s Director outlining the importance of talking to our local politicians this GBGW



Climate Focus Groups in St Ives

In 2018, Hope for the Future supported a constituent group in St Ives, West Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to organise an event focusing on local nature data. The group invited their local MP, Derek Thomas, and the event was a huge success in opening up a dialogue between local residents and their MP. The group were able to find initial common ground with their MP on home energy efficiency given Derek’s background in housebuilding, but have since progressed to talking together about a whole range of issues relating to climate change and nature. Following conversations with his constituent group, Derek wrote an article in Conservative Home about the power of solar energy. Through developing a relationship with Derek on this area of common interest, regular ‘Climate Focus’ sessions have been taking place since March 2021. These are a space for the group to discuss climate issues more generally with their MP, and expert speakers were invited along to provide Derek with the knowledge he needed to advocate for the group in parliament. Through these regular meetings, they’ve been able to meet with Alok Sharma MP, George Eustice MP, local campaign groups, the Cornwall Mayor and many more, discussing local and national climate issues. This initial event has been a catalyst for meaningful local conversations, with Derek taking forward the group’s ideas and concerns to parliament.

For example, in January this year he was one of only two Conservative MPs to speak in Caroline Lucas's Westminster Hall debate about fossil fuels and the cost of living, in which he spoke for 10 minutes and began by saying to tackle the cost of living crisis and the climate change the best solution is to improve the energy efficiency of our homes.

Getting Started: How to Engage your Local Politician this Great Big Green Week



There are many ways you can engage with your local politicians leading up to, during, and after Great Big Green Week, We've set out a step-by-step timeline below to make this journey as easy as possible for you.

Step 1: Attend a Free HFTF Online Training Workshop

When:

- [Tuesday 21st March 6pm-7.30pm](#)
- [Thursday 4th May 6pm - 7.30pm](#)

[Find out more and sign up.](#)

Hope for the Future exists to help you deliver your message to your politician. The first step is us walking you through our tips and tricks to having effective conversations with your local politicians during these free 90 minute training workshops, funded by [The Climate Coalition.](#)

During these sessions, we'll focus on how we can engage our local politicians for maximum political impact this GBGW, guide you through a simple process for communicating your message and unpick what we can actually ask our local politicians to do.



“Many thanks for your email following on from last night’s excellent training. We now have a lobbying meeting planned to discuss how we reset our rather fraught relationship with [our local politicians]. Last night will prove invaluable for that. So thank you very much again.”

Feedback from Hope for the Future training attendee, January 2022



“I liked how the training made you consider more the [local politician’s] perspective rather than just focusing on what you as an individual would like to get them to do and why.”

Feedback from Hope for the Future training attendee, October 2022

Step 2: Come Along to Big Community Meet Up

When:

- **Wednesday 12th April 6pm-7.30pm - Online**



Are you interested in putting on an event during Great Big Green Week? Are you interested in how to translate your message into political action? Would you like to know what other people are up to across the UK as part of Great Big Green Week, and meet other like minded community organisers?

In April 2023, Hope for the Future and The Climate Coalition are teaming up to bring you an event where we'll focus on:

- Amplifying our voices as part of GBGW
- Making sure our events have political impact by engaging our local politicians; and
- Providing an opportunity to network with other event organisers across the UK.

We'd love to see you there!





Step 3: Plan your own Event

Hopefully, you're now inspired to help raise climate change and nature higher up the agendas of your local politicians this Great Big Green Week! Running an event in your local area can help localise climate change's impacts by making it more relevant, whilst building a local mandate for action. An event is a great way of telling your local politician that an issue matters to your local area. Our Events Team has put together a [resource](#) to help you in your event planning. If you'd like any further support in making sure your event has political impact, get in touch with our Events Team at events@hftf.org.uk. Remember to also add your event to the Great Big Green Week [website](#) to encourage others to come along!

Step 4: Celebrate and Take Part in Great Big Green Week

When:

- 10th - 18th June 2023

Now that all your hard work and organising is complete, enjoy attending the [events](#) taking place all over the UK!



Continuing Momentum After Great Big Green Week

Whatever way you interacted with your local politician during Great Big Green Week whether that was inviting them to attend an event, or if you met with them in a small group to raise an important topic, it is important to follow up to continue building a relationship with them and to ensure that any actions they agreed to in your meeting or event have taken place.

Hope for the Future has found that the best way to effect change is through multiple, long-term engagements with local politicians, and we can help you do this. We can be there throughout your whole engagement journey, from training, letter writing, events, your first meeting and beyond.

This resource is only one piece of the puzzle, and Hope for the Future would love to offer you our free support for engaging your local politician. If you're using this resource to plan how to engage your local politician as part of GBG, you can request our support through hftf.org.uk/yournextstep.

We provide our resources and support to individuals for free and it's the support from partners like TCC and the generosity of individuals that enable us to do so. Consider becoming a Friend and supporting our work from as little as £1 per month. Visit www.hftf.org.uk/become-a-friend for more details.

