

Show The Love 2017 Top tips for meeting your MP



This Valentine's Day, green hearts will spark conversations about the places we love and the future we want for our children. Make, wear and share yours to help the love be felt by those who can make a world of difference. Invite your MP along to an event to show them how climate change will impact the special places in your local area, and help your MP represent those special places in Parliament.

“Politicians can’t deliver on the ambition without the public saying ‘We need you to do this.’”

-Amber Rudd, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change
after the Speak Up mass lobby in June 2015

Ahead of your event

Learn about your MP

It's worth doing a bit of detective work. Find out:

- Which political party are they in
- Whether or not they hold a government or shadow position
- What their interests and areas of expertise are
- How they voted in the past

You can find this info at theyworkforyou.com, parliament.uk or on your MP's website.

Doing this can help you to tailor your conversation to their interests and anticipate their response. If you don't know your MP's interests, finding out more about their concerns and priorities can be a really good foundation for your conversation.

MPs are also interested in anything local, so think about how your area is likely to be affected by climate change, and whether anyone local is already taking positive action.

Plan your strategy

Meet up ahead of your event and plan your strategy for the day. Decide what you want to show your MP – will you demonstrate cross-community support? A large number of constituents coming together? A particular place of concern or a local clean energy project? – and work out the best way to show this off. Nominate someone to take notes so you can follow up on important points.

Invite other community groups

Why not see if there are other community groups that can join you? Climate change is an issue that affects everyone and MPs are often pleasantly surprised when they see different groups that all care about the same issue. For tips on linking up with others in your area please visit www.showthelove.org.uk

At your event

Build the relationship

Building a good rapport with your MP is success in itself! Encourage your MP to see themselves as an ally by building on common ground and avoiding the temptation of diving straight into areas where you disagree.

Personal before policy

You don't have to be an expert and your MP won't expect you to be either. It is good to bring a couple of facts to help you make your argument but don't overwhelm your MP with statistics.

Instead of launching into your asks, start by talking about why this issue is important to you and your constituency. Include things you love that will be affected by climate change - from bees, to our global neighbours to people's health - and highlight positive local action, whether that be solar panels on schools or local renewable energy businesses generating employment.

If your MP is supportive, ask why climate change is important to them.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel"

Maya Angelou

Use the press and social media

Ask your MP for a photo with your group and see if they are willing to give you a quote. To find tips on contacting the press and using social media please visit www.showthelove.org.uk

What if....

Your MP doesn't agree with you

In your first meeting with your MP, it is unlikely you will be able to change their mind on every issue. Your time might be better spent looking at where you can work together. Start with small steps and building each other's trust. As the relationship develops see what you can do in the long term

Your MP keeps trying to change the subject

Acknowledge what they're saying but politely explain you are aware of the short time you have with them so you would like to focus on.

Your MP is from a minority or opposition party

No matter what party they belong to, your MP is there to represent you and is your link to political power. They can make your voice heard at the highest levels.

"As MPs we're here to represent you, we can listen to your concerns and take them right to the top"

David Burrowes MP, Enfield Southgate

After your event

Keep building your relationship

Don't forget to thank your MP for coming. This will help build your relationship for next time. In your thank you, ask them to keep you updated on any progress.

Regroup to start thinking about opportunities where you might be able to follow up with your MP, maybe a follow up meeting or by staying in touch on social media.

Let us know what happened

Let us know about how your event went and how your MP responded, contact campaigns@theclimatcoalition.org

This helps us follow up with MPs and show decision makers how much people care about tackling climate change.