

10 top tips for organising a public meeting with your MP

- 1. Start early.** MPs' diaries get booked up well in advance. Make your first step the approach to your target MP (s) to find an available date. The email/ phonecall to invite the MP is best coming from one of their own constituents.
- 2. Be realistic about planning time.** A general rule is that the organising and promotion of an event takes three months.
- 3. What's your focus?** Be clear about what you are trying to get out of the meeting and how you'll achieve it. This could include: getting your MP to commit to something; making links with other groups; attracting new people to join your group/ organisation; raising public awareness about the issue.
- 4. Plan your "ask".** What do you want to get your MP to commit to, and how will you make sure they are asked to do this? The public meeting format is a great way to directly ask your MP to do something, particularly because it's transparent, in front of their constituents and makes it much easier to hold them to account. You could ask the Chair to round up the event by asking the MP to e.g. raise your issues with a relevant Government Minister and support your campaign, or you could ensure that an audience member or panellist raises the "ask". Make sure someone takes notes or films/ records the meeting, so you can hold your MP to account.
- 5. A numbers game?** A massive public meeting attended by 100s of people isn't always necessary – some MPs are impressed by 20 or 30 people turning out from different organisations. Do some background research: What type of public meetings have been held with your MP and what type of audience numbers have they attracted? Getting a diverse cross-section of groups from your constituency to send representatives along might be more persuasive and realistic than trying to get 100s of attendees.



LOCAL CONNECTIONS: TOP TIPS

6. **Work together.** Including other organisations/groups at an early stage in the planning of your event will help lighten the load, foster good relationships for future joint working and will help to spread the word about your event.
7. **Break down the tasks.** Initially organising a meeting might seem like a huge feat. If you can break it down into smaller tasks it can be a great way to offer manageable activities for other people to get involved e.g. one local organisation might have someone with great local media relationships; another might have access to a great venue.
8. **Promotion, promotion, promotion!** List, and divide up all of the ways to spread the word about your event. This could include: Local media outlets, online events pages, organisations' newsletters, posters and flyers.
9. **Think about your Chair.** A Chair can make (or break!) your event: A good Chair will make panellists (including your MP) and the audience stick to the point and help you achieve the meetings' aims. Make sure your Chair is well-briefed and understands the aims of the meeting.
10. **Plan your follow-up.** Don't let all your fantastic work go to waste! Think of what you'll need to do after the meeting. This could include: Getting media coverage after the event; contacting people who attended to let them know how they can stay involved; how you can best use any video/recorded material from the meeting; how you'll ensure that the MP/MPs do what they said they would.

Finally... use our handy checklist overleaf to help you complete all the tasks, and remember to celebrate your success at a job well done!



LOCAL CONNECTIONS: TOP TIPS

Setting up the meeting:

Task	Done
Email/letter invitation to MP	
Follow up invitation with phone call	
Get together your “organising group” to plan & deliver the event	
Book venue once date agreed	
Contact national organisations for promotion and advice on additional speakers	
Arrange additional speakers and chairperson and brief them	
Send electronic invitations to local organisation contacts and allies – ask them to distribute	
Find out what technical facilities are available at the venue (projector, microphone, speakers) – if applicable	
Decide who will take photos/record meeting and arrange equipment – if applicable	
Try to list event in local newspaper events section	
Add local information to posters	
Draft & print flyers	
Distribute flyers	
Stick posters up at local libraries/council/cafes	
Create Facebook (or other social media) event page	
Meet with venue hirer to finalise booking	
Draft advance press release	
Send press release to local papers and radio stations	
Phone local radio stations to advertise meeting	
Phone local newspaper journalists	
Make signs to put up outside the venue and decide on any room decoration	
Arrange for refreshments and who will serve them	

On the day:

Buy/bring refreshments	
Put signs up outside venue	
Set up and serve refreshments	
Table cloth for speakers’ table	
Jug of water and glasses for speakers	
Set up chairs and stalls/displays of information	
Welcome speakers and introduce them to each other	
Greet members of the public as they arrive – have a sign-in/up sheet	
Record the meeting – either Dictaphone or video camera	
Take a photo of your MP and the meeting participants	
Allocate a place to socialise afterwards	
Start thinking about your follow-up plan e.g. post-event media work	

For more about organising public meetings, check out: www.stopclimatechaos.org/local
or contact callie@stopclimatechaos.org