



HOW TO SPEAK TO MPS AND BECOME AN ADVOCATE FOR NATURE

BRINGING
OUR WORLD
BACK TO LIFE



This guide will provide you with everything you need to speak to MPs about protecting and renewing nature.

Promises have been made by our leaders to help restore nature in the UK, but time is running out. The government and key decision-makers must act urgently to protect our life support system. Now, more than ever, we need to come together and speak up for nature. This guide will provide you with the tools and techniques you need to get your Member of Parliament (MP) to take action.

This guide also applies to talking to other politicians such as Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs) ahead of a general election and Local Councillors (LC).

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Our Wild Isles are in danger

The UK's wildlife is amazing – but it's in crisis. These shocking statistics tell of the extent to which we're losing nature in the UK:

- 38 million birds have vanished from our skies in the last 50 years
- 97% of our wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s
- A quarter of all our mammals are at risk of extinction
- The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world

Time has almost run out, but we have just enough of the natural world left to help it recover.

We know what we need to do – and our national governments have a big part to play. There are already amazing people transforming farms, businesses, urban spaces, transport networks, energy, supply chains, and creating communities for nature. We just need more action like this. Luckily, we have a plan...

The People's Plan for Nature

The [People's Plan for Nature](#) was created by the people, for the people of the UK – a vision for the future of nature, and the actions we must all take to protect and renew it. With input from thousands of people from across the UK, the People's Plan for Nature calls for urgent, immediate action – from governments, businesses, charities, organisations, farmers and communities – to protect and fundamentally change how we value nature.

It calls for:

- Everyone to take action now
- Nature to be at the heart of decision-making
- Change must be fair to those impacted
- Everyone should have equitable access to nature

Our Asks:

- **Stop the destruction:** Act now to strengthen and enforce environmental protections. Environmental protections must be strengthened, not scrapped.
- **Bring nature back:** Act now to make space for nature and safeguard our food security by doubling the Environmental Land Management budget. Farmers must be supported to protect and restore nature both at home and overseas.
- **Harness nature's power** Act now by investing in the power of nature to fight climate change. Public and private finance must be redirected to put nature at the heart of solutions to climate change by making transition plans mandatory and integrating nature.

How to Communicate with your MP

Step 1: Getting to know your MP

A member of Parliament (MP) is elected by their constituents at a general election and represents them in Parliament. They can raise important issues, take part in discussions and scrutinize government policy by participating in debates, inquiries and asking questions of government ministers. They can also propose and vote on legislation. All MPs have a duty to listen to and address the issues raised by their constituents and represent their needs and interests in Parliament.

Some MPs in the ruling party are also members of the government and as government ministers have responsibility for certain policy areas, such as education or the environment. However, they still have a duty to represent their constituencies.

Before contacting your MP, it's important to get an idea of what makes them tick. This will help you in finding an area of common ground between your MP's interests and the People's Plan for Nature.

Below is an infographic showing some of the different themes covered in the Plan. Doing some research into your MP will help you to find if they have shown interest in any of these policy areas.



Tip: Make it local! Issues that can be connected to your local area are more likely to motivate, or already be important to your MP. Does your constituency have an important river running through it? Or is there a particular development proposed which would harm local biodiversity? Something like this can make these issues real and relevant to your MP and can be a good hook for your conversation.



Useful resources for researching your MP

As well as looking on their website, social media and in the local news these three resources are really useful in getting a good understanding of your **MP's roles, interests and values.**

- **The [UK Parliament website](#).** This will tell you the MP's political party, election results, contact details and links to their website. It will tell you about their current and previous parliamentary roles - vital for understanding their areas of knowledge, interest and influence. It also tells you what All-Party Parliamentary Groups (informal interest groups) they are a member of.
- **[TheyWorkForYou](#)** is great tool to find out information about your MP. You can search for your MP and see all their contributions to debates, as well as their written and oral questions. Using the [search tool](#) you can narrow down your searches to specific keywords (such as 'farming' or 'rivers') to see if they have ever mentioned those words in Parliament. See if you can find any recurring themes or arguments.
- **The [House of Commons MP dashboard](#)** is a collection of data on the parliamentary activities of MPs. It provides information on which government department they most often submit questions to and tells you what debates and urgent questions that the MP has been granted. Applying for debates and urgent questions requires time and effort and so indicates that the MP really cares about that topic.

Once you've completed your research, make a list of which Calls to Action or topics your MP is most likely to be interested. Think about what parts of the Plan align with your community concerns that you can speak about. Are there any that overlap? If so, you've found your common ground!

Step 2: Getting in touch with your MP

The research you've done in Step 1 can help shape your discussion topic in your letter. Local politicians often receive thousands of emails every week, many of which are template campaign emails. Politicians tend to respond more positively to correspondence which is **personal and local.**

When writing your letter, we would recommend you follow this structure:

- Introduce yourself, your project and the any wider campaign you want to be associated with.
- Thank your politician for any relevant work on nature issues
- Personalise the letter with 2-3 short points on your area of common ground, including key facts, and why it's important

- Give a brief overview of your local environmental concerns and any action your community group does.
- Request a meeting or ask them directly to take a specific action (refer to Step 3: developing SMART asks for help with this)
- Sign off with your name

Important things to remember:

- Use the MP's constituency office address and include your postcode
- Use their title (MP) when addressing them by writing their name followed by MP
- Keep your letter simple and relevant
- End clearly with your request - you could put it in bold or on a new line
- Attach your letter as a PDF file when sending an email

Template Letter from your community group

R.E. Constituent Request: Protecting and Renewing Nature

Dear XXX MP,

We are writing to you as a residents of [your constituency] to ask that you support, and call on the Government to support the [People's Plan for Nature](#). The plan was created in collaboration with thousands of people across the UK, and sets out a vision for the future of nature and the actions that we all need to take to protect and renew it. It offers a clear mandate from the public for the UK and devolved governments to act urgently to restore and protect nature in the UK. As Sir David Attenborough says, "If we are to save what we have left, then we must act now."

Thank you for your recent work [insert some information you've found from your research about what your MP has been up to lately]. We are [insert a bit about yourself and your community group here e.g. what are your concerns, what does your group do? How many people are part of your group? Which other local groups do you work with?]

We are with the 76% of people in the UK who are worried about the state of UK nature. We are now one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Since 1970, over 40% of UK species populations have declined. 38 million birds have vanished from our skies in the last 50 years, 97% of our wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s. We are particularly concerned about the depletion of nature because [insert what you care about E.g. We spend a lot of time looking after our local allotment and recognise the importance of a thriving natural world for a healthy planet, and in particular sustainable food].

[Insert information on your specific topic area, as identified by your research. Include some key facts but keep it brief as that is what you will speak to your MP about in your meeting].

Please will you meet with me, via zoom or in person, to discuss what we can do here in our constituency to act on this plan?

Yours sincerely, [insert name/ Community Group]

Step 3: Developing SMART Asks

It's important to be clear on what specific action you want your MP to take. This helps give your engagement focus and makes it more likely to result in action, not just discussion.



Your asks should ideally be:

- Specific - so that it is clear what you are asking your MP to do
- Measurable - you can check whether your MP has completed them or not
- Attainable - it is within the power of your MP to complete
- Relevant - it aligns with their interests in some way or is relevant to their constituency
- Timely - it takes into account the current political or campaign context

Example SMART Asks

Below are some examples of SMART Asks you could put to your MP. These focus on 'supporting the People's Plan for Nature' but you can use the areas of common ground you've identified to make them more specific to you and your MP's interests.

- **Write an article or social media** post in support of the People's Plan for Nature, to show public support.
- **Attend an event.** This could be a national event taking place in Parliament or it could be a local event in your constituency. For instance, you could ask them to visit a local community garden, attend a local river clean up or even join in a session of wild swimming! If you want to put on your own event, there are some tips on the next page to help you.
- **Ask your MP to table an oral question** to the Environment Secretary, urging them to respond to the People's Plan for Nature. Backbench MPs can submit written or oral questions to government departments. Written questions are easier for a MP to submit and always must be answered by the government. Oral questions are harder as MPs must attend the relevant department's question time and they do not always get the opportunity to ask their question.
- **Ask your MP to apply for a debate** on the People's Plan for Nature. Debates are a good opportunity for MPs to raise the profile of an issue and gather support.

Step 4: Carrying on the conversation.

Politicians have many requests of them made each day, so following up with your MP is important - it acts as a reminder of what you have agreed with them and holds them to account as your representative.

After a meeting with your MP or if they have agreed to an action via email, you should:

- **Follow up** after the meeting or after receiving a reply. Do this as soon as possible, but **within one week** to serve as a reminder, show appreciation, and strengthen your relationship.
- Keep your follow-up concise by using our recommended format below:
 - **Introduction:** Start with a thank you and reminder of who you are and why you care
 - **Reiterate your requests:** Include relevant timescales and any information or actions agreed upon. Include any relevant photos or links to web pages or reports
 - **Sign off:** Express appreciation and ask to be kept updated on progress. If you want to meet again, suggest a date and time.

Continue building your success

Our experience working with thousands of people and hundreds of politicians shows us that the best way to effect change is through multiple engagements, therefore if you have already got your MP to act, then this is a great way to make a significant impact!

Planning an event with your MP

Planning a local event is a fantastic way to make national issues relevant at the local level and inspire action on the nature crises. Community events demonstrate wider community interest in an issue, leading local politicians to hear directly from their constituents about what matters to them. Events have the potential to galvanise action, and quickly. Imagine if you were being asked by 100 people to campaign on an issue, rather than 1 person.

Why not think about planning a local event to raise awareness in your community about how nature is important part of the local community. Inviting your MP along will help you demonstrate a broad local mandate for taking action.

Here are some top tips for running an impactful event:

- **Assemble a Planning Team**
By sharing the load with others you'll benefit from other perspectives in the local community and spread the responsibility for the event. When gathering your team together, think about having a range of skills (from organisation to baking!) and other community groups you could partner with to create even more of an impact.

- **Develop a clear purpose.**

As a group, you should establish your purpose for holding the event, as this will inform the rest of the planning process. Showing constituency support for an issue is vital for getting MPs to act. But what do you actually want them to do following your event? Would you like them to support the People's Plan for Nature? Is there a local nature project you need their backing on? Your event will create leverage, especially if it's attended by people your MP doesn't usually hear from so use this moment wisely to ask them to do something SMART.

- **Create a clear role for your MP within your event.**

MPs are busy people and they are more likely to attend events where they have an active role, such as a panellist, chair or host, attendee, presenter or prize giver. Think about some potential media opportunities too - could you invite a local newspaper to report on your event?

- **Make sure you provide your MP's office with all the information they need.**

This should include any confirmed speakers and timings for the event. Before the event takes place, ensure you have provided the office with a final running order and speaker list. It can also be a good idea to arrange a phone call with the MP or their office staff to run through final details before the event takes place.

- **Schedule a follow up meeting**

This will keep the relationship with your local politician, so that you can build trust and encourage them to do more for nature.

This resource has been co-produced by WWF-UK and Hope for the Future (HFTF) To find out more about HFTF and our work you can visit our website at: www.hftf.org.uk

At [Hope for the Future \(HFTF\)](http://www.hftf.org.uk) (registered charity (no. 1173547), 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.

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