

HOW TO CRAFT YOUR 'ASK' FOR MEETING WITH YOUR MP



UNITED
FOR PEOPLE,
CLIMATE &
NATURE



HOPE ^{FOR}
THE
FUTURE



**UNITED
FOR PEOPLE,
CLIMATE &
NATURE**

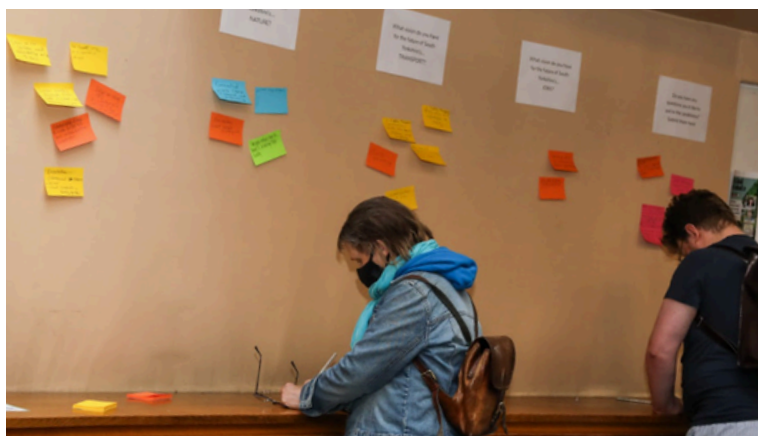
Crafting an ask

When you meet your MP, it's really important that you know what you want to ask them, and you ask it in a way which boosts the chances of them agreeing. We call this 'crafting an ask', and there are a few key things you can do which will help your ask be clear, compelling, and impactful.

Research

Before you meet your MP, you want to know as much about them as possible.

The more informed you are about their interests and experiences, the more you can tailor your ask/s to them, which will make them more likely to engage and take action. This helps you to build Common Ground with them - to find where you agree, rather than disagree. You can then start conversations from a point of commonality, rather than conflict, which sets a positive tone for the rest of your engagement - both then and going forward. In the same way that you have better conversations with friends, family and colleagues when you know who they are and what they enjoy, the same principle is true when talking to your MP.



One of the great things about action on climate and nature is that there are nearly always things that benefit everyone. For example, action to insulate homes to reduce gas consumption for heating also reduces fuel poverty, improves mental and physical health with warmer homes, and creates good jobs in the local area.





UNITED
FOR PEOPLE,
CLIMATE &
NATURE



HOPE FOR
THE
FUTURE

When researching an MP, some key areas to explore are:

What did the MP do before politics?

What did the MP do before politics? The career they have had will offer insight into their interests and areas of expertise. You may also want to know if they are from the local area, and if not where they grew up or lived.

What issues have they focused on while a candidate for becoming an MP?

You may want to look at their website and social media, leaflets they posted during the election campaign, or speeches they have given in parliament.

How have they voted?

How have they voted? Using websites such as [TheyWorkforYou](#), or the parliamentary record Hansard, you can see a MP's voting record, both on specific legislation, and sorted by theme. This will tell you how they vote on climate and nature issues, but also can show if they always vote with their party, or rebel when compelled to.

What are their non-political hobbies and interests?

What are their non-political hobbies and interests? This helps you see the person behind the politician more, which only helps positive engagement. These non-political areas can often be areas of Common Ground, such as understanding the importance of clean air as a parent, or ending sewage dumping if you both enjoy open water swimming.





UNITED
FOR PEOPLE,
CLIMATE &
NATURE

Why we're asking MPs to take action

Why we are asking MPs to take action

It's helpful to have in mind the messaging that underpins these asks, and that will help motivate MPs to take action. Communities across the UK are already taking action for a greener and fairer society - reducing local impacts caused by climate change, cleaning up air, creating warmer homes, having more sustainable food, caring for local nature and improving wellbeing. MPs championing and supporting this is needed to make more action possible and accessible. They can play a climate leadership role on the national and international stage.

Leadership and legacy

This cohort of MPs is the last parliament to be able to take action towards 2030 and are therefore our last defence. We are reaching tipping points. If we don't show leadership on urgent action at the scale needed, it will be too late for planet and people.

Fairness

We need to make sure we respond in a way that is fair and ensures that everyone can afford a healthy future for our communities and our planet.

Climate, nature and wellbeing

Action on climate change and nature loss brings public health benefits that address growing health inequalities and save the cost to families and the public purse of avoidable poor health.



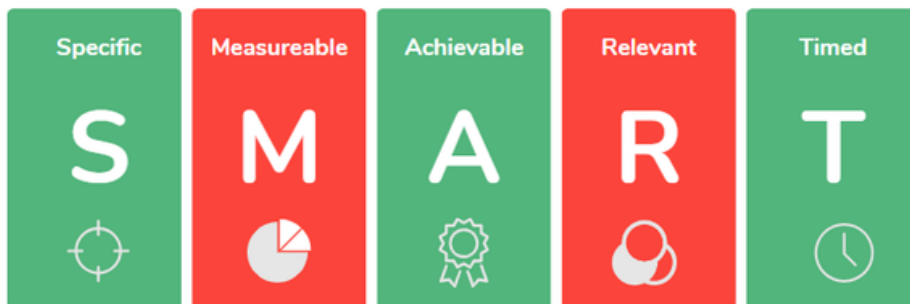


**UNITED
FOR PEOPLE,
CLIMATE &
NATURE**

SMART asks

Once you have researched your MP, and have found a compelling area of common ground, you want to craft this in a way that clearly communicates what you are asking your MP to do. This increases the chances they will agree to what you are asking and makes it easier to hold them to account afterwards.

An effective framework for doing this is to make your ask SMART:



Specific:

Your ask should focus on a specific area of the climate and nature crisis, and a specific action related to this area. Asking an MP to do more for the planet sounds positive, for example, but it is too vague, and allows the MP to explore this however they wish.

Measurable:

You should easily be able to tell if your MP has or has not completed your ask. Measurability is very important to accountability, as it allows you to follow if the MP is doing what they said they would do, and to have grounds to chase them up if they haven't.





UNITED FOR PEOPLE, CLIMATE & NATURE

Achievable: While MPs hold lots of power and influence, it is important that your ask is reasonable. Most MPs, for example, won't openly criticise their party or leadership, or vote against important legislation their party is supporting, as this could lead to them losing the privilege of representing that party. This will be exaggerated with ministers or shadow ministers, as not only could they lose their party membership, they might also lose their ministerial position, and a part of their salary. This said, MPs do have unique opportunities, such as scrutinising legislation, and submitting amendments, asking public questions to ministers, joining groups within parliament with other MPs and getting meetings with powerful figures outside of parliament. MPs may not be able to solve an issue on their own, but can be a vital part of meaningful action.



Relevant: Your question should make sense in the current context of the nature and climate crisis, and the issues that matter most to you. The reason you are engaging with your MP is to bring to them issues you care about, so make sure it's relevant to you and them.

Timed: Establish a timeline when they need to act if they agree. This allows you to hold your MP to account - if the action has not been completed in the timescale, you can chase them up. E.g. before a certain bill is passed, or in advance of COP 29.

[If you are not sure if your ask or topic is best suited to your MP, or another politician such as a Member of Scottish Parliament or Senedd, you can find out more here.](#)





**UNITED
FOR PEOPLE,
CLIMATE &
NATURE**

Examples of SMART asks

As an example, the following ask is not SMART:

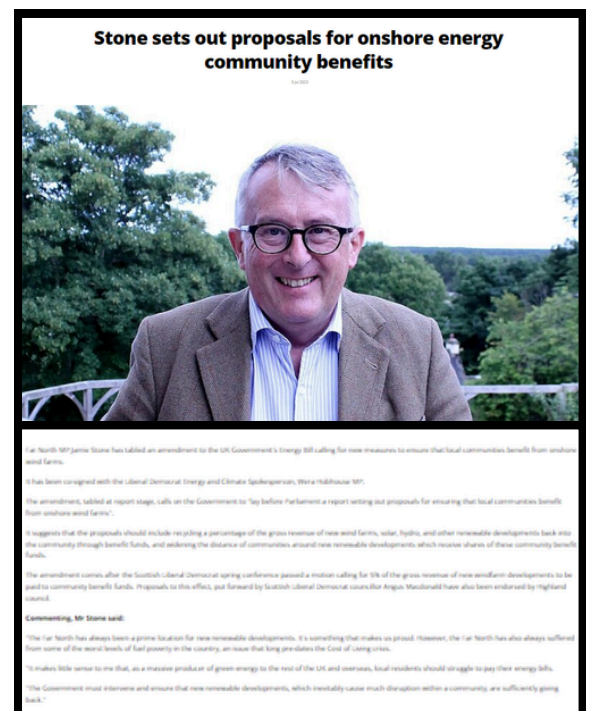
“Will you do more to decrease our reliance on fossil fuels, and increase our use of renewables?”

While absolutely an important issue, it lacks detail on what exactly we want the MP to do and by when, doesn't make clear how this is achievable by the MP, and could include more relevance to the current context or your specific passions within the area on renewables.

By contrast, the following example uses the SMART framework

“Will you propose an amendment to the UK Government's Energy Bill calling for measures to ensure local communities benefit from onshore wind farms, including recycling a percentage of the gross revenue of new wind farms, solar, hydro, and other renewable developments back into the community through benefit funds?”

This SMART ask example is from a real group constituent, who took this ask to their local MP, Jamie Stone. He responded positively, tabling his amendment in a timely manner, and receiving public backing from his party, the Liberal Democrats. He said further that “the Government must intervene and ensure that new renewable developments ... are sufficiently giving back”, and has continued to champion the need for community benefits from energy in parliament. The group involved believe that he engaged so positively because the issue was framed in a relevant way to his personal interests, and the local area, and because the ask was explicitly clear, motivating him to take action.





**UNITED
FOR PEOPLE,
CLIMATE &
NATURE**

Further SMART asks

“Will you agree to meet with parliamentary colleagues in the Department of the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs in the First 100 days of the new parliament, arguing for the pressing need for the party to legislate for the right to Clean Air as soon as possible, whilst highlighting the existing Clean Air (Human Rights) Bill?”

“Will you agree to meet with [our group] and the local councillors for the area within their First 100 days in office, seeking to work collaboratively and support the local authority to implement further School Streets programs locally?”

Using SMART asks is not a guarantee that your MP will say yes, but it does increase the chances that they will both say yes. Additionally, if they say no, it leaves more room to explore around the issue, potentially finding an alternative version. If you can, try and take 2 or 3 asks to your MP, so that if one seems like a dead end, you have somewhere to pivot too.





**UNITED
FOR PEOPLE,
CLIMATE &
NATURE**

Support from Hope for the Future

Some of these tasks may seem daunting, or look like they require a lot of work, but please remember your MP doesn't expect you to know everything about the issue you are raising.

Hope for the Future exists for the explicit purpose of supporting effective democratic engagement of the climate and nature crisis, and we want to support you in building a long term relationship with your MP. We can offer support in researching your MP and identifying common ground, developing SMART asks, preparing to meet with your MP, and holding them to account afterwards. Our support is tailored to you, to make engaging with your MP achievable and manageable, so please do get in touch if you would like further support in any of these areas!

If you would like to get in touch, please email Hope for the Future at info@hftf.org.uk, or complete the contact form on our website



**HOPE FOR
THE
FUTURE**

