

ASKING

IMPORTANT

PEOPLE



DIFFICULT

QUESTIONS



student
christian
movement

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

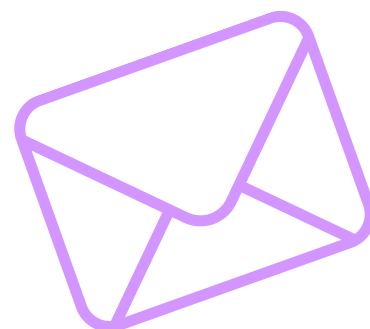
It can be a tad tricky to know all the different ways to ask questions, take action, and reach the people 'at the top'. This resource gives short introductions to the various ways you can take action. These

include:

Attending an AGM



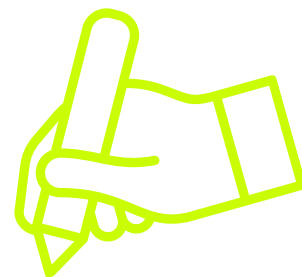
Writing to your MP



Writing to your councillor



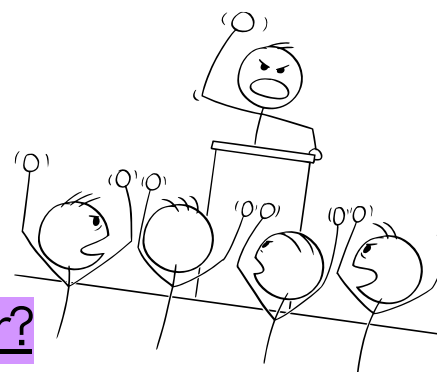
Surgeries



Letters



Hustings



Is it for my MP or my councillor?

ATTENDING AN AGM



What is an AGM?

AGM stands for Annual General Meeting. This is a chance for shareholders to make their priorities known by asking questions and flagging key concerns.

What action can I take?

If you own shares in an organisation, such as a bank, you can attend AGMs and ask questions. Organisations such as ShareAction allows activists to borrow their shares and attend these AGMs to challenge the company and ask questions.

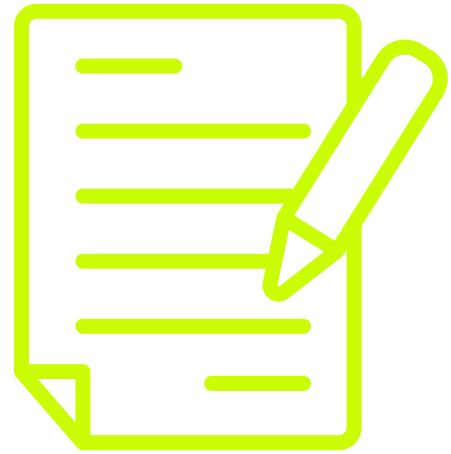
Tips for attending an AGM

- Prepare your questions in advance.
- Research and read recent reports and news articles to ensure your information is up to date.
- Meet others outside the AGM to support you.

More resources:

ShareAction and the JustMoney Movement run training sessions for attending AGMs. A recording of one of these sessions can be found [here](#).

Writing to your MP



Who is my MP?

Your MP is the 'Member of Parliament' which represents your area in National Government. You can find out who your MP is [here on the Government website.](#)

Tips

- You will only get a response from the MP for your area, add your address to the top of your email so they know you're a constituent.
- Writing a letter as a group may help to strengthen your message.
- You can write to MPs who are government ministers too, such as Foreign Secretary. However, it is likely an assistant will reply. [Find them here.](#)
- You can include poetry, videos or art to make your message stand out more.
- Tips for how to structure your letter can be [found here.](#)
- [Tips for engaging your MP can be found here.](#)

Writing to your Councillor



Who is my local councillor?

[Click here to find your local councillor.](#) Councils operate in different ways, and cover different sized areas. County is the largest, then it narrows down through district to parish. See below for the different issues each council covers.

Types of councils and what they deal with

County councils:

- education
- transport
- planning
- fire and public safety
- social care
- libraries
- waste management
- trading standards

District, borough and city councils:

- rubbish collection
- recycling
- Council Tax collections
- housing
- planning applications

Parish, community and town councils:

- allotments
- public clocks
- bus shelters
- community centres
- grants to help local organisations
- neighbourhood planning

Surgeries



What is a surgery?

Many MPs hold regular sessions called surgeries where they meet with constituents to talk about issues of concern. Your MP's website, or your local library, may have more information about when and where surgeries are taking place. Councillors will also hold surgeries to talk about more local issues.

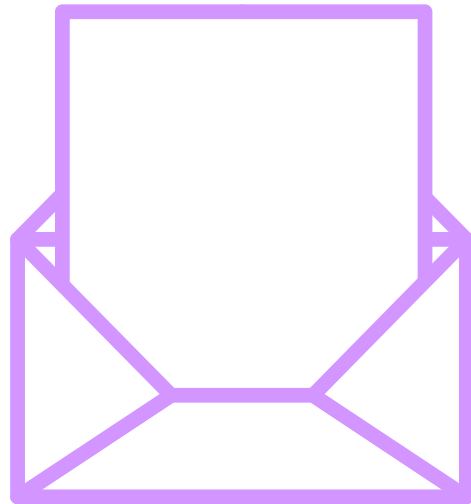
How do I attend a surgery?

Check back on your MP's website / council website for the information about how to book onto a surgery. For a lot of MPs it won't be a 'drop-in' and so you will need an appointment to do this. Find out who your MP is, then head to their website. Councillor surgeries may be less busy and therefore act as a drop in. Again check your councils website to find out.

Tips for attending a surgery

- You have limited time, so plan your questions and points well ahead of time.
- Plan something you would like to achieve from the meeting. Eg you would like your decision maker to contact a local charity. Make it clear what you want.

Letters



Get creative

Ah! The good old art of letter writing...It may seem like an obvious one, but we are moving away from the culture of letter writing, and therefore a letter can seem far more personal, and that you have really spent time for the cause. Here are a few ways to make your letter stand out:

- Include art work (origami, paintings, embroidery)
- Enclose photographs
- Get small testimonies handwritten by they people affected by the issue. For example, if you are concerned about something which will affect children get children you know involved.
- Seal it nicely, use nice paper etc.

Where to find an address

- MPs: Search for your MP [here](#), their address and contact details will come up.
- Councillors: search for your councillor [here](#).
- You can find details and send letters from [Write To Them](#) as well

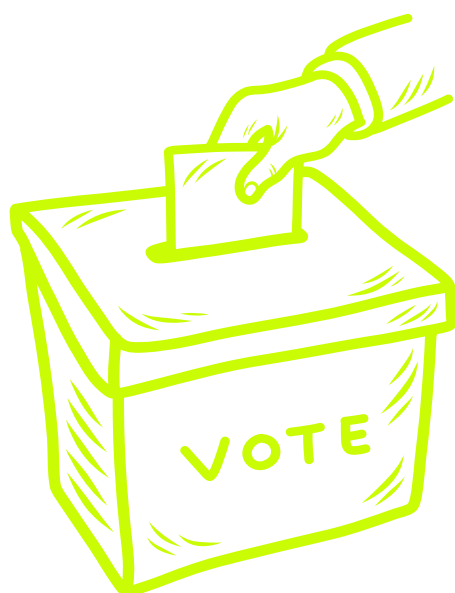
Hustings



What is a hustings?

During elections local venues may host 'hustings'. This is a time for the constituents to ask questions to candidates to learn more about their stance on certain issues. It is not a debate, but more like a Q and A. Each candidate is given the same amount of time to speak generally.

Why should I attend a hustings?



- They often hang around afterwards to chat to constituents so you have the opportunity to talk face to face with your potential MP.
- You can articulate issues which are important to you in the election, and ask them to put a focus on your concerns if they get in.

IS IT FOR MY MP OR MY COUNCILLOR?

