



BIOFUELWATCH HUSTINGS GUIDE 2019

WHAT IS A HUSTINGS?

A hustings is a non partisan event bringing together electoral candidates in the run up to an election. It is a great opportunity for voters to hear the views of politicians on a range of issues. You can also raise the issues that matter most to you by asking a question during the event.

Hustings are often organised by a community group or several

groups working together within an area. The easiest way to find out about a hustings near you is online. You will also find information in local newspapers, libraries, community centres or by asking the candidates.

The Electoral Commission has an excellent hustings guide if you might like to organise a hustings event in your local area.

WHY SHOULD I GO TO A HUSTINGS EVENT?

While Brexit and other important issues will be debated during the election, we also need urgent political action to tackle deforestation and the climate crisis. Asking a question at a hustings is a great way to raise awareness among candidates of the impacts of biomass burning on forests, wildlife, communities and the climate.

WHAT SHOULD I ASK GENERAL ELECTION CANDIDATES IN MY AREA?

Four important election issues to raise with candidates at a hustings event are:

The climate crisis: The steps they will take to end the UK's contribution to climate change by putting us on track to cut our greenhouse gas emissions. We need the new government to refuse funding for new fossil fuel infrastructure and transfer around £1.3 billion a year in renewable subsidies from biomass burning to genuine renewables.

Deforestation and biomass burning: How they will protect and restore forests in the UK and

around the world which are being destroyed for the biomass industries. How they will ensure that natural forests are not replaced with industrial monoculture plantations.

Renewable energy: How they will help support a Just Transition from fossil fuel and biomass burning to genuinely renewable wind, wave and solar power.

Justice for communities: What they will do to reduce air, noise and water pollution for communities affected by the fossil fuel, wood pellet and biomass industries.



WHAT SHOULD I ASK CANDIDATES AT A HUSTINGS EVENT?

We have a pledge which you can ask your Parliamentary candidates to sign (with a version you can print out here):



For forests, communities and the climate, I pledge to work towards transferring subsidies from biomass burning to wind, wave & solar power

You can also ask your candidates a question about biomass burning. Here are some example questions you might ask at a hustings (You can find more information about these questions in the election guide here):

1. What will you do to make tackling climate change and deforestation a priority?
2. Scientists agree that our natural forests play a vital role in reducing our carbon emissions. What plans does your party have to protect and restore natural forests?
3. What plans does your party have to support renewable wind, wave and solar power?
4. Will you sign the pledge to transfer around £1 billion in renewable subsidies from biomass burning to wind, wave and solar power?

TOP TIPS FOR HUSTINGS QUESTIONS

1. Try to raise your hand early so that you have more chances of being called by the chair.
2. Try to keep your question short. Biomass burning is a complex issue so it's good to keep to a single point.
3. Remember to be polite and respectful as candidates are more likely to consider the issues and give a good reply.
4. Even if the candidates do not answer your question properly, remember that the audience may also be interested.
5. It can be nerve-racking to ask a question in front of a room of people. It might help to prepare your question in advance and practice saying it beforehand so you feel confident.
6. You can do some research on your local candidates and their interests through their social media and election leaflets. The website theyworkforyou.com can also tell you how existing MPs have voted on climate and environmental issues.

If you want to, please feel free to tweet about the event and take a picture, using the hashtag #ClimateElection.

AFTER THE EVENT

We would love to hear about your experience of attending a hustings and the reaction you got from the panel. Please email biofuelwatch@gmail.com to let us know how you got on.

It's also a good idea to follow up with the candidates. If you got an interesting or positive response, you can write to the politician after the event and ask them to meet with you. You can also send them the link to the pledge form here.

You could follow up a frustrating response by directing them to the Biofuelwatch candidate briefing or sharing their reply with us at biofuelwatch@gmail.com.