

# Briefing

## Making the most of your Environment-Bill MP meeting

Now that you've managed to [secure a meeting](#) to ask your MP to support a strong Environment Bill – and decided on an EU protected area, nature site or local green space at which to hold it – it's time to plan to make the most of the opportunity.

To make sure your MP meeting has as much impact as it can, it's important to plan not just the meeting itself, but what you'll be doing either side of it. If you know your follow up plan, you can prepare for your meeting accordingly. Here are some tips to help you plan around your meeting.

### Take a good photo

Photos aren't just useful for sharing on social media or getting your story covered in the press, they're also a great way to hold your MP to their promise. Here's how you can get the most out of your photos:

- A posed photo of the group and your MP is a key asset to have. Ideally your MP will be holding a sign, banner or poster in support of a strong Environment Bill or outlining their specific commitment, if they make one. (Let us know if we can help your group make a prop for you to use).
- Try and take multiple photos in both landscape and portrait so that you can use them in different contexts.
- As you take photos check that they're well lit, in focus and high enough quality to be reprinted - you don't need an expensive camera though; a camera phone usually works fine.
- If you're hosting your meeting at a specific local nature site, EU protected area or locally valued green space, try to make it clear in the photo. Is there a sign or landmark where you could take the photo?
- If your MP seems keen, and especially if they've made a strong commitment to write to Michael Gove or take action for a strong Environment Bill, you could take a video of them outlining their commitment to the camera. This is a particularly strong asset to have for social media.
- Don't forget to use [Friends of the Earth t-shirts](#) and group banners to boost awareness of your group and campaigns.
- If you decide to take photos of the meeting in progress, try to avoid photos with the backs of heads as much as possible.

### **Send out a press release**

Getting a story in the local media is an excellent way to boost awareness of your group, the issue, and what you're doing about it. It's also helpful for holding your MP to their commitment. The best way to get your story in the local newspaper is by sending out a press release to journalists or local papers. Here's a refresher on writing an effective press release, from our media team:

- Start with a short, snappy and attention-grabbing headline. If there's an exciting outcome, such as a commitment or statement in support for your campaign, make sure to use it as your headline. If not, a simple statement that your group met with the local MP about Brexit and the Environment Bill will suffice.
- Below the headline use up to three bullet points to outline the importance of the issue, why you had a meeting, what was discussed and if there was an outcome.
- You can then spend two to three short paragraphs going into further detail and explaining the local relevance of the Environment Bill and Brexit, if you haven't already had a chance. You can also briefly mention the other work you're doing and how it might relate to these issues.
- Make sure to include a quote from your group's coordinator and/or Brexit contact for the journalist to use. This shouldn't repeat what has already been said but instead it can add more local detail, opinion and analysis than the rest of the press release.
- You can even include a quote from your MP, if they're supportive.
- Don't forget to end with your contact details in case journalists want to get in touch.
- If you have any extra information you want to include, or links to further reading, you can add a numbered notes section at the end, after your contact details. This means that journalists can digest the story, then look at extra information if they want it.
- You can also include any photos, videos and links to social media posts for journalists to use on the online version of their story.

If you'd like an example, have a look at our press release about Chester Friends of the Earth. It should help you understand how to put the points above into practice.

If you had an interesting meeting or outcome, you could also contact regional radio or T.V. outlets. Though you might need to contact broadcast journalists before the meeting in case they'd like to attend themselves.

You can also let us know if you're planning on getting in touch with particular local newspapers or media outlets. We might be able to give you useful press contacts, making it easier to get coverage. If your MP is particularly influential, or says something especially exciting, we can also help promote your story to bigger press outlets.

## Social media

From raising awareness of your campaign to alerting journalists of the meeting's outcome, social media is a useful tool when meeting with your MP. Our social media manager has some suggestions on how to maximise its potential:

- Once your meeting is confirmed you can publicize that it's happening on your social media accounts (but there's no need to give the exact details, of course). This could generate excitement and interest in your group. At the very least people will want to stay engaged to find out what happens. Plus, it'll make it harder for your MP to change their mind about meeting.
- After the meeting, make sure to share one of the photos you took and include some text to give it some context. If you took a video, share that too – videos perform especially well on social media.
- Don't forget to tag your MP and even a local newspaper or journalist in any posts about the meeting too. This will expand your reach in terms of potential supporters and journalists, whilst also giving journalists you've already contacted a reminder.
- You can also tag us (@friends\_earth) in your posts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) so we can share what you're up to with our social media followers.
- If your MP still hasn't fulfilled their commitment after a month, you can post a photo of them making their commitment on social media and tag them asking when they'll act on it.
- Importantly, always act politely online. Even if your MP doesn't agree with you, your group could lose credibility and support if you don't come across well in a public forum. And don't forget to stick to the [political impartiality guidance](#).

## Follow up with your MP

It's a good idea to follow up with your MP, not only to ensure they fulfil their commitment but to make sure it's done in the way you agreed and intended. When you email your MP after the meeting you should:

- Thank them for the meeting, recap what was discussed and outline the agreed action points.
- Attach the [Greener UK Environment Bill briefing \(updated version\)](#) available from mid-October) and any other resources your MP requested. This will allow them to make a strong argument when writing to Michael Gove in support of a strong Environment Bill.
- Ask them to let you know when they've acted on their commitment and if they receive a response.

If you would like additional detail or support with the topics outlined in this guide, or another aspect of meeting with your MP about Brexit and the Environment Bill, please

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email [shaan.jindal@foe.co.uk](mailto:shaan.jindal@foe.co.uk). Don't forget that you can also use this opportunity to talk to your MP about other issues important to your group, from your local campaigns to the Agriculture Bill.