

Working with Politicians

we need a list of "trigger words" to attract attention, opening the door to conversation. Examples are:

- well-being
- sustainability
- Big Society
- localism

- accountability they need reminding throughout the political cycle that "they work for us"

- if subject gets 100 letters the MP will think it is an important issue (we suspect it is less for councillors)

- we would like to see standard letters for issues as they are easier to customise (Amnesty International are very good at this). There may be templates already available for example on the Avaas and 38degrees websites.

- how can we influence what policies get into manifestoes? There was a big discussion about how relevant a manifesto commitment is given recent history, however it was felt to be a good start and something we could try to hold them to.

- it is possible to shift the culture for all parties, for example the rise of the concern in sustainability.

- politicians take the most notice of "snail mail" more effective from individuals than groups and much better than petitions.

- are there other ways of engaging? For example attending surgeries as a way of reinforcing points of view.

- how can we help raise awareness? What Local Meeting activities have been best? Is it possible to have an Area Meeting Resource - needs raising via Local BM.

- need to think which concerns are best to push in what circumstances (eg Decriminalisation of Drugs)