

GENERAL ELECTION

PACK FOR
CHURCHES



PHOTO BY RED DOT ON UNSPLASH

CALLING FOR THE PROTECTION
OF CLIMATE AND NATURE



Faith-motivated. Science-informed. Hope-inspired.

**GENERAL ELECTION
PACK FOR CHURCHES**

Welcome to the election action pack for churches put together by Green Christian and Operation Noah.

A crucial general election will take place later this year. The window to take effective action on climate change and nature loss is rapidly closing and strong environmental leadership is needed to ensure that the next UK government meets its domestic and international obligations. This action pack is to encourage you and your church to get involved, and to point you to some resources that will help you do that.

Our big ask is that you support the Climate and Nature Bill campaign. More on that below.

GENERAL ELECTION PACK FOR CHURCHES



PHOTO CREDIT: AMIT RUDRO

WHY SHOULD CHURCHES GET INVOLVED IN THIS ISSUE?

The political decisions that will be taken by the next government will be critical for the future of planet and people. We are called to love God and our neighbour (Mark 12:31) and we are called to seek justice (Isaiah 1:17). We pray as Jesus taught us “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). If we take this seriously we must do what we can to have a government that acts for the common good and to safeguard our common home - our faith must be accompanied by action (James 2:17).

Our involvement in political processes, including elections, are an expression of our faithfully seeking God’s kingdom on earth. By participating in the political process we bring a vision rooted in Godly values to a world which desperately needs this wisdom as it grapples with this deepest of crises.

In the context of unchecked climate and environmental degradation, participation of our church congregations in the selection and holding to account of our elected representatives should be seen as an act of stewardship, integral to our charge to care for the gift of God’s creation, and encouraged as a courageous witness to our faith in the face a national rhetoric that is making the exercise of this stewardship a space of self-interest, deliberate division and misinformation.

GENERAL ELECTION PACK FOR CHURCHES

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ANY LOCAL GROUP OR COALITION?

If you or your church are a member of any local group or coalition, ask them if they would sign up as an official supporter. They don't need to be a green group - it is about trying to show the widest possible support for this Bill.

Check these quick links if you want to go straight to how to support the Bill:

Your church and individual members of your congregation can use this link to ask your election candidates to back the CAN Bill <https://action.zerohour.uk>. There is a template letter customised to your local area - all you have to do is enter your postcode and then add your details. It only takes a couple of minutes.

Download the CAN Bill General Election Campaigner Pack <https://www.zerohour.uk/downloads/campaigner-pack.pdf>

Your church can join the growing list of churches who are signing up as supporter organisations of the CAN Bill. Simply email partnerships@zerohour.uk with your details and your logo if you have one.

Find out who else is supporting the Bill at <https://www.zerohour.uk/supporters/>

PERSUADE YOUR CHURCH TO GET INVOLVED

If you are reading this because you want to persuade your church to get involved, here is an example letter that Ruth, Green Christian Information Officer, sent her church. Feel free to adapt and use it.

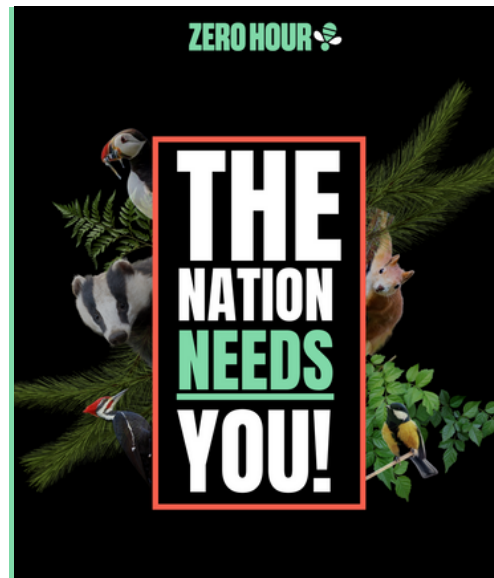
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZUjsXHbkhA0mz3k42IRIzyQYTYbL53mPMnj-7Dv_aPc/edit

GENERAL ELECTION
PACK FOR CHURCHES

As Christians we must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). Participating in the democratic process is a good work and helping people do this is a form of service. We hope that by electing good representatives, who will work to address the harm of climate change, that will benefit the common good.

GENERAL ELECTION PACK FOR CHURCHES

- 01 Voter registration and identification
- 02 Hosting hustings
- 03 Helping people prepare to talk to candidates about green issues
- 04 Building relationships
- 05 Resources for young people
- 06 Recommendations for other environmental election campaigns
- 07 Sermon and prayer resources



**HELP ALL
PARLIAMENTARY
CANDIDATES
UNDERSTAND THEIR
RESPONSIBILITIES
TO GOD'S CREATION**

GENERAL ELECTION PACK FOR CHURCHES

1. VOTER REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION



Tell your congregation about the voter ID requirements, and help them get the photo ID they need in order to vote. Remind them about the election date when it is announced, and encourage them to use their vote. Help them get to the polling station on the day. Do this in your wider community.

A practical way to help some people exercise their right to vote is to help them apply for a postal vote. Their ballot paper is sent to their home address, and they return it by freepost. No voter ID is needed for this, and they can apply by post or online.

Every vote matters, in previous elections there have been constituencies where non-voters outnumbered the voters for the winning party. Had they turned out, non-voters could have played a pivotal role in the election. We also recognise that the groups that are less likely to be registered and have the required identification to vote - young people, unskilled workers and unemployed people - are those that will be most affected by the climate and environmental crisis, and so it is a matter of justice that their votes are not excluded in the political process.

Register to vote

- <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

Voter ID requirements and how to get a free voter ID document

- <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id>

Supporting people to meet the voter ID requirement

- <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/resources/democratic-engagement-resources/voter-id-resources-generic>

Register for a postal vote

- <https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote>

Slides (put together for young people)

- <https://www.democracyclassroom.com/resources/why-is-registering-to-vote-so-important>

Resources to encourage people to vote Decisions are made by those who 'Show Up'. "At its most basic this is about turning up to vote on election day."

- <https://www.christiansinpolitics.org.uk/decisions-are-made-by-those-who-show-up>

10 reasons Christians should vote in the election

- <https://www.christiansinpolitics.org.uk/10-reasons-christians-should-vote-in-the-election>

2. HOST AN ECO HUSTINGS, QUESTION TIME OR OTHER PUBLIC PRE- ELECTION EVENT

These are a good way to hear directly from the candidates and to ask them questions about their views and what measures they will support. They are also an opportunity to show that these issues are important to your community. Hustings are often held during the six week campaigning period before the election, but the preparation work can be started earlier.



How to and ideas for hosting hustings other meetings

<https://jpit.uk/elections/hustings>

One of the most useful practical guides is this one from JPIT

<https://jpit.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Hustings-Guidance-for-Churches-February-2024.pdf>

Guidance for organisations, including charities, holding hustings

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/are-you-holding-a-hustings>

Green Christian member John was recently involved in a hustings held in a church ahead of the Mayoral election in the North East. He has some useful thoughts on the practicalities.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/10Ni72UGUSDDIW_bzk9mQNkmYUPZ7yBvmW2jiJmR8se0/edit

GENERAL ELECTION PACK FOR CHURCHES



3. PREPARE PEOPLE TO TALK TO CANDIDATES AND BE EFFECTIVE ADVOCATES FOR GREEN ISSUES

People can make a big difference by raising local and national green issues at hustings and when they are canvassed on the doorstep. Politicians say no one raises green issues on the doorstep, it's important to let candidates know that voters care and will hold them to account. To be most effective on these issues, it is important that people are prepared with questions and information. It's also a good opportunity to learn and discuss more about climate issues.

CAFOD and SVP have produced an excellent resource that has a useful section on asking candidates about environmental issues.

https://assets.ctfassets.net/vy3axnuecuwj/4iBZaGQABoFPwvvoAcDVih/409ca22eaabda45c606eb184da20e3c4/General_election_leaflet_vCAFOD_single_page.pdf

Christian Aid have a two page Climate Justice Cribsheet

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-03/general-election-campaign-climate-crib-sheet.pdf>

Citizens UK have a two page document on the climate crisis issues which are right now impacting those already disadvantaged in our communities

https://citizensuk.contentfiles.net/media/documents/Citizens_Agenda_-_Climate_Justice.pdf

Cards giving responses to the 12 most frequently used excuses for Climate Delay are available from

<https://www.islingtonclimatecentre.co.uk/post/climate-delay>

Hope For The Future run training sessions including Your Voice Heard and Influencing Tomorrow which will help people prepare for the upcoming General Election.

<https://www.hftf.org.uk/training>

4. BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

Meeting with a candidate can be a useful path to getting them to support action if elected. If you can get a candidate to pledge to act on something during an election campaign it could result in an important action in due course. If you can build a relationship that can help you hold them to account in the future. Do follow up any meeting or your email correspondence by thanking them for the meeting or their reply and summarising what they said to you about the issues you raised. If they are elected, email them to remind them of any positive they said they would take.



Find out who your local candidates are

<https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/ppcs/details/>

Write a letter on behalf of your church and ask for a meeting. You can use our template letter

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-Xv-YIzJ1-qFznHqH5QzIWscUuxfhyQi6hpnoPASKYk/edit>

If you want to email your existing MP online, Hope For The Future have a template with text you can edit and just click to send

<https://www.hftf.org.uk/write-to-your-mp>

Making something to give your candidate on behalf of your church can help you build a relationship. Could people knit, craft or bake something? See Christian Aid's Craftivism Guide for examples

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/campaigning-with-craftivism-guide-campaigns-may2019.pdf>



FOR GOD SO LOVED - CREDIT - AMIT RUDRO

5. EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE

Research reveals that the majority of young people feel disconnected from politics and that they are not listened to by our politicians. Young people need to know that their opinions do matter, and that they need to be heard. The political decisions made today directly shape their lives and their futures. One thing we can do is connect them with youth led campaigns that empower young people to get involved, to vote and to organise.

Non-partisan campaign which aims to demystify environmental politics and increase youth voter turnout at the 2024 General Election

<https://uky4n.org/project/vote4nature/>

Youth led campaign to make sure politicians hear the calls from young people and ensure the next government delivers on climate education.

<https://www.teachthefuture.uk/general-election-campaign>

If your young people are looking for something rooted in anti-oppression work and directed towards system change, Green New Deal Rising is a radical climate justice movement of young people from across the UK fighting to build a society that works for all. Their 2024 plan is here

<https://www.gndrising.org/our-plan/>

Young people from Christian Aid's Prophetic Activists scheme have created a Climate Justice Resource Pack.

You can find a copy here

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c-TfQlqB629tQu__frRw8Qxxm_ol46R7/view

6. OTHER CAMPAIGNS TO THINK ABOUT

Supporting the Zero Hour campaign for the Climate and Nature Bill is our big ask because the Bill is the only proposed legislation before the UK Parliament that ensures a comprehensive and joined-up approach to the climate emergency and nature crisis. There are also other campaigns that we think are worth reading about and getting involved with if you have capacity. Here are our top three.



Nature 2030 is asking politicians to take specific action to stop the collapse of nature.
<https://www.wcl.org.uk/nature2030.asp>

Greenpeace Project Climate Vote is using the power of voters to pledge in advance to vote for climate action to shape the debate and is forming local groups to campaign for the climate.
<https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/take-action/project-climate-vote/>

ClientEarth have a UK election manifesto setting out ten things that are needed from the next government.
<https://www.clientearth.org/latest/news/clientearth-uk-manifesto-what-we-want-to-see-from-the-next-government/>



PHOTO CREDIT: PIOTR FROM PIXABAY

7. SERMON AND PRAYER RESOURCES

We pray for a world in which all can flourish according to their created purpose. Praying into the electoral process is inviting God to join with us in our processes of seeking good and just government to this end, and for guidance for our best joining in God's work of our governance. Prayer is a fundamental part of the process of discerning what we should be doing.

Alongside this, the call to actively participate in the obligations of our earthly citizenship needs to be preached in church.. Some churches are well practised in this, some are less so. Wherever you are on this path we have collected together a variety of resources which may help you.

Prayer is the
bedrock of
our earthly
citizenship

Our collection of prayer resources can be found here

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jvp7Hh797E4YULJBcUv53a7bHh2jK5bjPhJBoEbBmBQ/edit?usp=sharing>

And some resources for sermons here

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ltq1kdJDD-8eH0fNmxuI55VC8rQv1I3frLwJp9WBFC/edit?usp=sharing>

The Climate Justice Resource Pack created by Christian Aid's Prophetic Activists includes bible verses, a prayer diary, and a climate liturgy. You can find it here

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c-TfQlqB629tQu_frRw8Qxxm_ol46R7/view