

Biofuelwatch and Stop Burning Trees hustings guide 2024



1. What is a hustings?

A hustings is a non-partisan panel discussion bringing together 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.

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 candidates.

[Friends of the Earth](#) and [The Electoral Commission](#) have excellent hustings guides if you might like to organise a hustings in your local area.

2. Why should I go to a hustings event?

While many important issues will be debated during the election, we also need urgent political action to tackle forest destruction as well as the climate and nature emergencies.

Asking a question at a hustings is a great way to raise awareness about the impacts of tree burning in UK power stations like Drax on forests, wildlife, communities and the climate.

3. What should I ask General Election candidates in my area?

Four important election issues to raise at a hustings are:

(i) **The climate crisis:** What steps they will take to end the UK's contribution to climate change by cutting our greenhouse gas emissions. Would they support refusing permission for new fossil fuel projects and transferring existing renewable subsidies from tree burning to genuinely renewable wind and solar power? Would the next Government say no to new subsidies for tree burning in UK power stations?

(ii) **Harm to forests and nature:** How they will protect forests around the world which are being destroyed for wood-burning power stations like Drax in Yorkshire and Lynemouth in Northumberland. How they will ensure that biodiverse forests are not replaced with industrial monoculture plantations.

(iii) **Renewable energy:** How they will support a Just Transition from fossil fuel and tree burning to genuinely renewable wind and solar power.

(iv) **Justice for communities and harm to human health:** What they will do to reduce air, water and noise pollution for communities in the UK and around the world who are impacted by the fossil fuel, wood pellet and biomass industries.

4. What should I ask candidates at a hustings?



We have a [pledge](#) which you can ask your Parliamentary candidates to sign: [‘I support an end to all subsidies for burning wood in power stations.’](#)

You can also ask your candidates a question about tree burning in UK power stations.

Here are some example questions you might like to ask at a hustings:

- 1) Will you end the scandal of renewable energy subsidies going to burning of imported wood, much of it from highly biodiverse forests in North America?
- 2) The Government has spent huge amounts of public money subsidising polluters, like Drax. How would you ensure public money is spent on genuine renewables?
- 3) We know that polluters like Drax, BP and Shell buy access to politicians. How can we ensure decision makers follow the science, not the money?
- 4) What will you do to make tackling the climate crisis and forest destruction a priority?
- 5) What plans does your party have to protect forests around the world that are being clear-felled to burn in UK power stations like Drax in Yorkshire?
- 6) What plans does your party have to support green jobs in genuine climate solutions, such as home insulation or wind and solar power?
- 7) Should UK energy bills be used to fund tree burning in UK power stations like Drax?

5. Top Tips for Hustings Questions

- Try to raise your hand early so that you have more chances of being selected.
- Try to keep your question short. It’s a good idea to say why you care about the issue and it may help to prepare your question in advance so you feel more confident.
- Even if candidates do not answer your question properly, remember that the audience members may also be interested.
- You can do some research on your candidates and their interests through their social media and election leaflets. The website theyworkforyou.com can tell you how former MPs have voted on climate and environmental issues.

6. 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.