Getting the most out of your hustings

Running a hustings event is great fun for members and a great part of our democratic process. These tips should help you make an event you run more of a success, including a hustings or just about any Lib Dem occasion!

Remember that if you invite any of the candidates, you MUST invite them all and give them all the same opportunities for speaking etc. It doesn't matter if some choose not to attend, but all must be invited equally.

1. Don't just invite party members

Only party members have a vote in the selection, but non-members who deliver leaflets or donate money will be interested in the selection contest - and whoever wins the selection will need their help.

So a good way to make them feel involved, valued and motivated is to invite them to the hustings meeting.

2. Advertise the event outside your local party

People are often willing to go to events outside their local party - if they know about them. It might be that they work near the venue, that travel links make it easier to get to than an event in their 'home' local party or even simply that it is an event which catches their interest.

So put the event up on both Flock Together (www.flocktogether.org.uk) and Facebook, and also let the Region know (campaigns@libdems4london.org.uk) so that your event can be included in the regular emails to London activists. Give people plenty of notice – a week is a good minimum target.

3. Provide the full postcode

A small but very useful tip: provide the full postcode for the venue's location as so often people now rely on that for their travel information, such as in a car sat nav or looking up the venue on Google Maps.

4. Provide public transport information

Especially in London, venues are often fairly straight forward to get to via public transport but people are put off by not knowing what routes are best, particularly if buses are involved.

Apart from mentioning the local bus routes, point people at www.transportdirect.info to find door-to-door public transport options for their own specific journeys.

5. Promote the event on Facebook

Putting the event on Facebook is a great step.

To really get the most from it make sure you give the event a photo (so that it stands out on screen) and then share it with other people you know on Facebook and in turn encourage them to share it.

6. Email people twice about the event

A good pattern of emails is once a couple of weeks an in advance to get it into people's diaries and then once a couple of days in advance to remind people.

You can link to your Facebook and Flock Together events encouraging people to sign up to say they are coming. If people

do say 'yes' in advance, they are more likely to then actually turn up on the day.

7. Have a sign-in sheet at the event

Even if the attendees are familiar faces, very often there will be some email addresses or phone numbers which you can get from them to update or fill in gaps in the local party records.

So have a good sign in sheet that asks for name, address, email and phone - and make sure that everyone who comes is personally asked to fill it in. One person working the room with a clipboard is a really good way to do this.

8. Give someone the job of welcoming new people

It's all too easy for a new person to feel a bit lost and lonely when they come to an event.

Make sure you've decided in advance that one person at least will make it their job to say hello to everyone and introduce them to others if needs be.

9. Have a good welcome speech

Obvious but important to remember: the welcoming remarks that open the formal part of the event really set the tone. They are the chance to be welcoming and encouraging people to get involved - or to be mumbling and negative. Guess which is better!

10. Take a photo and report back

Both in a post-event email and in the next local members and supporters' newsletter you should include a photo and brief report of the meeting. People who couldn't make it will be interested and if they see they missed a good event, they are more likely to come to one in future.

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Need more help? Want to promote your event?   campaigns@libdems4london.org.uk