



# Top Ten Tips: Engaging local politicians



## Engaging local politicians

1. **They will be interested** - you don't need to be afraid to engage with local politicians. It's their jobs to know what's going on in the local area, and, where they can, help – they will be happy to hear from you.
2. **Get to know them** - politicians are just people. Get to know them, and you'll soon figure out what works best for them in terms of maintaining an ongoing dialogue.
3. **Engage during “peace time”** - it doesn't come across well to make your first interaction with a politician when you need their help. Build a positive relationship during “peace time”, so as you have the relationship to call on if you need it.
4. **Manage your expectations** - politicians don't have the answers for everything. They will do what they can, but there may be times when all they can offer is advice.
5. **Be prepared** - make sure you attend any meeting prepared. Know the answer to the questions “why have you come to see me?” and “how can I help?”.
6. **Be courteous with timing** - local politicians are often under pressure from lots of different groups. If you have something important coming up that will impact their work, a polite “heads up” will be appreciated.
7. **They are very busy people** - most politicians have very busy lives. Be mindful of this in your requests for their time.
8. **Be responsive** - if a local politician asks you for an update, be timely in your response. Even if you can't answer the question, acknowledge the request and say you'll get back to them as soon as you can.
9. **Work positively together** - it's important you work with all the parties represented in your area. If you have an issue, make every attempt to work through it constructively as opposed to resorting to public criticism.
10. **They can be great ambassadors** - politicians often have very wide networks on social media etc. If you can persuade them to share information for you, it will reach many more people as a result.