*Guide to Hustings*

**EQUIPMENT / LAYOUT CHECKLIST**

* Digital projector / White Screen
* A holding slide with the title of the event
* A lectern – for chair to stand at.
* A name sign for each candidate / their party (or independent)
* A timer / mobile phone to time each answer
* PA system with minimum 3 (mobile) microphones – chair – candidate – audience (more is better)
* Video recording equipment
* Pen / paper if attendees want to submit question
* MEND STALL at the back for any literature (must be politically neutral – i.e. free from any literature relating to any candidate or party) and also for people interested in potentially joining.
* REFRESHMENTS – nice to offer refreshments; makes the event just that more enjoyable
* SMALL GIFT for candidates – e.g. box of chocolates
* FEEDBACK FORMS for attendees

**PERSONNEL REQUIRED**

Registration desk - record contact details of all attendees for future events – one person

One person to host / chair (can be the same person)

One person to take photos

One person to video record

A scribe – to make written record of hustings

SECURITY – Two people needed - one person on each side at the front of the hall to oversee the audience - stop people approaching / heckling the chair and candidates - any shouting heckling etc needs to be **quickly quashed**.

FLOOR MANAGER - to take messages to / from the chair (ask the group do NOT send texts to the chair during the event – he /she will not have time to read them)

AUDIENCE ASSISTANTS - Two people needed – to get mike to the audience / general help

MEND STALL – one person

REFRESHMENTS STALL – two people

**BEFORE THE HUSTINGS**

Need a very brief BIO of all candidates.

With the candidates go through rules **in writing** of how the hustings will work / approx how long will last etc (in case anyone needs to leave early or has other engagements). Also make clear if audio / video recording taking place.

Collate questions that have been sent in – have a link on your poster so they can email in their questions.

As chair, make sure you are familiar with

* The main political issues and policies of each party
* The voting patterns of the incumbent MP / voting patterns of any of the other candidates (e.g. if they are a councillor)
* MEND’s policy pledges and election’s documents
* Any local issues that are quite political e.g. closure of school / withdrawal of A&E services from local hospital, transport issues.

Invite any local media to your event? (way up pros and cons)

**THE HUSTINGS ITSELF**

**INTRODUCTION**

Introduce MEND for 5 mins – what MEND does etc (include a 2 minute video)?

Introduce all candidates – read out a very brief BIO of all candidates – in particular what links to them to the constituency they are standing in (e.g. local links etc)?

Make any omissions / empty chairing obvious

*e.g. The Conservative candidate was invited, but unfortunately declined to attend.*

**GO THROUGH HOUSEKEEPING RULES**

Allow recording - audio / video, allow photos (check with all candidates first).

WE as MEND MUST record all hustings – ideally video. Also useful to have one scribe recording all answers each candidate gives (this will help later on when creating a summary of who said what)

MOBILE PHONES – put on silent – but please note **#XXXHUSTINGS OR #MENDEVENT** please feel free to tweet away during this event

**GO THROUGH FORMAT**

Each speaker will put their case forwards for 2 minutes.

We will take a mixture of pre-submitted written questions and then open to the floor.

My plea to the candidates, please keep your answers brief and answer the question. You will speak for a maximum of 60 seconds.

My plea to the audience, please raise your hand, no shouting please, keep your questions brief and to the point and no speeches.

Please keep your questions relevant to the topic in hand, there will be time at the end for open questions.

We have stewards around if you need any assistance who will be around with the portable mikes.

**START HUSTINGS**

Each speaker puts their case forwards for 2 minutes.

Start with some pre-written questions

After all candidates have answered, go to the floor for f/u questions (or if the chair as any themselves) – be **strict enforcing the 60-second rule** for each candidate, or **if they go off topic**, or **if they don’t answer the question**.

Max 10 minutes per topic, then move on

Try to incorporate MEND pledges, if not into questions themselves, then into any follow up questions – this is the chair’s discretion.

Mix the topics between MEND pledges, mainstream political issues and local issues – gauge the audience interest.

**AT THE END**

90 secs closing speech from each candidate as to why you should vote for them

A big thank you to the hosts for allowing us to host this event

And I would also like to give a big thank you to our candidates for conducting a very interesting and lively debate.

As a small token of our appreciation, a small gift for all the candidates.

Ask attendees to complete feedback forms

Conclude and close event

**AFTER HUSTINGS**

Go through feedback forms

Go through scribes / chair’s notes and complete a summary – see enclosed.

Ask central to make a digital summary of this, but before you do – email all candidates to confirm what you have recorded is what they actually said.

Email all candidates to thank them for their participation; and look forward to working with them in the future.