



## **CONTACTING POLITICIANS AND CORPORATIONS**

**We as individuals need to play our part in reducing our emissions, but we can only do so much. It is governments, politicians and corporations who hold the power to make the biggest changes we need, but they won't act unless they know that the public and corporate stakeholders really want them to. This is why one of the most important things we can all do now is start to write regularly to our elected leaders at all levels, national and local, and also to our favourite brands.**

We always need to think about the tone we use in this correspondence. It is helpful to keep remembering that no one person is responsible for the problems we face and that to vent our anger, anxiety, and frustration on individuals when we write to them does not help. There is so much abuse online at the moment that it creates a situation where people on the receiving end have to develop thick skins and let it all wash over them. This is true for all of us and is a valid and necessary response which protects our own wellbeing. It is critically important now, when we all need to work together constructively and urgently, that we remember that those we want to influence are human beings just like us, all wanting to do their best in extremely challenging times. The most powerful way to enable politicians and business executives to act with appropriate urgency in response to our valid concerns is to present our case in respectful and easily absorbed language.

### **Writing to government and local politicians**

Every email needs to have your name and address on it, to show that you are a constituent of the politician you're writing to, because they're only allowed to respond to their own constituents.

#### **HERTFORD & STORTFORD MP**

**Julie Marson (MP)** House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
0207 219 2429. Email: [julie.marson.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:julie.marson.mp@parliament.uk)

## HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (HCC)

For your councillor search “Hertfordshire's County Councillors”. Click on the page of the same name on the democracy.gov.uk website. Click on “find your councillor”. (Here is the direct link: <https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/mgFindMember.aspx>) Enter your postcode for the simplest way to find out who your councillor is - the name and image of your councillor will appear at the bottom of the page. Clicking on their name will take you to all their information including contact details.

**East Herts**

					
<a href="#">David Andrews</a>	<a href="#">Eric Buckmaster</a>	<a href="#">Ken Crofton</a>	<a href="#">Ben Crystall</a>	<a href="#">Bob Deering</a>	<a href="#">Calvin Horner</a>
Ware North (25) (East Herts) (Conservative) Chairman Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC)	Sawbridgeworth (24) (East Herts) (Conservative) Executive Member, The Environment	Hertford Rural (22) (East Herts) (Conservative)	Hertford All Saints (21) (East Herts) (Green Party)	Hertford St Andrew (23) (East Herts) (Conservative) Executive Member, Resources & Performance	Bishop's Stortford East (17) (East Herts) (Liberal Democrats)

H

CC among other things deals with road and pavement matters and recycling and waste.

## EAST HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL (EHDC)

For your councillor search “Find your Councillor East Herts District Council”. Click on the page of the same name on eastherts.gov.uk website. Here is the direct link: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/councillors-committees/find-your-councillor>. Click on “find your councillor by postcode”. There are too many to print their mini-profiles here, as we have done for HCC.

EHDC among other things deals with waste and recycling, health and wellbeing, planning and building, housing, highways and parking and parks and leisure.

## HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL (HTC)

For your councillor search “Hertford Town Councillors”. Click on “Councillors/Political Parties/contact Hertford Town Council” on the hertford.gov.uk website. Here is the direct link: <https://www.hertford.gov.uk/councillors/> - you will need to know your ward and a map is provided on this page. Again, there are too many to print their mini-profiles here.

HTC among other things deals with allotments, grants and funding and Hertford Town and Tourist Information.

## **Writing to our favourite brands**

**Governments need to legislate to control the actions of corporations, so writing to your elected leaders can make a difference. But it is important to recognise that we as individuals, who are those companies' valued customers, can add our power to that of the politicians. We can boycott brands and write to let them know why we are doing so. If enough of us do it, they will have to listen and take us seriously. It is in their commercial interest to do so. Sending copies to our politicians, and letting the companies know we are doing so, will help them all to see how serious we are about the need for far-reaching change.**

**Amazon**, one of the richest companies in the world, is known to destroy items that are returned to them rather than repair them, keep them in a warehouse or donate them to someone who needs them. Laptops, hoovers, clothes and even unused PPE are all ending up in landfill because it is cheaper to do so. If you are concerned about this, stop using Amazon and tell them why, and copy your MP. This article lists a number of alternative ways to buy the products you need without using Amazon: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/apr/27/how-to-avoid-amazon-the-definitive-guide-to-online-shopping-without-the-retail-titan>.

**Tesco** is the worst supermarket in the UK for forest destruction, including buying from suppliers that either continue to encroach into the Amazon or have deforested other land elsewhere in Brazil. Even their British meat suppliers are linked to Amazon deforestation and human rights abuses. In other ways, Tesco are developing constructive policies, including working with LOOP to reduce their use of plastic packaging - see <https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/consumer/britains-tesco-joins-refillable-revolution-with-in-store-trial>. It is important that developments such as these are not used by Tesco, or any corporation, as "greenwashing" - a small initiative that does have some green impacts, thereby improving the company's image, and yet does nothing substantial to change its overall operating practices. Tesco's customers can influence their commitment to becoming more sustainable more quickly by combining a strategy of boycotting their most damaging products and writing to the company informing them of the boycott and requesting them to prioritise sustainability.

**Barclays** is the biggest investor in fossil fuels in Europe and the seventh largest investor in the world and is behind some of the most environmentally destructive projects on the planet. Since the Paris Agreement in 2015, it has continued to invest \$145 billion into global coal, oil and gas exploration. In 2020, their support for the most environmentally damaging fossil fuel sectors, fracking, tar sands and Arctic oil and gas, increased by 32% compared to 2019. See <https://www.cityam.com/barclays-fossil-fuel-financing-increases-despite-net-zero-pledge/>, which also mentions HSBC. As banking customers, we can change to a more ethical bank, like Triodos, Nationwide or Starling, and write to tell Barclays the reason for our move. For a company like Barclays, entrenched in old business models, it is likely that the most powerful

strategy that their customers can adopt in a bid to try to make them change is actually to leave them - if large numbers of customers do so and tell them why, it may compel them to review their business priorities and practices. It will always be possible for customers who want to be loyal to return to them in the future if they do seriously join the global effort to tackle climate change. Perhaps we can think of this as a form of “tough love”.

**Boohoo** owns Topshop, Dorothy Perkins and Wallis. Its business model is based around fast, cheap fashion which encourages over-consumption and generates excessive waste because most cheap clothes quickly end up in landfill. Additionally, workers report pay below the minimum wage and poor working conditions, which affects the UK as around 40% of their clothing comes from UK factories, particularly in Leicester which has recently been exposed as a centre of very low wages in the fashion trade. It has also been reported that modern slavery is an issue in its supply chains. See <https://libertyshared.org/apparel-industry>.

When writing to corporations, address your correspondence, whether email or letter, to their CEO and also their marketing and customer services departments.

Correspondence doesn't need to be long. The following example may help get you started:

To Boohoo: I understand how important it is to tackle climate change and that this will require changes from us all. I have been a loyal Boohoo customer since DATE, (give customer number if relevant) but will no longer shop in your stores until I see that you have seriously changed your business practices. In particular, I am concerned about your clothes ending up in landfill and also extremely poor staffing conditions reported in Leicester.

Be clear that examples like the four quoted above relate only to the corporation's misguided policies that you want to see change and are not in any way an indictment of the hardworking individual members of staff employed by those companies.

Finally, remember you can also write in praise of a company's activities or moves towards greater sustainability whenever it's merited. For example, when your favourite beer brand is out of stock at the supermarket, and you choose the alternative brand that uses a recyclable printed cardboard holder, why not write to tell them that this swung your decision to try their beer? If you're satisfied that they're not engaged in “greenwashing”, being positive and encouraging can also help hurry along the changes we need.



@haccherts

www.hacc-herts.org

