

Bat Conservation Trust



Advice to bat groups for writing to MPs

Here are a number of tips that might be helpful if you plan on writing to your local MP as a bat group or as an individual. The information is also helpful in contacting Members of Scottish Parliament, Members of the Senedd, Members of the Legislative Assembly or local councilors. This advice has been put together with experience from BCT's Species Advocacy and Policy Officer.

Petitions

If you decide to run a petition, consider running it through <https://petition.parliament.uk/> as petitions through there that reach 10,000 signatures will receive a Government response and petitions that reach 100,000 signatures considered for debate in Parliament. Petitions through other tools don't have the same guarantee!

The Welsh Senedd and the Scottish Parliament also have specific petitions processes which you can find out about here: [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).

Use a good, strong and specific call to action

Consider whether you can include a direct call to action, like inviting them along to a bat walk or to attend an upcoming event within your bat group.

This can sometimes be useful in ensuring deeper consideration of your overall position. Try to also include alternative actions in case they are unavailable for a particular event, as this makes a more compelling case and shows your commitment.

Make sure they can identify and respond to you

Representatives are unable to respond to people who are not their constituents so to save time, add your address so that they know you live in their constituency. Adding your name and contact details to a letter means that they can easily respond.

Describe what would happen in the local area if they do not act

MPs represent their constituencies so try to tie your letter back into local events, focusing on the impacts on local wildlife and people. This makes a stronger argument for acting and

Created 10/01/23

educates them about both the passion of their constituents on a topic and the potential effects of an issue.

Stay on message

Though you may be tempted to jump from one issue to another, it can make for a letter that is difficult to navigate and difficult to respond to, particularly if you are aiming for your MP to ask ministerial colleagues for a response. Make sure that everything in the letter actually needs to be in there, is coherent within the rest of the letter and furthers your points.

Proofread!

Similar to the above, asking someone to read over the letter before sending it can really help you to get a better response by making sure that the letter is readable and understandable. It will also help you to come across as more credible if typing and grammar errors can be corrected before you hit send.

Ask unique or uncommon questions

Be specific when asking for further information to ensure that you will receive a more detailed response pertaining to your situation. If you ask for information about a common question, you could receive a blanket response that might not be that useful in relation to your specific situation.

If you are writing to an MP as part of a wider campaign, make sure to personalise and adapt the response to make sure your response is unique and tailored to you. BCT often encourages supporters to get in touch with their local MP and provides a template letter that you can tweak.

Do your research

How do you know whether a question you want to ask is commonly asked or not? Researching recent press announcements or published guidance can help you prioritise questions that you would not have been able to find an answer to otherwise.

Research can also uncover previous commitments by your representative, or their interests, which can inform your correspondence. Look at the way they have voted, or statements they have made, and look to weave these into your letter.

Created 10/01/23