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**Guidelines for Parliamentary Candidates**

Ahead of our hustings events in Mitcham & Morden (9th March 2015) and Wimbledon (9th April 2015) we have prepared some brief guidelines for candidates.

**Which candidates have been invited?**

We have invited parliamentary candidates from the following parties (in alphabetical order):

* Conservative
* Green
* Labour
* Liberal Democrat
* UKIP

**How did you choose which candidates to invite?**

We identified the top 5 national parties who were fielding local candidates

**Which candidates have confirmed that they will attend?**

At the time of writing (26th January 20015), the following candidates have confirmed:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mitcham and Morden** | **Wimbledon** |
| Green – no responseConservative – Paul HolmesLabour – Siobhain McDonaghLiberal Democrat – Diana ComanUKIP – no response | Green – Charles BarraballConservative – Stephen HammondLabour – Andrew JudgeLiberal Democrat – Shas SheehanUKIP – no response |

**Can candidates just turn up on the day?**

No. Candidates must confirm their attendance 1 month in advance of the relevant hustings event.

**Can candidates send somebody else in their place?**

No.

**What will be the format of the hustings event?**

* 5 minutes introduction from the chair setting out what the hustings is about
* Candidates have **5 minutes** each to set out why they should be elected.
* Audience will listen to all candidates all the way through and then there will be a **short break** where volunteers will support the audience to prepare their questions
* Questions must be questions – anything the chair deems to be a speech will be ruled out of order.  Candidates get **90 seconds** to answer each question

**How will you decide what order candidates can speak in?**

Candidates will draw lots at the start of the event.

**What if one of the candidates talks for longer than 5 minutes in their initial speech?**

The chair will end their speech after 5 minutes. All candidates will get the same amount of time.

**How will the speeches be recorded?**

There will be a note-taker at each event. The notes will be published after the event.

**What if the candidate talks for longer than 90 seconds when answering a question?**

The chair will end their answer after 90 seconds. All candidates will get the same amount of time.

**Can any candidates answer a question?**

If a question is directed to all candidates, then they can all respond, in order. If a question is directed to one candidate, then they should answer the question first. Once they have responded, the other candidates will have an opportunity to respond if they wish, in order.

**What if we run out of time?**

If people have questions which are not answered in the session, then the organisers will gather those, send them to the candidates, and invite all candidates to respond in writing. The questions and responses will be made publically available

**What if one of the candidates makes offensive or illegal comments?**

The chair will intervene if this is the case. The chair’s decision is final. Extreme or repeated offences will result in the candidate being asked to leave.

**What if a candidate’s speech seems really irrelevant?**

Local people have a chance to meet, and make their assessment of, the people who want to represent them. It is up to candidates how they use this opportunity.

**Who will be in the audience?**

This hustings has been organised by Age UK Merton, Merton Centre for Independent Living, Merton Mencap, Merton Seniors Forum. We represent older people and disabled people in Merton. We expect many of our members to attend.

**What access needs should the candidate think about?**

Our members have a range of access needs. Candidates should be patient listening to questions, talk clearly, using plain English. They should avoid talking too fast.