

Guidance for Hosting a Meet the Candidates Event

Thank you for supporting local democracy by hosting a Meet the Candidate event in the lead-up to the local body elections.

To help your event run smoothly and support a positive experience for candidates and community members alike, here are some suggestions:

1. Event Structure

- Decide how you'd like to structure the event, and communicate this to the candidates in advance - some options are:
 - > Event introduction, including emergency exits and venue facilities, the structure of the event, any ground rules etc
 - > Candidate introductions (consider giving a time limit)
 - > A Q&A led by the facilitator with each candidate taking turns
 - > A panel-style discussion with questions from the audience
 - > Smaller group conversations where attendees can rotate between candidates
 - > Closing remarks (consider giving a time limit if allowing each candidate to make a closing remark)
- Whatever structure you choose, make sure it allows all candidates a fair opportunity to speak and engage with the public.
- Try to give all candidates equal speaking time and chances to respond to questions.

2. Facilitator

- Choose a facilitator who is politically neutral and can encourage respectful, well-managed discussion.
- A good facilitator will:
 - > Stay neutral, respectful and calm under pressure
 - > Manage inappropriate or aggressive questions
 - > Help defuse any tense or inflammatory situations

3. Respect and Safety

- Aim to create an environment where candidates feel safe and respected - before, during, and after the event.
- Support a setting where the public feel comfortable asking questions in a respectful way.
- Have a few people on hand to assist with logistics or any unexpected situations.

4. Venue and Accessibility

Choose a venue that:

- Suits the size of the audience you're expecting.
- Has accessible entrances, seating, and facilities for anyone who may wish to attend.
- Offers a layout that allows people to move around easily and exit safely if needed.

Contact

If you have any questions regarding your Meet the Candidates event, please contact the Council's Deputy Electoral Officer, Ash Garstang on:

Phone: 06 323 0000

Email: ash.garstang@mdc.govt.nz

Thanks again for contributing to the democratic process in your community.