

## **Speed Dating MPs to Stop Climate Chaos**

On 1 March, 650 of us “speed dated” about 60 MPs on climate change in Westminster. This included Environment Secretary Margaret Beckett, David Cameron and all 3 LibDem leadership candidates.

This was a new form of lobby organized by Stop Climate Chaos, the new climate change coalition.

The politicians rotated around different ‘dating’ tables, listening to concerns and answering questions on tackling climate change. We are demanding

- International action so greenhouse gases to peak and decline by 2015,
- UK action, specifically a Carbon Budget, cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 3 per cent year on year
- Action for justice for the world’s poorest countries.

Last year, many people were campaigning to Make Poverty History, but climate change will make poverty permanent.

The Stop Climate Chaos coalition is calling on the UK government to help developing countries to adapt to climate change and in the longer term get access to sufficient clean energy to meet their developmental needs. Currently the UK is not even fulfilling its existing legal obligations.

The event came one day after Stop Climate Chaos met with Prime Minister, Tony Blair, the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Margaret Beckett and the Secretary of State for International Development, Hilary Benn and urged the government for urgent and effective action on climate change.

The lobby’s ‘dating’ format was great fun. My group met a shadow cabinet minister, who we rated 3/10. He had at least shown up and was willing to talk, but had a pretty pathetic understanding of the problem of climate change and its solutions. We then met a great LibDem MP. I think we all wanted to take her home with us. She was clearly doing great stuff, on both a personal and a political level but was held back from doing more by fear of the negative reaction from her constituents. This made it very clear to us how valuable it is for us voters to speak out in support of action on climate change.

MPs were also asked which was the most passionate, persuasive argument they’d heard from their carbon dates.

Dr Ashok Sinha, Director of Stop Climate Chaos said: ‘Ultimately, politicians will be judged by what they do rather than what they say. This week we’ve met with the leaders of all three political parties and we’re delighted there is political consensus on the need for action, but UK emissions are rising. Bold decisions are needed if the UK is to get its emissions under control and show genuine global leadership on this issue’.

The growing Stop Climate Chaos coalition was launched in September 2005 and contains most of the UK’s leading environmental and international development organizations as well as women’s organizations, activist groups and faith-based campaigns and trade unions.

As a participant, the day was fun, well organized and effective, so I look forward to the next Stop Climate Chaos next event on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2006. This will be linked to the climate protocol talks in Nairobi, and will focus on the impact climate change is having in Africa and developing countries.

The Stop Climate Chaos coalition particularly welcomes BME organizations to join the campaign.

To learn more, join in their campaign, or find out how your MP was rated by their “dates” see [www.stopclimatechaos.org](http://www.stopclimatechaos.org)

Article by Anne Bragg March 2006