



## Murad chairs London's first Climate Hearing

In November, at City Hall, I was pleased to chair London's first Climate Hearing. It was jointly organised by the London Assembly's Environment Committee and Oxfam, and we heard from London's traditional and diaspora communities about the impact climate change has had on their lives both here and in their ancestral homes.



*Londoners Barry and Dot Palmer address the Climate Hearing at City Hall*

We also heard from experts about how cities can limit our combined carbon footprints and saw a production by the Blue Elephant youth theatre on the impact of climate change in South Asia. This was followed by a panel discussion on the issues brought up during the evening,

and the hearing concluded with a powerful reading by poet and novelist Ben Okri.

This event took place against the background of a raging debate over the alleged manipulation of the time series on

rising global temperatures produced by the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia. In a radio interview on LBC following the Climate Hearing, I came to the defence of UEA's research, pointing out that their time series tallies with that of NASA, and nobody is accusing NASA of manipulating the evidence. In any case, it is not just these time series that show the world is warming but a range of sources including other indicators such as sea level rises, glacier retreats and the reduction in Arctic sea ice.

I am glad we had the opportunity to hold a Climate Hearing at City Hall in the run-up to Copenhagen in order to raise these crucial issues for the future of our planet.

### Murad continues his work at City Hall

Since first being elected as a London-wide member of the London Assembly in 2004, my role has been to scrutinise the work of the Mayor while working for and with Londoners across the city.

I am Chair of the London Assembly's Environment Committee and a member of the Budget and Standards Committees. I represent the Assembly on the Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee.



Murad at City Hall

I also chair the London Waterways Commission, which was set up by the Mayor to keep him informed about issues relating to London's waterways.

### Show Racism the Red Card launch

Once a year London Assembly Members are allowed the use of London's Living Room, with its spectacular view of the capital from the top floor of City Hall, for an event of their choice. In November I was delighted to use my annual free let to host a meeting for Show Racism the Red Card, who were launching their new office covering London and the South East.

Show Racism the Red Card is an anti-racism education charity that was established in Tyneside in 1996. They aim to combat racism by utilising the high profile of professional footballers as anti-racist role

models. SRtRC have produced an impressive range of educational resources including films, education packs, posters and magazines and have succeeded in involving hundreds of top footballers and managers.

Recent protests by the English Defence League have shown how football can be misused to incite hatred. Show Racism the Red Card's campaign promotes the true spirit of football, which is one of respect, multiculturalism and diversity.

It's great that SRtRC will now be able to bring that message to young people across London.



Murad with Leroy Rosenior and Zesh Rahman

## Holding Thames Water to account

Over the past few years Maida Vale residents have suffered a spate of flooding in the W9 area for which Thames Water refused to take responsibility, saying that it was due to "freak weather conditions".

In addition to the personal cost the financial impact on residents, landlords and businesses has been massive. The Maida Flood Action campaign, which was formed to put pressure on Thames Water to upgrade its drainage systems, estimates the cost of damage caused by the floods of 2007 and 2009 to be nearly £5 million. The local housing association WALTERTON and Elgin Community Homes

(WECH) alone has faced a repair bill of £500,000.

Maida Flood Action and WECH have joined forces to provide TW with flood data from residents and businesses. They are insisting that some of the £340 million investment in remedial work recently announced by TW should be used as a matter of priority to resolve the flood problems in W9.



Campaigning with Maida Vale Flood Action

This underlines the need to hold private monopolies like Thames Water to account,

and the importance of residents organising themselves in effective campaign groups like Maida Flood Action, who have my full support.

## Save Money, Save the Planet

On the doorstep we politicians often find that when climate change issues are brought up it goes over most people's heads and they respond with glazed eyes. So it was with keenness that in November I went along to the Beethoven Centre for an evening entitled "Save Money, Save the Planet" organised by the Queen's Park Forum.

There, to a full house, I saw a very a different approach to these issues and one that many of those in the audience responded to very well. Residents received energy saving advice, found out how to take advantage of the

local car sharing club and learnt how to make environmentally friendly life changes such as taking up composting. This while being entertained by the Paddington Academy's Eco Team and marvelling at the Queen's Park children's play on "Thinking global, acting local".

While media coverage of environmental issues has been dominated by nations negotiating at the Copenhagen Summit, it's worth reminding ourselves what the campaign against climate change means at a local level.

So well done to the Queen's Park Forum.



## Contact me...

If you would like to raise an issue about life in London or invite me to your local group or campaign meeting, then please do get in touch via:



**Murad Qureshi AM**  
London Assembly Labour Group  
Office, City Hall, The Queen's  
Walk, London SE1 2AA

**Phone:**  
020 7983 4400

**Email:**  
murad.qureshi@london.gov.uk

**Online:**  
www.muradqureshi.com  
blog.muradqureshi.com

## In Bangladesh for my father's funeral

At the beginning of November it was my sad duty to return to our family's ancestral home in Bangladesh to bury my father, Councillor Mushtaq Qureshi, who died in October at the age of 76 after a short illness.

The first Bangladeshi to be elected to Westminster Council, my father was both an internationalist and a committed supporter of national rights, who enthusiastically backed the independence struggle of 1971 when what was then East Pakistan seceded to form the independent state of Bangladesh.

Although my father had spent most of the last four decades in the UK, his reputation still stood high in his homeland.

Leading public figures turned out for his funeral in Sylhet, and during my stay in Dhaka I was invited to the office of the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, so she could offer her condolences.

The accompanying picture shows me distributing food to the poor, a traditional practice in Bangladesh after funerals.

Back in London, on 29 November, one month after my father's passing away, a "Celebration of his Life" was held at the Beethoven Centre, in the heart of the



Feeding the poor in Sylhet following my father's funeral

ward he served as a councillor for fifteen years. Over a hundred friends, local residents, family members, colleagues and political adversaries turned up to pay their respects.