

## **BBC Question Time**

- 1. Please write your question on the card and take to the reception desk**
- 2. PLEASE ASK A DIFFERENT QUESTION TO THE ONE YOU SENT IN VIA E MAIL**
- 3. Your question should be short, sharp and provocative**
- 4. Please ensure your question refers to a single issue that is currently in the news**

**JACK STRAW MP** has been Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice since June 2007. He was active in student politics and was President of the National Union of Students, before pursuing a career in law. He was elected MP for Blackburn in 1979. He was one of the key members of Tony Blair's cabinet in 1997, and has since held a number of high-profile posts, including Home Secretary. He was Foreign Secretary from 2001 to 2006, a period which saw the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, and the subsequent 'War on Terror', with the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. He courted controversy in 2006 by suggesting women who wear veils over their faces can make community relations harder, saying they are a "visible statement of separation and of difference." Speaking on the BBC Politics Show last month he said, "wherever we have had BNP problems in my area and when we have fought them hard, we've pulled back and won the seats back."

**BARONESS WARSI** is the Conservative shadow minister for community cohesion. A British-born Muslim of Pakistani origin, she was a former race adviser to Michael Howard and has also been vice chair of the Conservative Party with responsibility for taking the party's message to the inner cities. She is youngest member of the House of Lords, as well as the first Muslim member of a shadow cabinet. In December 2007, she came to international attention when she took a leading role in the successful mission to the Sudan to secure the release of the British teacher, Gillian Gibbons. In an interview for the Times earlier this month she said: "I absolutely believe there is a marginalised white community, and the dispersal of asylum seekers policy had dire consequences for our northern towns."

**CHRIS HUHNE MP** is the Liberal Democrat spokesman on home affairs. He was formerly the party's environment and rural affairs spokesman. He was the runner up in last year's Lib Dem leadership contest, losing to Nick Clegg by just 511 votes. He had previously run for the party leadership in 2006, coming second behind Sir Menzies Campbell. Before entering politics he worked in the City and has written a number of books on economic and development issues. After five years as the MEP for South East England, he was elected as the MP for Eastleigh in 2005 and served as a shadow treasury spokesman under Charles Kennedy. Writing about Question Time in the Guardian this week he said, "better surely to champion the great British values of moderation and tolerance rather than give bigotry the only say."

**NICK GRIFFIN MEP** is the leader of the British National Party and a member of the European Parliament for North West England. He studied at Cambridge University and became involved in the politics of the National Front as a young man. In 1998 he was convicted of violating section 19 of the Public Order Act 1986, relating to incitement to racial hatred, for his editorship of issue 12 of The Rune, published in 1996. He had written: "I am well aware that the orthodox opinion is that six million Jews were gassed and cremated and turned into lampshades. Orthodox opinion also once held that the Earth was flat... the 'extermination' tale is a mixture of Allied wartime propaganda, extremely profitable lie, and latter witch-hysteria." In 2006 he was cleared of incitement to racial hatred, after a BBC documentary secretly filmed him saying that Islam was a "wicked, vicious faith". In June he led the BNP to their first European electoral successes, when he and Andrew Brons were both elected as MEPs.

**BONNIE GREER** is a playwright, critic and cultural commentator. She was born in Chicago and has lived in the UK for 20 years. Many of her plays have been dramatised on BBC radio and she has been the playwright-in-residence for the Soho Theatre and served on the boards of the Royal Opera House and London Film School. She has also spent time teaching Shakespeare in Lambeth and Brent schools and has published a number of books. She has appeared regularly as a critic on Newsnight Review and writes for a number of newspapers and magazines, including the New Statesman, the Guardian and the Mail on Sunday. In an interview in 2006 she said, "no British person would say that they were comfortable being a racist, you would never go on air and admit that in Britain."