

# Candidates and agents Briefing

South Staffordshire District and Parish Elections

## Topics

- who's who
- key dates of the election timetable
- qualifications
- disqualifications
- nominations
- agents
- postal votes
- voter ID
- the poll
- counting of votes
- candidate spending
- contacts

# The Electoral Commission

## Who's who

- The Returning Officer is the person responsible for running the elections. The Returning Officer is Dave Heywood.
- The Electoral Registration Officer is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists. The Electoral Registration Officer is Dave Heywood.
- The Deputy Returning Officer is Lorraine Fowkes.
- The Elections and Executive Support Manager is Matt Powis.

## Election timetable

Timetabled process:	Deadline
Publication of Notice of Election and Nominations commence	22 March 2023
Close of nominations	4pm – 4 April 2023
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – 4 April 2023
Publication of statement of persons nominated	4pm – 5 April 2023
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – 17 April 2023
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – 18 April 2023
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	25 April 2023

# The Electoral Commission

## Election timetable (cont'd)

Timetable process:	Deadline:
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – 25 April 2023
Deadline for applications for a Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document	5pm – 25 April 2023
Appointment of counting and polling agents	26 April 2023
Polling day	4 May 2023 – 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply to vote by emergency proxy	5pm – polling day
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm – polling day
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm – polling day
Return of election expenses – Parish District	1 June 2023 9 June 2023

## Qualifications

- Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated **and** on polling day:
  - be at least 18 years of age
  - be a British, qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or national of an EU member state.
- Also at least one of the following:
  - Registered local government elector for local authority area
  - Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the local authority area during the whole 12 months preceding nomination
  - Principal or only place of work (including unpaid) during last 12 months in local authority area
  - Lived in the local authority area during the last 12 months

## Disqualifications (1)

A person **cannot** be a candidate if they:

- are **employed by the local authority** or hold a paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees). Candidates may be 'employed by the local authority' if they work at certain schools, fire services, police or health services
- are subject of a **Bankruptcy Restrictions Order** (or interim restrictions order)
- have been sentenced to a term of **imprisonment** of three months or more (inc. suspended sentence) without option of a fine, during the 5 years before polling day

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Disqualifications  
(2)

- are serving a disqualification due to being found guilty of a **corrupt or illegal practice** by an election court
- hold a **politically restricted post**
- are subject to the **notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003**



## Submitting nomination papers (1)

- The documents that must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm, 4 April are –
  - the nomination form
  - their home address form
  - the consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm – 4 April
  - A certificate authorising the use of a party name/ registered description on the ballot paper
  - A written request to use one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper (optional)

## Submitting nomination papers (2)

- Take care when completing your nomination papers, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination
- Complete nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check
- The nomination form, home address form and consent to nomination **must be delivered by hand** and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means.

## Nomination form (1)

- Include your full name
- Optional: use commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than actual name and wish to use it instead. But you cannot use your first name as a commonly used name to exclude your middle name.
- Description field – 3 options:
  - leave blank
  - Independent
  - party candidates can use party name or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer

## Nomination form (2)

- Subscribers: 2 subscribers are required for elections
- Must sign & print and after their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** completing the name, address and description fields on the form
- When collecting signatures, it is important that you follow the latest government guidance on how to stay safe and stop the spread of coronavirus
- Data protection requirements

## Home address form

- Part 1 of the home address form must state:
  - your full name and home address in full
  - your qualifying address, or, where you have declared on your consent to nomination that you meet more than one qualification, your qualifying addresses
  - which of the qualifications your qualifying address or addresses relate to (a, b, c and/or d)
  - the full name and the home address in full of the witness to your consent to nomination

## Home address form (2)

- Part 2 of the home address form must be completed if you do not want your address to be made public:
  - The name of the relevant area in which your home address is situated (if your home address is in the UK),
  - if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which your home address is situated.

## Consent to nomination form

- Must include:
  - name
  - which area standing in
  - confirmation of qualification(s) that apply (at least 1, but select all that apply)
  - date of birth & signature
  - date of consent
  - witness' name, and signature

## Certificate of authorisation

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person authorised to act on their behalf)
- The certificate may:
  - allow the use of the party name or a particular description
  - allow candidate to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission
- Must be submitted by 4pm 4 April



## Emblem request form

- Party candidates can ask for an emblem to be printed on the ballot paper
- Emblem request form must be submitted by 4pm 4 April
- Party candidates should supply an electronic version of the emblem to the Returning Officer if required

## Joint party candidates

- Nominated by **more than one party**
- May use registered joint party descriptions
  - must be supported by certificate of authorisation **from each party**
- May use one emblem of one of the parties but there are no joint party emblems

## Election agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of appointment must reach the RO by 4pm – 4 April. Form is included in nomination pack.
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.

## Other agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
  - You must give notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by 26 April.
  - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session. We will give 48 hours' notice.

## Access to electoral register/absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
  - earliest, on 27 March if you, or others declared yourself a candidate
  - once you or others have declared yourself a candidate after this date / date you submit your nomination papers
- Make **written** request to the ERO – forms are available from the office / are included in your nomination pack.

Access to  
electoral  
register /  
absent voting  
lists

- Only use data for permitted purposes
  - to complete the nomination form
  - to help you campaign
  - to check that donations/loans are permissible

- Registration (1)
- As a candidate you are uniquely placed to encourage people to register to vote.
  - You should encourage people to register as soon as possible.
  - The deadline for applying for the election is 17 April
  - Individuals can apply to register online at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. It only takes a few minutes.

## Registration (2)

- When discussing registering to vote with individuals, you will need to make them aware that they will need to provide:
  - their National Insurance number
  - date of birth and address
- People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance number can still register, but they may need to provide further information. If so, they will be contacted by the ERO.



## Absent voting

- When talking to electors about voting by post or proxy, you should make them aware of the relevant deadlines and advise them to apply early.
- If you are encouraging people who don't have a postal (or proxy) vote to apply for one, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one in time for the elections if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections.

## Voter Identification

- Voters in this election will need to provide a form of accepted ORIGINAL photographic ID if they wish to vote in person at a polling station.
- Voters will be able to present out of date photographic ID so long as the photograph is still a good likeness.
- If a voter fails to present a form of accepted photographic ID they will not be issued with a ballot paper.
- This includes those who act as a proxy for another person.

## Accepted forms of Voter ID

- Voters should be encouraged to check whether they have one of the forms of accepted photographic ID well in advance of the election
- If a voter does not have an accepted form of photographic ID, they can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate either online <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate> or using a paper application form.
- Electors who are registered anonymously must have an Elector's Document to vote in person
- Any applications must be received by the ERO by 5pm on the 6th working day before poll.

Accepted forms  
of Voter ID (1)

**International travel**

Passport (issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state or a Commonwealth country)  
Irish Passport Card

**Driving and Parking**

Driving licence (issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state)

A Blue Badge

Accepted forms  
of Voter ID (2)

**Local travel**

Older Person's bus pass

Disabled Person's bus  
pass

Oyster 60+ Card

Freedom pass

Scottish National  
Entitlement card

60 and Over Welsh  
Concessionary Travel  
Card

Disabled person's Welsh  
Concessionary Travel  
Card

Senior SmartPass issued  
in NI

Registered Blind  
SmartPass or Blind  
Person's SmartPass  
issued in NI

War Disablement  
SmartPass issued in NI  
60+ SmartPass issued in  
NI

Half Fare SmartPass  
issued in NI

# The Electoral Commission

## Accepted forms of Voter ID (3)

### **Proof of age**

Identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)

### **Other Government issued documents**

Biometric immigration document

Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identify Card)

Nationality identity card issued by an EEA state

Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland

Voter Authority Certificate  
Anonymous Elector's Document

## Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites.
- Do comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners.
- Do make sure outdoor posters are removed 2 weeks after the election.
- Do not produce material that looks like a poll card.
- Do not pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business).

## Code of conduct for campaigners (1)

- Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, but their activities should not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.
- Electoral registration and absent vote applications:
  - Ensure forms fully conform to the requirements of electoral law
  - Include the ERO's address for the return of forms
  - Ensure unaltered applications are sent to ERO within **two working days**.
  - Make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote.
  - Do not encourage postal ballot pack redirection.
  - Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy.
- Voter Authority Certificate Applications:
  - Should not handle paper based Voter Authority Certificate applications and should encourage electors to send them directly to the ERO



## Code of conduct for campaigners (2)

- Postal ballot packs:
  - Never touch a postal ballot paper
  - Never observe electors completing their postal vote.
  - Never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot pack from voters
- Campaigning outside polling stations:
  - You are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including public spaces outside polling places.
  - Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.

## Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Office open 6.30am to 10pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election
  - for queries relating to election finance issues, contact the Electoral Commission (*contact details shown later*)
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10 pm can apply for a ballot paper
- Voters in this election will need to present **Original** photographic ID in the polling station
- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations within wards or delivered to the elections office until 10pm.
- A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in a postal vote can do so after 10pm.

## Counting of votes

- Ballot Box receipting will take place from 10.00p.m at Codsall Business Hub on polling day.
- The verification and count will be held at St Dominic's Grammar School Brewood on 5 May.
- Count centre will open to candidates agents from 8.30a.m
- Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend.

# Spending issues

## Candidate spending

- Defined as certain expenses ‘used for the purposes of the candidate’s election’ during the regulated period.
- Responsibility of **election agent**
- Limit on expenses:
  - £806 + 7 pence per elector in ward/division on register in force on 27 March reduced for joint candidates
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

## Candidates' spending returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election
- Returns made public by **Returning Officer**
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the **Electoral Commission**
- Failure to submit a spending return is a criminal offence enforceable by police
- No spending will be reimbursed

# Contacts

## Contacts

### Elections office

- 01902 696141
- 07976 215 812
- [elections@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:elections@sstaffs.gov.uk)
- <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/elections>
- [candidates@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:candidates@sstaffs.gov.uk) – Specific email address for candidates and agents to use.

### Electoral Commission contacts

- 0333 103 1928
- <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/>



# Questions

# Thank you

Please ensure you take your candidate's pack with you