

Candidate & Agents Briefing

Local Government Elections

Thursday 5 May 2016

Agenda

- who's who
- key dates of the election timetable
- qualifications
- disqualifications
- nominations
- agents
- the poll
- counting of votes
- candidates expenses
- contacts

Who's who

- **The Returning Officer** is the person responsible for running the elections.
- **The Electoral Registration Officer** is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists.
- **John Wheatley** is the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Tamworth.

Contact details are provided later

Election Timetable

Publication of Notice of Election	Monday 21 March
Nominations commence	Tuesday 22 March
Close of nominations	4pm – Thurs 7 April
Publication of statement of persons nominated	4pm – Friday 8 April
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – Thurs 7 April
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	Tuesday 26 April
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – Tuesday 19 April
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – Monday 18 April

Election Timetable continued

Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – Tuesday 26 April
Appointment of counting and polling agents	Weds 27 April
Polling day	Thurs 5 May – 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency or if unexpectedly called away because of employment or service	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	+ 35 days from result

Qualifications

- Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated **and** on polling day:
 - at least 18 years of age
 - British, qualifying Commonwealth citizen (with indefinite leave to remain), national of an EU member state.
 - Also at least one of the following:
 - Registered local govt 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

- 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 order) in England or Wales
- 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
- have been disqualified under Audit Commission Act 1998
- are serving a disqualification due to being found guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court
- hold a politically restricted post

This list is not comprehensive more information on disqualifications can be found in Part 1 of the Electoral Commission Guidance.

Submitting nomination papers

- Two nomination papers must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm – **Thursday 7 April**
 - the nomination form
 - the consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm – **Thursday 7 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

- 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 – please call 01827 709263 to arrange an appointment.
- Nomination papers must be delivered in person

Nomination form

- Include your full name & home address
- Optional: use commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than full name and wish to use it instead.
- 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

- Subscribers: 10 subscribers are required.
- Must sign & print 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.

Consent to nomination form

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

Certificate of authorisation

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person appointed 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 on **Thursday 7 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 on **Thursday 7 April**
- Party candidates should supply an electronic version of the emblem to the Returning Officer if required

Joint candidates

- Nominated by **more than one party**
- May use registered joint 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 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 – **Thursday 7 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 [Wednesday 27 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. The provisional postal vote time table is included in the Candidate and Information Pack.

Access to electoral register/absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on **Monday 21 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 – a register request form is 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
- Any person found breaching the restrictions on use of the electoral register could face a fine of up to £5,000.

More information can be found in Part 4 of the
Electoral Commissions Guidance

Registration

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

DON'T LOSE IT



- As a candidate you are uniquely placed to encourage people to register to vote. You should encourage people to register as soon as possible.
- When discussing registering to vote with individuals, you will need to make them aware that they will need:
 - their National Insurance number,
 - date of birth and address to register.
- People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance Number can still register, but they may need to provide further information. In such circumstances, they will be contacted by the ERO.
- Registration has changed from a household to an individual system. Online registration takes a few minutes
<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>.

The deadline for applying to register for the election
is **Monday 18 April**

Tamworth
Borough Council

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).

More information can be found in Part 4 of the Electoral Commissions Guidance

Code of conduct for campaigners

- 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 confirm to the requirements of electoral law
 - Include the EROs 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.

Information on the code of conduct can be found here: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/electoral-fraud/electoral-fraud-responsibilities>

Code of conduct for campaigners

- **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 9pm 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 10pm can apply for a ballot paper
- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations within ward or delivered to the elections office until 9pm.
- A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in postal vote can do so after 10pm.

More information can be found in Part 4 of the Electoral Commissions Guidance

Counting of votes

- The count will be held in:
 - The Sports Hall
 - Rawlett Community Sports College
 - Comberford Road
 - Tamworth
 - B79 9AA
- Count centre will open to candidates agents from 8pm
- The verification of the Police and Crime Commissioner ballots will take place prior to the verification and count for the local election.
- Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend.
 - limits to counting agents: 3

Spending issues

- There is a framework of rules that candidates and agents must work within. It states that election spending must to be properly accounted for.
- While spending returns are made to the RO, specific questions on campaign expenditure should not be directed to the Returning Officer or the elections team.
- Candidates and agents should consult the Electoral Commission Guidance in the first instance ([Parts 3 and 6](#)) . Further guidance, forms and contact details are available from the Commission's website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

Contact details are provided later.

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:
 - £740 + 6 pence per elector in ward on register in force on 1 March 2016
 - reduced for joint candidates
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

Candidates' spending returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election (Friday 10 June)
- Returns made public by **Returning Officer**
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the **Electoral Commission**
- Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence enforceable by police
- No spending will be reimbursed

You **must** submit a return regardless of whether you have made a spend or not

Contacts

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