

Prospective Candidates and agents Briefing

District, Town and Parish elections

4 May 2023

Topics

- who's who
- key dates of the election timetable
- qualifications and disqualifications
- nominations
- agents
- registration and absent voting
- voter ID
- campaign dos and don'ts
- candidate spending
- 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 McCormack is the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer
- Maggie Mulhall is acting as Interim Electoral Services Manager
- Annie Bradbury is the Democratic Services Officer (Elections)
- Contact details are provided later

Context

- 28 District Wards
- 50 Towns and Parishes
- 126 potential contests
- 750 to 850 nominations expected

Election timetable

Timetabled process:	Deadline
Publication of Notice of Election	24 March
Nominations commence	27 March
Close of nominations	4pm – 4 April
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – 4 April
Publication of statement of persons nominated	4pm – 5 April
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – 17 April
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – 18 April
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	25 April

Election timetable

Timetable process:	Deadline:
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – 25 April
Deadline for applications for a Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document	5pm – 25 April
Appointment of counting and polling agents	26 April
Polling day	4 May – 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 Town and Parish	1 June
Return of election expenses District (+ 35 days from result)	9 June [^]

Key events

Event	Location	Date(s)
Poll card despatch		24 March*
Nominations can be delivered	Badminton Road reception (Rooms 12/13)	27 March to 4 April 9.30am to 4pm
Postal votes despatch (first batch)		14 April*
Postal vote opening sessions	Kingswood Council Chamber Thornbury Leisure Centre	19 April to 4 May 4 May at the verification

*Dates are subject to change

Key events

Event	Location	Date(s)
Verification – both elections	Thornbury Leisure Centre	Thursday, 4 May 10pm start
Counting of votes – District	Thornbury Leisure Centre	Overnight 4/5 May Following verification
Counting of votes – Town and Parish	Thornbury Leisure Centre	Friday 5 May Late morning start (tbc)

Qualifications (1)

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.

Qualifications (2)

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
 - At parish council elections, the qualification of living in the local authority area is extended: it includes the parish and any area within 4.8km of it.

Disqualifications include (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 include (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** (does not apply at parish council elections)
- are subject to the **notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003**
- **This list is not comprehensive.** Candidates should read Part 1 of the Commission's guidance for further information on disqualifications

Disqualifications (3)

- The Returning Officer will not be able to confirm whether or not candidates are disqualified
- If candidates are in any doubt, contact their employer, consult the legislation or, if necessary, take own independent legal advice

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
- 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.
- Complete nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check

Appointment system and informal checks

- Informal checks
 - allow errors to be highlighted before the papers are formally submitted
 - papers are not submitted and can be taken away to correct
- If formally submitted and are incorrect, they will be rejected and retained by the Returning Officer. New blank papers will be provided to start afresh
- Appointment system
 - Checked and input in strict order of arrival
 - Allow sufficient time to wait for the checks to be completed
 - Book several slots if you have lots of nominations to be checked
 - Recommend delivery between 27 to 31 March, giving weekend to correct any errors

Nomination papers – common mistakes

- Incorrect spelling of independent
- Consent to nomination signed outside of 1 month before close of nominations
- Description on nomination papers is not identical to the description on the certificate of authorisation
- One of the assentors has not provided a signature
- Consent to nomination/home address form not witnessed
- Request for emblem not signed by candidate

Nomination form (1)

The ward you are standing in should be added here.

Should be deleted to show if there is one or more vacancy in the ward.

This section should be completed by election staff when the form is formally submitted.

1a – Nomination paper		Office use only			
Local government election in England		Date received	Time received	Initials	No
*ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS / A COUNCILLOR for the					
electoral division / ward of the	Clearvale				
county / district / London borough of *Delete whichever is inappropriate	Southmarsh				
Date of election:	4 May 2023				

The name of the council should be added here.
E.g., if you are standing for a ward in South Gloucestershire Council, 'South Gloucestershire' should be added here.
If you put the council's name in full this would not invalidate the nomination.

The Candidate's details section must be completed in full before any electors sign the nomination paper

Full names must be added here – no initials.

Prefixes like Sir, or suffixes like Snr, must not be used.

It is not vital to complete this.

Titles will not appear on the ballot paper or other notices.

Should be deleted as necessary.

We, the undersigned, being local government electors for the said electoral division/ward, do hereby nominate the under-mentioned person as a candidate at the said election

Candidate's Details		
Candidate's surname	<i>Smith</i>	Mr/Mrs/Miss/ <i>Ms/Dr/Other</i>
Other forenames in full	<i>Joseph</i>	
Commonly used surname (if any)		
Commonly used forenames (if any)	<i>Jo</i>	
Description (if any) Use no more than six words (see note 5)	<i>Gold party candidate</i>	

Nomination form (2)

We, the undersigned, being local government electors for the said *electoral division/ ward, do hereby nominate the under-mentioned person as a candidate at the said election

Candidate's Details		
Candidate's surname	<i>Smith</i>	Mr/Mrs/Miss/ Ms/Dr/Other
Other forenames in full	<i>Joseph</i>	
Commonly used surname (if any)		
Commonly used forenames (if any)	<i>Jo</i>	
Description (if any) Use no more than six words (see note 5)	<i>Gold party candidate</i>	

The description may be left blank.

OR you could use the description 'Independent'.

OR - for political party candidates, you will need to enter the registered party name or description as authorised by the party. This must be as registered with the [Electoral Commission](#), and must match **EXACTLY** with the description authorised on Form 2 – the Certificate of Authorisation.

It is important to read [Electoral Commission guidance](#) if a description is used.

This is optional.

If you are commonly known by a different name to your actual name, you should enter it here.

The commonly used name will appear on the ballot paper and Statement of Persons Nominated instead of your actual name.

It is **important** to read [Electoral Commission guidance](#) if a commonly used name is used.

Nomination form (3)

- Town and Parish council candidates may use any description up to six words
- As long as it does not confuse with a registered political party name or description.
- Party candidates will need a certificate of authorisation.

Nomination form (4)

- Must sign & print and after their names.
- Check details of subscribers against electoral register (1 March version)
- Only ask subscribers to sign after completing the name, address and description fields on the form
- Data protection requirements

We, the undersigned, being local government electors for the said <i>*electoral division/ward</i> , do hereby assent to the foregoing nomination <i>*Delete whichever is inappropriate</i>				
	Signature	Print name	Electoral number	
			Polling District	Elector Number
Proposer	<i>S Jones</i>	<i>Sarah Jones</i>	<i>AE</i>	<i>123</i>
Seconder	<i>T Jones</i>	<i>Tom Jones</i>	<i>AE</i>	<i>124</i>

You should include the polling district reference and elector number from the register in force when the Notice of Election is published.

Home address form – Part 1

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

Part 1: To be completed by all candidates in England		
Full name of candidate	<i>Joseph Smith</i>	
Home address (in full)	<i>1 Forest Lane Southfold, S99 1ZW</i>	
Qualifying address: Add your qualifying address, or qualifying addresses (in full) to each of the relevant qualifications below (you can complete more than one qualification).		
Qualifications that apply (tick those which apply)	Address	
(a) I am registered as a local government elector for the area of the *county/district/London borough named above	✓	<i>1 Forest Lane Southfold, S99 1ZW</i>
(b) I have during the whole of the preceding 12 months occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the area named above		
(c) my principal or only place of work during the preceding 12 months has been in the *county/district/London borough named above	✓	<i>Dr Jo's Medical Practice 1 High Street, Northfold, S99 2AB</i>
(d) I have during the whole of the preceding 12 months resided in the *county/district or London borough named above		
Witness details		
Full name of the person who will witness the candidate's consent to nomination form	<i>Sidney Jackson Brown</i>	
Full home address of the person who will witness the candidate's consent to nomination form	<i>3 Forest Lane Southfold, S99 1ZW</i>	

Home address form – Part 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.

Part 2: To be completed only if you do not wish your home address to be made public.

Note: Please submit this part (part 2) of the home address form with your nomination papers, even if your home address is to be made public.

If you request that your home address is not made public then your address will not appear on the statement of persons nominated, notice of poll or the ballot paper. Instead the name of the relevant area in which your home address is situated (or country, if outside the UK), as explained below, will appear on the statement of persons nominated, notice of poll and the ballot papers.

Statement: I require my home address not to be made public

The relevant area my home address is situated in:	<i>Southmarsh</i> (insert name of relevant area) ²
OR	
My home address is situated outside the UK. My home address is situated in:	(insert name of country)
Signature of candidate (only required where Part 2 above has been completed)	
Candidate's signature:	<i>JSmith</i>
Date:	<i>31 March 2023</i>

Consent to nomination form (1)

1c – Candidate’s consent to nomination	Office use only			
Local government elections in England	Date received	Time received	Initials	No

*You must declare that you meet at least one of the listed qualification(s) below and may declare more than one qualification if applicable. To do this, strike through any that do not apply. Any qualification(s) that apply must match the information given on your home address form.

Date of election:	4 May 2023		
I (name in full):	Joseph Smith		
hereby consent to my nomination as a candidate for election as councillor for the:	Clearvale	*electoral division/ ward	
of the *county/district/London borough of:	Southmarsh		

Must include:

- name in full
- which area standing in

Consent to nomination form (2)

Must include:

- 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 (same person whose details are on the home address form)

I declare that on the day of my nomination, I am qualified and that, if there is a poll on the day of election, I will be qualified to be so elected by virtue of being on that day or those days a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of a Member State of the European Union, who has attained the age of 18 years and that:	
*a. I am registered as a local government elector for the area of the * county/district/London borough named above; or	
*b. I have during the whole of the 12 months preceding that day, or those days, occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the area named above; or	
*c. my principal or only place of work during those 12 months has been in the * county/district/London borough named above; or	
*d I have during the whole of those 12 months resided in the *county/district or London borough named above.	
I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief I am not disqualified for being elected by reason of any disqualification set out in, or decision made under, sections 80 or 81A of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 34 of the Localism Act 2011 (copies of which are printed overleaf), and I do not hold a politically restricted post, within the meaning of Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, under a local authority, within the meaning of that Part.	
Note 1: A candidate who is qualified by more than one qualification may complete any of those which may apply.	
Note 2: Disqualifications set out under s.81A of the Local Government Act 1972 only apply to a person who is subject to any relevant notification requirements, or a relevant order, made on or after 28 June 2022.	
Date of birth:	23/04/1991
Signature:	<i>J Smith</i>
Date of consent:	20 March 2023
Witness: I confirm the above-mentioned candidate signed the declaration in my presence.	
Witness (name in full):	<i>Sidney Jackson Brown</i>
Witness's signature:	<i>S J Brown</i>

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 Returning Officer 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 **Monday 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.
- Registered political parties are entitled to receive a copy of the full electoral register at any time.

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
- Refer to Access and Supply section of the Commission's guidance for further details.

Registration

- 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.
- 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.
- The deadline for applying for a postal vote is **5pm on 18 April 2023**
- The deadline for applying for a proxy vote is **5pm on 25 April 2023**
- Emergency proxy deadline is **5pm 4 May 2023**

Voter Identification

- Voters in this election will need to provide a form of accepted 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
- List of acceptable forms of photographic ID
- 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 25 April 2023**

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.

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 1 March 2023
 - reduced for joint candidates
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

Candidates' spending returns

- District returns due 35 calendar days after result of election (9 June*)
- Parish returns due 28 calendar days after date of election (1 June)
- Returns are available for inspection
- 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

Electoral Commission Webinar

Tuesday, 7 March 2023, 12pm to 1pm

The webinar will include information on:

- standing for election and the nominations process
- when the spending rules apply and how much you can spend
- notional spending rules
- who you can accept donations from and
- what you need to report after the election

If you have a specific question in advance, or topic you would like the Commission to speak about, get in touch before the event

To attend, email Stuart Butler on sbutler@electoralcommission.org.uk

Contacts

Elections office

- Tel: 01454 863030
- Email: elections@southglos.gov.uk

Interim Elections Manager – Maggie Mulhall

- Tel: 01454 868198
- Email: maggie.mulhall@southglos.gov.uk

- Electoral Commission contacts
 - 0333 103 1928

Thank you and any questions