

Candidates and agents Briefing – 14 March 2019

Local government elections – 2 May 2019



Listening Learning Leading

Topics

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



Who's who

- **The Returning Officer** is the person responsible for running the elections. The Returning Officer is Margaret Reed.
- **The Electoral Registration Officer** is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists. The Electoral Registration Officer is Margaret Reed.
- Contact details for the team are provided later



Our objectives

- To achieve accurate results in which voters, candidates and political parties have confidence



Election timetable

Publication of notice of election	Tuesday 26 March 2019
Nominations commence	Tuesday 26 March 2019
Close of nominations	4pm – Wednesday 3 April 2019
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – Wednesday 3 April 2019
Publication of statement of persons nominated	Not Later than 4pm – Thursday 4 April 2019
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – Friday 12 April 2019
Deadline for new postal vote applications / changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – Monday 15 April 2019
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	Not later than Wednesday 24 April 2019

Election timetable (cont'd)

Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – Wednesday 24 April 2019
Appointment of counting and polling agents	Thursday 25 April 2019
Polling day	Thursday 2 May 2019 – 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 – Thursday 2 May 2019
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm – Thursday 2 May 2019
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm – Thursday 2 May 2019
Return of election expenses	+ 35 days from result

Changes to district wards – South Oxfordshire

- Changes made by Local Government Boundary Commission for England orders (2017 and 2019) to reflect parish boundary changes
- Main changes:
 - Forest Hill & Holton to Wheatley
 - Sonning Common to Henley-on-Thames
 - Areas in neighbouring parishes to Didcot
- Changes incorporated in revised registers published on Tuesday 5 March



Changes to district wards – Vale of White Horse

- Changes made by Local Government Boundary Commission for England orders (2017 and 2019) to reflect parish boundary changes
- Main changes:
 - Grove North to Wantage & Grove Brook (Stockham Farm)
 - Watchfield & Shrivenham to Faringdon (Great Coxwell parish)
 - Areas in neighbouring parishes to Abingdon
- Changes incorporated in revised registers published on Tuesday 5 March



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

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

- are **employed by the relevant 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) in England or Wales
- have been sentenced to a term of **imprisonment** of three months or more (including a suspended sentence) without option of a fine, during the five years before polling day
- are serving a disqualification due to being found guilty of a **corrupt or illegal practice** by an election court
- hold a **politically restricted post**



Submitting nomination papers

- The documents that must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm on **Wednesday 3 April** are:
 - the nomination form (only the new form will be accepted)
 - their home address form
 - the consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm on **Wednesday 3 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 (cont'd)

- 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
- Nominations must be delivered to the Returning Officer at 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, Abingdon, OX14 4SB
- No appointment system – first come first served



Nomination form

- 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 (cont'd)

- Subscribers: 10 subscribers are required.
- Must sign and print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register **published 5 March 2019, Do not use old registers.**
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** completing the name, address and description fields on the form.
- 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 person attesting the home address form (which must be the same person as signs your consent to nomination)



Home address form (cont'd)

- 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), e.g. **South Oxfordshire or Vale of White Horse**
 - 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 one, but select all that apply)
 - date of birth and 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 on **Wednesday 3 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 **Wednesday 3 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 Returning Officer by 4pm on **Wednesday 3 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 **Thursday 25 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.
 - We will give you a detailed schedule of postal vote opening sessions at the briefing on Wednesday 17 April
 - All postal vote opening sessions before polling day will take place at 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park



Access to electoral register/absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on **publication of notice of election on Tuesday 26 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 Electoral Registration Officer – forms are available from the office



Access to electoral register / absent voting lists (cont'd)

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

It is unlawful to use data for any other purpose



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 **midnight on Friday 12 April**.
- Individuals can apply to register online at **<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>**. It only takes a few minutes.



Registration

- 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 Electoral Registration Officer and they must respond promptly.



Absent voting

- 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.



Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites and all electronic material.
- Do comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners.
- Do make sure outdoor posters are removed no later than two 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

- 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 Electoral Registration Officer's address for the return of forms
 - Ensure unaltered applications are sent to Electoral Registration Officer 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.



Code of conduct for campaigners (cont'd)

- 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.
 - Please do not park vehicles displaying election material outside or near polling stations.
 - **The Code of Conduct for campaigners can be found on the Commission's website**



Changes to polling stations - South

- Nettlebed Village Club for Nuffield (no suitable venue within the parish)
- Snooker Club Thame in place of Barley Hill School (avoid use of school)
- St Mary's Church Wallingford in place of The Regal Centre (renovation works)



Changes to polling stations - Vale

- Boundary Park Pavilion (additional polling station for Harwell)
- Stockham Primary School, Wantage to replace St Mary Convent (renovation works)
- Marcham Baptist Church to replace the Sports & Social Club (refurbishment works)



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
- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations within **ward** 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

- The counts for the district and parish elections will be held in:
 - **White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre, Audlett Drive, Abingdon, OX14 3PJ**
- Count centre will open to candidates agents from 9.45pm – but please manage expectations on timings
- Verification from 10pm up to approximately 2am
- District counts from completion of verification up to approximately 8am (no speeches)
- Parish counts from 12 noon on Friday 3 May
- Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend.
 - limits to counting agents: **further details on numbers at next briefing on 17 April**



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:
 - £740 + 6 pence per elector in ward on register in force on **Tuesday 26 April**
 - 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 – elections@southandvale.gov.uk or telephone 01235 422528 or visit our websites at www.southoxon.gov.uk and www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk
- Electoral Commission contacts - telephone 0333 103 1928 or website www.electoralcommission.org.uk



Further briefing

- A further briefing will be held on Wednesday 17 April at 7pm at Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot, OX11 7NE
- It will include detailed election and count arrangements



Questions



Thank you

Please sign the attendance sheet and provide/check your contact details



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