

# Candidates and Agents Briefing

Cambridgeshire County Council elections &  
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined  
Authority Mayor &  
By election - Octavia Hill Ward of Wisbech Town  
Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017

# 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 Sue Grace and her appointed Deputy Returning Officer for the seats in Fenland is Paul Medd
- The Electoral Registration Officer is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists. The Electoral Registration Officer is Paul Medd
- As well as Paul the Elections Management team comprises of:
  - Rob Bridge, Carol Pilson and Anna Goodall will act as Paul's Deputies
  - Elections Team Leader Joanne Anderson & Elections Team Supervisor Elaine Cooper

## Election timetable

Latest date for Publication of Notice of Election	Not later than 27 March
Nominations commence	23 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 - 13 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	Not later than 25 April
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm - 25 April
Appointment of counting and polling agents	25 April

## Election timetable (cont'd)

Polling day	4 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 - 9 June + 28 days for Town/Parish 2 June

# 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 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 (inc. suspended sentence) without option of a fine, during the 5 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**

A person may also be disqualified from election if they have been disqualified from standing for election to a local authority following a decision of the First-tier Tribunal

**This list is not comprehensive.** Candidates should read Part 1 of the Commission’s guidance for further information on disqualifications.

## Submitting nomination papers

- Two documents must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm on 4 April
  - the nomination form
  - the consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm on 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)

**This deadline is set in legislation and cant not be moved or extended under any circumstances**

## 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
- The nomination form and consent to nomination **must be delivered by hand** and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means.

## Nomination form

- Include your full name & home address  
(please note your address will be shown on the Ballot Paper)
- 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

- 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 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 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 on 4 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 on 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.

## Access to electoral register/absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
  - Earliest this can happen is the 27 March
  - Make **written** request to the ERO – forms are available from the office / are included in your nomination pack.
- **Only use data for permitted purposes!**
  - to complete the nomination form
  - to help you campaign
  - to check that donations/loans are permissible

# 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 **13 April**.
- Individuals can apply to register online at **<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>**. It only takes a few minutes.
- 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
- May need to supply documentary evidence

## 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.
  - Deadline for to apply for, cancel or modify an existing Postal Vote is 5pm 18 April
  - Initial postal votes being sent out Wednesday 19 April
  - Deadline to apply for a Proxy Vote (where someone votes on the electors behalf) is 5pm 23 April
  - If after the deadline for the Proxy Vote an elector becomes unable to attend the polling station through illness or employment they can apply for an Emergency Proxy up until 5pm on Polling Day (4 May)

## Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites.
- 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

- 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 (and by the deadline)**
  - 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.
- 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

# Code of conduct for campaigners (cont.)

- 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.

- Tellers:

It is recognised that Tellers are a long standing and important part of the process however please note they have no legal standing and should:

- Comply with any instructions from the (Deputy) Returning Officer or his staff
- Do not enter the polling station for any reason other than to cast own vote, proxy vote or as a companion of a voter with disabilities
- Must not be able to see or hear any of the polling station proceedings
- Must not impede, obstruct or intimidate voter and must not demand information
- Must not campaign by having any discussions with voters that could have undue influence and must not display campaign material of any kind (other than rosette)
- 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 6:15am 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 division** or delivered to the elections office until 10pm.
- A schedule of the polling stations in use for each division will be circulated following this briefing
- 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 count will be held in:
  - The Hudson Leisure Centre, Harecroft Road, Wisbech PE13 1RL
- Count centre will open to candidates agents from 8pm
- Candidates, the candidates guest, election agents and counting agents appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend.  
(limits to counting agents will be confirmed following the close of nominations once the number of candidates is known)

## 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 division on register in force on 17<sup>th</sup> February
  - reduced for joint candidates
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

**Strongly advise you familiarise yourself with the expenses paperwork and guidance in advance of the election so you can keep track of the relevant things**

## 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

**The elections team are not able to provide advice or guidance around the completion and submission of expenses, any questions should be directed to the Electoral Commission**

# Contacts

- Elections office

- [elections@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:elections@fenland.gov.uk)
- telephone 01354 622383 or 01354 622323

- County Council Highways department

- by email [highways@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:highways@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)
- by telephone 0345 045 5212

- Electoral Commission contacts

For questions on the Commission's guidance on registering political parties and any other queries about political parties, candidates or agents including election spending

- by email [pef@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk)
- 0333 103 1928

The  
Electoral  
Commission

# Questions