

The  
Electoral  
Commission

# Candidates and agents Briefing

District and Town/Parish Council Elections – 4 May 2023

# The Electoral Commission

## What we will cover ...

- What are we planning for?
- Who's Who?
- Election Timetable
- Qualifications & Disqualifications
- Nominations
- Agents
- Registration and Postal Votes
- Polling Day
- Voter ID
- Verification & Count
- Candidates Expenses
- Your Questions

What are we  
planning for on  
4 May?

- Arun District Council Elections
  - All 23 District Wards
- Town & Parish Council Elections
  - All 24 Town & Parish Councils
  - Now equates to 47 separate electoral areas

## What's different for these elections?

- the main difference for these elections is the introduction of Voter ID, which we will cover a bit later
- District candidates will only need to have their nomination subscribed by a proposer and seconder (8 assentors no longer required)
- Candidates, agents and political parties are no longer allowed to handle postal votes
- there are no changes to electoral area boundaries, other than a number of additional polling districts

## Who's who?

### **Election process**

- District Council elections
  - Returning Officer is James Hassett, Arun District Council
- Town/Parish Council elections
  - Returning Officer is James Hassett, Arun District Council

### **Registration process**

- Electoral Registration Officer for the Arun District
  - James Hassett

## Election Timetable - District & Parish

Publication of Notice of Election	20 March 2023
Nominations commence	21 March 2023
Close of nominations	4 April 2023 at 4pm
Deadline for withdrawals	4 April 2023 at 4pm
Publication of statement of persons nominated	5 April 2023 by 4pm
Deadline to register to vote	17 April 2023
Deadline for new postal vote applications and changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	18 April 2023 at 5pm
Publication of Notice of Poll	25 April 2023

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## Election timetable – District & Parish

Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	25 April 2023 at 5pm
Deadline for applications for Voter Authority Certificate (VAC)	25 April 2023 at 5pm
Appointment of counting and polling agents	26 April 2023
Polling day	4 May 2023 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency, employment or lack of acceptable ID	5pm – polling day
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm – polling day
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm – polling day

## Qualifications - District & Parish

- Candidates must satisfy the 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:
  - a) Registered local government elector for the local authority/parish area in which they wish to stand
  - b) Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the local authority/parish area during the whole 12 months preceding nomination
  - c) Principal or only place of work (including unpaid) during last 12 months in local authority/parish area
  - d) Lived in the local authority/parish area during the last 12 months



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## Disqualifications – District & Parish

- 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)
    - For District candidates that means Arun District Council
    - For Parish candidates that means the relevant Town or Parish Council
  - 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 (including 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 [*District candidates only*]

## Submitting nomination forms - District & Parish

- Three forms must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm on 4 April 2023
  1. the nomination paper
  2. the home address form (was introduced in 2019)
  3. the candidate's consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm on 4 April 2023:
  - 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)
- The nomination paper, home address form and consent to nomination must be delivered by hand

## Nomination Paper – you need to complete for all elections ...

- the electoral area in which you are standing
  - District ward
  - Parish or parish ward
- the date of the election
- your full name
- your home address on the home address form
- optional: a commonly used name
- the Description box – 3 options:
  1. leave blank
  2. Independent
  3. party candidates can use party name or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer

Home Address  
Form –  
New for District  
and  
Town/Parish  
elections

- Home address in full
- If you do not want your address to be made public and appear on the ballot paper
- If so,
  - Give the name of the electoral area in which your home address is situated, or
  - If you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which you reside

Needs to state ...

## Nomination Paper - tips

- Subscribers
  - Proposer and seconder
  - Now the same for both district and parish candidates
- All must be registered electors from the ward or parish in which you are standing
  - for District & Town/Parish at 1 March 2023
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** completing the name and description fields on the form.

Candidate's  
consent to  
nomination –

- your name
- the name of the district ward or parish/parish ward in which you are standing
- the relevant parish in full against at least one of the qualifications
- your date of birth and signature
- your witness then needs to complete
  - their name
  - Signature
- You are not allowed to sign the consent to nomination before **4 March 2023**

## Certificate of authorisation – all elections

- 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 4 April 2023

## Emblem request form – All elections

- 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 2023
- Party candidates should supply an electronic version of the emblem to the Returning Officer if required
- Emblems must be registered with The Electoral Commission



Election agent  
- District  
candidates

- 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 2023
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.

- Other agents – all elections
- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
    - The Returning Officer requires notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by 26 April 2023
    - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session

## Access to electoral register & postal voting lists

- Electoral Register to be used for nominations
  - published on 1 March 2023
- All requests for supply must be in writing
- When this can be supplied:
  - Please request using the online form:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/r6dUNWibV6>
  - Or by completing a request form available at this briefing
- You can only use this:
  - to complete the nomination form
  - to help you campaign
  - to check that donations/loans are permissible

## Registration – messages to voters

- If not registered, simplest way is online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)
- Poll card delivery dates
  - Around 20 March to 5 April
- Deadline for registration – 17 April
- Encourage electors to register ASAP

## Postal Voting

- Deadline for new applications or to change an existing application
  - 5pm on 18 April
- Existing postal voters will receive a postal poll card
- Likely issue dates
  - Main issue : 18 April
  - Final issue : 24 April
- Possibility of Royal Mail strikes
- Postal vote opening will start on 25 April

## Campaigning – Do's 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.
- **Don't** produce material that looks like a poll card.
- **Don't** 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.
- **Absent vote applications:**
  - Make sure electors understand implications of absent vote.
  - Do not encourage postal ballot pack redirection.
  - Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy.
  - Ensure unaltered applications are sent to ERO **within two working days**.
- **Postal ballot packs:**
  - Never touch a postal ballot paper or observe electors completing their postal vote.
  - Do not encourage electors to give you their completed postal ballot paper or envelope.
  - If asked to take a postal ballot pack, immediately post it or take it directly to the office of the Returning Officer or to a polling station (a form will need to be completed for this as per new legislation)
- **Polling stations:**
  - Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.
  - Do not put your campaign messages to voters in the vicinity of the polling station

## Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Elections Office will be manned from 0630 to 2100
- Majority of the polling stations are unchanged – changes are highlighted on the constituency schedule
- Combined ballot box for both elections
- All notices will be colour coded to reflect the ballot paper colours
- Queues
  - how we will manage



## Polling day

- Tellers
  - maximum of 1 per Party/or Independent candidate at each polling station
  - please ensure that you provide any tellers with adequate training before polling day
  - Tellers will not be permitted to sit inside the polling station unless there is an adequate entrance and with the express permission of the Presiding Officer
  - If we receive complaints about the behaviour of any tellers and the issues are not rectified, the Returning Officer will remove them from the curtilage of the polling station

## Voter ID

- From May 2023, voters will need to show photo ID before voting in local council elections in England, police and crime commissioner elections in England and Wales, and in any parliamentary by-elections. From 5 October 2023, voters will need photo ID at UK parliamentary general elections.
- It will not be required at local elections in Scotland or Wales, or elections to Scottish Parliament or Senedd. The requirement already exists in Northern Ireland
- Voters will need to show photo ID to vote in person in a polling station, following new requirements introduced by the Elections Act. A new form of free ID, the Voter Authority Certificate, will be available for those who do not have another type of accepted ID.

## Accepted forms of ID include:

- A 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
- A driving licence issued by the UK, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state
- A Blue badge
- Some concessionary travel pass, such as an Older Person's Bus Pass or an Oyster 60+ card, a Disable Person's Bus Pass, a Freedom Pass
- An Identity card with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme)
- A Biometric Immigration document
- A Defence identity card (Ministry of Defence Form 90)
- Certain national identity cards issued by an EEA state

People will be able to use expired photo ID if they are still recognisable from the photo. There is more information on the Electoral Commission's website on all the accepted types of ID at [electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID](https://electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID)

## **What are we doing about those without ID?**

- We are working to ensure that anyone without an accepted form of ID is aware of the free ID available and understands how to apply for it.
- The Electoral Commission is running a national public awareness campaign, which we are using to support our own public awareness campaign
- We sent a Household Notification Letter to each residential property at the end of January to check registration details and provide information on Voter ID at the May elections

## What will the Voter Authority Certificate/ free ID application process look like?

- Voters can apply for free voter ID online at [voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/](https://voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/) or by completing and posting a paper form to their local council's electoral services team. Arun are also accepting applications in person.
- Voters will need to provide a photograph, their date of birth and National Insurance number as part of the application. If the applicant cannot provide a photo we can do this for them at the Civic Centre.
- The Voter Authority Certificate will be centrally distributed from a government selected printer and not from Arun.
- Anyone who needs voter ID to vote in the May 2023 elections, must apply by 5pm on Tuesday 25 April. We will be able to produce Temporary Voter Authority Certificates close to the deadline if we believe that the elector may not receive theirs in time to vote on 4 May.

## Verification and Counting of Votes

- Verification for all ballot boxes
  - Friday, 5 May 2023 from 9.00am
- District Count
  - Friday, 5 May 2023 to start at approximately 1.00pm
- Town/Parish Count
  - Friday, 5 May 2023 to start at approximately 4.00pm
- Contingency count of Sunday 7 May from 10.00am
- Venue
  - Arun Leisure Centre, Felpham Way, Felpham, Bognor Regis
- Attendance
  - Candidates and election agents
  - counting agents and guests as confirmed by the Returning Officer

## Verification and Counting of Votes

- We will be using the same way of counting the multi-member electoral areas at this count as we did in 2019
  - The first stage will be block voting for party led ballot papers
  - The remaining ballot papers will be counted using kangaroo boards, which are based on grass-skirts but are re-usable. This have been developed by Scarborough Borough Council and a video of how they work can be viewed here  
<https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/home/council/elections-and-voting/kangaroo-board>
  - Observers will be given the opportunity to view each completed board at the tables
  - The results will then be collated by a specific member of the team so counting can continue unimpeded
  - Electoral areas will be counted in a specific order and a sheet showing this will be provided at the start of the verification. Announcements will be made throughout the count to keep everyone updated, we will also be using tv's for announcements and results

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## Candidate spending

- Defined as certain expenses 'used for the purposes of the candidate's election' after the date they officially become a candidate
- Election Agents are responsible by law for submitting the Return of Expenses
- Limit on expenses:
  - District & Parish = £806 + 7p per elector in ward/parish
- Must get and keep receipts
- For do's and don'ts – refer to the Electoral Commission's guidance



## Candidates' spending returns

- Parish – 28 calendar days after polling day
  - 2 June 2023
- District - 35 calendar days after result of election
  - 9 June 2023
- Expenses Returns are open for inspection
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the Electoral Commission
- Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence
- No spending will be reimbursed

## If elected as district councillor – what do you need to know?

- Code of Conduct
  - Declaration of Acceptance of Office – and numerous ‘getting started’ sessions available with Committee Services and ICT Helpdesk
  - Register of Interests – training on how to complete your form
  - Code of Conduct training
- Members Induction Programme for Arun District Councillors
  - Commences on 10 May 2023
  - Numerous sessions available to attend to teach you about Arun as an organisation and the role of the Councillor
  - Specific training to support Councillors in their role as a Member of a Committee. There are mandatory training requirements for those Members appointed to the Planning, Planning Policy, Licensing, Standards and Audit and Governance Committees. Daytime and evening sessions have been planned through May to July 2023
  - Further information sessions to be organised following completion of the main induction sessions

## Contacts

- Registration and Postal Voting
  - Elections Team
    - [elections@arun.gov.uk](mailto:elections@arun.gov.uk)
    - 01903 737615/01903 737822
- Returning Officer
  - James Hassett, Arun District Council
    - [james.hassett@arun.gov.uk](mailto:james.hassett@arun.gov.uk)
    - 01903 737601
- Deputy Returning Officer
  - Daniel bainbridge, Arun District Council
    - [daniel.bainbridge@arun.gov.uk](mailto:daniel.bainbridge@arun.gov.uk)
    - 01903 737607
  - Lauren Fairs-Browning, Arun District Council
    - [lauren.fairs-browning@arun.gov.uk](mailto:lauren.fairs-browning@arun.gov.uk)
    - 01903 737615
- Helpline (Arun Direct)
  - 01903 737616

## Electoral Commission

- Contact
  - <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/contact-us>
- District candidate information
  - <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-england>
- Parish candidate information
  - <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-council-elections-england>
- Voter ID information
  - <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id>

Election  
information and  
nomination  
details

- Please refer to the relevant pages on our website:

4 May election details:

<https://www.arun.gov.uk/2023-elections>

District:

<https://www.arun.gov.uk/arun-district-council-elections>

Town/Parish:

<https://www.arun.gov.uk/town-parish-council-elections>

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# Questions