

District and Parish Elections 2 May 2019



South Norfolk has had several reviews that have changed boundaries and governance arrangements for both district wards and parishes. These will come into effect for the upcoming elections. Please make yourselves aware of these changes in case they affect you. To assist with this, the website has a range of helpful information with links to maps, details of the number of councilors per electoral areas, polling stations and other changes.

We will publish the Statement of Persons Nominated for both the district wards and parishes on the 4th. April . At that point, we will know how many contested elections there will be at the polls on 2nd. May.

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.

Being qualified by virtue of being registered elector is an on-going test that must be satisfied (unless qualified under another category) for the duration of the term of office should a candidate be elected.

It is important to mark all of the qualifications that the candidate satisfies when completing the Consent to Nomination.

A candidate does not need to be in paid employment in order to satisfy the principal/only place of work qualification.

At parish/community council elections, the qualification of living in the local authority area is extended: it includes the parish/community itself and anywhere within 4.8km of it.

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 (Does not apply to parish/ community council elections)**

Candidates should read Part 1 of the Commission's guidance for further information on disqualifications.

It is a criminal offence to make a false statement on nomination papers as to the qualification for being elected. If candidates are in any doubt, they should seek their own independent legal advice.

Submitting nomination papers

- Three documents **must be delivered by hand** by all candidates by 4pm – 3 April
 - Nomination form
 - Home address form
 - Consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm – 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)

Take time to complete it and use the Commission's guidance to make sure the form is completed correctly, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination. Completing nomination papers early will give time to arrange 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, e-mail or other electronic means. There are **no restrictions on who can deliver the nomination papers but it is strongly recommended that it should be by either the candidate or agent. If this is not possible, it should be someone trustworthy as failure to deliver by the close will prevent nomination**

The certificate of authorisation and the emblem request form may be submitted by post, but may not be submitted by fax, e-mail or other electronic means.

We recommend completing a contact sheet. This is so we can contact you quickly during the elections period (for example regarding your nomination). This contact sheet will be available on the website so it can be submitted with your nomination pack.

Nomination form

- **NEW forms**
- 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

The new nomination forms allow for the removal of a candidates' home address from the Statement of Persons Nominated and the ballot paper.

Use of commonly used name section is optional. Even if you are commonly known by another name, you may leave this section blank and stand under your actual name.

Parish/community 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. However, party candidates will need a certificate of authorisation.

Nomination form

- Subscribers: District -10 subscribers are required. Parish – 2 subscribers are required
- Must sign & print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register.
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** you have completed the name and description fields on the form.
- Data protection requirements

Note that at parish/community council elections, there are only two subscribers - a proposer and a seconder - on the Nomination form.

Please note that an individual elector may **NOT** subscribe more nomination papers than there are vacancies to be filled in the electoral area.

Home Address
Form

- Part 1 -of the form must be completed, as required remembering to confirm your qualifications.
- Part 2 – To be completed if you do not wish your home address to be made public.

The new home address form gives candidates the option NOT to have their home address made public by completing part 2 of the form.

The person attesting your home address form must be the same person as witnesses your consent to nomination.

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

If candidates qualify under more than one qualification, it is good practice to use them all in case any qualification becomes invalid after election.

The witness should witness the candidate signing the form and then sign themselves. However, this must NOT be done any earlier than the 4th. March (one calendar month before the 3rd. April deadline for submitting nominations).

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 – 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 – 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

Registered joint descriptions are listed on the Electoral Commission website.

Election agent
- District Only

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of appointment must reach the Returning Officer by 4pm – 3 April. Form is included in nomination pack.
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.

An agent can be replaced at any time.

There are NO election agents for parish/community council elections.

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 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.

Postal Vote agents may watch the opening of postal votes.

Polling Station agents are allowed in the polling station to look for impersonation. However, such data may not leave the polling station.

In contrast, tellers outside the polling station may allow their data to be removed and used.

Access to
electoral
register/absent
voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on 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 ERO – forms are available from the Electoral Services Team.

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.

Read part 4 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 midnight on 12 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, make them aware that they will need to provide their:

- National Insurance number
- date of birth
- 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.

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.

The deadline for receiving new postal votes, postal proxy applications, and for changes to existing postal or proxy votes is 5pm on Monday 15th. April.

The deadline for receiving new applications to vote by proxy is 5pm on Wednesday 24th. April.

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).

Candidates must make sure that printed material (such as leaflets and posters) include the name and address of both the printer and the promoter.

There are detailed rules about putting up and removing posters, and the use of other election material. Failure to follow these rules may constitute an offence.

Read Part 4 of the Commission's guidance for further guidance on campaigning.

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**.
 - Make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote.
 - Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy.

The Code of Conduct for campaigners can be found on the Council's website and on the Electoral Commission's website

The Commission has also produced a quick guide for party workers on handling postal votes.

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.

The Code of Conduct covers all those actively involved in campaigning in elections or referendums in Great Britain.

If candidates and agents have complaints or allegations of electoral fraud, they should raise the matter with their election agent or local party, or with the relevant Electoral Registration or Returning Officers. They may also be required to give the police a statement and substantiate any allegations

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 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.

You can use your copy of the electoral register and canvass the support of electors. You may campaign on polling day but not in a building or area that has been hired as a polling station.

Guidance for tellers and Does & Don'ts can be found on both the South Norfolk and the Electoral Commission websites.

There is a maximum of one teller per candidate. The teller must remain outside the polling station, and not impede access or egress or intimidate voters. Tellers may display a coloured rosette or badge displaying the name of the candidate, party and or emblem or description, but the rosette/badge should not bear a slogan and must not be oversized.

Counting of votes

- The count will be held in:
Long Stratton Leisure Centre
- Count centre will open to candidates agents from
8.30 am with the verification starting at 9am
- Candidates, election agents, counting agents and
one other person appointed by the candidate are
entitled to attend.

- **Verification** – this is the check of the number of ballot papers received against the number of ballot papers issued. Each presiding officer at each polling station completes a ballot paper account stating how many ballots they have given out.
- **Count** – the number of votes cast for each candidate is counted. For single member electoral areas, the ballot papers are sorted into trays for each candidate and each tray is counted. For multi member electoral areas, a counting sheet is used with a tick made against the name of candidate voted for and the number of ticks counted.
- **Recounts** – where the total for each candidate are relatively close, a recount may happen after the informal results are discussed with the candidates /agents.
- **Declaration of results.**

Counting Agents will be limited to ONE per candidate. Every person attending the count will need to get permission from the Returning Officer in advance. No-one not involved in the elections (such as existing councillors, MPs etc.) has a right to attend. However, the Returning Officer can allow people to attend as guests (subject to space etc.) and such persons should apply well in advance if they wish to attend. The only exceptions to this are registered observers, Electoral Commission staff, and accredited media.

Candidate spending

- Defined as certain expenses 'used for the purposes of the candidate's election' during the regulated period.
- Responsibility of the **District Election Agent or Parish Candidate**
- Limit on expenses:
 - £740 + 6 pence per elector in ward/division/parish on register in force on 1 March
 - reduced for joint candidates
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20 for District & £10 for Parish)

The election agent is responsible in law for the return . However, the candidate must submit a declaration that the return is correct and therefore should also know the rules. Returns are required even if they are nil.

The 'pence per elector' part of a candidate's spending limit is based on the number of electors on the electoral register for the division/ward (or Parish/Community or ward if warded) at the last date for publication of the notice of election (which is the 19th. March). The Elections Office can provide that figure, and explain its calculation.

See Part 3 of the Commission's guidance for candidates and agents.

For parish/community council elections, the responsibility for accounting for election spending rests with the candidate.

Candidates'
spending
returns

- Returns due after result of election - District 35 calendar days and Parish is 28 calendar
- 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

Please note , accounting for all relevant spending is a legal requirement.

No money spent on your campaign can be reclaimed from either the Council or the Electoral Commission. The rules simply restrict how much can be spent.

At parish/community council elections, the returns are due 28 calendar days after the result of the election. Even if the election was uncontested or the candidate did not spend anything, a return must be submitted. **An elected candidate is not allowed to sit or vote on the parish/community council until their spending return is completed and submitted.**

What if I get
elected?

- As a councillor, you will be expected to represent your ward and the people who live in it
- Provide community leadership
- Decision maker and attend meetings
- Code of Conduct

Time
commitment

- Being an effective member requires commitment and hard work
- Day time and evening meeting
- You are entitled to 'reasonable' time off with your employer

Remuneration
– District
Councillors

- No salary, but an allowance to compensate for time spent on council business
- Some expenses are paid
- There is an assumption that some of your work is 'voluntary'

Key Dates

Newly elected District Councillors need to attend:

- ❖ Induction Day
 - Friday, 10 May
- ❖ Member Development Day
 - Thursday, 13 June

Parish Councillors will need to contact their Parish Clerk who will explain the next steps

Questions and Thank you for attending

All the information discussed and this presentation will be made available on the South Norfolk Election webpage