

Nomination

In order to stand for election, a candidate must submit a nomination paper. It is very important that nomination papers be completed correctly.

a. Each candidate must be nominated on a separate nomination paper.

b. The nomination paper must show:

- Name and home address in full. This means all of the candidate's forenames (not initials) as well as their surname and their complete address, including the post code and with the names of roads and streets completed in full (not abbreviated).
- Common name (if desired). If a candidate is commonly known by some other name and wishes to have it used on the official documents relating to the election (including the ballot papers), they may specify it on the nomination paper and the Returning Officer will decide whether it can be used instead of the candidate's given name(s).
- Description (if desired). Examples of descriptions include the name of a political party, the candidate's profession or any description of not more than six words which best describes them or the reason why they are standing.

If a candidate proposes to stand under the name of a political party, the nomination paper must be accompanied by a certificate signed by a duly authorised officer of that party confirming that the candidate may use the party's name as his or her description.

c. A nomination paper must be signed by two electors – a Proposer and a Secunder. Both electors must appear on the current electoral register and neither can sign more nomination papers than there are vacancies to be filled. The nomination paper will not be valid unless the proposer's and the seconder's electoral numbers are also given on the nomination paper. Where Parish/Town Clerks are providing these numbers to help candidates complete their papers, be aware that the numbers are liable to change every time a new register of electors is published (every 1 December). It is essential therefore to have the most up to date version of the register. If in doubt, contact the elections office.

d. A document confirming that the candidate consents to their nomination must accompany the nomination paper and it must be witnessed by someone who knows the candidate. Candidates must also state on this consent that they are qualified to stand for election, and to specify how they are so qualified. To qualify, a candidate must satisfy at least one of the following –

- to be registered as a local government elector of the parish, or
- during the whole of the last 12 months to have occupied either as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the parish, or
- during that period to have had their principal or only place of work located within the parish, or
- during the whole of the preceding 12 months, to have resided in the parish or within 4.8 kilometres (3 miles) of the parish boundary.

It is good practice for a candidate to indicate all the qualifications that apply. The information on the nomination paper will be reproduced exactly on the Statement of Persons Nominated and, subsequently, on the ballot papers.

The Returning Officer will prepare the Statement of the Persons Nominated as soon as possible after the last time for submitting nomination papers and a copy will be sent to the Parish Clerk for publishing locally. There follows a further short period during which validly nominated candidates may withdraw from candidature. After that, if more 4 candidates remain than there are vacant seats on the Council, the election will be contested and a poll will be held.

Contested Elections

Where an election is contested, the Returning Officer will make arrangements for a poll to be held between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. on the day specified. Amongst other things, this will involve booking polling stations, appointing polling, clerical and count staff, printing ballot papers and dispatching postal votes. At principal council elections poll cards also have to be issued to electors but they are not compulsory at Town and Parish Council elections. Where the poll at a Town or Parish Council election is not combined with a poll at a District or County Council election, the Parish or Town Council may nevertheless request that poll cards be produced and issued to electors but, if so, the request must be made in writing and submitted before the close of the nominations process. It is not therefore possible for the Council to wait to consider this until after it is known whether the election will be contested. If no request for poll cards is made by the deadline, they cannot be issued, regardless of how many candidates there may be at the election.

Where a Parish or Town Council election takes place on its own, the full costs of producing and mailing poll cards will be recharged to the Parish/Town Council, as will the costs of hiring venues, paying staff, sending and receiving postal votes, printing ballot papers etc. Where polls are combined, some costs can be shared, such as the cost of hiring a polling station used for both elections and the fees paid for people to staff it.

Uncontested scheduled elections

If the number of remaining candidates is the same as there are seats on the Council, the validly nominated candidates automatically become Councillors without a contest. The Returning Officer will give public notice and formal notice to the proper officer of the Parish or Town Council of the persons declared to be elected. An unopposed candidate will take office immediately after they have been declared to be elected provided they sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

If there are fewer candidates than there are seats on the Council, the validly nominated candidates take up office and the remaining seats will be filled in one of two ways:

1) If the number of Councillors that have taken up office comprises a quorum (one third of the total number of seats on the Council, subject to a minimum of three), then the Council can make its own decisions about who should be taken on to the Council to fill the remaining available seats. They fill the remaining seats by the process of co-option (further information about this is given below).

2) If the number of Councillors that have taken up office does not constitute a quorum, the Returning Officer must order a fresh election³, which must be held within 35 working days of the

date fixed for the original election. In the meantime the District Council may by order temporarily appoint persons to fill the seats in order to establish a quorum for the Council and permit it to undertake any statutory business .