



Candidates and Agents Briefing

District and Parish Council Elections

Thursday 4 May 2023

Presentation by Phil Hardy
Electoral Services Manager &
Deputy ERO and DRO

Topics

- who's who
- key dates of the election timetable
- qualifications & disqualifications
- nominations
- agents
- Absent voting (postal/proxy votes)
- Registration
- the poll – including Voter ID
- Campaigning
- verification and counting of votes
- candidates' expenses
- Contacts
- Q and A session

Who's who

- The **Returning Officer (RO)** is responsible for running the overall election – The District Returning Officer for Uttlesford is Peter Holt, this Council's Chief Executive.
- The **Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)** is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters lists. The Electoral Registration Officer is also Peter Holt.
- Electoral Services Manager and Deputy ERO and Deputy RO, Phil Hardy.
- Senior council officers who are also Deputies (DROs) with full delegated power include Adrian Webb, Dean Hermitage.

Overview

- All 22 District Wards are up for contest and are likely to be contested
- All Town/Parish Councils are up for election, but I only expect a dozen contested parish areas, but potential for many!
- Full details of these elections are on our website [Local Elections 2023 - Uttlesford District Council](#)
- First election under the Elections Act 2022 that introduced Voter photo ID at polling stations – more later and see our website

Combined poll implications

- All stations will have minimum of ONE ballot paper
- **WHITE** District Ward
- If the parish is contested they will also have a **YELLOW** ballot paper
- Elector's will automatically be given both papers
- Same franchise

We shall issue:

- **Combined poll cards** – new style A4 enveloped
- **Combined postal vote pack**
- The Verification & Count – more on this later....

Key dates

Publication of Notice of Election	Not after [E-22] Tuesday 28 Mar. NOTE – we are publishing on Wed 22
Nominations commence	9.00 to 16.30 on each weekday from publication of Notice of Election – Wed 22 March
Close of nominations and notice of appointment of election agents	4pm [E-19] Tues 4 April
Publication of statement of persons nominated	5pm on Wed 5 April [E-19] , or 4pm on [E-18] (where objections)

Key
dates

Deadline for applications to register to vote	[E-12] Midnight Mon 17 April
Deadline for new postal vote applications/ changes to existing postal or proxy vote arrangements	5pm [E-11] Tues 18 April
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm [E-6] Tues 25 April
Publication of Notice of Poll, including situation of polling stations	5pm [E-6] Tues 25 April
Appointment of polling and counting agents	[E-5] Wed 26 April
Polling day	[E-0] 7am to 10pm THURSDAY 4 MAY

Key
dates

<p>Deadline to apply to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency or if unexpectedly called away because of employment or NEW GROUND not received Voter Authority Cert</p>	<p>5pm on [E-0] 4 May</p>
<p>Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends</p>	<p>5pm on [E-0] 4 May</p>
<p>Return of election expenses. NOTE: different deadlines for District and Parish</p>	<p>+ 35 calendar days from result declared Friday 9 June +28 for parish (Friday 2 June)</p>

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 (any ward)
 - 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.

NOTE – complete ALL your qualify on.

In case of **parishes – extra criterion:**

- during the whole of the preceding 12 months resided in the parish or within 4.8 kilometres 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**

Submitting nomination papers

- ALL forms and EC guidance on our website from 4 March including an example District and Parish paper with notes on how to complete
- Print the whole pack and submit whole – do **not** remove any notes or legislation extracts.
- All candidates must submit in paper **by hand** by **[E-19] 4pm on Tuesday 4 April 2023:**
 - their nomination paper
 - their home address form
 - their consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit by that time:
 - 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

Submitting nomination papers

- **Take care when completing your nomination papers as mistakes may invalidate your nomination!** Complete your nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check.
 - Appointments are not legally required, but they help us!
 - We shall ask you to wait as we check the paper
 - Once processed we shall post the Notice of Validity to the candidate
- The nomination form, consent to nomination form and home address form **MUST** be **delivered by hand** to the Returning Officer's staff **c/o The Elections Office (ground floor), Council Offices, London Road.**
 - we are asking you to make an appointment to submit your forms.

Nomination form

- Include your full name
- Optional: complete commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than full name and wish to use it instead e.g. Bob instead of Robert
- Description field – 3 options:
 - leave **blank**
 - **Independent**, OR
 - party candidates can use **party name** or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the XYZ Nominating Officer.

NOTES:

1. make sure the description is exactly as per the certificate e.g. The XYZ Party Candidate.
2. Parish nominations – can say other descriptions e.g. Farmer, Ex-Teacher etc. as long as not offensive or misleading and cant include part of a registered party name e.g. you cannot say Conservative Farmer
3. You are best not leaving it “blank” as the public query who you are standing for!

Nomination form

- Subscribers: **NEW from 2023** – **Just 2 signatures required** - Proposer and Seconder required for District (and County) nomination papers.
Must sign and should print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register that is **in force on the last day for publication of notice of election**. i.e. 1 March register.
- If they are not on that register, they can't subscribe your nomination.
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** completing the name and description fields on the form.
- Data protection requirements – treat with care as personal data

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) – **clearly indicate such as CIRCLE**
 - the full name and the home address in full of the witness to your consent to nomination

Homes address form cont...

- **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

For example – ballot paper will say “address in Uttlesford” for both District/Parish. If you live outside the district and qualify – please contact us!!

Consent to nomination form

Must include:

- name
- which area standing in e.g. Ward or Parish name
- confirmation of qualification(s) that apply (at least 1, **BUT select all that apply**)
- Your qualifying address
- date of birth & signature

NOTE – must be signed and dated within **ONE** month of nomination deadline date (4 April)

- date of consent
- witness' name, and signature (anyone can witness this)

Certificate of authorisation

- 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 description
 - allow the candidate to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission
- Must be submitted with the other nomination papers by **4pm on Tuesday 4 April [E-19]**

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 E-19**
- Party candidates should supply an electronic version of the emblem to the Deputy Returning Officer, if required.

NOTE – The RO uploads these from the Electoral Commission's website and already has the main political party logos.

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 E-19**. Form is included in nomination pack.
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.
- No Election Agent in parish 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 **E-5**. Forms are in the nomination pack section of our website.
 - The appointment of **postal voting agents** attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of each session. The dates and times are on our website.

Access to electoral register & absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on **last date for publishing the NoE (E-25)** if you, or others, have declared yourself a candidate on or before this date
 - After this date once you or others have declared yourself a candidate or you submit your nomination papers, whichever is earliest
- Make **written** request to the ERO (email is fine) – forms to request are on our website. Email to **candidateinfo@uttlesford.gov.uk**

NOTE: we generally provide by PDF (Word) or data in Excel. We will not post any of these.

Access to electoral register & absent voting lists

Only use data for permitted purposes:

- to complete a nomination paper
- to help you campaign
- to check that donations/loans are permissible

Post election – if not elected these documents are to be destroyed confidentially or returned to the ERO.

Registration

- As a candidate you are uniquely placed to encourage people to register to vote.
- Remind everyone that they will need suitable photo ID this time to vote in person.
- You should encourage people to register as soon as possible.
- The deadline for applying for the election is Monday 17 April (midnight) **E-12**
- Individuals can apply to register online at **<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>**

It only takes a few minutes. This is the quickest and easiest way.

Registration

- When discussing registering to vote with individuals, you will need to make them aware that they will need:
 - their National Insurance number,
 - date of birth and address to register.
- 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 ERO.

Absent voting

- 15% of our electorate have a postal vote.
- Encourage anyone who needs one to apply as early as possible – if before 30 March they will be in our first main issue

NOTE:

- the date the first main batch goes out Monday 17 April (1st class). Balance will go on Monday 24 April.



Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material
- Do comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners
- Do make sure outdoor posters are removed by 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 conform fully 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 postal ballot pack redirection
 - Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy.

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 packs from voters.
- **Campaigning outside polling stations:**
 - You are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including in public spaces outside polling places
 - Keep access free and clear to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.
 - Any notices that we feel are too close to our polling places may be removed.

Polling Day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm.
- Office open **8.30am to 5.00pm** 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 10pm can apply for a ballot paper.
- Postal votes can be handed into polling stations within the Ward/Parish. They can also be taken to our council offices up to 10pm – to hand in at the polling station there from 5pm.

Voter ID at polling stations

New legal requirement from this May - To vote at a polling station voters you **MUST** present an accepted form of photographic identity – listed on the back of poll cards and on our website.

National and local multi-media publicity campaign including leaflet to all households

Main ones likely to be shown:

- Passport
- Driving licence (including provisional)
- Blue Badge
- Concessionary travel pass, and a
- Voter Authority Certificate

NOTE – it doesn't matter if the ID has expired/lapsed as long as it is still a “reasonable likeness” of you.

Voter Authority Certificate

- Anyone can apply via the GOV.UK portal for a free certificate if they do NOT have suitable photo ID.
- Deadline is **E-6** - 5pm on 25 April.
- There is provision for a Temporary VAC to be issued if the ERO feels the nationally issued form will not arrive in time
- Provision for an emergency proxy if the elector's ID (including their VAC) is lost, damaged or stolen

[Apply for photo ID to vote \(called a 'Voter Authority Certificate'\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Publicity

The Electoral Commission

YOUR VOTE MATTERS
DON'T LOSE IT



REMEMBER TO**
1- Register to vote
2- Check my photo ID
3- Vote at a polling station!

Local elections are taking place in Uttlesford on Thursday 4 May 2023

You will need to bring photo ID to be able to vote at a polling station at these elections

Visit www.uttlesford.gov.uk/local-elections-2023 or call 01799 510510 to find out more

Electoral Registration Officer, Uttlesford District Council, London Road, Saffron Walden CB11 4ER

Voter ID contin...

- If someone has forgotten their ID they can go and get it and return to vote later (before 10pm)
- If someone has no ID they will not be able to vote and the polling staff record this
- Polling staff can refuse someone if the voter ID is not suitable or is not a “reasonable” likeness
- Staff are NOT required to record what ID a voter shows
- Staff will be personally trained on this new process
- A number of stations will have additional staff to support this additional step

Tellers

- **Read the EC's guidance on our website**
- They are to keep away from electors entering the building
- They should clearly identify themselves with rosettes etc., so making it clear they are not election officials
- They can ask for an elector's number but this should be on the way out

Postal Vote verification

From 9.30am most days from 20 April in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Saffron Walden :

- The Returning Officer's staff will complete the postal vote verification for each electoral area.
- The boxes will then be locked/sealed and stored safely.
- On polling day at around 2pm we shall re-check and seal all ballot boxes. Further postal votes received after this time will be processed from 8.30pm at the same venue – boxes then locked and sealed ready for Friday's count.

After close of poll

The Returning Officer is NOT opening any ballot boxes on election night. The verification and count is on the Friday daytime.

From 10pm onwards – Thursday 4 May at The Lord Butler Centre.

The Returning Officer will:

- Take receipt of the ballot boxes – to be safely stored overnight
- Check the Ballot Paper Account for each box – entering the totals in our Count Module
- Sort and account for all the sacks of official documents returned

Verification & Counting of votes

- The count will be held at: **Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre, Peaslands Road, Saffron Walden CB11 3EG**
- Count centre will open to candidates/agents from **8.45am**.
The count will commence at 9.30am.
- There will be 5 count teams – each with an allocated number of district wards and parishes. You will be told the order they will be dealt with. District wards will be counted first. Single member, then 2 member and finally 3 member wards.
- The Candidate, election agent (if appointed), their guest and up to 2 appointed counting agents are entitled to attend.
See forms on our website

Count process

AIM:

“to run an open, transparent and efficient count”

- You will be able to freely observe our processes
- The Returning Officer will make regular announcements on progress
- Any queries on the day – please direct to the Count Team Leader or the Returning Officer or one of his Deputies

Once Result declared ...

- The elected candidate (District) will be provided with a pack of documents all about your Induction and Training AND a Contact List to be completed **before** you leave the count
- Elected Parish candidates should make contact with the Parish Clerk as soon as possible
- The RO will send the Parish result to the Parish Clerk
- The RO will publish all results on our website and via social media as soon as they are declared.

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: See next slide
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)
 - NOTE: Parish elections it is over £10

The spending limit



Regulated period	Fixed amount	Variable amounts (per registered elector)
From Notice of Election publication deadline	£806.00	7p per registered local government elector

1st March register

Candidates' spending returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election (28 in case of a Parish)
- Returns made public by **Returning Officer**
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the **Electoral Commission**
- Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence enforceable by the police
- No spending will be reimbursed
- **MUST** submit a return even if it is NIL
- Parish candidates should submit even if they are elected uncontested!

Contacts

- **Uttlesford Elections office:**
 - E-mail **candidateinfo@Uttlesford.gov.uk**
 - General queries **01799 510 510 (contact centre)**
 - Direct to the office **01799 510 434 (Phil)**
 - General public e-mail **elections@Uttlesford.gov.uk**
- **Elections Team**
 - Phil, Sarah, Hannah and Patrick – all have access to candidateinfo and elections email inboxes
- **Electoral Commission contacts:**
 - For questions on the Commission's guidance on standing for election and expense queries, contact www.electoralcommission.org.uk/contact-us/our-offices
 - Email: **infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk**
 - Phone: **0333 103 1928**

Questions



Thank You for Listening

Please view and download your candidate's pack from our website and refer to this for information

