



# Coventry Decides

Candidate and Agents Briefing – March 2024



# Welcome and Introduction

Julie Newman – Returning Officer



# Topics

- Who's who
- Key Dates
- Qualifications and disqualifications
- Nominations and home address forms
- Agents
- Integrity Issues
- Postal votes
- Voter ID
- Day of poll
- Verification and Count
- Candidates' spending/expenses
- Contacts



# Who's who

- Julie Newman – Director of Law and Governance, Coventry City Council – Combined Authority Returning Officer, Local Returning Officer & Electoral Registration Officer
- Liz Read – Head of Electoral Services and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer, Deputy Combined Authority & Local Deputy Returning Officer
- Shahren Akhtar and Vicky Kelleher – Single Point of Contact, West Midlands Police



# Key Dates - registration

Postal votes sent out for applications submitted by 1 April	17 April
Postal votes sent out for applications submitted after 1 April and up to deadline	24 April
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight, 16 April,
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm, 17 April
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm, 24 April
Deadline for Voter Authority Certificates	5pm , 24 April
Deadline to apply for new applications to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency, occupation of Voter ID (covered later)	5pm, polling day
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm, polling day



# Key dates – Candidates & Agents

Publication of Notice of Election	Thursday 21 March
Nominations commence	Friday 22 March
Close of nominations	5pm Friday 5 April
Notification of appointment of election agents	5pm Friday 5 April
Publication of statement of persons nominated	No later than 4pm Monday 8 April
Appoint of counting and polling agents	Thursday 25 April
Return of election expenses	Friday 7 June (results declared on 3 May)



# Key Dates in Timetable

- Poll cards delivered - from 21 March sent out by Royal Mail
- Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations which will be combined with Statement of Persons Nominated – 8 April
- Polling day - 2 May: 7am to 10pm
- Verification of Ballot Papers – ballot boxes from polling stations and postal votes 10.45pm 2 May
- Count for each Ward will commence at 2pm on Friday 3 May
- Ericsson Exhibition Hall, Coventry Building Society Arena



# 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)
  - 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**
  - are subject to the **notification requirement under part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003**



# Nomination Papers

- Nomination papers must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm – 5 April
  - the nomination form
  - the home address form
  - the consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm – 5 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)



# Submitting Nomination Papers

- **Make sure the nomination papers are filled in correctly, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination.**
- Complete nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check
- To arrange an informal check, contact the elections office (*details provided later*)
- Nomination form, home address form and consent must be delivered by hand they cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means



# Nomination Paper

The division or ward you are standing in should be added here.

Should be deleted to show if there is one or more vacancy in the division/ward.

This section should be completed by election staff when the form is formally submitted.

1a – Nomination paper

Local government election in England

\*ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS / A COUNCILLOR for the

electoral division/ward of the *Clearvale*

county/district/London borough of  
\*Delete whichever is inappropriate *Southmarsh*

Date of election: *4 May 2023*

If it has not been pre-printed, the date of the election should be added here.

The name of the council should be added here. – eg. Coventry  
If you put the council's name in full this would not invalidate the nomination.



# Nomination Paper cont...

The Candidate's details section must be completed in full before any electors sign the nomination paper

Full names must be added here – no initials.  
Prefixes like Sir, or suffixes like Snr, must not be used.

It is not vital to complete this.  
Titles will not appear on the ballot paper or other notices.

Should be deleted as necessary.

We, the undersigned, being local government electors for the said electoral division/ward, do hereby nominate the under-mentioned person as a candidate at the said election

Candidate's Details		
Candidate's surname	Smith	Mr/Mrs/Miss/ Ms/Dr/Other
Other forenames <b>in full</b>	Joseph	
Commonly used surname <b>(if any)</b>		
Commonly used forenames <b>(if any)</b>	Jo	
Description <b>(if any)</b> Use no more than six words (see note 5)	Gold party candidate	

The description may be left blank.  
**OR** you could use the description 'Independent'.  
**OR** - for political party candidates, you will need to enter the registered party name or description as authorised by the [party](#).

This is optional.  
If you are commonly known by a name that is not your full name, you should enter it here.  
The commonly used name will appear on the ballot paper and Statement of Persons Nominated instead of your



We, the undersigned, being local government electors for the said ~~\*electoral division/~~ ward, do hereby assent to the foregoing nomination  
 \*Delete whichever is inappropriate

	Signature	Print name	Electoral number	
			Polling District	Elector Number
Proposer	<i>S Jones</i>	Sarah Jones	AE	123
Seconder	<i>T JONES</i>	Tom Jones	AE	124

The candidate should include the polling district reference and elector number from the register in force when the Notice of Election (NOE) is published.



# Home Address Form

This section will be completed by election staff when your form is formally submitted.

<b>1b – Home address form</b>		Office use only			
<b>Local government elections in England</b>		Date received	Time received	Initials	No
*ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS / A COUNCILLOR for the					
<i>Clearvale</i>		*electoral division/ward of the			
*county/district/London borough of *Delete whichever is inappropriate		<i>Southmarsh</i>			
Date of election:		<i>4 May 2023</i>			

The division or ward you are standing in should be added here.

The name of the council should be added here.  
If you are standing for a ward in Coventry should be added here.

The date of the election should be added here.



# Home Address Form – Part 1

All candidates must complete Part 1 of Form 1b

This should be your actual full name, rather than any commonly used name.

Your home address must be given here:

- in full and without any abbreviations
- it must be your current home address
- it must not be a business address (unless you run a business from your home).



Part 1 To be completed by all candidates in England	
Full name of candidate	<i>Joseph Smith</i>
Home address (in full)	<i>1 Forest Lane Southfold, S99 1ZW</i>





# Home Address Form – Part 1

Qualifying address: Add your qualifying address, or qualifying addresses (in full) to each of the relevant qualifications below (you can complete more than one qualification).	
Qualifications that apply (tick those which apply)	Address
(a) I am registered as a local government elector for the area of the *county/district/London borough named above	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>1 Forest Lane Southfold, S99 1ZW</i>
(b) I have during the whole of the preceding 12 months occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the area named above	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) my principal or only place of work during the preceding 12 months has been in the *county/district/London borough named above	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Dr Jo's Medical Practice 1 High Street, Northfold, S99 2AB</i>
(d) I have during the whole of the preceding 12 months resided in the *county/district or London borough named above	<input type="checkbox"/>
Witness details	
Full name of the person who will witness the candidate's consent to nomination form	<i>Sidney Jackson Brown</i>
Full home address of the person who will witness the candidate's consent to nomination form	<i>3 Forest Lane Southfold, S99 1ZW</i>

A full address should be written next to **each** qualification that applies to you.

If relevant, a different address may be used for each qualification.

At least one must match information you give on Form 1c.

There are no restrictions on who can be a witness, but the same person must also witness Form 1c.



# Home Address Form – Part 2

**Candidates who do not want their home address printed on the ballot paper must complete and sign Part 2 of Form 1b.**

**Part 2 should be submitted whether it is completed or not.**

**Part 2:** To be completed only if you do not wish your home address to be made public.

**Note:** Please submit this part (part 2) of the home address form with your nomination papers, even if your home address is to be made public.

If you request that your home address is not made public then your address will not appear on the statement of persons nominated, notice of poll or the ballot paper. Instead the name of the relevant area in which your home address is situated (or country, if outside the UK), as explained below, will appear on the statement of persons nominated, notice of poll and the ballot papers.

Statement: I require my home address not to be made public

The relevant area my home address is situated in:	<i>Southmarsh</i> (insert name of relevant area) <sup>2</sup>
<b>OR</b>	
My home address is situated outside the UK. My home address is situated in:	(insert name of country)
Signature of candidate (only required where Part 2 above has been completed)	
Candidate's signature:	<i>J. Smith</i>
Date:	<i>31 March 2023</i>

The relevant area is the county/district/London borough your home address is in.

For example, if your home address is in the Coventry area, the name of the relevant area is 'Coventry'.

If either of the two boxes above have been completed the form must be signed and dated.



# Consent to Nomination

**The entire form must be submitted.**

<b>1c – Candidate’s consent to nomination</b>		Office use only			
<b>Local government elections in England</b>		Date received	Time received	Initials	No
*You must declare that you meet at least one of the listed qualification(s) below and may declare more than one qualification if applicable. To do this, strike through any that do not apply. Any qualification(s) that apply must match the information given on your home address form.					
Date of election:	4 May 2023				
I (name in full):	Joseph Smith				
hereby consent to my nomination as a candidate for election as councillor for the:	Clearvale	*electoral division/ ward			
of the <del>*county</del> /district/ <del>London-borough</del> of:	Southmarsh				
I declare that on the day of my nomination, I am qualified and that, if there is a poll on the day of election, I will be qualified to be so elected by virtue of being on that day or those days a					

This should be your actual full name (rather than commonly used name) as given in Form 1a.



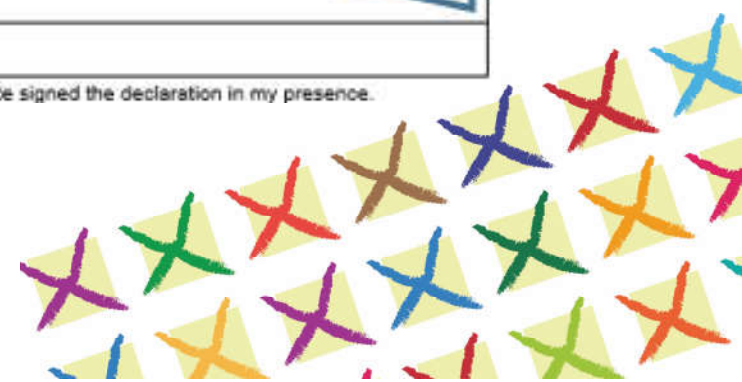
# Consent to Nomination

You must strike through any qualification that does not apply, leaving at least one not struck through.

The qualifications which apply must match the information you give in Part 1 of Form 1b.

hereby consent to my nomination as a candidate for election as councillor for the:	Clearvale	*electoral division/ ward
of the *county/district/London borough of:	Southmarsh	
I declare that on the day of my nomination, I am qualified and that, if there is a poll on the day of election, I will be qualified to be so elected by virtue of being on that day or those days a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of a Member State of the European Union, who has attained the age of 18 years and that:		
*a. I am registered as a local government elector for the area of the *county/district/London borough named above; or		
<del>*b. I have during the whole of the 12 months preceding that day, or those days, occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the area named above; or</del>		
*c. my principal or only place of work during those 12 months has been in the *county/district/London borough named above; or		
<del>*d. I have during the whole of those 12 months resided in the *county/district or London borough named above.</del>		
I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief I am not disqualified for being elected by reason of any disqualification set out in, or decision made under, sections 80 or 81A of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 24 of the Localism Act 2011 (copies of which are printed overleaf), and I do not hold a politically restricted post, within the meaning of Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, under a local authority, within the meaning of that Part.		
Note 1: A candidate who is qualified by more than one qualification may complete any of those which may apply.		
Note 2: Disqualifications set out under s.81A of the Local Government Act 1972 only apply to a person who is subject to any relevant notification requirements, or a relevant order, made on or after 28 June 2022.		
Date of birth:	23/04/1991	
Signature:	<i>J. Smith</i>	
Date of consent:	20 March 2023	

Witness: I confirm the above-mentioned candidate signed the declaration in my presence.



# Consent to Nomination

I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief I am not disqualified for being elected by reason of any disqualification set out in, or decision made under, sections 80 or 81A of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 34 of the Localism Act 2011 (copies of which are printed overleaf), and I do not hold a politically restricted post, within the meaning of Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, under a local authority, within the meaning of that Part.

Note 1: A candidate who is qualified by more than one qualification may complete any of those which may apply.

Note 2: Disqualifications set out under s.81A of the Local Government Act 1972 only apply to a person who is subject to any relevant notification requirements, or a relevant order, made on or after 28 June 2022.

Date of birth:	23/04/1991
Signature:	<i>J. Smith</i>
Date of consent:	20 March 2023
Witness I confirm the above-mentioned candidate signed the declaration in my presence.	
Witness (name in full):	<i>Sidney Jackson Brown</i>
Witness's signature:	<i>S.J. Brown</i>

You must sign here, and the date should not be earlier than 2 March 2024.

You must be 18 or over on the date the nomination paper is submitted.

This must be the same person who witnessed Part 1 of Form 1b.



# Certificate of Authorisation /Emblem

<b>2 – Certificate of authorisation</b>	Office use only			
<b>Local government elections in England</b>	Date received	Time received	Initials	No

<b>Details of candidate to be authorised and the allowed description/<del>party name</del></b>			
Ward/ <del>division</del> name:	<i>Clearvale</i>	Date of election:	<i>4 May 2023</i>
The candidate (name in full):	<i>Joseph Smith</i>		
Name of political party:	<i>Gold party</i> <small>Political party registered with the Electoral Commission</small>		
I hereby certify that the candidate may include the following registered description or party name in their nomination form:	<i>Gold party candidate</i>		
<small>Note: it is an offence to sign this form if you are not the party's registered nominating officer or authorised to do so by the party's registered nominating officer</small>			
Signature of party's registered Nominating Officer (or person authorised by the registered Nominating Officer):	<i>H Robertson</i>		
Name of person signing this form:	<i>Hugh Robertson</i>		
Date:	<i>31 March 2023</i>		

Must be signed by the party's Nominating Officer or someone authorised by them

If you are authorised to use a specific registered description or party name, it should be written here. **It must match the description you give on Form 1a.**

Or, if you are authorised to choose from a range of registered descriptions or party names, it should say 'any registered description or the party's name as registered with the Electoral Commission'



# 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 – 5 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 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.



# Access to electoral register/ absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
  - earliest, on 26 March which is the last date for publication of the notice of election 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 office / are included in your nomination pack.



# 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



# 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 16 April
- Individuals can register online at **<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>**. It only takes a few minutes – will need information to proceed



# Absent Voting

- Electors can now apply online at [www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote](http://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote) or [www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote](http://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote)
- When talking to electors about applying to vote by post or proxy, you should make them aware of the relevant deadlines and advise them to apply early
- You will need to make them aware that they will need to provide their National Insurance number, date of birth, signature and address to apply.
- People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance Number or cannot provide a signature can still apply, but they may need to provide further information. If so, they will be contacted by the ERO.
- If you are encouraging people to apply for a postal (or proxy) vote, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections.



# Absent Voting

- Campaigners cannot handle postal votes for other electors who are not close relatives or someone for whom they provide regular care
- Campaigners may handle postal voting documents if that's a feature of a job they hold (e.g. a postal worker)
- New limits on the number of postal votes that can be handed in – a maximum of five plus their own for each poll



# Absent Voting – Who is a campaigner

A campaigner is:

- a candidate at the election(s)
- an election agent
- employed by the candidate (for the purposes of the candidate's activities at the election)
- a member of a registered political party who is carrying out activity to promote a particular outcome at an election
- someone employed by a registered political party in connection with that party's political activities



# Voter Identification

- Voters in this election will need to provide a form of accepted photographic ID if they wish to vote in person at a polling station.
- Voters will be able to present out of date photographic ID so long as the photograph is still a good likeness.
- If a voter fails to present a form of accepted photographic ID they will not be issued with a ballot paper.
- This includes those who act as a proxy for another person.





# Accepted forms of Voter ID

- Voters should be encouraged to check whether they have one of the forms of accepted photographic ID well in advance of the election
- If a voter does not have an accepted form of photographic ID, they can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate either online <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate> or using a paper application form.
- Electors who are registered anonymously must have an Elector's Document to vote in person
- Any applications must be received by the ERO by 5pm on the 24 April.



# Accepted forms of Voter ID

## International travel

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)

Irish Passport Card

## Driving and Parking

Driving licence (issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state)

A Blue Badge



# Accepted forms of Voter ID

## Local travel

Older Person's bus pass funded by the UK government

Disabled Person's bus pass funded by the UK government

Oyster 60+ Card funded by the UK government

Freedom pass

Scottish National Entitlement card card for the purpose of concessionary travel

60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card

Disabled person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card

Senior SmartPass issued in NI

Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in NI

War Disablement SmartPass issued in NI

60+ SmartPass issued in NI

Half Fare SmartPass issued in NI



# Accepted forms of Voter ID

## **Proof of age**

Identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)

## **Other Government issued documents**

Biometric immigration document

Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identify Card)

Nationality identity card issued by an EEA state

Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland

Voter Authority Certificate

Anonymous Elector's Document



# 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).
- Do not handle any postal voting documents you are not entitled to



# 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 confirm to the requirements of electoral law
  - Ensure electors are aware they can apply to register or for an absent vote online
  - Include the EROs address for the return of any paper 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
- Voter Authority Certificate applications:
  - Should not handle paper based Voter Authority Certificate applications and should encourage electors to send them directly to the ERO



# 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.
  - Behaviour within the vicinity of the polling station on polling day including Tellers and Polling Agents
- Issue Reporting:
  - Online Form



# Polling Day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Office open 6.30am to 10.00pm 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 10 pm can apply for a ballot paper
- Voters in this election will need to present photographic ID in the polling station
- Voters can request to have their ID checked in private





# Completed postal votes handed in to polling stations

- Postal votes can be handed into polling stations within the voting area
- Anyone returning postal votes by hand must complete a postal vote return form, otherwise the postal votes will be rejected
- Polling station staff may assist anyone wishing to hand in postal votes to complete the relevant form
- An individual may hand in a maximum of 6 electors' postal votes (their own and five others) per poll
- If the individual is a campaigner they may only handle their own postal vote and those that belong to close family members or people for whom they provide care
- Polling station staff will not be able to provide advice about whether someone is a campaigner, but they may reject postal votes if they have reasonable cause to believe an individual is a campaigner
- If postal votes are handed in not in accordance with the rules, then they will be rejected



# Completed postal votes handed in to polling stations

- Restrictions on the numbers of returned postal votes and who may hand in postal votes are the same as for polling stations
- An individual may hand in a maximum of 6 electors' postal votes (their own and five others) per poll
- Postal votes for all contested electoral areas may be returned by hand any polling station in the City or the Council House
- Staff authorised by the Returning Officer may assist anyone wishing to hand in postal votes to complete the relevant form
- Postal votes dropped off to reception or other council office desks or locations or any posted into council letter boxes without completing the postal vote return form will be rejected and will not be counted



# Verification and Count

- The verification will be held at the Coventry Building Society Arena at 10.45pm on 2 May
- Verification centre will open to candidates and agents from 10.30pm
- The count for all wards will start at 2pm on Friday 3 May
- Candidates, election agents, 4 counting agents.
- Candidates will be able to have 1 guest.



# 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:
  - £960+ 8 pence per elector in ward/division on register in force on 1 March
  - reduced for joint candidates
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)



# 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



# Contacts

- Electoral Services Team – 024 7697 5226
  - E-mail – [electionsbackoffice@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:electionsbackoffice@coventry.gov.uk)
- Electoral Commission Contacts
  - For questions on the Commission's guidance on standing for election, contact 0333 103 1928



# QUESTIONS

