

Prospective Candidates and Election Agents Briefing



By Adam Hill – Deputy Returning Officer

Topics Covered

- Who's who
- Key dates of the election timetable
- Qualifications and disqualification
- Nominations Process
- Agents
- Voter ID
- Postal Votes
- Candidates Conduct
- Integrity Issues
- Polling Day
- Counting of votes
- Candidate spending

The Elections Team

- Adam Hill – Deputy Returning Officer
- Sara Pregon - Monitoring Officer and Head of Chief Executive Department
- Jeff Saxby – Electoral Services Manager
- Tom Short – Senior Electoral Services Officer
- Maizie Housden – Electoral Services Officer
- Supported by: 200 Polling Station Staff, Postal Vote Opening Team and 120 counting staff



Role and Responsibility of Deputy Returning Officer

- Independent role from all political parties and candidates
- To ensure that the election is administered effectively and that, as a result, the experience of voters and those standing for election is a positive one
- Duties as DRO are separate from duties as Chief Executive



Role and powers of the Deputy Returning Officer are:

- Personally responsible for the conduct of the election in Rushcliffe
- Management and administration of the processes
- Ensuring electoral processes are conducted in accordance with the law
- Powers in relation to what takes place within each polling place and the postal vote opening and count venues



Role and Responsibilities of Deputy Returning Officer

Deputy Returning Officer **does not** have powers in relation to:

- Matters of conduct and behaviour away from Polling Places including issues regarding campaigning
- Investigating matters such as allegations of fraud
- Checking or validating an individual's eligibility to be a candidate (nomination papers are taken on face value)

Introduction to Notts. County Council

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Introduction to Notts. County Council

- Executive Arrangements
- 66 County Councillors – 56 divisions (8 single member /1 two member division in Rushcliffe)
- Meetings take place in the daytime
- Results Day – event at County Hall
- Acceptance of Office and handover of ICT kit for Rushcliffe divisions will be held at County Hall on 8 May 1.00pm / 2.00pm

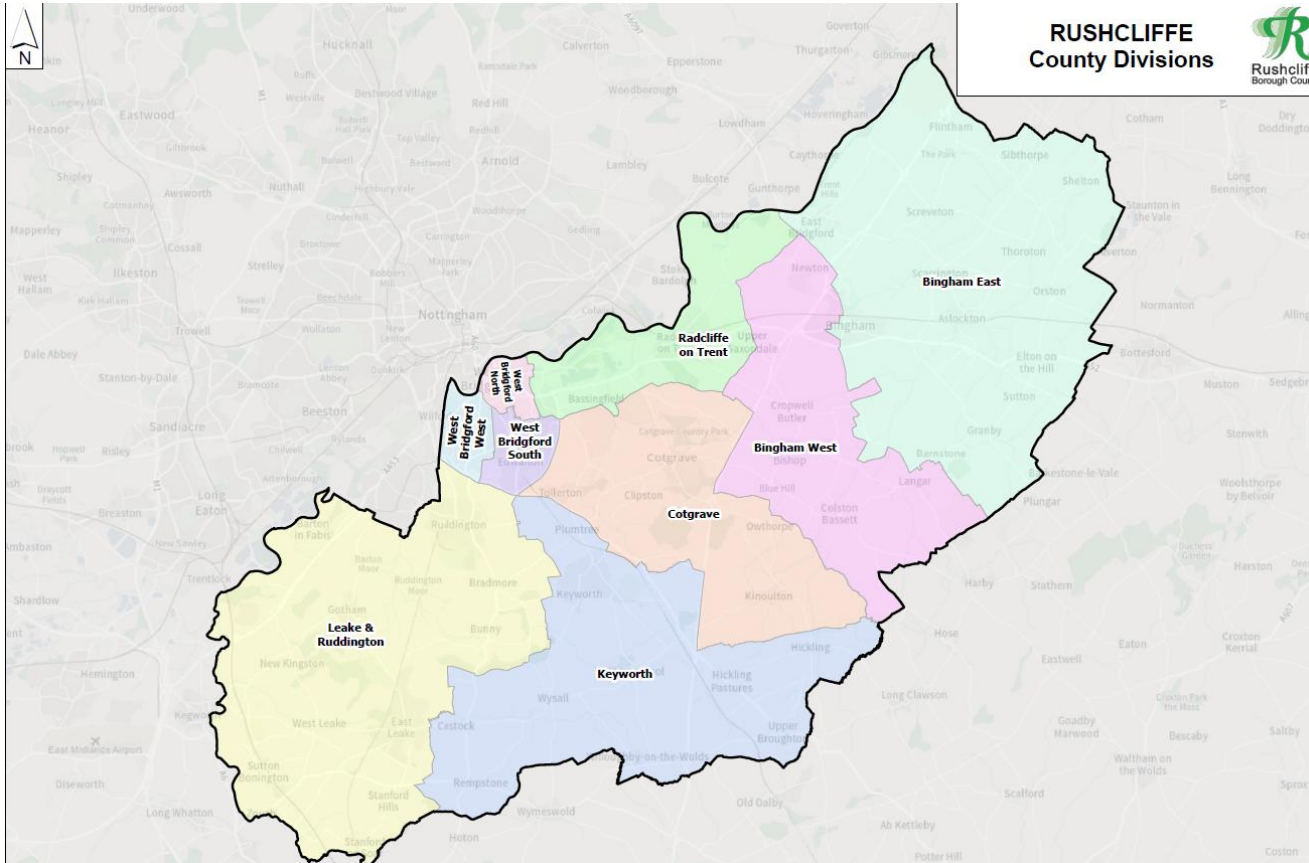
Introduction to Notts. County Council

- Induction Programme - targeted
- Local Government Reorganisation
- Allowances
 - Basic allowance - £16,925 per annum
 - Special Responsibility Allowances - £4,763 to £39,689 per annum



Rushcliffe
Borough Council

Electoral Divisions



RUSHCLIFFE
County Divisions



Division	Seats
Bingham East	1
Bingham West	1
Cotgrave	1
Keyworth	1
Leake & Ruddington	2
Radcliffe on Trent	1
West Bridford North	1
West Bridford South	1
West Bridford West	1

Key Dates



Milestone	Date
Publication of Notice of Election	Tuesday 25 March
Close of Nominations	4pm Wednesday 2 April
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm Wednesday 2 April
Publication of Statement of Persons Nominated	By 4pm Thursday 3 April
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Friday 11 April
Deadline for new postal vote applications	5pm Monday 14 April
Main postal vote issue on or around	Monday 14 April
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	Wednesday 23 April
Deadline for applications for new proxy vote	5pm Wednesday 23 April

Key Dates



Milestone	Date
Deadline for applications for a Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document	5pm Wednesday 23 April
Appointment of counting and polling agents	Thursday 24 April
Polling Day	Thursday 1 May
Deadline to apply to vote by emergency proxy	5pm Thursday 1 May
Deadline to replace lost/spoilt postal votes	5pm Thursday 1 May
Alterations to register to correct clerical errors	9pm Thursday 1 May
Election count	Friday 2 May
Return of election expenses	Friday 6 June

Candidate Qualifications

Qualifications - Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated and on polling day:

- ✓ at least 18 years old
- ✓ a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights

Also at least one of the following:

- ✓ Registered local government elector for Nottinghamshire County Council Area
- ✓ Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the County Council area during the whole of the 12 months preceding nomination
- ✓ Principal or only place of work (including unpaid) during last 12 months in the County Council area
- ✓ Lived in the County Council area during the whole of the last 12 months



Candidate 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 of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003**

Completing Nomination Papers

1

Candidate



Your responsibility
to check whether you are qualified to stand

Things to remember

- Witness must be the same person for both Consent to Nomination and Home Address Form
- Select as many qualifications on Consent to Nomination as apply rather than just one
- Same qualifications are then selected on Home Address Form
- Home Address on ballot paper and notices if section two not completed

Home Address Form



Nomination Process

Nomination papers to be submitted from Tuesday 25 March until **4PM on Wednesday 2 April** and must include:

- Completed Nomination Form, Home Address Form and Consent to Nomination form which **all must be delivered by hand to Rushcliffe Arena and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means**
- Take care when completing your nomination papers, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination
- Complete nomination papers early and arrange an appointment for us to provide an informal check prior to submission

Appoint Agents

- Deadline for appointments – **Thursday 24 April**
- People entitled to attend proceedings:
 - Candidate
 - Election Agent
- People to include on Agent Appointment forms:
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Party Workers
 - Borough/County Councillors
 - MPs





Rushcliffe
Borough Council

Access to Electoral Register and AV Lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on last day for Publication of Notice of Election if you, or others declared yourself a candidate – **Tuesday 25 March**
 - 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 included in nomination packs.
- Only use data for permitted purposes
 - To complete the nomination form
 - To help your campaign
 - To check that donations/loans are permissible

The image shows a portion of an Electoral Roll form. It includes a section for registration with fields for 'Month' and 'Year'. Below that is a section for organ donation with checkboxes for 'Heart', 'Lungs', 'Kidneys', and 'Liver'. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Previous licence details' with checkboxes for 'photocard licence?' and 'paper lic...'. The form is titled 'Electoral Roll' and 'Please register me to at this address'.

Registration

- 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 Friday 11 April
- Individuals can register online at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. It only takes a few minutes.

Absent Voting

- Highlight that electors can now apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote or www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote
- When talking to electors about voting 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 register.
- 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 election.

Postal Voting

- Legislation has been introduced that introduced significant changes from 2 May 2024 onwards:
 - Offence for a political campaigner to 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)
 - Limits on the number of postal votes that can be handed in – a maximum of five plus their own
 - Anyone returning postal votes by hand must complete a postal vote return form, otherwise the postal votes will be rejected
 - If postal votes are handed in not in accordance with the rules, then they will be rejected

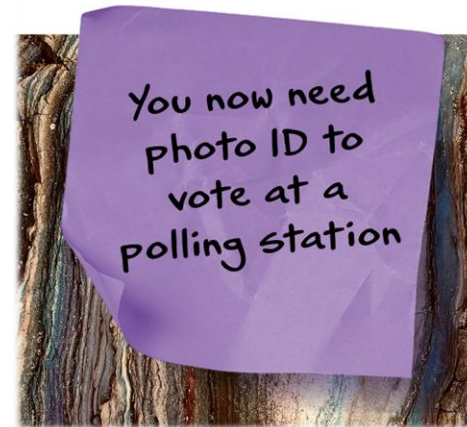
Postal Voting – who is a campaigner

A campaigner is:

- a candidate at the election
- 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 the 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 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 proxy for another person
- A free Voter Authority Certificate will be available for those without ID
- **Photocopies of ID cannot be accepted**
- Does not impact on voting by post



Accepted forms of photo 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 free Voter Authority Certificate either online <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-to-vote>, use a paper application form or make an appointment with our Customer Services Centre to complete one in person
- Electors who are registered anonymously must have an Anonymous Elector's Document to vote in person
- Any application must be received by the ERO by 5pm on the 6th working day before poll (Wednesday 23 April)



Accepted forms of photo ID

International Travel	Driving and Parking
<p>Passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or a British Overseas Territory</p>	<p>Driving licence (issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or an EEA state)</p>
<p>Passport or passport card issued by an EEA state, or a country whose citizens are commonwealth citizens</p>	<p>A Blue Badge</p>



Accepted forms of photo ID

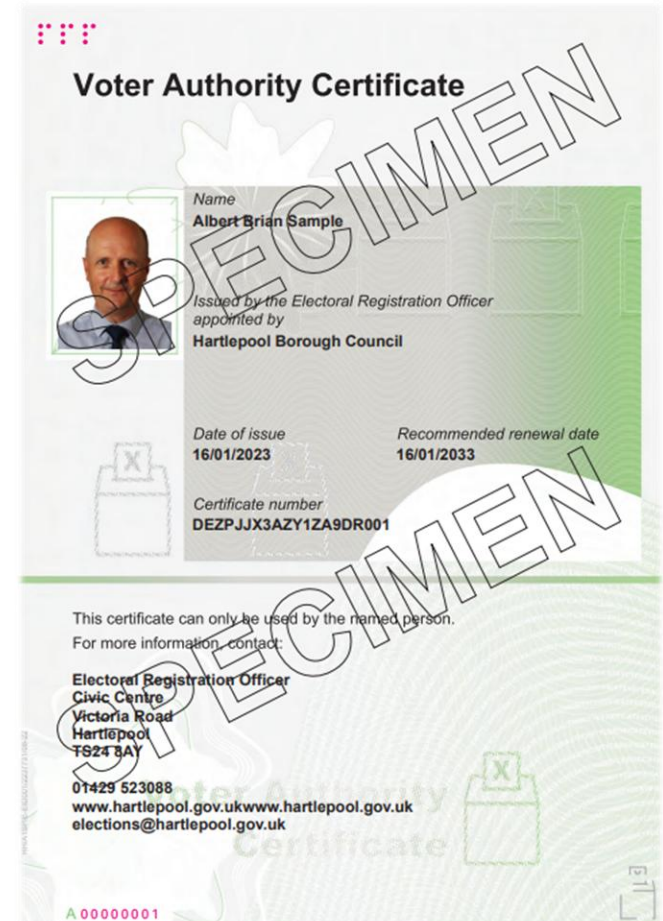
Local Travel	
Older Person's bus pass funded by the UK Government	Disabled Person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card
Disabled Person's bus pass funded by the UK Government	Senior SmartPass issued in NI
Oyster 60+ Card funded by the UK Government	Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in NI
Freedom Pass	War Disablement SmartPass issued in NI
Scottish National Entitlement card	60+ SmartPass issued in NI
60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card	Half Fare SmartPass issued in NI

Accepted forms of photo ID

Proof of Age	Other Government issued documents
<p>Identity card Bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)</p>	Biometric immigration document
	Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card)
	Ministry of Defence Form 100 (HM Armed Forces Veteran Card)
	National Identity Card issued by an EEA state
	Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland
	Voter Authority Certificate Anonymous Elector's Document

Voter Authority Certificate (VAC)

- Available free of charge
- Contains electors name and photograph (or elector number and photo for anonymous electors)
- Used for voting purposes only
- Must be registered to vote first before applying
- Recommended renewal every 10 years



Candidate Conduct

Candidates and Agents can seek advice on election matters

Issue	Where to obtain advice
Campaign Materials containing Photos of Council Buildings	Local Authority Consider Code of Conduct for existing Members
Display of campaign advertisements	Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations Undue Influence - Deputy Returning Officer
What can existing councillors do during the election period e.g. civic functions, business as usual	Local Authority Code of Recommended Practice on local authority publicity Objectivity and even handedness Code of Conduct for existing Members
Integrity Issues e.g. complaints regarding another candidate	Police SPOC Election petition
Tellers on election day	Deputy Returning Officer
Problems with candidate behaviour at polling stations	Deputy Returning Officer Police SPOC
Defamatory campaign literature	Police SPOC

RO Role is not to referee between candidates

Campaigning dos and don'ts

✓ Do use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites and social media



✓ 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

Campaigning materials

- All election campaign material needs an imprint, including newspaper and billboard advertising.
- Where election campaign material is promoting a party, it is the Electoral Commission who are responsible for enforcing imprint rules.
- Where election campaign material is promoting a candidate, the police are responsible.
- Imprints should be clear and visible
- **You must not:**
- Knowingly make a false statement about the personal character or conduct of a candidate – this is a formal offence
- False statements that are not about a candidate's personal character or conduct are not illegal under electoral law, but could be considered as libel or slander.

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
 - Ensure electors are aware they can apply to register or for an absent vote online
 - Include the ERO's 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 voting documents:

- Never touch any of an elector's postal voting documents
- 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



Candidates Key Contact

The Electoral Commission's role is:

- to regulate candidates donations and campaign spending
- to provide guidance and set performance standards for those involved in the running of the election
- To raise public awareness of the election
- Responsible for providing advice and assistance on electoral matters to all those involved in elections, including political parties and candidates
- **Expense Forms**
- **www.electoralcommission.org.uk**
- **Tel: 0333 103 1928**
- **E-mail: infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk**



Integrity

- Local Police Single Point of Contact (SPOC)
- Detective Inspector **Daniel Johnstone**
- **elections@notts.police.uk**



Polling Day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Private areas to produce ID if requested within polling stations
- Only the presiding officer and poll clerk can inspect ID
- Presiding officer must refuse an elector a ballot paper if they have reasonable doubt the ID does not look like the elector or suspect the documents are forged
- A refusal to deliver a ballot paper is final and cannot be questioned in any way other than via an election petition



Completed Postal votes handed in to Council Buildings

- 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 to Rushcliffe Arena only
- Staff authorised by the Deputy 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 any council letter boxes without completing the postal vote return form will be rejected and will not be counted

The Verification and Count

- Verification Commence at 9am on Friday 2 May
- Location: Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road
- Number of agents allowed will be confirmed - Make sure name is on the list to gain entry

- 1st Stage – Verification
- 2nd Stage – Election Count

- Adjudication of doubtful ballot papers
- Recounts
- Declaration of result



Use of Social Media



- Mobile phones/devices not permitted in the count hall – use in designated areas only
- No photography is permitted in the count hall
- Do not disturb the counting staff unnecessarily when they are counting

Candidate Spending



- Expense Limits
 - £960 plus 8p per local government elector
 - Reduced for Joint Candidates
- Responsibility of election agent to complete and submit
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)
- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election
- Returns made public by Deputy 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

Any Questions

