



Candidate & Agents Briefing

Staffordshire County Council Election

Thursday 1 May 2025

Agenda

This briefing has been updated to cover the changes as enacted by the Elections Act. It will outline:

- Who's who
- Key dates of the election timetable
- Qualifications and disqualifications
- Nominations
- Agents
- Absent voting
- Voter ID and enhanced accessibility
- Polling Day
- Verification and counting of votes
- After the Declaration of Results
- Candidate spending
- Campaigning and Integrity issues
- Contacts

Who's who

- **The Returning Officer** is the person responsible for running the elections. The Returning Officer for Staffordshire County Council is Patrick Flaherty.
- **The Electoral Registration Officer** is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists.
- **Stephen Gabriel** is the Deputy Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Tamworth Borough Council.

Contact details are provided later

Election Timetable

Event	Date
Publication of Notice of Election	Tuesday 25 March
Nominations commence	Tuesday 25 March
Close of nominations	4pm – Wednesday 2 April
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – Wednesday 2 April
Deadline for withdrawal of candidature	4pm – Wednesday 2 April
Publication of statement of persons nominated	Not later than 4pm on Thursday 3 April
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – Friday 11 April
Deadline for new postal vote applications (including postal-proxy applications) /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – Monday 14 April

Election Timetable continued

Event	Date
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	Not later than Wednesday 23 April
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – Wednesday 23 April
Deadline to apply for Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document	5pm – Wednesday 23 April
Deadline for appointment of counting and polling agents	Thursday 24 April
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes	Friday 25 April
Polling day	Thursday 1 May – 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply to vote by emergency proxy	5pm – polling day
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm – polling day
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm – polling day
Verification of ballot papers and Counting of votes	After the close of poll
Return of election expenses – please send these to Staffordshire County Council.	+ 35 days from result Friday 6 June

Qualifications

(including changes to EU candidacy rights)

- Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated **and** on polling day:
 - at least 18 years of age
 - be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights
- 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

A **qualifying EU citizen** is a citizen of a country:

- that has a bilateral Voting and Candidacy Rights (VCR) treaty with the UK
- is resident in the UK
- with any form of leave to remain, or does not require such leave

Currently Denmark, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

An **EU citizen has retained rights** if:

- they are a citizen of a country which does not have a bilateral Voting and Candidacy Rights (VCR) treaty with the UK
- and they have been legally resident in the UK since before the UK left the EU on 31/12/2020

Disqualifications (1)

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 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
- have been disqualified under Audit Commission Act 1998
- are serving a disqualification due to being found guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court
- hold a politically restricted post

This list is not comprehensive more information on disqualifications can be found in the [Electoral Commission Guidance for Candidates and Agents](#).

Disqualifications (2)

- are serving a disqualification due to being found guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court
- are subject to the notification requirements of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003

This list is not comprehensive more information on disqualifications can be found in the [Electoral Commission Guidance for Candidates and Agents](#).

Submitting nomination papers (1)

- The documents that must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm on **Wednesday 2 April** are:
 - the nomination form
 - the home address form
 - the consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm on **Wednesday 2 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)

The last appointment time will be 3:30pm on Wednesday 2 April. This is in order to give enough time to complete the informal check prior to formally submitting your nomination papers.

Submitting nomination papers (2)

Please ensure that you are completing the correct version of nomination papers. You can find the correct version [here](#).

- Take care when completing your nomination papers, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination.
- Complete nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check – please call **01827 709263** to arrange an appointment.
- The nomination form, home address form and consent to nomination **must** be delivered by hand.

Please read the [Electoral Commission's Candidates & Agents Guidance](#) for further clarification.

Nomination form (1)

– Include your full name

– Optional: use commonly used name box(es):

The Elections Act 2022 introduced legislation which permits greater flexibility.

- Option: use commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than your full name and wish to use it instead.

– 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

There are now 5 county divisions within Tamworth with new names following the Staffordshire Electoral Review;

- Perrycrofts
- The Heaths
- The Cotes / Two Rivers
- Watling
- Wilnecote

Nomination form (2)

- Subscribers: **2** subscribers are required. *(Please see GDPR note below)*
- Must sign & print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register.
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** completing the name and description fields on the form.
- Data protection requirements.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Revised data protection legislation came into force from 25 May 2018 and applies to the processing of all personal data. Please contact the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) for further information about how the General Data Protection Regulation affects you.

When collecting subscriber information, you should point out what the information will be used for, how personal data will be processed and kept secure. The lawful basis to collect the information in this form is that it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest and exercise of official authority as set out in Representation of the People Act 1983 and associated regulations.

You should also explain that the information will be shared with the Returning Officer. For further information on data protection and data processing you should refer to the Returning Officer's privacy notice on their website at <https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/privacy/Elections-Fair-Processing-Notice.pdf>

Home address form (Part 1)

All candidates **MUST** complete Part 1 of the home address form. You must complete:

- your name in full name
- 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. You must also state which of the qualifications your qualifying address or addresses relate to (a,b,c and/or d)
- the full name and the home address in full of the person attesting the home address form (which must be the same person as signs your consent to nomination)

Home address form (Part 1)

1b – Home address form		Office use only			
Local government elections in England		Date received	Time received	Initials	No
*ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS / A COUNCILLOR for the					
Pagford			*electoral division/ward of the		
*county/district/London borough of *Delete whichever is inappropriate		Bingord Borough Council			
Date of election:		Thursday 5 May 2022			

You must complete Part 1

Only complete Part 2 if you do not wish your home address to be made public

Part 1: To be completed by all candidates in England	
Full name of candidate	David James Richards
Home address (in full)	23 Green Lane, Pagford, Bingord, Pagfordshire, PA7 3PH
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"/> 23 Green Lane, Pagford, Bingord, Pagfordshire, PA7 3PH
(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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 23 Green Lane, Pagford, Bingord, Pagfordshire, PA7 3PH
(c) my principal or only place of work during the preceding 12 months has been in the *county/district/London borough named above	
(d) I have during the whole of the preceding 12 months resided in the *county/district or London borough named above	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 23 Green Lane, Pagford, Bingord, Pagfordshire, PA7 3PH
Witness details	
Full name of the person who will witness the candidate's consent to nomination form	Suzanne Smith
Full home address of the person who will witness the candidate's consent to nomination form	25 Green Lane, Pagford, Bingord, Pagfordshire, PA7 3PH

Home address form (Part 2)

ONLY complete Part 2 if you **DO NOT** wish your home address to be made public.

- The name of the relevant local authority area in which your home address is situated (if you live in the UK), for example as long as you live within the county this will be Staffordshire.
- If you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which your home address is situated.
- Sign and date

Consent to nomination form

- Must include:
 - name
 - which area you want to stand in
 - strike through the qualification(s) that **DO NOT** apply
 - date of birth & signature
 - date of consent
 - witness' name, and signature
 - REMEMBER:** it **MUST** be the same person that attests your Home address form
 - ensure that the **legal references** are included as they form part of this document

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 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 on **Wednesday 2 April.**
- This must **exactly match** the description that is on the Nomination Form

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 **Wednesday 2 April**
- Party candidates should supply an electronic version of the emblem to the Deputy 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

Election agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of appointment must reach the RO by 4pm – **Wednesday 2 April**. Form is included in nomination pack.
- You will become your own agent by default if no-one 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 **Thursday 24 April**.
 - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session. The postal vote timetable is included in the Candidate and Information Pack.

Access to electoral register/absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on **Tuesday 25 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 – a register request form is included in your nomination pack.

Operation Ford and Force Elected-Officials Advisors

- Operation Ford - to strengthen protective security measures for locally elected representatives. Each Police Force now has at least one Force Elected-Official Advisor (FEOA).
- The FEOA will act as a dedicated named police contact for raising concerns and providing personal security briefings.
- An Operation Ford incident is any act committed against a serving elected official (local councillors, Mayor, Police & Crime Commissioner) or a candidate for these elections where it is reasonable to believe that the act has been committed with the intention of intimidating or harassing the elected official or candidate in connection with their official position or potential future position.
- FEOA should not be contacted for non-crime related matters or for the reporting of incidents or crimes, these must be triaged and prioritised appropriately by local Police Control Rooms by contacting 999, 101 or online via www.police.uk
- **FEOA can proactively contact candidates to provide them with information and advice, Returning Officers will provide the FEOA with candidate contact details after the close of nominations (you can opt out).**

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 an unrestricted fine.

Please read the [Electoral Commission's Candidates & Agents Guidance](#) for more information.

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.
- 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. In such circumstances, they will be contacted by the ERO.
- Registration has changed from a household to an individual system. Online registration takes a few minutes
<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>.

The deadline for applying to register for the election is **Friday 11 April**.

EU Citizen voting rights

Who can register to vote?

- 16 or older (although you can't vote until you're 18)
- a British citizen; or an Irish, qualifying Commonwealth, or qualifying European Union citizen living in the UK
- Due to the changes implemented by the Election Act 2022 only certain EU citizens are entitled to register to vote. You must now be a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights.
- Currently only citizens from Denmark, Luxemburg, Poland, Portugal, and Spain are classified as Qualifying EU citizens.
- Citizens from other EU countries may be entitled to register to vote if they were already resident in the UK before UK left the European Union on 31/12/2020. Such persons are also required to have maintained a lawful immigration status (EU citizen with retained rights).
- The above does not affect citizens from Ireland, Malta, or Cyprus.

Absent voting

- Electors can now apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote or 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 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.

Electors can now apply for an absent vote online;

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote>

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote>

Absent voting and campaigners

- 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)
- 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

Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites and ensure that this meets the requirements set out in the [Electoral Commission's Guidance](#).
- 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 (1)

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 that electors are aware that 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 (2)

- **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.

Voter ID (1)

- Voters 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.

The list of accepted photographic ID can be found on the [Electoral Commission's](#) website. **The list of acceptable ID has been updated.**

Voter ID (2)

- 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 Anonymous Elector's Document to vote in person.
- Any applications must be received by the ERO by 5pm on the 6th working day before poll.

Accepted forms of voter ID

Please visit the Electoral Commission website for a full list of accepted ID:

[Accepted forms of photo ID | Electoral Commission](#)

Recently updated to include;

- Digital eVisas (form of biometric immigration document)
- HM Forces Veteran Card (MOD 100)
- National Entitlement Card issued by Local Authority in Scotland

Enhanced Accessibility

All polling stations should be accessible for electors with disabilities. Each station will have equipment available for electors such as:

- Ramps
- Pencil grips
- Easy grip pencils
- Seating
- Magnifying glass
- Large print ballot papers
- Staff will also assist electors with the voting process if the elector asks for help.

Polling day (1)

Voters should be encouraged to check their poll cards before polling day, to see if their polling station has changed since the previous elections.

If electors vote at a polling station their poll card will contain important information about the accepted forms of ID.

We will be using the Modern Polling system within our polling stations. This is an iPad-based system which contains the Electoral Register, Corresponding Numbers List, Ballot Paper Account and will record all the required information needed to complete statistical reports for the Government.

There are some changes to polling station locations following the Polling District and Place Review.

Polling day (2)

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Office open 6:30am to 9pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election.
 - for queries relating to election finance issues, please 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.
- Voters will need to present photographic ID in the polling station.
- Voters can request to have their ID checked in private.

Completed postal votes handed into 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 into 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:
The Post Room / Marmion House Reception
Tamworth Borough Council
Marmion House
Lichfield Street
Tamworth
B79 7BZ
- 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 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.

The verification and counting of votes

The verification and counting of ballot papers will commence after the close of poll on **Thursday 1 May**:

The Sports Hall

The Rawlett School (An AET Academy)

Comberford Road

Tamworth

B79 9AA

What3Words Ref: [///wiring.strict.cabin](http://wiring.strict.cabin)

More information regarding the verification and count processes will be provided after the close of nominations.

Candidate spending (1)

- There is a framework of rules that candidates and agents must work within. It states that election spending must be properly accounted for.
- While spending returns are made to the RO, specific questions on campaign expenditure should not be directed to the Returning Officer or the elections team.
- Candidates and agents should consult the Electoral Commission Guidance in the first instance. Further guidance, forms and contact details are available from the Commission's website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

Contact details are provided later.

Candidate spending (2)

- Defined as certain expenses 'used for the purposes of the candidate's election' during the regulated period
- Responsibility of **election agent**
- The spending limits are worked out as follows:
- £960 + 8 pence per elector in the electoral area on the register in force on **Tuesday 25 March** (reduced for joint candidates)
- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election (Friday 6 June)
- Returns made public by **Returning Officer**
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the **Electoral Commission**
- You **must** submit a return regardless of whether you have made a spend or not. Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence enforceable by the Police
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)
- No spending will be reimbursed

Contacts

Nomination Appointments

01827 709263 or email candidates&agents@tamworth.gov.uk

Elections Office

01827 214155

elections@tamworth.gov.uk

Highways Department

0300 111 800

highways@staffordshire.gov.uk

Staffordshire Police (Single Point of Contact)

election.spoc@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk

Electoral Commission

3 Bunhill Row

London

EC1Y 8YZ

0333 103 1928 (switchboard)

info@electoralcommission.org.uk

Thank you for attending, a further briefing for confirmed candidates and agents has been scheduled for **Friday 4 April at **6pm** but if you need any further information please feel free to contact me.**

