

# Candidates and Agents Briefing

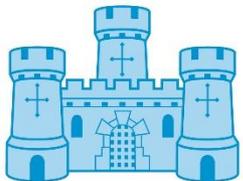
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Local Elections - 07 May 2026



# Topics

- This briefing has been updated to cover changes as enacted by the Elections Act. It will outline:
- Who's Who
- Election Timetable
- Standing as a Candidate and Nominations
- Agents
- Registration
- Voter ID
- Absent Voting
- Campaigning
- Postal Vote Opening
- Polling Day
- Counting of Votes
- Candidate Spending

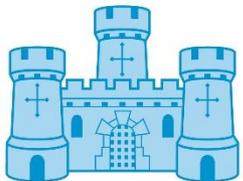


# Who's Who

- **Gordon Mole**  
Returning Officer, Chief Executive & Electoral  
Registration Officer for the Newcastle Borough Area
- **Anthony Harold**  
Service Director for Legal and Governance & Deputy  
Returning Officer
- **Stephanie Price**  
Elections Manager & Deputy Returning Officer
- **Annette Bailey, Chris Booth and Julie Colclough**  
Elections Team

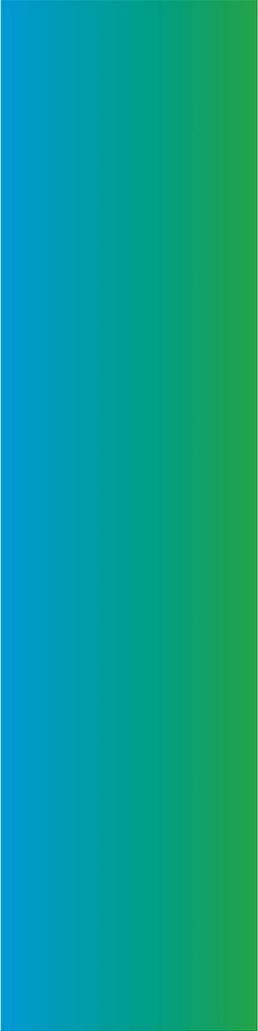
# Election Timetable

Publication of Notice of Election	27 March 2026
Nominations commence	9.30am – 27 March 2026
Good Friday / Easter Monday – offices will be closed	3 April 2026 – 6 April 2026
Close of nominations	4pm – 09 April 2026
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – 09 April 2026
Publication of statement of persons nominated and notice of poll/situation of polling stations	4pm – no later than 10 April 2026
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – 20 April 2026
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – 21 April 2026



# Election Timetable (continued)

Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – 28 April 2026
Deadline for applications for new voter authority certificates	5pm – 28 April 2026
Appointment of counting and polling agents	29 April 2026
Polling day	07 May 2026 - 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency or if unexpectedly called away because of employment or service	5pm – polling day
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm – polling day
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm – polling day
Deadline for applications for temporary voter authority certificates	10pm – polling day
Return of election expenses	
Town/Parish:	4 June 2026
Borough:	12 June 2026



# NOMINATIONS



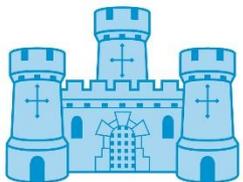
# Qualifications – Who Can Stand?

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

- be at least 18 years of age
- be a British, qualifying Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen or EU citizen with retained rights

They must also have at least one of the following criteria:

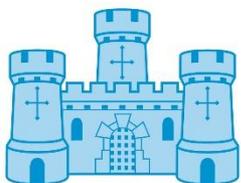
- **Registered local government elector** in Newcastle-under-Lyme area
- **Occupied** as owner or tenant any **land or premises** in the Newcastle-under-Lyme area during the whole 12 months preceding nomination
- **Principal** or only **place of work** (including unpaid) during last 12 months in Newcastle-under-Lyme area
- **Lived** in the Newcastle-under-Lyme area during the last 12 months



# Standing as a 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
- hold a politically restricted post
- 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
- have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983
- are subject to the notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
- have been convicted of an intimidatory criminal offence motivated by hostility towards a candidate, campaigner or holder of elective office



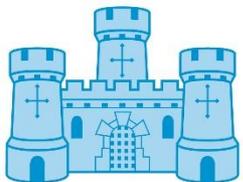
# Nomination Forms to Submit

- 1a – Nomination Paper
- 1b – Home Address Form
- 1c – Candidate’s Consent to nomination (including the pages of legislation)
- 2 – Certificate of Authorisation (if party candidate)
- 3 – Request for a party emblem (if party candidate)
- 4 – Notification of election agent (if applicable)
- 5 – Candidate Contact Information

**ALL by 9<sup>th</sup> April – 4pm**

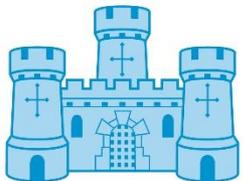
# Nomination Paper

- Include your full name
- Commonly used name - if you are known by another name 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



# Nomination Form - Subscribers

- Two subscribers are required.
- Must **sign** & print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register.
- Only ask subscribers to sign after completing the name, address and description fields on the form.
- Subject to data protection requirements – further guidance at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/direct-marketing-and-privacy-and-electronic-communications/guidance-for-the-use-of-personal-data-in-political-campaigning-1/>



# Home Address Form – Part 1

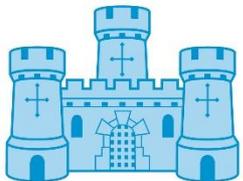
Part 1 of the home address form must state:

- your full name and home address in full
- your qualifying address/addresses
- 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 witness to your consent to nomination

# Home Address Form – Part 2

Part 2 of the home address form must be completed if you do not want your address to be made public:

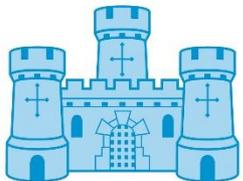
- The name of the relevant area in which your home address is situated (if your home address is in the UK),
- if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which your home address is situated.



# Consent to Nomination Form

Must include:

- name
- which area standing in
- confirmation of qualification(s) that apply (at least 1, but select all that apply)
- date of birth & signature
- date of consent
- witness' name and signature



# Certificate of Authorisation

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person authorised 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 09 April 2026

# 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 09 April 2026
- Party candidates should supply an electronic version of the emblem to the Returning Officer if required

# Joint Candidates

- Nominated by **more than one party**
- May use registered joint descriptions: these must be supported by a certificate of authorisation from each party
- May use one emblem of one of the parties but there are no joint emblems

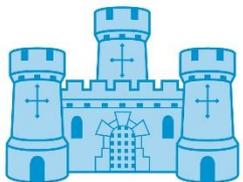
# Submitting nomination papers

Candidates must submit the following papers by **4pm on 09/04/2026:**

- the nomination form
- their home address form
- the consent to nomination

Party candidates will also need to submit, **by 4pm on 09/04/2026:**

- 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

- Take care when completing your nomination papers - mistakes may invalidate your nomination.
- Complete nomination papers early and contact us by email at [electreg@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:electreg@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk) or call 01782 742249 to make an appointment for us to provide an **informal check and submit**.
- The nomination form, home address form and consent to nomination must be delivered **by hand** to the **Returning Officer at Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle, ST5 1BL** and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email, etc

# Operation Ford

An additional form is enclosed with the nomination pack to collect candidate/agent contact details.

This is part of Operation Ford and the details you provide will be passed along to the police.

Elections staff may use the details if we are required to contact you urgently, but if a candidate appoints an agent, we will always try to reach your agent first.

## Local government elections in England: candidate contact information

For completion by an individual candidate and their election agent (if they are not acting as their own agent) at a local government election in England.

You are not required to complete and return this form but providing contact detail to the Returning Officer (RO) in this way will enable the RO to contact you quickly with relevant information regarding the election.

In addition, to help support the safety and security of everyone who wants to participate in elections, it is important that the police can proactively contact candidates and election agents to provide you with relevant, timely information and advice.

By providing your contact details on this form you are also agreeing that the RO may share them with the police to help them to support the safety of all candidates and election agents participating in the election. In particular, this will enable the police to contact you directly with relevant, timely security information about the election.

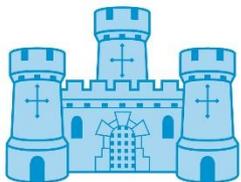
Candidate contact details	
Full name:	
Email address:	
Telephone number:	
Signature:	
Election agent contact details	
Full name:	
Email address:	
Telephone number:	
Signature:	

The data controller will only use the information you have provided on this form for electoral purposes and will look after your personal information securely, following data protection legislation.

The data controller will not give personal information about you and the personal information you may provide on other people to anyone else or another organisation unless permitted by law, including, as here, where you have consented to the data being shared or where it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest and exercise of official authority vested in the Returning Officer.

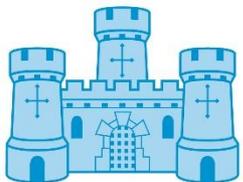
The lawful basis to collect the information in this form is that it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest and exercise of official authority as vested in the Returning Officer as set out in Representation of the People Act 1983 and related regulations.

The Returning Officer is the Data Controller.  
For further information relating to the processing of personal data you should refer to their privacy notice on their website.



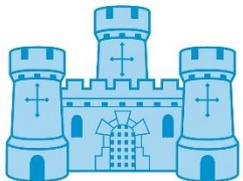
# Election Agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of appointment must reach the RO by **4pm on 09 April 2026**. This form is included in the nomination pack.
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.



# Other Agents

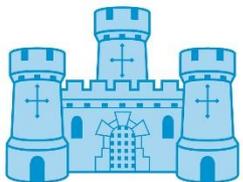
- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
- You must give notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by 29 April 2026.
- The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session.
- We will give 48 hours' notice by email



# Access to Electoral Register / Absent Voting Lists

Once you officially become a candidate:

- Make written request to the ERO For Electoral Register and Absent Voting Lists
- Forms will be included in your nomination pack, available online, or available from the office;
- Only use data for permitted purposes
  - to complete the nomination form
  - to help you campaign
  - to check that donations/loans are permissible

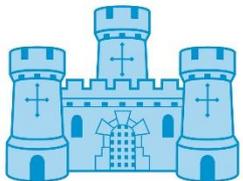


# Registration

- 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 on 20 April 2026.
- Individuals can apply to register online at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. It only takes a few minutes.

# Voter ID

- All electors are now required to provide voter ID at a polling station
- An eligible list of accepted ID can be found at: <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/elections-registration-1/voter-identification/2>
- Electors can apply for free voter ID, known as a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC), if they do not have eligible ID.
- Applications can be made online (web link on our website); by post; or by calling into Castle House where a member of the team will also be able to take a photograph if required.
- Applications for a VAC must be received by 5pm on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.



# Absent Voting

People can only qualify for a **Postal or Proxy** for this election if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections!!

Deadlines:

- Postal vote: 5pm on the 21st April
- Proxy vote: 5pm on the 28th April
- Emergency Proxy – 5pm on Polling Day!

Apply for a postal or proxy vote online at:

[www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote](http://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote)

[www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote](http://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote)

All applicants will need to supply their NINO!

# Postal Voting – Hand in

- Changes introduced to postal vote returns as part of the Elections
- All postal voters are recommended to return their postal vote ballot pack via a Royal Mail postbox.
- For those that choose to hand-in at Castle House Reception or a polling station, they will need to complete an additional form (Postal Vote Return form) upon hand-in or their postal vote pack will be automatically **rejected**.

# Campaigning – Do's & Don'ts

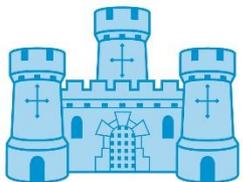
- Do use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites.
- Do comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners.
- Do make sure outdoor posters are removed 2 weeks after the election.
- Do not produce material that looks like a poll card.
- Do not pay people to 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

Electoral Commission Guidance:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/resources/welcome-your-vote/campaigning>

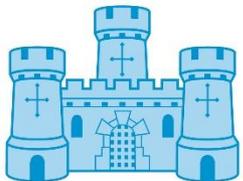
# Campaigning – Code of Conduct

- 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

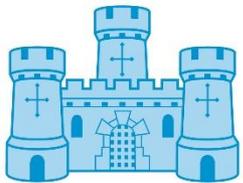


# Campaigning – Code of Conduct (continued)

- 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.



# POSTAL VOTE OPENING



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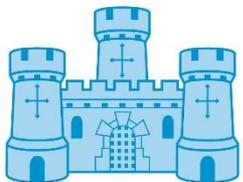
# Postal Vote Opening Sessions

- Postal vote opening sessions will take place from 27 April 2026 at Jubilee2, Dance Studios
- Final opening session - 9pm on 7 May 2026 at Keele Sports Centre.
- The Returning Officer has requested a Royal Mail sweep to be completed at 9.45pm on the day of the poll.
- Candidates & PV Agents can attend – 1 PV Agent for each candidate.

# 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 **Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 1BL** and will need to complete the postal vote return form
- 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

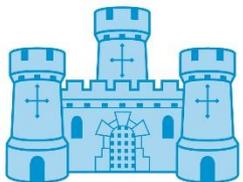
# POLLING STATIONS

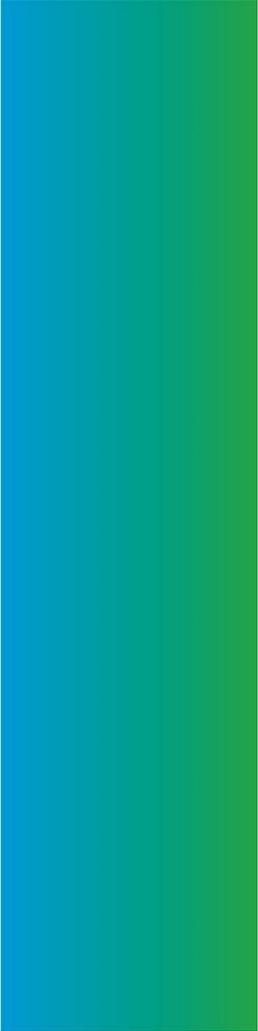


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# Polling Day – General Information

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- The Elections office will be open from 6.30am to 10pm for queries relating to the administration of the election
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10 pm can apply for a ballot paper
- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations within the division or delivered to the elections office until 10pm. Remember to fill in the postal vote return form upon hand-in!
- A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in a postal vote can do so after 10pm.
- There will be equipment provided to support accessibility needs and staff on hand to assist as and when required.





**COUNT**

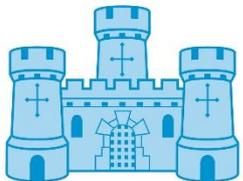


# Counting of Votes

- Count Venue - **Keele Sports Centre**
- Verification – Thursday 7th May (Borough and Parish)
- Candidates/agents arrive by 10.15pm and will be issued a wristband on sign-in.
- Verification will commence from 10.45pm followed by the count for the borough election.
- Count for parish elections will take place on Monday 11 May 2026 at Castle House

# The Successful Candidate

- After the declaration of result, successful candidates will be issued with an information pack informing them of the immediate steps that they will be required to take
  - E.g. making contact about signing acceptance of office



# 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
  - reduced for joint candidates
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

# Candidate Spending (continued)

- Returns due:
  - For parish by 4 June 2026
  - For borough by 12 June 2026
  - To be returned to the Returning Officer, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1BL
- 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

# Other considerations

- Do you need any additional guidance in understanding the role of a councillor?
- Have you considered who will nominate you?
- Could you commit the time needed to be a councillor if you are elected?
- There are resources online to assist. If you are unclear on any part of the process we have described, just ask or contact us after the briefing.

# Contacts

## **Elections Office**

01782 742249

[electreg@Newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:electreg@Newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)

## **Highways Department**

0300 111 800

[highways@Staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:highways@Staffordshire.gov.uk)

## **Staffordshire Police (Single Point of Contact)**

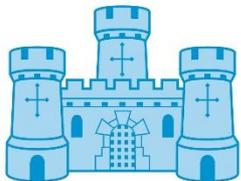
[election.spoc@Staffordshire.police.uk](mailto:election.spoc@Staffordshire.police.uk)

## **Electoral Commission**

3 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8YZ

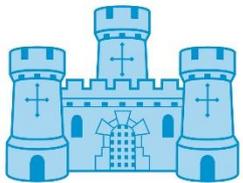
0333 103 1928 (switchboard)

[info@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:info@electoralcommission.org.uk)



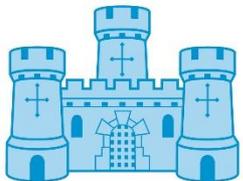
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# QUESTIONS



**NEWCASTLE  
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Thank you for  
Attending



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