Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR PROSPECTIVE KIDSGROVE TOWN COUNCIL CANDIDATES



August 2026
Kidsgrove Town Council
(Kidsgrove Central & Ravenscliffe ward)

www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

JULY 2026

INTRODUCTION FROM THE RETURNING OFFICER



Hello – My name is **Gordon Mole** and I am the Returning Officer for the Kidsgrove Town Council (Kidsgrove Central & Ravenscliffe ward) By-election being held within Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's area on 6 August.

My Elections Team will endeavour to help you with any queries you may have during the election process, but this guidance will hopefully answer many of your initial queries. It is not intended as an authoritative interpretation of the law, and candidates are advised to seek their own legal advice, which may involve you contacting the Electoral Commission direct.

I would also urge you to refer to our webpage – "Kidsgrove Town Council (Kidsgrove Central & Ravenscliffe ward) 2026" – which will provide you with information throughout the election process. This can be found under the "Elections" section on our website or via the following direct link as follows:
https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/elections-registration-1/kidsgrove-town-council-kidsgrove-central-ravenscliffe-ward-election-2026

All relevant notices will be published on that page, and this should be your first port of call, as with so many individual elections taking place, it will be quicker to find out who you are standing against online, rather than trying to telephone a member of the Elections Team.

In addition to the guidance produced by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, the Electoral Commission, which is the UK's independent elections watchdog, has provided information on how to stand as a candidate, conduct your election campaign and spending limits for candidates.

I strongly recommend that all candidates, and their agents, should download and familiarise themselves with the Electoral Commission's comprehensive notes obtainable via the following link:-

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england

Topics covered in this local guidance are as follows:-

- Important Nomination Deposit Notice
- Part 1 - The Election Timetable
- Part 2 - Introduction to Election Procedures
- Part 3 - Town and Parish Council Elections
- Part 4 - Candidates and Agents
- Part 5 - The Nomination Process
- Part 6 - Polling Day, The Count and Post-Election Matters
- Part 7 - Elections Expenses and the Election Campaign
- Appendices:
    - *Notice of Withdrawal Form*
    - *Register and Absent Voter List Request Forms*
    - *Appointment of Polling Agents and Postal Vote Opening Form*
    - *Appointment of Counting Agents Form*

If you have any issues or concerns during the election process, you should contact Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's **Elections Team**
who are based at Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 1BL
Tel: **01782 742249** E-mail: **electreg@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING NOMINATIONS!

Completed Nomination Papers **CANNOT** be submitted to the Returning Officer in the post, by e-mail or by fax. The law states that they can only be **HAND-DELIVERED** to the Deputy Returning Officer by the Candidate, their Agent or a person that they trust.

Any Nomination Forms, Home Address Forms or Consents to Nomination received by post have not been "delivered" in accordance with the rules.

The Candidate is therefore not deemed to stand nominated and no decision can be taken as to whether the papers are valid.

An appointment booking system is in place for an informal check and submissions of Nomination Forms. Please contact the Elections office to make an appointment by calling 01782 742249 or e-mailing electreg@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk.

IMPORTANT CHANGES SINCE THE LAST ALL-OUT LOCAL ELECTIONS!

Changes to voting in a polling stations (Voter ID requirements)

As part of the Elections Act 2022, electors are now required to provide ID to vote in polling stations. Further information can be found in Part 5 of this guide.

Changes to Absent Voting

As part of the Elections Act 2022, the way in which electors apply for an absent vote has changed. Further information can be found in Part 3 of this guide.

Changes around undue influence and intimidation and digital imprints

Legislation has been made and came into effect from November 2023 around undue influence and intimidation and digital imprints as part of the Elections Act 2022. We strongly recommend that you read Electoral Commission guidance regarding this.

Changes around Postal Vote Handling

Legislation came into effect from May 2024 onwards preventing political parties and campaigners from handling postal vote packs for other electors entirely. Further information can be found in Part 3 of this guide.

Changes around European Candidacy Rights

Legislation came into effect from May 2024 onwards as part of the Elections Act 2022 now means that European Union citizens standing as a candidate must be a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights. Further information can be found in Part 2 of this guide.

Changes around Commonly Used Names

Legislation came into effect from May 2024 allowing greater flexibility around commonly used names on nomination papers and ballot papers. Further information can be found in Part 2 of this guide.

Current Members

Current Council members are reminded that they should not use council equipment or council e-mail addresses during the election period (from 30th March) with regards to election campaigning or any correspondence which relates to the election.

Part 1: The Election Timetable

The election timetable is set down in law, beginning with the Notice of Election to be published on **Thursday 2 July 2026.** An appointment-booking system is in place for submissions of Nomination Forms. Please contact the Elections office to make an appointment by calling 01782 742249 or e-mailing electreg@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk.

- The law states that Candidates (or their Representative) may **only** deliver their nomination paper **in person**; it can no longer be accepted through the post.
- Please note that the deadline for withdrawals of candidature is also 4pm on the last day to submit nomination papers. If any candidate submits nomination papers for more than one area, they must ensure that they withdraw from all but one area by the due deadline, otherwise their candidature will be cancelled in **all areas**.

All deadlines within the timetable, must be strictly observed.

ELECTORAL EVENT	DATE & TIME *(if applicable)*	
Publication of the "Notice of Election"		Thursday 2 July 2026
Nominations commence	**10pm**	Friday 3 July 2026
Deadline for the receipt of nominations	**4pm**	Friday 10 July 2026
Withdrawal of candidature if no longer standing *(see boxed note above)*	**4pm**	Friday 10 July 2026
Deadline for the appointment of election agents	**4pm**	Friday 10 July 2026
Publication of "First Interim Notice of Alteration"		Friday 10 July 2026
Last date for publication of the "Statements of Persons Nominated"	**4pm**	Monday 13 July 2026
Last date to receive applications to **appear on the Register**		Tuesday 21 July 2026
Last date to receive written applications to **vote by post**	**5pm**	Wednesday 22 July 2026
Publication of "Second Interim Notice of Alteration"		Thursday 23 July 2026
Last date to publish the "Notice of Poll"		Wednesday 29 July 2026
Last date to receive applications for **voter authority certificates**	**5pm**	Wednesday 29 July 2026
Last date for receipt of applications to **vote by proxy**	**5pm**	Wednesday 29 July 2026
Deadline for the appointment of polling and counting agents		Thursday 30 July 2026
Publication of "Final Notice of Alteration"		Thursday 30 July 2026
First day to issue replacement spoilt/lost postal ballot papers		Friday 31 July 2026
Deadline for the appointment of postal voting agents		Tuesday 4 August 2026
Deadline for receipt of emergency proxy applications	**5pm**	Thursday 6 August 2026
Last day to issue replacement spoilt/lost postal ballot papers	**5pm**	Thursday 6 August 2026
POLLING DAY	***7:00 am to 10:00 pm***	***Thursday 6 August 2026***
Last day to submit the "Declaration of Candidates Expenses"		Thursday 3 September 2026

Part 2: Introduction to Election Procedures

These notes are to advise prospective candidates of the practice relating to Town and Parish Council elections. It is for general guidance only and is not intended as a comprehensive statement of the law.

The Returning Officer appointed by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is responsible for the conduct of, and arrangements for, Town Council Elections. However, the Town Council and its Clerk have an important role to play, especially in giving advice to prospective candidates prior to the four-yearly ordinary elections and in the preliminary arrangements for the filling of casual vacancies, including by-elections.

Notices will be issued to local Town Council Clerks for display at various key dates during the election timetable. This information will also be displayed on Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's website – www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk on its webpage **"Kidsgrove Town Council (Kidsgrove Central & Ravenscliffe ward) By-election"**.

The information which will be published includes:-

- ***Notice of Election*** — This is the first stage of the election process which makes prospective candidates aware that an election has been called and what action they should take. It also provides eligible people within that area with the key dates to apply to register or apply for postal or proxy voting, should a poll take place.
- ***Statement of Persons Nominated*** — This shows which candidates have submitted valid nomination papers to stand at the election.
- ***Notice of Uncontested Election*** — In the event that there are fewer than or an equal number of candidates as there are seats available, this notice informs electors of those candidates remaining validly nominated, who are then elected unopposed.
- ***Notice of Poll*** — Should there be more candidates than seats available, this notice informs local electors of the date and time of the poll, and which polling station they should attend on polling day.
- ***Declaration of Results*** — For all contested elections, this notice records the results of votes cast in the poll, including any rejected votes and the reason for their rejection.

To find out who you are standing against, we will be sending a copy of the Statement of Persons Nominated to the Town/Parish Clerk for display locally. A copy of the notice will also be published on Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's website, so you may wish to log in to see who the other candidates are (if any). **These notices should be available on our website as soon as possible after the close of nominations on Friday 10 July 2026 and not later than 4pm on Monday 13 July**. When viewing the page, please remember to press "Refresh" on your browser bar to ensure that you have the most up-to-date information available.

Part 3: Town and Parish Council Elections

TERM OF OFFICE

Town and Parish Councillors hold office for a period of four years (or if elected part way through the cycle, for the remainder of that period only) and retire on the fourth day after the ordinary day of election. The newly elected Councillors take office (provided they have made declarations of acceptance of office) on the day on which their predecessors retire (Local Government Act, 1972, Section 16(3)).

The Chair of a Town or Parish Council continues in office until their successor becomes entitled to act as such.

Part 4: Candidates and Agents

- We **recommend** that you consult the Electoral Commission's Guidance for Candidates and Agents at local government elections in England on this topic at https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england/nominations

1. QUALIFICATIONS TO BE A COUNCILLOR

- To be qualified to be elected a member of a Town/Parish Council, a person must be 18 years of age or over at the date of his or her nomination, and either a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen[1] or an EU citizen with retained rights[2], AND meet **at least one** of the following criteria:-

(i) You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the town/parish in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards;
(ii) You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the town/parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election;
(iii) Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the town/parish area;
(iv) You have lived in the town/parish area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

Candidates must disclose this information on their **Home Address Form** and **Consent to Nomination** and are advised to complete as many of the relevant qualifications as apply.

A submitted **Nomination Paper** is **NOT** valid unless the candidate's **Home Address Form** and **Consent to Nomination**, given in writing is delivered at the place and within the time appointed for the delivery of nomination papers. The consent must contain a statement declaring that, with reference to the day of nomination the candidate is, and on the day of election will be, qualified to be elected (giving particulars of his or her qualification) and must be attested by a witness. Any person may act as a witness to the candidate's signature. The consent to nomination must also include the candidate's date of birth.

2. DISQUALIFICATIONS

You cannot be a candidate if at the time of your nomination and on the day of the election:

(i) You are employed by the town/parish/community council or hold a paid office under the parish/community council (including joint boards or committees); or
(ii) You are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order; or
(iii) You have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence), without the option of a fine, during the five years before polling day; or
(iv) You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations).
(v) You are subject to the notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003; or
(vi) You have been convicted of an intimidatory criminal offence motivated by hostility towards a candidate, future candidate or campaigner or holder of a relevant elective office.

The full range of disqualifications is highly complex and if you are in any doubt about whether you are disqualified, you must do everything you can to check that you are not disqualified before submitting your nomination papers; neither the Returning Officer nor members of the Election Team are able to provide you with guidance on this matter.

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[1] A person is a qualifying EU citizen if they are a citizen of a country with which the UK has a bilateral Voting and Candidacy Rights (VCR) treaty and are resident in the UK with any form of leave to remain, or do not require such leave. Currently the UK holds bilateral treaties with the following countries: Denmark, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

[2] An eligible Commonwealth citizen is a Commonwealth citizen who either does not need leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom, or has indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom.

It is a criminal offence to make a false statement on your nomination papers as to your qualification for being elected, so if you are in any doubt you should contact your employer, consult the legislation or, if necessary, take your own independent legal advice.

3. CAMPAIGNING AND EXPENDITURE

It is in the interests of each candidate to undertake their own publicity campaign, so that potential voters know who they are voting for.

You must:

- use imprints* on all your printed campaign material, websites and any electronic campaign material that is designed to be printed off locally;
- comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners – please note that Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council does **not** permit any type of flyposting;
- Make sure that any outdoor posters displayed on private property, are removed promptly after the election – you must do this within two weeks.

You must not:

- Produce material that looks like the poll cards sent to voters by the Returning Officer;
- Pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business).

* An imprint must, by law, be added to campaign material to show who is responsible for its production. It helps to ensure that the campaign is transparent. On printed material, such as leaflets and posters, you must include the name and address of the **printer**, the **promoter** and **any person on behalf of whom the material is being published** (and who is not the promoter). The promoter is the person who has authorised the material to be published. If the promoter is acting on behalf of a group or organisation, the group or organisation's name and address must also be included.

Full details regarding the use of imprints can be found in Electoral Commission guidance.

Candidates are subject to limits on what they spend during the regulated period in advance of an election. The limit for these elections is £960, plus 8p per local government elector in the ward. A record (and receipts) for any expenses incurred should be kept, as towards the end of the election process, each candidate must, by law, complete and return their Election Expenses, even if they do not incur any expenses.

Candidates sometimes believe that they can claim back their campaign expenditure. **No reimbursement of expenses can be made by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to candidates** – it is a record which is required to be submitted by law, and is a public document which is available for public inspection.

4. AGENTS

At town and parish level, Candidates are not required to appoint Election Agents. They can however appoint Polling and Counting Agents and also Postal Vote Agents, should they so wish.

- **Polling Agents** are appointed, usually to a specific polling station, to detect personation. They should not be confused with Tellers, who have no official standing and are not allowed to enter the polling station, except to vote. The deadline to receive this form is Thursday 30 July 2026.
- **Verification and Counting Agents** are appointed to observe proceedings at the verification and counting of votes. The deadline to receive this form is Thursday 30 July 2026.
- **Postal Vote Agents** are appointed to observe the opening of postal votes. The deadline to receive this form is Tuesday 4 August 2026

5. OPENING OF POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS

Sessions for the opening of postal ballot papers will be held at **FF01, Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1BL** in Newcastle-under-Lyme on the following dates:-

Wednesday 5 August 2026 – Thursday 6 August 2026	10.30am to 5.00pm *This may finish earlier if daily quantity of post is less. If you prefer to check this with us beforehand please contact the Elections Team on 01782 742249.*

A final postal vote opening session will be held in the Queen Elizabeth II/Astley Room on polling day (6 August 2026) from 10.30pm.

6. RETURN OF POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS

Candidates or their Agents should **not** collect postal ballot papers on behalf of any elector. Further information on this can be found in Electoral Commission guidance at the following link: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/code-conduct-campaigners-uk-parliamentary-general-elections-great-britain-local-elections-england/postal-voting-documents. Completed ballot packs can either be returned by post or in person to the Returning Officer in advance of, or on, polling day. Electors may also return their completed ballot pack to any polling station **within the elector's relevant ward** between the hours of 7.00am and 10.00pm on polling day.

Those who choose to hand their postal vote packs in at a polling station or at the offices of Castle House will only be able to hand in a total of 6 (a voter's own and up to 5 others). The voter will also be asked to fill in a form when handing postal votes in at a polling station or our offices. Based on new legislation, any postal vote packs handed into a polling station or the offices of Castle House by someone who does not complete a form will be rejected and not included in the vote.

Part 5: The Nomination Process

- We **recommend** that you consult the Electoral Commission's Guidance for Candidates and Agents at local government elections in England on this topic at https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england/nominations

1. NOMINATION PAPERS

The first stage in running for election is to submit a **nomination paper**. It is vital that nomination papers are completed correctly.

Whilst it is often the case that the Town or Parish Clerk will arrange to distribute nomination papers, it is the responsibility of each Candidate and not the Clerk, to ensure that their papers are submitted to the Returning Officer before the deadline specified within the statutory election timetable.

Please note that nomination papers can only be submitted between the hours of 10.00am until 4pm from Friday 3 July until 4pm Friday 10 July 2026 (excluding the weekend) and must be hand delivered to the Returning Officer.

To be validly nominated, you must complete and submit the following forms:

- Nomination Paper
- Home Address Form (Part 1)
- Candidate's Consent to Nomination
- If you are standing for a political party, you will also need to submit a "Registration of Political Parties" Certificate and (if applicable) the "Request for Use of Registered Party Emblem" *(Additional information is provided under the topic "Descriptions" below).*

Candidates should ensure that their full name, (and description, if required) are completed correctly BEFORE they seek a proposer and seconder. They should also offer the nomination paper for signature to each person, so that those details are clearly visible to avoid any confusion as to what they are being asked to sign. Usual signatures should be used and the proposer and seconder names should be printed as signed.

Great care should be taken in the completion of nomination papers, to ensure that they are not ruled to be invalid by the Returning Officer. Candidates are advised to ensure that nomination papers are free of errors and crossings out. Correction fluids are not recommended.

Names:
The candidate's full name must be written on the nomination paper – initials alone are not permitted.

Candidates can also use "commonly used names" and guidance on this issue is listed in Part 2a and Part 2b of the Electoral Commission guidance. I would strongly recommend that you study this in full before using a "commonly used name" on your ballot paper.

Descriptions:
A candidate may, if desired, give a description, which must not exceed six words in length. As this description is what will appear on the printed ballot paper, if a candidate were to write their description as being "Hairdresser – Wavy Hair, Brown Eyes", that is what will be printed below their name on the ballot paper!

A candidate may not use a description/use an emblem which is likely to mislead voters into believing that they are associated with a political party, unless that description is authorised by a Certificate signed by or on behalf of the Party's Registered Nominating Officer. Any such request, must be received by the Returning Officer not later than the latest time for the delivery of nomination papers.

Proposers and Seconders:
Each nomination paper must be subscribed by a proposer and seconder, who must be registered local government electors of the appropriate town/parish and **specific ward** (in the event that the town/parish is "warded" or "grouped"). The electoral numbers (poll numbers) of the proposer and seconder must also be shown on the nomination paper.

You can obtain the relevant poll numbers from the Elections Team by either e-mailing the names and address of the proposer and seconder and the parish or ward in which you are standing to electreg@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk or by telephoning 01782 742249.

No person shall subscribe to more nomination papers than there are vacancies in the parish or ward if the parish is warded.

Home Address Form
Legislation came into force in December 2018 in regards to the removal of requirement for a candidates home address to be published for local government and parish council elections.

There are two parts to the form. **Part 1 must be completed** whether a candidate wishes to publish their address or not. **Part 2** is only to be completed if the candidate wishes not to make their address public. Further guidance on Home Address Forms can be obtained from the Electoral Commission guidance.

Consent to Nomination:
Candidates must, on or within one month before the last day and time for the delivery of nomination papers, also deliver to the Returning Officer, a signed **"Candidates Consent to Nomination**". The consent should contain a statement declaring that on the day of their nomination, they are qualified to be elected and provide details of their qualification. The consent must be attested by an independent witness. The nomination is not valid unless the consent, properly completed and attested, is delivered within the time stated.

2. SUBMISSION OF NOMINATION PAPERS

Please remember that all nomination papers must be delivered BY HAND, either by you or someone you trust. It is advisable to wait for them to be checked by the Elections Team before you leave. This is because if an error is discovered, you will be able to take your paper away with you for correction and re-submission before the closing date and time.

Nomination papers should be hand-delivered to Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 1BL between the hours of **10am to 4pm** on Monday to Friday, **before 4pm on Friday 10 July 2026.**

3. CLOSE OF NOMINATIONS

The nomination period will close at **4pm precisely on Friday 10 July 2026**. Whilst all nomination papers will have been formally lodged, the Team will then go through the process of making final checks before producing the "Statements of Persons Nominated" for every electoral ward and town/parish council ward.

Statements of Persons Nominated for each area will be published on the Council's website as soon as they become available. The checking/publishing process will commence with the Borough council nomination papers first, followed by those for towns and parish councils.

The Statements of Persons Nominated for each area must be available no later than 4pm on Monday 13 July, so please keep checking on our website for full details. When viewing the website, we would recommend candidates press the "refresh" button, to ensure that they have the most up-to-date webpage on screen. Please refer to the "**Kidsgrove Town Council (Kidsgrove Central & Ravenscliffe ward) By-election**" webpage on www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk.

4. WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

Any candidate wishing to withdraw their candidature must do so in writing. A Withdrawal Form is enclosed at the end of this document, which must be delivered to the following office ONLY:

The Returning Officer – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council,
Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 1BL.

It must be signed by the candidate and one witness and must be received not later than **4pm on Friday 10 July 2026.**

It is only at the expiry of the deadline for withdrawals that we will know whether or not there will be a poll in that particular area.

5. UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS

If the number of people remaining validly nominated after any withdrawals does not exceed the number of Councillors to be elected, those candidates will be declared to be "elected unopposed". The Returning Officer will give notice of their names to the Town/Parish Clerk and to the public, as well as publishing this information on our website.

If there are not enough candidates to fill all the vacancies, the Representation of the People Act 1985, Section 21 allows the elected members, provided there is a quorum (i.e. – one third of the whole number of members with a minimum of three) to co-opt members to fill the remaining vacancies.

If the Town/Parish Council fails to exercise the power to co-opt within seven weeks (35 days computed as under paragraph 3) or if there is no quorum, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council may order a fresh election to properly constitute the Town/Parish Council.

6. CONTESTED ELECTIONS

When the result of the poll is known, the Returning Officer will:-

(a) declare to be elected, the candidate(s) to whom more votes have been given than to the other candidates, up to the number of Councillors to be elected;
(b) give notice of the name of each candidate elected to the Town/Parish Clerk;
(c) give public notice of the name of each candidate and of the total number of votes given for each (whether elected or not) together with the number of rejected ballot papers

Part 6: Polling Day

1. HOURS OF POLL

The hours of poll will be 7.00am to 10.00pm inclusive. There are however various statutory provisions for a poll not to take place or to be abandoned/adjourned in the event of the death of a candidate or a riot.

2. POLLING STATIONS

The location of polling stations will be published on the appropriate Notices of Poll, as well as appearing on the Council's website.

Please note that entry to polling stations is restricted to the following parties only:-

- The Returning Officer and his appointed staff
- The Presiding Officer and Poll Clerk(s)
- Voters (and any persons assisting a voter with disabilities)
- Candidate
- Polling Agent
- Electoral Commission's Accredited Observers
- Police Officers
- Children under the age of 18, accompanying voters

The Count

1. VENUE

The venue for the Counting of Votes will be **Queen Elizabeth II/Astley Rooms, Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 1BL on Thursday 6 August 2026** at 10.45pm.

2. ENTRY TO THE COUNT

Those attending the Count will be able to buy refreshments on site. However it is imperative that **no food or drink is brought into the hall** where the counting of votes is taking place.

Those people attending **must** present their letter of admittance prior to gaining entry to the Hall where the counts are taking place, and will be required to sign against their name on an Attendance Sheet. Movements of candidates and their guests will be restricted to certain areas only within the Hall used for the count.

Each Candidate is able to attend in person and further information on the number of count agents and guests that can be appointed will follow.

Please note that once you have submitted your list of attendees, you will <u>not</u> be permitted to make any substitutions to that list.

Post-Election Matters

1. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Successful candidates are not permitted to act as a Councillor until they have made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office. A person elected to the office of a Town or Parish Councillor must make this Declaration at or before the first meeting of that Council following their election, or with the prior agreement of the Council, at an alternative time.

Failure to do this will mean their office will become vacant (Local Government Act 1972, Section 83). The person making the declaration is required to observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Town/Parish Council.

2. CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES

There are a number of corrupt and illegal practices that candidates should be aware of. Broadly speaking, a corrupt practice involves bribing or using undue influence to obtain votes. An illegal practice might involve the making of a false statement about the personal character or conduct of another candidate, or paying others to canvass, display notices or pay for transport for voters to and from the polling station. **Failing to display the names and addresses of the publisher or printer on any election material is also an illegal practice.**

Part 7: Election Expenses

- We **recommend** that you consult the Electoral Commission's Guidance for Candidates and Agents at local government elections in England on this topic at Candidate spending | Electoral Commission.

Election Expenses

***A further reminder here*:** **Some candidates believe that they can claim their campaign expenses back from Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, but this is NOT the case**.

At the end of the election period, even if no poll has taken place, each Candidate (whether successful or not) **must** submit a Statement of Election Expenses/Declaration to show the expenses (if any) incurred as part of their election campaign. These documents are **required by law** to be available for public inspection and failure to return one (even if it is a 'Nil Return') is an electoral offence.

Within your nomination pack, there is a comprehensive guide detailing how Candidates should complete the election returns. Staff in the Elections Office are purely the recipients for the elections returns – they are not permitted to advise on how to complete forms or to check their accuracy.

The Election Campaign

The Electoral Commission's website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk provides invaluable information designed to assist Candidates. Please make sure that you visit the site and download any suggested documents.

The Electoral Commission may be contacted:

- By phone on 0333 103 1928
- By e-mail on info@electoralcommission.org.uk, or
- By post/in person at 3 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8YZ.

DEFINITION OF A CANDIDATE

A person becomes a candidate at an election under the Local Government Act either:-

- On the last day for publication of the notice of election if, on or before that day, he has been declared by himself (or by someone else) to be a candidate; or
- On the day on which he declares himself (or is so declared by someone else) to be a candidate; or
- On the day on which he is nominated as a candidate at the election (whichever is the earlier).

CANDIDATE'S LITERATURE

***A further reminder here*:** Any candidate wishing to publish and distribute election literature should ensure that it bears the name and address of the printer and publisher on it. There are strict rules and regulations on what must **by law** be included on election material, and this is listed in full in Part 4 of the Electoral Commission's guidance (Sections 1.23 – 1.27).

Election material must **not** be "fly posted" on the highway, on street furniture or any public property. If it is to be displayed on private property, the permission of the owner must be sought in advance. Any such advertisements, posters, etc. relating specifically to a pending election must be removed within 14 days following the close of poll.