



Shropshire
Council

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR PROSPECTIVE TOWN & PARISH COUNCIL CANDIDATES



May 2017
Town and Parish Council Elections

www.shropshire.gov.uk

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MARCH 2017

INTRODUCTION FROM THE RETURNING OFFICER



Hello – My name is **Claire Porter** and I am the Returning Officer for the Unitary, Town and Parish Council Elections being held within Shropshire Council's area on 4th May.

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 make reference to our webpage – “**Local Elections - May 2017**” – which will provide you with information throughout the election process. The website address for Shropshire Council is www.shropshire.gov.uk and you can follow us on Twitter - @ShropCouncil

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 Shropshire 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 should download and familiarise themselves with the Electoral Commission's comprehensive notes obtainable via the following link:-

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-and-community-council-elections-in-england-and-wales>

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, Verification/The Count and Post-Election Matters
- Part 7 - Elections Expenses and the Election Campaign
- Part 8 - Candidates Checklist
- Appendices:
 - *Notice of Withdrawal Form*
 - *Register and Absent Voter List Request Forms*

If you have any issues or concerns during the election process,
you should contact

Shropshire Council's **Elections Team**
who are based at The Shirehall in Shrewsbury.

Tel: 0345 678 9015 E-mail: elections@shropshire.gov.uk

IMPORTANT!

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 Returning Officer
by the Candidate
or by a person that they trust.

***Any Nomination 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.***

Part 1:

The Election Timetable

The election timetable is set down in law, but there is discretion to bring forward the date for the publication of the Notice of Election. Due to the number of seats being contested, the Returning Officer will publish the Notice of Election early - **Monday 13 March** - to allow all candidates more time to submit their nomination papers. We are expecting over 1400 nomination papers to be lodged with us in just over 3 weeks!

KEY CHANGES TO ACTIONS AND EVENTS WITHIN THE ELECTORAL TIMETABLE

- The law now states that Candidates (or their Representative) may only deliver their nomination paper **in person**; it can no longer be accepted through the post.
- The deadline for receipt of nominations is now **4pm**.
- 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 (<i>if applicable</i>)	
Publication of the "Notice of Election"		Monday 13 March 2017
Deadline for the receipt of nominations	4pm	Tuesday 4 April 2017
Withdrawal of candidature if no longer standing (see boxed note above)	4pm	Tuesday 4 April 2017
Publication of "First Interim Notice of Alteration"		Tuesday 4 April 2017
Last date for publication of the "Statements of Persons Nominated"	4pm	Wednesday 5 April 2017
Last date to receive applications to appear on the Register	5pm	Thursday 13 April 2017
<i>Offices Closed Good Friday (14th April) to Easter Monday (17th April) inclusive</i>		
Last date to receipt written applications to vote by post	5pm	Tuesday 18 April 2017
Last date to publish the "Notice of Poll"		Tuesday 25 April 2017
Last date for receipt of written applications to vote by proxy	5pm	Tuesday 25 April 2017
Deadline for the appointment of polling and counting agents		Wednesday 26 April 2017
Publication of "Final Notice of Alteration"		Wednesday 26 April 2017
First day to issue replacement spoilt/lost postal ballot papers		Thursday 27 April 2017
<i>Offices Closed Bank Holiday Monday (1st May)</i>		
Deadline for receipt of emergency proxy applications	5pm	Thursday 4 May 2017
Last day to issue replacement spoilt/lost postal ballot papers	5pm	Thursday 4 May 2017
POLLING DAY	7:00 am to 10:00 pm Thursday 4 May 2017	
Last day to submit the "Declaration of Candidates Expenses"		Thursday 8 June 2017

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 Shropshire Council is responsible for the conduct of, and arrangements for, Town and Parish Council Elections. However, the Town and Parish 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 and Parish Council Clerks for display at various key dates during the election timetable. This information will also be displayed on Shropshire Council's website – www.shropshire.gov.uk on its webpage "**Local Elections – May 2017**".

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 Shropshire 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 by 4pm on 5th April.** 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:

We recommend that you visit the Electoral Commission's website and download their Guidance for Parish and Community Councils in England – Parts 1 and 2a (for independent candidates) or 2b (for party candidates), Part 3 and Part 4

Candidates and Agents

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 be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of any Member State of the European Union, 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 3 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 **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 **Consent to Nomination**, given in writing on or within one month before the last day for delivery of nomination papers, 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).

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.

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 Shropshire 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 Part 4 of the Electoral Commission's Guidance for Parish Council Candidates (*Sections 1.24 – 1.37*)

Candidates are subject to limits on what they spend during the regulated period in advance of an election. The limit for these elections is £740, plus 6p 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 Shropshire 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, 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.
- **Verification and Counting Agents** are appointed to observe proceedings at the verification and counting of votes.

Forms to appoint Verification and Counting Agents should not be submitted until after you know whether there will be a poll in your area (which will be Wednesday 5th April). The deadline to submit your request to appoint Verification and/or Counting Agents is **Wednesday 26th April**.

Part 5:

We recommend that you visit the Electoral Commission's website and download their Guidance for Parish and Community Councils in England – Part 2a (for independent candidates) or 2b (for party candidates)

The Nomination Process

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 cannot be submitted until the date shown on the Notice of Election.

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

- Nomination Paper
- 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 name, address (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 and **could** result in a nomination paper being declared invalid.

Names:

The candidate's full name must be written on the nomination paper – initials alone are not permitted. Similarly, the candidate's home address must be included on the form.

Candidates can also now use "commonly used names" and guidance on this issue is listed in Part 2a and Part 2b of their 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.

One copy of the Nominal Register of Electors has been supplied to the local Town or Parish Clerk for the area in which you are standing. You can obtain the relevant poll numbers from your local Town or Parish Clerk who may be willing to assist you, or from the Elections Team, at The Shirehall in Shrewsbury. We would recommend that you try to contact your Town or Parish Clerk in the first instance, as the telephone lines into the Elections Office at this time can become very busy.

No person shall subscribe to more nomination papers than there are vacancies in the division.

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

Completed Nomination Papers (including the Consent to Nomination) must be submitted to the Returning Officer before the deadline for close of nominations – **4pm on Tuesday 4th April**.

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.

To assist candidates, there will be some local opportunities to submit nomination papers, as well as visiting the Shirehall in Shrewsbury. The places, dates and times, including “late nights” in Shrewsbury, to submit nomination papers are shown in the table below:-

SHREWSBURY – Bridgnorth Room, The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury	
• <i>Tuesday 14th March, Wednesday 15th March</i>	9.00am - 5.00pm
• <i>Thursday 16th March</i>	9.00am – 7.00pm
• <i>Friday 17th , Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st March</i>	9.00am – 5.00pm
• <i>Wednesday 22nd March</i>	9.00am – 7.00pm
• <i>Thursday 23rd March, Friday 24th March, Monday 27th March, Tuesday 28th March, Wednesday 29th March</i>	9.00am – 5.00pm
• <i>Thursday 30th March</i>	9.00am – 7.00pm
• <i>Friday 31st March</i>	9.00am – 5.00pm
• <i>Monday 3rd April</i>	9.00am – 7.00pm
• <i>Tuesday 4th April inclusive</i>	9.00am – 4.00pm

OSWESTRY – Council Chamber, Castle View	
• Tuesday 14 th March	8.45am – 6.00pm
• Thursday 23 rd March	8.45am – 6.00pm
• Wednesday 29 th March	8.45am – 5.30pm
WEM – Edinburgh House, New Street	
• Wednesday 15 th March	9.15am – 4.30pm
• Monday 20 th March	9.15am – 4.30pm
• Thursday 30 th March	9.15am – 4.30pm
LUDLOW – Helena Lane Day Care Centre	
• Thursday 16 th March	8.45am - 4.00pm
• Wednesday 22 nd March	8.45am - 4.00pm
• Tuesday 28 th March	8.45am – 3.45pm
BRIDGNORTH – Bridgnorth Library, Listley Street	
• Friday 17 th March	9.45am - 4.30pm
• Tuesday 21 st March	9.45am – 3.30pm
• Monday 27 th March	9.45am – 4.30pm

3. CLOSE OF NOMINATIONS

The nomination period will close at **4pm precisely on Tuesday 4th April** and the Election Office will, quite literally, be locked down. 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 division 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 unitary 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 Wednesday 5th April, 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 **“Local Elections – May 2017”** webpage on www.shropshire.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 – Shropshire Council,
The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.

It must be signed by the candidate and one witness, and must be received not later than **4pm on Tuesday 4th April 2017**.

Any candidate who is validly nominated for more than one ward of the same town/parish **must** withdraw their candidature in all those wards except one by that deadline, otherwise they shall be deemed to have withdrawn from all those wards.

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, Shropshire 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 (or Chairman);
- (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:

We recommend that you visit the Electoral Commission's website and download their Guidance for Parish and Community Councils in England – Parts 5 and 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

Verification/The Count

1. VENUE

The venue for both the Verification and the Count will be **Shrewsbury Sports Village, Sundorne Road, Shrewsbury**.

2. TIMETABLE

The timetable for the verification and counting of votes is as follows:-

EVENT	DATE	COMMENCEMENT
Verification of ALL votes	Thursday 4th May	10.00 PM
Unitary Council Divisions Only: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counting of votes• Declaration of Unitary results	Friday 5th May	10.00 AM
Town & Parish Council Wards Only: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counting of votes• Declaration of Town and Parish Council results	Saturday 6th May	10.00 AM

3. ENTRY TO THE VERIFICATION AND 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 verification and counting of votes is taking place.

Those people attending **must** present their letter of admittance prior to gaining entry to the Hall where the verification/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 verification/count.

Separate attendance letters will be issued for the **Thursday evening** verification session and the **Saturday daytime** counting session, as appropriate. Please make sure that you complete the correct application forms (attached) for the events that you and your guests wish to gain access to.

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

If there is a high demand for tickets, the Returning Officer may need to reduce the number of people attending at a later date: Please therefore list your agents/guests in your preferred order of attendance.

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. ANNUAL MEETING

A Town/Parish Council must hold an annual meeting each year on any day in May they choose. The annual meeting must be held on, or within fourteen days after, the day the new Councillors take office (i.e. the fourth day after the day of the election, which is usually a Monday).

3. 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:

We recommend that you visit the Electoral Commission's website and download their Guidance for Parish and Community Councils in England – Parts 3, 4 and 6

Election Expenses

A further reminder here: Some candidates believe that they can claim their campaign expenses back from Shropshire 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 1.24 – 1.37).

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.

Part 8:

Candidates Checklist

As there are a number of key issues to be juggled during the election process, you may find it helpful to run through this Checklist to make sure you have done everything required by the dates set out in the statutory election timetable.

<i>Tick in the end column when task has been completed</i>	
NOMINATION PAPER AND CONSENT TO NOMINATION:	
Remember that the nomination paper and consent to nomination must be delivered <u>in person</u> and be received by the deadline for receipt of nominations. We recommend early submission where possible.	
• Has the nomination paper been completed with the correct town/parish name <u>and</u> also the correct ward name (<i>if applicable</i>) <u>and</u> the date of election?	
• Has the nomination paper been completed with the Candidate's Surname and Forename(s) in full?	
• If required, have the "Commonly Used Name" sections been completed?	
• Is a Description being used, and if so, is it less than six words?	
• Has the Candidate's home address been completed?	
• Have the Proposer and Seconder signed the Nomination Paper and have their polling district numbers been completed? Have you checked that they are registered in the correct portion of the Register in which you are standing as a Candidate?	
• Has the Candidate's Consent to Nomination been fully completed with the Candidate's name, home address and divisional information, together with (a) all the qualification sections that apply; (b) the candidate's date of birth; (c) the candidate's signature and date of signing; (d) the signature, name and address of a witness?	
• If using a Political Party Description and Emblem, have the necessary consents been completed, countersigned by the Registered Nominating Officer or Authorised Person, and been submitted by the close of the nomination period?	
WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE (<i>if required</i>)	
• If withdrawing from a particular contest after submitting a nomination paper, has/have the necessary form(s) been completed, witnessed, and submitted by the due deadline?	
APPOINTMENT OF AGENTS	
• If required, have the forms for the appointment of polling agents, verification and counting agents and postal vote opening agents been completed and submitted to the Returning Officer by the due deadline(s)?	
DECLARATION AND RETURN OF CANDIDATES ELECTION EXPENSES	
• Have the "Declaration by Candidates" and "Return of Election Expenses" forms been submitted to the Returning Officer by the due deadline – even if it is a "Nil" return?	
REGISTER OF ELECTORS and ABSENT VOTER LISTS	
• Have you submitted Register and/or Absent Voter List requests by the due deadline (<i>if required</i>)?	
• For candidates who have withdrawn or were not elected: Has any paper version of the Register of Electors been sent back to Shropshire Council's Returning Officer?	
DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE AND MEMBERS INTERESTS	
• For elected candidates: Has the Declaration of Acceptance of Office been signed and witnessed?	
• For elected candidates: Has a Declaration of Members Interests Form been completed and submitted to Shropshire Council's Monitoring Officer as soon as taking up office?	

LOCAL TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

**For use by a
Candidate validly
nominated for a
Town or Parish
Council Election**

Notice of Withdrawal

ELECTION OF TOWN/PARISH COUNCILLOR FOR

Name of Town/Parish Council	
Name of Town/Parish Ward (<i>if applicable</i>)	
Election Date:	4 th May 2017

To be completed by Candidates withdrawing their nomination. This form must be delivered to the Returning Officer, at the place fixed for the delivery of nomination papers and must be received by **4pm on Tuesday 4th April 2017**. (If the candidate is outside the United Kingdom, please contact the Returning Officer direct).

I (<i>Candidate's Name</i>)	
of (<i>Candidate's Address</i>)	

having been nominated, **withdraw** my nomination as a candidate for the above election.

Section 1 – To be completed by the Candidate in the presence of a Witness

Signature of Candidate		Date	
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Section 2 – To be completed by the Witness named above

Signature of Witness		Date	
Print Name of Witness (in BLOCK CAPITALS)			

For official use only

Lodged: _____ (date) _____ (time)

Request for the Electoral Register (Campaign Purposes) – May 2017

NOTE:

Your Electoral Register can only be supplied, at the earliest, on the last date allowed for the Notice of Election to be published, which is 27th March 2017. It may however be prudent to wait to find out whether your area is contested before applying for a copy of the Register. It is therefore recommended that you do not submit this form before 5th April.

Town/Parish Council Name	
Town/Parish Ward (if applicable)	

This completed form must be submitted to the **Electoral Registration Officer, Shropshire Council, The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND** or can be scanned and e-mailed to elections@shropshire.gov.uk.

The form must be completed by the Candidate.

SUPPLY AND USE OF THE ELECTORAL REGISTER INFORMATION	
Name of Candidate	
I understand that my Register will be supplied and other than for electoral purposes, purposes in connection with my campaign and purposes of complying with the controls on donations prescribed by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or the Representation of the People Act 1983, no person employed by or assisting me or my party shall:	
(a) Supply a copy of the Register to any person; (b) Disclose any information contained within it unless that information is also contained with the Open Register; (c) Make use of such information.	
Candidate's Signature	

REGISTER DELIVERY DETAILS		
My application is for the electoral register in (<u>one</u> box only):		
Paper format		<i>If you request a paper copy, you must return it to the Elections Office at the end of the election campaign.</i>
Data format		
Postal Delivery Address or Email Address for Data Versions:		

CONTACT DETAILS (in case of query)		
Telephone		Mobile
Email (if not used above)		

Request for the Absent Voters List – May 2017

NOTE:

The Absent Voter Lists will only be supplied, after the relevant closing dates for **postal votes**, which is 18th April, and **proxy votes**, which is 25th April, as appropriate. It may be prudent to wait to find out whether your area is contested before applying for a copy of the List(s). It is therefore recommended that you do not submit this form before 5th April.

Town/Parish Council Name	
Town/Parish Council Ward (if applicable)	

This completed form must be submitted to the **Electoral Registration Officer, Shropshire Council, The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND** or can be scanned and e-mailed to elections@shropshire.gov.uk.
The form must be completed by the Candidate.

SUPPLY AND USE OF THE ABSENT VOTER LIST INFORMATION		
Name of Candidate		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">I declare that I am a Candidate at the above named election.I will use my copy of the Absent Voter List (postal and/or proxy voters list) for electoral purposes only.I will only allow others who are assisting me in my campaign to use my copy of this data for the same purposes only.I understand that any use other than electoral purposes is illegal, with a maximum fine of £5,000.		
Candidate's Signature		
APPLICATION AND DELIVERY DETAILS		
My application is for the following Absent Voter Lists:- <i>(Tick as many boxes as you wish)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The final list of postal voters		
<input type="checkbox"/> The final list of proxy voters		
Please supply the information in the following format:- <i>(Tick one box only)</i>		
Paper format		
Data format		
Postal Delivery Address or Email Address for Data Versions:		
CONTACT DETAILS (in case of query)		
Telephone		Mobile
Email (if not used above)		

TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2017
Form for the Appointment of Verification Agents & Guests

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: WEDNESDAY 26TH APRIL 2017

~ Please do not submit this form until after 5th April ~

Please return your completed form to the Returning Officer at The Shirehall,
Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.

Once this form has been lodged NO SUBSTITUTIONS can be made to those people listed.

The VERIFICATION OF VOTES will take place at:

SHREWSBURY SPORTS VILLAGE, SUNDORNE ROAD, SHREWSBURY
Commencing at 10PM on THURSDAY 4TH MAY

Entry to the Verification Hall will be strictly monitored and Candidates, their Appointed Agent(s) and Guest(s) MUST produce their official appointment letter to gain entry.

Each Candidate is able to attend in person and may also appoint a maximum of TWO ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIVES, namely:

- Their Spouse/Partner
- And One Guest
- OR one named alternative representative for each category above

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL CANDIDATE DETAILS		
Candidate Name		
Town/Parish Council		
I hereby give you notice that I have appointed the following person(s) to attend the VERIFICATION OF VOTES at 10PM on Thursday 4 th May 2017		
NAME		ADDRESS FOR ENTRY TICKET
(1)		
(2)		

SIGNED: _____ **Date:** _____
Candidate

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	Date Rec'd	Processed By
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TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2017

Form for the Appointment of Counting Agents & Guests

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: WEDNESDAY 26TH APRIL 2017

~ Please do not submit this form until after 5th April ~

Please return your completed form to the Returning Officer at The Shirehall,
Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.

Once this form has been lodged NO SUBSTITUTIONS can be made to those people listed.

The COUNTING OF VOTES will take place at:

SHREWSBURY SPORTS VILLAGE, SUNDORNE ROAD, SHREWSBURY

Commencing at 10AM on SATURDAY 6TH MAY

Entry to the Count Hall will be strictly monitored and Candidates, their Appointed Agent(s) and Guest(s) MUST produce their official appointment letter to gain entry.

Each Candidate is able to attend in person and may also appoint a maximum of TWO ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIVES, namely:

- Their Spouse/Partner
- And One Guest
- OR one named alternative representative for each category above

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL CANDIDATE DETAILS		
Candidate Name		
Town/Parish Council		
I hereby give you notice that I have appointed the following person(s) to attend the COUNTING OF VOTES at 10AM on Saturday 6 th May 2017		
NAME		ADDRESS FOR ENTRY TICKET
(1)		
(2)		

SIGNED: _____ **Date:** _____
Candidate

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	Date Rec'd		Processed By
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TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2017

Form for the Appointment Agent(s) to Attend the Opening of the Postal Votes

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: MONDAY 24TH APRIL 2017

Please return your completed form to the Returning Officer at The Shirehall,
Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.

- **Postal Votes will be opened daily in the Council Chamber at the Shirehall in Shrewsbury from 8.30am on working days between 25th April and 4th May inclusive.**
- **Additional Opening Sessions will be held at Shrewsbury Sports Village at 8pm and 10pm on Thursday 4th May.**

Should you wish to appoint an Agent to attend any of the Opening Sessions at the Shirehall, please complete and submit this form at **Section A**. Appointed Agents may attend the Opening Session at Shrewsbury Sports Village at 8pm on Thursday 4th May, but they can only be one of the people named in your allocation of two who are attending the Verification Process. Any person so appointed, will be required to leave the Verification Hall prior to the commencement of the formal verification process, if the 8pm Opening Session has ended early. Please complete and submit this form at **Section B**.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL CANDIDATE DETAILS	
Candidate Name	
Town/Parish Council	
SECTION A	I hereby give you notice that I have appointed the following person to attend the OPENING OF POSTAL VOTES (VARIOUS DATES) at The Shirehall, Shrewsbury
NAME	ADDRESS (<i>Tickets will not be issued for these sessions</i>)
SECTION B	I hereby give you notice that I have appointed the following person to attend the OPENING OF POSTAL VOTES at Shrewsbury Sports Village commencing at 8PM on Thursday 4 th May 2017
NAME	ADDRESS FOR ENTRY TICKET

SIGNED: _____ **Date:** _____
Candidate

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	Date Rec'd		Processed By
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