

Parish Clerks / Candidates Briefing

PCC, City Council Wards & Parish Elections

Thursday 2 May 2024

Peter Taylor - Electoral Services Manager

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What we'll
cover
today

- Background, context and who's who
- New Elections Act changes and Voter ID refresher
- Key dates / election timetable
- **Nomination Forms**
- Contested and uncontested elections
- The Poll and Count
- **What happens after the election**
- Questions

The Electoral Commission

- Who's who
- Sharon Bridglalsingh is the Returning Officer and is responsible for running the election
 - Sharon Bridglalsingh is also the Electoral Registration Officer and is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters lists
 - Michael Bracey, Pete Brown and Peter Taylor are Deputy Returning Officers
 - Contact details are provided later

Context

- Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner – Salmon Ballot Paper
- 19 City Wards - Yellow Ballot Paper
- 17 Parish Areas - Lilac Ballot paper
 - 55 areas / wards
 - 212 vacancies
- A General Election (if called) on the same day will be on White Paper
- 135 Polling stations (3 portacabins)
- Electorate of 202,000 & 37,000 Postal Voters
- Over 600 Election Staff
- Turnout in 2023 - 30.90%
- New Count Venue - Marshall Arena, MK Dons Stadium
- Further Election Act Changes:
 - Postal Voting Rule Changes
 - Proxy Voting Rule Changes
 - Handling Postal Votes

More information at: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/voter-ID, or www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id

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Voter ID refresh

- Since 4 May 2023, voters have had to show acceptable photographic ID before voting in a polling station:
 - Passport
 - Driving licence (including provisional license)
 - Blue badge
 - Certain concessionary travel cards
 - Identity card with PASS mark (includes the [All in 1 MK card](#))
 - Biometric Immigration document
 - Defence identity card
 - Certain national identity cards
- Expired documents can still be used, provided the photo remains a good likeness
- Those without ID can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate until **5pm on 24 April** (416 were issued for May 2023)
- A Temporary VAC (produced locally) can be issued if a VAC was applied for by the deadline and is unlikely to be received in time.

What Changes Affect May?

The new requirements of Elections Act 2022 that will be in effect for May 2024 polls alongside Voter ID:

- Postal and Proxy Voting Applications made online only since 31 Oct 2023 (paper applications have to be rekeyed online by our staff)
- If General Election on same day - Overseas electors (removal of the 15 year limit) since 16 January have no restrictions on registering to vote as long as they were resident / registered in the UK before leaving.
- Postal Vote Handling and secrecy changes (more on this later)
- Campaign Expenditure Limit increased in Nov 2023

Postal & Proxy Application Changes

- Electors are now required to provide more information when applying for an absent vote such as NINO
- A proxy can now only vote on behalf of no more than four electors, of which no more than two may be on behalf of other domestic electors
- Applications for both proxy and postal vote can now be made online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote and www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote .
- We can accept paper forms, but this is not the preferred route.

Postal Vote Handling and Secrecy

- The provisions introduce a ban on the handling of PVs by political campaigners unless their own or close family member.
- Limits on handing in postal votes at polling stations / civic offices.
- No more than 5 can be handed in (plus their own) and a form to be completed.
- No longer able to just have a ballot box to drop them into unless form filled.
- Rejection letters sent post-poll.
- Secrecy requirements which apply at a polling station are being extended to postal and proxy votes - offence to try to find out how someone has voted on their PV.

Election timetable

Part I

Full timetable with local dates available at:
www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/elections-2024

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Publication of Notice of Election | Monday 25 March |
| Nominations commence | 10am - Monday 25 March |
| Close of nominations | 4pm - Friday 5 April |
| Publication of statement of persons nominated | 4pm - Monday 8 April |
| Publication of Notice of Uncontested election | Tuesday 9 April |
| Deadline for applications to register to vote | Midnight - Tuesday 16 April |
| Deadline for new postal vote applications / changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications | 5pm - Wednesday 17 April |
| Publication of notice of poll / situation of polling stations | Wednesday 24 April |
| Deadline for applications for new proxy votes | 5pm - Wednesday 24 April |

Election timetable

Part II

Full timetable with local dates available at:
www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/elections-2024

| | |
|---|--|
| Deadline for applications for a Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document | 5pm - Wednesday 24 April |
| Appointment of counting and polling agents | Thursday 25 April |
| Polling day | 7am - 10pm Thursday 2 May |
| Deadline to apply to vote by emergency proxy | 5pm - polling day |
| Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends | 5pm - polling day |
| Alterations to register to correct clerical error | 9pm - polling day |
| Deadline for production of Temporary Voter Authority Certificates | 10pm - polling day |
| Return of election expenses | + 28 days from election Thursday 30 May |
| Return of Declaration of Interest | + 28 days from result Friday 1 June or becoming a member. |

Qualifications

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

- be at least 18 years of age
- be a British, qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or national of an EU member state.

Also at least one of the following:

- Registered local government elector for parish area (not required to be in the parish ward)
- Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the parish area during the whole 12 months preceding the day of nomination and day of election.
- Principal or only place of work (including unpaid) during last 12 months has been in the parish area
- Lived in the parish area or within 3 miles of it during the last 12 months

Disqualifications

A person **cannot** be a candidate if they:

- are **employed by the parish council** or hold a paid office under the parish council (including joint boards or committees).
- 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
- subject to the notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the **Sexual Offences Act 2003**
- for polls on or after 2 May 2024, 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

Nomination papers

- Available on our website at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/elections-2024
- A nomination form has been pre prepared for every parish and parish ward
- A map has been prepared showing Parish and ward boundaries which is also available at the above web address
- We will accept bookings for submission of nomination forms from 11 March

Submitting nomination papers

The **three** documents that must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm on Friday 5 April, are:


1. the nomination form
 2. their home address form
 3. the consent to nomination
-

Party candidates will also need to submit, by that time:

- a) A certificate authorising the use of a party name/ registered description on the ballot paper
- b) A written request to use one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper (optional)

Submitting nomination papers

- The nomination form, home address form and consent to nomination **must be delivered by hand** (does not need to be the candidate) and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means.
- Take care when completing your nomination papers, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination.
- Complete nomination papers early and make an appointment for us to provide an informal check (can be remote) if required before formally submitting them.
- Forms must be submitted to Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ between **10.00am – 4.00pm Monday – Friday**, from **Monday 25 March until Friday 5 April (working days only)**.
- There will be two teams on duty to receive forms but you may need to be patient – allow an hour from start to finish



You will need to enter via main reception at Civic, and confirm to security that you have an appointment with, or ask to speak to a member of the Electoral Services team – PLEASE DO NOT HAND FORMS TO RECEPTION OR SECURITY, OR POST THROUGH THE LETTER BOX AT CIVIC

Nomination form

| 1a – Nomination paper | | Office use only | |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Parish election in England | | Date received | Time received |
| | | Initial | NI |
| *ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCILLORS for the | | | |
| Central Bletchley | ward of the | | |
| parish of | Bletchley & Fenny Stratford | | |
| Date of election: | Thursday 2 May 2024 | | |
| We, the undersigned, being local government electors for the said *ward/parish do hereby nominate the under-mentioned person as a candidate at the said election. | | | |
| Candidate's Details | | | |
| Candidate's surname | | Mr/Mrs/Miss/ Ms/Dr/Other | |
| Other forenames in full | | | |
| Commonly used surname (if any) | | | |
| Commonly used forenames (if any) | | | |
| Description (if any) Use no more than six words | | | |
| | Signature | Print name | Electoral number |
| | | | Polling District Elector Number |
| Proposer | | | |
| Seconder | | | |

- Include your full name
- Optional: use commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than actual name and wish to use it instead.
- Description field – 3 options:
 - leave blank
 - **Up to six words of your choice**
 - party candidates can use party name or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer

The Electoral Commission

Nomination form

- Subscribers: **two** subscribers are required for the parish or parish ward as appropriate.
- Must sign & print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register in force on 1 March (must be 18 on day of poll)
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** completing the candidates name, address and description fields on the form
- Check that they haven't already subscribed more forms than allowed

| 1a – Nomination paper | | Office use only | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|----|
| Parish election in England | | Date received | Time received | Initials | Nr |
| *ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCILLORS for the | | | | | |
| Central Bletchley | ward of the | | | | |
| parish of | Bletchley & Fenny Stratford | | | | |
| Date of election: | Thursday 2 May 2024 | | | | |
| We, the undersigned, being local government electors for the said *ward/parish do hereby nominate the under-mentioned person as a candidate at the said election. | | | | | |
| Candidate's Details | | | | | |
| Candidate's surname | | Mr/Mrs/Miss/ Ms/Dn/Other | | | |
| Other forenames in full | | | | | |
| Commonly used surname (if any) | | | | | |
| Commonly used forenames (if any) | | | | | |
| Description (if any) Use no more than six words | | | | | |
| | Signature | Print name | Electoral number | | |
| | | | Polling District | Electoral Number | |
| Proposer | | | | | |
| Seconder | | | | | |

Q – *How do I know if my subscribers are on the register and what their number is?*

A – *You can contact us and we'll tell you, or the parish clerk may have a copy of the register. You can also request a copy of the register from MKCC.*

Home address form

Part 1 of the home address form must state:

- your full name and home address in full
- your qualifying address, or, where you have declared on your consent to nomination that you meet more than one qualification, your qualifying addresses
- 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

| | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------|---------------|----------|-----|
| 1b – Home address form | | Office use only | | | |
| Parish elections in England | | Date received | Time received | Initials | No. |
| *ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCILLORS for the | | | | | |
| Central Bletchley | | ward of the | | | |
| parish of | | Bletchley & Fenny Stratford | | | |
| Date of election: | | Thursday 2 May 2024 | | | |

You must complete Part 1

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

| | |
|---|---------|
| Part 1: To be completed by all candidates in England | |
| Full name of candidate | |
| Home address (in full) | |
| Qualifying address: Add your qualifying address, or qualifying addresses (in full) to each of the relevant qualifications below (you can complete more than one qualification). | |
| Qualifications that apply (tick those which apply) | Address |
| (a) I am registered as a local government elector for the area of the parish named above | |
| (b) I have, during the whole of the preceding 12 months occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the parish named above | |
| (c) my principal or only place of work during the preceding 12 months has been in the parish named above | |
| (d) I have during the whole of the preceding 12 months resided in the parish named above or within 4.8 kilometres of it. | |
| Witness details | |
| Full name of the person who will witness the candidate's consent to nomination form | |
| Full home address of the person who will witness the candidate's consent to nomination form | |

Home address form

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Part 2: To be completed only if you do not wish your home address to be made public. | |
| Note: Please submit this part (part 2) of the home address form with your nomination papers, even if your home address is to be made public. | |
| <small>If you request that your home address is not made public then your address will not appear on the statement of persons nominated, notice of poll or the ballot paper. Instead the name of the relevant area in which your home address is situated (or country, if outside the UK), as explained below, will appear on the statement of persons nominated, notice of poll and the ballot papers.</small> | |
| Statement: I require my home address not to be made public | |
| The relevant area my home address is situated in: | Milton Keynes |
| OR | |
| My home address is situated outside the UK. My home address is situated in: | (insert name of country) |
| Signature of candidate (only required where Part 2 above has been completed) | |
| Candidate's signature: | |
| Date: | |

Deliver both Parts 1 and 2 with the nomination form to the Returning Officer by no later than 4pm on the last day to deliver nominations

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),
- Relevant area means the Council area and not the Parish or the Parish Ward eg Milton Keynes
- if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which your home address is situated.

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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 (earliest can be signed is **5 March**)
- witness' name and signature

| 1c – Candidate's consent to nomination | | Office use only | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------|----------|-----|
| Parish elections in England | | Date received | Time received | Initials | No. |
| *You must declare that you meet at least one of the listed qualification(s) below and may declare more than one qualification if applicable. To do this, strike through any that do not apply. Any qualification(s) that apply must match the information given on your home address form. | | | | | |
| Date of election: | Thursday 2 May 2024 | | | | |
| I (name in full): | | | | | |
| hereby consent to my nomination as a candidate for election as councillor for the: | Central Bletchley | ward | | | |
| of the parish of: | Bletchley & Fenny Stratford | | | | |
| I declare that on the day of my nomination, I am qualified and that, if there is a poll on the day of election, I will be qualified to be so elected by virtue of being on that day or those days a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of a Member State of the European Union, who has attained the age of 18 years and that: | | | | | |
| *a. I am registered as a local government elector for the area of the parish named above; or | | | | | |
| *b. I have, during the whole of the 12 months preceding that day or those days occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the parish named above; or | | | | | |
| *c. my principal or only place of work during those 12 months has been in the parish named above; or | | | | | |
| *d. I have during the whole of those 12 months resided in that parish named above or within 4.8 kilometres of it. | | | | | |
| I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief I am not disqualified for being elected by reason of any disqualification set out in, or decision made under, sections 80 or 81A of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 34 of the Localism Act 2011, or section 30 of the Elections Act 2022 (copies of which are printed overleaf). | | | | | |
| Note 1: A candidate who is qualified by more than one qualification may complete any of those which may apply. | | | | | |
| Note 2: Disqualifications set out under s.81A of the Local Government Act 1972 only apply to a person who is subject to any relevant notification requirements, or a relevant order, made on or after 28 June 2022. | | | | | |
| Date of birth: | Signature: | Date of consent: | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Witness: I confirm the above-mentioned candidate signed the declaration in my presence. | | | | | |
| Witness (name in full): | | | | | |
| Witness's signature: | | | | | |

Contested or Uncontested Election?

We can confirm either way from 8 April – uncontested notices will be published on the 9 April.

Contested

- If there are more candidates than seats after the deadline for withdrawals, there will be a poll on the 2 May organised by MKCC
- Currently, MKCC does not charge parishes for the cost of the administration of scheduled contested elections held in May.

Uncontested

- If the number of validly nominated candidates is less than or equal to the number of seats to be filled in the electoral area, those candidates are declared to be elected
- Parish or Town Councils can co-opt to vacancies that remain after the close of withdrawals. We will write to you confirm.

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Contested or Uncontested Election?

- If the election is contested, candidates will need to be aware:
- That there are campaign and spending rules (maximum amount that can be spent)
 - [EC guidance on spending](#)
 - That there are campaign rules (must be imprints on campaign material)
 - [EC guidance on campaigning](#)
 - They can observe electoral processes if they would like
 - [EC guidance on attending key processes](#)
 - They can attend the count on Friday 3 May (we will work out what order we do things in, when we know what is contested)

Polling Day and the Count

Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm.
- Office open 6am to 10pm for queries or problems 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 – BIG CHANGES!
- A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in a postal vote can do so after 10pm.

Counting of votes

- The count will be held for contested elections on **Friday 3 May from 9am** at:
 - Marshall Arena, Stadium MK, Stadium Way, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK1 1ST
 - Parking is available at the site
- Candidates, election agents, counting agents appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend.
- We will communicate the amount of Counting Agents that can be appointed per contest after the close of nominations.
- Depending on the number of contested elections we may be able to allow clerks to attend

After the election

Taking Up office?

After scheduled elections

- New Councillors take up office on the day existing Councillors retire (regardless of if the position(s) were filled or not). In May 2024 this will be Tuesday 7 May.
- This is the case regardless of whether the elections were contested or uncontested.

After a co-option

- NALC advice is that co-opted Councillors should not take up office until after the end of the meeting at which they were co-opted.

Acceptance of office

- Must be in prescribed form, and made in presence of proper officer or another Councillor.
- Existing Councillors who are re-elected must sign a new acceptance of office.
- Councillors cannot sit and vote until they have signed their acceptance of office.

What needs to be returned?

Spending Returns

- Due 28 calendar days after date of election even if no expenses incurred (Thursday 30 May)
- No spending will be reimbursed
- Failure to submit a spending return is a criminal offence enforceable by police
- Send to elections@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Declaration of Acceptance of Office

- Clerks must arrange and collect these before or at the first meeting of the parish council (or a time agreed at the first meeting)
- They do not need to be returned to MKCC

Register of Interest

- Must be returned to Clerk and MKCC within 28 days of the election re-election or co-option.
- Please collect locally and return to MKCC together if possible.
- Send scanned and completed forms to dsbusinesssupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk
- Don't forget sensitive interests..

Electoral
Commission
Briefing –
Wednesday 6
March
12.00pm to
1.00pm

- Electoral Commission is hosting a pre-election webinar for candidates.
- Webinar will focus on the spending and donation rules.
- Please complete their online form [here](#) to sign-up.

Contact
details

Peter Taylor - Electoral Services Manager

Peter.taylor@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk & 01908 253930

Pete Brown - Head of Democratic Services

Peter.brown@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk & 01908 253671

Dominique Scholes - Senior Electoral Services Officer

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Questions