ELECTIONS FOR PARISH COUNCILS
7th MAY 2015

Guidance Notes for Candidates

The Returning Officer
The Returning Officer for all parish council elections within the Bromsgrove District Council area is Kevin Dicks.

The Returning Officer for Feckenham Parish Council in the Redditch Borough Council area is Sue Hanley.

Parishes and Timetable of the Elections
The ordinary elections in 2015 are being held on 7th May 2015, when they are being combined with elections for the District / Borough Council and the Parliamentary General election. The parish elections begin with the publication of the Notice of Election on Monday 16th March 2015. The statutory timetable for the elections and a list of parishes and seats is included in the appendix.

The Nomination Process
The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) Rules 2006 state the requirements of a nomination, and the Returning Officer must rule as invalid any nominations that fail to meet these requirements.

Qualifications to be a Councillor
To be eligible to stand as a councillor, you must be:

- a British citizen, eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union citizen and
- on the day of nomination that they are 18 or over.

In addition, the person must meet at least one of the following qualifications:-

(1) on the relevant day and thereafter they continue to be on the electoral register for the parish, or
(2) during the whole of the twelve months before that day they have owned or tenanted land or premises in the parish, or
(3) during the whole of the twelve months before that day their principal or only place of work has been in the parish, or
(4) during the whole of the twelve months before that day they have resided in the parish or within 4.8 km (three miles) of it.

NOTE – it is in the parish, not just the parish ward.

Certain people are disqualified from standing – please see Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 78A of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 34 of the Localism Act 2011 (copies of which are enclosed).

The Nomination Paper

The rules are very strict and it is important that time is taken in its completion:-

the parish or parish ward name – should be clearly stated
the candidate’s full names - the surname and other names must be in full (initials would invalidate the form), if the candidate commonly uses a different surname or forename he/she may include those;
the home address must be in full;
and, if desired, a description - the description can be left blank, or include the word Independent, or a six words description. But the description must not be confused with a party political description unless it is authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the registered nominating officer of the political party. The description allowed on the party certificate must match exactly the description used on the nomination paper. This authorisation must be delivered with the nomination paper.

The nomination paper must be signed by two electors of the electoral area as proposer and seconder. The "electoral area" is the parish, or if the parish is divided into wards, the parish ward for which the candidate is seeking election.

The nomination paper shall give the electoral letter and number of each person subscribing it. A person shall not subscribe more nomination papers than there are vacancies to be filled in the electoral area. Thus, for example, if the parish/parish ward has five councillors, a person may not subscribe more than five nomination papers, and, if they do, the sixth nomination paper will be invalid.

In the rules "elector" means a person who is registered in the register of local government electors for the electoral area in question on 2nd March 2015, and would include a person then shown as below voting age if (but only if) it appears from the register that he/she will be of voting age on the day fixed for the poll – PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU USE A CURRENT COPY OF THE REGISTER OF ELECTORS
Consent to Nomination
A person shall not be validly nominated unless his/her consent to nomination is given in writing on the form which will be supplied in the nomination pack. Candidates should be advised to complete, on the form, as many of the relevant qualifications as apply. The consent to nomination must include the candidate’s date of birth and must be attested by one witness (who may be any person).

If the candidate has been authorised by a political party to use a description in their nomination, they can also request that one of the party’s official emblems is used on the ballot paper next to their name. That request must be made in writing by the close of nomination.

Delivery of Nomination Papers
Candidates can request an informal check of their nomination papers by making an appointment with the Elections Office team.

IMPORTANT – Nomination Papers MUST be delivered by **4PM on THURSDAY 9th APRIL 2015** to the Returning Officer, Room 8, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove B60 1AA
(for Feckenham Parish Council only, this will be Room 2.6/2.7, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch B98 8AH)

Nominations MUST be handed to the Returning Officer, or Deputy, by the candidate or a person trusted by the candidate. **Posting or leaving at reception is not accepted as delivery and there is no leeway.** Any nomination papers received after 4PM on 9th April will be invalidated.

Nomination papers can be inspected at the Returning Officer's office during normal office hours from close of nominations at 4pm on Thursday 9th April until the day before polling day, Wednesday 6th May.

Statement of Persons Nominated
The Returning Officer must publish a statement of persons nominated by 5pm on Friday 10th April. It will appear on the principal Council’s website and a copy of the relevant part will be posted to each Parish Administrator.

Withdrawal of Candidature
A candidate may withdraw their candidature, a form is include in the appendix, his form must be signed by them and witnessed by one other person and delivered to the Returning Officer, Room 8, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove B60 1AA
A candidate who is validly nominated for more than one ward of the same parish must withdraw from their candidature in all those wards except one, and if they do not so withdraw, they shall be deemed to have withdrawn from their candidature in all those wards.

Statement of Persons Nominated
The Return Officer will publish a statement of persons nominated by 4pm Friday 10th April 2015 and will appear on the principal Council’s website. The Returning Officer will know the status of the elections for each of the parish/parish wards in the District/ Borough area. Where the number of candidates for an electoral area is less than or equal to the number of seats to be filled, those candidates are declared to be elected. Some Parish Councils may need to co-opt members to make up their full quota of councillors; others will have their full quota. Those councils with more candidates than vacancies will require the election in that area to proceed to a poll.

Uncontested Elections and Co-option
The Returning Officer will issue a notice to the uncontested election candidates to inform them of their election as councillors. This notice will remind the candidates about their duties with regard to the completion of a declaration and return of election expenses.

A notice will also be issued to the Parish Administrators to inform them of the outcome of any uncontested elections.

A Declaration of Acceptance of Office form should be signed by each councillor and attested by the Parish Administrator as the proper officer of the council before or at the first meeting of the parish council after their election. The declaration form also contains a reference to the Code of Conduct for Members.

Contested Elections and Polls
The Notice of Poll will be published on in the week commencing 13th April. Polling will be from 7.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. on Thursday, 7th May

Candidates will be sent further instructions and documents relating to postal vote opening the day of poll, the verification and counting of ballot papers.
Verification and count
The verification of all ballot papers for the combined local and Parliamentary elections will take place on the night of Thursday 7\textsuperscript{th} May 2015 at The Dolphin Centre School Drive Bromsgrove B60 1AY commencing at 10 pm followed by the Parliamentary election count.

The verified ballot papers for the District/Borough elections and Parish elections will be stored securely overnight and the Count will be held on the following day, Friday 8\textsuperscript{th} May 2015 at the Dolphin Centre.
(\textit{for Feckenham Parish Council only – verification and the count will take place at the Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch B98 8AH})

Declaration of result
Following the declaration of the result at the count by the Returning Officer the results will be available on the principal Council's Elections website.

The Returning Officer will issue a notice to the Parish Administrators to inform them of the results of contested elections. A notice will also be issued to the successful candidates to inform them of their election and their requirement to sign their declaration of acceptance of office before acting as councillor.

This notice will remind the candidates about their duties with regard to the completion of a declaration and return of election expenses within 28 days, even if they have incurred nil expenditure. Please note that election expenses are not reimbursed.

Election expenses
All candidates contesting parish elections are subject to controls on their election expenses and are required to submit a return of election expenses to the proper officer of the principal authority within 28 days after the day of the election. This return must be accompanied by a declaration by the candidate as to their election expenses – \textit{see enclosed Electoral Commission document and forms}.

A candidate at a parish council election is allowed to incur expenditure up to a limit of £740 plus 6p for every entry in the register of electors on the last date for the publication of notice of election.

Any claim against any person in respect of election expenses incurred by or on behalf of a candidate that is not sent in to the candidate within 14 days of the day after the election must not be paid.
All election expenses must be paid within **21 days** of the day after the election; otherwise they must not be paid. Candidates should note that for all payments of £10 or more an accompanying invoice or receipt must be submitted with the return.

**For further assistance**
The following references may be helpful:


Guidance can also be found on the National Association of Local Councils website [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk)

Bromsgrove District Council or Redditch Borough Council website will include the various statutory notices that the Returning Officer is required to publish [www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/elections](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/elections)  [www.redditchbc.gov.uk/elections](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/elections)

The Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001
The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006

**You can contact the Elections Office on:**

**Helpline:** 01527 881 421

**Email:** [elections@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:elections@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

**Websites:** [www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/elections](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/elections)

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk/elections](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/elections)

**PLEASE NOTE:** These notes are only intended a brief guidance – candidates must always seek their own legal advice on any matters relating to the election.