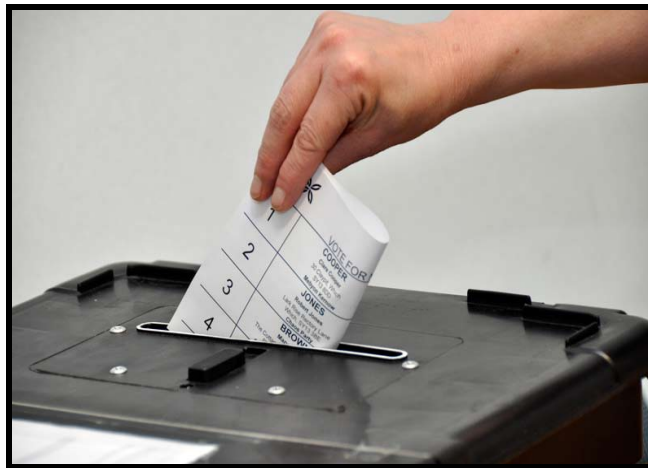




Shropshire  
Council

# GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR PROSPECTIVE UNITARY CANDIDATES



May 2021 Local Government Elections

[www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

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**MARCH 2021**

# MESSAGE FROM CLAIRE PORTER THE RETURNING OFFICER

Elections are taking place on **Thursday 6 May** for both the unitary and town/parish tiers of local government, and those candidates who are successfully elected will take up office for a period of four years.

The Police and Crime Commissioner Election for the West Mercia Police Area, which was postponed from May 2020, will also take place on the same day.

I am the Returning Officer for all unitary, town and parish council elections being held within Shropshire Council's area. Due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, this election will be like no other, and has provided my Elections Team with a whole new set of challenges to make sure that candidates, the electorate and those working at both polling stations and the counting of votes, will all feel safe throughout the electoral process, whilst working to maintain the usual high standards of service provided at all elections.

My Team has provided extra guidance on items which have been affected by Covid-19 as part of this pack, but should you have any other queries on our Coronavirus arrangements or any other topic during the election period, please contact a member of my Team (preferably by email), who will endeavour to help you with any queries you may have – [elections@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:elections@shropshire.gov.uk).

I hope that this guidance document will answer many of your initial queries. Please be aware however that it is not intended as an authoritative interpretation of the law, and candidates are advised to seek their own legal advice where appropriate, which may involve you contacting the Electoral Commission direct. Their website address, which contains their full email and telephone contact details, is:-

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

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

[Local elections in England | Electoral Commission](#)

The Electoral Commission is the UK's independent elections watchdog and provides information on how to stand as a candidate, conduct your election campaign and the current spending limits for candidates.



***Claire Porter, Returning Officer  
Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND.***

I would also urge you to make reference to our webpage – [Unitary election 6 May 2021 | Shropshire Council](#) – which will provide you with information throughout the election process.

Our website address is [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

You can also follow us on  
Twitter - **@ShropCouncil**

Or email us at [elections@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:elections@shropshire.gov.uk)

The aim of this document is to provide specific information for the arrangements put in place for Shropshire, and covers the following topics:-

Important Election Information about nomination papers

- (1) The unitary electoral divisions and number of seats
- (2) The election timetable
- (3) Candidates, nominations, withdrawal of candidature and appointment of election agents
- (4) Applying for a postal vote or appointing a proxy
- (5) Tellers, polling and counting agents
- (6) Polling day, polling stations and verification/the count
- (7) Post-election matters
- (8) Election expenses and the election campaign
- (9) Candidates Checklist
- (10) Appendices and Forms:
  - *Appendix 1 - Guidance on the use of “commonly used names”*
  - *Appendix 2 – Postal voting quick guide for party workers*
  - *Appendix 3 – Postal voting – Code of conduct for campaigners*
  - *Appendix 4 – Candidates Imprints for the 2021 election*
  - *Appendix 5 – Tellers In and Around Polling Places*
  - *Request forms for the electoral register and absent voter lists (postal and proxy)*
  - *Notice of withdrawal form*
  - *Forms to appoint agents/guests to attend the verification and the count, and agents to the postal vote opening sessions*

# **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, their agent, or a person they trust.

There is **no change** to this requirement due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic.

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.

We would advise you, wherever possible, to deposit your completed nomination paper as soon as possible to avoid any waiting times.

Due to Covid restrictions you may have to wait outside the building until a member of the team is available.

## **COVID ADVICE:**

*For your own safety, the safety of the staff on duty, as well as others attending the same venue, you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand sanitizer and observe social distancing rules when submitting your nomination papers.*

*If there is a one-way system in place at the location where your nomination papers are to be submitted, please ensure you adhere to the restrictions in place.*

## PART 1 – The unitary electoral divisions and number of seats

|                                 |   |                         |   |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| Abbey                           | 1 | Ludlow North            | 1 |
| Albrighton                      | 1 | Ludlow South            | 1 |
| Alveley & Claverley             | 1 | Market Drayton East     | 1 |
| Bagley                          | 1 | Market Drayton West     | 2 |
| Battlefield                     | 1 | Meole                   | 1 |
| Bayston Hill, Column & Sutton   | 3 | Monkmoor                | 1 |
| Belle Vue                       | 1 | Much Wenlock            | 1 |
| Bishop's Castle                 | 1 | Oswestry East           | 2 |
| Bowbrook                        | 1 | Oswestry South          | 1 |
| Bridgnorth East & Astley Abbots | 2 | Oswestry West           | 1 |
| Bridgnorth West & Tasley        | 2 | Porthill                | 1 |
| Broseley                        | 1 | Prees                   | 1 |
| Brown Clee                      | 1 | Quarry & Coton Hill     | 1 |
| Burnell                         | 1 | Radbrook                | 1 |
| Castlefields & Ditherington     | 1 | Rea Valley              | 1 |
| Cheswardine                     | 1 | Ruyton & Baschurch      | 1 |
| Chirbury & Worthen              | 1 | Severn Valley           | 1 |
| Church Stretton & Craven Arms   | 2 | Shawbury                | 1 |
| Clee                            | 1 | Shifnal North           | 1 |
| Cleobury Mortimer               | 2 | Shifnal South & Cosford | 1 |
| Clun                            | 1 | St. Martins             | 1 |
| Copthorne                       | 1 | St. Oswald              | 1 |
| Corvedale                       | 1 | Sundorne                | 1 |
| Ellesmere Urban                 | 1 | Tern                    | 1 |
| Gobowen, Selattyn & Weston Rhyn | 2 | The Meres               | 1 |
| Harlescott                      | 1 | Underdale               | 1 |
| Highley                         | 1 | Wem                     | 2 |
| Hodnet                          | 1 | Whitchurch North        | 2 |
| Llanymynech                     | 1 | Whitchurch South        | 1 |
| Longden                         | 1 | Whittington             | 1 |
| Loton                           | 1 | Worfield                | 1 |
| Ludlow East                     | 1 |                         |   |

Please note that we are not able to supply copies of divisional maps to you.

You should seek to obtain your own copies, which you may be able to obtain from the **Ordnance Survey Website**: <http://election-maps.co.uk>

or from **Shropshire Council's Interactive Mapping Service**:  
<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/website-information/arcgis-interactive-mapping-service/>

## PART 2: The election timetable

The election timetable is set in law, but there is discretion for the returning officer to bring forward the date for the publication of the Notice of Election from the statutory publication date of Monday 29 March. Due to the number of seats being contested, the returning officer will publish the Notice of Election early - **Monday 15 March** - to allow candidates more time to submit their nomination papers. All deadlines within the timetable, must be strictly observed: where no time is specified in the timetable, it is assumed to be midnight on that day.

| <b>ELECTORAL EVENT</b>  | <b>DATE &amp; TIME (if applicable)</b>         |                       |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Publication of the "Notice of Election"   | Monday 15 March 2021                           |                       |
| <b>Offices Closed Good Friday (2<sup>nd</sup> April) to Easter Monday (5<sup>th</sup> April) inclusive</b>                                  |  |                       |
| Deadline for the receipt of nomination papers, consent to nomination forms and home address forms   | <b>4pm</b>                                     | Thursday 8 April 2021 |
| Withdrawal of candidature if no longer standing*  | <b>4pm</b>                                     | Thursday 8 April 2021 |
| Deadline for the appointment of election agents   | <b>4pm</b>                                     | Thursday 8 April 2021 |
| Publication of "First Interim Notice of Alteration"   | Thursday 8 April 2021                          |                       |
| Last date for publication of the "Statements of Persons Nominated"  | <b>4pm</b>                                     | Friday 9 April 2021   |
| Last date to receive applications to <b>appear on the Register</b>  | Monday 19 April 2021                           |                       |
| Last date to receipt written applications to <b>vote by post</b> (including postal proxy applications and changes to existing postal votes) | <b>5pm</b>                                     | Tuesday 20 April 2021 |
| Last date to publish the "Notice of Poll"   | Tuesday 27 April 2021                          |                       |
| Publication of "Second Interim Notice of Alteration"  | Between Friday 9 and Tuesday 27 April 2021     |                       |
| Last date for receipt of written applications to <b>vote by proxy</b>   | <b>5pm</b>                                     | Tuesday 27 April 2021 |
| Deadline for the appointment of polling and counting agents   | Wednesday 28 April 2021                        |                       |
| Publication of "Final Notice of Alteration"   | Wednesday 28 April 2021                        |                       |
| First day to issue replacement spoilt/lost postal ballot papers   | Thursday 29 April 2021                         |                       |
| <b>Offices Closed Bank Holiday Monday (3<sup>rd</sup> May)</b>  |  |                       |
| Deadline for receipt of emergency proxy applications  | <b>5pm</b>                                     | Thursday 6 May 2021   |
| Last day to issue replacement spoilt/lost postal ballot papers  | <b>5pm</b>                                     | Thursday 6 May 2021   |
| Last time to alter register due to a clerical error or court appeal   | <b>9pm</b>                                     | Thursday 6 May 2021   |
| <b>POLLING DAY</b>  | <b>7:00 am to 10:00 pm Thursday 6 May 2021</b> |                       |
| The last date to submit election returns depends on the date/time of the declaration of result**  |  |                       |

\* If a candidate submits nomination papers for more than one area at unitary level and does not withdraw from all but one of those areas by the deadline for withdrawals, then **all** unitary level nomination papers submitted by that candidate are deemed to have been withdrawn.

\*\* Candidates expenses are due on the following date, dependant upon the declaration date:

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Declared 6 May: Deadline by 10 June 2021 | Declared 8 May: Deadline 14 June 2021 |
| Declared 7 May: Deadline by 11 June 2021 | Declared 9 May: Deadline 14 June 2021 |

## PART 3: Candidates, nominations, withdrawal of candidature and appointment of election agents

- We **recommend** that you download and keep a copy of the Electoral Commission's Guidance on this topic: namely Parts 1, and 2a (for Independent Candidates) or 2b (for Party Candidates) and Part 4.

### Candidates

#### STANDING FOR ELECTION

To be eligible to stand as a unitary councillor for Shropshire Council, you **must** be:

- Aged 18 or over; AND
- A British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of any member state of the European Union.

Secondly, you **must** meet at least one of the following four qualifications:

- You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector in the Shropshire Council area in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards; or
- You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the Shropshire Council area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election; or
- 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 Shropshire Council area (providing the address of the place of work and where appropriate, the name of the employer); or
- You have lived in the Shropshire Council area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of the election.

If you qualify under more than one heading, it is good practice to include all those which apply.

You will be **unable** to stand as a candidate if:

- You are employed by the local authority or hold a paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees). Note that you may be 'employed by the local authority' if, for example, you work at certain schools, fire services, police or health services; or
- You hold a politically restricted post; or
- You are the subject of a Bankruptcy Restrictions Order or Interim Order; or
- 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
- You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations).

Full details can be obtained online from the Electoral Commission – [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk).

# Nominations

## SUBMITTING A NOMINATION PAPER

The first stage in running for election is to submit their nomination, which includes several elements. When the nomination period closes, if there are more candidates than seats for that particular division, there will need to be a poll. If there are the same number or fewer candidates than seats for that particular division, those candidates will be elected unopposed.

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

- **Nomination Form**
- **Home Address Form**
- **Candidate's Consent to Nomination**
- **If you are standing as a candidate for a political party, you must also return the "Registration of Political Parties" Certificate and (if applicable) the "Request for Use of Registered Party Emblem"**

The candidate's full name must be written on the **NOMINATION FORM** – initials alone are not permitted. Similarly, the candidate's home address must be included on the form. If candidates want to use a "commonly used name" on their nomination paper, they will also need to supply their full given name. Further guidance on the use of "commonly used names" is included as Appendix 1 to this document.

If a candidate wishes to use a description, it can only be one of the following:

- (a) one certified as an authorised or registered description as mentioned in Rule 5 of the election rules, or
- (b) the word 'Independent'.

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.

**IMPORTANT:** Due to the Covid situation, the requirement for 10 subscribers to a nomination paper has been temporarily removed. Each nomination paper must now be subscribed by a **proposer and seconder only**, who must both be local government electors of the relevant electoral division and have their electoral numbers (poll numbers) shown on the nomination paper. If you have obtained a nomination form from the returning officer, please be aware that these were supplied prior to this change being introduced.

The **HOME ADDRESS FORM** allows the candidate to choose whether or not they want their address published or whether it is to be shown as "**Shropshire**" on election notices and the ballot papers. The form must be witnessed prior to submission, and full information about the requirements is shown in the Electoral Commission's Candidates' Guidance (Part 2a for independent candidates or Part 2b for political candidates).

The **CONSENT TO NOMINATION** is required to show what qualifications you are standing under and must also be signed by the witness who is shown on the Home Address Form. It cannot be dated more than one calendar month before the deadline for submitting your nomination papers.

- One free copy of the nominal register of electors may be supplied for the area in which the candidate is standing – a register application form is enclosed. Please note that registers may only be supplied after the last date allowed for the Notice of Election to be published (29 March 2021).

- If that person subsequently does not stand or is unsuccessful at the election, the register **must** be returned to the Elections Office in Shrewsbury.
- Please note that candidates/agents may only use their copy of the Register for campaign purposes and must not pass a copy of it on to any other person or disclose information from it which is not contained in the open version of the register (which is available to the public). This is a strict legal requirement.

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

Candidates should ensure that the details on their nomination form are completed in full **before** presenting them to their proposer and seconder, and those details should be clearly visible at the time of signing, so that they know who they are supporting and what party (if any) they are giving their consent to. Usual signatures should be used and assenter 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.

Reminder: Completed nomination papers must be submitted to the returning officer in person – not via the postal system or by electronic transmission or fax - before the deadline for close of nominations – **4pm on Thursday 8 April 2021.**

## WHERE TO SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATION PAPERS

When delivering your nomination papers, 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.

**COVID ADVICE:** *For the safety of the staff on duty, as well as others attending the same venue, you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand sanitizer and observe social distancing rules when submitting your nomination papers. If there is a one-way system in place at the location where your nomination papers are to be submitted, please ensure you adhere to the restrictions in place.*

The following locations will be used to accept nomination papers:

| Venue                          | Date                             | Deposit Times |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Shirehall, Shrewsbury          | Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March   | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> March | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> March  | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> March    | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March    | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March   | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> March | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> March  | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> March    | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> March    | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> March   | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> March | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> April   | 9am – 5pm     |
|                                | Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> April    | 9am – 7pm     |
|                                | Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> April  | 9am – 7pm     |
| Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> April | 9am – 4pm                        |               |

| Venue                 | Date                             | Deposit Times |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Castle View, Oswestry | Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March   | 8.45am – 6pm  |
|                       | Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> March  | 8.45am – 6pm  |
|                       | Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> March | 8.45am – 6pm  |

| Venue                | Date                             | Deposit Times   |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Edinburgh House, Wem | Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> March | 9.15am – 4.30pm |
|                      | Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March    | 9.15am – 4.30pm |
|                      | Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> April   | 9.15am – 4.30pm |

| Venue                                  | Date                             | Deposit Times |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Helena Lane Day Care Centre,<br>Ludlow | Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> March  | 8.45am – 4pm  |
|  | Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> March | 8.45am – 4pm  |
|  | Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> March   | 8.45am – 4pm  |

| Venue              | Date                           | Deposit Times   |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Bridgnorth Library | Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> March  | 9.45am – 4.30pm |
|                    | Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March | 9.45am – 4.30pm |
|                    | Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> March  | 9.45am – 4.30pm |

## CLOSE OF NOMINATIONS

The nomination period will close at **4pm precisely on Thursday 8 April** and the Election Office will, quite literally, go into lockdown, so you will not be able to reach any of the elections staff by telephone or email. 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 electoral divisions first, followed by the towns and parish councils, so there may be a delay before this information is published.**

The Statements of Persons Nominated for each area must be available no later than 4pm on Friday 9 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 webpage at <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/elections-and-electoral-registration/voting-and-elections/>

## Withdrawal of candidature

Any candidate wishing to withdraw their candidature must do so in writing (a withdrawal form is included as part of your nomination pack) and must deliver their form to the following office **ONLY**:

*The Returning Officer - Shropshire Council,  
Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.*

It must be signed by the candidate and one witness and must be received no later than **4pm on Thursday 8 April 2021**. Any candidate who has submitted nominations for different areas, will be deemed as having withdrawn from all areas, if no withdrawal notices are received by the due deadline.

A Withdrawal Form, if required, is listed as a separate addition to this document.

# Appointment of election agents

Candidates do not have to appoint an election agent. Where nobody has been appointed, the candidate will be deemed to be their own agent.

The appointment of an election agent must be in writing and be submitted by **4pm on Thursday 8 April 2021**.

Candidates may change their election agent after that date, by giving notice in writing to the Returning Officer.

An Appointment Form, if required, is enclosed as part of your sealed Nomination Pack.

## **PART 4: Applying for a postal vote or appointing a proxy**

- We **recommend** that you download and keep a copy of the Electoral Commission's Guidance on this topic: namely Parts 4 and 5.

### **ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE**

The following two Appendices from the Electoral Commission should also be noted:-

- Appendix 2 – Postal voting quick guide for party workers
- Appendix 3 – Postal voting - Code of conduct for campaigners

### **POSTAL AND PROXY APPLICATION FORMS**

If during your canvassing, you meet an elector who wishes to vote by post, it is better to check with the Elections Team to see if that person already has a postal vote in place. Every year, we get a large number of duplicate applications, when people have simply forgotten that they have a permanent postal vote in place or think that they have to re-apply.

Postal and proxy vote application forms can be downloaded from Shropshire Council's website – <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/elections-and-electoral-registration/voting-and-elections/postal-and-proxy-voting/> ; they can also be downloaded from the Electoral Commission's website: [Voting in person, by post or proxy | Electoral Commission](#)

Extreme care should be taken if handing out any **proxy application forms**, as there are specific application forms available depending on the exact circumstances of the applicant. If in any doubt, please refer the applicant to the Elections Team for direct assistance.

Applicants may submit paper applications, or electronic versions by email to [elections@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:elections@shropshire.gov.uk) or [registration@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:registration@shropshire.gov.uk). It is imperative that the applicant signs the application form with a "wet ink" signature – they cannot use a computer font to sign their application form.

### **DEADLINES FOR RECEIPT OF ABSENT VOTE APPLICATIONS**

- The final date for **new postal vote applications** or written cancellation of existing postal votes is **5pm on TUESDAY 20 APRIL**.
- The final date for **new proxy vote applications** or written cancellation of existing proxy votes is **5pm on TUESDAY 27 APRIL**.
- Any appointed proxy who wishes to apply to vote by post on behalf of the elector, must complete a

postal proxy application form by **5pm** on **TUESDAY 20 APRIL**. Any person who is appointed as a proxy after the close of postal applications, must be prepared to cast the elector's vote in person at the elector's allocated polling station in Shropshire.

- The final date for late proxy vote applications on the grounds of a medical emergency or employment grounds is **5pm** on **THURSDAY 6 MAY**.

**COVID ADVICE:** *We understand that advice for electors wishing to appoint a proxy due to self-isolation requirements is currently under consideration. At the time of preparing this document, this information has not yet been published.*

## **RETURN OF POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS**

Candidates or their Agents should **NOT** collect postal ballot papers on behalf of any elector. 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 their electoral division only** on polling day between the hours of 7.00am and 10.00pm on polling day.

## **LISTS OF ABSENT VOTERS**

Candidates may obtain a list of absent voters (postal and/or proxy), by completing and submitting the appropriate form contained as an additional item to this guidance document.

They are entitled to ONE list only, in either data or paper format. Ideally candidates should wait until the last date for postal voting (Tuesday 20 April) before submitting their request. Once a list has been issued, then any subsequent request will only contain the latest updates, rather than being a comprehensive list.

## **OPENING OF POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS AT THE SHIREHALL (VARIOUS DATES)**

Sessions for the opening of postal ballot papers will be held at the **Shirehall** in Shrewsbury. Due to the quantity of postal votes expected and social distancing requirements, the opening sessions will take place in the following locations:

- **The Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room** (Ludlow & Wrekin Divisions)
- **The Wilfred Owen Room** (North Shropshire Divisions)
- **The Council Chamber** (Shrewsbury & Atcham Divisions)

The dates and times of the sessions is as follows:-

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Tuesday 27 April to Friday 30 April</b> | 8.30am to 4.00pm<br><i>or earlier if daily quantity of post is less</i> |
| <b>Tuesday 4 May to Wednesday 5 May</b>    | 8.30am to 4.00pm<br><i>or earlier if daily quantity of post is less</i> |
| <b>Thursday 6 May</b>                      | 8.30am to 3.00pm  |

## SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS TO VIEW THE OPENING SESSIONS

Candidates, their election agents or their appointed postal vote agent may attend to view the opening of postal votes. Please be aware that due to social distancing requirements for Covid-19, they will only be able to have a **general overview of the process taking place**. They will **not** be able to see individual ballot papers, which must, in any event, remain face down both before and whilst the polls are open.

**COVID ADVICE:** *For the safety of both the staff on duty and others in attendance, you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand-sanitizer upon arrival and observe social distancing rules when attending a pre-booked postal vote opening session or session for the viewing of rejected ballot papers. If there is a one-way system in place, please ensure you adhere to the restrictions in place.*

Please be aware that this year, to accommodate social distancing, there will be a **booking system** in operation for anyone wishing to view these sessions:

- A form to appoint a postal vote agent is contained as part of this pack. Please complete the agent's contact details and relevant division.
- We will contact the proposed agent to arrange a suitable time slot for them to attend to view the opening process.
- If any candidate or election agent wishes to attend, they must also contact the Elections Team in advance, to request a time slot to attend the viewing session.
- A maximum time period of one hour is permitted for each person wishing to attend the viewing.
- Whilst every effort will be made to have the relevant divisional papers being opened during the timeslot allocated, you must appreciate that we are unable to give you any guarantees that the ballot papers for that area will be opened at this time. We again stress that these sessions are purely to give candidates and their agents an overview of the process.

Additional postal vote opening sessions will be held at **Shrewsbury Sports Village** on polling day, as follows:

Thursday 6 May  
Thursday 6 May

8.00pm to finish  
10.00pm to finish

Please note:

At 4pm on each working day (with the exception of Tuesday 27 April and Thursday 6 May), candidates and their agents will be able to view the rejected ballot papers/postal voting statements, from the previous day's opening session. Again, space will be limited, so anyone wishing to attend these sessions will need to **pre-book a place in advance**. You will be required to contact the Elections Team on 01743 252330 to make arrangements to attend these sessions, and places are limited due to social distancing rules.

## PART 5: Tellers, polling and counting agents

- We **recommend** that you download and keep a copy of the Electoral Commission's Guidance on this topic: namely Parts 4 and 5.

Some candidates appoint Tellers to stand outside polling stations and mark off the poll numbers of electors who have voted. Tellers are not permitted to be inside the polling station other than to exercise their own vote or to vote as a proxy.

Tellers have **no legal status** and should concern themselves only with checking who has voted. Any other involvement with potential voters could give rise to the risk of allegations of exercising undue influence on voters.

Guides for tellers has been provided on the Electoral Commission's website – this document is in two parts:

- Tellers' guidance (PDF)
- Tellers' dos and don'ts (PDF) (attached a copy at Appendix 5)

They can both be downloaded from the resources section available in Part 5 on [Local elections in England | Electoral Commission](#)

**COVID ADVICE:** *For the safety of voters attending the polling station, any staff on duty or other tellers in attendance, you will be required to wear a face-covering and observe strict social distancing rules. The frequent use of hand sanitizer (from your own personal supply) is recommended.*

Tellers should observe social distancing with each other and when interacting with voters and must always remain outside the polling station, observing any social distancing markings where available and must always comply with the instructions of the Returning Officer and Presiding Officer. Tellers may approach voters for information as they enter or leave the polling station but should maintain social distancing as they do so, ensure that voters can enter or leave the polling station safely and not impede, obstruct or intimidate voters in any way.

### Polling and Counting Agents

The returning officer must also be informed in writing of any polling agent and counting agent appointments by Wednesday 28 April 2021. The appointment of any such agents forms part of the statutory timetable and **the deadline must be strictly observed.**

**Polling agents** may be appointed, but there is no requirement for candidates to appoint one. Their purpose is to detect personation in a polling station. They may mark their own copy of a register, but no such register will be supplied to them by the returning officer. The removal of such a marked copy of the register during the hours of poll is not permitted. No more than one polling agent may be admitted to a polling station at the same time on behalf of the same candidate.

**COVID ADVICE:** *For the safety of voters attending the polling station, any staff on duty or other counting agents in attendance, you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand sanitizer upon arrival, and observe social distancing rules. You must adhere to any instruction given to you by the presiding officer on duty, with regard to your position in the room and you also must adhere to any one-way system which may be in force at the polling station in question.*

**Counting agents** may attend the verification and counting of votes to observe the proceedings but are not allowed to touch the ballot papers at any stage of the proceedings.

**COVID ADVICE:** *For the safety of staff on duty at the count venue, as well as other candidates, agents or guests in attendance, you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand sanitizer upon arrival, and observe social distancing rules. You must adhere to any instruction given to you by the staff on duty and you also must adhere to any one-way system which may be in force at the count venue.*

The timetable for the verification and count is detailed in the next section. Official notice of the times and days for the count, together with the number of agents/guests who may be appointed by each candidate, are shown on the relevant application form in this pack. Due to the limited capacity at the count venue, the returning officer can only allow a candidate and their agent/guest. The returning officer may review this should the capacity increase at a later date.

The necessary appointment forms for both polling agents and counting agents are enclosed as part of your nomination pack. A separate form for the appointment of verification agents is also included with this document.

## **PART 6: Polling day, polling stations and verification/ the count**

### **Polling Day**

#### **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.

### **Polling Stations**

The location of polling stations will be published on the appropriate notices of poll, as well as appearing on Shropshire 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
- Election agent
- Polling agent
- Electoral Commission's accredited observers
- Police officers
- Children under the age of 18, accompanying voters

**COVID ADVICE:** *If entering the polling station, for the safety of electors, staff on duty and any others in attendance from the list above (also including tellers positioned outside the station), you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand sanitizer upon arrival, and observe social distancing rules. You must adhere to any instruction given to you by*

*the staff on duty and you also must adhere to any one-way system which may be in force at the polling station.*

## Verification/The Count

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

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

| EVENT  | DATE                      | COMMENCEMENT   |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Verification of ALL VOTES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commences with Unitary Divisions</li> <li>• Followed by Towns and Parishes</li> <li>• Followed by Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</li> </ul> | <b>Thursday<br/>6 May</b> | <b><u>10.00 PM</u></b><br><br>Anticipated completion on Friday 7 May |
| <b><u>Unitary Council Divisions:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counting of votes</li> <li>• Declaration of Unitary results</li> </ul>   | <b>Friday<br/>7 May</b>   | Will commence upon completion of the verification                    |
|  | <b>Saturday<br/>8 May</b> | Anticipated start time 8am   |
| <b><u>Town &amp; Parish Council Wards:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counting of votes</li> <li>• Declaration of Town and Parish Council results</li> </ul>   | <b>Sunday<br/>9 May</b>   | Anticipated start time 8am   |
| <b><u>Police &amp; Crime Commissioner Election Only:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counting of votes</li> <li>• Declaration of Area result</li> </ul>   | <b>Monday<br/>10 May</b>  | Anticipated start time 8am   |

Due to capacity restrictions at Shrewsbury Sports Village, access will be strictly monitored. Candidates and their agent/guest will be advised when to arrive at the Sports Village in their attendance letter.

### ENTRY TO THE VERIFICATION AND COUNT

This year, those attending the verification of votes and/or the count will **NOT** be able to buy refreshments on site. They may bring their own refreshments, but it is advisable to consume these in your vehicle outside the premises. 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. Movements of candidates and their agent/guest will be restricted to certain areas only within the hall used for the verification and/or the count.

Separate attendance letters will be issued for each event taking place. Please make sure that you/your agent complete the correct application forms for the events that you and your agent/guest wish to attend. We anticipate that you will need to wait outside the venue and will only be called into the hall when the relevant area is due to be addressed. You may therefore need to be escorted into and out of the building.

**Please note that once you have submitted your list of attendees, you will not be permitted to make any substitutions to that list, and that numbers are limited to a maximum of TWO – the candidate, their agent OR one guest.**

*COVID ADVICE: For the safety of staff on duty at the verification/count venue, as well as other candidates, agents or guests in attendance, you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand sanitizer upon arrival, and observe social distancing rules. You must adhere to any instruction given to you by the staff on duty and you also must adhere to any one-way system which may be in force at the verification/count venue. Full details will be contained in the letters issued to outline the procedures required.*

## **PART 7: Post-election matters**

- We **recommend** that you download and keep a copy of the Electoral Commission's Guidance on this topic: namely Parts 3 and 6.

### **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". This must be done within two months of the date of the election. If no such declaration is made within the specified time, their office will become vacant and must be re-advertised.

### **RETURN OF ELECTION EXPENSES**

Despite the term "expenses", **election expenses are not refundable**. They relate purely to the costs that a candidate can legitimately incur in promoting his/her candidature and form a legal document which is made available for public viewing.

Each candidate (whether successful or not) **must** complete and return a "Declaration of Election Expenses" incurred during their campaign. It is a legal requirement to complete and return one – even if it shows a "nil" return. **Failure to do so is a reportable electoral offence.**

Election expenses are required to confirm that any expenses incurred by the Candidate do not exceed the authorised amount. The level of campaign expenditure is set at **£806 plus 7p per each registered elector** (or other amount if amended by the Electoral Commission following publication of this document). Where there are joint candidates, there is a proportionate reduction of spending limit as follows:

- For two joint candidates: 25% reduction
- For three or more joint candidates: 33% reduction

Election expenses per division are set out as per the number of registered electors as follows:

| <i>Electoral Division</i>       | <i>Reg'd Electors</i> | <i>Limit</i> | <i>Electoral Division</i> | <i>Reg'd Electors</i> | <i>Limit</i> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Abbey                           | 3389                  | £1042.81     | Ludlow North              | 3075                  | £1021.25     |
| Albrighton                      | 3629                  | £1060.03     | Ludlow South              | 3173                  | £1028.11     |
| Alveley & Claverley             | 3475                  | £1049.25     | Market Drayton East       | 3856                  | £1075.92     |
| Bagley                          | 3850                  | £1075.50     | Market Drayton West       | 6849                  | £1285.43     |
| Battlefield                     | 3429                  | £1046.03     | Meole                     | 3349                  | £1040.43     |
| Bayston Hill, Column & Sutton   | 10159                 | £1517.13     | Monkmoor                  | 3240                  | £1032.80     |
| Belle Vue                       | 3424                  | £1045.68     | Much Wenlock              | 3507                  | £1051.49     |
| Bishop's Castle                 | 2892                  | £1008.44     | Oswestry East             | 6934                  | £1291.38     |
| Bowbrook                        | 3372                  | £1042.04     | Oswestry South            | 3357                  | £1040.99     |
| Bridgnorth East & Astley Abbots | 5560                  | £1195.20     | Oswestry West             | 2863                  | £1006.41     |
| Bridgnorth West & Tasley        | 5516                  | £1192.12     | Porthill                  | 3338                  | £1039.66     |
| Broseley                        | 3804                  | £1072.28     | Prees                     | 3550                  | £1054.50     |
| Brown Clee                      | 3203                  | £1030.21     | Quarry & Coton Hill       | 3230                  | £1032.10     |
| Burnell                         | 3626                  | £1059.82     | Radbrook                  | 4255                  | £1103.85     |
| Castlefields & Ditherington     | 3408                  | £1044.56     | Rea Valley                | 3414                  | £1044.98     |
| Cheswardine                     | 3371                  | £1041.97     | Ruyton & Baschurch        | 3362                  | £1041.34     |
| Chirbury & Worthen              | 2377                  | £972.46      | Severn Valley             | 3682                  | £1063.74     |
| Church Stretton & Craven Arms   | 7263                  | £1314.41     | Shawbury                  | 3741                  | £1067.87     |
| Clee                            | 3596                  | £1052.72     | Shifnal North             | 4637                  | £1130.59     |
| Cleobury Mortimer               | 5993                  | £1225.58     | Shifnal South & Cosford   | 4583                  | £1126.81     |
| Clun                            | 3151                  | £1026.57     | St. Martins               | 3648                  | £1061.36     |
| Copthorne                       | 3258                  | £1034.06     | St. Oswald                | 3516                  | £1052.12     |
| Corvedale                       | 3045                  | £1019.15     | Sundorne                  | 3093                  | £1022.51     |
| Ellesmere Urban                 | 3336                  | £1039.52     | Tern                      | 3844                  | £1075.08     |
| Gobowen, Selattyn & Weston Rhyn | 5559                  | £1195.13     | The Meres                 | 3885                  | £1077.95     |
| Harlescott                      | 3354                  | £1040.78     | Underdale                 | 3169                  | £1027.83     |
| Highley                         | 2821                  | £1003.47     | Wem                       | 6821                  | £1283.47     |
| Hodnet                          | 3024                  | £1017.68     | Whitchurch North          | 6029                  | £1228.03     |
| Llanymynech                     | 3470                  | £1048.90     | Whitchurch South          | 3227                  | £1031.89     |
| Longden                         | 3385                  | £1042.95     | Whittington               | 3337                  | £1039.59     |
| Loton                           | 3265                  | £1034.55     | Worfield                  | 2997                  | £1015.79     |
| Ludlow East                     | 3037                  | £1,018.59    |                           |                       |              |

Forms for the return of election expenses are contained within your nomination pack.

## **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 8: Election expenses and the election campaign**

- We **recommend** that you download and keep a copy of the Electoral Commission's Guidance on this topic: namely Parts 3, 4 and 6.

### **Election Expenses**

Within the nomination pack, there is a comprehensive guide detailing how candidates and/or their agents should complete their election expenses return.

Staff in the elections team 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](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk) provides invaluable information designed to assist candidates and their agents. 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](mailto:info@electoralcommission.org.uk), or
- by post/in person at 3 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8YZ.

### **DEFINITION OF A CANDIDATE**

The earliest date a person becomes a candidate is the last date for publication of the notice of election – for this election, this would be **Monday 29 March 2021**.

If your intention to stand has not been announced by 29 March 2021, you will officially become a candidate on the earlier of:

- the date your intention to stand is announced
- the date when you submit your nomination papers

### **CANDIDATE'S LITERATURE**

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. Failure to display the names and addresses of the publisher/printer/promoter (as appropriate) on election material is an illegal practice. **Appendix 4** provides full guidance from the Electoral Commission on this subject.

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 the poll.

## PART 9: Candidates checklist

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

|  | Tick when Complete |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>NOMINATION FORM, HOME ADDRESS FORM AND CONSENT TO NOMINATION:</b>   |                    |
| <b>Remember that the nomination form, home address form and consent to nomination must be <u>delivered in person</u> and be received by the deadline for receipt of nominations.</b>   |                    |
| • Has the nomination form been completed with the correct division name and the date of election?  |                    |
| • Has the nomination paper been completed with the candidate's surname and forename(s) in full and (if required) their commonly used name?   |                    |
| • Is a description being used, and if so, is it the approved wording?  |                    |
| • Have the proposer and seconder signed the nomination form and have their polling district numbers been completed?  |                    |
| • Has the home address form been completed with the candidate's name, home address, and qualifications? Has it been witnessed and bear the home address of the witness, as detailed on the candidate's consent to nomination form?   |                    |
| • Has the choice been determined correctly as to whether to publish or withhold the candidate's home address using the area of "Shropshire"?   |                    |
| • Has the candidate's consent to nomination been fully completed with the candidate's name and divisional information, together with<br>(a) all the qualification sections that apply;<br>(b) the candidate's date of birth;<br>(c) the candidate's signature and date of signing;<br>(d) the name and signature of the witness who is named on the home address form? |                    |
| • 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?  |                    |
| <b>WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE (if required)</b>   |                    |
| • If withdrawing from a particular contest after submitting a nomination paper, have the necessary form(s) been completed, witnessed, and submitted by the due deadline.   |                    |
| <b>APPOINTMENT OF AGENTS</b>   |                    |
| • If required, have all the forms for the appointment of polling agents, verification agents, counting agents and postal vote opening agents been completed and submitted to the returning officer by the due deadline(s).   |                    |
| <b>DECLARATION AND RETURN OF CANDIDATES ELECTION EXPENSES</b>  |                    |
| • 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?   |                    |
| <b>REGISTER OF ELECTORS and ABSENT VOTERS LISTS</b>  |                    |
| • Have you submitted register and/or absent voter list requests by the due deadline?<br>• For candidates who have withdrawn or were not elected, has the register of electors been sent back to Shropshire Council's returning officer?  |                    |
| <b>DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE AND MEMBERS INTERESTS</b>   |                    |
| • 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 practicable after taking up office?   |                    |

# APPLICATION FORMS

There now follows a series of application forms to enable you to:

- Obtain a copy of the electoral register for your division
- Obtain copies of the absent voter lists
- Withdraw your candidacy
- Make appointments to attend the verification of votes
- Make appointments to attend the counting of votes
- Make appointments to view the opening of postal votes

In each case, we will only use the information you give us on those forms for electoral purposes. We will look after your personal information securely and we will follow data protection legislation. We will not give personal information about you, or any personal information you may provide on other people, to anyone else or another organisation unless we have to by law.

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

The Electoral Registration Officer is the Data Controller. Her contact details are:  
Claire Porter, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.

For further information relating to the processing of personal data, you should refer to the privacy notice on Shropshire Council's website:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/elections-and-electoral-registration/privacy-notice/>