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Candidates and Agents Briefing

County Council & Police & Crime Commissioner Elections



Topics

- Who's who
- Election timetable
- Public health and Coronavirus
- Qualifications/disqualifications
- Nominations
- Agents
- Postal votes
- The poll
- Counting of votes
- Candidate spending
- Contacts

Who's who

- For elections in Epsom & Ewell, the roles of Local Returning for the PCC and the Deputy Returning Officer for the County will be Kathryn Beldon.
- The two Deputies are – Amardip Healy and Kerry Blundell
- Electoral Registration - such as voter registration and upkeep of absent voter lists the contact is Kerry Blundell

Election timetable

Publication of Notice of Election	Not later than 29 March but will be 22 March
Nominations commence	23 March
Close of nominations	4pm – 8 April
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – 8 April
Publication of statement of persons nominated	4pm – 9 April
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight on 19 April
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm on 20 April
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	27 April

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Election timetable (cont'd)

Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm on 27 April
Appointment of counting and polling agents	28 April
Polling day	6 May 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency or if unexpectedly called away because of employment or service Covid Proxy details to be confirmed	5pm on polling day
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm on polling day
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm on polling day
Return of election expenses + 35 days from result	11 June

Staying safe – Covid considerations

We will be implementing government guidelines for Covid-19 for all those participating in the elections:

- Social distancing
- PPE – masks, sanitiser etc.
- Face coverings where required
- Asking voters to bring their own pencil/pen
- **No-one should attend any electoral events if they are unwell, symptomatic with COVID-19, a confirmed case or someone who is self-isolating**

Who Can stand? 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 local authority area
 - Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the local authority area during the whole 12 months preceding nomination
 - Principal or only place of work (including unpaid) during last 12 months in local authority area
 - Lived in the local authority area during the last 12 months

Who cannot stand?

Disqualifications

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

- are **employed by the local authority (SCC)** or hold a paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees). Candidates may be 'employed by the local authority' if they work at certain schools, fire services, police or health services
- 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
- hold a **politically restricted post**

Submitting nomination papers

- ▶ The documents that must be submitted by hand by all candidates by 4pm on 8 April are
 - the nomination form
 - the home address form
 - the consent to nomination
- ▶ Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm on 8 April:
 - A certificate authorising the use of a party name/ registered description on the ballot paper
 - A emblem request form to use one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper
- ▶ Ensure candidate's name is same on all forms
- ▶ Make an appointment to submit forms

Nomination form

- 2021 Subscribers: two subscribers are required
- Must sign & print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** completing the candidates name and description fields on the form
- When collecting signatures - follow government guidelines on social distancing etc. as well as any local restrictions
- Data protection requirements

Home address form

- Part 1 - of the home address form must be completed
- Part 2 - of the home address form only needs to be completed if you do not want your address to be made public
- Attestor - on the form must be the same person who signs as witness on each candidate's consent to nomination form

Consent to nomination form

Must include:

- Candidate name
- which area standing in (county division)
- confirmation of qualification(s) that apply (at least 1, but select all that apply)
- date of birth & signature
- date of consent
- witness' name and signature – this must be the same person who is attestor on the Home address form

Certificate of authorisation & Emblem request form

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description
- The certificate may:
 - allow the use of the party name or a particular description
 - allow candidate to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission
- The Emblem Request form:
 - Party candidates can ask for an emblem to be printed on the ballot paper
 - Give ref and description of emblem on form

Both forms must be submitted by 4pm 8 April

Election agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign: particularly its financial management
- Notification of appointment must reach the RO by 4pm – 8 April. Form in nomination pack
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed

Other Agents Postal Vote Opening, Poll Stations & Count (SCC & PCC)

- You must give notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by 28 April
- The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session.

Electoral register/absent voting lists

- Candidate needs to make written request to the ERO – forms in nomination pack - **Available from 22 March**
- Register - only use data for permitted purposes
 - to complete the nomination form
 - to help you campaign
 - to check that donations/loans are permissible
- Absent voter lists
 - Postal and Proxy lists
 - Paper or data format

Voter Registration & Absent Voting

- If you find someone who is not registered you should encourage people to register as soon as possible
- The deadline to register to vote on 6 May is 19 April 2021
- Individuals can apply to register online at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>
- If you are encouraging people who don't have a postal (or proxy) vote to apply for one, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one in time for the elections if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections.

Campaigning

- Until the 7 March the position is that the current national lockdown restrictions do not support door to door campaigning or leafleting, you can continue to send voters campaigning information remotely
- Prior to any campaigning, participants should undertake a risk assessment. Political parties should provide guidance to party campaigners to support this
- Rules will change from the 8 March and from the 29 March – See guidance published 26 February 2021
- You should continue to check the latest government guidelines on national and [local restrictions](#), and be aware that different restrictions could apply to different parts of the electoral area

Campaigning dos & don'ts

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites.
- Do comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners.
- Do not produce material that looks like a poll card.
- Do not pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business).

Code of conduct for campaigners

- Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, but their activities should not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.
- Absent vote applications:
 - If handing out blank forms ensure fully conform to the requirements of electoral law
 - Include the ERO's address for the direct return of forms
 - Make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote
 - Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy

Code of conduct for campaigners

- Postal ballot packs:
 - Never touch a postal ballot paper
 - Never observe electors completing their postal vote.
 - Never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot pack from voters
- Campaigning outside polling stations:
 - You are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including public spaces outside polling places.
 - Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.

Polling day

- We will have arrangements in place to ensure that polling stations are Covid Secure
 - Social distancing, provision of hand sanitiser and encourage mask wearing
- Messages on poll cards
 - To check their poll card for changes to polling stations
 - Encourage voters to bring their own pen/ pencil for use in polling stations (pencils will available for anyone who needs one)
 - To wear a mask and follow covid guidance

Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Elections office open 6.30am to 10.30pm for queries or problems
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue at or outside a polling station at 10pm can vote or hand in a postal vote
- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations within the borough or to the Town Hall until 10pm
- **Tellers**

Verification & Count

- The verification and count processes will be modified to take account of the public health situation. **The duration of the count is likely to be longer than usual because of the Covid Secure measures.**
- The counts for both elections will be in the:
 - Queens Stand at Epsom Racecourse, Epsom Downs
- Details for the Count arrangements will be sent out nearer the time
- Candidates & election agents are entitled to attend
- Number of counting agents/guest for each candidate to be confirmed
- Media

Candidate spending & returns

▪ Spending

- Defined as certain expenses 'used for the purposes of the candidate's election' during the regulated period.
- Responsibility of **election agent**
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

▪ Limit on expenses

- £806 + 7 pence per elector in ward/division on register in force on 1 March 2021

▪ Returns

- due 35 calendar days after result of election – 11 June
- Failure to submit a spending return is a criminal offence enforceable by police
- No spending will be reimbursed

Checklist

- Make appointments early – the Town Hall is closed to the public at present
- Bring all your nomination papers at the same time
- Do not use TIPPEX on any document – cross through and initial
- Make sure the names & any descriptions are consistent on the Nomination paperwork
- Must be 18 or over on day of nomination
- Print details clearly on the forms
- Tellers

Contacts

- Elections office
 - 01372 732120
- Town Hall main number 01372 732000
- Surrey County Council (for advertising on the Highway)
- Electoral Commission
 - 0333 103 1928 in England

Questions

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Thank you