

Candidates and agents Briefing

Borough of Gosport Elections being held on Thursday, 05 May 2022

Topics

- who's who
- key dates of the election timetable
- public health principles
- qualifications
- disqualifications
- nominations
- agents
- postal votes
- the poll
- verification and counting of votes
- candidate spending
- contacts

Who's who

- **The Returning Officer** is the person responsible for running the elections. The Returning Officer is **Graeme Jesty**.
- **The Electoral Registration Officer** is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists. The Electoral Registration Officer is **Graeme Jesty**.
- Contact details are provided later

The Electoral Commission

Electoral specific information

- These are the last scheduled elections due to be held in the Borough of Gosport before the implementation of The Elections Bill.
 - The Elections Bill contains various other proposals (and not just voter ID) which will impact on how all elections are conducted in the UK including Gosport. The Bill has gone through the first stage in the Commons and is expected to have Royal Assent by May 2022. The Bill has had three readings in the House of Commons and is progressing through The House of Lords currently.
 - It is therefore important to note that The Elections Bill will have no impact on how I will be conducting the May 2022 Borough of Gosport elections.
- These elections are however being conducted on the new Electoral Wards following the conclusion of the Electoral Review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

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Election timetable

Publication of Notice of Election	10:00am – Wed 23 March 2022
Nominations commence	09:30am – Thurs 24 March 2022
Close of nominations	4:00pm – Tues 05 April 2022
Notification of appointment of election agents	4:00pm – Tues 05 April 2022
Publication of statement of persons nominated	4:00pm – Wed 06 April 2022
Deadline for applications to register to vote	11:59pm – Thurs 14 April 2022
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – Tues 19 April 2022
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	10:00am – Tues 26 April 2022

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Election timetable (cont'd)

Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – Tues 26 April 2022
Appointment of counting and polling agents	5pm – Wed 27 April 2022
Polling day	Thurs 5 May 2022 – 7:00am to 10:00pm
Deadline to apply to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency or if unexpectedly called away because of employment or service	5pm – polling day
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm – polling day
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm – polling day
Return of election expenses	Fri 10 June 2022

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Staying safe – Covid considerations

- General public health principles that everyone should follow in all aspects of daily life, including participating in elections:
- Limit close contact with others
 - Clean hands regularly
 - Avoid touching your face
 - Wear a face covering where appropriate
 - No-one should attend any electoral events if they are unwell, symptomatic with COVID-19, or are legally required to self-isolate

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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

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Disqualifications

- A person **cannot** be a candidate if they:
- are **employed by the local authority** 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)
 - 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**

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Submitting nomination papers

- The documents that must be submitted by all candidates by **4:00pm on Tues 05 April** are:
 - the nomination form
 - their home address form
 - the consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by **4:00pm on Tues 05 April**:
 - A certificate authorising the use of a party name/ registered description on the ballot paper
 - A written request to use one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper

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Submitting nomination papers

- Take care when completing your nomination papers, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination
- Complete nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check
- The nomination form, home address form and consent to nomination **must be delivered by hand** and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means.

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Nomination form

- Include your full name
- Optional: use commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than actual name and you wish to use it instead. But you cannot use your first name as a commonly used name to exclude your middle name.
- Description field – 3 options:
 - leave blank
 - Independent
 - party candidates can use party name or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer

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Nomination form

- Subscribers: 10 subscribers are required for these elections
- Must sign & print and after their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** completing the name, address and description fields on the form
- When collecting signatures, it is important that you follow the latest government guidance on how to stay safe and stop the spread of coronavirus
- Data protection requirements

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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

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Home address form (cont.)

- 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),
 - if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which your home address is situated.

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
 - witness' name, and signature

Certificate of authorisation

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person authorised to act on their behalf)
- 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
- Must be submitted by **4pm on Tues 05 April 2022**

Emblem request form

- Party candidates can ask for an emblem to be printed on the ballot paper
- Emblem request form must be submitted by **4pm on Tues 05 April 2022**
- Party candidates should supply an electronic version of the emblem to the Returning Officer if required

Joint candidates

- Nominated by **more than one party**
- May use registered joint descriptions
 - must be supported by certificate of authorisation **from each party**
- May use one emblem of one of the parties but there are no joint emblems

Election agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of appointment must reach the Returning Officer by **4pm on Tues 05 April 2022**. Form is included in nomination pack.
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.

Other agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
 - You must give notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by 5:00pm on Wed 27 April 2022.
 - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session. We will give 48 hours' notice.

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Access to electoral register/absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on Mon 28 March 2022 if you, or others declared yourself a candidate
 - once you or others have declared yourself a candidate after this date / date you submit your nomination papers
- Make **written** request to the ERO – forms are included in your nomination pack.

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Access to electoral register / absent voting lists

- **Only use data for permitted purposes**
 - to complete the nomination form
 - to help you campaign
 - to check that donations/loans are permissible

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Registration

- As a candidate you are uniquely placed to encourage people to register to vote.
- You should encourage people to register as soon as possible.
- The deadline for applying for the election is 11:59pm on Thurs 14 April 2022.
- Individuals can apply to register online at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. It only takes a few minutes.

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Registration

- When discussing registering to vote with individuals, you will need to make them aware that they will need to provide:
 - their National Insurance number
 - date of birth and address
- People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance number can still register, but they may need to provide further information. If so, they will be contacted by the ERO.

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Absent voting

- 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.
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic there are still a large number of postal voters for this election (~11k so far)
- Timetabling for the PV opening sessions will be required, and the timetable will be produced following close of nominations.

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Campaigning dos and 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 make sure outdoor posters are removed 2 weeks after the election.
- 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).

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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.
- Electoral registration and absent vote applications:
 - Ensure forms fully conform to the requirements of electoral law
 - Include the ERO's address for the return of forms
 - Ensure unaltered applications are sent to ERO within **two working days**.
 - Make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote.
 - Do not encourage postal ballot pack redirection.
 - Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy.

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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.
 - Written note from the RO on the standards of behaviour within the vicinity of the Polling Place on Polling Day will be provided following the close of nominations.

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Tellers

- There have been isolated incidents and issues with Tellers at Polling Stations at elections in previous years, therefore:
 - Tellers must not impede or interfere with the efficient and secure administration of the election and must comply with any instructions issued by the Returning Officer or Presiding Officer.
 - Tellers have no official legal status.
 - The Returning Officer advises that up to 9pm on Polling Day, tellers may approach voters for information as they either enter or leave the Polling Station. However from 9pm until the close of poll, Tellers may only approach voters for information as they leave the Polling Station.

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Tellers must:

- Always remain outside the Polling Station/Place;
- Only enter the Polling Station to cast their own vote, to vote as a proxy or to accompany a voter with disabilities;
- Always comply with the instructions of the Returning Officer and Presiding Officer.

Tellers may:

- Display a coloured rosette displaying the name of the candidate and/or a registered political party. While the rosette must not be oversized, it may carry a registered party description/emblem.

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Polling day

- We have put arrangements in place to ensure that Polling Stations are safe places to vote
- Most of the measures that will be in place will be familiar to us all from visiting other public places such as shops and banks, for example the provision of hand sanitiser on entry and exit, plastic screens between voters and electors etc
- Voters will be encouraged to bring their own pen or pencil for use in Polling Stations, but pencils will also be made available for anyone who needs one
- Voters should be encouraged to check their poll card before Polling Day, to see if their Polling Station has changed since previous elections.

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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
 - for queries relating to election finance issues, contact the Electoral Commission (*contact details shown later*)
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the Polling Station at 10pm can apply for a ballot paper
- Postal votes – can be handed into Polling Stations within the Electoral Ward or delivered to the elections office until 10pm.
- A person in a queue at a Polling Station at 10pm waiting to hand in a postal vote can do so after 10pm.

Modern Polling Overview

Modern Polling is a digital electoral register at the Polling Station on a secure iPad.

There are 2 apps:

- Modern Polling (Poll Clerk)
- Preside (Presiding Officer)

Note: to Log into our apps you need your mobile phone...

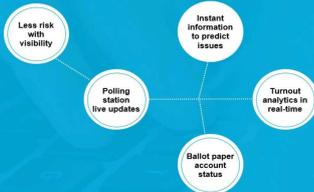


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REAL-TIME INFORMATION DIGITAL POLL CLERK

The Digital Poll Clerk provides real-time analytics on the turnout and Polling Station status throughout election day



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Poll Clerk Modern Polling

The Poll Clerk uses this to process voters by:

- Logging into the Polling Station
- Scanning the QR Code on the Voter's Poll Card or Searching for a Voter
- Scanning the QR Code on the ballot paper(s)
- The Register & CNL are automatically marked
- Logging out Close of Poll

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Presiding Officer
Preside

The Presiding Officer uses this to:

- Find Voters that cannot be found on the Poll Clerk's app
- Confirm the Ballot Paper Account and Close the station.

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Counting of votes

- I have also made adaptations to the verification and count in light of the public health situation.
- The anticipated duration of the count is likely to be longer than usual because of the impact of measures to ensure the safety of staff and observers.
- The verification of all ballot papers for the elections held will be completed immediately following the close of Poll
- The count of the Borough of Gosport will be held on Friday 06 May 2022 and Electoral Wards will be timetabled following close of nominations.

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Counting of votes

- The count will be held in:
The main sports hall of the Gosport Leisure Centre, Forest Way, Gosport, PO13 0ZX.
- Count centre will open to candidates and their appointed agents before any ballot papers are counted and the timetable will be shared following the close of nominations.
- Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend.
 - limits to counting agents: will be calculated following the close of nominations using the usual formula and process;

Spending issues

Candidate spending

- Defined as certain expenses 'used for the purposes of the candidate's election' during the regulated period.
- Responsibility of **election agent**
- Limit on expenses:
 - £806 + 7 pence per elector in the Electoral Ward on the register in force on Monday 28 March 2022 (*start of the regulated period*)
 - reduced for joint candidates
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

Candidates' spending returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election
- Returns made public by **Returning Officer**
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the **Electoral Commission**
- Failure to submit a spending return is a criminal offence enforceable by police
- No spending will be reimbursed

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Contacts

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Contacts

- **Elections office** – 023 9254 5227 or electoral.registration@gosport.gov.uk
- **Highways department** – 0845 603 5638 general
 - 0300 555 1375/roads@hants.gov.uk: complaints regarding unauthorised placement of signs on the public highway.
- **Electoral Commission contacts**
 - 0333 103 1928 in England
 - 0333 103 1929 in Wales

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Questions
