

Candidates and agents Briefing

UK Parliamentary general election

Topics

- Who's who
- Key dates of the election timetable
- Qualifications & disqualifications
- Nominations
- Agents
- Registration and absent votes
- The campaign
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The Electoral Commission

Who's who

- Acting Returning Officer – Ian Gallin (Chief Executive)
- Ben Smith is Deputy Returning Officer and will be the main point of contact for Election Candidates and Agents.
- The Electoral Services Office for the Parliamentary election is West Suffolk House in Bury St Edmunds.

Constituencies

- Bury St Edmunds & Stowmarket Constituency
 - Covers part of West Suffolk Council and part of Mid Suffolk Council area
 - Election administered by West Suffolk Council
- West Suffolk Constituency
 - Covers part of West Suffolk Council area
 - Election administered by West Suffolk Council
- Maps:
www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps

Election timetable

Key dates

Timetable process:	Date:
Dissolution of Parliament	Thursday 30 May
Publication of Notice of Election	Monday 3 June
Nominations commence	10am on the day after publication of Notice of Election
Close of nominations and notice of appointment of election agents	4pm on Friday 7 June
Publication of statement of persons nominated, including notice of poll and situation of polling stations	5pm on Friday 7 June, or 4pm on Monday 10 June (where objections)
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – Tuesday 18 June
Deadline for new postal vote applications/ changes to existing postal or proxy vote arrangements	5pm Wednesday 19 June

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Key dates

Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm Wednesday 26 June
Deadline for applications for Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document	5pm Wednesday 26 June
Appointment of polling and counting agents	Thursday 27 June
Deadline for notification of appointment of sub agents	Tuesday 2 July
Polling day	Thursday 4 July 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply for an emergency proxy	5pm on Thursday 4 July
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm on Thursday 4 July
Return of election expenses	Friday 9 August

Qualifications and disqualifications

Qualifications

- Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated **and** on polling day:
 - be at least 18 years old
 - either be a British citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen
- There is no requirement to be a registered elector in the UK.

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Disqualifications Certain people are disqualified from becoming an MP, such as:

- **civil servants**
- members of **police forces**
- members of the **armed forces**
- **government-nominated directors** of commercial companies
- **judges**
- members of a **foreign legislature** (outside the Commonwealth)
- **peers who sit and vote in the House of Lords**

Disqualifications Further disqualifications include:

- those who are subject to a **bankruptcy restrictions order** or **debt relief restrictions order** (but not those who are simply bankrupt) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland; or those whose estate has been sequestrated in Scotland and have not been discharged
- those who are disqualified on the grounds that they are found guilty of an illegal or corrupt practice such as undue influence
- those who are subject to a disqualification order under section 30 of the Elections Act 2022

Nominations

The nomination papers

- Three nomination papers must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm on Friday 7 June, together with the deposit:
 - the nomination form
 - the home address form
 - the consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit by that time:
 - 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

The deposit

- Each candidate must deposit £500 with the (A)RO so that the nomination is valid.
- Can be made using legal tender (cash) or an electronic funds transfer
- An electronic funds transfer is the preferred payment method:
 - The West Suffolk General Account
 - Sort Code: 309558
 - Account Number: 26326468
 - Reference: Party Name/Candidate Name
- The deposit is returned if a candidate polls at least 5% of the valid votes cast across the constituency

Completing nomination papers

- Take care when completing your nomination papers as mistakes may invalidate your nomination!
- Complete your nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check (by email).
- Book an appointment to deliver your nomination form.
- The nomination form, consent to nomination form and home address form must be delivered by hand and cannot be submitted by post, fax or other electronic means.
- The nomination and home address form may only be delivered by:
 - you
 - your proposer or seconder, or
 - by your election agent (if the (Acting) Returning Officer has previously received notification of their appointment).

Nomination form

- Include your full name
- Optional: complete commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than full name and wish to use it instead
 - Commonly used names are the only names shown on official notices and ballot papers
 - Candidates may use commonly used names to use one of more of their names given on the nomination paper in a different manner
 - For example, if Andrew John Smith-Jones is more commonly known as John Smith-Jones, they could ask for this name to be used

Nomination form

- 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. Refer to the Electoral Commission website:
<http://search.electoralcommission.org.uk>.

Nomination form

- Subscribers: 10 subscribers from the constituency are required.
- Must sign and should print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register as of 1 June.
- If they are not on that register, they can't subscribe your nomination.
- Ensure that subscribers are aware of what their data will be used for.
- Only ask subscribers to sign after completing the name and description fields on the form.

Home address form

- Must state home address in full
- Must state if you do not want your address to be made public and to appear on the ballot paper. If so:
 - give the name of the constituency or the relevant area in which your home address is situated.

Consent to nomination form

All candidates must consent to their nomination.

On the consent to nomination form you will be asked to state:

- that you are qualified and not disqualified from standing
- your date of birth
- the name, address and signature of witness
- that you are not a candidate in another constituency

Certificate of authorisation

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person appointed to act on their behalf).
- The certificate may:
 - allow the use of the party name or a description
 - allow the candidate to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission
- Refer to the Electoral Commission website: <http://search.electoralcommission.org.uk>
- Must be submitted with the other nomination papers by **4pm on Friday 7 June.**

Emblem request form

- Party candidates can ask for an emblem to be printed on the ballot paper.
- Refer to the Electoral Commission website: <http://search.electoralcommission.org.uk>
- Emblem request form must be submitted by **4pm on Friday 7 June.**

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

Agents

Election agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of appointment must reach the (A)RO by **4pm on Friday 7 June**. Form is included in nomination pack.
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.

Sub-agents

The election agent may appoint sub-agents to act on their behalf in the constituency:

- areas of appointment must not overlap
- can attend proceedings instead of the election agent

The agent must give written notice to the (A)RO by Tuesday 2 July.

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 Thursday 27 June. We will provide forms.
 - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of each session. We will provide details of the opening sessions and give 48 hours' notice of any additional sessions.

Electoral registration and absent votes

Access to electoral register / absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on 30 May if you, or others, have declared yourself a candidate on or before this date
 - After 30 May once you or others have declared yourself a candidate or you submit your nomination papers, whichever is earliest
- Make **written** request to the ERO – forms are available from the Elections Team.

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

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 Tuesday 18 June.
- Individuals can apply to register online at **<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>**. It only takes a few minutes.

Registration

- When discussing registering to vote with individuals, you will need to make them aware that they will need:
 - their National Insurance number
 - date of birth and address to register.
- 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 Electoral Services Team.

Absent voting

- Electors can now apply for an absent vote online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote or www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote
- You will need to make them aware that they will need to provide their National Insurance number, date of birth, signature and address to register.
- The deadline for applying for a postal vote at the elections is 5pm Wednesday 19 June.
- The earlier that voters apply for a postal vote, the sooner it can be processed and the quicker it can be sent to them.
- The deadline for applying for a proxy vote at these elections is 5pm Wednesday 26 June, although in some circumstances voters may be able to appoint an emergency proxy after this date.

The campaign

Free candidate mailing

- All candidates who are validly nominated are entitled to send one election communication, free of charge, to electors across the constituency.
- It must include matters relating to the election only.
- You can choose to send either:
 - one unaddressed election communication of up to 60 grams to every postal address, or
 - one election communication of up to 60 grams addressed to each elector
- contact Royal Mail to make arrangements:
<http://www.royalmail.com/specialist-services/candidate-mailing>

Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material
- 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)
- Do not handle any postal voting documents you are not entitled to

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 confirm to the requirements of electoral law
 - Ensure electors are aware they can apply to register or for an absent vote online
 - Include the EROs address for the return of any paper 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
- **Voter Authority Certificate applications:**
 - Should not handle paper based Voter Authority Certificate applications and should encourage electors to send them directly to the ERO

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: See next slide
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

The spending limit



Regulated period	Fixed amount	Constituency type	Variable amounts (per registered parliamentary elector)
Short campaign	£11,390	County	12p per registered parliamentary elector As at 28 May: BSE & Stowmarket = £9,212.50 West Suffolk = £9,124.56

Candidates' spending returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election. If the result is declared on Friday 5 July, then the deadline for returns will be Friday 9 August.
- Returns made public by **(Acting) Returning Officer**
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the **Electoral Commission**
- Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence enforceable by the police
- No spending will be reimbursed.

Contacts

Websites and
contacts

www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/elections

- **Nomination pack**
- **Statutory notices**
- **Information about registering to vote, methods of voting and voter ID,**

Ben Smith 01284 757101
elections@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Electoral
commission

Electoral Commission

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Phone | 0333 103 1928

Helpful guidance includes:

- Can you stand for election?
- Standing as an independent candidate
- Standing as a party candidate
- Candidate's spending form and notes
- The campaign

Questions on spending | 020 7271 0616

Electoral Registration Officers

Voting area	Address	Contact details
Mid Suffolk District Council	Endeavour House 8 Russell Road Ipswich IP1 2BX	elections@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk 0300 1234000
West Suffolk Council	West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU	elections@westsuffolk.gov.uk 01284 757131

Questions

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Thank you