

GUIDE TO ELECTION PROCESS - PARISH ELECTION

The following is a brief guide to the election process for candidates. If there is anything that you are not clear on, or need further advice on, please contact: the Elections Team, on 01908 25 3930/2486 or via e-mail at: elections@milton-keynes.gov.uk. If in doubt, please ask!

1. **Who does what?** Sharon Bridglalsingh is the Returning Officer at this Parish Election. Responsibility for the organisation of these elections rests with her. The day to day administration of the elections will be carried out by the Elections Team at Civic. You may contact a member of the team on the above telephone number or e-mail address.
2. **Election Timetable** – A copy is included with the Nomination Pack. Please note that the deadlines on the timetable are statutory deadlines and will not be subject to change.
3. **What is the Notice of Election?** – It is a poster produced by the Returning Officer, that gives details of the proposed election (deadlines etc.) and advises people where they can obtain nomination papers etc. ***Copies will be circulated to the Parish Clerk so that they can be displayed throughout the Parish.***
4. **Who can be a Candidate?** - To be eligible to stand as a candidate at a Parish election you must be :

- ✓ At least 18 on the day you hand in your nomination paper and
- ✓ A British citizen, or a citizen of the Irish Republic, the Commonwealth or another member state of the European Union,

and must meet at least one of the following criteria: -

- ✓ are registered as a local government elector for the parish, or
- ✓ have during the whole of the 12 months preceding the date of the nomination, occupied as owner or tenant, the land or premises in the Parish, or
- ✓ your principal or only place of work during those 12 months has been in that Parish, or
- ✓ have during the whole of the 12 months resided in that Parish or within 4.8 kilometres (3 miles) of it.

It is recommended that if you qualify under more than one of the criteria then you should complete all the appropriate sections.

5. **Who can't be a Candidate?** – Certain people are disqualified from being elected to a local authority. These include people who are employed by the local authority, or who have been subject of a bankruptcy restriction, or have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 3 months or more (including suspended sentences) without the option of a fine, during the five years before election day. Other restrictions apply. If you need further advice please contact the Elections Team.

6. **Nomination Paper – (Please complete in BLOCK LETTERS).**

To complete the form insert:

- name of Parish e.g. Bradwell Parish
- name of Parish Ward (if applicable) e.g. Heelands Parish Ward
- date of Election e.g. 19 August 2004
- candidate's surname e.g. BLOGGS
- candidate's title e.g. Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms
- other names **in full** (no initials) e.g. JOSEPH JAMES
- date of birth

- Your home address **in full** e.g. 'ROAD' not 'RD' or 'STREET' not 'ST'. This does not have to be the address at which you appear on the Electoral Register.
- A daytime telephone number or e-mail address would be useful in case of any problems with your forms.

Descriptions: You can use a description which will appear under your name on the ballot paper, although it is not compulsory, and you can leave the description section blank.

You can include **either** of two types of description on a nomination paper:

Candidates not affiliated to any political party can use a description of up to six words. This will appear on the ballot paper under your name. Any candidate can use the word '*Independent*' as a description, or any other description you wish to use, for example, 'Local Resident' or 'Businessman'.

Candidates standing for a political party, who wish to use a registered political party description, **must** obtain a certificate of authorisation from the relevant political party, authorising them to use the registered Party Description.

If you have been authorised by a political party to use a description on a ballot paper, you can also request that one of the **party's official emblems** is used on the ballot paper next to your name. You will also need to complete a request for use of the registered party emblem and have it approved by the party's authorising officer.

Signatures: Nomination Papers must be signed by a proposer and seconder, who must be electors of the Parish or, if the Parish is divided into Wards, the Parish Ward. It is important to ensure that the people signing the nomination paper appear in the register of electors and their electoral numbers must be given on the Nomination Paper. The proposer and seconder must also print their names, in the column provided. The electoral numbers are their numbers in the register of electors to be used at the election.

7. The Register

The Parish Clerk will have a copy of the Register of Electors and the alterations, or you can contact the Elections Team to find out the proposer and seconder's electoral numbers. As a Candidate at a local government election, you are entitled to a free copy of the full Register of Electors for the area for which you are contesting. If you wish to receive this you must contact the Elections Team to indicate whether you wish to receive this in data or in paper format.

If you request the register in data format it will be provided in a CSV (comma-separated values) format. CSV files are a simple form of spreadsheet and can be read or modified with a number of common desktop applications. It is important to note that a number of legal restrictions apply to the use of the information in the full register. If you are supplied with a full copy of the register for an area you **must not**:

- Pass a copy of the register to any other person;
- Disclose any information from the register (which is not contained in the edited version of the register also published by the Electoral Registration Officer); or
- Make use of any information from the register

other than for electoral purposes.

If you are found guilty of breaching these conditions you may face a fine of up to £5,000.

8. **Consent to Nomination** - must be completed by the candidate and signed in the presence of a witness.

The signature and address of the witness to the candidate's signature must also be inserted. The witness does not have to be an elector for the area. **Anyone** (including a partner or spouse) can witness the consent form.

Extracts from the LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – Part V (as amended) are enclosed with your pack and you should read these notes carefully before you submit your nomination and consent forms.

9. Delivery

The Nomination Paper and the Candidate's Consent to Nomination (and the Certificate of Authorisation and request to use the party emblem if applicable) need to be delivered to the Returning Officer. The deadline will be shown in the timetable with your nomination pack. This is a strict deadline and no papers will be accepted as valid after that time. Submit your papers well in advance of the deadline so that, if necessary, there is time to correct the paper and re-submit it before the deadline. **If you are delivering your nomination papers in person you are advised to make an appointment.** Due to limited availability of staff over the nomination period, it may not be possible to check nomination papers immediately when they are submitted. **Make sure that you include a daytime telephone number on your forms, in case of any problem.** The Returning Officer will write to each candidate informing him or her that their nomination has been accepted and is a valid nomination.

10. Publications

Once you become a Candidate you may want to print campaign publicity material such as posters, leaflets etc. All printed or publicity material must carry an **imprint** giving the name and address of the printer and publisher of the material on its face, e.g. Printed by Bloggs Printers, 1 Saxon Gate East and Published by John Smith, 12, Smith Terrace, Anytown. If you need any advice on this item, please contact a member of the Elections Team.

11. The Returning Officer will publish a list of candidates called a **Statement of Persons Nominated** by no later than **28 October 2019**.

12. **If you no longer want to be a Candidate?** – You can **withdraw** from the election if you deliver a written notice to the Returning Officer before **4.00pm on Friday 25 October 2019**.

13. The Returning Officer will publish a **Notice of Poll** by **Wednesday 13 November 2019**. This Notice will give details of the date and time of the Election, the candidates' details and where the voting will take place. Copies will be sent to each party or to each independent candidate.

14. **Polling Day** – Polling will take place between **7am and 10pm** on **Thursday 21 November 2019**.

15. Absent Voting

You may wish to know that anyone can apply for a postal vote. Ballot papers are sent by post to the elector. Forms are available from the Elections Team at Civic.

Ballot papers will start to be sent to those who have applied for a postal vote about 10 days before the election. Postal ballot papers must be returned to the Returning Officer by 10pm on election day. Ideally, these should be returned to Civic, but envelopes may be handed in at the relevant Polling Station. These will then be taken to the Count Venue and included in the counting of votes.

16. The Counting of Votes - The number of ballot papers in each box will be verified. Date and venue to be confirmed. You are welcome to attend the count. Please let the elections team know if you will be attending.

After the Election

17. Election Expenses

The expenses incurred by, or on behalf of, a candidate must not exceed the maximum permitted. Expense Forms giving the maximum allowance will be sent to candidates in due course. At local elections the maximum is £740 together with an additional 6p for every entry in the register of electors to be used at the election. Where there are two joint candidates for the same Parish or Parish Ward then the maximum amount is reduced by a quarter and if there are more than two joint candidates, it is reduced by one-third. Joint candidates are candidates who publish a joint address, circular or notice at the election. The deadline for the return of election expenses forms, which will be distributed at a later date, will be advised to you.

Please Note: Election expenses are NOT reimbursed by the Returning Officer, by Milton Keynes Council or by the Parish Council.

18. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

If you have been successfully elected you must sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form, in which you agree to follow the Council's Code of Conduct in the performance of your duties. This must be done at or before the first meeting of the parish council after the election or if the parish council so permit, before or at a later meeting of the council. Successful Candidates will be provided with the Declaration of Acceptance of Office following the election.

You must not act in your capacity as a Councillor until you have signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

If you have any queries about the election process please contact the elections team on 01908 25 3930/2486, or via e-mail at elections@milton-keynes.gov.uk

The Electoral Commission has also published some very useful information on their web site: www.electoralcommission.org.uk