

Elections bulletin for Parish Clerks

Issue No 1

Published 14 February 2023

The Electoral Services team will be issuing monthly bulletins in the run up to the May elections via email, they will also be published on our [website](#) alongside the elections timetable and all statutory notices.

The Elections Act 2022

On 28 April 2022 the Elections Act received Royal Assent, some of which is relevant to this May's elections –

- Requirement for voters to show ID at polling stations before a ballot paper is issued
- Requirement for Electoral Registration Officers to issue FREE 'Voter Authority Certificates' to electors who do not have any of the acceptable ID to allow them to vote
- Extension of accessibility to elections meaning Returning Officers must take all reasonable steps to provide support for those with a disability in polling stations.
- Reduction of subscribers on ward nomination papers

Voter ID –

From May 2023 individuals, who wish to vote in person, including those acting as a proxy on behalf of another individual, will be required to produce an accepted form of photographic ID to prove their identity before they will be issued with a ballot paper. **The requirement for Photo ID does not apply to postal voters.**

This will apply at:

- UK parliamentary elections (after 5 October 2023)
- Recall petitions
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections
- **Local government elections in England – Including the District and Parish elections taking place on Thursday 4 May 2023.**

We expect most voters will use their passport or photo card driving licence. A full list of acceptable forms of ID is as follows:

- a passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state, or a Commonwealth country
- a driving licence issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state
- a biometric immigration document
- an identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)
- a Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card)
- a Blue Badge
- a national identity card issued by an EEA state
- an Older Person's Bus Pass
- a Disabled Person's Bus Pass
- an Oyster 60+ Card
- a Freedom Pass
- a Scottish National Entitlement Card issued in Scotland
- a 60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card issued in Wales
- a Disabled Person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card issued in Wales
- a Senior SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- a Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- a War Disablement SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- a 60+ SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- a Half Fare SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- an Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland

Expired photo ID can be used as long as the photograph is still a good likeness of the elector. If an elector's name has changed and their name on the Electoral Register does not match their ID, they will be asked to provide evidence of this change such as a marriage certificate or deed poll. If they have not brought this with them, they will be asked the prescribed questions by the polling station staff.

Different arrangements are in place for electors registered anonymously, and we will be contacting them separately.

Voters without acceptable ID

The Government and Cabinet Office estimate that between 2% and 6% of voters will not have a suitable form of ID. This could be between 2940 to 8820 electors in Herefordshire.

Where an individual does not have an acceptable form of photo ID, they can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. This is a document containing an elector's name and photograph which will be obtained **free of charge** by:

- Applying online on the central government website www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate
- Contacting the Electoral Services office for a hardcopy application form
- Applying in Person at the Electoral Services office

Applicants must be registered to vote to receive a Voter Authority Certificate. Upon application they will be asked to provide a photograph of themselves and their national insurance number. When applying in person, applicants do not need to supply their own photo, we can take this for them, but they will still need their National Insurance number.

The deadline to apply for a voter authority certificate for use at this election is **5pm Tuesday 25th April 2023.**

Communication to the public

You should have already received a pack from us containing booklets and posters relating to Photo ID, we hope you have these on display within your parish area(s) and ask that you get in touch if you require more.

The Electoral Commission are running a national campaign on TV, radio and social media to communicate the new ID requirements with electors. We are running a communications campaign alongside this through social media, our website and press releases. In addition to this, we are sending a Notification Letter to each household at the end of February to raise awareness of Voter ID but to also give the electorate the opportunity to update any incorrect details we hold for them. Poll cards will then go out at the end of March to every registered elector eligible to vote in the elections.

Communications will be sent frequently and will increase around key date such as the despatch of poll cards and first postal vote issue in mid-April.

Accessibility at polling stations

We have ensured that all polling stations across the county are fully accessible by ramp or elevator to any voter with mobility restrictions. Every polling station will also be equipped with at least one wheelchair-accessible polling booth.

Once inside the polling station, there will be clear instructions on how to vote in both written and picture formats, and our friendly polling station staff are on hand to help voters. They are trained to offer impartial guidance on the voting process and to maintain a stress-free environment throughout the day.

Further information about the arrangements we will have in place are listed on our [website](#).

Key election dates

We will be sending all statutory election notices to you in hardcopy format in the post as they are published (we will send these in advance where we can) and we ask that you display them in the local area by the publication date on each notice. The Statement of persons will be sent via email as you will have 24 hours to display it due to the tight deadlines. All notices will also be published on our website. The statutory notice publication dates in the election timetable are as follows:

Notice of Election	Published locally on Monday 6th March 2023 . We will send this to you in advance.
Statement of Persons Nominated	To display not later than 4pm on Wednesday 5th April 2023 . Lists all valid candidates. We will send this to you via email after 4pm on Tuesday 4 th April (the close of nominations).
Notice of Election Agents	Published as soon as practicable after the Statement of Persons Nominated.
Notice of Uncontested Election	Published as soon as practicable after the Statement of Persons Nominated.
Notice of Poll	Published locally on Tuesday 25th April 2023 for all councils which will have a contested poll. We will send this to you in advance.
Notice of election results	Published as soon as practicable after the counting of votes on Friday 5th May 2023 .

Parish Clerk briefing sessions

We are holding 3 briefing sessions for Parish Clerks and prospective parish candidates in the Assembly Hall at the Town Hall in Hereford. These are open for all clerks to attend:

- **Monday 27th February 2023 – 6pm**
- **Wednesday 1st March 2023 – 6pm**
- **Friday 3rd March 2023 – 6pm**

In these sessions we will talk through the nomination process, voter ID and any other key dates to be aware of. This includes the date poll cards and postal vote packs will be issued, the date they are opened and the date of the verification and counting of votes. We will also give you information regarding electoral fraud and offences. The Electoral

Services team will be on hand throughout to talk about the elections process and assist with any queries that attendees may have.

Please make us aware of which session you are attending by emailing elections@herefordshire.gov.uk so we know roughly how many people to expect.

Nominations

Hardcopy nomination packs can be collected from the above briefing sessions. There will be pre-printed packs addressed to each clerk covering the number of seats on your relevant council(s). We will post these out after the last briefing to anyone that does not attend.

Anyone can also request a nomination pack from our [website](#) and we will send it via email or post as soon as they are available. Hardcopies will also be available to collect from the Electoral Services office at the Town Hall.

More information on the nomination period, informal checks on nomination papers, booking an appointment for submission of papers and requesting absent voter lists and registers is available on our [website](#).

We are currently compiling a set of parish clerk guidance which we will get out to you via email as soon as we are able to. This covers the full term Local Government Elections, casual vacancies, parish polls and more and will be useful for you to have on record.

If you are aware of anyone else wishing to stand as a candidate in your area please feel free to forward this bulletin.