

Grantham Parish Council elections – 2 May 2024

Candidates Briefing



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome – Karen Bradford, Returning Officer
- Introductions:
 - Graham Watts, Deputy Returning Officer
 - Julie Edwards, Electoral Services Manager



Contents of Presentation

- Elections taking place in South Kesteven
- Key dates of the election timetable
- Qualifications and disqualifications
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- Agents
- Access to electoral register and absent voters lists
- Postal votes
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- Campaigning and polling day
- Verification and Counting of votes
- Candidate spending
- Contacts



Information and Guidance

- Information and guidance included in candidate nomination packs
- Electoral Commission guidance for candidates and agents - available on their website <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-parish-council-elections-england>
- Candidates are strongly recommended to read the Electoral Commission guidance
 - What you need to know before standing as a candidate
 - Candidate spending
 - The campaign
 - Nominations
 - Postal votes
 - Polling day
 - Verification and count
 - After the declaration of result



Polls taking place in South Kesteven

- **Police and Crime Commissioner elections:**
 - Lincolnshire Police Area
- **Grantham Parish Council elections**
 - 7 wards, 22 councillors

Ward	No. of Seats
Arnoldfield	3
Barrowby Gate	3
Earlesfield	3
Harrowby	3
Springfield	3
St Vincent's	4
St Wulfram's	3



Election Timetable

Timetabled Process	Deadlines
Publication of Notice of Election	Friday 22 March
Close of Nominations / Candidate withdrawals	4pm Friday 5 April
Deadline for registering to vote on 2 May	Tuesday 16 April
Deadline for new postal vote applications/changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – Wednesday 17 April
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – Wednesday 24 April
Deadline for applications for a Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document	5pm – Wednesday 24 April
Polling day – 7am – 10pm	Thursday 2 May
Return of Election Expense Returns	Friday 31 May



Standing for Election - 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 citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen or a national of an EU member state

Also at least **one** of the following:

- ✓ Registered local government elector for the area of Grantham Parish
- ✓ Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the Grantham Parish during the whole 12 months preceding nomination
- ✓ Principal or only place of work (including unpaid) during last 12 months in the Grantham Parish area
- ✓ Lived in the Grantham Parish or within 3 miles (4.8km) of it during the last 12 months



Disqualifications

A person cannot be a candidate if they:

- ❖ Are **employed by the local authority (parish/town council)** or hold a paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees).
- ❖ Are subject of a **Bankruptcy Restrictions Order** (or interim restrictions order)
- ❖ Have been **sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more** (including suspended sentence) without the 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
- ❖ Are subject to the **notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003**

If in doubt a person is advised to take their own independent legal advice



Nomination Papers

The documents that must be submitted by all candidates by
4pm Friday 5 April :

- the nomination paper (form 1a)
- the home address form (form 1b)
- the consent to nomination (form 1c)

Party candidates will also need to submit by **4pm Friday 5 April:**

- a certificate authorising the use of a party name/registered description on the ballot paper (form 2)
- a written request to use one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper (optional) (form 3)

Please also complete the contact details form to provide telephone number and email address.

Nomination packs area available - request from the elections team:

01476 406080, email: elections@southkesteven.gov.uk



Nominations – Key Points

- **Commonly used names**
 - More flexibility introduced by Elections Act 2022.
 - Can use commonly used name if commonly known by a name other than your full name and wish to use it instead
 - Commonly used names apply only to statement of persons nominated, notice of poll and ballot paper.
 - Candidate's actual name should appear on other documents such as the imprint and candidate's spending returns



Nominations – Key Points

- **Description**

- Leave blank; or
- Independent; or
- Description of no more than six words as long as it does not associate you with a registered political party name or description. For example 'Farmer', 'Member of village action team'; or
- Party candidates can use party name or one of the registered descriptions :
 - Must be authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer of the party
 - Description included on nomination paper must match exactly the description authorised by the party
 - Certificate of authorisation must include the full name of the candidate



Nomination - Subscribers

Subscribers:

- 2 subscribers – proposer and seconder
- Must sign and print their names
- Must be registered local government electors for the relevant parish ward on 1 March Electoral Register – if not registered in the ward they can't subscribe
- Elections team can check register and provide electoral number details
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** the name and description details have been completed
- Subscribers can sign up to the number of seats in the ward
- When collecting subscriber information, you should point out what the information will be used for, that it will be shared with the Returning Officer.
- Names of proposers and seconders will be published on the Statement of Persons Nominated and Notice of Poll



Home address form

PART 1: All candidates must complete:

- Full name and home current address – no abbreviations
- Qualifying addresses for each of the qualifications you have declared on your consent to nomination (a, b, c and/or d)
- The full name and home address in full of the witness to your consent to nomination

PART 2: Complete only if you do not want your home address to be made public:

- the name of the ‘**relevant area**’ in which your home address is situated (eg “South Kesteven”)
- if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which your home address is situated.

Both Parts 1 and 2 must be submitted.

Do not complete or sign Part 2 if you want your home address to be made public.



Consent to Nomination

- Confirm which of the qualifications apply – must match the qualifications indicated on the home address form
- Strike through any qualifications that do not apply
- Date of birth and signature
- Date of consent - no earlier than one calendar month before deadline for nominations – **5 March**
- Witness' name and signature (witness name and address entered on the home address form)
- Disqualification rules must be attached to Consent to Nomination



Submitting Nomination Papers

- Take care when completing your nomination papers as mistakes may invalidate your nomination
- PLEASE complete early
- Arrange for an informal check – forms can be emailed in advance of formal submission to **nominations@southkesteven.gov.uk**
- The nomination paper, home address form and consent to nomination **must be formally delivered by hand** and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means
- **Make an appointment for delivery - contact the elections team on 01476 406080 or email nominations@southkesteven.gov.uk**
- No restriction as to who can deliver – responsibility of the candidate



Where to Submit Nomination Papers

Location :

South Kesteven District Council,
South Kesteven House, Civic
Building, St Peter's Hill, Grantham,
NG31 6PY (St Peter's Hill
entrance only)

Dates:

From Friday 22 March to Friday 5
April (4pm deadline)

Times:

Monday to Friday – 10am to 4pm
(excluding bank holidays)

**Book an appointment - Anyone
arriving without an appointment
will be seen and may be asked
to wait until an officer becomes
available.**



Appointment of agents

- **There is no provision for the appointment of an election agent at Parish and Town Council elections**
- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf.
- **Postal vote agents:**
 - Written appointment must be made in advance of the opening session
 - Advise the elections team in advance (minimum of 24 hours notice) of attendance at any of the postal vote opening sessions
- **Polling agents Counting agents:**
 - You must give notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by **25 April**
 - You will be advised of the maximum number of counting agents you can appoint after the close of nominations – the number allowed will be the same for each candidate



Access to Electoral Register and Absent Voters Lists

Available to candidates - once you **officially** become a candidate:

- **Earliest date : Tuesday 26 March 2024** (latest date for publication of Notice of Election)
- Must make written request to the ERO – forms included in the nomination packs
- Can submit request form earlier for supply on 26 March 2024
- **Only use data for permitted purposes!**
 - ✓ To complete the nomination form
 - ✓ To help you campaign
 - ✓ To check that donations/loans are permissible
- Must not be used for any other purpose
- Keep the electoral register secure
- Securely destroy when no longer needed



Registration and Absent voting applications

Registration applications

- The deadline for registering to vote at the election is Tuesday 16 April
- Individuals can apply to register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.
- National insurance number, date of birth and address required

Absent voting applications

- Electors can now apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote or www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote
- National insurance number, date of birth, signature and address required
- Deadline for applications:
 - Postal vote applications – 5pm Wednesday 17 April
 - Proxy vote applications – 5pm Wednesday 24 April

Paper applications can also be submitted to Electoral Services at SKDC by post or by email (scan or photograph) to elections@southkesteven.gov.uk



Postal Votes Issue and Opening

- Postal vote issue dates:
 - Main issue : 15 April (for applications received by 1 April)
 - Final issue : 22 April
- Postal vote opening sessions:
 - From 22 April to 2 May

Further details of the sessions will be provided to candidates for contested after the close of nominations



Absent voting - campaigners

- Campaigners cannot handle postal votes for other electors who are not close relatives or someone for whom they provide regular care
- Campaigners may handle postal voting documents if that's a feature of a job they hold (e.g. a postal worker)
- New limits on the number of postal votes that can be handed in – a maximum of five plus their own for each poll

A campaigner is:

- a candidate at the election(s)
- an election agent
- employed by the candidate (for the purposes of the candidate's activities at the election)
- a member of a registered political party who is carrying out activity to promote a particular outcome at an election
- someone employed by a registered political party in connection with that party's political activities



Completed postal votes handed in to polling stations

- Postal votes can be handed into polling stations within the voting area
- **Anyone returning postal votes by hand must complete a postal vote return form, otherwise the postal vote will be rejected**
- Polling station staff may assist anyone wishing to hand in postal votes to complete the relevant form
- An individual may hand in a maximum of 6 electors' postal votes (their own and five others) per poll
- If the individual is a campaigner they may only handle their own postal vote and those that belong to close family members or people for whom they provide care
- Polling station staff will not be able to provide advice about whether someone is a campaigner, but they may reject postal votes if they have reasonable cause to believe an individual is a campaigner
- If postal votes are handed in not in accordance with the rules, they are required to be rejected



Completed postal votes handed in to council buildings

- Restrictions on the numbers of returned postal votes and who may hand in postal votes are the same as for polling stations
- An individual may hand in a maximum of 6 electors' postal votes (their own and five others) per poll
- Postal votes for all contested electoral areas may be returned by hand to Customer Services, The Guildhall, St Peter's Hill, Grantham during opening hours.
- Staff authorised by the Returning Officer may assist anyone wishing to hand in postal votes to complete the relevant form
- **Postal votes dropped off to reception or other council office desks or locations or any posted into council letter boxes without completing the postal vote return form will be rejected and will **not** be counted**



Voter Identification

- Voters will need to provide a form of accepted photographic ID if they wish to vote in person at a polling station
- Voters will be able to present out of date photographic ID so long as the photograph is still a good likeness
- If a voter fails to present a form of accepted photographic ID they will not be issued with a ballot paper
- Includes those who are voting as a proxy for another person
- Voters without ID or with the wrong type of ID will be able to return later with the correct ID



Accepted forms of Voter ID

- Voters should be encouraged to check whether they have one of the forms of accepted photographic ID well in advance of the election
- If a voter does not have an accepted form of photographic ID, they can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate either online www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-to-vote or using a paper application form.
- Electors who are registered anonymously must have an Elector's Document to vote in person
- Any applications must be received by the ERO by 5pm on the 6th working day before the poll – 5pm on Wednesday 24 April



Accepted forms of Voter ID(1)

International travel

- ✓ 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)
- ✓ Irish Passport Card

Driving and Parking

- ✓ Driving licence (issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state)
- ✓ A Blue Badge



Accepted forms of Voter ID(2)

Local travel

- ✓ Older Person's bus pass
- ✓ Disabled Person's bus pass
- ✓ Oyster 60+ Card
- ✓ Freedom pass
- ✓ Scottish National Entitlement card
- ✓ 60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card
- ✓ Disabled person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card
- ✓ Senior SmartPass issued in NI
- ✓ Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in NI
- ✓ War Disablement SmartPass issued in
- ✓ 60+ SmartPass issued in NI
- ✓ Half Fare SmartPass issued in NI



Accepted forms of Voter ID(3)

Proof of age

- ✓ Identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)

Other Government issued documents

- ✓ Biometric immigration document

- ✓ Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identify Card)
- ✓ Nationality identity card issued by an EEA state
- ✓ Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland
- ✓ Voter Authority Certificate
- ✓ Anonymous Elector's Document



Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Use imprints on all your campaign material, including digital material and websites
- Comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners
- 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
- Do not use the SKDC logo



Campaigning on polling day

Campaigning outside Polling Stations:

- You are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including **public** spaces outside polling places – Not within the polling place premises
- Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter
- Must not campaign near polling stations in a way that could be seen by voters as aggressive or intimidation (for example large groups of supporters carrying banners)
- Comply with requests by polling station staff or the Returning Officer



Campaigning – Notices on Highways

- Can only be sited 25-200 metres from the entrance to polling place (must not be within 25 metres)
- No more than two posters per candidate within the permitted area of each entrance
- **Not to be erected earlier than 48 hours** before polling day and removed within 14 days after close of poll
- Objections and queries relating to display of posters to be addressed directly to Place Directorate, Lincolnshire County Council (email cschighways@lincolnshire.gov.uk). More information provided in nomination packs.
- Posters displayed on private land are excluded from these restrictions





Polling Day



- Polling stations open 7am-10pm
- Office phone lines open 7am to 10pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election
- Postal votes – can be handed in to polling stations within the Ward until 10pm (with the completion of the postal vote return form)
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue at 10pm can apply for a ballot paper or hand in a postal vote
- Voters in this election will need to present photographic ID in the polling station



Verification and Count

The Meres Leisure Centre



Verification and Count Thursday 2 May

- Verification and count – Thursday 2 May from 10pm
- In the event of General election being called for 2 May – PCC and Grantham counts will be held Friday 3 May
- Candidates, limited number of counting agents and one guest
- Notification of appointed counting agents and details of any guest required by 25 April
- Permitted number of counting agents will be advised after nominations have closed
- Only those notified will be admitted - no entry if not registered
- All attending required to sign in on arrival
- Refreshments available – separate designated area for candidates and agents

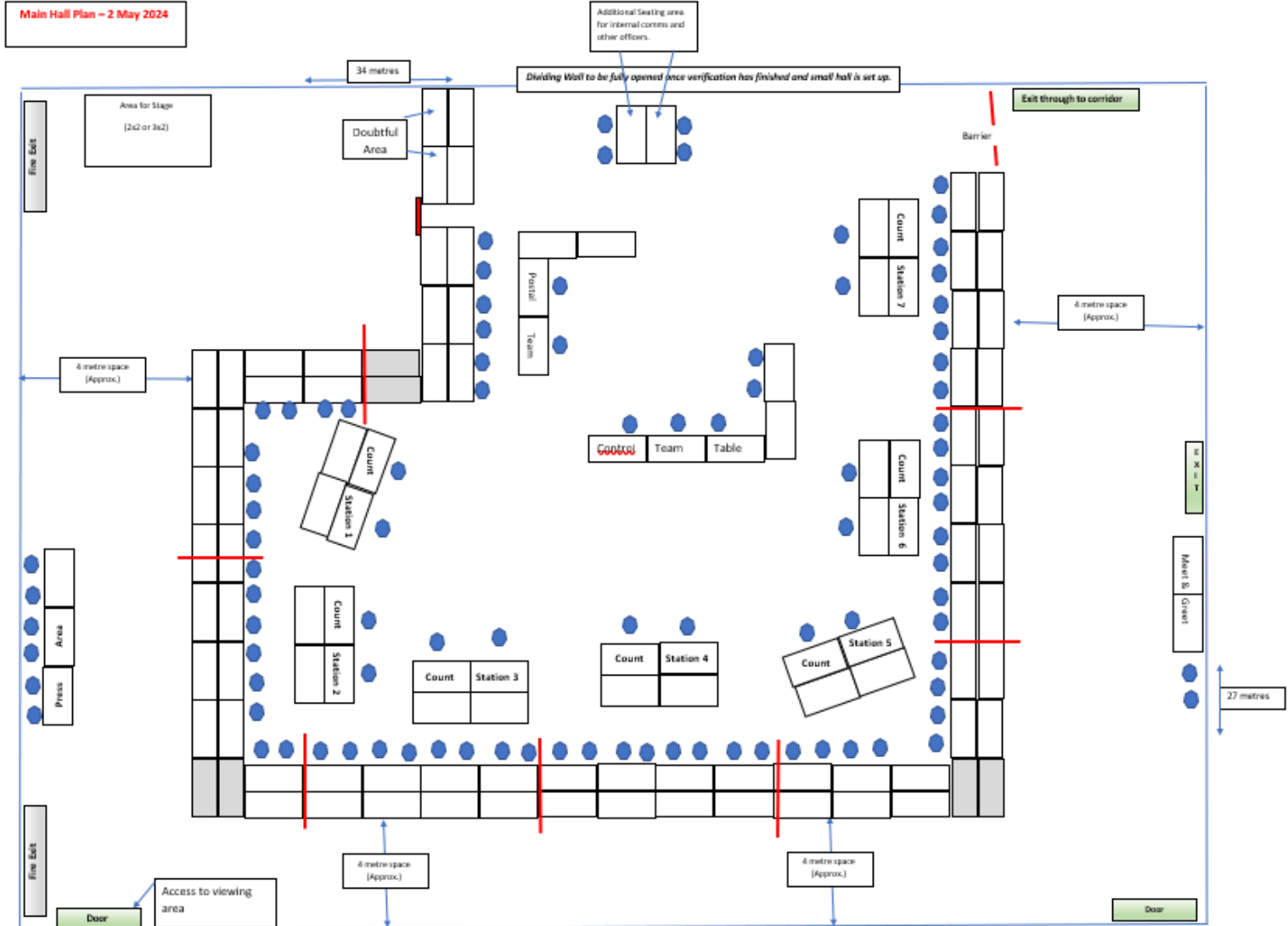


Verification and Count Thursday 2 May

- Final postal vote opening session from **8.00pm**
- Verification of ballot papers from 10.00pm for both PCC and Grantham Parish Wards
- Verification figures for PCC election will be collated across Lincolnshire
- PCC count cannot commence until verification completed for all Districts and figures agreed by Police Area Returning Officer (City of Lincoln Council) – could delay start of PCC count
- Grantham wards will be counted on a number of tables – counting will commence straight away alongside the PCC verification
- Doubtful votes
- Equality of votes – process in the event of a tie



Count layout – main hall



After the election

- **Uncontested election:** insufficient or the exact number of nominations
 - Result of Uncontested Election – published after nomination/withdrawal deadline
 - Take up office 7 May
- **First meeting:** 13 or 14 May – complete form included in nomination pack to indicate availability
- **Term of Office:** Elected councillors take up office 7 May. Initial 3 year term.
- Declaration of Acceptance of Office
- Register of interests Forms and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)



Candidate Expenses

- Expenses 'used for the purposes of the candidate's election' after the date they officially became a candidate
- Responsibility of election agent
- Maximum expenses limit:
 - £960 + 8p per elector in Ward on the register as at 1 March 2024
 - Maximum reduced for joint candidates
- Must obtain and keep receipts for payments over £20
- Refer to Electoral Commission Guidance
www.electoralcommission.org.uk



Spending Returns

- Declaration and Return due 28 calendar days after result of election
- Legal requirement - even if no expenses incurred or the election was uncontested
- Returns to be submitted to:
 - Electoral Services, South Kesteven District Council, Council Offices, The Picture House, St Catherine's Road, Grantham, NG31 6TT
- Returns made public by 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 **even if you do not spend anything**
- No spending will be reimbursed.



Contacts - SKDC

- Elections Team :
 - 01476 406080 elections@southkesteven.gov.uk
- Informal checks of Nomination Papers and booking appointments:
 - nominations@southkesteven.gov.uk
- Julie Edwards, Electoral Services Manager
 - 01476 406078 julie.edwards@southkesteven.gov.uk
- Website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk/elections2024
www.southkesteven.gov.uk/voterID



Any Questions?



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