



Shropshire
Council

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR PROSPECTIVE TOWN & PARISH COUNCIL CANDIDATES



May 2021
Town and Parish Council Elections

www.shropshire.gov.uk

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MARCH 2021

MESSAGE FROM CLAIRE PORTER THE RETURNING OFFICER

Elections are taking place on **Thursday 6 May** for both the town/parish and unitary tiers of local government, and those candidates who are successfully elected will take up office for a period of four years.

The Police and Crime Commissioner Election for the West Mercia Police Area, which was postponed from May 2020, will also take place on the same day.

I am the Returning Officer for all town and parish council elections and unitary elections being held within Shropshire Council's area. Due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, this election will be like no other, and has provided my Elections Team with a whole new set of challenges to make sure that candidates, the electorate and those working at both polling stations and the counting of votes, will all feel safe throughout the electoral process, whilst working to maintain the usual high standards of service provided at all elections.

My Team has provided extra guidance on items which have been affected by Covid-19 as part of this pack, but should you have any other queries on our Coronavirus arrangements or any other topic during the election period, please contact a member of my Team (preferably by email), who will endeavour to help you with any queries you may have – elections@shropshire.gov.uk.

I hope that this guidance document will hopefully answer many of your initial queries. Please be aware however that it is not intended as an authoritative interpretation of the law, and candidates are advised to seek their own legal advice where appropriate, which may involve you contacting the Electoral Commission direct. Their website address, which contains their full email and telephone contact details, is:-

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

We strongly recommend that all candidates and their agents, should download and familiarise themselves with Electoral Commission's comprehensive notes obtainable via the following link:-

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-council-elections-england>

The Electoral Commission is the UK's independent elections watchdog and provides information on how to stand as a candidate, conduct your election campaign and the current spending limits for candidates.



***Claire Porter, Returning Officer
Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND.***

I would also urge you to make reference to our webpage – “[Town and parish elections 6 May 2021 | Shropshire Council](#)” – which will provide you with information throughout the election process.

Our website address is www.shropshire.gov.uk

You can also follow us on
Twitter - **@ShropCouncil**

Or email us at elections@shropshire.gov.uk

The aim of this document is to provide specific information for the arrangements put in place for Shropshire, and covers the following topics:-

Important Election Information about nomination papers

- (1) The election timetable
- (2) Introduction to election procedures
- (3) Town and Parish Council Elections
- (4) Candidates
- (5) Nomination process
- (6) Polling day; verification and count
- (7) Post-election matters
- (8) Election expenses and the election campaign
- (9) Postal voting
- (10) Candidates checklist
- (11) Appendices and forms:
 - *Appendix 1 - Guidance on the use of “commonly used names”*
 - *Appendix 2 – Candidates Imprints for the 2021 election*
 - *Request forms for the electoral register and absent voter lists (postal and proxy)*
 - *Notice of withdrawal form*
 - *Forms to appoint agents to attend the verification, the count and postal vote opening*

IMPORTANT!

Completed nomination Papers cannot be submitted to the returning officer in the post, by e-mail or by fax.

The law states that they can only be **hand-delivered** to the returning officer by the candidate, their agent, or a person that they trust. There is **no change** to this requirement due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic.

Any Nomination Forms, Home Address Forms, or Consents to Nomination received by post have not been “delivered” in accordance with the rules. The Candidate is therefore not deemed to stand nominated and no decision can be taken as to whether the papers are valid.

We would advise you, wherever possible, to deposit your completed nomination paper as soon as possible to avoid any waiting times.

Due to Covid restrictions you may have to wait outside the building until a member of the team is available.

COVID ADVICE:

For your own safety, the safety of the staff on duty, as well as others attending the same venue, you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand sanitizer and observe social distancing rules when submitting your nomination papers.

If there is a one-way system in place at the location where your nomination papers are to be submitted, please ensure you adhere to the restrictions in place.

PART 1: THE ELECTION TIMETABLE

The election timetable is set in law, but there is discretion for the returning officer to bring forward the date for the publication of the Notice of Election from the statutory publication date of Monday 29 March. Due to the number of seats being contested, the returning officer will publish the Notice of Election early - **Monday 15 March** - to allow candidates more time to submit their nomination papers. All deadlines within the timetable, must be strictly observed: where no time is specified in the timetable, it is assumed to be midnight on that day.

We are expecting over 1400 nomination papers to be lodged with us in just over 3 weeks!

All deadlines within the timetable, must be strictly observed.

ELECTORAL EVENT	DATE & TIME (if applicable)	
Publication of the "Notice of Election"	Monday 15 March 2021	
Offices Closed Good Friday (2 April) to Easter Monday (5 April) inclusive		
Deadline for the receipt of nomination papers, consent to nomination forms and home address forms	4pm	Thursday 8 April 2021
Withdrawal of candidature if no longer standing*	4pm	Thursday 8 April 2021
Publication of "First Interim Notice of Alteration"	Thursday 8 April 2021	
Last date for publication of the "Statements of Persons Nominated"	4pm	Friday 9 April 2021
Last date to receive applications to appear on the Register	Monday 19 April 2021	
Last date to receipt written applications to vote by post (including postal proxy applications and changes to existing postal votes7)	5pm	Tuesday 20 April 2021
Last date to publish the "Notice of Poll"	Tuesday 27 April 2021	
Publication of "Second Interim Notice of Alteration"	Between Friday 9 and Tuesday 27 April 2021	
Last date for receipt of written applications to vote by proxy	5pm	Tuesday 27 April 2021
Deadline for the appointment of polling and counting agents	Wednesday 28 April 2021	
Publication of "Final Notice of Alteration"	Wednesday 28 April 2021	
First day to issue replacement spoilt/lost postal ballot papers	Thursday 29 April 2021	
Offices Closed Bank Holiday Monday (3 May)		
Deadline for receipt of emergency proxy applications	5pm	Thursday 6 May 2021
Last day to issue replacement spoilt/lost postal ballot papers	5pm	Thursday 6 May 2021
Last time to alter register due to a clerical error or court appeal	9pm	Thursday 6 May 2021
POLLING DAY	7:00 am to 10:00 pm	Thursday 6 May 2021
The last date to submit election returns for Parish Councils	Thursday 3 June	

PART 2: INTRODUCTION TO ELECTION PROCEDURES

These notes are to advise prospective candidates of the practice relating to town and parish council elections. It is for general guidance only and is not intended as a comprehensive statement of the law.

The returning officer appointed by Shropshire Council is responsible for the conduct of, and arrangements for, town and parish council elections. However, the town and parish council and its clerk have an important role to play, especially in giving advice to prospective candidates prior to the four-yearly ordinary elections and in the preliminary arrangements for the filling of casual vacancies, including by-elections.

Notices will be issued to local town and parish council clerks for display at various key dates during the election timetable. This information will also be displayed on Shropshire Council's website – www.shropshire.gov.uk on its webpage "[Town and parish elections 6 May 2021 | Shropshire Council](#)".

The information which will be published includes:

- **Notice of Election** This is the first stage of the election process which makes prospective candidates aware that an election has been called and what action they should take. It also provides eligible people within that area with the key dates to apply to register or apply for postal or proxy voting, should a poll take place.
- **Statement of Persons Nominated** This shows which candidates have submitted valid nomination papers to stand at the election.
- **Notice of Uncontested Election** In the event that there are fewer than or an equal number of candidates as there are seats available, this notice informs electors of those candidates remaining validly nominated, who are then elected unopposed.
- **Notice of Poll** Should there be more candidates than seats available, this notice informs local electors of the date and time of the poll, and which polling station they should attend on polling day.
- **Declaration of Results** For all contested elections, this notice records the results of votes cast in the poll, including any rejected votes and the reason for their rejection.

To find out who you are standing against, we will be sending a copy of the Statement of Persons Nominated to the Town/Parish Clerk for display locally, including on the town/parish council's website (if they have one). A copy of the notice will also be published on Shropshire Council's website, so you may wish to log in to see who the other candidates are (if any). **These notices should be available on our website by 4pm on 9 April.** When viewing the page, please remember to press "Refresh" on your browser bar to ensure that you have the most up-to-date information available.

PART 3: TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

TERM OF OFFICE

Town and Parish Councillors hold office for a period of four years (or if elected part way through the cycle, for the remainder of that period only) and retire on the fourth day after the ordinary day of election. The newly elected Councillors take office (provided they have made declarations of acceptance of office) on the day on which their predecessors retire (Local Government Act, 1972, Section 16(3)).

The Chair of a Town or Parish Council continues in office until their successor becomes entitled to act as such.

PART 4: CANDIDATES

STANDING FOR ELECTION

To be eligible to stand as a town or parish councillor, you **must** be:

- Aged 18 or over; AND
- A British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of any member state of the European Union.

Secondly, you **must** meet at least one of the following four qualifications:

- You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the town/parish in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards;
- You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the town/parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election;
- Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the town/parish area;
- You have lived in the town/parish area or within 3 miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

If you qualify under more than one heading, it is good practice to include all those which apply.

You will be **unable** to stand as a candidate if:

- You are employed by the town/parish/community council or hold a paid office under the parish/community council (including joint boards or committees); or
- You are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order; or
- You have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence), without the option of a fine, during the five years before polling day; or
- You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations).

Full details can be obtained online from the Electoral Commission – www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

It is a criminal offence to make a false statement on your nomination papers as to your qualification for being elected, so if you are in any doubt you should contact your employer, consult the legislation or, if necessary, take your own independent legal advice.

PART 5: THE NOMINATION PROCESS

SUBMITTING A NOMINATION PAPER

The first stage in running for election is to submit their nomination, which includes several elements. When the nomination period closes, if there are more candidates than seats for that particular town or parish, there will need to be a poll. If there are the same number or fewer candidates than seats for that particular area, those candidates will be elected unopposed.

If you are standing in a warded or grouped town or parish area, great care should be taken when completing your nomination papers, as it is imperative that your supporters are from the correct portion of the register to make your nomination valid. Please contact the local Clerk to obtain more information about the relevant area.

To be validly nominated, you must complete and submit the following forms:

- **Nomination Form**
- **Home Address Form**
- **Candidate's Consent to Nomination**
- **If you are standing as a candidate for a political party, you must also return the "Registration of Political Parties" Certificate and (if applicable) the "Request for Use of Registered Party Emblem"**

The candidate's full name must be written on the **NOMINATION FORM** – initials alone are not permitted. Similarly, the candidate's home address must be included on the form. If candidates want to use a "commonly used name" on their nomination paper, they will also need to supply their full given name. Further guidance on the use of "commonly used names" is included as **Appendix 1** to this document.

If a candidate wishes to use a description, it can only be one of the following:

- (a) one certified as an authorised or registered description as mentioned in Rule 5 of the election rules,
or
- (b) the word 'Independent'
or
- (c) a description of a maximum of six words

A candidate may not use a description/use an emblem which is likely to mislead voters into believing that they are associated with a political party, unless that description is authorised by a certificate signed by or on behalf of the party's registered nominating officer. Any such request must be received by the returning officer not later than the latest time for the delivery of nomination papers.

PROPOSER AND SECONDER

Each nomination paper must be subscribed by a proposer and seconder, who must be registered local government electors of the appropriate town/parish and **specific ward** (in the event that the town/parish is "warded" or "grouped"). The electoral numbers (poll numbers) of the proposer and seconder must also be shown on the nomination paper.

Your local Town or Parish Clerk for the area in which you are standing may have a copy of the Register of Electors and be able to assist you with electors poll numbers. Alternatively, you can obtain the relevant poll numbers from the Elections Team, at The Shirehall in Shrewsbury. We would recommend that you try to contact your Town or Parish Clerk in the first instance, as the telephone lines into the Elections Office at this time can become very busy.

No person shall subscribe to more nomination papers than there are vacancies in the Parish or Parish Ward (if warded).

The **HOME ADDRESS FORM** allows the candidate to choose whether or not they want their address published or whether it is to be shown as “Shropshire” on election notices and the ballot papers. The form must be witnessed prior to submission, and full information about the requirements is shown on the Electoral Commission’s Candidates’ Guidance.

The **CONSENT TO NOMINATION** is required to show what qualifications you are standing under and must also be signed by the witness who is shown on the Home Address Form. It cannot be dated more than one calendar month before the deadline for submitting your nomination papers.

Candidates should ensure that the details on their nomination form are completed in full **before** presenting them to their proposer and seconder, and those details should be clearly visible at the time of signing, so that they know who they are supporting and what party (if any) they are giving their consent to. Usual signatures should be used and assenter names should be printed as signed.

Great care should be taken in the completion of nomination papers, to ensure that they are not ruled to be invalid by the returning officer. Candidates are advised to ensure that nomination papers are free of errors and crossings out. Correction fluids are not recommended and could result in a nomination paper being declared invalid.

Reminder: Completed nomination papers must be submitted to the returning officer in person – not via the postal system or by electronic transmission or fax - before the deadline for close of nominations – **4pm on Thursday 8 April 2021**.

WHERE TO SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATION PAPERS

When delivering your nomination papers, it is advisable to wait for them to be checked by the Elections Team before you leave. This is because if an error is discovered, you will be able to take your paper away with you for correction and re-submission before the closing date and time.

COVID ADVICE: *For the safety of the staff on duty, as well as others attending the same venue, you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand sanitizer and observe social distancing rules when submitting your nomination papers. If there is a one-way system in place at the location where your nomination papers are to be submitted, please ensure you adhere to the restrictions in place.*

The following locations will be used to accept nomination papers:

Venue	Date	Deposit Times
Shirehall, Shrewsbury	Tuesday 16 th March	9am – 5pm
	Wednesday 17 th March	9am – 5pm
	Thursday 18 th March	9am – 5pm
	Friday 19 th March	9am – 5pm
	Monday 22 nd March	9am – 5pm
	Tuesday 23 rd March	9am – 5pm
	Wednesday 24 th March	9am – 5pm
	Thursday 25 th March	9am – 5pm
	Friday 26 th March	9am – 5pm
	Monday 29 th March	9am – 5pm
	Tuesday 30 th March	9am – 5pm
	Wednesday 31 st March	9am – 5pm
	Thursday 1 st April	9am – 5pm
	Tuesday 6 th April	9am – 7pm
Wednesday 7 th April	9am – 7pm	
Thursday 8 th April	9am – 4pm	

Venue	Date	Deposit Times
Castle View, Oswestry	Tuesday 16 th March	8.45am – 6pm
	Thursday 25 th March	8.45am – 6pm
	Wednesday 31 st March	8.45am – 6pm

Venue	Date	Deposit Times
Edinburgh House, Wem	Wednesday 17 th March	9.15am – 4.30pm
	Monday 22 nd March	9.15am – 4.30pm
	Thursday 1 st April	9.15am – 4.30pm

Venue	Date	Deposit Times
Helena Lane Day Care Centre, Ludlow	Thursday 18 th March	8.45am – 4pm
	Wednesday 24 th March	8.45am – 4pm
	Tuesday 30 th March	8.45am – 4pm

Venue	Date	Deposit Times
Bridgnorth Library	Friday 19 th March	9.45am – 4.30pm
	Tuesday 23 rd March	9.45am – 4.30pm
	Monday 29 th March	9.45am – 4.30pm

CLOSE OF NOMINATIONS

The nomination period will close at **4pm precisely on Thursday 8 April** and the Election Office will, quite literally, go into lockdown and you will not be able to reach any of the elections staff by telephone or email. Whilst all nomination papers will have been formally lodged, the team will then go through the process of making final checks before producing the “Statements of Persons Nominated” for every unitary electoral division and town/parish council ward.

Statements of Persons Nominated for each area will be published on the Council’s website as soon as they become available. The checking/publishing process will commence with the unitary divisions first, followed by the town and parish councils, so there may be a delay before this information is published.

The Statements of Persons Nominated for each area must be available no later than 4pm on Friday 9 April, so please keep checking on our website for full details. When viewing the website, we would recommend candidates press the “refresh” button, to ensure that they have the most up-to-date webpage on screen. Please refer to the [“Town and parish elections 6 May 2021 | Shropshire Council”](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/town-and-parish-elections-6-may-2021) webpage on www.shropshire.gov.uk.

WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

Any candidate wishing to withdraw their candidature must do so in writing (a withdrawal form is included as part of your nomination pack) and must deliver their form to the following office ONLY:

*The Returning Officer - Shropshire Council,
Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.*

It must be signed by the candidate and one witness, and must be received no later than **4pm on Thursday 8 April 2021**.

Any candidate who is validly nominated for more than one ward of the same town/parish **must** withdraw their candidature in all those wards except one by that deadline, otherwise they shall be deemed to have withdrawn from **all** those wards.

A Withdrawal Form, if required, is enclosed with this document.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- **UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS**

If the number of people remaining validly nominated after any withdrawals does not exceed the number of councillors to be elected, those candidates will be declared to be “elected unopposed”. The returning officer will give notice of their names to the town/parish clerk and to the public, as well as publishing this information on our website.

If there are not enough candidates to fill all the vacancies, the Representation of the People Act 1985, Section 21 allows the elected members, provided there is a quorum (i.e. – one third of the whole number of members with a minimum of three) to co-opt members to fill the remaining vacancies.

If the town/parish council fails to exercise the power to co-opt within seven weeks (35 days computed as under paragraph 3) or if there is no quorum, Shropshire Council may order a fresh election to properly constitute the town/parish council.

- **CONTESTED ELECTIONS**

A poll will need to be held, in order to determine who is elected to serve on the Council. The poll will take place on Thursday 6 May 2021. When the result of the poll is known, the returning officer will:-

- (a) declare to be elected, the candidate(s) to whom more votes have been given than to the other candidates, up to the number of councillors to be elected;
- (b) give notice of the name of each candidate elected to the town/parish clerk (or chairman);
- (c) give public notice of the name of each candidate and of the total number of votes given for each (whether elected or not) together with the number of rejected ballot papers.

PART 6:

POLLING DAY

1. HOURS OF POLL

The hours of poll will be 7.00am to 10.00pm inclusive. There are however various statutory provisions for a poll not to take place or to be abandoned/adjourned in the event of the death of a candidate or a riot.

2. POLLING STATIONS

The location of polling stations will be published on the appropriate Notices of Poll, as well as appearing on the Council's website.

Please note that entry to polling stations is restricted to the following parties only:-

- The returning officer and his appointed staff
- The presiding officer and poll clerk(s)
- Voters (and any persons assisting a voter with disabilities)
- Candidate
- Polling agent
- Electoral Commission's accredited observers
- Police officers
- Children under the age of 18, accompanying voters

VERIFICATION/THE COUNT

1. VENUE

The venue for both the Verification and the Count will be **Shrewsbury Sports Village, Sundorne Road, Shrewsbury.**

2. TIMETABLE

The timetable for the verification and counting of votes is as follows:

Verification of ALL VOTES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commences with Unitary Divisions• Followed by Towns and Parishes• Followed by Police & Crime Commissioner	Thursday 6 May	<u>10.00 PM</u> Anticipated completion on Friday 7 May
Unitary Council Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counting of votes• Declaration of Unitary results	Friday 7 May	Will commence upon completion of the verification
	Saturday 8 May	Anticipated start time 8am
Town & Parish Council Wards: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counting of votes• Declaration of Town and Parish Council results	Sunday 9 May	Anticipated start time 8am
Police & Crime Commissioner Election Only: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counting of votes• Declaration of Area result	Monday 10 May	Anticipated start time 8am

3. ENTRY TO THE VERIFICATION AND COUNT

This year, those attending the verification and/or the count will **NOT** be able to buy refreshments on site. They may bring their own refreshments, but it is advisable to consume these in your vehicle outside the premises. It is imperative that **no food or drink is brought into the hall** where the verification and counting of votes is taking place.

Those people attending **must** present their letter of admittance prior to gaining entry to the hall where the verification/counts are taking place. Movements of candidates and their guests will be restricted to certain areas only within the hall used for the verification and/or the count.

Separate attendance letters will be issued for each event taking place. Please make sure that you complete the correct application forms (attached) for the events that you and your guest wish to attend. We anticipate that you will need to wait outside the venue and will only be called into the hall when the relevant area is due to be addressed. You may therefore need to be escorted into and out of the building.

Please note that once you have submitted your list of attendees, you will not be permitted to make any substitutions to that list, and that numbers are limited to the candidate and one guest only.

COVID ADVICE: For the safety of staff on duty at the verification/count venue, as well as other candidates or guests in attendance, you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand sanitizer upon arrival, and observe social distancing rules. You must adhere to any instruction given to you by the staff on duty and you also must adhere to any one-way system which may be in force at the verification/count venue. Full details will be contained in the letters issued to outline the procedures required.

PART 7:

POST ELECTION MATTERS

1. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Successful candidates are not permitted to act as a Councillor until they have made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office. A person elected to the office of a Town or Parish Councillor must make this Declaration at or before the first meeting of that Council following their election, or with the prior agreement of the Council, at an alternative time.

Failure to do this will mean their office will become vacant (Local Government Act 1972, Section 83). The person making the declaration is required to observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Town/Parish Council.

2. ANNUAL MEETING

A Town/Parish Council must hold an annual meeting each year on any day in May they choose. The annual meeting must be held on, or within fourteen days after, the day the new Councillors take office (i.e. the fourth day after the day of the election, which is usually a Monday).

3. CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES

There are a number of corrupt and illegal practices that candidates should be aware of. Broadly speaking, a corrupt practice involves bribing or using undue influence to obtain votes. An illegal practice might involve the making of a false statement about the personal character or conduct of another candidate, or paying others to canvass, display notices or pay for transport for voters to and from the polling station. **Failing to display the names and addresses of the publisher or printer on any election material is also an illegal practice.**

PART 8:

(A) ELECTION EXPENSES

A further reminder here: Some candidates believe that they can claim their campaign expenses back from Shropshire Council, but this is **NOT** the case.

At the end of the election period, even if no poll has taken place, each Candidate (whether successful or not) **must** submit a Statement of Election Expenses/Declaration to show the expenses (if any) incurred as part of their election campaign. These documents are **required by law** to be available for public inspection and failure to return one (even if it is a 'Nil Return') is an electoral offence.

Within your nomination pack, there is a comprehensive guide detailing how Candidates should complete the election returns. Staff in the Elections Office are purely the recipients for the elections returns – they are not permitted to advise on how to complete forms or to check their accuracy.

(B) THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The Electoral Commission's website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk provides invaluable information designed to assist Candidates. Please make sure that you visit the site and download any suggested documents.

The Electoral Commission may be contacted:

- By phone on 0333 103 1928
- By e-mail on info@electoralcommission.org.uk, or
- By post/in person at 3 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8YZ.

DEFINITION OF A CANDIDATE

A person becomes a candidate at an election under the Local Government Act either:-

- On the last day for publication of the notice of election if, on or before that day, he has been declared by himself (or by someone else) to be a candidate; or
- On the day on which he declares himself (or is so declared by someone else) to be a candidate; or
- On the day on which he is nominated as a candidate at the election (whichever is the earlier).

CANDIDATE'S LITERATURE

A further reminder here: Any candidate wishing to publish and distribute election literature should ensure that it bears the name and address of the printer and publisher on it. There are strict rules and regulations on what must **by law** be included on election material, and information on this is included as **Appendix 2**.

Election material must **not** be "fly posted" on the highway, on street furniture or any public property. If it is to be displayed on private property, the permission of the owner must be sought in advance. Any such advertisements, posters, etc. relating specifically to a pending election must be removed within 14 days following the close of poll.

PART 9: POSTAL VOTING

OPENING OF POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS AT THE SHIREHALL (VARIOUS DATES)

Sessions for the opening of postal ballot papers will be held at the **Shirehall** in Shrewsbury. Postal votes for town and parish councils will be opened in the unitary divisional area in which they lie.

Due to the quantity of postal votes expected and social distancing requirements, the opening sessions will take place in the following locations: -

- **The Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room** (Ludlow & Wrekin Divisions)
- **The Wilfred Owen Room** (North Shropshire Divisions)
- **The Council Chamber** (Shrewsbury & Atcham Divisions)

The dates and times of the sessions is as follows:-

Tuesday 27 April to Friday 30 April	8.30am to 4.00pm <i>or earlier if daily quantity of post is less</i>
Tuesday 4 May to Wednesday 5 May	8.30am to 4.00pm <i>or earlier if daily quantity of post is less</i>
Thursday 6 May	8.30am to 3.00pm

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS TO VIEW THE OPENING SESSIONS

Candidates, their election agents or their appointed postal vote agent may attend to view the opening of postal votes. Please be aware that due to social distancing requirements for Covid-19, they will only be able to have a **general overview of the process taking place**. They will **not** be able to see individual ballot papers, which must, in any event, remain face down both before and whilst the polls are open.

COVID ADVICE: *For the safety of both the staff on duty and others in attendance, you will be required to wear a face-covering, use hand-sanitizer upon arrival and observe social distancing rules when attending a pre-booked postal vote opening session or session for the viewing of rejected ballot papers. If there is a one-way system in place, please ensure you adhere to the restrictions in place.*

Please be aware that this year, to accommodate social distancing, there will be a **booking system** in operation for anyone wishing to view these sessions: -

- A form to appoint a postal vote agent is contained as part of this pack. Please complete the agent's contact details and relevant unitary division that the parish/ward is in.
- We will contact the proposed agent to arrange a suitable time slot for them to attend to view the opening process.
- If a candidate wishes to attend they must also contact the Elections Team in advance, to request a time slot to attend the viewing session.

- A maximum time period of one hour is permitted for each person wishing to attend the viewing.
- Whilst every effort will be made to have the relevant town or parish papers being opened during the timeslot allocated, you must appreciate that we are unable to give you any guarantees that the ballot papers for that area will be opened at this time. We again stress that these sessions are purely to give candidates and their agents an overview of the process.

Additional postal vote opening sessions will be held at **Shrewsbury Sports Village** on polling day, as follows:-

Thursday 4 May
Thursday 4 May

8.00pm to finish
10.00pm to finish

Please note:

At 4pm on each working day (with the exception of Tuesday 27 April and Thursday 6 May), candidates will be able to view the rejected ballot papers/postal voting statements, from the previous day's opening session. Again, space will be limited, so anyone wishing to attend these sessions will need to **pre-book a place in advance**. You will be required to contact the Elections Team on 0345 678 9015 to make arrangements to attend these sessions, and places are limited due to social distancing rules.

PART 10: CANDIDATES CHECKLIST

As there are a number of key issues to be juggled during the election process, you may find it helpful to run through this Checklist to make sure you have done everything required by the dates set out in the statutory election timetable.

<i>Tick in the end column when task has been completed</i>	
NOMINATION PAPER AND CONSENT TO NOMINATION:	
Remember that the nomination paper, home address form and consent to nomination must be delivered <u>in person</u> and be received by the deadline for receipt of nominations. We recommend early submission where possible.	
• Has the nomination paper been completed with the correct town/parish name <u>and</u> also the correct ward name <i>(if applicable)</i> <u>and</u> the date of election?	
• Has the nomination paper been completed with the Candidate's Surname and Forename(s) in full and (if required) their commonly used name?	
• Is a description being used, and if so, is it less than six words?	
• Have the proposer and seconder signed the nomination form and have their polling district numbers been completed? Are they from the correct portion of the register for the area in which the candidate is standing?	
• Has the home address form been completed with the candidate's name, home address and qualifications? Has it been witnessed and bear the home address of the witness, as detailed on the candidate's consent to nomination form?	
• Has the choice been determined correctly as to whether to publish or withhold the candidate's home address?	
• Has the candidate's consent to nomination been fully completed with the candidate's name, home address and parish information, together with (a) all the qualification sections that apply; (b) the candidate's date of birth; (c) the candidate's signature and date of signing; (d) the signature, name and address of a witness?	
• If using a political party description and emblem, have the necessary consents been completed, countersigned by the registered nominating officer or authorised person, and been submitted by the close of the nomination period?	
WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE <i>(if required)</i>	
• If withdrawing from a particular contest after submitting a nomination paper, has/have the necessary form(s) been completed, witnessed, and submitted by the due deadline?	
APPOINTMENT OF AGENTS	
• If required, have the forms for the appointment of polling agents, verification and counting agents and postal vote opening agents been completed and submitted to the Returning Officer by the due deadline(s)?	
DECLARATION AND RETURN OF CANDIDATES ELECTION EXPENSES	
• Have the "Declaration by Candidates" and "Return of Election Expenses" forms been submitted to the Returning Officer by the due deadline – even if it is a "Nil" return?	
REGISTER OF ELECTORS and ABSENT VOTER LISTS	
• Have you submitted register and/or absent voter list requests by the due deadline (if required)?	
• For candidates who have withdrawn or were not elected: Has any paper version of the Register of Electors been sent back to Shropshire Council's Returning Officer?	
DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE AND MEMBERS INTERESTS	
• For elected candidates: Has the Declaration of Acceptance of Office been signed and witnessed?	
• For elected candidates: Has a Declaration of Members Interests Form been completed and submitted to Shropshire Council's Monitoring Officer as soon as taking up office?	

PART 11: Appendices and Forms

APPLICATION FORMS

There now follows a series of application forms to enable you to:

- Obtain a copy of the electoral register for your Parish/Ward
- Obtain copies of the absent voter lists
- Withdraw your candidacy
- Make appointments to attend the verification of votes
- Make appointments to attend the counting of votes
- Make appointments to view the opening of postal votes

In each case, we will only use the information you give us on those forms for electoral purposes. We will look after your personal information securely and we will follow data protection legislation. We will not give personal information about you, or any personal information you may provide on other people, to anyone else or another organisation unless we have to by law.

The lawful basis to collect the information is that it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest and exercise of official authority as vested in the Electoral Registration Officer as set out in the Representation of the People Act 1983 and associated regulations.

The Electoral Registration Officer is the Data Controller. Her contact details are:
Claire Porter, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.

For further information relating to the processing of personal data, you should refer to the privacy notice on Shropshire Council's website:-

[Privacy notices | Shropshire Council](#)