

Candidates and Election Agents Briefing



Topics

- Who's who
- Covid Implications for Elections
- Key Dates
- Qualifications
- Disqualifications
- Nominations and home address forms
- Agents
- Integrity Issues
- Postal votes
- Day of poll
- Verification and Count
- Candidates' expenses
- Contacts

Who's who

- Martin Reeves – Chief Executive Coventry City Council,
 - Police Area Returning Officer (PARO)
 - Combined Authority Returning Officer (CARO)
 - Local Returning Officer for Coventry for PCC and CAM
 - Returning Officer (Local Elections),
- Liz Read – Electoral Services Manager Coventry and Deputy PARO/CARO, LRO & Returning Officer
- Robert Connelly – LRO for Birmingham and Deputy PARO/CARO
- Adam Keen – Single Point of Contact, West Midlands Police

- Opening comments from Martin Reeves

Covid 19 - Implications

- General public health principles to be followed
- Campaigning – Guidance from Central Government
- Amendments to Nominations requirements
- Increases in Postal Voting
- Amendments to Proxy voting
- Polling Stations
- Postal Vote Opening and Verification & Count Processes

Key Dates - registration

First Issue Postal votes posted out	16 - 21 April
Second Issue postal votes posted out	26 April
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight, 19 April,
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm, 20 April
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm, 27 April
Deadline to apply for new applications to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency	5pm, polling day
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm, polling day
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm, polling day

Key dates – Candidates & Agents

Publication of Notice of Election	22 March
Election Addresses	23 March to 12noon 8 April (PCC) 4pm (CAM)
Nominations commence	23 March
Close of nominations	4pm, 8 April
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm, 8 April
Publication of statement of persons nominated	4pm, 9 April
Appointment of counting and polling agents	28 April
Return of election expenses	19 July (results declared on 8 May)

What are the arrangements for voting and the count?

- Poll cards delivered - from 22 March (and by 7 April)
- Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations which will be combined with Statement of Persons Nominated – 9 April
- Polling day - 6 May: 7am to 10pm
- Verification of Ballot Papers – will be done in each Local Authority Area on either Thursday night or Friday morning
- Counts will take place in each local authority area with the first preference result being submitted to the region by 1pm on Saturday 8 May
- If second preference required then that will commence as soon as possible anticipated by 2.30pm

PCC - Qualifications

- To stand as a candidate for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections you must (on the day you are nominated **and** on polling day):
 - at least 18 years of age
 - British, qualifying Commonwealth citizen (with indefinite leave to remain), national of an EU member state
 - and registered as a local government elector in a local council area that is within the police area

PCC - Disqualifications

Most disqualifications apply on the day of nomination **and** on polling day. For example, where you:

- have been nominated as a candidate at a PCC election taking place on the same day for a different police area
- have ever been convicted of an imprisonable offence
- are a police officer or are directly or indirectly employed by the police
- are a member of the legislature of any country or territory outside the UK
- are a member of staff of a local council that falls wholly or partly within the police area in which you wish to stand
- are employed in an organisation that is under the control of a local council in the police area in which you wish to stand.
- are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order

PCC - Disqualifications cont.

Disqualifications that apply only on election:

- Being a Member of the House of Commons, the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly or the European Parliament.
- If they are elected they must resign their seat before taking up the post of Police and Crime Commissioner.

CAM - Qualifications

Candidates must satisfy criteria on day they are nominated **and** on polling day:

- be at least 18 years of age
- be a British, qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or national of an EU member state
- Also at least one of the following:
 - Registered local government elector within the combined authority area
 - Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the combined authority area during the whole 12 months preceding nomination
 - Principal or only place of work (including unpaid) during last 12 months in combined authority area
 - Lived in the combined authority area during the last 12 months

CAM - Disqualifications

A person **cannot** be a candidate if on the day of nomination **and** on polling day they:

- are **employed by the combined authority or a constituent council** (including joint boards or committees), or hold a paid office under the combined authority or constituent council. Candidates may be 'employed by or on behalf of the combined authority or a constituent council' if they work at certain schools, fire services or health services
- hold a **politically restricted post**
- are the subject of a **bankruptcy restrictions order or interim restrictions order**
- have been sentenced to a **term of imprisonment of three months or more** (inc. suspended sentence) without option of a fine, during 5 years before polling day
- are serving a disqualification due to being found **guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court**

Candidates who are sitting councillors – CAM only

- A person cannot sit as both a combined authority mayor and a local councillor of a constituent council.
 - If you are already an elected councillor and are subsequently elected as combined authority mayor, your office as councillor will become vacant.
 - If you wish to stand as a candidate at the same time in both contests and are elected to both offices, your election as councillor will be disregarded and the office of councillor will become vacant.

Nomination Papers - Both

- Three Nomination papers must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm – 8 April
 - the nomination form
 - home address form
 - the consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm – 8 April:
 - 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 (optional)

Submitting Nomination Papers

- Both

- **Take care when completing nomination papers, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination.**
- Complete nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check
- To arrange an informal check, contact the elections office (*details provided later*)
- Nomination form, home address and consent to nomination must be delivered by hand, they cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means
- The deposit of £5,000 which is returned if a candidate polls at least 5% of the valid first preference vote cast across the police/combined authority area

Paying Deposit

- Cash or
- Via the Council's [online payment portal](#). When prompted, please select "Council and Democracy" and "Candidates Deposit".
- You will receive an email receipt once payment is completed. Please forward the receipt to me and we will be able to supply the information requested.

- Alternatively by BACS. Please use the following information -
- **Account Name:** Coventry City Council The Acting Returning Officer
Sort Code: 56-00-45
Account Number: 38496283
- **Address for NatWest Bank:**
Coventry City Branch
24 Broadgate
Coventry
CV1 1NE

- Please make sure that you mark the payment as "Candidates deposit - NAME".

- If you pay by BACS please can you let me know when you will be paying so I can request our finance colleagues look out for the payment when it comes in.

Nomination Form

- Include your full name
- Optional: use commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than full name and wish to use it instead. But you cannot use your first name as a commonly used name to exclude your middle name
- Description field – 3 options:
 - Independent
 - party candidates can use party name or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer

Election of the Police and Crime Commissioner for

WEST MIDLANDS

Police area

Date of poll:

6 May 2021

We, the undersigned, being persons entitled to vote at local government elections and ordinarily resident in this police area, nominate the person whose name appears below as a candidate to be the Police and Crime Commissioner for [insert name of police area] police area.

Candidate's Details

Candidate's surname	BLOGGS	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Mr/Mrs/Miss/ Ms/Dr/Other
Other forenames in full	JOSEPH	
Commonly used surname (if any)		
Commonly used forenames (if any)	Joe	
Description (if any) Use no more than six words (see note 5)	XXXXXX PARTY or Independent. (desc must be the same as the authorisation)	

Nomination Form

- Subscribers: Proposer and seconder, 12 subscribers are required for both elections and for CAM it must be two subscribers from each constituent council
- Must sign & print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register in force on 1 March. Include the voting area
- Only ask subscribers to sign after completing the name, address and description fields on the form
- Data Protection Requirements

	Signature	Print name	Voting Area (local authority)	Electoral number	
				Polling District	Number
Proposer:					
Secunder:					
We the undersigned being local government electors in [insert name of police area] police area, do hereby assent to the foregoing nomination					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

As they would normally sign

PRINTED VERSION OF SIGNATURE

Name of Council

Letters (Part of elector number) on Register

Numbers

PCC – Home Address Form

- Candidate's home addresses do not appear on the ballot paper – but they are published on the statement of persons nominated, unless otherwise requested
- On the home address form you can request to keep your home address private
- If so, state electoral area within the police area where you are registered to vote
- In all cases, you must give your full name and home address

CAM - Home Address Form

- Must state:
 - your full name and home address in full
 - your qualifying address, or, where you have declared on your consent to nominations that you meet more than one qualification, your qualifying addresses
 - which of the qualifications your qualifying address or addresses relate to (a, b, c and/or d)
 - the full name and the home address in full of the witness to your consent to nomination

Home Address Form - Both

- Part 2 of the home address form must be completed if you do not want your address to be made public:
 - The name of the relevant area in which your home address is situated (if your home address is in the UK),
 - if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which your home address is situated.

PCC - Consent to Nomination

- 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
 - that you are not nominated as a PCC candidate for any other police area on the same day
 - your date of birth
- The consent must be witnessed

CAM - Consent to Nomination

- On the consent to nomination form you will be asked to state:
 - your name
 - confirmation of all qualification(s) that apply (at least 1, but select all that apply)
 - that you are qualified and not disqualified from standing
 - your date of birth
 - date of consent
- The consent must be signed and witnessed

Certificate of Authorisation/Emblem

- 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 particular description
 - allow candidate to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission
- Party candidates can ask an emblem to printed on the ballot paper
- Must be submitted by 4pm 8 April 2020

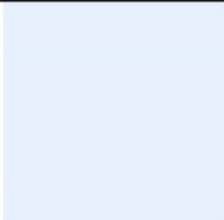
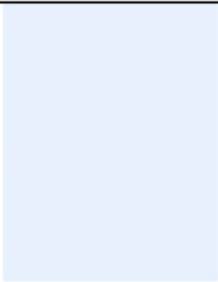
Joint Candidates

- 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

PCC - Candidates Election Address

- Each candidate is entitled to make a campaign statement for publication on a website provided by the UK Government:
 - www.choosemypcc.org.uk
- If you would like an election address included on the website, the election agent must submit on the template which is now available to the PARO by **12 noon on 8 April.**

PCC Election Candidate Address template

Candidate Name	Click here to enter text.
Contact details (e.g. web url), which will appear under your statement and will not count towards the 300 word limit. Statement by the Election Agent will appear under your statement and must state that this form has been prepared by your election agent and give their name and address, which is part of the 300 word limit	Click here to enter text.
Police Force Area	West Midlands
Candidate Description (where appropriate, and as entered on your nomination form) Click here to enter text.	
Registered Emblem (where appropriate) This can be included if the Registered Emblem meets the criteria set out in 5(4) Content of election address, Schedule 8 of the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections Order 2012 . Where registered Party emblems are appropriate then Vector eps logos are preferred for quality, but a 300dpi JPG (also commonly known as JPEG) is also acceptable at a minimum width of 50mm. This should be provided separately to ensure optimum resolution.	
Photograph (if desired) Please note that the photograph should be at least 9 cm high x 7cm wide and a close up portrait photo and a high resolution (e.g. 300dpi). The image needs to be higher than screen resolution (72dpi). This photograph should be provided separately as a JPG (also commonly known as JPEG) to ensure optimum resolution.	
Statement (maximum 300 words formatted except for bullet points and bold where desired) (no hyperlinks) Click here to enter text.	

CAM - Candidates Election Address

- Candidates are entitled to make a campaign statement for publication in a booklet produced by the CARO.
- If you would like to have your campaign statement included, it must be delivered to the CARO by **4pm on 8 April**.
- Each candidate included in the booklet will be asked to contribute £5,000 towards the production costs.

- An election address can only contain matters relating to the election.
- It must contain:
 - a statement confirming that it has been prepared by your election agent
 - the name and address of the election agent
 - your name and address or if you have requested not to make your home address public, the relevant electoral area as given on your home address form
- It must not contain:
 - Contain any advertising material (other than material promoting the candidate as a candidate at the election).
 - Contain any other material appearing to be included with a view to commercial gain.
 - Include any material referring to any other candidate. • Be more than two sides of A5 paper. Where an address takes up two sides of A5 paper, you must supply a second version printed on one side of A5 paper. The CARO will use this single-side version if more than 15 candidates supply an election address.

- It may contain:
 - a photograph – provided you have submitted two identical photographs to the CARO, one of which you must have signed on the back
 - a party emblem and description – provided you have a certificate of authorisation issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer of the party
- In all cases, your election address must comply with the CARO's requirements – including layout, margins and use of colour – so that it can be reproduced in the booklet.

Submission of Election Address

- It is not necessary to submit an election address
- Detailed provisions in the CAM Order and PCC Order
- The timeframe detailed is the latest but would recommend early submission in case of amendments being required

PCC – Submitting Nomination papers

- The nomination form and home address form may only be delivered, by hand, by:
 - the candidate
 - their election agent, provided the PARO has received notice of their appointment
 - the proposer or seconder as shown on the nomination form
- Anyone can deliver the consent to nomination, certificate of authorisation and emblem request form – but it should be someone you trust
- The consent to nomination must be delivered by hand; the certificate of authorisation and emblem request forms for party candidates may be posted

Election Agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of appointment must reach the RO by noon – 4pm 8 April. 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 within the combined authority area:

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

The agent must give written notice to **the CARO** by 30 April.

Other Agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
 - The RO requires notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by 30 April.
 - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session. The RO will give 48 hours' notice.
 - Forms will be sent with the information letter sent out after nominations.

Access to electoral register/absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on 29 March which is the last date for publication of the notice of election if you, or others declared yourself a candidate
 - once you or others have declared yourself a candidate after this date / date you submit your nomination papers
- Make **written** request to the EROs in the combined authority area forms are available on the website.

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 midnight 19 April
- Individuals can 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 ERO.

Absent Voting

- If you are encouraging people who don't have a postal (or proxy) vote to apply for one, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one in time for the elections if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections.

Integrity Issues

- Code of Conduct for Campaigners
 - Electoral Registration
 - Absent Voting
 - Postal Voting Ballot Papers
 - Campaigning outside polling places
 - Electoral Fraud
 - Nomination Papers
 - Personation Issues
- Reporting Forms

Campaigning

- The UK government have advised that the current national lockdown restrictions (which are in place until 29 March) do not support door to door campaigning or leafleting
- Therefore, Government have issued guidance around campaigning safely from 8 March with some additional changes with effect from 29 March
- Any further changes to this position will be determined and communicated by the government.
- You should continue to check the latest government guidelines on national and [local restrictions](#)

Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites.
- 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).

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
 - Include the relevant EROs address for the return of 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.

Code of conduct for campaigners

- Postal ballot packs:
 - Never touch a postal ballot paper
 - Never observe electors completing their postal vote.
 - Never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot pack from voters
- Campaigning outside polling stations:
 - You are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including public spaces outside polling places
 - Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.
 - Behaviour within the vicinity of the polling station on polling day including Tellers and Polling Agents – including public health guidelines in relation to coronavirus

Polling Day

- We have put arrangements in place to ensure that polling stations are safe places to vote
- Most of the measures that will be in place will be familiar to us all from visiting other public places such as shops and banks, for example floor markings to ensure social distancing and the provision of hand sanitiser on entry and exit
- Voters will be encouraged to bring their own pen or pencil for use in polling stations, but pencils will also be made available for anyone who needs one
- Voters should be encouraged to check their poll card before polling day, to see if their polling station has changed since previous elections.

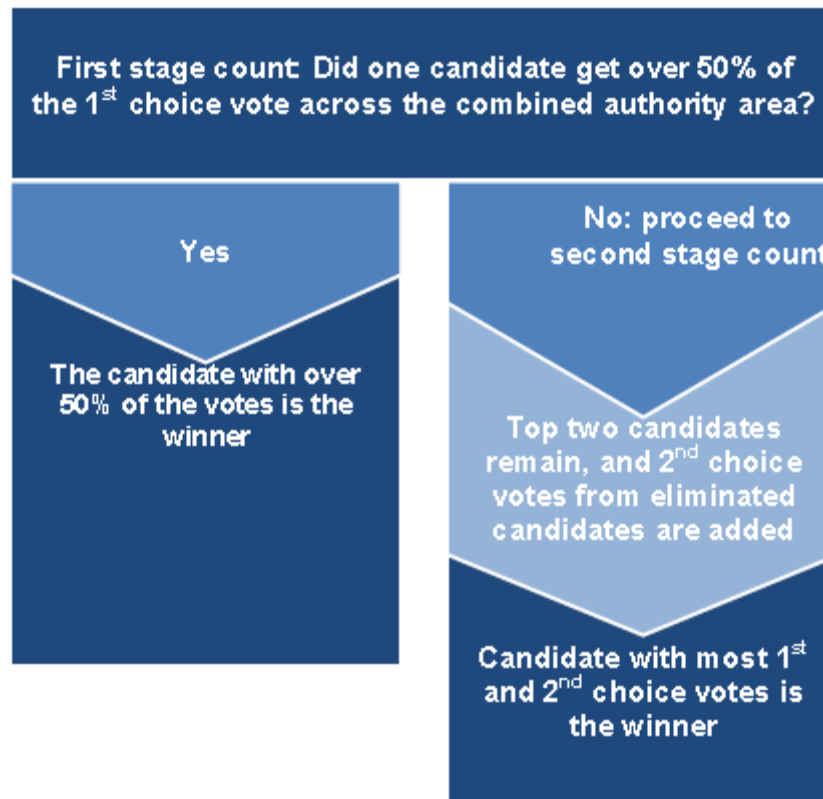
Polling Day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Office open 6.30am to 10.15pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election
 - For queries relating to election finance issues, contact the Electoral Commission (contact details shown later)
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10 pm can apply for a ballot paper
- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations within ward/division or delivered to the elections office until 10pm.
- A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in postal vote can do so after 10pm.

Supplemental vote (SV) system

- If there are more than 2 candidates standing in the combined authority area - supplementary vote system (SV) used.
- This is where voters can vote for a first and second choice candidate.
- If there are only two candidates, then the first-past-the post electoral system is used.

SV Count



Verification and Count

- Candidates, election agents (or sub-agent in place of the election agent), counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend the verification and count
- Verification
 - Will take place in each local authority area by Local Returning Officers
 - Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton Thursday 6 May followed
 - Birmingham & Solihull Friday 7 May
 - Venue will be open to candidates and agents information will be supplied by each local authority after close of nominations
- Counting of votes
 - Will take place in each local authority area by Local Returning Officers on Saturday 8 May
- Anticipate regional first preference result approx. 2.15pm noon 8 May

- PARO/CARO is responsible for collating the local count totals from across the police area/combined authority area and declaring the result
 - NIA Birmingham
 - further information will be provide after close of nominations
- Attendance:
 - candidates and one person chosen by each candidate
 - election agents (or sub-agent if they are not present)
 - no counting agents allowed

Spending Issues

Election Spending

- The time when spending and donation rules apply is called the 'regulated period'.
- The regulated period begins on the **day after the date** you officially become a candidate and ends on polling day.
- The earliest date you can officially become a candidate is the last date for publication of the notice of election, which will be 29 March.
- You must keep within the spending limit during the regulated period. You must keep a record of your spending on items and services you use during the regulated period, and donations you receive towards that spending.

PCC - Spending Limit

- Each police area has a maximum spending limit that is set out in legislation
- The spending limit for £357,435 for the West Midlands police area
- Comprehensive guidance is included in Part 3 of the Commission's guidance for candidates and agents
- No spending will be reimbursed

CAM - Spending Limit

- The spending limit that is set out in legislation and is calculated using a fixed amount of £2,362 which is then:
 - multiplied by the total number of constituent councils (7)
 - plus 5.9p for every entry in the register of electors to be used at the election (1 March electorate)
- Comprehensive guidance is included in [Part 3 of the Commission's guidance for candidates and agents](#)
- No spending will be reimbursed

Candidates' Spending Returns

- Returns due 70 calendar days after result of election
- Returns made public by PARO/CARO
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the **Electoral Commission**
- Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence

Contacts

- PARO/CARO Team – 024 7697 5226
 - Email for PCC – paro@coventry.gov.uk
 - Email for CAM – caro@coventry.gov.uk
 - Websites – PCC -
<https://www.westmidlandspcc.info/>
 - CAM - <https://www.wmcaelects.co.uk/>
- Electoral Commission Contacts
 - For questions on the Commission’s guidance on standing for election, contact 0333 103 1928
 - For questions on election spending, contact 020 7271 0616

Questions