

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND
COLNBROOK WITH POYLE PARISH BY
ELECTION
3 MAY 2018**

**BRIEFING FOR
CANDIDATES/AGENTS**

9 April 2018

INTRODUCTIONS

Slough Borough Council

Catherine Meek - Returning Officer

**Philip Seccombe - Deputy Returning Officer and
Interim Electoral
Services Manager**

Thames Valley Police -

**Neil Misselbrook – Neighbourhood Policing
Inspector**

**Duncan Wynn - Detective Inspector Economic
Crime Unit**

AGENDA

- Key dates
- Local Integrity Protocol
- The Election Campaign
- Postal Voting
- Polling Day
- Campaigners and Tellers
- Verification and counting of Votes
- Election Spending
- Contacts

BOROUGH ELECTIONS AND PARISH BY ELECTION

Key dates

- **Appointment of polling and counting agents - 26th April 2018**
- **Registration – Tuesday 17th April – midnight**
- **Postal vote applications – 5.00pm Wednesday 18th April**

Electoral Registration and absent vote applications

Electoral registration and absent vote applications:

- Ensure any forms used fully conform to the requirements of electoral law
- Include the ERO's 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 a postal vote.
- Do not encourage postal ballot pack redirection.
- Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as a proxy.

LOCAL INTEGRITY PROTOCOL

- **Commitment to work towards a free and fair election, ensure allegations are correctly reported and investigated and that candidates campaign fairly within the law and EC guidance**
- **No candidate or supporter should put themselves in a position where their honesty or integrity, or that of the candidate or party, can be questioned**
- **All candidates have signed up to the protocol**

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN - Reminders

- **must include imprints on all printed material - Includes posters, placards, bills, election leaflets**
- **should include imprints on all non printed material including websites – good practice**
- **The Imprint on printed material must include the full name and address of the printer and publisher (E mail and PO Box addresses not sufficient)**
- **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 do this as part of their normal business)**
- **Do not pay Canvassers - delivery of leaflets is not classed as canvassing**

Display of Advertisements

- **Don't obstruct highway**
- **Private Land – get permission/no payment**
- **Council Land is Private Land – Buildings, Street sign's etc. RO reserves the right to remove material (where it is safe to do so) and charge agents for the cost of removal**

AUTOMATED CALLING – ROBO CALLS

Information Commissioner's guidance clear – must be consent based

Reporting via ICO website section on Nuisance calls and messages, evidence needed:

- Number that the call comes from
- Time and date
- Recorded message, live person or text message?
- Nature of the call – what was it about

MESSAGES TO THE ELECTORATE

It's not OK for campaigners to:

- Force you to vote in a particular way or stop you from voting
- Offer to reward you for voting for them
- Watch you while you complete your postal ballot paper
- Take your postal ballot paper from you
- Take your completed postal ballot pack away to deliver on your behalf
- Get in the way or stop you from getting into the polling station to vote

MESSAGES TO THE ELECTORATE

It's OK for campaigners to:

- Explain their party or candidate's policies to you
- Encourage you to vote for their party or candidate
- Encourage you not to vote for another party or candidate
- Explain how the electoral registration or voting process works, including how to vote by post
- Encourage you to go online to register via www.gov.uk/register-to-vote Give you advice about how to fill in an electoral registration or an application form to apply for a proxy or postal vote.

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Corrupt Practices/Election Offences

- **False Statement about Candidate**
- **Bribery (money, office, gift)**
- **Treating (food, drink, entertainment)**
- **Undue influence**
- **Postal and Proxy Votes**

POSTAL VOTES - Despatch

- **There are currently approximately 15,000 postal voters in Slough**
- **Postal voting packs for the Borough elections will be despatched on 17th April and Parish soon after.**
- **The second despatch of Borough postal votes and Parish postal votes will be on or around Wednesday 24th April**

Postal Votes – Opening Sessions

- **At St Martins Place**
- **Every weekday from Tuesday 24th April from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm**
- **Polling day – 3rd May – 9.30 am to 5.00 pm additional opening at 9.30 pm**
- **48 hours notice of any additional sessions**

Postal Votes - Attending

- **Candidates and their election agents**
- **Candidates can appoint someone to attend in place of his/her election agent**
- **Appointments in writing, providing the name of the person who may attend in place of the election agent before the session starts**
- **No one else can attend**

Postal Votes - Attending

You:

- Have a duty to maintain secrecy – ballot papers will be face down
- must not attempt to see how individual ballot papers have been marked or disclose any such information gained from the session
- must not keep a tally of how ballot papers have been marked

If you do attempt to keep a tally you will be asked to leave and the police will be advised

Anyone found guilty of breaching these requirements can face a fine of up to £5,000, or may be imprisoned for up to six months

Postal Votes - General

- **Should be returned to the RO as soon as possible – postage is paid**
- **Can be returned to a polling station on polling day – in the voter's ward or Parish (for Parish postal packs)**
- **Polling Station Inspectors will be collecting any postal votes delivered to polling stations throughout the day**
- **All postal voters are required to provide a signature and date of birth which are all scanned and checked against the information we hold**

Postal Votes - General

- **Follow the Local Integrity Protocol**
 - **Never touch anyone else's postal ballot paper**
 - **Never observe electors completing their postal vote.**
 - **Never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot pack from voters**

POSTAL VOTE PILOT - Your Vote is yours alone

Slough is taking part in a postal vote pilot as part of the Local elections in May

Postal voters will be provided with additional information to ensure they are aware of the need to complete their vote themselves and where to report any concerns they may have.

Postal Vote Pilot - Your Vote is yours alone

The Returning Officer's staff will be visiting a sample of postal voters across the Borough (after the postal votes have been delivered) to:

- check that the voter has received their ballot paper**
- identify any problems with the voter receiving their ballot paper**

Postal Vote Pilot - Your Vote is yours alone

Pilot being run alongside a national campaign 'Your vote is yours alone' which aims to help prevent electoral fraud elections

Raises awareness of what constitutes unacceptable pressure to influence whether or how someone casts their vote.

Postal Vote Pilot - Your vote is yours alone

Report any concerns to:

Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or

Crimestoppers on line form

The Returning Officer on 01753 875013

or the Council's website

The police on 101 or

[ECUElectoral@thamesvalley.pnn.police](mailto:ECUElectoral@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)
[e.uk](mailto:ECUElectoral@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

POLLING DAY 3rd MAY

- **Separate Ballot Boxes for Borough and Parish election**
- **Ballot papers - White (Borough) - Yellow (Parish)**
- **44 polling stations open from 7am to 10pm**
- **Postcode finder on website**
- **Entitlement to enter Polling Station**
- **Polling Station Inspectors will be visiting stations all day and will deal with any problems that arise**
- **There will be Police patrols during the day.**

Polling Day – close of Poll

- **Close at 10.00 pm**
- **If there is a queue:**

Voters who are in the polling station, or in a queue outside the polling station may apply for a ballot paper

CAMPAIGNING OUTSIDE POLLING PLACES

- Campaigners are allowed to put their messages to voters on polling day, including in public spaces outside polling places.
- Campaigners must not be within or impeding access to the grounds of the polling place.
- Campaigners should recognise that groups of supporters may be perceived as intimidating by voters.

CAMPAIGNING OUTSIDE POLLING PLACES

- Access to polling places and the pavements around polling places must be kept clear to allow voters to enter
- The Presiding Officer is responsible for maintaining order in the polling place, and you may be asked to move by polling station staff or police officers if you are impeding access by voters to a polling place.

Tellers

- **No more than one teller at a polling station for each candidate**
- **No legal status and voters have the right to refuse to give them any information.**

Tellers

Tellers must:

- **Always stay outside the polling station**
- **Only enter the polling station to cast their own vote, to vote as a proxy or to accompany a disabled voter**
- **Always comply with the instructions of the Polling Station Inspector and Presiding Officer**

Tellers

Tellers must not:

- be able to see or hear what is happening inside the polling station
- impede, obstruct or intimidate voters on their way in or out of the polling station
- demand any information relating to a voter's elector number, name or address
- have discussions with voters that may give rise to allegations of undue influence
- display any campaign material in support of or against any particular political party or individual candidate other than a rosette

Tellers

Tellers may:

- approach voters for information as they enter or leave the polling station
- display a coloured rosette displaying the name of the individual candidate or political party they are working for
- the rosette should not bear a slogan and must not be oversized

REPORTING ISSUES

- **Advise Returning Officer**
 - **Be prepared to provide evidence**
- **Dedicated phone line 01753 875013**
- **RO will refer to police if necessary**
 - **Single point of contact SPOC – responsible for investigation of all alleged electoral offences**

THE VERIFICATION and COUNT

- **Montem Leisure Centre**
- **Thursday 3rd May starting promptly at 10pm**
- **Entry from 9.45 pm for Candidates & Guest, Agents and Counting Agents**
- **Wrist bands will be issued**
- **Letter of appointment needed to gain entry**

The Count

- **Ballot Box receipt and Verification**
 - **Seven counting teams**
- **Wards will be counted alphabetically**
 - **Parish will be counted separately**
- **Papers will be sorted into candidates and then counted into bundles of twenty**

The Count

- **Bundles placed in counting trays for each candidate**
- **Doubtful papers to be dealt with by Count supervisors, DROs and RO**
- **Provisional Result discussed with candidates and agents**
 - **Results announced asap**

ELECTION SPENDING

- **All candidates must submit a return even if they are not elected**
- **Must get (and keep) receipts (over £20)**
- **Responsibility of election agent**
- **Electoral Commission has guidance**
- **Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence enforceable by police**

CONTACTS

- **The Electoral Commission:**
www.electoralcommission.org.uk Tel: 020 7271 0500
- **Elections Office:**
Tel: 01753 875549 - Philip Seccombe