

Candidates and agents briefing

East Markham By-election

TUESDAY 15th September 2026

The Electoral Commission

Topics

This briefing has been updated to cover changes as enacted by the Elections Act. It will outline:

- who's who
- key dates of the election timetable
- qualifications and disqualifications
- nominations
- agents
- voter ID
- postal votes
- polling day
- counting of votes
- candidate spending
- integrity issues
- contacts

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Who's who

- The Returning Officer is David Armiger, Chief Executive
- David Armiger is also the Electoral Registration Officer who is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists.
- Jonathan Brassington – Head of Performance and Engagement/ Deputy Returning Officer
- Cara Hopkinson – Democratic and Electoral Services Manager/ Deputy Returning Officer

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Police

SPOC for these Elections is DI Daniel Johnstone

Contact: elections@notts.police.uk

Election timetable

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Timetabled process:	Deadline
Publication of Notice of Election	Not later than Monday 10 th August
Nominations commence	10am – Tuesday 11 th August
Close of nominations	4pm – Tuesday 18 th August
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – Tuesday 18 th August
Publication of statement of persons nominated	Not later than 4pm on Wednesday 19 th August
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – Thursday 27 th August
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – Friday 28 th August
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	No later than 7 th September

Election timetable (cont'd)

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Timetable process:	Deadline:
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – Monday 7 th September
Deadline for applications for a Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document	5pm – Monday 7 th September
Appointment of counting and polling agents	Tuesday 8 th September
Polling day	TUESDAY 15 th September – 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply to vote by emergency proxy	5pm – polling day
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm – polling day
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm – polling day
Return of election expenses	+ 35 days from result date – Tuesday 20 th October

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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, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights

Qualifications (cont'd)

- Also at least one of the following:
 - You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for local authority area
 - You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the local authority area during the whole 12 months preceding 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 local authority area.
 - You have lived in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

Disqualifications

The full range of disqualifications is complex and if you are in any doubt about whether you are disqualified, you must do everything you can to check that you are not disqualified before submitting your nomination papers.

You must be sure that you are not disqualified as you will be asked to sign one of the required nomination papers to confirm that you are not disqualified.

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. The Returning Officer will not be able to confirm whether or not you are disqualified.

Submitting nomination papers (1)

- The documents that must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm are – 18th August
 - the nomination form
 - their home address form
 - the consent to nomination
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm – 18th August
 - 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 (2)

- Take care when completing your nomination papers, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination
- Complete nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check
- We are offering informal checks by email. You can send a full scan of the nomination papers to be checked by email to nominations@bassetlaw.gov.uk. **Please do not send to any other email address.** Please only use this email address for informal checks.
- You can also make an appointment with the Electoral Services Team for an informal check at the Town Hall, please contact elections@bassetlaw.gov.uk or 01909 533 252.
- **Final submissions cannot be accepted by email.**
- The nomination form, home address form and consent to nomination **must be delivered by hand** and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means.

The Electoral Commission have produced a short video on how to complete your nomination papers:

- Completing your nomination papers | Guidance for candidates

Nomination form (1)

- Include your full name
- Optional: use commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than your full name and wish to use it instead.
- Description field – 3 options:
 - leave blank
 - Independent
 - party candidates can use party name or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer
 - Need to make sure that the description/party name written on the nomination form matches the description on the certificate of authorisation from the nominating officer (or issued by someone authorised to act on their behalf).

Nomination form (2)

- Subscribers: 2 subscribers are required. The subscribers must be registered electors from the relevant division.
- Must sign and print and after their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register
- **Only ask subscribers to sign after completing the name, address and description fields on the form**
- Data protection requirements

The Electoral Commission have produced a short video on how to complete your home address form:

- Home address form and relevant area | Guidance for candidates

Home address form

- Part 1 of the 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 nomination 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 (2)

- 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.
 - Example if the address is within a district for which there is a district council, that district e.g. Bassetlaw

Consent to nomination form

- Must include:
 - name
 - which area standing in
 - confirmation of qualification(s) that apply (at least 1, but select all that apply)
 - date of birth & signature
 - date of consent - Candidates must not sign the form earlier than one calendar month before the deadline for submitting their nomination papers i.e. 18th July
 - witness' name, and signature - The witness should be the same person whose details you give on your home address form

Certificate of authorisation

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person authorised 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 names and descriptions are on the Commission website and must match exactly. No alteration is permitted.
- Must be submitted by 4pm 18th August
- These must be originals. Any documents sent by email or fax will not be accepted.

Emblem request form

- Party candidates can ask for an emblem to be printed on the ballot paper
- Emblem request form must be submitted by 4pm 18th August
- Party candidates should supply an electronic version of the emblem to the Returning Officer if required

Joint party candidates

- Nominated by **more than one party**
- May use registered joint party 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 party emblems

Election agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of appointment must reach the RO by 4pm – 18th August.
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed. If a candidate acts as their own agent and do not provide an office address, their home address will be published on the notice of election agents, even if they have requested for this information to be withheld from the SOPN and ballot paper.

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Other agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
 - You must give notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by 8th September
 - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session. We will give 48 hours' notice.

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Access to electoral register/absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on 10th August 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 ERO – forms are available from the office
- Registered political parties are entitled to receive a copy of the full electoral register at any time.

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 27th August.
- Individuals can apply to register online at **<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>**. It only takes a few minutes.

Absent voting applications

- Electors can apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote or www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote
- When talking to electors about applying to vote by post or proxy, you should make them aware of the relevant deadlines and advise them to apply early
- You will need to make them aware that they will need to provide their National Insurance number, date of birth, signature and address to register.
- People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance Number or cannot provide a signature can still apply, but they may need to provide further information. If so, they will be contacted by the ERO.
- If you are encouraging people to apply for a postal (or proxy) vote, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections.

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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

Absent voting – A campaigner is:

Who is a
campaigner?

- 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

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Voter Identification

- Voters in this election 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.
- This includes those who act as a proxy for another person.

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 <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate> 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 poll – 7th September

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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).
- Do not handle any postal voting documents you are not entitled to

Code of conduct for campaigners (1)

- 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
 - Ensure electors are aware they can apply to register or for an absent vote online
 - Include the EROs address for the return of any paper 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
- Voter Authority Certificate applications:
 - Should not handle paper based Voter Authority Certificate applications and should encourage electors to send them directly to the ERO

Code of conduct for campaigners (2)

- Postal voting documents:
 - Never touch any of an elector's postal voting documents
 - 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.

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Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Office open 6.30am to 10.00pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election
 - for queries relating to election finance issues, contact the Electoral Commission

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 votes 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, then they will be rejected

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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 an authorised person at Worksop and Retford Council Offices. The relevant form must be completed
- 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

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Counting of votes

- The verification and count will be held at:
 - East Markham Village Hall
- The Verification and Count will commence at 10.00pm on Tuesday 15th September following the close of poll
- Candidates, candidate guest, election agents, and counting agents appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend.
 - limits to counting agents will be advised after close of nominations

Spending issues

Candidate spending

- Defined as certain expenses 'used for the purposes of the candidate's election' during the regulated period.
- Responsibility of **election agent**
- The regulated period begins on the day after the date you officially become a candidate and ends on polling day.
- Limit on expenses:
 - £960 + 8 pence per elector in ward/division on register in force on 10th August =
 $£960 + (2,115 \times 0.08) = £1,129.20$
 - reduced for joint candidates
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

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Candidates' spending returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election – 20th October
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the Electoral Commission
- Failure to submit a spending return is a criminal offence enforceable by police
- No spending will be reimbursed

Contacts

- Elections office – 01909 533252,
elections@bassetlaw.gov.uk
- Electoral Commission contacts
 - For questions on the Commission's guidance on standing for election
www.electoralcommission.org.uk/contact-us/our-offices
 - For questions on election spending, contact
020 7271 0616

Police SPOC

- Detective Inspector Daniel Johnstone is the SPOC for Nottinghamshire Police.
- elections@notts.police.uk

Questions