



# **WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS TEAM**

## **MAY 2022 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

### **GUIDANCE FOR PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES AND AGENTS**

How will you vote at the elections in May?

The image shows three icons representing different voting methods: a purple ballot box labeled "IN PERSON", a blue envelope labeled "BY POST", and two overlapping speech bubbles labeled "BY PROXY".

The Electoral Commission logo is visible in the bottom left corner, and a slogan "YOUR VOTE MATTERS DON'T LOSE IT" with a ballot icon is in the bottom right corner.

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The following forms are available to download from our website:

- 1a: Nomination paper
- 1b: Home address form
- 1c: Candidate's consent to nomination
- 2: Certificate of authorisation
- 3: Request for a party emblem
- 4: Notification of election agent
- Notice of Withdrawal
- Request for the Electoral Register
- Request for a Copy of the Lists of Postal and Proxy Voters
- Appointment of Postal Vote Agents, Polling Agents, Counting Agents
- Spending Return Forms: Electoral Commission Explanatory Notes, Declaration by Candidate as to Election Expenses, Declaration by Election Agent as to Election Expenses, Return of Candidate Election Expenditure

The following guidance is available to download from our website:

- Code of Conduct for Campaigners
- Tellers In and Around Polling Places
- Candidate imprints factsheet

All candidates, and their agents, are strongly recommended to 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/local-elections-england>

Information, guidance, and downloadable nomination forms for City and County candidates are available on the City Council website

<https://www.worcester.gov.uk/councillors-democracy/elections/election-information-for-potential-candidates>

The Returning Officer for this Election is **Shane Flynn**. The Deputy Returning Officer is **Claire Chaplin**.

If you have any issues or concerns during the election process, in the first instance please contact the City Elections Team.

Email: [electoralservices@worcester.gov.uk](mailto:electoralservices@worcester.gov.uk)

Office Tel: 01905 722530

Address: Guildhall, High Street, Worcester WR1 2EY

Candidates or Agents can also call the Deputy Returning Officer on 01905 722005 but this number should not be given to the public.

Police Single Point of Contact (SPOC): Dianne Hunt 01905 332306

Electoral Commission: 0333 103 1928

## 1. Important Election Information about Nomination Papers

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.

Any Nomination 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.

## 2. Wards and the Election Timetable

Listed below are the Wards in which elections are scheduled for 2022, and the number of seats available in those areas.

<b>City Ward</b>	<b>Seats</b>
Battenhall	1
Bedwardine	1
Cathedral	1
Claines	1
Gorse Hill	1
Nunnery	1
Rainbow Hill	1
St. John	1
St. Peter's Parish	1
Warndon	1
Warndon Parish North	1
Warndon Parish South	1

There are NO City Council elections in Arboretum, St. Clement, or St. Stephen Wards this year.

Please note that we are not currently able to supply copies of Ward maps to you. You should seek to obtain your own copies.

You may be able to obtain them from the OS Website: [www.election-maps.co.uk](http://www.election-maps.co.uk)

## The Election Timetable

All deadlines within the timetable must be strictly observed.

Publication of Notice of Election	Monday 28 March 2022
Nominations Commence	Monday 28 March 2022
Deadline for Receipt of Nominations	4pm Tuesday 5 April 2022
Deadline for Withdrawal of Candidate	4pm Tuesday 5 April 2022
Deadline for Appointment of Election Agents	4pm Tuesday 5 April 2022
Publication of Statements of Persons Nominated	Wednesday 6 April 2022
Last Date for Voter Registration	Thursday 14 April 2022
Deadline for Receipt of Postal Vote Applications	5pm Tuesday 19 April 2022
Deadline for Receipt of Proxy Vote Applications	5pm Tuesday 26 April 2022
Publication of Notice of Poll	Tuesday 26 April 2022
Deadline for Appointment of Poll and Count Agents	Wednesday 27 April 2022
First Day to Issue Replacement Lost Postal Ballot Papers	Thursday 28 April 2022
Deadline for Receipt of Emergency Proxy Vote Applications	5pm Thursday 5 May 2022
Last Day to Issue Replacement Spoilt or Lost Postal Ballot Papers	5pm Thursday 5 May 2022
Day of Poll	7:00am – 10:00pm Thursday 5 May 2022
Deadline for alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm Thursday 5 May 2022
Verification and Count	From 10pm Thursday 5 May 2022
Return of Election Expenses	Friday 10 June 2022

### 3. Candidates, Nominations, Withdrawal of Candidature and Appointment of Election Agents

We recommend that you download and keep a copy of the Electoral Commission's Guidance on this topic: namely Parts 1, 2a (for Independent Candidates) / 2b (for Party Candidates) and Part 4.

#### Standing for election

To be eligible to stand, you **must** be:

- Aged 18 or over;
- Either 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 in the local authority area in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards; or
- You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election; or
- 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 (providing the address of the place of work and where appropriate, the name of the employer); or
- 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 the 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 local authority or hold a paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees); or
- You hold a politically restricted post; 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](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

The period of office for councillors elected is normally four years. **Due to the up-coming change in the electoral cycle for Worcester City, councillors elected on 5 May 2022 will serve a two-year term.**

#### Nominations – submitting a nomination paper

The first stage in running for election is to submit a nomination paper. When the nomination period closes, if there are more candidates than seats for that particular Ward, there will need to be a poll. If there are the same number or fewer candidates than seats for that particular Ward, those candidates will be elected unopposed.

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

- Nomination Paper
- Candidate's Consent to Nomination
- Home Address form
- 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 paper – initials alone are not permitted.

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

- one certified as an authorised or registered description as mentioned in Rule 5 of the election rules, or
- the word 'Independent'.

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.

Each nomination paper must be subscribed by a proposer, a seconder and eight assentors, who must be local government electors of the relevant Ward and have their electoral numbers (poll numbers) shown on the nomination paper.

One free copy of the Nomination Register of Electors may be supplied for the area in which the candidate is standing – a Register Application Form is available for download from the website.

If that person subsequently does not stand or is unsuccessful at the election, the Register must be returned to the Elections Office, or securely destroyed.

Please note that Candidates/Agents may only use their copy of the Register for electoral purposes and must not pass a copy of it on to any other person, or disclose information from it which is not contained in the open version of the register (which is available to the public). This is a strict legal requirement.

No person shall subscribe to more nomination papers than there are vacancies in that Ward.

Candidates should ensure that their name and description are completed correctly BEFORE they seek a proposer, seconder or assentors. They should also offer the nomination paper for signature to each person, so that those candidate details are clearly visible, to avoid any confusion as to what they are being asked to sign. Usual signatures should be used and assentor names should be printed as signed.

Candidates should make anyone signing the nomination form aware that the details they provide will form part of the public record and be included in published notices.

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.

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" may be obtained from the Electoral Commission.

Completed nomination papers must be submitted to the Returning Officer IN PERSON – not via the postal system - before the deadline for close of nominations – **4pm on Tuesday, 5 April 2022.**

## Where to submit your nomination papers

### Informal checks

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.

The following dates will be used to carry out informal checks on nomination papers, please contact the Elections Team at [electoralservices@worcester.gov.uk](mailto:electoralservices@worcester.gov.uk) or on 01905 722530 to book a time slot. We anticipate that each nomination will require approximately 30 minutes for checking:

Date	Time slots available
Monday 28 March 2022	10.00am – 11.30am 1.00pm – 4.30pm
Tuesday 29 March 2022	9.30am – 11.30am 1.00pm – 4.30pm
Wednesday 30 March 2022	9.30am – 11.30am 1.00pm – 4.30pm
Thursday 31 March 2022	9.30am – 11.30am 1.00pm – 4.30pm
Friday 1 April 2022	9.30am – 11.30am 1.00pm – 4.30pm
Monday 4 April 2022	9.30am – 11.30am 1.00pm – 4.30pm
Tuesday 5 April 2022	9.30am – 11.30am 1.00pm – 3.00pm (4pm is the submission deadline)

When your informal check is complete you will be asked if you wish to formally submit the nomination papers.

**If you or your agent would prefer not to attend informal checks in person please contact us. We can arrange to informally check papers remotely but please note that original nomination papers must be submitted to the Returning Officer by hand in order for you to stand nominated.**

### Formal submissions

If you do not require an informal check, or you have had one and taken your papers away to make amendments, you can submit your nomination papers to the Returning Officer without an appointment.

Nomination papers must be delivered by hand to the Returning Officer, Electoral Services Office (Room F7), Guildhall, High Street, Worcester, WR1 2EY between

9am-5pm on the dates shown on the Notice of Election, and only until 4pm on Tuesday 5 April 2022.

## Consent to nomination

Candidates must, on or within one month before the last day and time for the delivery of nomination papers, also deliver to the Returning Officer a signed "Candidates Consent to Nomination". The consent should contain a statement declaring that on the day of their nomination, they are qualified to be elected and provide details of their qualification. The consent must be attested by an independent witness. The nomination is not valid unless the consent, properly completed and attested, is delivered within the time stated.

## Home address form

All candidates must complete Part 1 of the Home Address form. If this form is not delivered, by hand, to the Returning Officer by the close of nominations deadline then the candidate nomination is deemed not to have been made.

If you do not want your home address to be published, you must also complete Part 2 of the form. For example if your home address is in the Worcester electoral area, you must put "Worcester." The Statement of Persons Nominated and the ballot paper will then state "Address in Worcester" in place of your address.

The name and address of the person who witnessed your Consent to Nomination must also be included on this form.

## Close of nominations

The nomination period will close at **4pm precisely** on **Tuesday, 5 April 2022**.

Statements of Persons Nominated for each area will be published on the Council's website as soon as they become available.

## Withdrawal of candidature

Any candidate wishing to withdraw their candidature must do so in writing and deliver this to the Returning Officer.

It must be signed by the candidate and one witness, and must be received no later than 4pm on Tuesday, 5 April 2022.

A Withdrawal Form, if required, is available to download as part of the nomination pack.

## Appointment of election agents

Candidates do not have to appoint an Election Agent. Where nobody has been appointed, the Candidate will be deemed to be their own Agent.

The appointment of an Election Agent must be in writing and be submitted by **4pm on Tuesday, 5 April 2022.**

Candidates may change their Election Agent after that date, by giving notice in writing to the Returning Officer.

An Appointment Form, if required, is available to download as part of the nomination pack.

## 4. Postal and Proxy Voting

We recommend that you download and keep a copy of the Electoral Commission's Guidance on this topic: namely Parts 4 and 5.

### Additional guidance

Please note that the Electoral Commission's "Code of Conduct For Campaigners: Electoral Registration, Postal Voting, Proxy Voting And Polling Stations" is available to download on the City Council website.

### Postal and proxy application forms

If during your canvassing, you meet an elector who wishes to vote by post, it is useful to check with the Elections Team to see if that person already has a postal vote in place. Every year, we get a large number of duplicate applications, when people have simply forgotten that they have a permanent postal vote in place, or think that they have to re-apply.

Postal and proxy vote application forms can be downloaded from the Council's website – <https://www.worcester.gov.uk/councillors-democracy/elections>

Clear and legible scans or photos of application forms can be submitted to the electoral services team by email at [electoralservices@worcester.gov.uk](mailto:electoralservices@worcester.gov.uk)

### Deadlines for receipt of absent vote applications

The final date for new postal vote applications, written cancellation of existing postal votes, or amendment /cancellation of proxy votes, is 5pm on Tuesday, 19 April 2022.

The final date for new proxy vote applications is 5pm on Tuesday, 26 April 2022.

Any appointed proxy who wishes to apply to vote by post on behalf of the elector, must have submitted a postal proxy application form by 5pm on Tuesday, 19 April 2022.

The final date for late proxy vote applications on the grounds of a medical emergency is 5pm on Thursday, 5 May 2022.

**At time of publication the UK Government intends to extend the legislation, introduced in last year, to allow electors to apply for an emergency proxy if they are self-isolating. Up-to-date information will be available on the City Council and Electoral Commission websites.**

### Lists of absent voters

Any Candidate may obtain a list of absent voters (postal and/or proxy), by completing and submitting the appropriate form, available for download from the City Council website.

They are entitled to ONE list only, in either data or paper format. Ideally candidates should wait until the last date for postal voting applications (Tuesday,

19 April 2022) before submitting their request. Once a list has been issued, then any subsequent request will only contain the latest updates, rather than being a comprehensive list.

### Opening of the postal ballot papers

Sessions for the opening of postal ballot papers will be held in the Guildhall, High Street, Worcester on the following dates:-

Wednesday, 20 April, 10am

Wednesday, 27 April, 10am

Wednesday, 4 May, 10am

Thursday, 5 May 5pm

### Return of postal ballot papers

Candidates or their Agents should not collect postal ballot papers on behalf of any elector. Completed ballot packs can either be returned by post or in person to the Returning Officer in advance of, or on, polling day up to 10.00pm. Electors may also return their completed ballot pack to any polling station within the electoral area between the hours of 7.00am and 10.00pm on polling day.

## 5. Tellers, Polling and Counting Agents, Agents for Postal Vote Proceedings

We recommend that you download and keep a copy of the Electoral Commission's Guidance on this topic: namely Parts 4 and 5.

### Tellers

Some Candidates appoint Tellers to stand outside polling stations and mark off the poll numbers of electors who have voted. Tellers are not permitted to be inside the polling station other than to exercise their own vote or to vote as a proxy.

Tellers have no legal status and should concern themselves only with checking who has voted. Any other involvement with potential voters could give rise to the risk of allegations of exercising undue influence on voters.

A "Tellers' Guide in and Around Polling Places" based on guidance issued by the Electoral Commission can be downloaded from the City Council website.

### Polling and counting agents

The Returning Officer must also be informed in writing of any Polling Agent and Counting Agent Appointments by **Wednesday, 27 April 2022**. The appointment of any such Agents forms part of the statutory timetable and the deadline must be strictly observed.

Polling Agents may be appointed, but there is no requirement to do so. Their purpose is to detect personation in a polling station. No more than one Polling Agent may be admitted to a polling station at the same time on behalf of the same candidate, and no more than four Polling Agents may attend any particular polling station.

Counting Agents may attend the verification and counting of votes to observe the proceedings but are not allowed to touch the ballot papers at any stage of the proceedings.

The necessary appointment forms for both Polling Agents and Counting Agents can be downloaded from the City Council website.

### Agents for postal vote proceedings

A Candidate and their Election Agent may attend the opening of postal ballot papers without giving notice in advance, but in addition, named Agents may be appointed to attend the sessions held to open the postal ballot papers.

An appointment form is enclosed as part of your Nomination Pack, which must be received no later than the date and time fixed for the first opening session (**Wednesday, 20 April, 10am**) or the date and time of the session the Agent wishes to attend.

Attendees will be required to sign "in" and "out" on each occasion that they attend to observe the postal vote opening process.

## 6. Polling Day

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.

### 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
- Election Agent
- Polling Agent
- Electoral Commission's Accredited Observers
- Police Officers
- Children under the age of 18, accompanying voters

### Verification/the count

There will be a Briefing for Candidates and Agents on Verification and Count. This will be on **Monday, 25 April 2022** to be held remotely. Candidates and Agents will be sent invitations by email.

The venue for both the Verification and Counting of Votes will be Guildhall, High Street, Worcester, WR1 2EY.

Verification of postal ballots will begin on **Thursday, 5 May 2022** at 10pm.

Verification of polling station ballots will begin immediately following this.

Counting for the City Council elections will follow the completion of the verification stage, after a short refreshment break.

The necessary appointment forms for both Polling Agents and Counting Agents can be downloaded from the City Council website.

The Returning Officer must also be informed in writing of any Polling Agent and Counting Agent Appointments by **Wednesday, 27 April 2022**.

We ask that successful candidates do not leave the venue until they have spoken to a member of the Democratic Services team who will inform you of the next steps.

## 7. Post-Election Matters

We recommend that you download and keep a copy of the Electoral Commission's Guidance on this topic: namely Parts 3, 4 and 6.

### 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. City Councillors will need to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office prior to the Annual Council Meeting on Tuesday, 17 May 2022. Successful candidates will be provided with more information on the arrangements for completing the Declaration.

### Return of election expenses

Despite the term "expenses", election spending is not refundable. It relates purely to the costs that a candidate can legitimately incur in promoting his/her candidature and forms a legal document which is made available for public viewing.

Each Candidate (whether successful or not) must complete and return a declaration of election expenses incurred during their campaign. It is a legal requirement to complete and return one – even if it shows a "nil" return. Failure to do so is a reportable electoral offence.

Election expenses are required to confirm that any expenses incurred by the Candidate do not exceed the authorised amount. The level of campaign expenditure is set at £806 plus 7p per each registered Ward elector (or other amount if amended by the Electoral Commission following publication of this document).

Forms for the return of election expenses are contained within your nomination pack.

A breakdown of the amount permissible for each Ward is set out below. Expenses are based on the election fee of £806 plus 7p per registered elector on the Nominal Register (March).

<b>WARD</b>	<b>REGISTERED ELECTORS</b>	<b>LIMIT £</b>
<b>Battenhall</b>	4106	1093.42
<b>Bedwardine</b>	6770	1279.90
<b>Cathedral</b>	8435	1396.45
<b>Claines</b>	6455	1257.85
<b>Gorse Hill</b>	3761	1069.27

<b>Nunnery</b>	6413	1254.91
<b>Rainbow Hill</b>	4056	1089.92
<b>St. John</b>	6241	1242.87
<b>St. Peter's Parish</b>	4484	1119.88
<b>Warndon</b>	3890	1078.30
<b>Warndon Parish North</b>	4028	1087.96
<b>Warndon Parish South</b>	4588	1127.16

Spending return forms must be accompanied by the Agent's Declaration. The Candidate's declaration must be submitted within 7 working days.

Further guidance for candidates and agents on spending and donations is contained on the Electoral Commission's website.

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.

## 8. The Election Campaign

We recommend that you download and keep a copy of the Electoral Commission's Guidance on this topic: namely Part 4.

A "Code of Conduct for Campaigners" published by the Electoral Commission can be downloaded from the City Council website.

### The election campaign

The Electoral Commission's website at [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk) provides invaluable information designed to assist Candidates and their Agents. 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](mailto: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

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. Please refer to Part 4 of the Electoral Commission's guidance, on this issue, as failure to display the names and addresses of the publisher/printer/promoter (as appropriate) on election material is an illegal practice.

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 the poll.

### 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.