Logo, company name

Description automatically generatedHart District Council

Harlington Way

Fleet

Hampshire

GU51 4AE

Telephone: 01252 774077

[www.hart.gov.uk](http://www.hart.gov.uk)

[elections@hart.gov.uk](mailto:elections@hart.gov.uk)

To: Prospective Parliamentary Election Candidates or their Election Agent

**IMPORTANT**

**PLEASE BE SURE TO READ THE CONTENTS OF THIS LETTER VERY CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING THE NOMINATION PAPERWORK**

Dear Prospective Candidate/Agent

**PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION:**

**NORTH EAST HAMPSHIRE CONSTITUENCY**

There are a number of important points which need to be made about the submission of the nomination, so **please read all the information in this letter carefully before completing the various documents.**

1. Attachments to this Letter

The following are attached:

* + A form relating to the payment and return of the deposit
  + A location plan showing the Council’s Offices

1. Electoral Commission Guidance

The comprehensive guidance produced by the Electoral Commission for candidates/agents is available at:

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-uk-parliamentary-general-elections-great-britain

Election agents are strongly recommended to refer to the Commission’s guidance throughout the election period, as necessary.

1. Delivery of Nomination Papers

Notice of Election will be published on **Monday 3 June 2024.** Nominations may then be submitted between 10am and 4pm on any of Monday 3 to Friday 7 June, inclusive . Delivery of the Nomination Paper, Home Address Form and Consent to Nomination **MUST be by hand**, and must be by the candidate, their election agent (if appointed), or the proposer or seconder of the nomination. Whilst the other necessary documents may be sent by post it is clearly desirable for all documentation to be delivered with the nomination if at all possible.

Delivery must be at the Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet, GU51 4AE.

Please make an appointment for the delivery of the nomination.

**It is also strongly recommended that you try to organise the submission of the nomination ahead of the last day if at all possible.**

1. Validity of Nomination

To be valid, a nomination must be accompanied by (i) the consent form, duly completed; (ii) a certificate authorising the description to be used by the candidate (unless there is no description, or the description is “Independent”); (iii) the home address form, duly completed; and (iv) a deposit of £500. All of these are referred to in the following paragraphs, and dealt with comprehensively in the Electoral Commission guidance.

1. Number of Nomination Papers

Nomination papers can be provided on request or printed via the Electoral Commission at:

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-uk-parliamentary-general-elections-great-britain/nominations/completing-your-nomination-papers/nomination-form

Parliamentary elections rules allow up to thirty signatories, although only ten are required. If you do submit more than one nomination, please make it clear which is the “primary” one, from which the proposer and seconder will be taken.

1. Home Address Form

As mentioned in 4 above, the required documents include a “home address form”. This has to include the candidate’s home address (rather than it appearing on the nomination paper). If the candidate wishes the address to be excluded from the ballot paper and notices, part 2 of the form must be completed and signed, and will need to include the name of the constituency in which the candidate’s address is situated, or if living outside the UK, the name of the country of residence. The nomination will not be valid in the absence of a properly completed home address form.

1. Consent to nomination

A properly completed consent to nomination is also required for the nomination to be valid. Please note that the consent includes the statement that the candidate is “*aware of the provisions of the House of Commons Disqualifications Act 1975 (as amended) and to the best of my knowledge and belief I am not disqualified from membership of the House of Commons*”. This is a complex area, and not one where the Returning Officer can give specific advice. The Act may be accessed at:

http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/content.aspx?activeTextDocId=1804148

Please note that the website to which the above link will direct you gives warnings and information as to whether the legislation is up to date, and you are advised to satisfy yourself as to that and to check elsewhere if in any doubt.

1. Certificate of Authorisation and Use of Party Emblem

If the Candidate wishes to use a description other than “Independent” then the certificate of authorisation is required to be submitted during the nominations period.

It is ***essential*** that (i) the person who signs the authorisation is empowered to do so by the registered nominating officer for the political party concerned; (ii) the description is ***either*** one of the descriptions registered by the party concerned ***or*** the name of the party as registered; and (iii) what is entered on the certificate matches ***precisely*** the registered name or description ***and***the description included on the nomination paper.

There is also a form which may be used by the candidate to request the printing of a party emblem on the ballot paper. Please be aware (i) that this request has to be made by the **candidate**; and (ii) that if the party concerned has registered more than one emblem, the request must make it clear which one is to be used.

Please note that the register of political parties can be accessed via <https://search.electoralcommission.org.uk/>, and that information and guidance about registering and maintaining a party is available at https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/our-guidance/political-party/registering-and-maintaining-a-party.

1. Candidate’s Deposit

Please note that:

* the deposit remains at £500, which is refundable if the candidate receives more than 5% of the total number of votes polled by all the candidates
* we will repay the deposit after election day in respect of those candidates who achieve more than 5% of the total number of votes counted for all candidates.
* the payment options are (i) by bankers draft, payable to Hart District Council; or (ii) by cash (legal tender), the money should be brought in when the nomination is delivered. The deposit can also be made by BACS but must be cleared funds before the nomination is considered valid.

Complete the Payment of Deposit form, if properly completed and returned, will ease the administration of this aspect of the nominations process.

1. Notification/Appointment of Election Agent and Sub-Agent

A candidate at a parliamentary election is required to appoint an election agent and, if he/she does not do so, then he/she shall be deemed to be his/her own agent.

To be effective, the appointment and notification of the election agent must be delivered during the period for the delivery of nominations.

More information about the role of the election agent is included in the Electoral Commission guidance.

The nomination pack includs a form for the appointment of a sub-agent. Please note that there is no requirement to appoint a sub-agent, but if you do so then the area which he/she covers must be specified, and not more than one sub-agent may cover the same area for the same election agent. A duly appointed sub-agent has the authority fully to act on behalf of the election agent.

The deadline for me to receive notification of the appointment of a sub-agent is two working days before the date of the election, i.e. **no later than Tuesday 2 July**.

Please be aware of the requirements in relation to the office address for the agent. This must be in the North East Hampshire Constituency.

***On a related note – if the candidate has completed the Home Address Form such that his/her address will not appear on the Statement of Persons Nominated or the Ballot Paper but then acts as his/her own agent, the address will then be published in accordance with the obligation on me to give notice of election agents.***

1. Meeting with Agents

There will not be a candidates and agents briefing due to the short timescale. I will discuss any particular concerns you have with you by telephone after you have read this guide**.** Email will also be used to bring any key points to your attention.

1. Election Campaign and Election Expenses

More information about the role of the election agent, the election campaign, and the question of election expenses can be accessed via the Electoral Commission guidance.

We will, as soon as possible after the close of nominations, supply the necessary forms for the declaration and return of expenses. For your information, we will do this in paper form, and also by email. This is because the Electoral Commission has made a version of the returns available in Excel format, which you may find convenient to use before printing for signature and return. If you would like to access these in the meantime, they are available to download from the resources section of part 3 of the page at:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-uk-parliamentary-general-elections-great-britain/after-election/completing-your-return> in both Excel and pdf formats.

It should be noted that it is not the role of the Acting Returning Officer to be concerned with or advise you on these issues. Should you require advice, then it may be sought from your Party (if you have one) or from the Electoral Commission.

Regarding expenses, it is worth me reminding you that:

* the statute requires the returns and declarations to be submitted by no later than 35 calendar days after the day when the result is declared, i.e. by **no later than 22 August 2024.**
  + - the spending returns and declarations can be inspected by any person after they have been submitted.
    - the candidate or election agent may make a request for the submitted documents to be returned to them at the end of the two year period during which they are available for inspection, failing which they will be destroyed at that time
    - Failure to submit a spending return or declaration by the deadline without an authorised excuse is a criminal offence.

Finally, we will in due course advise agents/candidates of the maximum permissible expenses, based on the calculation of £11,390 plus 12p for each elector on the register for the constituency as at the date of the publication of the notice of election. The Commission’s guidance refers to the maximum amounts and also explains what constitutes the “regulated period”.

1. Electoral Commission

Contact information for the Commission is included in its guidance. In summary:

Telephone: 03331031928 or email info@electoralcommission.org.uk

1. Contact Information and Registration Queries

In addition to the contact details at the head of the letter, my personal email address is [vicci.pepper@hart.gov.uk](mailto:vicci.pepper@hart.gov.uk). For queries as to whether individuals are included in the electoral register, please email [elections@hart.gov.uk](mailto:elections@westoxon.gov.uk) or phone 01252 774077.

1. Supply of the Register of Electors

A candidate at a Parliamentary election is entitled to a copy of the register of electors, and a form for the purpose of making the necessary written request is included.

Please note the content of the form, and be aware that a person needs to be a candidate in order to make the request.

A registered political party make may a request for the register at any time, via its registered nominating officer, or by someone authorised by that person for a particular constituency.

1. Supply of Lists of Absent Voters

A candidate at a Parliamentary election is entitled to a copy of the lists of absent voters, and a form for the purpose of making the necessary written request is attached. Any request for the current lists (as referred to in the form) will be dealt with as soon as possible after the person becomes a candidate (as referred to above).

1. Candidate Mailing

A candidate at a Parliamentary election is, subject to Post Office Regulations, entitled to send free of any charge for postage one postal communication, in relation to the election only, to all electors or addresses in the constituency. This is referred to on pages 9 and 10 of part 4 of the Electoral Commission guidance. Candidates are recommended to obtain a copy of the Best Practice Guide from the Royal Mail website: [www.royalmail.com/candidatemail](http://www.royalmail.com/candidatemail) and to contact the Royal Mail Election Support Team on 03456076424.

1. Nature of this Document

Please be aware that the matters on which I have commented and provided information in this letter are simply a few issues which I felt worthwhile to highlight at this stage. However, this is **not** intended to be comprehensive or definitive guidance, nor to obviate the need for candidates/election agents to refer to the Electoral Commission’s guidance.

1. Communications

Please note that after the nominations period communications will be sent direct to the election agent, and it will be for him/her to liaise with the candidate as necessary. This will include information, which will be sent as soon as possible after the close of nominations, relating to the arrangements for the opening of postal ballot papers; polling day; and the count. There will be no issue of tickets for Counting Agents, Agents and Candidates to attend the count.

1. Election Timetable

Details of the main dates and times included in the election timetable are set out overleaf.

I hope that this is all clear and useful.

Yours sincerely

Vicci Pepper

Deputy Acting Returning Officer

ELECTION OF A MEMBER

TO SERVE IN PARLIAMENT FOR THE

NORTH EAST HAMPSHIRE CONSTITUENCY

Day of Election: 4 July 2024

PAYMENT OF DEPOSIT

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ being a candidate/election agent\* at the above election certify that the deposit in the required sum of £500:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Please ✓  relevant box |
| Is enclosed in cash |  |
| Is enclosed by way of a bankers draft, payable to Hart District Council |  |
| Transferred via BACS |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| signed: |  |
|  | candidate / election agent \* |

\* *please delete as appropriate*

BACS Details: Hart District Council

Sort Code: 20-17-07

Account Number: 40021156

Reference: Please state **Candidates Surname** and **UKPGE**

Please email [elections@hart.gov.uk](mailto:elections@hart.gov.uk) one payment has been paid

Please provide details to return the deposit if the candidate is found to have polled more that 5% of the total number of valid votes cast in the constituency.

Banks Account Name:……………………………………………………………………………………………………...

Sort Code:……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Account Number:……………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**HART DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES IN FLEET**

