



Election Agents of Filton & Bradley Stoke,
Kingswood and Thornbury & Yate
Parliamentary Candidates

Date: 13 April 2015
Your ref:
Our ref:
Enquiries to: Natalie Carr
Tel: (01454) 868198
Fax:
E-mail: electoral.services@southglos.gov.uk

Dear Election Agent

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION – 7 MAY 2015 IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL CONSTITUENCIES

Now that the nominations deadline has passed I am in a position to give you various information that is important to your involvement in the election process. This information supplements the information previously issued with the nomination papers or at the Candidates and Agents briefing.

Generally

Candidates and their Election Agents can attend all events without prior notification. The exception to this is in regard to the issue of postal votes where no candidates or Agents are allowed to attend. The number of other people and capacity in which they can attend at all events is restricted by the legislation. All persons must be appointed and accredited in advance of the specific event. Further information in regard to each of these events is detailed below.

Statement of Person Nominated / Notice of Poll/ Situation of Polling Stations

This notice was issued to you by post on 10 April 2015. If you would like an electronic list of polling stations please let the elections office know.

Election Expenses

The electorate figure for the purposes of election expenses is calculated as at the date for publishing the Notice of Election, which at these elections was on 2 April 2015.

Filton and Bradley Stoke Constituency

I can confirm that for the Filton & Bradley Stoke constituency the electorate is 70492. This should be applied to the following formula:

Long campaign – £30,700 plus 9 pence per elector to arrive at the maximum permitted spend.

Short campaign - £8,700 plus 9 pence per elector to arrive at a maximum permitted spend.

Kingswood Constituency

I can confirm that for the Kingswood constituency the electorate is 67786. This should be applied to the formula:

Long campaign – £30,700 plus 6 pence per elector to arrive at the maximum permitted spend.

Short campaign - £8,700 plus 6 pence per elector to arrive at a maximum permitted spend

Thornbury and Yate Constituency

I can confirm that for the Thornbury & Yate constituency the electorate is 65626. This should be applied to the formula:

Long campaign – £30,700 plus 9 pence per elector to arrive at the maximum permitted spend.

Short campaign - £8,700 plus 9 pence per elector to arrive at a maximum permitted spend

Postal Voting

Your attention is drawn to the Electoral Commission's Code of Conduct for Political Parties, Candidates and Agents, which is supplied with this information letter.

You will be aware of the issues arising from the Birmingham election fraud trial judgement and the damage this has had to public confidence in the postal voting system.

Notwithstanding the contents of the Code of Conduct, my best advice to you is not to handle any completed postal vote applications, postal vote envelopes, or assist postal voters in any way to exercise their vote. In all things, the key question to be asked is "what would a reasonable observer think?" The answer to this is probably different now than it was before the Birmingham trial and judgement and the publicity arising.

Issue of Postal Votes

There is no right of attendance for candidates or election agents at the issue of postal votes. Postal votes will be issued on the following dates by first class post (or equivalent if mailing overseas):

Date of Issue	Location
16 April 2015 – overseas and BFPO addresses	Thornbury Council Offices
18 April 2015 – main run	Thornbury Leisure Centre

Opening of Postal Votes

Each candidate or their Election Agent may appoint **one** person to attend the opening of postal votes. The table below details the dates, times and locations of each postal vote opening.

Date	Start Time	Location
Monday 27 April 2015	9.30am	Thornbury Council Offices
Tuesday 28 April 2015	9.30am	Thornbury Council Offices
Wednesday 29 April 2015	9.30am	Thornbury Council Offices
Thursday 30 April 2015	9.30am	Thornbury Council Offices
Friday 1 May 2015	9.30am	Thornbury Council Offices
Tuesday 5 May 2015	9.30am	Thornbury Council Offices
Wednesday 6 May 2015	9.30am	Thornbury Council Offices
Thursday 7 May 2015	9.30am	Thornbury Council Offices
Thursday 7 May 2015	8.30pm	At each count location there will be an opening of the postal votes for that constituency

Please note that postal ballot papers will be kept face down during the opening procedure in accordance with the recently issued Electoral Commission advice.

100% checking of postal vote statement personal identifiers will take place.

Due to the large numbers of postal votes we are starting to open the outer envelopes from 8.30am.

However, nothing will be extracted until 9.30am when the staff arrive. We are simply opening the outer document before the staff arrive to speed up the overall opening process. Your appointed person is welcome to attend from 8.30 am if desired.

Postal votes delivered with ballot boxes from polling stations will be opened as the boxes are received as part of the count process. There is no provision for the appointment of additional agents to oversee this process.

A form to appoint a Postal Vote Agent is included with this pack.

Tellers

Your attention is drawn to the paper “Polling Agents, Tellers and Political Advertising”, which is supplied to you as part of this candidates/agents information pack. Please ensure any persons acting on your behalf are fully briefed on the matters set out in the paper.

Please note that should tellers, or anyone else, irritate voters, cause a nuisance or obstruct a polling station, the Presiding Officer will seek to resolve the problem. If this is not possible, we will seek assistance from the Police in resolving the matter. This is in accordance with advice from the Electoral Commission on such matters.

The Count

Filton and Bradley Stoke Constituency

The counting of votes for the Filton and Bradley Stoke Constituency will take place at 10pm at The Indoor Astroturf Pitch, WISE Campus, New Road, Stoke Gifford, BS34 8LP. You should park in the main car park. You will be directed by parking attendants on the evening. Access to the count is via the main reception into the indoor sports pitch.

You are entitled to appoint **12** counting agents to act on your behalf.

Kingswood Constituency

The counting of votes for the Kingswood Constituency will take place at 10pm at The Sports Complex, The Grange Community School, Tower Road North, Warmley, BS30 8XQ. You should access the school site via the main entrance. From here you will be directed by car park attendants to the sports hall where the count is taking place.

You are entitled to appoint **8** counting agents to act on your behalf.

Thornbury and Yate Constituency

The counting of votes for the Thornbury & Yate Constituency will take place at 10pm at The Summer Hall, Thornbury Leisure Centre, Alveston Hill, Thornbury, BS35 3JB. You should use the overflow car park and will be directed by parking attendants on the evening. Access to the count is via the Severnside Suite entrance.

You are entitled to appoint **12** counting agents to act on your behalf.

A form for appointing Counting Agents is attached, which must be returned to me by no later than **Wednesday 29 April 2015**.

In addition to this please provide the details of the candidate's spouse or partner if you would like them to attend the count.

I am afraid that due to space restrictions other guests cannot be invited and therefore I would advise that if you have particular people who you would like to be able to attend the count, you should appoint them as a Counting Agent.

Please note that entry to the Count will be by TICKET ONLY. Counting Agents will receive their ticket in the post. Persons without tickets will not be admitted to the Count. If you would prefer tickets can be collected by hand from Thornbury Council Offices, Castle Street, Thornbury after 2pm on Wednesday 6 May 2015. It is your responsibility to arrange for one person to collect the

tickets. If it is not you, then please supply that person with written confirmation, signed by you, that you wish them to collect on your behalf.

Yours sincerely

John McCormack
Acting Returning Officer

Encs: Form for appointment of Postal Vote Agent
Form for appointment of Counting Agents
Polling Agents, Teller and Political Advertising Guidance
Open letter from The Avon and Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner
Code of conduct for campaigners: electoral registration, postal voting, proxy voting and polling stations
Electoral Commission election expenses forms and guidance (long campaign)
Electoral Commission election expenses forms and guidance (short campaign)