

# Candidates and agents briefing

Borough Elections Thursday 5 May 2022

Sharon Bridglalsingh - Returning Officer

Peter Brown - Head of Democratic Services

Peter Taylor - Electoral Services Manager

## Topics

- who's who
- key dates of the election timetable
- close of nominations
- campaigning
- postal vote opening sessions
- polling day and polling stations
- count venue
- counting of votes
- contacts

## Who's who

- Sharon Bridglalsingh is the Returning Officer and is responsible for running the election
  - Deputy Returning Officers are:
    - Michael Bracey (Chief Executive MKC)
    - Peter Brown (Head of Democratic Services)
    - Peter Taylor (Electoral Services Manager)
- Sharon Bridglalsingh is also the Electoral Registration Officer and is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters lists

## Close of Nominations

- Borough (70 candidates in total)
  - 8 Wards with 3 candidates
  - 9 Wards with 4 candidates
  - 2 Wards with 5 candidates
- Parishes
  - None of the 8 new seats contested

Statement of persons Nominated available on our website: [milton-keynes.gov.uk/elections-2022](https://milton-keynes.gov.uk/elections-2022)

## Election timetable

Full timetable with local dates available at:  
[milton-keynes.gov.uk/elections-2022](https://milton-keynes.gov.uk/elections-2022)

Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – <b>Thursday 14 April</b>
Initial issue of Postal Votes	From <b>Tuesday 19 April</b> (expect will be delivered from Thursday 21 April)
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – <b>Tuesday 19 April</b>
Second issue of Postal Votes	From <b>Monday 25 April</b>
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	<b>Tuesday 26 April</b>

# The Electoral Commission

## Election timetable (cont'd)

Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – <b>Tuesday 26 April</b>
Appointment of counting and polling agents	<b>Wednesday 27 April</b>
First date that electors can apply for a replacement for lost postal votes	<b>Thursday 28 April</b>
Polling day	<b>Thursday 5 May</b> – 7am to 10pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deadline to apply to vote by emergency proxy</li><li>• Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends</li></ul>	5pm – polling day
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm – polling day
Return of election expenses	+ 35 days from result <b>Friday 10 June</b>

## Campaigning dos and don'ts

Official imprint guidance:  
<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-01/Part%204%20The%20campaign%20LGEW.pdf>

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material
  - Printed by [printer's name and address].  
Promoted by [agent's name] of [agent's address], on behalf of [candidate's name] of [candidate's address]
- 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 post items on highways or public realm – this could result in enforcement action
- 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)

## Integrity

DC 6112 Stephen Perry | Thames Valley Police |  
Economic Crime Unit

- Election Offences and Guidance circulated to all candidates and agents
- TVP will investigate all offences as shown in document
- Returning Officer does not have the power to investigate election offences



# The Electoral Commission

## Postal Vote Opening

### Where and when

- Civic Chamber - Sessions will commence at 2pm & 6.30pm on Monday 25 April and run every weekday (with the exception of bank holiday Monday) in the run up to 5 May

### Who

- Candidate, Election Agent and one Postal Vote Agent per session (must be notified before session commences) by e-mailing Liz Richardson / Dino Imbimbo
  - ✓ [Elizabeth.Richardson@Milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Elizabeth.Richardson@Milton-keynes.gov.uk)
  - ✓ [Dino.Imbimbo@Milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Dino.Imbimbo@Milton-keynes.gov.uk)

### How

- Liz Richardson / Dino Imbimbo will email candidates / agents 2 hours prior to session with details of what will be dealt with at each session

### What else

- DRO adjudication of provisionally rejected signatures at 6pm on the day of every opening session
- Outer envelopes only may be slit before the opening session for efficiency

## Postal Vote Opening

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-01/Part%205%20Your%20right%20to%20attend%20key%20electoral%20events%20LGE.pdf>

### Access

It is important that you can follow the process and see what is happening, but secrecy is important:

- Ballot papers will be handled face down
- The practice of ‘tallying’ at postal vote opening sessions is prohibited
- You should allow space for staff to work and not attempt to look at ballot paper numbers

### EC Guidance

*Anyone attending an opening session must not attempt to see how individual ballot papers have been marked. It follows therefore that keeping a tally of how ballot papers have been marked is not allowed.*

*...anyone attending a postal vote opening must not attempt to look at identifying marks or numbers on ballot papers, disclose how any particular ballot paper has been marked or pass on any such information gained from the session. Anyone found guilty of breaching these requirements can face an unlimited fine, or may be imprisoned for up to six months.*

## Polling Stations

- Minor changes from usual sites (full list online) including moving away from Portacabins where possible:
  - Charles Warren Academy (Ashland – CPOW)
  - Fairfield Sports Hub (Fairfields - Stony Stratford)
  - Watling Academy (Whitehouse - Stony Stratford)
- Light touch Covid precautions:
  - ✓ Hand sanitiser &
  - ✓ face masks available
- Polling Booth Secrecy
  - We will be briefing Presiding Officers on preventing 'family voting'

## Tellers Tellers

- One teller per candidate please
- Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter
- Tellers will not generally be given access to the inside of a polling station (lobby etc)

### Campaigning outside polling stations:

- You are allowed to verbally put your messages to voters on polling day, including public spaces **away** from polling places
- Cars should not be left in Polling Station car parks with campaign messages on

## Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Office open 6 am to 10 pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10 pm can apply for a ballot paper, or hand in a postal vote
- Postal votes:  
On polling day UNTIL 10 pm either hand in at:
  - polling stations within Milton Keynes Borough or
  - Milton Keynes Council Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

## The Count Venue

We are fortunate to have secured the Milton Keynes Conference Centre as our venue this year. This venue is good because:

- It represents good value for money
- It is easy to find
- It is professionally run
- It offers 85 on site car parking spaces, free of charge, including disabled spaces
- It is a flexible space which regularly and successfully hosts large scale events
- It has good facilities for the drop off and storage of ballot boxes
- It has catering and audio visual facilities

## The Count Venue

The verification and count will be held at:

- Milton Keynes Conference Centre, Strudwick Drive, Oldbrook, Milton Keynes, MK6 2TG
- The venue will open to candidates and agents from 8am

### Refreshments

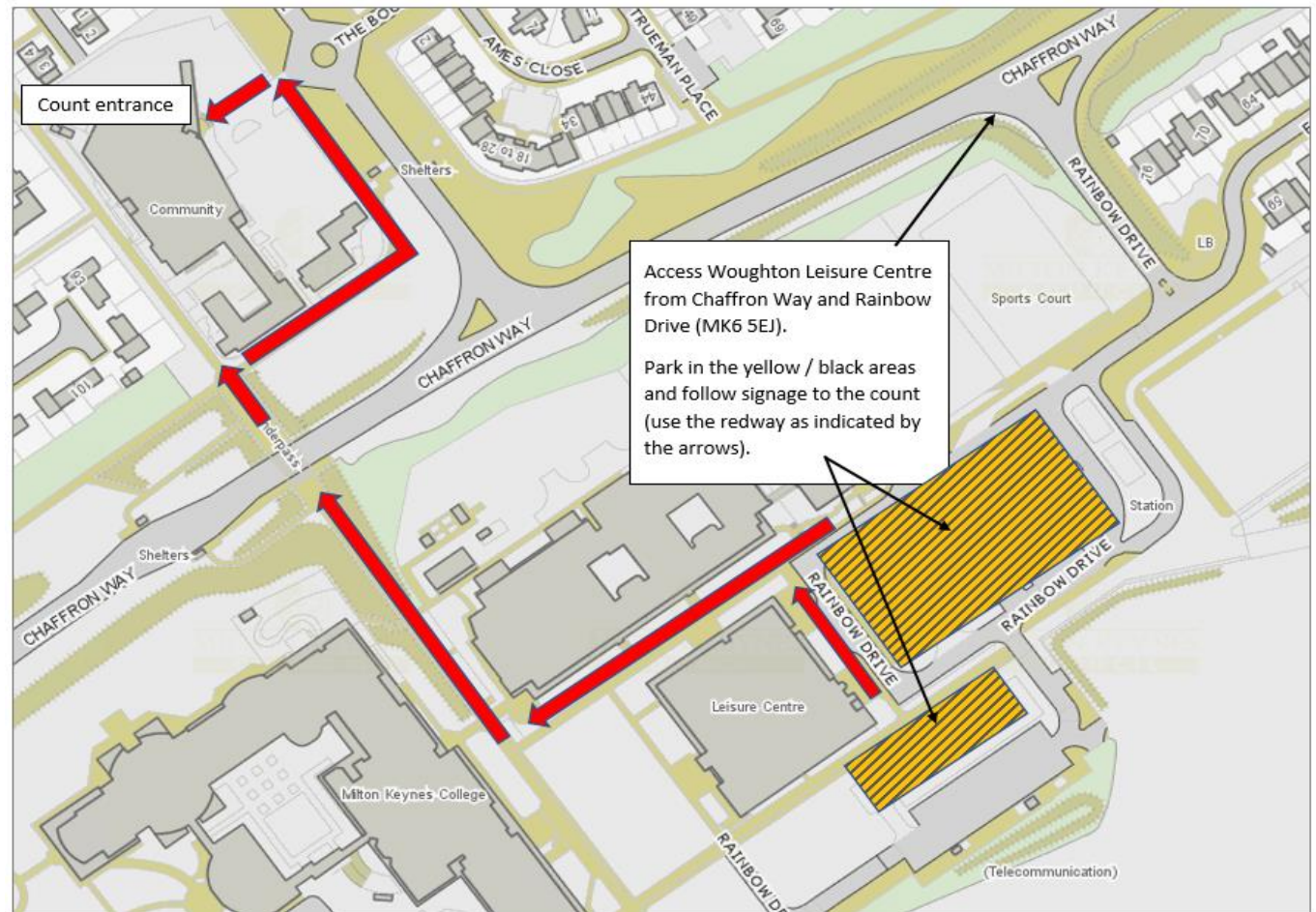
- On arrival: Breakfast & hot drinks
- Teas and coffees and light snacks during the day
- Café closed so bring your own lunch

### Parking

- Onsite parking is available for candidates and agents (first come first served)
- Please consider car sharing
- Overflow parking 5 minute walk away (next slide)
- Staff will park elsewhere

## The Count Venue

## Overflow Parking



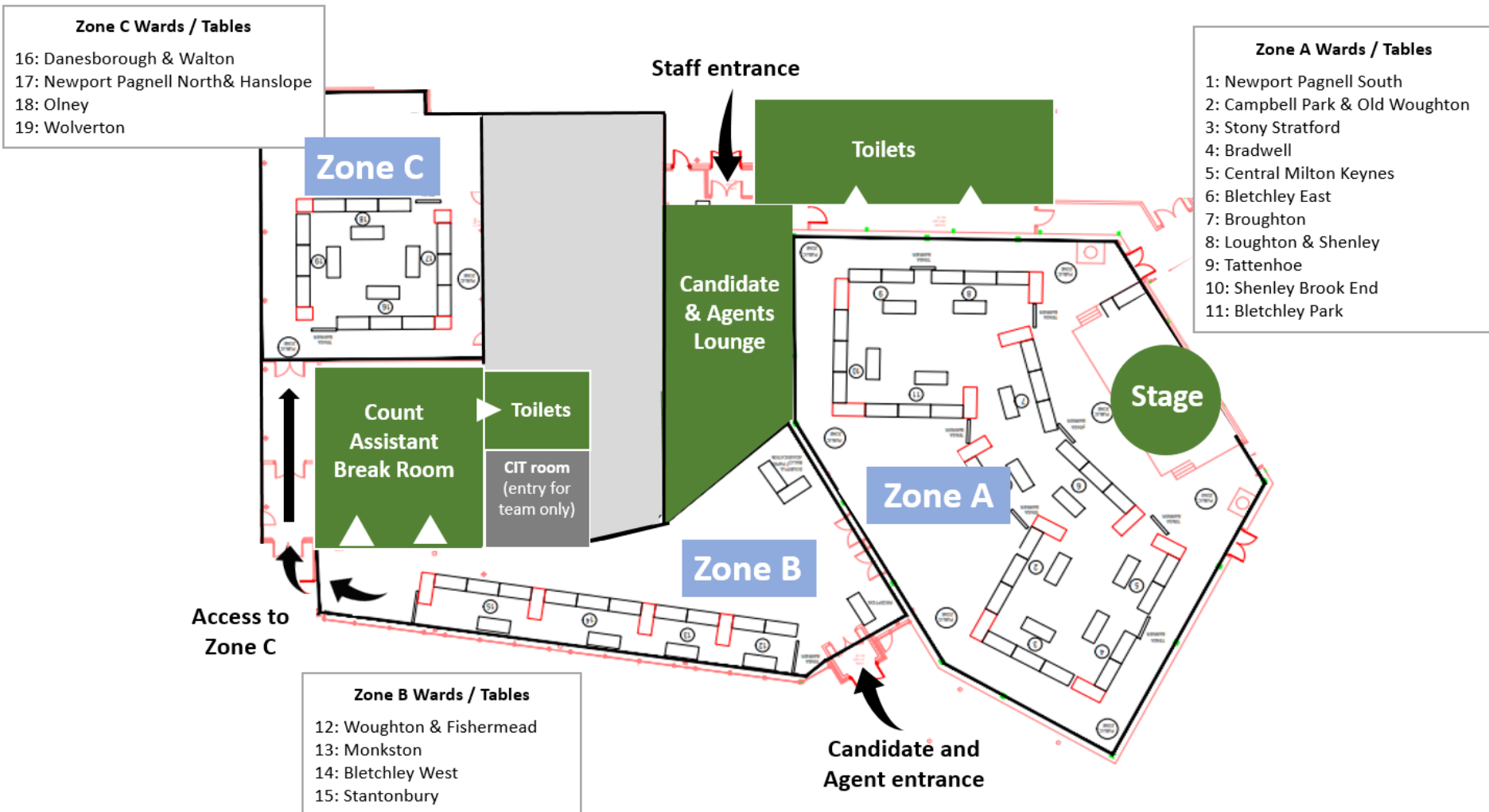


## The Count Venue

- Dedicated candidate and agents lounge
- Dedicated area for sharing provisional results
- All announcements will be made from the auditorium and will be audible throughout the venue
- Venue separated into 3 Zones
- Each zone will have its own Deputy Returning Officer(s) & doubtful ballot adjudication area
- We are preparing over 30 separate pieces of branded wayfinding signage for the venue

# Verification and Count Layout

# The Electoral Commission



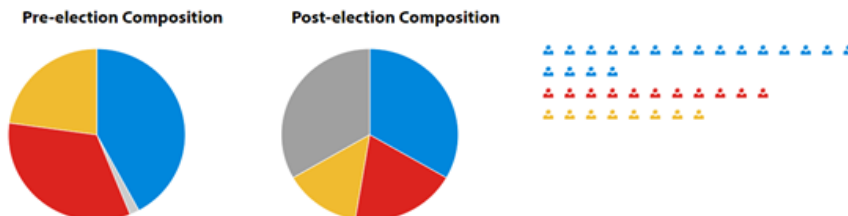
## Verification & Count process

- Ballot Paper stored securely at the venue overnight with MKC security (TVP will also attend the site periodically on Thursday night)
- When you arrive, ballot boxes will be behind each ward table consisting of polling station boxes, postal votes for the ward
- Each ward table has 1 count team leader and 4-6 counters
- Welcome announcements
- Verification of all ballot papers – from 9am
- Estimated to start finishing from 10:30 / 11:00 onwards
- Counting of ballot papers – to follow, different start times for each table but we expect from around 11.30 / 12 noon

# The Electoral Commission

## Verification & Count process

- We will verify the postal votes received prior to the close of poll and then Polling Stations sequentially
- When the Ward has been verified in full, a statement of verification will be prepared, and the turnout will be announced over the PA system
- Counting on verified tables will commence around 30 mins after completion of verification – we will make an announcement
- Doubtful ballot paper adjudication (see later slide)
- Provisional results will be shared with candidates and agents
- Results will be announced on the stage and updated online / on screen



Party	Pre-election Composition	Contested	Post-election Composition
Conservative Party	24	5	19
Green Party	0	0	0
Independent	1	1	0
Labour Party	19	8	11
Liberal Democrats	13	5	8
Women's Equality Party	0	0	0
Unannounced seats			19
Total	57	19	57

## Verification & Count process

### Specifics

- Normal service resumed (flicking corners of ballot papers to count). However, when counting, we will use the coloured party markers on front tables as in 2021
- Supervisors will hold up and bundle flick at front table before placing on rear table
- DRO will review and bundle flick again before provisional result

### Recount threshold

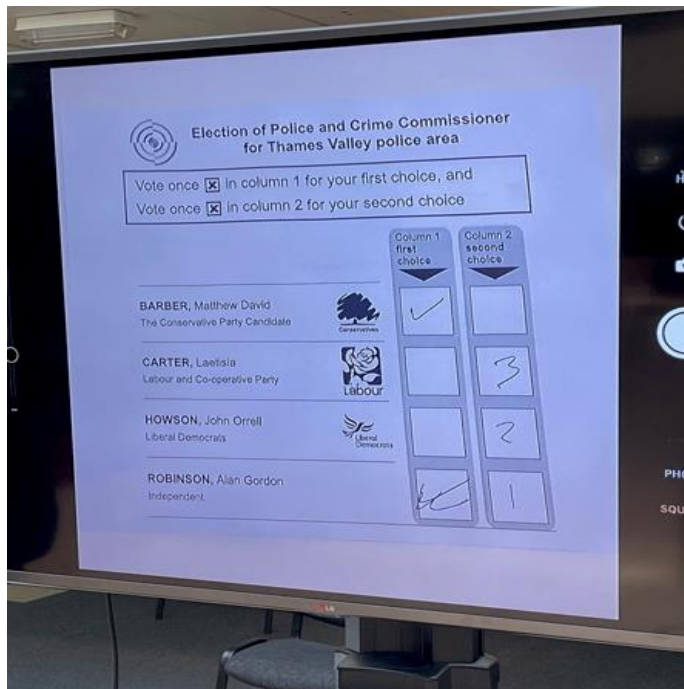
- Decision on the day, but: <60 is likely full recount and 60-120 additional bundle flick

### Count Agents

- Two per Candidate
- No guests

# The Electoral Commission

## Count Doubtful Ballot Papers



- As usual – supervisors will reinsert obvious papers into the count
- Announcement of adjudication with 2 minute warning
- Adjudication will be undertaken concurrently in three zones by DRO's
- RO available for particularly sensitive adjudications
- Once adjudicated 'for' a slip will be stapled to the BP

## Upcoming Events

Electoral Commission Candidates advice surgery - Thursday 21 April.

- First come, first served.
- Contact: Denise Bottom on  
[DBottom@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:DBottom@electoralcommission.org.uk)

## Contacts

- **Returning Officer**  
[Sharon.bridglalsingh@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Sharon.bridglalsingh@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk) & 01908 252095
- **Electoral Services Manager**  
[Peter.taylor@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.taylor@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk) & 01908 253930
- **Head of Democratic Services**  
[Peter.brown@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.brown@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk) & 01908 253671
- **Electoral Commission contacts**
  - For questions on election spending, contact 020 7271 0616
  - For questions on the Commission's guidance on standing for election, contact 0333 103 1928

## Useful information

- [Candidates online security guidance](#)
- [Candidates and Agents physical safety advice](#)



Questions &  
thank you