

Candidates & Agents Briefing

Thursday 6 May 2021

Suffolk County Council election
East Suffolk Council District by-election
Town & Parish Council by-elections

Introductions

The
Electoral
Commission

- Stephen Baker Deputy Returning Officer & ERO
- Karen Last Electoral Services Manager
- Tim Willis Deputy Electoral Services Manager

Electoral Services Offices

Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft NR33 0EQ

&

East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Station Road,
Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1RT

Public Health principles

Covid Considerations

General public health principles that everyone should follow in all aspects of daily life, including participating in elections:

- ✓ Maintain social distancing
- ✓ Clean hands regularly & avoid touching your face
- ✓ Wear a face covering where necessary
- ✓ No-one should attend any electoral events if:
 - Unwell
 - Symptomatic with COVID-19
 - Had a confirmed case or confirmed contact with someone who is now self-isolating

Briefing Topics

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- Key dates of the election timetable
- Qualifications/Disqualifications
- Nominations
- Agents
- Electoral Register
- Registering to vote
- Candidate spending
- The poll & polling station safety
- Campaigning

Election Timetable

Election Timetable – Key Dates

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Publication of Notice of Election	Thursday 25 March 2021
Nominations commence	Friday 26 March 2021
Close of nominations	4pm – Thursday 8 April 2021
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – Thursday 8 April 2021
Publication of statement of persons nominated	4pm – Friday 9 April 2021
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Monday 19 April 2021
Deadline for new postal vote applications /changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – Tuesday 20 April 2021
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	Tuesday 27 April 2021

Election Timetable – Key Dates

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Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – Tuesday 27 April 2021
Appointment of counting and polling agents	Wednesday 28 April 2021
Polling day	Thursday 6 May 2021 – 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency or if unexpectedly called away because of employment or service	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	Monday 3 June 2021 (Parish) Friday 11 June 2021 (SCC) Monday 14 June 2021 (District)

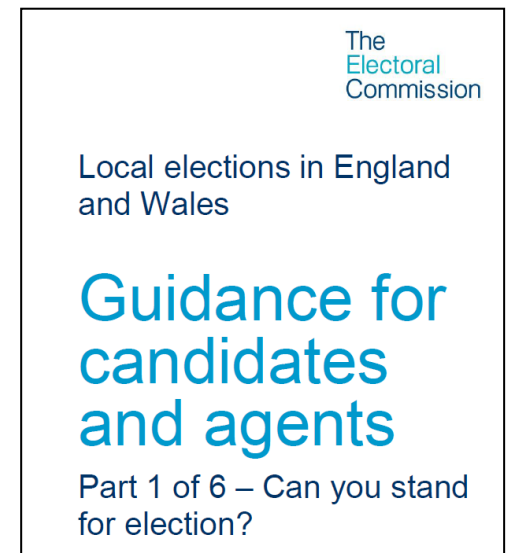
- Initial Postal Votes will be sent on **Thursday 22 April 2021**

Qualifications & Disqualifications

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, qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or national of an EU member state.
- Also at least one of the following:
 - Registered local government elector for county/district/parish area
 - Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the county/district/parish area during the whole 12 months preceding nomination
 - Principal or only place of work (including unpaid) during last 12 months in county/district/parish
 - Lived in the county/district/parish (or 4.8km of parish) during the last 12 months

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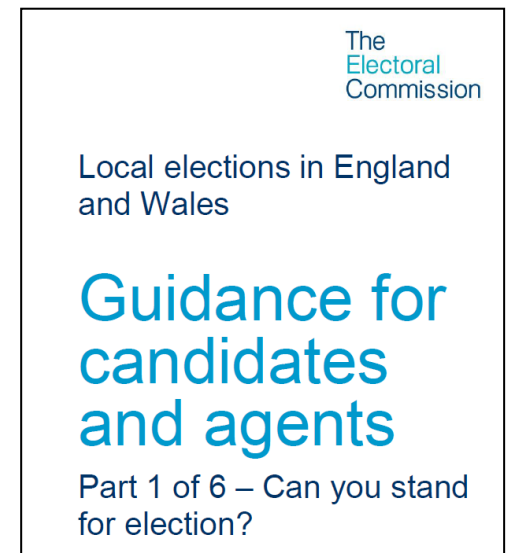


Disqualifications

A person **cannot** be a candidate if they:

- are **employed by the local authority** or hold a paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees). Candidates may be 'employed by the local authority' if they work at certain schools, fire services, police or health services
- are subject of a **Bankruptcy Restrictions Order** (or interim restrictions order) in England or Wales
- have been sentenced to a term of **imprisonment** of three months or more (inc. suspended sentence) without option of a fine, during the 5 years before polling day
- are serving a disqualification due to being found guilty of a **corrupt or illegal practice** by an election court
- hold a **politically restricted post**

See Part 1 of 6



Nominations

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Submitting Nomination Papers

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- Nomination papers must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm – Thursday 8 April 2021 and must include:
 - The nomination form
 - The home address form(s)
 - The consent to nomination
 - Notification of election agent form (if appointing an agent)
- Party candidates will also need to submit by 4pm – Thursday 8 April 2021
 - 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)

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Submitting Nomination Papers

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Key information:

- Take care when completing nomination papers as mistakes may invalidate a nomination
- Where possible please completed nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an **informal check** (by email)
- Please make an appointment to come into the office to deliver forms (where possible)
- Drop off paper(s) and wait outside whilst we process

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Submitting Nomination Papers

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Key information:

- Must be hand delivered by candidate or someone they trust
- Nomination papers **CANNOT** be posted or emailed
- Completed Nomination papers must be hand delivered to:

The Electoral Services office at either:

Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft, NR33 0EQ

Or

East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Station Road, Melton,
Woodbridge IP12 1RT

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Nomination form

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Must include:

- Full Name
- Optional: can use commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than full name & wish to use it instead. You cannot use your first name as a commonly used name to exclude your middle name.

Description field: 3 options

- Leave blank (or up to six words for Town/Parish)
- Independent
- Party Candidates can use party name or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer

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Completing Nomination Papers

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- Subscribers: **2** subscribers are required.
- Must sign & print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register. Ensure subscribers are aware of what their data will be used for.
- Only ask subscribers to sign after completing the name, address and description fields on the form.
- When collecting signatures, it is important that you follow the latest government guidelines on social distancing, face coverings and hand hygiene, as well as the latest government guidelines on local restrictions.

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 (cont)

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- 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)
East Suffolk
 - if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which your home address is situated.

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Consent to nomination

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Must include:

- Name
- Which area the candidate is standing in
- Confirmation of qualification(s) (at least 1, but select all that apply)
- Date of birth & signature
- Date of consent
- Witness name & signature
- The form **cannot** be dated before **8 March 2021**

The Nomination Process

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Key information:

- Notice of Election: Thursday 25 March 2021
- Nomination papers can be downloaded from the East Suffolk Council Website
- Nomination papers can be delivered during office hours from Friday 26 March 2021
- Nomination papers must be delivered by **Thursday 8 April 2021, 4PM**

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Certificate of authorisation

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- Party Candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person appointed to act on their behalf)
- The certificate may:
 - allow the use of the party name or a particular description
 - allow candidates to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission
- Must be submitted by **4pm, Thursday 8 April 2021**

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Emblem request form

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- Party Candidates can ask for emblem to be printed on the ballot paper.
- Emblem request form must be submitted by **4PM, Thursday 8 April 2021**

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The Nomination Process

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Withdrawal of Candidate

- May withdraw by giving notice to the DRO in writing
- Must be signed by candidate and witnessed
- Must be delivered by **4PM, Thursday 8 April 2021**

Agents

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Election Agent

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- Responsible for the proper management of the election campaign; particularly its financial management
- Notification of appointment must be submitted by 4PM, Thursday 8 April 2021. The form is included in the nomination pack
- Candidate will become own agent by default if one is not appointed

Note: No election agents for Parish & Town Council by-elections



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Other Agents

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- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on behalf of the candidate.
- Written notice must be given of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by **Wednesday 28 April 2021**
- The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session.

Please note, sessions will be published online but check with Electoral Services Team before attending to ensure session is taking place

Electoral Register

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Access to electoral register & absent voting lists

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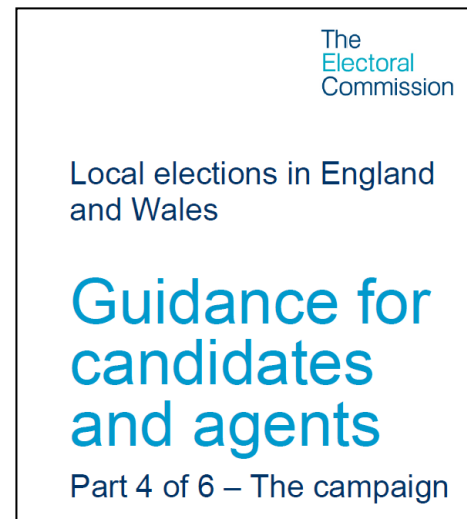
- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate
 - Earliest date that candidates are entitled to it is **29 March**
 - Once you have declared yourself a candidate after this date / date you submit nomination papers
- Make written request to the ERO – forms are available from Electoral Services Team and online
 - www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/elections

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Access to electoral register & absent voting lists

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- Only use data for permitted purposes
 - to complete the nomination form
 - to help you campaign
 - to check that donations/loans are permissible
- Refer to part 4 of EC guidance



Registering to vote

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Registering to vote

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- 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 to register is **Monday 19 April 2021**
- Registration can be done online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote
- It only takes a few minutes

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Registering to vote

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- When discussing registering to vote with individuals, you will need to make them aware that they will need:
 - their National Insurance number
 - date of birth
 - address
- People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance Number can still register, but they may need to provide further information. If required, they will be contacted by the ERO.

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Absent Voting

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- Written to all over 70's to offer a postal vote (where DOB available)
- Emailed or text any elector (with contact details held) who does not have a postal vote
- Written to those Shielding (NHS data) to offer a postal vote
- Residents magazine article
- If you are encouraging people who don't have a postal vote to apply for one, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one in time for the elections if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections.

Candidate Spending

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Candidate Spending

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- Defined as certain expenses ‘used for the purposes of the candidate’s election’ during the regulated period
- Responsibility of the **election agent** (where appointed)
- Limit on expenses:
 - £806 + 7 pence per elector in ward/division on register in force on **1 March 2021**
- Electoral Services team cannot provide advice on expenses – refer to Part 3 of the EC Guidance for candidates & agents
- Electorate Stats on website

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Candidate Spending Returns

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- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election (28 days for Town & Parish)
- Returns made public by **Deputy Returning Officer**
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the **Electoral Commission**
- Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence enforceable by the police (Must submit even if a NIL return)
- No spending will be reimbursed

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Polling Day



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Polling Day

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- Arrangements in place to ensure that polling stations are safe places to vote. Most measures familiar to us all from visiting other public places such as shops, for example face coverings and the provision of hand sanitiser on entry and exit
- Voters will be encouraged to bring their own pen or pencil for use in polling stations, but pencils will also be made available for anyone who needs one
- Voters encouraged to check their Poll Card before Polling Day to confirm details

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Polling Day

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- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Office open 6.30am to 10pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election
 - for queries relating to election finance issues, contact the Electoral Commission (*contact details shown later*)
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10pm can apply for a ballot paper
- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations or delivered to the elections office until 10pm.
- A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in a postal vote can do so after 10pm.

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Polling Day & Count

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Election day : Thursday 6 May 2021

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Offices open 6.30am to 10pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election.

	Verification
ALL	Thursday 6 May 10PM, Waterlane Leisure Centre, Lowestoft

	Count
County	Friday 7 May 9.30AM Waterlane Leisure Centre, Lowestoft
District/ Parish	Monday 10 May 9.30AM Riverside & East Suffolk House

Campaigning

Campaigning

The Electoral Commission

- The UK government have published guidance for candidates and agents on campaigning from Monday 8 March 2021

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-governments-approach-to-elections-and-referendums-during-covid-19/the-governments-approach-to-elections-and-referendums-during-covid-19#campaigning-safely-from-8-march

- You should continue to check the latest government guidelines on national and local restrictions, and be aware that different restrictions could apply to different parts of the electoral area

The screenshot shows a webpage from the Local Government Association. The main heading is "Local Elections 2021: Standing for election and campaigning in a COVID-19 context" with a date and time of "Friday 12 March 2021, 2.00pm – 3.30pm". The page includes a description of the webinar, a list of speakers, and a program schedule. The speakers listed are Cllr James Jamieson (Chairman, Local Government Association), Charlene Hanson (Head of Guidance, Electoral Commission), Martin Carr (Registration Guidance Manager, Electoral Commission), and Paul Docker (Head of Electoral Administration, Cabinet Office). The program schedule includes a welcome and introduction, an Electoral Commission update, and Cabinet Office guidance on campaigning.

Local Elections 2021: Standing for election and campaigning in a COVID-19 context
Friday 12 March 2021, 2.00pm – 3.30pm

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 elections in England and Wales will be like none other that we have experienced before. Candidates, agents and campaigners will all have a part to play in ensuring the elections are conducted in a COVID-19 secure manner.

This webinar will provide the opportunity to learn from comparable elections that have taken place in Scotland during the pandemic by hearing firsthand how candidates and their campaigners responded to the challenges presented by COVID-19 in their recent by-elections. There will also be the opportunity to hear from the Electoral Commission (EC) on their latest available guidance and resources, with attendees able to directly raise questions and concerns to help inform the EC's work to support the polls and the Cabinet Office will take us through specific guidance relating to campaigning which is published recently.

NB - Most political party associations will issue specific guidance to help candidates and agents comply with EC rules - this session will not duplicate this. Rather it will provide insights into what it feels like to run for election in a COVID-19 context and the type of issues you may encounter.

Programme

2:00	Welcome and introduction Cllr James Jamieson, Chairman, Local Government Association
2:05	Electoral Commission update Charlene Hanson, Head of Guidance, Electoral Commission Martin Carr, Registration Guidance Manager, Electoral Commission
2:20	Cabinet Office guidance on campaigning Paul Docker, Head of Electoral Administration, Cabinet Office

Who should attend:
Candidates standing for election* in May 2021
Local election agents, campaigners and political association staff

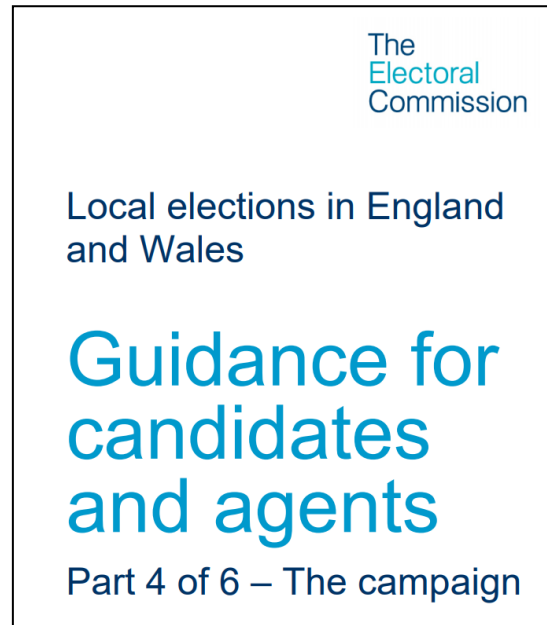
*Local Authority, Mayoral, Combined Authority, Police and Crime Commissioners, Parish Town Council

Cost to attend:
Free to all
Please refer to our [webinars and conferences](#)

Campaigning Guidance

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- Don't forget to use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites.
- Further guidance is available on the Electoral Commission website




Useful Websites

Elections 2021

East Suffolk Website

The
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www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/elections/



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Access local council services and information quickly and easily

Home > Elections

Elections

Register to vote	Election notices and results	Ways to vote	Election types	Councillors
How do I become a councillor?	Annual Electoral Canvass	Mayoral petitions	Purdah/pre-election period	Absent vote signature refresh
Electoral area maps and street lists	Suffolk County Council Electoral Review	Casual vacancy notices	Electoral Services Privacy Notice	



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Electoral Commission Guidance

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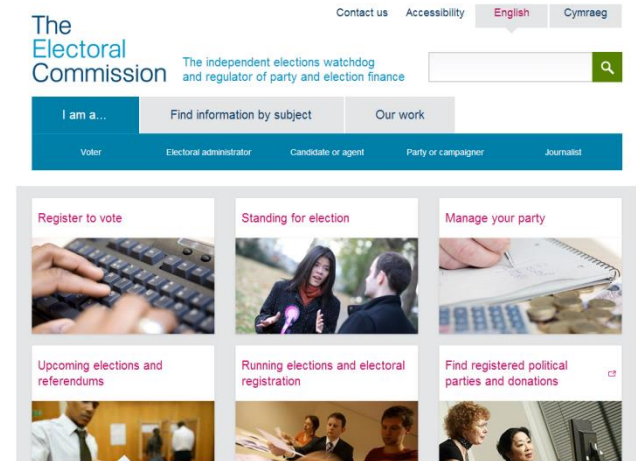
Useful website:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Phone | 0333 103 1928

Helpful guidance includes:

- Can you stand for election?
- Standing as an independent candidate
- Standing as a party candidate
- Candidate's spending form and notes
- The campaign



Next Briefing:

Thursday 22 April 2021 at 10am

- Agents
- Postal Votes
- Polling Day
- Verification/Count

Electoral Services

Website:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/elections

Office Contact Details:

Electoral Services

Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft NR33 0EQ

Electoral Services

East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Station Road,
Melton, Woodbridge, IP12 1RT

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