County Council Elections 2017 - FAQs

Introduction

The FAQ guide is designed to provide basic information for members of the public to clarify key issues around the registration and election process for the Northamptonshire County Council Elections in May 2017.

Further useful information about the electoral process can be found on the Electoral Commission website: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/

Please note that whilst Northamptonshire County Council is responsible for managing these elections, most electoral matters, such as registration of voters, are dealt with by District and Borough Councils. A list of contacts for local District and Borough Council election offices is given at the end of this document.

General information and voting

When is the election?
The poll will take place on Thursday 4 May 2017. Polling hours are between 7am – 10pm.

How do I vote?
You can vote in person at a polling station, by post or by proxy.

Where is my polling station?
Your poll card should tell you the location of your polling station. Alternatively, contact the local District or Borough Council elections office. There may have been a review of the polling places in your area since the last elections. Your polling station may have been changed as a result.

I’m not registered to vote or am unsure if I am registered. What do I do?
If you’re not already on the electoral roll, you need to register to vote by midnight on Thursday 13 April to vote in the forthcoming election. You can visit this page for further details https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or https://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/ or contact your local district or borough council (details at the bottom of this note). Remember that applications to register should be made as soon as possible. Applications received after 13 April 2017 will not be in time for the election, but will be for future elections.

Am I eligible to vote?
You can only vote if you are registered. You can register if:
- you are 17 or over (but you cannot vote until your 18th birthday)

AND
- You are a British, Irish, EU citizen, or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen (i.e. you have leave to enter or remain in the UK or don’t require leave to enter or remain in the UK) permanently living in the UK.
- EU citizens (who are not also British, Irish or a Commonwealth citizen) can vote at local government elections, but they cannot vote at UK Parliamentary elections.
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- Some people can register, even though they are not permanently living in the UK. These are Service Voters or Crown Servants posted overseas. Refer to local elections office if unsure.

I’m a student and am unsure where I should register to vote
Students may be entitled to register at either or both their permanent home address and their term time address. It is an offence to vote more than once in a national election, but where you are registered in two different local authorities, you can vote in both sets of local elections if the elections are for different councils. See ‘I’m not registered to vote or am unsure if I am registered.’

I’m homeless / live on a house boat / caravan / in a hospital / remanded in custody. Can I register?
Yes. You can make something called a ‘declaration of local connection’. You can apply by filling in a ‘No Fixed Address’ form and posting it to your elections office. Refer to local elections office.

Can I apply for a postal vote?
Anyone who is registered to vote can apply for a postal vote. If you are not yet registered, you should apply now. You can submit a postal vote application alongside your registration application. Postal forms are available from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk or the local District or Borough Council elections office.

Have I still got time to register for a postal vote?
The deadline for registering for a postal vote is 5pm, 18th April 2017. You can contact your local district or borough council or you can visit: https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

I haven’t received my postal ballot paper yet.
Please contact the local District or Borough Council elections office and ask when they are sending out postal votes if you need to know exactly when the postal votes will be sent. If you need a replacement for a lost/not received postal vote, contact the local elections office for details of the acceptable identification and to arrange a convenient time for the replacement to be made.

I have received my postal vote but I don’t want to vote by post
If before 5pm on 18 April 2017: You can change your voting method for these elections if you haven’t already returned your postal vote. You will need to contact the local District or Borough Council elections office.

Otherwise, you can complete your postal vote and take it to certain polling stations in the area on polling day, or hand it in at the local elections office. Make sure you do it before 10pm on polling day. Contact local District or Borough Council elections office to find out where their office is. They can also give you the address of your polling station or the polling stations in the area where you can return your postal vote to.

Can I apply for a proxy vote?
Anyone who is registered to vote can apply for a proxy vote. Your chosen proxy (i.e. the person voting on your behalf) must also be registered to vote. If you or your proxy are not yet registered, you should apply now (and no later than 13 April 2017) so you can be registered in time for the forthcoming election. You can submit a proxy vote application alongside your registration application. To vote by proxy, you must have a reason – e.g. you will be away on holiday, you are
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away on business. Contact your local District or Borough Council elections office for more information and an application form.

Have I still got time to register for a proxy vote?
If you are amending an existing proxy vote or changing from postal to proxy, you must return your application by **5pm on 18 April 2017**. New proxy applications (where you were previously going to vote at a polling station) must be received by **5pm on 25 April 2017**.

What provision is made for disabled or visually impaired people?
There are different options for casting your vote:
- at a polling station;
- by post, or;
- by appointing a proxy to vote on your behalf.
Most polling stations will be fully accessible. The staff should be trained and have access to equipment to assist disabled electors to vote independently or with the assistance of polling station staff. Tactile voting templates and large print versions of ballot papers that can be used for reference are available at all polling stations. Disabled electors may also bring a companion to assist them to vote at the polling station. Contact your local District or Borough Council elections office for details of the access to any particular polling station and the assistance that will be available.

Information about candidates

Who is standing in the election?
Please refer to the statement of persons nominated on our website:
Or the local District or Borough Council elections office. The statements will be available at 4pm on 5 April 2017.

Where can I get information about the candidates?
See answer under ‘Who is standing in the election?’ above. You can also contact the candidates. Most candidates/parties post leaflets through letter boxes during election time, put up posters, hold meetings, knock on doors or have websites with information. The County Council cannot publicise information about candidates other than through the official notices such as the statement of persons nominated.

Information for candidates

Can I stand for election?
If you wish to stand for election, you must:
- be at least 18 years old
- be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any member state of the European Union, and
- meet at least one of the following four qualifications:
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a) You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the local authority area in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards.

b) 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.

c) 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.

d) 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 election.

You must also not be disqualified. For more information, visit:
http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-in-england

How do I go about standing for election?

You need to submit a set of nomination papers, including the signatures of 10 registered electors (known as subscribers) from the division in which you wish to stand. The subscribers must appear on the local government electoral register that is in force on the 25th working day before the poll. Nomination papers must be submitted by the nomination deadline by 4pm on 4 April 2017.

For more information, contact the local District or Borough Council elections office or Refer to candidates’ guidance on Electoral Commission website: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-england-and-wales

Complaints

I want to complain about the conduct of a candidate

It is not always possible for the returning officer to resolve complaints or disputes about candidates. If you believe a candidate has broken the law relating to elections, you can raise this with the Local Returning Officer by contacting the local District or Borough Council elections office below. You can also raise the issue with the Returning Officer by emailing democraticsupport@northamptonshire.gov.uk

I want to complain about election fly-posting

It is illegal to attach signs, posters, placards or other advertising material on or adjacent to the highway, including the road, footpath and verge, or on street furniture including lamp posts, railings, bridges and road signs. Any unauthorised advertising material will generally be removed by the County Council and those responsible may be issued with a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted and fined for the offence(s). To report election-related fly-posting email regulations@kierwsp.co.uk or telephone 01604 651072

District and Borough Council contacts

Northamptonshire County Council is not an electoral registration authority. Individuals wishing to register to vote, stand for election or who have any query about the poll should contact their local district or borough council. Details are set out below. In unsure, use https://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/ and search by postcode.
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Corby
Electoral Registration Officer
The Corby Cube
Parkland Gateway
George Street
Corby
NN17 1QG
01536 464012 / 464014
electoral.services@corby.gov.uk

Daventry
Electoral Registration Officer
Lodge Road
Daventry
Northamptonshire
NN11 4FP
01327 871100
elections@daventrydc.gov.uk

East Northamptonshire
Electoral Registration Officer
East Northamptonshire House
Cedar Drive
Thrapston
Northamptonshire
NN14 4LZ
01832 742155 / 742119
elections@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk

Kettering
Electoral Registration Officer
Municipal Offices
Bowling Green Road
Kettering
NN15 7QX
01536 534353
elecreg@kettering.gov.uk

Northampton
Electoral Registration Officer
The Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton
NN1 1DE
01604 837111
elecreg@northampton.gov.uk
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South Northamptonshire
Electoral Registration Officer
The Forum, Moat Lane
Towcester
NN12 6AD
01327 322128
elections@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Wellingborough
Electoral Registration Officer
Swanspool House
Doddington Road
Wellingborough
NN8 1BP
01933 231513
elections@wellingborough.gov.uk