

**Presentation: Voter ID and Local Elections**

**Presenter: Aurora Loi – Electoral Services Manager, B&NES**

AL said that parishes should have been sent election information via Globalscape – a secure portal.

The Poll Cards will be going to the 136k voters in Bath and North East Somerset on 20 March. This will be the first time that many voters will know about the need for Voter ID.

The Notice of Election triggers the notification period which runs from 21 March until 4pm on 4 April. You can give copies of forms to candidates but can also ask them to contact the Elections Office instead – email [elections@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:elections@bathnes.gov.uk)

Completed forms need to be hand delivered to the Brunswick Room in the Guildhall, Bath. Candidates should not leave forms at the Reception Desk, or post them through the letterbox – this will render them invalid (these are national rules, not B&NES rules).

On 5 April, the statement of persons nominated will be published along with notice of uncontested elections. This information will also be added to Globalscape by 5pm on 5 April.

The Polling Stations will be open 7am – 10pm on 4 May. Verification will take place overnight for B&NES and for contested parish elections at the University of Bath's Sports Village. The count will then take place during the night for B&NES. The count for parishes will take place from 2pm on 5 May.

It is not necessary for parish candidates to attend on the evening of 4 May – there is likely to be 500 staff and candidates for B&NES already present. The ballot boxes will be opened in front of observers. If parish candidates want to attend, it is better for them to come on Friday 5 May.

Voter ID was introduced through the Elections Act 2022. It means that those voting in person cannot do so without the required ID. It does not matter if they are known to the Presiding Officer – they will still need ID and sent home to get it.

The list of acceptable Voter ID is long but if someone doesn't have it they can apply for a certificate. The system has been set up by the Government but B&NES will see applications relating to its area. It is easiest to apply online – you will need your ID and National Insurance Number. If you have no online access, you can request a paper application or go to one of the Council's Information and Advice Centres

(formerly One Stop Shops). Staff will assist electors in applying and take a photograph if necessary.

For those with a postal vote, there is no change and photo ID is not required as they will not be able to vote in person.

B&NES is also running a public awareness campaign in support of the Electoral Commission's campaign with ads on buses, the radio and in the local papers. Parishes are encouraged to share information. There is a [dedicated page on the B&NES website](#).

### **Questions after the update**

**Q1: What is the closing date for applying for Voter ID?**

A1: 5pm on 25 April.

**Q2: What are the opening hours of the Brunswick Room in the Guildhall?**

A2: Officially 9am – 4pm but we are often in the office from 8am and there until 6pm/7pm. If people come early, we can offer an informal check and if all is in order can accept them formally at 9am. However, we have no discretion at all on the closing time and date of 4pm and 4 April.

**Q3: Are you open on a Saturday?**

A3: We are there every day but Guildhall Reception may not be open at weekends.

**Q4: There was advice today from ALCA that it is up to parishes on whether they give out packs and electoral numbers etc. Also, that you cannot hand over the electoral roll. You must also use the latest one, not an old one.**

A4: Yes – Parish Clerk contact details have been removed as an alternative contact as support to candidates is at their discretion.

**Q5: Thank you for the work that you do and hours that you work. As there is likely to be extra demand due to checking Voter ID and the potential for hold ups, will there be more staff in the Polling Stations and, if so, what is the cost to B&NES?**

A5: We have changed the ratio so there will be one Presiding Officer and two Poll Clerks to every 1,200 voters. If the number of voters is higher, there will be two further Clerks. There will also be a marshal at the door either directing people to the correct desk, or advising them to go home to get their Voter ID. We have taken into account that checking ID will take longer and it is going to cost more but we have received funding from central Government to cover this so it will not cost B&NES more.

**Q6: In terms of bus passes, do they need to be B&NES ones, or are others acceptable?**

A6: If they have gone through the Government Portal process they will be acceptable.

**Q7: If someone is in the queue at the Polling Station at 9.55pm, they will usually be allowed to vote. What happens if they do this and do not have their Voter ID?**

A7: They will need to be able to get back with it by 10pm. The marshal will probably check that anyone queuing has it. There will also be notices on the door reminding people of the need to have Voter ID.

