

## Full Council

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<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Publicity for 2023 Elections</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>17 January 2023</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Mandy Sturdy, Town Clerk Lizzie Fuller, Committee Services Officer</b>

### Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide background for the discussion on potential publicity for the Town and Parish elections on 4 May 2023.

### Background

2. It is accepted good practice, in the interests of democracy and appropriate representation, that a Parish / Town Council should encourage individuals to stand for election to the Council.
3. Any process followed must show complete independence, without any Political involvement whatsoever. The Pre-Election Period (previously known as Purdah) is expected to start on 23 March 2023.
4. The individuals in the best position to provide guidance and support for any publicity campaign are those currently in position, i.e. elected Councillors.
5. Officers including the Town Clerk, the Community Services Manager, the Committee Services Officer, and the Communications & Events Officer could be made available to assist, but preferably not to lead.

### Proposal

6. That one or more Councillors are nominated to take a lead on preparing and executing a publicity campaign to encourage members of the public to stand in the Town Council Elections on 4 May 2023.
7. Work would involve supporting Officers with publicity methods listed below:
  - Councillor Interviews / Videos to be shared online
  - Local radio interviews
  - Talks in schools / community groups
  - Distributing posters
  - Social media
  - Press releases via local news outlets / Parent mail / TTC newsletter / website
  - Utilising materials from the National Association of Local Councils.
  - Being available for interested candidates to ask questions.
  - Any other publicity methods as appropriate.

The following have already been created to assist with publicity:

- Town Guide – this year has a focus on elections and what the town council does.
- [‘Become a Councillor’ webpage](#) including information on what being a town councillor involves, a Councillor job description, eligibility, how to apply and information on training sessions.

8. Nomination papers should be received by hand at SODC by Tuesday 4 April 2023. It is suggested that the main publicity drive runs February – March.

### **Resource Appraisal**

9. Any incidental costs would be allocated from existing relevant budget lines.

### **Risk Assessment**

10. This will reduce the risk of uncontested elections which would reflect poorly on democracy and could jeopardise the Town Council’s General Power of Competence.

### **Legal Powers:**

11. There are specific powers that could be applied, but the project is also covered by the General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011.

### **Recommendation**

**It is recommended that:**

- i) One or more Councillors volunteer to take a lead on the publicity for the 2023 Local Elections publicity, with support from Officers.*