

OXFORDSHIRE GREEN PARTY

STANDING AS A PAPER CANDIDATE

What is a Paper Candidate?

A paper, or 'non-target' candidate is someone who volunteers to have their name on an election ballot paper, but does not actively campaign or expect to win.

Why do we stand Paper Candidates?

- As a smaller party, the Green Party does not (yet!) have the financial or human resources to run an active campaign in every district ward or county division at election time. We target our resources first of all where we are most likely to win, and secondly where we are most likely to make a difference (for example getting a respectable second place which we can build on in subsequent years).
- The more candidates that the Green Party stands, the more likely we are to gain local and national media coverage, and be eligible to have a Party election broadcast
- It's good for democracy; paper candidates enable supporters to vote for us, and demonstrate to other parties and voters that the Green Party is active and credible in their area.

Am I eligible to stand?

To be able to stand as a candidate at a local government election in England and Wales 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:
 - a. Be registered as an elector for the local authority area in which you wish to stand.
 - b. Own or rent land or other premises in the local authority area for at least 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.
 - c. have had your main or only place of work (may be unpaid) in the local authority for at least 12 months.
 - d. Have lived in the local authority area for 12 months.

Full eligibility information is available from the [Electoral Commission website](#).

What do I have to do to stand?

The main purpose of being a paper candidate is your willingness to have your name on the ballot paper, there are some other responsibilities associated with agreeing to stand. You will receive support and guidance from your local branch and election agent, but you should expect to:

- **Complete the nomination paperwork.** This will include confirming your election agent, consenting to stand, providing signatures and some personal details.
- **Find people to nominate you.** Every candidate application must be supported by nominees. Your nominees are merely agreeing that you are a real person – they do not have to vote for you. Usually ten names are required, though this was reduced to two in 2021 during the pandemic. These people have to be on the electoral register in the ward or division where you are going to stand. Nominees can be found through:
 - local friends, colleagues, and neighbours if you are standing where you live or a place where you know lots of people;
 - Green Party members and their contacts who live in the area you want to stand in;

- knocking on the doors of people on the electoral roll and explaining what you are asking for (people are often pleasantly pleased to have been asked).
- an evening in the local pub, your local sports club, parish council, church service, the school playground... in short, anyone who can vouch for your existence.
- **Supply a short bio and a photo for a candidate profile.** Candidate information will be needed to upload to the [Who Can I vote For](#) Website, your branch website, and may be asked for by local media outlets reporting on the elections. See our [guidelines for candidate photos](#).
- **During the election campaign, pressure groups and other organisations may ask local candidates to fill in questionnaires, or pledges, related to their objectives.** Filling these in is an excellent way of raising the Green Party profile and demonstrating commitment to important causes. Political parties are often judged in part on the proportion of their candidates who respond. You are likely to be sent these requests by your branch and given some guidance about relevant Green Party policy and/or suggestions of things to mention. Although hard to predict, previous election experience suggests that you may receive up to 10 such requests, each taking approximately 10 to 30 minutes to complete. Recent topics include [active travel](#), rights of [EU citizens](#), and [protecting nature](#). Please do ask for support if you are contacted directly by a campaign or need help completing requests!
- **Support neighbouring target campaigns.** While as a paper candidate you will not be campaigning, it is highly likely that we will be actively trying to win nearby. Offering to help other election teams is an enormous help, but also another way to find out whether you might want to stand in a future target campaign.
- **Attend the election count.** As well as finding out results and sharing the excitement, we can monitor samples from each ballot box to understand how different places vote, and observe the counting. For a very good recent example of why observing counts is important see the [2021 Banbury Ruscote result](#).
- **Complete some post-election paperwork.** This includes a form asking you to confirm your expenses, which in most cases will be minimal (e.g. shared costs of central county campaign support), but will need to be declared as such.

Will I get elected?

If there is a realistic chance of winning (e.g. based on previous performances or a clear local issue to campaign on), we are more likely to run an active campaign. Paper candidates can and do go on to campaign actively for a seat which they have a chance of winning, but winning your election as a paper candidate is very unlikely. But it is never 100% out of the question, and this should be kept in mind when [considering whether to stand](#).

Paper candidates are an important way that you can support the Green Party locally. This summary is to give you an idea about what activities might come up. Decide how much you are able and willing to do and discuss and agree this with your local branch.

More Information

- Oxfordshire Green Party, [‘Council Candidates’](#)
- New Forest Green Party, [‘Why be a green party ‘paper candidate’ at a local election?’](#)
- Electoral Commission [Guidance and Resources for Candidates](#)
- Local Government Association. [‘Be A Councillor’](#)
- [Elect Her](#): inclusive, non-partisan organisation providing support and training to women wanting to stand for political office.