

## **Part C – Guidance for Candidates**

### **Prospective Candidate**

1. To be eligible to stand as a prospective Candidate in the Election a person must:
  - a) be an Elector, as defined in the Act;
  - b) be proposed by an Elector and be seconded by another Elector (except an incumbent Conservator in accordance with Election Byelaw 8);
  - c) not be disqualified from being a trustee of a charity by the Charity Commission or from being a Conservator under the Act.
2. Information on these eligibility criteria will be provided within the Application Pack, together with the Conservator Code of Conduct.
3. Information on the Election will be disseminated after the Date of the Election has been determined, in accordance with section 14 of the Act and Election Byelaw 2. No later than 12 weeks before the Date of the Election, the Candidate Brief and Application Pack will be placed on the WPCC website. At any time thereafter until 14 days before the Date of the Election, an eligible Elector may submit and have validated a completed Application Pack. In accordance with Election Byelaw 8, however, if the Candidate wishes to have his/her Candidate Statement included in the Election Pack, the Application Pack must be submitted and validated not less than six weeks before the Date of the Election.
4. Prospective Candidates will have the opportunity to meet with the Returning Officer and Chief Executive of WPCC at two meetings convened between twelve and eight weeks before the Date of the Election. If a prospective Candidate is not able to attend either of these meetings, the Returning Officer and Chief Executive will meet with the prospective Candidate separately, if the candidate so wishes.
5. The Returning Officer will take steps to ensure that the information presented at both meetings is consistent and that notes of the meetings are taken.
6. It is important that prospective Candidates complete the Application Pack correctly. They should seek advice from the Returning Officer or his nominated Officer(s) if any issues are unclear. Prospective Candidates will be asked to supply full contact details including telephone numbers and email addresses with their application. These will be held confidential unless the prospective Candidate expressly states he/she wishes them to be made public.
7. Prospective Candidates will be required to sign a declaration that forms part of the Application Pack that states that:
  - they will not knowingly through their actions bring the reputation of WPCC into disrepute during the Election period;
  - any oral/written communication undertaken is to the best of their knowledge accurate;

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- confirms that they understand the consequences of harassment, making defamatory statements or other illegal activity and potential police involvement if such activity were to occur.
8. In accordance with Election Byelaw 8, nominations of Candidates wishing their biographical details to be included in the Candidate Statements must be made not less than six weeks before the Date of the Election. The process and dates described above will be set out in the Candidate Brief and Application Pack.

**Official Candidates**

9. Only when the Returning Officer has undertaken due diligence processes in conjunction with members of the Project Team, confirming a prospective Candidate's eligibility to stand and approved the Candidate Statement as acceptable, will a prospective Candidate be confirmed as an official Candidate.
10. The Returning Officer will advise Candidates if there are any discrepancies in their Candidate Statements that need to be amended. Candidates will be given a further 24 hours to clarify their position. If a Candidate cannot provide evidence required or amend his/her Candidate Statement, the Returning Officer's decision on their eligibility is final.
11. The names of all official Candidates will be published in a Media Release approved by the Returning Officer and placed on the WPCB website.

**Candidate Statement**

12. Each Candidate Statement will be put into a standard format by the Scrutineer. Each Candidate must confirm in writing to the Returning Officer or his nominated Officer that he/she approves the printed draft Candidate Statement in its final form. The date by which the draft Candidate Statement must be signed off by the Candidate will be provided by the Returning Officer. If a Candidate misses this deadline, then his/her Candidate Statement will not be included in the Election Pack.

**Spending and Donations**

13. There is no limit on the amount a Candidate is allowed to spend or receive in donations in respect of his/her Election campaign.
14. If duly elected, a Conservator who has received a financial contribution or donation from an individual or an organisation of any sort will need to consider if they have a conflict of interest either financially or one of loyalty which they should declare in his/her declaration of interest form and/or consider if they are conflicted if a matter appertaining to the donor is raised at a subsequent WPCB Board meeting in accordance with the Conservator Code of Conduct.

**Standing Jointly**

15. There is no prohibition on Candidates campaigning jointly or sharing a manifesto.

**Campaign Rules for Candidates**

16. You can start campaigning as an Election activist at any time and become a prospective Candidate when you have submitted your completed Application Pack. You are not an official Candidate until the Returning Officer has confirmed that you are eligible to stand. You do not have to wait until you have formally been declared as an official Candidate

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- by the Returning Officer to declare that you will run for Election, ask people to support you or publish campaign material.
17. You can use social media to help promote your campaign.
  18. You can help Electors with information about postal or online voting. Best practice guidance states that Candidates should never:
    - (i) touch a postal ballot paper;
    - (ii) observe Electors completing their postal votes;
    - (iii) handle or take any completed ballot paper or Election Pack from voters.
  19. You can engage with the public at public meetings, promoting your views and responding to questions from the audience providing you stay within the law.
  20. You must not knowingly make false statement(s) about the personal character of a Candidate in any literature that you or your campaigners prepare, publish or post electronically. This includes information on social media and public forums. In response to a complaint (or if a matter is brought to WPCCC's attention through another channel), if the Returning Officer believes any matter falls within the jurisdiction of the police, it will be referred accordingly.
  21. It is illegal under the Representation of People Act 1983 to pay someone to canvass on behalf of an official Candidate. Canvassing means trying to persuade an Elector to vote for or against a particular candidate or group of Candidates.
  22. Use of the WPCCC crest on any printed or electronic campaign material is prohibited. The crest is the sole property of the Conservators and was provided under a Letter of Patent issued in June 1965 by the College of Arms.
  23. You must abide by the Byelaws, including not posting or placing any Election material you have produced on the Commons. Pinning/nailing Election material to any tree or structure is expressly forbidden. You may with the express consent of the lessee, place Election material inside buildings on Wimbledon and Putney Commons.

**Maintaining the Integrity of the Election**

24. As a Candidate, you will be one of the key public faces of the Election, and your conduct will be scrutinised in detail by your opponents, the media and Electors. Electors should be able to trust that you will as a potential public servant comply with the law and maintain the integrity of the Election process. As part of the Candidate Brief and Application Pack, you will be required to sign a declaration that during the Election you will not bring the reputation of WPCCC into disrepute.
25. You must take adequate steps to ensure that your supporters fully understand the law and know what they need to do to ensure that Electors can participate freely in the Election.
26. The police can only investigate allegations of electoral fraud where there is evidence to show that an offence has taken place, so you should always be able to substantiate any claims or allegations when you refer them to the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer will determine whether to refer matters to the police and/or to inform the Charity Commission. You should also consider the impact on public trust and confidence of making false or unsubstantiated allegations about the conduct of other Candidates and campaigners.

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**Withdrawing from the Election**

27. A prospective Candidate can withdraw from the Election and have their name removed from the ballot paper and their Candidate Statement withdrawn up until the day they are confirmed as an official Candidate. They must put their decision to withdraw from the Election in writing to the Returning Officer and that decision should be witnessed in writing by an independent person, such as the Candidate's proposer or seconder.
28. The Returning Officer will consider how to manage a situation in which a Candidate withdraws.

**Death of a Candidate**

29. If a Candidate dies during the Election campaign, a critical issue for the Returning Officer is to receive formal notification at the earliest opportunity. If formal notification is received after the date at which he/she has been advised that he/she is an official Candidate, but before the date that the ballot papers and Candidate Statements have been produced, then the Returning Officer will be able to remove the Candidate's name from the list. The Returning Officer will decide whether it is appropriate to issue a Media Statement and formally advertise the death in local papers.
30. If an official Candidate dies after the ballot papers and the Candidate Statements have been produced, then it will be at the Returning Officer's discretion as to how to handle the matter.