

ELECTION ADDRESSES AND OTHER ELECTORAL MATERIAL

Any candidate in the proctorial or House of Laity elections is entitled to request the presiding officer to circulate an election address from that candidate by making it available to view on the online elections portal, posting it on the diocese's website and sending it by post to every elector in the diocese or area who has not provided an email address. An election address must be on no more than one sheet of A4 paper and may be printed on both sides. If it is in electronic form, it must be capable of being so printed in an easily legible form. It is for each candidate to decide whether to take advantage of this opportunity – it is optional. But whether or not candidates do so, there is nothing to stop them sending material direct to electors themselves.

Election Rules do not lay down any rules as to the content of election addresses. So, subject to the limitation on the size of an election address, the candidate is free to decide on its layout and content (including whether to include a photograph). A presiding officer does not have power to require changes to a candidate's election address unless, in exceptional circumstances, the presiding officer advises the candidate that the election address is defamatory or otherwise unlawful in some way.

If a candidate wishes to exercise the right to have an election address circulated by the presiding officer, the candidate must provide one copy of the address at his or her own expense. This can be delivered to the presiding officer by email, by post or in person. It must be received by the presiding officer by a date specified by him or her, no earlier than seven days after the closing date for nominations. The presiding officer is under no obligation to circulate election addresses received after the due date or not in the required form.

Election addresses will be made available on the online elections portal and on the diocesan website, so do bear that in mind when deciding on the format of the address. Candidates may wish to provide the election address in two forms: for example, one in colour for posting on the online elections portal and one in black and white, and therefore more suitable for high quality reproduction, for sending by post to electors who have not provided an email address.

Some candidates might not provide an election address, as they are entitled to do and the online elections portal and diocesan website will state prominently that "The election address of every candidate who has provided one is displayed here" and any booklet containing addresses to be posted will commence with a statement that "This booklet contains the election address of every candidate who has provided one".

The presiding officer is under a duty to supply free of charge a copy of the relevant register of electors (including, if an elector has provided an e-mail address, that address) to any duly nominated candidate who makes such a request. It must be supplied within seven days of the request being received.

The presiding officer is required to ensure that, between the issue of invitations to nominate and the end of the voting period, no literature (other than the election addresses) which, in the opinion of the presiding officer, is likely to prejudice the election, is circulated to electors by the presiding officer or by or under authority of the diocesan synod or any deanery synod, or are distributed at any synod meeting. The area dean, the lay chair, and the secretary of the deanery synod are under a similar duty to ensure that during the election period no literature is circulated or distributed at a synod meeting which, in the opinion of any of them, is likely to prejudice the election.

However, neither the presiding officer nor any other office holder or body in the diocese is responsible for supervising any material that candidates may themselves send to electors, or websites maintained by them or on their behalf.