

Parish Election Recharges Policy

September 2025

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Why do we recharge?

Elections can be called at any time, when parish councillors are no longer in office due to resignations, death, or disqualification. Every parish election incurs costs such as the hire of polling stations, staffing, the printing of ballot papers and postal votes, and postage. By-elections also incur these types of cost, and the number of parish by-elections is unpredictable. Scheduled parish elections are held every 4 years. All parish, town and city councils will have scheduled elections in May 2027.

The Returning Officer for North Yorkshire Council (NYC) is responsible for organising and delivering elections for all parishes within North Yorkshire. Section 36 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 allows the Returning Officer to recover from local Town & Parish Councils administration fees and costs incurred.

The recharges to parishes are on a cost recovery basis only, and no income will be generated by NYC as profit.

When will recharges apply?

Recharges will apply for all parish elections and by-elections, whether contested or uncontested.

The costs associated exclusively with a parish election and by-election will be recharged in full to the parish council.

Where combined with the election of North Yorkshire Council councillors, only the additional costs of holding the parish elections will be recharged (for example the core cost of polling stations and polling staff will not be recharged as that cost would be incurred for the North Yorkshire Council elections anyway, only the staffing 'uplift' fees for combined poll will be recharged (see [schedule 2](#)).

What is recharged?

Parishes election costs depend on many variables, such as:

- parish electorate;
- number of postal voters;
- geographical area affecting number of polling stations and staffing required; and
- whether poll cards are issued or not.

Costs incurred at an election relate to:

Cost Element	
Hire of venues	Polling & count
Delivery of equipment to venues	Polling booths and or other equipment, if required
Printing	Poll cards, postal votes, ballot papers, election notices
Postage	Poll cards and postal votes, general administration
Staffing (& mileage)	At the polling station, the opening of postal votes, the count of votes, and for general administration
Returning Officer Fee	

Poll card issue

The issue of poll cards is optional for the parish but is strongly recommended.

Upon receipt of the necessary requests for a parish by-election, NYC will calculate the cost of production and postage of poll cards and inform the parish in advance to allow a decision to be made by the parish on whether to issue them or not. Whilst not issuing poll cards can reduce the cost of a by-election, the Returning Officer recommends issuing poll cards for all contested elections to increase awareness and turnout for improved democracy. For scheduled elections, poll cards will be combined with the North Yorkshire Council elections on one card.

Combined Polls

A list of the cost elements for an election, and the basis on which they can be shared with a combined poll, are set out in [schedule 1](#).

Staff working at the election are paid using rates of pay agreed by NYC. A schedule of staffing fees is provided in [schedule 2](#). Note that the rates of pay are subject to annual uplift in line with the national election fees schedule.

The costs incurred also vary depending on the prices charged by Royal Mail and service providers for a particular election. The anticipated costs incurred for printing and postage (outwards) can be found in [schedule 3](#).

An indicative example of the costs involved in a parish election under different recharging schemes can be found in [schedule 4](#).

Uncontested Election Fees – from April 2026

When a casual vacancy occurs, a Notice of Vacancy is published by the parish or town clerk giving electors 14 working days notice to request in writing that the vacancy be filled by election. If 10 such requests are received by North Yorkshire Council's Proper Officer with the 14 working day period, an election to fill the vacancy must be held.

Usually when this happens, sufficient candidates come forward to stand at the election for it to be contested. Occasionally however, there are insufficient candidates for a contested poll and those validly nominated stand elected uncontested.

Where the poll is uncontested, North Yorkshire Council still incurs costs. To prepare for an election, Electoral Services need to engage with a print supplier to prepare the printed materials needed should the poll be contested. This incurs a cost. Officer time is also required to produce the legal notices for the poll and to run candidate nominations.

For this reason, it is proposed that where a parish by-election is uncontested, the printer's setup costs could be recharged (actual cost incurred) to the relevant parish council and for all scheduled parish elections, an administration fee for an uncontested election charged at the following rates:

Number of Vacancies	Electorate in affected electoral area	Fee
Less than or equal to 7	Less than or equal to 1,000	£50
Less than or equal to 7	More than 1,000	£75
8 or 9	All	£100
10 or more	All	£125

How much will be recharged?

As explained in the above section, costs vary greatly between parishes due to many variables.

Indicative calculations can be provided upon request for each parish (or ward of a parish if warded), though it must be noted that these are estimates only.

By way of example, parish by-elections can cost anywhere between £1,500 and £10,000 depending upon the size of the electorate and geographical area.

Currently parishes should expect to receive an invoice from NYC for the cost of a by-election within 2 months of the date of the poll. This allows the costs incurred from external organisations (polling station hire, print and postage) to be received, paid and reconciled by NYC before calculating the total cost of a parish by-election.

Paying the recharges

Parishes receive a precept via the Local Authority Council Tax to run the parish and this includes services such as allotments, lighting, cemeteries etc. Parishes need to factor the contingency cost of by-elections into their budget setting activity, and ensure they have sufficient funds to cover elections.

Invoices for by-election recharges must be paid in full, within 30 days.

Invoices issued by NYC can be paid by following the information provided on the back of the invoice, which explains how to pay the invoice by any of the following methods:

- via the council website using a debit or credit card
- by telephone – automated payment line
- by bank transfer
- at the bank
- by post (cheque)

If any parish is struggling to pay their election recharges, they should contact electoral services on the details below.

Schedule 1 - Cost Elements for a Parish Election

(Combination share)

The following table lists the cost elements of an election, and the basis on which they will be shared if combined with another poll on the same day:

Chargeable Service or Item	Cost recharged to parish at by-election	If combined with another poll (as will be the case for scheduled parish elections):
Hire of polling stations (varies by venue)	actual cost	no cost to parish council
Production of Poll cards (optional for the parish)	Refer to schedule 3	no cost to parish council (if able to issue combined poll cards)
Postage of Poll Cards (optional for the parish)	Refer to schedule 3	no cost to parish council (if able to issue combined poll cards)
Production of ballot papers (and other election stationery)	Refer to schedule 3	Actual cost of parish element
Production/print of postal votes	Refer to schedule 3	If not possible to combine - full cost recharged. If possible to combine, no cost to parish council
Outward postage of postal votes	Refer to schedule 3	If not possible to combine - full cost recharged. If possible to combine, no cost to parish council
Inward postage votes	In line with Royal Mail	If not possible to combine - full cost recharged. If possible to combine, no cost to parish council
Hire of count venue	Actual (varies per venue)	no cost to parish council
Staffing (polling staff & count staff etc)	Refer to schedule 2	Polling – only additional cost recharged to parish Count – 100% to parish for specific staff time counting parish ballot papers
Returning Officer Fees	Refer to schedule 2	Unable to share if combined
Mileage incurred by staff	45p per mile	no cost to parish council

Schedule 2 - Election staff rates of pay

North Yorkshire Council agreed schedule of fees (as at 2025/26)

Job / Role	Rate of Pay
Returning Officer	8p per elector, or £56 (whichever is the greater)
Presiding Officer	£278.80 / day
Uplift for combination poll	£55.76 / day
Poll Clerk	£201.60 / day
Uplift for combination poll	£40.32 / day
Polling Station Inspector (if required)	£303 / day
Attendance at training (if required)	£18.05 / hour
Coordinator Role: • Poll Card Checks / Issue • Postal Vote Issue / opening	£21.86 / hour – day £32.80 / hour – eve
Supervisor Role • Poll Card Checks / Issue • Postal Vote Issue / Opening	£18.05 / hour – day £27.07 / hour – eve
Assistant Role	£14.05 / hour – day
Postal Vote issue / opening	£21.08 / hour – eve
Senior Count Manager / Supervisor	£29.85 / hour – day £42.07 / hour – eve
Count Supervisor	£20.09 / hour – day £30.14 / hour - eve
Count Assistant	£14.05 / hour – day £21.08 / hour – eve
Clerical (supervisory level)	£15.50 / hour - day £23.25 / hour – eve
Clerical (admin level)	£14.04 / hour – day £21.08 / hour - eve
Staff mileage	45p / mile

Schedule 3 – External Print and Postage Costs

The following table details our contracted rates for the production, printing and postage for election material by NYCs specialist contracted provider:

Element	Cost
Job setup costs	Under £1k
Poll card printing	contracted rate
Poll card postage	£0.60 per poll card
Postal vote printing	contracted rate
Postal vote postage – outward	£1.25 per postal vote envelope
Postal vote postage – return	£1.67 per envelope (Royal Mail costs)
Ballot papers – ordinary	contracted rate
Ballot papers – tendered	contracted rate

Schedule 4 – Worked Example, Parish with electorate of 3,250, 1 polling station

Chargeable Service or Item	Cost recharged to parish at <u>by-election</u> (not combined)	Cost to parish at <u>scheduled election</u> (additional costs of parish election to be recharged)
Hire of polling stations (varies by venue)	£346.50	£0
Production of Poll cards	£431.14	£0
Production of Postal votes	£758.75	£758.75
Postage of Poll Cards (optional for the parish at by-elections)	£1,897.76	£0
Postage of Postal Votes (outward)	£833.25	£833.25
Production of ballot papers (and other election stationery)	£361.60	£361.60
Inward postage (postal votes)	£811.62	£811.62
Hire of count venue	Usually count at one of polling stations (no extra cost)	£0
Staffing (polling staff &, count staff etc)	£750	£236.40
Returning Officer Fees	£259.68	£259.68
TOTAL	£6,450.30	£3,261.30