**Absent Vote Signature Refresh FAQs**

Q. I have completed the form using blue ink – not black. Is this acceptable?

A. If the signature is not acceptable we will send another notice in the form of a reminder on about 16th February 2017. Sometimes the scanner will read the signature if a firm hand has been used. If you think you can go over the signature again using black ink please do so.

Q. I don't want a postal vote any more. What do I need to do?

A. Please tick the applicable box located underneath your name and address section of the notice and remember to sign the form or it will not be a valid request.

Q. My surname has changed since I completed the last postal vote application.

A. If the pre-printed name on the form is your current name, you have already notified us of your name change and, therefore, the electoral register holds the correct details. As long as we have received notification of your name change (if not please see the answer to the following question regarding a supporting letter) please sign the absent vote refresh form with your new signature.

Q. I am getting married/changing my name very soon (before reminders are issued). Which name should I put on the notice you have sent?

A. Do not complete the notice you have received. Instead, wait until you receive the reminder form (these are being sent on 16th February), by which time your name will have changed. You can then complete and sign the form with your new signature. Return the notice with a letter explaining that you have changed your name and sign it with both your old and new signatures. In addition, we will need a copy of your marriage certificate or other proof of your change of name, for example a copy of the Deed Poll. If your name has changed through marriage and you are due to go on honeymoon, please remember that we must receive the form, letter and proof by 2nd March 2017 or you will lose your absent vote and will have to re-apply for a new postal application.

Q. I am getting married/changing my name after the 16th February (the date when reminders are being sent). Please advise.

A. Please complete and sign the form with your current signature. When you eventually change your name, please send a letter explaining the change and sign it with both your previous and new signatures. We will then send you a new postal vote application form to complete with your new details.
In addition, we will need a copy of your marriage certificate or other proof of your change of name, for example a copy of the Deed Poll.

Q. I am unable to sign my name

A. Please refer to the section on the signature refresh form headed “information about this form”. Go down to the section called “What if I cannot sign the form”. If applicable, tick the box requesting a signature waiver and we will send a form for you or your helper to complete. If you have any further queries regarding this matter, telephone Electoral Services on 01263 516046. As long as the forms are received prior to 9th February you will not receive a reminder.

Q. My signature changes each time I sign it, so it may not match the signature you hold on your records and may differ to any signature I provide on a postal voting statement in respect of future elections.

A. If your signature changes considerably each time you sign, please contact the office on 01263 516046 for further advice. One of the main reasons for this exercise is to ensure that our absent voters’ signature records are as up to date and accurate as possible. Depending on the reason why your signature changes, we may be able to offer a waiver of signature.

Q. A form has been sent to someone who has passed away

A. We are very sorry for any distress that this may have caused. In order to remove a deceased person from our register we need to have received either a copy of the death certificate or formal notification from the registrars’ office (we receive weekly updates from registrars of deaths within North Norfolk). Unfortunately, notification of a death may not be received in time for us to be able to suppress a communication. We appreciate that this can be distressing for relatives. It would be very helpful if you could contact the office on 01263 516046 to ascertain whether we are aware of the death and, if not, how the matter can be addressed so as to avoid further upset.

Q. Is this a genuine request? I’m concerned that it may be a scam.

A. Please be assured that this request is genuine. By law, we have to undertake an exercise in January each year to obtain a new signature from absent voters where the signatures we hold are more than 5 years old. Signatures change for many reasons, including illness, frailty, marriage, divorce etc. In addition, some absent voters will have moved house and not told us. Therefore, this process helps us to ensure that our records are as up to date as possible and to delete any absent votes that are no longer required or valid.
Q. I have had an operation on my hand and cannot sign very well at the moment.

A. Don’t return the form you have just received. Instead, wait for the reminder which is being sent out on 9th February and hopefully you may have recovered sufficiently to sign. If that is not the case and you are still having difficulty using your hand, please sign the form as best you can so that we can retain your absent vote. Then, once your hand is fully recovered get in touch with us again and we will obtain another signature.

Q. I have moved out of the area but have received a notice for my old address.

A. Please state on the form you have received that you have moved out of the area and wish to be removed from our electoral register. We will need your signature to be able to comply with your request.

We cannot stop the reminder process, so if we do not hear from you by 9th February, a reminder will go out. If no response has been received by 2nd March, we will delete your absent vote, but you will remain on the electoral register until either you request us in writing to remove your details, or we receive notification from your new Council that you have moved to their area.