

Candidates and agents Briefing

Council elections in Scotland – 4 May 2017

Topics

- who's who
- key dates of the election timetable
- qualifications
- disqualifications
- nominations
- agents
- campaigning
- the poll
- postal votes
- the count
- candidate spending
- contacts
- questions

Who's who

- The **Returning Officer** is the person responsible for running the elections. The Returning Officer is **Lorraine McMillan**.
- The **Electoral Registration Officer** is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists. The Electoral Registration Officer is **Alasdair MacTaggart**.
- Contact details are provided later.

The Electoral Commission

Election timetable

Publication of notice of election National date as directed by the Convener of the Electoral Management Board	Monday 13 March 2017
Nominations commence	Tuesday 14 March 2017
Close of nominations / last time to withdraw	4pm – Wednesday 29 March 2017
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – Wednesday 29 March 2017
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	As soon as practicable after 4pm –Wednesday 29 March 2017

Election timetable (cont'd)

Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – Monday 17 April 2017
Deadline for new postal votes/changes to existing postal or proxy votes	5pm – Tuesday 18 April 2017
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – Tuesday 25 April 2017
Appointment of polling and counting agents	Wednesday 26 April 2017
Polling day	Thursday 4 May 2017 – 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply for new applications to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency or if unexpectedly called away because of employment or service	5pm – Thursday 4 May 2017

Election
timetable
(cont'd)

Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm – Thursday 4 May 2017
Alterations to electoral register to correct clerical error	9pm – Thursday 4 May 2017
Return of candidate spending return	+ 35 calendar days from declaration of result – Friday 9 June 2017

Other notable dates

- The Convener of the Electoral Management Board has made directions around some other key dates in the process:-
- Poll Card dispatch – handed over to Royal Mail on 14/15 March
- Postal pack dispatch (first issue) – handed over to Royal Mail on 13/14 April
- Postal pack dispatch (second issue) – handed over to Royal Mail on 25 April

Qualifications

- Candidates must satisfy criteria on day they are nominated and on polling day:
 - be at least 18 years of age
 - be a British, **qualifying** Commonwealth citizen, or national of an EU member state
- Also at least one of the following:
 - Registered local government elector for local authority area
 - Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the local authority area during the whole 12 months preceding nomination
 - Principal or only place of work (**including unpaid**) during last 12 months in local authority area
 - Lived in local authority area during the last 12 months.

The Electoral Commission

Disqualifications

- A person **cannot** be a candidate if they:
 - were a councillor prior to the 2007 council elections and received a **severance payment under the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004**
 - hold a **politically restricted post**
 - have had your **estate sequestrated** by a court in Scotland and have not been discharged, been adjudged bankrupt by a court elsewhere, or are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order under either the Bankruptcy (Scotland) Act 1985 or the Insolvency Act 1986

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Disqualifications (cont'd)

- A person **cannot** be a candidate if they:
 - have been **sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more** (inc. suspended sentence) without option of a fine, during the 5 years before polling day
 - are serving a disqualification due to being **found guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice** by an election court
 - have been disqualified by a decision of the **Accounts Commission or the Standards Commission**

Submitting nomination papers

- Nomination forms must be submitted by **all candidates** by 4pm – Wednesday 29 March 2017
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm – Wednesday 29 March 2017:
 - A certificate authorising the use of a party name/ registered description on the ballot paper
 - A written request to use one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper (optional)

Submitting nomination papers (cont'd)

- Take care when completing your nomination papers, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination
- Complete nomination papers early and contact us to arrange for us to provide an informal check
- **The nomination form must be delivered by hand** and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means

Nomination form

- Include the following:
- Your **full** name
- Optional: **Commonly used name.**
Complete this section if commonly known by a name other than full name and wish to use it instead.
- Can be commonly used forename, surname or both or even initials
- RO only reject if likely to mislead or confuse voters or is obscene/offensive.

Nomination form (cont'd)

- Home address
- Description field – 3 options:
 - leave blank
 - Independent
 - party candidates can use party name or registered description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the party's Nominating Officer

Nomination form (cont'd)

- Must also include:
 - which ward you are standing in
 - confirmation of qualification(s) that apply (at least 1, but complete all that apply)
 - candidate's declaration and signature
 - witness' name, address and signature

Certificate of authorisation

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person authorised to act on their behalf)
- The certificate may:
 - allow the use of the party name or a particular description
 - allow candidate to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission
- Must be submitted by 4pm – Wednesday 29 March 2017 – Can be posted but ORIGINAL DOCUMENT REQUIRED

Emblem request form

- **Party candidates** can ask for an emblem to be printed on the ballot paper
- Candidate must make request
- Emblem request form must be submitted by 4pm – Wednesday 29 March 2017 Can be posted but **ORIGINAL DOCUMENT REQUIRED**

Joint candidates

- Nominated by **more than one party**
- May use registered joint descriptions
 - must be supported by certificate of authorisation **from each party**
- May use one emblem of one of the parties **but there are no joint emblems**

Election agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of appointment must reach the Returning Officer by 4pm – Wednesday 29 March 2017. Form is included in candidate pack.
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.

Other agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
 - You must give notice in writing of any people appointed as **polling and counting agents** by Wednesday 26 April 2017.
 - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session. We will give at least 48 hours' notice.

Access to electoral register/absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on Monday 13 March 2017 if you, or others declared yourself a candidate; or
 - once you or others have declared yourself a candidate after 13 March or on date you submit your nomination papers, whichever is earliest
- Make **written** request to the ERO – forms are included in your candidate pack.

Access to
electoral
register /
absent voting
lists

- You can use your copy of the electoral register and absent voting lists for campaigning purposes.
- Only use data for this permitted purpose!

Registration

- As a candidate you are uniquely placed to encourage people to register to vote.
- You should encourage people to register as soon as possible.
- The deadline for applying for the election is Monday 17 April 2017.
- Individuals can apply to register online at **<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>**. It only takes a few minutes.

Registration (cont'd)

- When discussing registering to vote with individuals, you will need to make them aware that they will need to provide:
 - their National Insurance number
 - date of birth and address
- People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance number can still register, but they may need to provide further information. If so, they will be contacted by the ERO.

Absent voting

- If you are encouraging people who don't have a postal (or proxy) vote to apply for one, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one at the elections if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections.

Campaigning dos and don'ts

- **Do** use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites.
- **Do** comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners.
- **Do** make sure outdoor posters are removed no later than 2 weeks after the election.
- **Do not** produce material that looks like a poll card.
- **Do not** pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business).

Code of conduct for campaigners

- Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, but their activities should not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.
- Handling electoral registration and absent vote application forms:
 - Ensure forms fully conform to the requirements of electoral law
 - Include the ERO's address for the return of forms
 - Ensure unaltered applications are sent to ERO within **two working days**.
 - Make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote.
 - Do not encourage postal ballot pack redirection.
 - Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy.

Code of conduct for campaigners

- Postal ballot packs:
 - Never touch a postal ballot paper
 - Never observe electors completing their postal vote.
 - Never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot pack from voters
- Campaigning outside polling stations:
 - You are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including public spaces outside polling places.
 - Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.
 - **Polling place includes curtilage e.g. school includes school grounds**

Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Election Office open 6.00am to 10pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the elections
 - for queries relating to election finance issues, contact the Electoral Commission (*contact details shown later*)
- Voters in a queue at a polling station at 10pm can apply for a ballot paper
- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations within the council area or delivered to the elections office until 10pm
- A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in a postal vote can do so after 10pm.

Polling day
(cont'd)

- Polling places and stations
 - What is the difference?
- Polling scheme
- Who's who in the polling place
 - Senior Presiding Officer (PO No.1)/Presiding Officer/Polling Clerks
- Appointing polling agents

Polling agents

- Polling agents
 - In the polling station
 - Detecting personation
 - Close of poll
- Wearing of rosettes and badges
- Arrangements in Force at the Poll

Tellers

Do's and Don'ts

- Can ask voter's name and address
- Can only enter polling station to vote or to vote as proxy or as companion

Appearance

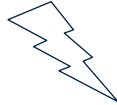



- Rosettes – Reasonable size – Name of candidate/description/logo acceptable
- Must **not** wear, carry or display any headwear, footwear or other apparel that carries any writing, picture or sign relating to any candidate or party other than a rosette

Guidance Para 1.19

How to mark the ballot paper at council elections

- Voters will rank candidates in their order of preference using numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc).
- Voters can rank as many or as few candidates as they wish.
- The same number cannot be used twice and there should not be a break in the sequence.

Ballot papers

BALLOTSHIRE COUNCIL: ANYTOWN & DISTRICT WARD		
Three of the candidates listed below will be elected. You can make as many or as few choices as you wish.		
Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Easter Road, Anytown Rowan Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent		<input type="checkbox"/>
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Elm Party		<input type="checkbox"/>

Postal vote processes

- Issue of postal votes
 - No entitlement to attend the issue
 - First issue 13/14 April
 - Second issue 25 April
- Opening of postal votes
 - Appointment of postal voting agents
 - Must be notified in advance **in writing**

Postal vote
processes
(cont'd)

What happens at a postal vote opening session?

- Checking of postal vote identifiers
 - Ballot papers handled **face down**
- Last opening to deal with postal ballots handed in at polling stations and the Royal Mail “sweep” will be in the Council HQ at the close of poll.

Counting of votes

- The count of ballots will be held in:
 - The Foundry, Main Street, Barrhead
- Ballot papers will be counted electronically
- Count centre will open to candidates agents etc from 9.00 am
- Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend.
 - limits to counting agents: Number to be confirmed

Allocation of seats

- The voting system used at council elections is the **Single Transferable Vote**
- Candidates who reach a minimum number of votes known as the quota will win a seat. The quota is calculated as follows:

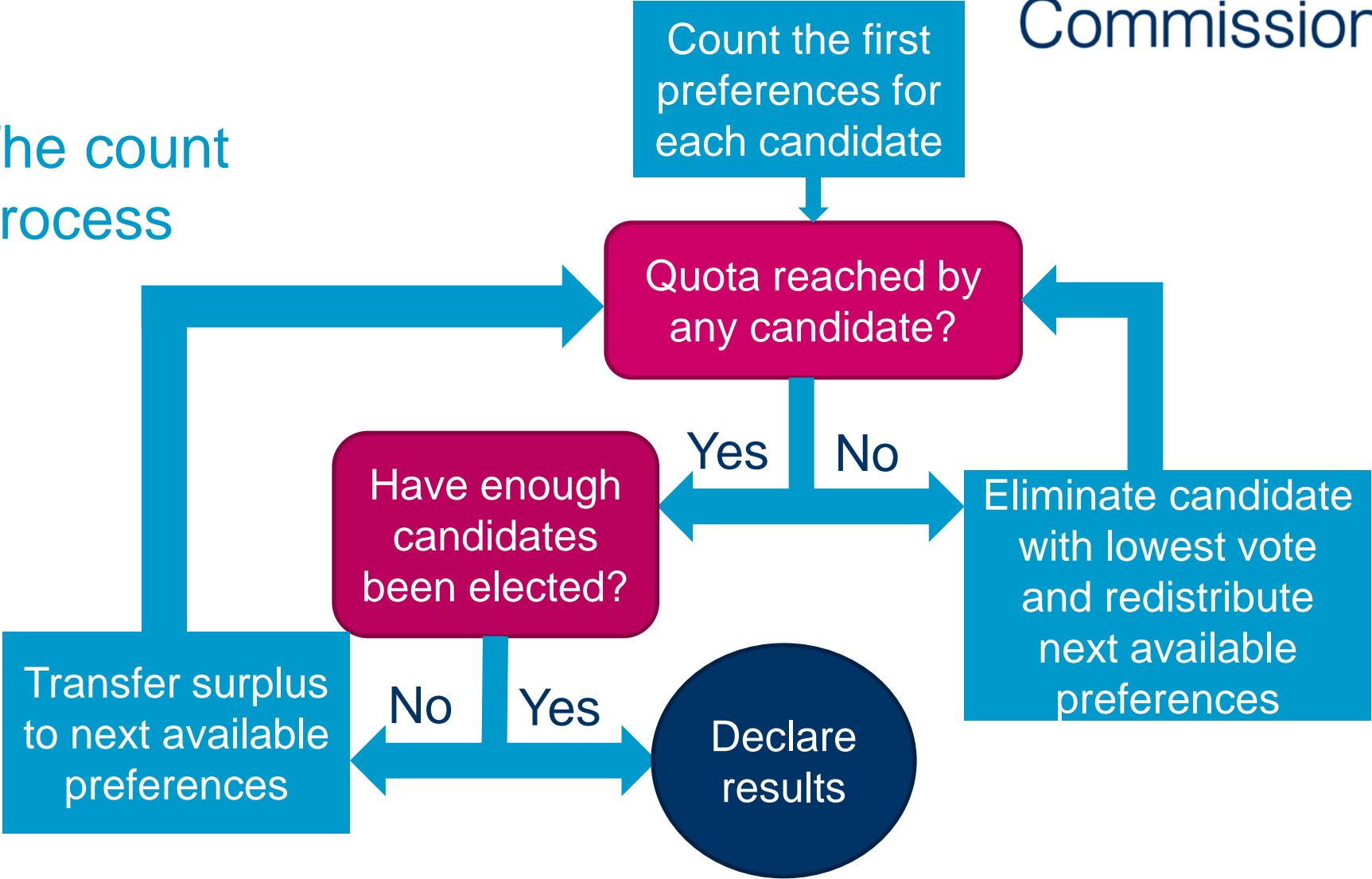
$$\left[\frac{\text{Total number of valid ballot papers}}{\text{Number of councillors to be elected} + 1} \right] + 1$$

Allocation of seats

- **Surpluses** of candidates who reach the quota are transferred to the voters' next choice. If there are still seats to fill after all the surpluses have been transferred, the candidate with the fewest votes will be **excluded** and their votes will be redistributed.
- The e-counting system will perform these calculations and produce a detailed report which will be shared with candidates and agents.

The Electoral Commission

The count process



Spending issues

Candidate spending

- Defined as certain expenditure ‘used for the purposes of the candidate’s election’ starting from the day after the date you officially become a candidate and ending on polling day, 4 May 2017.
- Responsibility of **election agent**
- Spending limits:
 - £740 + 6 pence per elector in ward on register in force on 22 March 2017
 - reduced for joint candidates
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

Campaign
spending
returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election (9 June 2017 if result declared on 5 May 2017).
- Returns made public by **Returning Officer**
- Failure to submit a spending return is a criminal offence enforceable by police
- No spending will be reimbursed

Contacts

Contacts

- Elections office – 0141 577 3033/3023
- E-mail:- electionoffice@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

- Electoral registration office – 0300 300 0150
- E-mail:- ero@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk

- Electoral Commission
 - Scotland Office - 0131 225 0200
 - E-mail:- infoscotland@electoralcommision.org.uk

Questions

Thank you

Please ensure you take a copy of your candidate pack with you