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Commission

Scottish Parliamentary Election 6th May, 2021 – Fife Arrangements

Candidates and Agents Briefing

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Topics

- Who's who
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- qualifications
- disqualifications
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Who's who

- The Constituency Returning Officer, Steve Grimmond, is responsible for the constituency election and managing polling stations in Fife.
- The Regional Returning Officer, Steve Grimmond, is responsible for the regional election and the allocation of regional seats.
- The Electoral Registration Officer, Morag Ferguson is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists in Fife.

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Who's who
(cont.).

- The Depute Returning Officers (DROs) In Fife for this election will be:-
 - Morag Ferguson and Mike Melville (overall management of election and counts)
 - Emma Whyte (postal votes)
 - Elections Lead Officer is Gillian Prestage

All contact details at end of presentation.

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Election Timetable

(a more detailed timetable with dates for issue of poll cards and postal vote packs is available as a handout.)

Publication of Notice of Election	Monday 15 March 2021
Nominations Commence	Tuesday 16 March 2021
Close of nominations and deadline for withdrawals of candidature	4pm – Wednesday 31 March 2021
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – Wednesday 31 March 2021
Publication of statement of persons nominated and notice of poll (if no objections)	5pm – Wednesday 31 March 2021
Deadline for new postal and postal proxy applications/changes to postal or proxy votes	5pm – Tuesday 6 April 2016
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – Monday 19 April 2016

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Election timetable (cont'd)

Deadline for cancelling existing postal or proxy votes	Tuesday 20 April 2021
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – Tuesday 27 April 2021
Appointment of counting and polling agents (not postal proxies or emergency proxies)	Wednesday 28 April 2021
Appointment of sub agents	Tuesday 4 May 2021
Polling day	6 May – 7am -10pm
Deadline to apply for an emergency proxy	5pm – 6 May 2021
Replacement for spoilt/lost postal votes ends	10pm – 6 May 2021
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm – 6 May 2021
Return of spending returns to the CRO by constituency candidates or RRO by individual regional candidates and declarations of personal expenses by party list candidates	+ 35 calendar days from result

Staying safe – Covid considerations

General public health principles that everyone should follow in all aspects of daily life, including participating in elections:

- Maintain physical distancing
- Clean hands regularly
- Avoid touching your face
- Wear a face covering where necessary
- No-one should attend any electoral events if they are unwell, symptomatic with COVID-19, a confirmed case or a confirmed contact of someone who is self-isolating

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Qualifications

- To qualify as a candidate you must (on the day you are nominated and on polling day):
 - be at least 18 years of age
 - be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a qualifying foreign national

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Disqualifications

- A person cannot be a candidate if, at the time of your nomination or your election:
 - you are a full-time member of the judiciary
 - you are a civil servant
 - you are a member of the armed forces
 - you are a member of the police force
 - you are a member of a legislature of any country or territory outside the Commonwealth (other than Ireland)
 - you hold an office that is mentioned in the Scottish Parliament (Disqualifications) Order 2020

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Disqualifications

- Also, you cannot be a candidate if:
 - your estate has been sequestrated by a court in Scotland and you have not been discharged; or you are currently subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order or debt relief restrictions order made by a court in England, Wales or Northern Ireland
 - you are currently serving a prison sentence of at least one year
 - you have been disqualified under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which relates to donations and other offences)

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- Dual candidacy**
- You can be a candidate for both a constituency and a region, but the constituency must be within the region
 - You must stand for the same party in both contests, or be an independent in both contests
 - You cannot stand in more than one constituency or in more than one region
 - If you are elected at the constituency election, your name will be disregarded at the allocation of regional seats

Nomination form (constituency)

If you wish to stand as a constituency candidate, your form must contain:

- your **full name**
- your **full home address**
- the name, address and signature of a **witness** to your nomination

You also have an option to include on the form:

- a **registered party name** (if authorised to use one)
- the description 'Independent' (or no description at all)
- any names you commonly use (and which you wish to appear on the ballot paper).

Nomination
form –
individual
regional
candidates

If you wish to stand as an individual regional candidate, your form must contain:

- your **full name** - you also have an option to include on the form any names you commonly use (and which you wish to appear on the ballot paper).
- your **full home address**
- the name, address and signature of a **witness** to your nomination

If you wish to use the description 'Independent', you must state this on the form.

Nomination form – party lists

Forms for a party's regional list must contain:

- The **full name of each candidate** on the list in the order they are to be elected, up to a maximum of 12 candidates (candidates also have an option to ask for a commonly used name to appear on the statement of persons and parties nominated)
- The **full home address** of each candidate
- The **name of the party** and, if desired, one of the party's registered descriptions.
- A **statement** declaring that it has been issued by the party's Nominating Officer (or someone authorised in writing to act on their behalf)

Completing nomination papers

- Take care when completing your nomination papers, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination.
- Complete nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check.
- Informal checks can be requested by email to Election.Enquiries@fife.gov.uk
- Appointments are available to lodge nomination papers

Consent to nomination

- All candidates, including those on a party list, must consent to their nomination.
- On the consent to nomination form candidates are asked to confirm that they are not disqualified from being a Member of the Scottish Parliament
- The form must also contain:
 - the candidate's name and address
 - the candidate's date of birth
 - the signature of a witness

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Descriptions you can use if you are standing for a political party

- You can use the party's name as registered with the Commission.
 - If authorised, the party name can be preceded by the word 'Scottish' if it is not already part of the name. If the party name begins with 'The', then 'Scottish' would be inserted after that word.
- To use a party's name you must have **a certificate of authorisation** signed by the party's Nominating Officer (or someone authorised to act on their behalf).

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Descriptions - regional party lists

- A party submitting a party list must use the party's name as the description to appear on the statement of persons and parties nominated and on the ballot paper.
- A party must submit, alongside the nomination form, a **certificate of authorisation** signed by the party's Nominating Officer (or someone authorised to act on their behalf) allowing them to use the party name.

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Descriptions – regional party lists

- The party name can be preceded by the word ‘Scottish’ if it is not already part of the name. If the party name begins with ‘The’, then ‘Scottish’ would be inserted after that word. For example:

Party name	The Purple Party
Party name preceded by ‘Scottish’	The Scottish Purple Party

- The party may choose to follow the party name with one of the descriptions the party has registered with the Commission. If so, the certificate of authorisation must also authorise the use of the description.

Nominations

- Nomination papers must be submitted to the Constituency Returning Officer by **4pm on 31 March to**
Election Office
Centre 1, Ground Floor
Bankhead Central
Bankhead Park
Glenrothes, KY7 6GH

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Submitting nomination papers (constituency)

- **Anyone** can deliver the nomination papers on behalf of a constituency candidate, but it should be someone you trust.
- The nomination form and the consent to nomination must be submitted by hand.
- Party candidates - the certificate of authorisation and emblem request form may be submitted by post, but may not be submitted by fax, email or other electronic means.

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Submitting nomination papers (regional contest)

- The **party list** nomination form may only be delivered, by hand, by the **Nominating Officer** (or someone authorised in writing by them). The **certificate** authorising the use of the party name must be submitted **at the same time**.
- **Anyone** can deliver the nomination papers on behalf of an **individual regional candidate**, but it should be someone you trust and they must deliver them by hand.

The deposit

- A candidate must deposit **£500** with the CRO so that their nomination is valid.
- Payment can be made using –
 - legal tender (cash) or
 - a UK banker's draft or
 - a debit or credit card or
 - an electronic funds transfer.
- If a candidate obtains more than 5% of the valid votes cast, the deposit will be returned.
- **Please avoid paying by cash if at all possible**

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)
- **A certificate of authorisation 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 to the CRO by **4pm on Wednesday 31 March 2021**

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Joint descriptions

- As a constituency candidate, you can stand for election for more than one party and use a joint description
- You will need a certificate of authorisation from the Nominating Officers for both parties and they can allow the use of a joint description consisting of the names of both parties.

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Emblem requests by party candidates

- If you are standing on behalf of a party, you can also request to have a party emblem appear on the ballot paper.
- Party lists can also request to have a party emblem appear on the ballot paper.
- The emblem must be registered by the party and published on the Electoral Commission's register of political parties.
- The request must be made in writing and must be received by the close of nominations – a form is included in the nomination pack.

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Election agent

- Responsible for the proper management of the campaign and in particular its financial management.
- All constituency candidates, individual regional candidates and party lists must have an election agent. Constituency candidates and individual regional candidates can act as their own agent if they wish.
- The appointment of the election agent must be declared to the Constituency Returning Officer before **4pm on Wednesday 31 March.**

Other Agents

- **Sub-agents**

The election agent may appoint sub-agents to act on their behalf in the constituency, as long as those parts do not overlap. The agent must give written notice to the **CRO/RRO by 4 May 2021**.

- **Polling and counting agents**

The CRO/RRO requires notice in writing of any people appointed as polling agents and any persons nominated to attend the counting of the votes **by 28 April 2021**.

- **Postal vote agents**

The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session. We will give 48 hours' notice of the sessions.

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Access to the electoral register / lists of absent voters

- Candidates (constituency and individual regional) – entitled to a copy of the full register and the lists of absent voters once you officially become a candidate:
 - Earliest, 27 working days before polling day
 - Once you or others have declared yourself a candidate after this date / date you submit your nominations paper
- the election agent for a party that has submitted a list is entitled to a copy of the full register and the lists of absent voters – not the candidates.

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Access to the
electoral
register /
lists of absent
voters

- Make written request to the ERO – forms are included in your nomination pack.
- **Only use data for permitted purposes!**
 - to complete the nomination form
 - to help you campaign
 - to check that donations/loans are permissible

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Registration

- Candidates 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 **19 April 2021**.
- Individuals can register online at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. It only takes a few minutes.

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Absent voting

- If 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 in time for the elections if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections.
- The deadlines for a new application for a
 - Postal Vote is **Tuesday 6 April**
 - Proxy Vote is Tuesday 27 April

Campaigning

- The Scottish Government's current stay at home guidelines do not support door to door campaigning or leafleting by individual political party activists.
- Campaigning at this point in time is therefore not considered essential or necessary activity. However, you can continue to send voters campaigning information remotely
- Any changes to this position are to be determined and communicated by the Scottish Government.
- You should continue to check the latest government guidelines on national and local restrictions, and be aware that different restrictions could apply to different parts of the electoral area

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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 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).

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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.
- Electoral registration and absent vote applications:
 - Ensure forms fully confirm 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.

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Postal votes

- First issue of postal packs – goes to Royal Mail on 14 April – delivered 15th/16th
- Postal vote opening sessions all at the Rothes Halls, Glenrothes – from 20 April
- Each candidate may appoint an agent to observe the opening of postal votes.

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Polling day

- Arrangements to ensure that polling stations are safe places to vote
 - lower number of electors per polling station
 - physical distancing / screens between staff and electors
 - provision of hand sanitiser on entry and exit
 - voters will be encouraged to bring their own pen or pencil for use in polling stations, but pencils will also be made available for anyone who needs one
- Significant number of changes to polling places in Fife (33 / 192)
- Voters should check their poll card before polling day, to see if their polling station has changed since previous elections.

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Counting of votes

- Over two days – Friday 7th / Saturday 8th
- Two venues
 - Rothesay House, Glenrothes (3 or 4 constituencies)
 - Michael Woods Sports & Leisure Centre, Glenrothes (1 or 2 constituencies)
- The allocation of regional seats will be held in Rothesay House, Glenrothes
- The number of agents will strictly controlled
- Enumerators will count facing candidates/ agents – one place to observe per enumerator

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Spending issues

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Election spending

- The time when spending and donation rules apply is called the 'regulated period'.
- The regulated period for the Scottish Parliamentary election is divided into
 - the '**long campaign**' (started 6 January and stops on the day you officially become a candidate) and
 - the '**short campaign**' (begins the day after you officially become a candidate and ends on polling day).
- Each period has its own spending limit.

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- Spending limits
- Details about the spending limits for candidates can be found in **Part 3 of the Commission's guidance for candidates and agents**
 - Further details about spending limits for parties can be found in the **Commission's guidance for political parties**
 - No spending will be reimbursed

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Integrity issues

Police single
point of contact
(SPOC)

Julie Seath

Fife Divisional Co-ordination Unit,

Police Scotland,

Fife 'P' Division,

Detroit Road,

Glenrothes,

Fife,

KY6 2RJ.

Email: julie.seath@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Tel: 01592 418588 (if no response, call 101)

Contacts

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Contacts

- Steve Grimmond, Returning Officer – Tel. 03451 555555 (Ext 444143) – email: steve.grimmond@fife.gov.uk
- Morag Ferguson, Depute Returning Officer – Tel. 03451 555555 (Ext 442180) – email: Morag.Ferguson@fife.gov.uk
- Mike Melville, Depute Returning Officer – Tel 03451 555555 (Ext 442240) – email: Mike.Melville@fife.gov.uk
- Gillian Prestage, Lead Officer/Elections Office Tel 01592-583111 email: Gillian.Prestage@fife.gov.uk
- Elections Office email Election.Enquiries@fife.gov.uk
- Electoral Registration Officer – Morag Ferguson
- Electoral Registration Office – Tel 03451 555511
- Postal Votes – Emma Whyte, Depute Returning Officer – Tel 01592-583115 email @Emma.Whyte@fife.gov.uk
- Fife Council Elections web page: www.fife.gov.uk/elections

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Contacts

- The Electoral Commission –
- Website www.electoralcommission.org.uk
- Address The Electoral Commission, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ
- Tel. 0333 103 1928
- Email: infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Standing for election
- Nomination forms
- The election process
- Campaigning
- Candidate spending
- Expenses forms
- Donations
- Permissibility checks on donors
- Hustings events

Contacts

- Registering to Vote –

Website: aboutmyvote.co.uk

Email: info@electoralcommission.org.uk

- Register to vote
- Reasons why you should register
- How do I vote
- Am I registered to vote in the UK
- Home movers
- Armed Forces
- Overseas electors
- Students

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Questions?

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Thank you