

The Electoral Commission

Scottish Parliamentary Election 6th May, 2021

Fife Arrangements

Candidates and Agents Briefing

1

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Topics

- Who's who
- election timetable
- public health principles in light of coronavirus
- the Electoral Register
- campaigning
- postal votes
- polling day
- counting of votes
- candidate spending
- integrity
- contacts

2

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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.

3

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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)
 - Emma Whyte (postal votes)
- Elections Lead Officer is Gillian Prestage

All contact details at end of presentation.

4

Election Timetable

Deadline for new postal and postal proxy applications/changes to postal or proxy votes	5pm – Tuesday 6 April 2021
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight – Monday 19 April 2021
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

5

Election Timetable (cont'd)

Polling day	6 May – 7am to 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 – 5 May 2021
Return of spending returns to the CRO by constituency candidates Return of spending returns to the RRO by individual regional candidates and declarations of personal expenses by party list candidates	+ 35 calendar days from result

6

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

7

Staying safe – Covid considerations

- 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

8

Electorate / Postal Votes (First Interim Election Notice of Alteration)

Contest	Electorate	Postal Votes
Cowdenbeath	55,681	11,327
Dunfermline	61,406	13,465
Kirkcaldy	60,398	13,047
Mid Fife & Glenrothes	54,022	11,056
North East Fife	57,254	12,651
Fife Total	288,761	61,546

9

Access to the electoral register / lists of absent voters

On written request.

- **Constituency and individual regional candidates** are entitled to a free copy of the full register and lists of absent voters
 - **Election agent** for the party list (not the candidates) is entitled to a copy of the full register and the lists of absent voters
- Make written request to the relevant ERO(s)

10

Access to the electoral register / lists of absent voters

- **Only use data for permitted purposes!**
 - to help you campaign
 - to check that donations/loans are permissible

11

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.

12

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

13

- Absent voting**
- Postal Vote deadline is **5 p.m. tonight** (Tuesday 6 April) Any elector registering after this date will not be able to apply for a postal vote for this election.
 - If you are encouraging people who don't have a proxy vote to apply for one, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections.
 - The deadline for a new application is Tuesday 27 April

14

- Campaigning**
- **CAMPAIGNING NOT ABLE TO START ON 5 APRIL AS HAD BEEN HOPED**
 - 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

15

- 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).

16

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 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.

17

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 (including maintaining social distancing)

18

Postal vote deliveries

Applications	Delivered to Royal Mail
Received by 26 th March	14th April
Processed by 9 th April	16th April
Processed after 9 th April	26th April

19

Postal vote openings

- Schedule of openings - all at 10:00 at **Roths Halls, Glenrothes**
- Every weekday from **Tuesday 20 April** (except Monday 26 April / Monday 3 May)
- Polling Day (also at 14:30 / 19:30 / 22:30)
- All constituencies opened each day except
 - Tuesday 20 (Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and N.E.F. only)
 - Wednesday 21 (Cowdenbeath, Dunfermline, and Mid Fife & Glenrothes only)

20

Postal vote
openings

- Two separate rooms (for opening and adjudication)
- Each candidate may appoint ONE agent to observe the opening of postal votes for all or individual sessions.
- Notice of appointments must be delivered before opening session is due to begin.
- Screens between agents and staff
- Observation points for each opener / adjudicator – agents can move between empty points

21

Polling day

- Arrangements in place to ensure that polling stations are safe places to vote
 - extra staff to assist manage flow of electors
 - one way flows (where possible) and floor markings to ensure physical distancing,
 - Requirement to wear face coverings
 - the provision of hand sanitiser on entry and exit
- Voters will be encouraged to bring own pen or pencil for use in polling stations
- Pencils / PPE will also be made available for electors

22

Polling day

- Significant number of changes to polling places in Fife due to need for social distancing / unavailability
- Encourage voters to check their poll card before polling day, to see if their polling station has changed since previous elections.
- Three further changes – replacement poll cards will be issued this week

23

Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Elections Office open 6.00am to 10.00pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10 pm can apply for a ballot paper
- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations within voting area or delivered to the elections office until 10pm.
- A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in postal vote can do so after 10pm.
- Candidate seals – only at close of poll

24

Counting of votes - Schedule

Counting will be over 2 days – Friday 7th and Saturday 8th

		Michael Woods Sports & Leisure Centre	Rothsay House
Friday	9 a.m.	North East Fife	Cowdenbeath
	10 a.m.		Kirkcaldy
Saturday	9 a.m.	Dunfermline	Mid Fife & Glenrothes

25

Counting of votes

- All counts, will start at 9 a.m. with exception of Kirkcaldy which will commence at 10 a.m. to stagger arrival of candidates/agents
- Both count centres will open to candidates and agents from 8.30 a.m. each day – Kirkcaldy candidates and agents are asked not to arrive before 9.30 am..
- The allocation of regional seats will be held in Michael Woods Sports & Leisure Centre, Glenrothes on Saturday 8th after receipt of final results

26

Counting of votes

- Adaptations to the verification and count in light of the public health situation.
- Access :
 - Constituencies – likely 5-7 (tbc)
 - Regional contest – very limited numbers –
 - Can appoint more counting agents but access to count room will be limited to specified number
 - Candidates / parties will be given passes – can pass between agents but no entry without a pass.

27

Counting of votes

- Enumerators will count facing candidates/agents – intend one place to observe per enumerator
- Protective screens will be between enumerators and candidates/agents
- Consideration being given to how to make adjudications accessible
- Limited access to declarations – considering need for livestream of declarations via Council website / YouTube

28

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Count Information

- Make sure appointments for counting agents are submitted to the **CRO by 28 April 2021**
- Information pack on count process and arrangements will be issued with count passes
- CRO/RRO briefing immediately prior to counts
- Candidate Liaison Officers

29

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Spending issues

30

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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 two periods: 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.

31

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Election spending

You must keep within the spending limit for each period and keep separate records of spending for each period.

All Fife constituencies are County constituencies

Long campaign:
County constituency = £21,500 + 6.3p per elector

Short campaign:
County constituency = £8,700 + 9p per elector

32

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Electorate for spending calculation

Constituency	Electorate
Cowdenbeath	55,262
Dunfermline	60,959
Kirkcaldy	60,043
Mid Fife & Glenrothes	53,666
North East Fife	56,692

Based on electorate at time of last date for publication of Notice of Election (update at 1 March 2021)

33

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Spending limits

Constituency	Long	Short
Cowdenbeath	24,981.51	13,673.58
Dunfermline	25,340.42	14,186.31
Kirkcaldy	25,282.71	14,103.87
Mid Fife & Glenrothes	24,880.96	13,529.94
North East Fife	25,071.60	13,802.28

Independent Candidate (Region)
The totals of the maximum limit for each campaign in each constituency in region

34

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Election spending

- **Constituency and Individual regional candidates** must keep within the spending limit for each period and keep separate records of spending for each period. You will also need to keep separate records of any personal expenses during the short campaign.
- **Party list candidates** cannot incur expenses on their own behalf, and spending incurred by the party counts towards party's regional spending limit – party list candidates can incur **personal expenses** that do not count towards the spending limit, but must be reported after the election.

35

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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

36

Spending returns – (Constituencies)

- **Election agents** must deliver a constituency candidate's spending return to the CRO **within 35 calendar days** of the declaration of result of the election
- **Election agents and candidates** must deliver declarations vouching for the candidate's election spending return to the CRO
- The election agent's declaration must be delivered at the same time as the return. Generally all candidates' declarations must be delivered **within 7 working days** of the election agent submitting the return.

37

Spending returns - (Regional contest)

- Individual regional candidates – their election agents must deliver a candidate's spending return to the RRO **within 35 calendar days** of the declaration of result of the election
- Regional party list candidates – each list candidate must deliver a declaration of their personal expenses to the RRO within 35 calendar days of the declaration of result of the election
- Election agents and candidates must deliver declarations vouching for the candidate's election spending return to the RRO
- The election agent's declaration must be delivered at the same time as the return. Generally all candidates' declarations must be delivered **within 7 working days** of the election agent submitting the return.

38

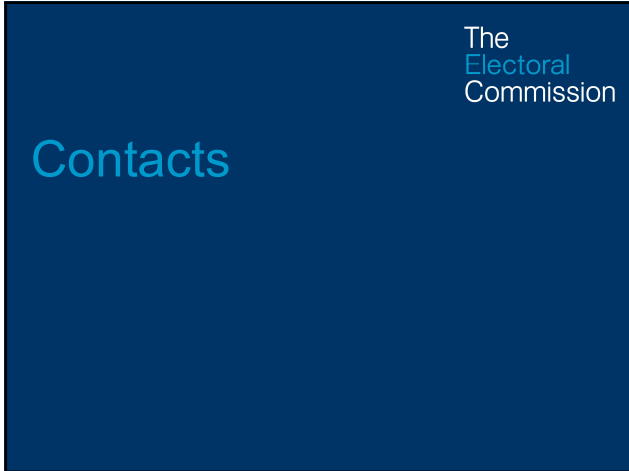
Integrity issues

39

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)

40



41



42



43



44