



The  
Electoral  
Commission

Briefing for candidates and agents  
Tuesday 8 March 6.30pm  
(via MS teams)

Local Government Elections

East Lothian Council

5 May 2022

## Topics

- Roles and responsibilities
- Election timetable
- Nominations
- Agents
- Registration/absent voting
- Polling day
- Voting/counting of votes
- Candidate spending
- Useful contacts

## Roles and responsibilities

- The **Returning Officer** is the person responsible for running the election. The Returning Officer is Monica Patterson and her Depute is Morag Ferguson
- The **Elections Office staff** – Hazel Boak, Alison Smith and May Turner
- The **Electoral Registration Officer** is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists. The Electoral Registration Office is part of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board, based in Edinburgh

*Contact details are provided later and also in the information pack*

Election  
 Timetable  
 (1 of 3)

Publication of notice of election	14 March
Receipt of nominations commences	15 March
Close of nominations/last time to withdraw	4pm – 30 March
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm – 30 March
Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations	After 4pm – 30 March
Poll Card issue	15 March
First issue of postal votes	Between 14/19 April
Deadline for registration applications	18 April (to be received by ERO)

## Election timetable (2 of 3)

Deadline for new postal vote applications and changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – 19 April (to be received by ERO)
Final issue of postal votes	26 April
Deadline for new proxy vote applications	5pm – 26 April (to be received by ERO)
Deadline for appointing polling and counting agents	27 April
<b>POLLING DAY</b>	5 May

## Election timetable (3 of 3)

<p>Deadline to apply for new applications to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency</p> <p>Alterations to register to correct clerical error</p> <p>Deadline for a replacement postal vote</p>	<p>5pm – polling day</p> <p>9pm – polling day</p> <p>10pm – polling day</p>
<p>E-Count          Meadowmill, Tranent, EH33 1LZ</p>	<p>6 May – 9am</p>
<p>Last Day for Receipt by the Returning Officer of Candidates' Spending Forms</p>	<p>10 June</p>

## Staying safe – Covid-19 considerations

Up to date public health advice will be followed for all aspects of the election including polling day and the count

No-one should attend any electoral events if they are unwell, symptomatic with Covid-19



The  
Electoral  
Commission

# Nominations



## Nominations

- **Qualifications**

- candidates must satisfy certain criteria on day they are nominated and on polling day  
*(set out on nomination form)*

- **Disqualifications**

- there are a number of circumstances that prevent a person from being a candidate  
*(detailed within nomination papers)*

- ***Important Note***

- *it is not a matter for the Returning Officer to determine your eligibility or not*
- *it is a criminal offence to make a false declaration within the nomination process*

## Submitting nomination papers

- Nomination forms must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm on 30 March
- Party candidates will also need to submit, by 4pm on that date and preferably as part of nomination submission:
  - A certificate authorising the use of a **party name/ registered description** on the ballot paper from the party's Nomination Officer
  - A written request to use one of the **party's emblems** on the ballot paper (optional)
- Make sure the nomination papers are filled in correctly, as mistakes may invalidate your nomination

## Submitting nomination papers

- Given the ongoing pandemic, the nomination papers should be submitted **initially by email** and a pre-check will be carried out by the Election Team
- Following this, and notification to you of any alterations that may be required, the nomination papers must then be **hand delivered** to the Election Office, Room 1.10, John Muir House, Haddington
- **Contact the Election Team to make an appointment.**

## Nomination form/packs

- Please pay close attention to all of the notes and guidance included within the pack
- Take your time to complete and check the Electoral Commission guidance in addition to the notes within the pack
- As mentioned earlier, it is **essential** to make an appointment with the Election Office to submit/hand deliver your nomination paper



The  
Electoral  
Commission

# Agents

- Election Agent**
- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly financial management and spending returns
  - Notification of appointment must reach the Returning Officer by **4pm – 30 March**
  - Form is included in nomination pack
  - You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed

## Other Agents

## Polling Agents, Counting Agents, Postal Vote Agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote opening, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
  - The RO requires notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by 27 April
  - The appointment of postal voting agents must be made in writing before the date of the opening session and appointed agent wishes to attend

***\* Earlier notification is always appreciated***

## Access to electoral register/absent vote lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate
- Make written request to the ERO – forms are included within your nomination pack – **please submit these to us when lodging your nomination papers and we will forward to the ERO**
- Only use data for permitted campaign purpose



## Campaigning

- Check the Electoral Commission's Code of Conduct for Campaigners – especially provisions relating to the handling of postal ballot packs
- Use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites
- Guidance regarding display and erection of posters – provided within nomination pack
- Do not produce material that looks like a poll card or ballot paper
- Do not pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business)

# Registration/ absent voting

## 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 these elections is 18 April (to be received by ERO)
- Individuals can apply to register online at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

## 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 these elections if they are (or will be) registered in time i.e. by 18 April (to be received by ERO)

## Postal voting (1 of 2)

- **Key dates** – mentioned earlier within timetable
- **Code of conduct** – Electoral Commission Guidance for Candidates & Agents applies
- **Personal Identifiers (PI's)** - for security reasons, absent voters are required to provide signature and date of birth on applications – these are also requested on voter's Postal Voting Statements
- **Handling Postal Vote Applications &/or Postal Ballot Packs** – applications should be returned to the Electoral Registration Office and completed postal ballot packs to the Elections Office as soon as possible to ensure adequate time for processing

## Postal voting (2 of 2)

- Postal vote opening
  - Will take place in Meadowmill Sports Centre, Tranent, EH33 1LZ from 29 April, daily on weekdays, commencing at 9am
  - The final session will be held following close of poll
- Candidates or their appointed agents can observe the opening of postal votes but should give prior notice in writing



The  
Electoral  
Commission

Polling day

## Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Arrangements in force at the poll – in Information Pack
- Elections Office operational throughout the day but Contact Centre will assist in dealing with/signposting calls
- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations until 10pm
- Close of Poll – Meadowmill Sports Centre, Tranent, EH33 1LZ (candidates and agents entitled to attend)
  - *Ballot Box reception*
  - *Final opening of Postal Votes*
  - *Pre-count verification*

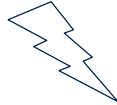





# Voting/ counting of votes

## Voting - Single Transferable Vote (STV)

- 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

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

## Allocation of seats

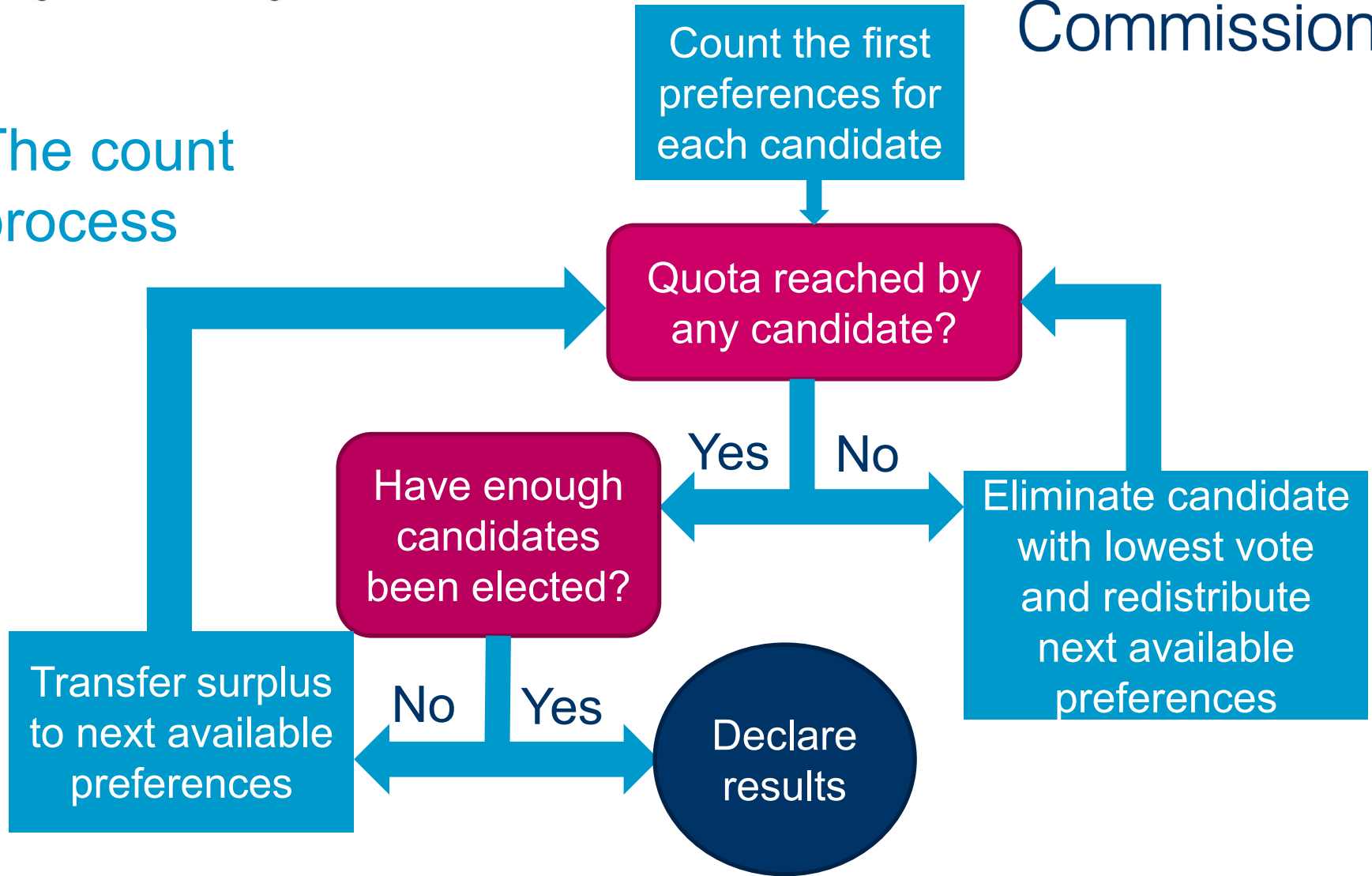
- Candidates who reach a minimum number of votes known as the quota will win a seat. The quota is calculated as follows:

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

## Allocation of seats

- **Surpluses** of candidates who reach the quota are transferred to the voter's next choice. If there are still seats to fill after all the surpluses have been transferred the candidate with the fewest number of 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 count process



- The Count**
- The Count will be on 6 May – commencing at 9am
  - The Count will be held within Meadowmill Sports Centre, Tranent, EH33 1LZ
  - Candidates, election agents and a limited number of counting agents may attend – also entitled to attend are registered observers, Electoral Commission staff and accredited media
  - The Returning Officer has some discretion about further attendees
  - The Returning Officer also may decide to restrict numbers depending on up to date public health advice

## The Count

- Ballot papers will be counted electronically
- Count Centre will be set up before polling day
- Count/Postal Vote Manager – Alan Cruickshank
- Count/Postal Vote Assistant Manager – Graeme Marsden





The  
Electoral  
Commission

# Spending

## Candidate spending

- Defined as certain expenditure ‘used for the purposes of the candidate’s election’ after the date they become a candidate
- Statutory responsibility of election agent
- Spending limits:
  - £806 + 7 pence per elector in ward on register in force on 23 March
  - reduced for joint candidates
  - Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

## Campaign spending returns

- Returns due 35 days after result of election
- Returns made public by the Returning Officer
- Failure to submit a campaign spending return is an offence
- Successful candidates who fail to submit returns may not sit or vote in the council



The  
Electoral  
Commission

# Contacts

## Useful Contacts

- **Elections Office**

- Hazel Boak 01620 820185
- Alison Smith 01620 820184
- May Turner 01620 820183
- Public Helpline 01875 824300
- E-mail [elections@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:elections@eastlothian.gov.uk)
- Website [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk)

- **Electoral Registration Office**

- Telephone 0131 344 2500
- E-mail [enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk)
- Website [www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk](http://www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk)

## Other Useful Contacts

- **Electoral Commission**
  - Telephone 0333 103 1928
  - E-mail [infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk)
  - Website [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)
  
- **Information Service**
  - Website [www.localcouncillor.scot](http://www.localcouncillor.scot)