

**NOTES FOR CANDIDATES AND AGENTS
SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY (CONSTITUENCY) ELECTION
7 MAY 2026**

Please note that on 17 March 2026 West Dunbartonshire Council will be introducing a new telephone system. During this period, the Election Office can be contacted on 07557 175 961. Full service on the Election Office number, (01389 737643), will resume on 18 March. The Election Office email address (elections@west-dunbarton.gov.uk) will be available at all times.

These notes are primarily designed to assist candidates and agents in dealing with the process of nomination and with the papers in the nomination pack.

1. Returning Officer (Constituency Only)

- 1.1 The (Constituency) Returning Officer for this election is Peter Hessett, Chief Executive of West Dunbartonshire Council. The Returning Officer is responsible for all aspects of the conduct of the election and the verification and counting of votes.
- 1.2 Alan Douglas, Depute Returning Officer, oversees the day-to-day co-ordination of the election. His contact details are - Telephone: 07810 310 052; Email: alan.douglas@west-dunbarton.gov.uk.

2. Electoral Registration Officer

- 2.1 The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is Russell Hewton, of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Valuation Joint Board. The ERO is responsible for voter registration, maintenance and security of the electoral register, applications to register to vote, applications for absent votes and maintenance of the absent voter lists.
- 2.2 The ERO office for East and West Dunbartonshire area is located at 235 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank, G81 4XJ. Telephone: 0141 952 1200. Email: <mailto:ero-wdc@dab-vjb.gov.uk>.
- 2.3 The ERO office for the Lomond North and Helensburgh area is located at Kilbrannan House, Bolgam Street Campbeltown PA28 6JY. Telephone: 01586 555300. Email: <mailto:ero-abc@dab-vjb.gov.uk>.

3. Election Office

- 3.1 The Election Office, which is located on the ground floor of the Municipal Buildings, College Street, Dumbarton, will be open for the issue and receipt of nomination papers between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on weekdays during the nomination period.
- 3.2 The election office can be contacted by telephone on 01389 737643 and by email at elections@west-dunbarton.gov.uk.

4. Notice of Election

4.1 In terms of the statutory timetable the Notice of Election may be published between Monday, 16th March and Wednesday, 24th March 2026. In accordance with the direction issued by the Electoral Management Board for Scotland, we will publish the Notices of Election for each of the Dumbarton and the Clydebank and Milngavie constituencies on Monday, 16th March 2026. These will be displayed in the Municipal Buildings and on the Council's website.

5. Qualification - the Candidate

5.1. A Candidate must be at least 18 years of age, be a British or Irish citizen or an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a qualifying foreign national. If you wish further information on qualifications for election, you should access the Electoral Commission's guidance, available at [Qualifications and disqualifications for standing for election | Electoral Commission](#), and you may wish to take independent legal advice.

6. Disqualifications

6.1 Apart from meeting the qualifications for standing for election, you must also not be disqualified from standing. Certain people are disqualified from being elected to the Scottish Parliament. You cannot be a candidate if at the time of your nomination or your election:

1. you are a full-time member of the judiciary
2. you are a civil servant
3. you are a member of the regular armed forces
4. you are a member of a police force
5. you are a member of a legislature of any country or territory outside the Commonwealth (other than Ireland)
6. you hold an office that is mentioned in the Scottish Parliament (Disqualification) Order 2020
7. your estate has been sequestrated by a court in Scotland and you have not been discharged: you are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order by a court in England and Wales; or you have been adjudged bankrupt by a court in Northern Ireland
8. you are currently serving a prison sentence of at least one year
9. you have been disqualified under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which relates to donations and other electoral offences)
10. You have been disqualified in terms of the requirements of the Scottish Election (Representation & Reform) Act 2025.

6.2 A person may also be disqualified from election if they have been convicted or reported guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court.

6.3 If you wish further information on disqualifications from election, you should access the Electoral Commission's guidance, available at [Qualifications and disqualifications for standing for election | Electoral Commission](#), and you may wish to take independent legal advice.

7. Completing the Nomination Form

- 7.1 Guidance on completing a constituency nomination form, including a short supporting video, is available on the Electoral Commission's website at [Nominations – Constituency candidates | Electoral Commission](#).

In addition, the following notes may be helpful in completing the nomination form:-

Insert the candidate's details:

- (i) surname
- (ii) other names in full (note – not necessarily as shown in the electoral register. Do not use initials or abbreviations.)
- (iii) commonly used surname (if any) – e.g. where a married woman commonly uses her maiden name
- (iv) commonly used forenames (if any) – e.g. where a candidate commonly uses an abbreviated form of a forename, or a middle name as a forename
(Note – where the candidate enters a surname and/or forename “commonly used”, these are the names that will appear on the ballot paper, instead of the full name.)
- (v) description (if any) – (see para. 5 below)
- (vi) home address in full. It is also helpful if you include your telephone number.
- (vii) signature of candidate
- (viii) enter 'date' of signature
- (ix) This signature must be witnessed. The witness must sign and must enter his/her name and address.
- (x) Finally, the witness should enter the date the signature is witnessed.

8. Description

- 8.1 No candidate may use a description which is likely to lead voters to associate the candidate with a registered political party unless the party is a qualifying party (i.e. registered with the Electoral Commission) and the description is authorised by a certificate from that party's nominating officer. A style of certificate is enclosed in the nomination pack. Candidates may use this form or one supplied by their party, so long as it contains the same information and is signed by or on behalf of the party's registered nominating officer. This certificate must be lodged with the Returning Officer **by 4p.m. on Wednesday 1 April 2026**.
- 8.2 Candidates who are standing for a registered political party and who have the appropriate authorisation, can use only one of the descriptions registered by that party with the Electoral Commission. A party name registered with the Commission, with 'Scottish' added at the beginning or after 'The', is permissible. Other variations are not permitted. Where a candidate is not standing on behalf of any party, he or she can only use the description "Independent" or leave the description blank.

8.3 Where a candidate is standing on behalf of two distinct registered parties - e.g. Labour and Co-operative Parties - he/she must obtain a certificate from the nominating officer of each of those parties authorising use of the combined description.

9. Deposit

9.1 The sum of £500 must be deposited with the Constituency Returning Officer not later than 4 p.m. on Wednesday 1 April 2026. This should be lodged either in cash, by banker's draft, or by debit/credit card.

10. Emblem

10.1 Candidates who are representing a registered political party may opt to use one of their approved party emblems on the ballot paper. This can only be used if the candidate has received the authorising certificate from the party's nominating officer as mentioned above. A request to use an emblem must be made in writing, **signed by the candidate himself/herself** and be lodged with the Returning Officer not later than **4p.m on Wednesday 1 April 2026**. A form is supplied in the nomination pack, but candidates may use their own form for the purpose. Candidates are asked to provide the appropriate 'emblem ID' as recorded on the Electoral Commission website and supply a copy of the emblem which they wish to be used on the ballot paper.

10.2 Emblems are reproduced in black and white.

10.3 Emblems are not available to Independent candidates, or candidates who have chosen not to enter any description on the ballot paper.

11. Election Agent

11.1 In terms of Article 32 of the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015, every candidate must appoint an election agent, who may be him/herself. The agent must be named by each candidate, and his/her name and address sent to the Constituency Returning Officer in writing, at the address for the delivery of nomination papers, not later than **4p.m. on Wednesday 1 April 2026**.

11.2 An agent must have an office to which all claims, notices, writs, summonses and documents may be sent and its address must be given. This applies equally where the candidate appoints him/herself as his/her own election agent.

11.3 If no agent is named within the required time, or if the agent appointed dies and a new appointment is not made on the day of the death or on the following day, or if the appointment of the agent is revoked without a new appointment being made, the candidate will be deemed to have appointed him/herself as agent.

- 11.4** A form on which intimation of the appointment of an election agent may be given is also enclosed. The election agent must consent in writing to his/her appointment and this should be done on the same form.
- 11.5** An election agent of a candidate for return as a constituency member may appoint to act in any part of the constituency one, but not more than one, deputy election agent known as a Sub-Agent. Forms for the appointment of sub-agents must be delivered to the Election Office by Tuesday 5th May 2026. A form is enclosed with the nomination pack.

12. Polling and Counting Agents

- 12.1** Application forms for polling and counting agents are included in the nomination pack for completion and return to the Election Office. While there is no restriction on the number of polling agents appointed, only one polling agent will be admitted to a polling station on behalf of any one candidate or the same registered party at any one time. Each constituency candidate will be allowed to nominate up to 14 counting agents per count to attend the count. All polling and counting agents must be advised of the requirement of secrecy and copies of the relevant extracts from the legislation will be issued with the passes.
- 12.2** The deadline for the appointment of polling and counting agents is **Wednesday, 28 April 2026**, but candidates are requested to submit their lists **earlier than this date if possible**. This will support us in preparing the necessary passes and lists. No applications will be accepted after Wednesday 28 April 2026. Passes are not issued individually to polling and counting agents but to the election agent or to a candidate acting as his/her own agent. For security reasons, agents will be requested to arrange to collect passes from the Election Office.

13. Delivery of Nomination and Associated Forms

- 13.1** The completed nomination form must be returned to the Election Office at the Municipal Buildings, College Street, Dumbarton, not later than **4p.m. on Wednesday 1 April 2026**. It is recommended that the forms be returned in advance of that date wherever possible.
- 13.2** The other related forms need not be returned at the same time as the nomination form, but must be returned not later than **4p.m. on Wednesday 1 April 2026**.
- 13.3** An appointment should be made for the lodging of the nomination form. Please contact the election office on 01389 737643 to make an appointment.
- 13.4** Making an appointment sufficiently in advance of 1 April 2026 will allow for an informal check of the nomination form to be carried out, which will highlight errors which may invalidate the nomination form, or which may give reason for a challenge following the election, and allow time for these to be remedied.

14. Forms of Withdrawal

- 14.1** Forms of withdrawal of candidature are included in this pack. If any candidate wishes to withdraw from the election, he/she must apply to the election office for a form of withdrawal. The closing date for withdrawals is not later than **4p.m. on Wednesday 1 April 2026**.

15. Candidate's Free Copy of Register/Absent Voters' Lists

- 15.1** Candidates are entitled to a free copy of the Register of Electors for the constituency in which they are nominated. The register is available on request from the ERO's office (see section 2). Form which can be used to request the free copy of the register and the absent voters' lists are included in the Nomination Pack. Data will be supplied in pdf format by email unless requested otherwise. The other options available are paper and data format by email. This form should be returned to the ERO's office as soon as possible after the Nomination is lodged. A member of the Election Team receiving the Nomination will, on request, transmit the form by scanned copy to the Electoral Registration Office as soon as the form is lodged.
- 15.2** The register you will receive incorporates all changes up until 23 March 2026 and is published on 1 April 2026. There is an interim update to the Register published on 10 April 2026. The final cut-off date for registration is 20 April 2026 and the final update will be issued by the Electoral Registration Officer after publication on 29 April 2026.

16. Absent Votes

- 16.1** Candidates and agents are referred to the code of conduct drawn up by the Electoral Commission to guide candidates, agents and canvassers in the correct handling of postal votes. This guidance can be accessed at [Code of Conduct for Campaigners at Scottish Parliament, Senedd Cymru, Scottish council and Welsh local elections | Electoral Commission](#).
- 16.2** It is essential that party workers take great care to ensure that their actions in dealing with postal votes do not, however inadvertently, raise concerns about their honesty and integrity – or that of their party or candidate. Candidates and election agents should ensure that they and their party workers observe the code of conduct referred to in paragraph 16.1 above at all times.

Postal/Proxy Voting

- 16.3** There are two kinds of absent votes. Postal votes are issued to the voter at his/her home or another address, and proxy votes which allow the voter to nominate another person to cast his or her vote on his/her behalf.
- 16.4** Proxy voters can vote in person or by post. Postal votes can be sent abroad, but the tight deadlines for their issue and return can make it difficult to ensure that the votes are returned in time for polling day. In these circumstances, a proxy vote might be more appropriate for the voter. The Electoral Registration Officer can advise voters on

the best means of casting their vote - voters can contact the relevant Electoral Registration Office using the contact details above.

Deadlines for applications

- 16.5** Applications for new postal votes and for cancellations of or alterations to postal or proxy votes must be lodged with the Electoral Registration Officer not later than **5 p.m. on Tuesday 21 April 2026.**
- 16.6** New applications for proxy votes must be received by the ERO by **5pm on Tuesday 28 April.**
- 16.7** After 5p.m. on Tuesday 28 April 2026, if, as the result of a medical emergency or because of work reasons, a voter learns that they cannot go to the polling station, or for equivalent reasons a voter's appointed proxy cannot go to the polling station, an emergency application to vote by proxy may be submitted. Such an application must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by **5.00pm on Thursday 7 May 2026.**
- 16.8** Application forms for postal and proxy votes can be obtained from the Electoral Registration Office using the contact details above, or can be downloaded from its website at www.saa.gov.uk/dab-vjb. In the case of proxy voting it is recommended that the advice of the Electoral Registration Office team be sought before making application.

Issue of Postal Voters' Ballot Papers

- 16.9** The postal ballot packs will be issued directly by the printer. It is anticipated that the first issue date will be Thursday 16 April 2026. Candidates and agents are not entitled to be present at the issue of postal votes. Lists of absent voters can be obtained from the Electoral Registration Officer, as mentioned in section 15.

Opening of Postal Voters' Ballot Papers

- 16.10** A copy of the postal vote opening timetable has been included with this pack. Candidates and agents are entitled to attend. It is intended to commence the openings on the morning of Monday 20th April 2026, then daily on weekdays (excluding Monday 4th May 2026) until polling day. Openings will be held in the Bridge Training Room, Council Offices, Church Street, Dumbarton. On polling day, opening will continue there throughout the day until 12.45 pm, when the team will relocate to the Count Centre at the Clydebank Leisure Centre, Queen's Quay, Clydebank for the final opening session which will begin at 8p.m.

17. Timetable of Main Dates and Count

- 17.1** The pack contains a list of main dates which apply at the elections.
- 17.2** The count for the Scottish Parliamentary Elections will be conducted manually and

will be held in the Clydebank Leisure Centre, Queens Quay, Clydebank, at 9 am on Friday 8th May 2026.

18. Election Expenses

- 18.1** The election agent of every candidate **must** deliver to the Election Office a return, accompanied by a declaration of election expenses, in a specified form, within **thirty-five** days after the day on which the result is declared. Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays are not excluded in reckoning time for this purpose. Assuming that the result is announced on Friday 8 May, the deadline for the submission of expenses will be **Friday 12 June**. Details of reporting requirements and timelines can be found on the Electoral Commission website at [After the election | Electoral Commission](#).
- 18.2** Forms for the return of expenses and relative declarations will be issued to agents and candidates acting as their own agents by the Returning Officer in due course.
- 18.3** There are two types of campaign expenses. The long campaign began on 7 January 2026 and ends on the day that you officially become a candidate. The short campaign starts when you officially become a candidate and ends on polling day. The earliest date on which you can officially become a candidate is 26 March 2026. Guidance on the application of candidate spending rules and when you will become a candidate can be found on the Electoral Commission website at [When do the candidate spending laws apply? | Electoral Commission](#).
- 18.4** The maximum level of permitted expenditure for the Dumbarton Constituency based on the electorate as at 2 March 2026 is as follows:-

Long Campaign Lump sum	No of Entries in the register (includes attainers)	Amount per entry in register	Total Additional amount	Total Expenses Limit
£21,500	55,816	6.3p	£ 3516.41	£25,016.41

Short Campaign Lump sum	No of Entries in the register (includes attainers)	Amount per entry in register	Total Additional amount	Total Expenses Limit
£8,700	55,816	9p	£5,023.44	£13,723.44

18.5 The maximum level of permitted expenditure for the Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency based on the electorate as at 1st March 2021 is as follows:-

Long Campaign Lump sum	No of Entries in the register (includes attainers)	Amount per entry in register	Total Additional amount	Total Expenses Limit
£21,500	54,062	4.2p	£ 2,270.60	£23770.60
Short Campaign Lump sum	No of Entries in the register (includes attainers)	Amount per entry in register	Total Additional amount	Total Expenses Limit
£8,700	54,062	6p	£3,243.72	£11,943.72

It must be stressed that these amounts are **maximum** amounts and that, in addition to verifying the relevant calculation given above (the accuracy of which is not guaranteed) candidates and their election agents must ascertain the amounts applicable to themselves by reference to the relevant legislation. Revised figures based on the final electorate as at 1 April 2026 will be circulated to all election agents/candidates in due course.

Please note that expenses are met by the candidate or party. The Returning Officer is not responsible for any payment towards these expenses.

19. Arrangements in Force at the Poll/Guidance on Election Posters

19.1 The Arrangements in Force at the Poll detail the procedures adopted by the Returning Officer for the conduct of voting. Candidates and agents are obliged to observe these procedures.

19.2 Attached to the Arrangements are the West Dunbartonshire Council's guidelines on the display of campaign posters and the use of car parks. These guidelines must be observed at all times.

19.3 As both constituencies cross into other local authority areas, a copy of the guidelines produced by the other relevant local authority are also provided with the nomination pack.

20. Meeting of Candidates and Agents

A virtual candidates and agents briefing session will be arranged to provide an opportunity for Constituency Returning Officer and the Election Team to share information and to answer questions you may have about arrangements for the election. All candidates and agents will be issued details of this session.

21. After the Close of Nominations

21.1 List of Candidates

At the close of nominations, the Returning Officer will prepare a list of candidates, which will be made available to the public at 5pm on 1 April 2026 providing no objections have been received. If objections are received then the list will be published no later than 4pm on 2 April 2026. The list will be posted in the Municipal Buildings, College Street, Dumbarton and placed on the Council's web page.

22. Election Office Contacts

22.1 If you require further information, contact the Election Office Staff on 01389 737643, who are co-ordinating nomination and other arrangements for the election.

22.2 The election office also has a dedicated email address as follows - elections@west-dunbarton.gov.uk.

Peter Hessett,
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Election Office,
Municipal Buildings,
College Street,,
Dumbarton, G82 1NH

16 March 2026