

Scottish Parliamentary Election Thursday 6 May 2021



Constituency

Notice to Candidates & Election Agents of Openings of Postal Ballot Boxes and Envelopes

I HEREBY GIVE YOU NOTICE

- (1) that, in terms of paragraph 16 of Schedule 4 to The Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015, I shall, in connection with the above Election, begin the opening of the Postal Ballot Boxes and the Envelopes contained therein in the Council Chambers, Midlothian Council, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith at **10.00am on 22 April 2021** and thereafter daily at the same time and place, (including, if necessary, Saturday 24 April, Sunday 25 April, Saturday 1 May and Sunday 2 May 2021) until and including **Thursday 6 May 2021**. For the avoidance of doubt, an opening will take place under the usual arrangements on Monday 3 May 2021 (*May Day Bank Holiday*).
- (2) On **Thursday 6 May 2021 (Polling Day)** I will commence a first opening of the Postal Ballot Boxes and the Envelopes contained therein at The Lasswade Centre, Eskdale Drive, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2LA at 10.00am and at 8.00pm commence a second opening. This second opening will proceed as and when necessary until all the postal ballot envelopes received timeously for the election have been processed.

Please note that if for any reason it is not practical to open the postal votes and process the postal voting statements therein at The Lasswade Centre (eg power failure) such openings will revert to the Council Chambers in Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith.

- (3) (a) that, in terms of paragraph 5 of Schedule 4 to The Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015, each Candidate or a person appointed by him/her to attend in his/her place and each Election Agent or a person appointed by the Candidate to attend in the Election Agent's place will be entitled to be present at the Opening of Postal Ballot Boxes and the Envelopes contained therein. I will also allow the Candidate or the Election Agent if he/she so wishes to appoint one agent in addition to the aforementioned.
- (b) that, notice in writing of the appointments (made in terms of paragraph 3(a) above) stating the name(s) and address(es) of the person(s) appointed shall be given by the Candidate or as appropriate the Election Agent to me. **This must be done before the time fixed for the relevant opening of the postal voters' ballot boxes.**

I shall/

I shall issue to every person attending the proceedings for the issue or receipt of postal ballot papers a copy of Article 31 of the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015 in regard to the requirement of secrecy.

NOTE – Where in Schedule 4 to The Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015 (relating to the receipt of postal ballot papers) any act or thing is required or authorised to be done in the presence of the candidates or their agents, the non-attendance of any such persons or person at the time and place appointed for the purpose shall not, if the act or thing is otherwise duly done, invalidate the act or thing done.

Accordingly in the absence of such persons the Opening of Postal Ballot Boxes and the Envelopes contained therein will proceed at the times stipulated.

In regards to the timings of the various adjudications for processing the incoming postal ballot papers and postal vote statements please refer to the 'Administrative Notes' contained in the Nomination Pack.

The Electoral Commission has developed a set of election objectives with the UK's governments, political parties and electoral administrators, to ensure the elections can be delivered safely and successfully. This has been done with the input of all political parties and governing bodies. The assessment of risk in relation to the coronavirus pandemic is an ongoing process and the position will be kept under review in accordance with the latest national and local guidance in relation to Covid-19 restrictions and public health guidance.

Should the Constituency Returning Officer (or a Depute) become concerned that an activity is not being carried out in a way compliant with public health, that activity will be suspended until the situation is resolved

Dr Grace Vickers
Constituency Returning Officer
15 March 2021