

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

THURSDAY 7 MAY 2026

Notes for the Guidance of Candidates in the Orkney Islands Constituency

These notes should be read in full before completing and submitting your
nomination papers.

Oliver D Reid
Constituency Returning Officer for the Orkney Islands Constituency

Election Office
Council Offices
School Place
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1NY

March 2026

NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

These notes are produced for the guidance and convenience of prospective candidates in the election of a Constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) for the Orkney Islands Constituency at the Scottish Parliamentary Election on Thursday 7 May 2026.

While every care has been taken in the preparation of these notes, they do not have any binding force and candidates are advised, where necessary, to consult the relevant statutory authorities. For the Register of Electors or qualifications for absent and proxy voting, information may be obtained from the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO).

The Constituency Returning Officer and their staff cannot give advice as to the conduct of the election campaign by candidates or agents, particularly in relation to the legality or otherwise of their actions.

Candidates should refer to the comprehensive guidance for candidates and agents which has been prepared by the Electoral Commission before submitting their nomination papers. A copy of this is available to download from the Electoral Commission's website.

This guidance note should be read in conjunction with the relevant legislation and supplements the Electoral Commission Guidance for Candidates and Agents which all Candidates and their Election Agents should read. The Commission's Guidance forms part of the Nomination Pack and is on the Commission's website at:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-scottish-parliament-elections>

Websites

Useful websites include:

The Electoral Commission www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Orkney Islands Council <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/your-council/elections/>

The Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) www.emb.scot

1. Organisation of Elections

The Constituency Returning Officer (CRO) is responsible for the conduct of the poll and the counting of votes afterwards. A team organises and administers the Election on behalf of the Returning Officer. The Constituency Returning Officer is Oliver David Reid.

Constituency Returning Officer	Oliver David Reid
Depute Constituency Returning Officers	Gareth Waterson & Gavin Mitchell
Election Manager	Fiona Ratter
Election Assistant	Audrey Waterson

2. General Enquiries

Day to day enquiries are dealt with through the:-

Election Office
Council Offices
School Place
Orkney
KW15 1NY
Telephone: 01856 886350

E mail address: electionoffice@orkney.gov.uk

If you are visiting the Election Office, please call at Customer Services, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.

3. Electoral registration enquiries

Enquiries relating to electoral registration and absent vote applications are dealt with by the Electoral Registration Office, 8 Broad Street, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NX, adjacent to the Cathedral.

Telephone Number: 01856 876222

E Mail address: ero@orkney.gov.uk

1	Your nomination: the essentials
a	<p>Your formal nomination papers must be accurate, because we use the information from these documents for the Ballot Paper. If you make a mistake, or if any information is wrong, your nomination may not be valid.</p> <p>Candidates and agents are strongly advised to make appointments to lodge nominations papers (although the rules do not require this).</p>
b	<p>Informal help</p> <p>You are responsible for making sure your information is correct on the nomination papers. We can help by checking it informally before you lodge your formal nomination.</p> <p>These informal checks help you take part in the electoral process by trying to spot errors.</p>

	<p>We will work through the papers with you when we check your papers informally. At the end of the informal check, if we find a problem, we will offer them back to you. Occasionally, nomination papers cannot be accepted and new or amended papers are required in order to meet statutory requirements. It is in your interest to make sure that you submit nomination papers in good time in case new or amended papers are required. If we do not find a problem, we will offer to accept them formally. You can then decide to formally deliver the nomination papers.</p> <p>The CRO and his staff also have the power to correct minor errors in a nomination paper, for example obvious errors of spelling in the details of a Candidate or registered party.</p> <p>To arrange an informal check, please contact the Election Office – the Returning Officer’s staff will check the details before formal submission of the completed nomination. It is strongly advised that this is not left until the deadline day!</p>
c	<p>Deadlines for the return of your nomination</p> <p>You can only deliver your completed nomination papers on working days between 10am and 1 pm and 2pm and 4pm from Tuesday 17 March 2026 to Wednesday 1 April 2026.</p> <p>You must keep to these dates. By law, the CRO cannot accept any papers received after the Closing Date (4pm on Wednesday 1 April 2026).</p> <p>Please make an appointment to deliver your papers. This will allow us to provide the best service possible.</p> <p>Contact electionoffice@orkney.gov.uk or Tel: 01856 886350 to arrange an appointment.</p> <p>Your papers must be delivered by hand to the Election Team at the Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY.</p>
d	<p>Delivering your Nomination Papers</p> <p>There are no restrictions on who may deliver your nomination papers. However, we recommend that you, your Election Agent or someone you trust does this, so you can be sure they are delivered to the CRO in time.</p>

e	<p>Nomination Pack</p> <p>You can find blank copies of all the papers you need in the Nomination Pack, on the Council website and on the Electoral Commission website at Completing your nomination papers Electoral Commission</p> <p>https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-scottish-parliament-elections</p> <p>We will provide paper copies of the forms if you need them.</p>
f	<p>Completing your Nomination Papers</p> <p>It is important that you pay particular attention to the rules for filling in nomination papers and related matters, found in Schedule 2 of the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015. If you have any questions, you can refer to the Electoral Commission Guidance: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-scottish-parliament-elections</p> <p>The Electoral Commission have also produced useful videos on how to complete your nomination papers:</p> <p>Nominations Constituency Candidates: https://youtu.be/_CDCsvU21XQ</p>
2	
Guidance for completing the forms	
a	<p>Guidance for completing The Nomination Paper</p> <p>The Candidate’s surname and all other names must be filled out in full. All Candidates must provide their home address in full.</p> <p>You can choose to have your commonly used forenames and a commonly used surname on the Ballot Paper and Statement of Persons Nominated, if these are different from your full name. We have the power to reject a commonly used name if it is obscene or offensive or if we consider that is likely to mislead or confuse electors.</p> <p>There is no need to add a title (e.g. Mr, Dr, Cllr, etc.). If you do add a title, it will not appear on either the Statement of Persons Nominated or the Ballot Paper.</p> <p>The Candidate may, if desired, use a description or may leave this line blank to indicate that they do not want to use a description. If a description is to be used, then it must either be “Independent” or the name of the Candidate’s registered Political Party.</p>

	<p>To stand on behalf of a registered political party, the party must be registered on the Electoral Commission’s register of political parties at http://search.electoralcommission.org.uk/ and be listed as allowed to field candidates in Scotland.</p> <p>The description and party name must exactly match that given on the Electoral Commission’s register of political parties.</p> <p>If you write the description in capital letters it will be shown in small letters on the Ballot Paper itself, unless it is in capital letters on the Electoral Commission’s register.</p> <p>The form must be signed and dated by the Candidate and witnessed. The Witness must sign and date the form and provide their full name and address.</p>
b	<p>Guidance for completing The Consent to Nomination Form</p> <p>As a Candidate, you must formally give your consent to being nominated.</p> <p>In signing this form the candidate also declares that they are not disqualified – please see following link - Qualifications and disqualifications for standing for election Electoral Commission from being an MSP.</p> <p>Again, you can find more guidance on the Electoral Commission website at https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-scottish-parliament-elections</p> <p>The form must be signed and dated by the Candidate and witnessed.</p>
c	<p>Guidance for completing the Certificate of Authorisation in the Nomination Pack and the Request for a Party Emblem</p> <p>Your party’s registered Nominating Officer may ask for one of the party’s registered descriptions and emblems to be printed on the Ballot Paper. If you want to use their description and emblem, you will need a Certificate of Authorisation from the Nominating Officer.</p> <p>The Certificate of Authorisation must be delivered as part of your nomination papers and by 4pm on Wednesday 1 April 2026.</p> <p>You should include the name of the registered party and the name or description you want to use and must:</p>

- be authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the registered Nominating Officer of the Party;
- be nominated by the Party’s Nominating Officer; and
- be accompanied by a valid consent to nomination for each Candidate.

A Candidate of a Political Party who is subject to a Certificate of Authorisation and who wishes to have a Party emblem printed on the Ballot Paper must also complete – Request for a Party Emblem



d Guidance for completing the Withdrawal of Nomination

If you decide to withdraw your nomination, you must deliver a Notice of Withdrawal to us before the Closing Date (4pm Wednesday 1 April 2026). It must be signed by both you and a witness.

3 Paying your Deposit

a You must pay a deposit of £500 to stand for election.

We must receive your deposit by the Closing Date (4pm Wednesday 1 April). If you use an electronic, or BACS payment, it is your responsibility to make sure that your deposit is actually in our bank account by the Closing Date.



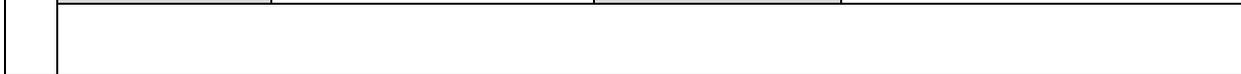
b How to pay your deposit

You can pay by legal tender (cash), banker’s cheque (where the drawer is a UK bank), credit or debit card, or an electronic or BACS payment. Certified cheques and banker’s cheques should be made payable to Orkney Islands Council.

Electronic or BACS Payments are **OUR PREFERENCE**

If you wish to pay your deposit by electronic, online or BACS payment please use these bank account details

Sort code	83-24-07		
Number	00233886	Bank name	Royal Bank of Scotland
A/C Name	Orkney Islands Council General Account	Branch address	1 Victoria Street, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1DP



	<p>Make sure your “payment reference” is clear and shows your name or party (maximum 18 characters). If your reference is not clear then the payment might not be accepted, which would cause problems with your nomination.</p> <p>Your deposit is only accepted when the money arrives in the Council’s bank account. It is not enough for you to show us a receipt. It is your responsibility to make sure that we have your deposit in our account by the Closing Date (4pm Wednesday 1 April 2026).</p> <p>We recommend you contact the Election Team by e-mail BEFORE making the payment to tell us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date money to arrive in the Council’s account; • Amount of money; • Payment Reference; • Name of Party /Candidate; and • Contact point in the party if there is a query. <p>If you do not tell us in advance, your payment may be difficult for us to trace, and this may cause a delay in processing your nomination.</p>
4	<p>Returning Your Deposit</p>
	<p>As long as you receive the necessary number of votes, we will return your deposit. The necessary number of votes is one-twentieth (5%) of the total number of votes polled by all the Candidates standing in the constituency.</p> <p>If you do not receive the necessary number of votes, your deposit will not be returned but will, instead, be paid to the Scottish Government.</p> <p>We will refund the money by the next working day after the day on which the result of the election is declared. So, if the result is declared on Friday 8 May, then the refund will be made on Monday 11 May.</p>
5	<p>People that you can appoint to help you in the election</p>
a	<p>An Election Agent</p> <p>If you choose to appoint an Election Agent, you must appoint your Election Agent by the Closing Date (4pm Wednesday 1 April 2026). You can be your own Election Agent, or it can be someone else.</p> <p>You should use the Notification of Election Agent form to give their name, address and office.</p>

	<p>If you do not tell us who you want your Election Agent to be, the law says we must assume that you are undertaking this role yourself and we will publish your name on our formal notice listing the Election Agents for the constituency.</p>
b	<p>Polling Agents</p> <p>You can appoint Polling Agents to visit polling stations on Polling Day. Their role is to help detect and prevent the offence of “personation” (where someone votes illegally by pretending to be another person).</p> <p>You must appoint any Polling Agents by informing us in writing by Wednesday 29 April 2026.</p> <p>Polling Agents must abide by the Requirement for Secrecy, which is in the Nomination Pack. This is a very serious matter, and breaches may be investigated by Police Scotland and could lead to fines or imprisonment.</p>
c	<p>Postal Vote Openings</p> <p>A list of postal vote openings sessions will be included in our letter following close of nominations.</p>
d	<p>Counting Agents</p> <p>You can appoint Counting Agents to attend the counting of the votes. Again, this must be done in writing and you need to use the form given in the letter following close of nominations. Their role is to make sure that the Count is being conducted properly, scrutinising the processes as the “eyes and ears” of the voter.</p> <p>Soon after the Closing Date (4pm Wednesday 1 April 2026), the Election Team will let you know how many Counting Agents you will be allowed to appoint.</p> <p>You must tell us the names and addresses of your Counting Agents in writing no later than 29 April 2026 using the document in the letter following close of nominations.</p>
6	Useful Information for your Campaign
	The Register of Electors and the Absent Voters List

	<p>Once your Nomination has been accepted as valid, you can request a free copy of the Register of Electors and the Absent Voters List from the Electoral Registration Office, 8 Broad Street, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NX.</p> <p>By law, you can only use the register and/or list for electoral purposes.</p> <p>To request the registers, fill in the form provided in the Nomination Pack – Request for Register of Electors and Absent Voters.</p>
7	<p>Conducting your campaign</p> <p>Conduct and Behaviour</p> <p>We cannot give you any legal or other advice about how you or your team conduct your election campaign or about how you behave during the campaign.</p> <p>We only run the election, we do not “police” or regulate it. If you have any specific concerns about the behaviour of any Candidates or how they are campaigning then you should contact either Police Scotland or the Electoral Commission, as appropriate.</p>
8	<p>Some general information about this election</p>
a	<p>The Election Timetable</p> <p>An election timetable showing all the important dates is provided in the Nomination Pack and is also on the Electoral Commission website.</p> <p>https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.electoralcommission.org.uk%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2025-10%2FElection%2520timetable%25207%2520May%25202026%2520-%2520SP.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK</p>
b	<p>The Constituency Returning Officer</p> <p>The Constituency Returning Officer (CRO) for the Orkney Islands Constituency is Oliver David Reid. He is also the Chief Executive of Orkney Islands Council, but that is separate from his role as CRO.</p> <p>The CRO is personally responsible for all aspects of administering the Election. For some day to day elements of this work the CRO has appointed Depute Returning Officers (DROs) to exercise some or all of his powers namely Gareth Waterson and Gavin Mitchell.</p>

c	<p>Postal Votes</p> <p>We will be issuing Postal Ballot Papers in batches with the first issue taking place around Monday 20 April 2026.</p> <p>Starting on 21 April there will be daily opening sessions for the Postal Vote packs that voters have completed and returned to us. At these openings we only validate the voter's identity. The Ballot Papers themselves are kept face down at these sessions - we do not count any Ballot Papers until 9 am on Friday 8 May 2026.</p> <p>We will issue a note of the Postal Vote opening sessions in our letter following close of nominations.</p>
d	<p>Counting of Votes</p> <p>We will provide more detailed information about the Count following the close of Nominations (4pm Wednesday 1 April 2026). This will include information about the Count Centre facilities and procedures.</p> <p>This year the Count for the Orkney Islands Constituency will be held at the Pickaquoy Centre in the Arena. The Counts will start at 9:00am on 8 May. There are a range of security measures in place for the transport of ballot boxes and the storage of papers and we can provide full details of these if that would be useful.</p> <p>The following people are entitled to attend the count:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constituency Returning Officer's staff; • Candidates and one other person chosen by each of them; • the Candidate's Election Agent; • appointed Counting Agents; • representatives of the Electoral Commission; and • any accredited Election Observers • media <p>We will provide security passes for each of these individuals. Ideally these passes can be collected in advance but they can also be issued at the reception on the morning of the Count. They will only be issued to those on the Count attendance list.</p> <p>There are usually representatives of the media in attendance, including TV, radio and newspaper journalists.</p>
e	<p>Registration, Postal or Proxy Voting Arrangements</p>
	<p>Arrangements for registration, postal or proxy voting are dealt with by the Electoral Registration Officer, (Electoral Registration Officer's office at 8 Broad Street,</p>

Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NX. Email: ero@orkney.gov.uk or telephone 01856 876222.

The Voter registration, Postal and Proxy vote application deadlines for the Scottish Parliament election are as follows:-

Applications to register to vote must be submitted to the Electoral Registration Officer by midnight on Monday 20 April 2026.

Postal or proxy voting timescales

- Any elector may apply for a postal or proxy vote at this election.
- Applications and amendments of existing postal and proxy votes must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by 5pm on Tuesday 21 April 2026
- Cancellations of postal votes must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by 5pm on Tuesday 21 April 2026
- Applications to cancel existing proxy arrangements must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by 5pm on Tuesday 28 April 2026.
- Applications to vote by proxy at this election must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by 5pm on Tuesday 28 April 2026.
- Applications to vote by emergency proxy at this election, where the emergency occurred after 5pm on Tuesday 28 April 2026 must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by 5pm on Thursday 7 May 2026.
- If you have any enquiries relating to registering to vote, postal or proxy voting arrangements, please contact the Electoral Registration Officer.