

Frequently Asked Questions

The Highland Council By-Elections – Thursday 12 August 2021 Ward 3 (Wick and East Caithness) and Ward 13 (Inverness West)

<p>Who can and cannot vote? You are entitled to vote as an elector at a local government election in the Ward if, on the date of the poll, you are a qualifying citizen (*) and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• registered in the register of local government electors for that Ward;• of voting age (that is, 16 years or over).• not subject to any legal incapacity to vote (age apart); <p>(*) British, Irish or qualifying Commonwealth citizens - EU citizens, other than the UK, Republic of Ireland, Malta and Cyprus - Qualifying foreign citizens</p> <p>If you are a convicted prisoner who is detained and serving a sentence of 12 months or less, you are entitled to vote by post or by proxy.</p> <p>You are not entitled to vote more than once in the same electoral area at any local government election.</p> <p>There are also special categories for armed forces voters, crown servants, people resident in the UK with no permanent address. Please contact the Electoral Registration Office for more information.</p>	<p>Electoral Registration Office: Freephone 0800 393783 Mail: ero@highland.gov.uk Web: www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/</p>
<p>How do I register to vote?</p> <p>You can apply to register to vote online. Please visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. The details you will have to provide are your name, address, national insurance number, nationality and date of birth.</p> <p>You only need to register once, unless you change your address, name or nationality. You are not registered until you receive confirmation from the electoral registration office about your application.</p> <p>For any support or advice please contact the Electoral Registration Office.</p>	 <p>www.gov.uk/register-to-vote</p> <p>Electoral Registration Office: Freephone 0800 393783 Mail: ero@highland.gov.uk Web: www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/</p>
<p>I have moved to a new house am I registered to vote?</p> <p>If you have recently moved home and live within the Highland Council area, you will need to register to vote at your new address.</p> <p>You can visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. Alternatively, you can request a paper application to be sent to you.</p> <p>For further information please contact the Electoral Registration Office.</p>	<p>Electoral Registration Office: Freephone 0800 393783 Mail: ero@highland.gov.uk Web: www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/</p>

How do I vote by post or appoint someone to vote for me (as a proxy)? You do not have to vote in person at the polling station. You can apply to vote by post by the means of a postal vote or you can appoint someone to vote on your behalf through a proxy vote.

Postal vote: any elector can apply, and you do not have to give a reason. You can apply to vote by post for an indefinite, definite period or a specific election. To apply you need to complete a paper form and send it to your Electoral Registration Office. If you are an existing Postal Voter and you wish the ballot paper to be sent to an address other than your home, you do have to give a reason for this.

Proxy vote: If you're unable to vote in person you can ask someone to vote on your behalf. Again, you can apply for an indefinite, definite period or a specific election. Everyone is entitled to vote by proxy at a particular election, but if you are applying for a definite or indefinite proxy vote, you will need to give a specific reason. You can only apply for a proxy vote under certain circumstances, including:

- being away on polling day
 - blindness or disability
- not being able to vote in person because of work
In some cases, you may need an attestation to support your application.

To apply you need to complete the relevant paper form and to send it to your Electoral Registration Office.

Postal proxy vote: those appointed as a proxy can choose to apply to vote by post.

What happens if I have missed the deadline for applying to vote by post or appoint a proxy? Do I qualify for an emergency proxy? In some circumstances, an emergency proxy may be granted if you find that you are unable to attend the polling station after 5pm on Wednesday 4 August 2021 because you

- Have a medical emergency; or
- Learn you cannot go to the polling station because of work reasons, or
- Are following Scottish Government advice or the advice of a registered medical practitioner in relation to coronavirus

To apply or for further information contact the Electoral Registration Office.

What happens if I lose or spoil my postal vote? If you have not received your postal vote or mislaid it please contact us, as a replacement can be issued from our Elections office until 5pm on polling day.

It can be posted to you, if there is time, or you can collect your replacement postal vote from a designated polling place. You will be able to fill out the new pack and return it at any of the polling places within the ward.

[Apply to vote by post](#) ▶

Postal votes for this election are being issued on Tuesday 3 August 2021

Our full list of application forms can be found in the link below

[View our full list of application forms](#)

Deadlines: Tuesday 27 July 2021 by 5pm for new postal vote applications and for changes to existing postal or proxy votes.

Wednesday 4 August 2021 by 5pm for new applications to vote by proxy (not postal proxy), except for medical emergencies.

Electoral Registration Office:

Tel 0800 393783

Mail: ero@highland.gov.uk

Web: www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/

Deadline:

Thursday 12 August by 5pm for emergency proxy applications.

Electoral Registration Office:

Freephone 0800 393783

Mail: ero@highland.gov.uk

Web: www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/

Deadline: Friday, 6 August, first date that electors can apply for replacements for lost postal votes

Thursday 12 August by 5pm, last time for re-issue of spoilt and lost postal votes.

Elections Helpline

01349 886657

<p>You must retain all papers that were accidentally spoilt and await instructions that will be issued by the Elections Team.</p>	<p>Mon - Fri (excl. Bank Holidays) between 8am and 5pm.</p>
<p>What happens if I haven't posted my postal vote back in time? When you receive your postal vote, please complete it as soon as you can. If you haven't got enough time to post it back by polling day (remember to allow at least 2 days for posting back via Royal Mail from within the UK) then you can hand your completed postal vote into any polling stations within in the ward.</p>	<p>Deadline: By 10pm Thursday 12 August 2021</p>
<p>How do I vote at my polling station? Is it safe? You can still vote in person at a polling place. Safety measures will be in place at the polling stations in accordance with Scottish Government guidelines to make sure that it is safe for you to vote.</p> <p>Polling places will be open from 7am to 10pm. If there's a queue, you'll still be able vote as long as you joined it before 10pm.</p> <p>You will notice several differences at polling stations when you go to vote to ensure the safety of all voters and election staff. These will include: The polling station will be cleaned before polling day, and touch points will be cleaned throughout the day. Support staff that are moving around in the polling station will be wearing face coverings. Polling staff issuing ballot papers will be behind a Perspex screen. All voters are must wear a face covering whilst inside the polling place. The polling station will be operating a one-way system where possible. You will be expected to follow signs, instructions and floor markings to ensure social distancing. Hand sanitisers will be available at entry and exit.</p> <p>Staff will not take your polling card from you - please take this home with you. You will be asked for your name and address by one of the polling station staff to establish that your name is on the Register and that you are eligible to vote, you will then be issued with one ballot. You will then be directed to a polling booth where you can vote in secret. You are welcome to take your own pens or pencils however clean pencils will be provided for every voter.</p> <p>We ask for your patience to assure your safety, election staff will be cleaning regularly, so you might need to wait for a booth and with social distancing a limit on how many people are allowed inside the polling place may apply.</p>	
<p>How do I find out where I go to vote? Every elector registered to vote is on the electoral register with a unique reference number. This is made up of letters identifying the ward and polling district and then a number which is the elector's entry on the Electoral Register. For example: I13A 123 Ann Other would be an elector in the 'A' polling district of Ward 13. Each elector's</p>	<p>Polling takes between 7am and 10pm on Thursday 12 August 2021.</p> <p>The list of polling places can be found here www.highland.gov.uk/elections.</p>

reference number is printed on poll cards and all election letters. The polling district in which you are registered determines the building where you should go and vote.

If you are unable to get to the polling station on polling day you can apply for a postal or proxy vote (absent vote). If you feel you are suffering from COVID related symptoms you should not attend the polling station. You can apply for an emergency proxy after 5pm on Wednesday 4 August if you are following Scottish Government advice or the advice of a registered medical practitioner in relation to Coronavirus. You can apply for an emergency proxy by contacting the Electoral Registration Office.

When will I have my Poll Card and what will it tell me? If you are eligible to vote in this election, you will receive a Poll Card. Poll Cards will also be sent to those who have already registered for a postal or proxy vote. The Poll Cards are scheduled to be posted out via Royal Mail on **Friday 9 July 2021**. If you have not received a Poll Card by **Friday 16 July 2021** and are not sure whether you are on the Register or where to go to vote, please contact the Electoral Registration Office. The Poll Card will give you the date of the election (Thursday 12 August 2021) and the hours during which you can vote in person at your polling station on the day (7.00am to 10.00pm). Please read the instructions on the Poll Card carefully. Your Poll Card will also give you your poll number. You do not need to take your Poll Card with you when you go to vote, and Do not worry if you lose your Poll Card you do not need it to vote.

Measures are in place to ensure that as far as possible voters can cast their vote without concern about their exposure to COVID-19 infection. We are applying the standard measures that voters will be used to in lots of other areas of life; e.g. social distancing, opportunities to sanitise hands, a one way flow through buildings, PPE where appropriate and face coverings. These provisions will be in place in polling places to support your safety.

However, if you are unable to vote on the day of poll at the polling station, you can apply to vote by either:

- By post
- By proxy which means you can choose for someone else to vote on your behalf.
- By emergency Proxy because you:
 - Have a medical emergency; or
 - Learn you cannot go to the polling station because of work reasons, or
 - Are following Scottish Government advice or the advice of a registered medical practitioner in relation to coronavirus

Elections Helpline

01349 886657

Mon - Fri (excl. Bank Holidays) between 8.00am and 5.00pm.

Forms and further information can be found at www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/ or by telephoning 0800 393783 or emailing ero@highland.gov.uk.

When will the polling station be open?

Voting hours at your polling station will be from 7am to 10pm.

The list of polling places can be found here www.highland.gov.uk/elections.

What help and support is there for voters with disabilities?

Polling station staff can help:

- If the voter is finding the building difficult to access
- If the voter is blind or partially sighted
- If the voter needs the assistance of the Presiding Officer to vote
- If the voter has a companion with them to help them vote

Physical Access: Some polling places may have temporary ramps. Any buildings that do not have wheelchair access will have arrangements whereby the elector can summon help from the polling station staff.

Large print: The ballot paper will be on display in a large print format.

Magnifying sheet: Each polling place has a magnifying sheet for any electors who find the size of the print difficult to read.

Plastic voting device: Polling places will have a plastic strip to fit over a ballot paper so that a blind or visually impaired voter can vote in secret. Staff will demonstrate how this voting aid works to any voter wishing to use the device.

Help from the Presiding Officer or a Companion:
If a voter cannot read the ballot paper, is blind or cannot vote unaided due to other physical incapacity, he/she can either ask for assistance in voting from the Presiding Officer or bring along a Companion. The Companion must be over 16 and be either a close relative or a qualified voter.

Polling station staff are there to help all electors to vote. Any elector who wishes for help or guidance from polling station staff or wishes to raise an issue should request to speak to the Presiding Officer who is in charge.



Who are the candidates?

A list of all persons nominated for election is now published on the council's web-site www.highland.gov.uk/elections.

The list of candidates can be found www.highland.gov.uk/elections.

How many ballot papers and how many votes will I have?

Voters will have one ballot paper. The local government elections are conducted under the Single Transferable Vote electoral system (STV) which means that electors can indicate as many or as few preferences as they wish using 1 for their first choice and so on by marking the ballot papers with the numbers i.e. 1,2,3,4,5 and 6.

FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party	<input type="checkbox" value="1"/>
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Elm Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party	<input type="checkbox" value="2"/>
MACKENZIE Robert William Sutherland 192 Blackhall Road, Anytown	<input type="checkbox" value="3"/>

What are the electoral areas?

The Electoral area for Ward 3 (Wick and East Caithness), comprising approximately of 10043 electors and Ward 13 (Inverness West) comprises of 8482 electors

How do I find out the results after the elections?
Counting of the votes will take place in the Inverness Leisure Centre starting at 10.00am on Friday 13 August 2021.

Once the results are announced they will be posted on the Council's website at www.highland.gov.uk/elections

The results can be found here www.highland.gov.uk/elections.

THE ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICE

Moray House, 16-18 Bank Street, Inverness, IV1 1QY.

Freephone 0800 393783

Mail: ero@highland.gov.uk

Web: www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/



THE ELECTION OFFICE

If you require further information please contact the Election Helpline on **01349 886657** or email the Council at election@highland.gov.uk

