



Scottish Parliamentary Election

Thursday 7 May 2026

Local Notes for the Guidance of Candidates/Agents Shetland Islands Constituency

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

Jan-Robert Riise

Constituency Returning Officer (CRO)

Shetland Islands Council

8 North Ness

LERWICK

Shetland

ZE1 0LZ

March 2026

NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

These notes are produced to give some guidance to prospective candidates at the election of the constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) for Shetland 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 material. If you need any information about the electoral register or qualifications for absent and proxy voting, you should refer to the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO).

The Constituency Returning Officer and his staff cannot give any advice as to the conduct of the election campaign by candidates or agents.

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. [Guidance for Candidates and Agents at Scottish Parliament elections | Electoral Commission](#)

Websites

Other useful websites include:

The Electoral Commission	www.electoralcommission.org.uk and www.aboutmyvote.co.uk
The Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB)	www.emb.scot
Shetland Islands Council	https://www.shetland.gov.uk/elections-voting
Electoral Registration Office / Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board	www.orkney-shetland-vjb.co.uk

If you have any questions about the election in general or the nomination process, please contact the Elections Office as follows:

Elections Office	01595 744066 returning.officer@shetland.gov.uk
Monday to Friday 10 am to 4pm	Shetland Islands Council 8 North Ness LERWICK Shetland ZE1 0LZ

The Constituency Returning Officer (CRO) is responsible for the conduct of the poll and the counting of votes afterwards. The Constituency Returning Officer is Jan-Robert Riise. A team led by the Depute Returning Officer (DRO) organises and administers the election on his behalf.

On a day-to-day basis the Election will be delivered by a team led by:

Anne Cogle
Depute Returning Officer
Shetland Islands Council
8 North Ness
LERWICK
Shetland
ZE1 0LZ

01595 744554

Anne.cogle@shetland.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 official notices and for the Ballot Paper. If you make a mistake, or if any information is wrong, your nomination may not be valid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An informal check of nomination papers is available prior to formal submission. This can be done electronically. You should scan and email your papers to anne.cogle@shetland.gov.uk as an electronic alternative to face to face checks. Alternatively we are happy to talk through the papers face to face. • Candidates and agents are advised to make an appointment to lodge nominations papers (although the rules do not require this). • While nomination papers must be submitted in person, other papers can be submitted by hand or by post but not by electronic means. Refer to the Electoral Commission guidance for additional detail. <p>Post Nomination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With respect to any request to inspect the nomination papers an appointment system will be used. Nomination papers will not be made available for inspection by electronic means. Should inspection be required it will be undertaken under appropriate conditions at the office of the Constituency Returning Officer. • Confirmation of a valid nomination will be issued by email.
b	<p>Informal help</p> <p>You are responsible for making sure the information is correct on the nomination papers. We can help by checking it informally, either electronically or face to face, before you formally submit your nomination. These informal checks help you spot any errors early.</p> <p>At the end of the informal check, if we find a problem, we will offer them back to you with comments. 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 if the informal check has been carried out in person.</p> <p>The CRO and his staff have the power to correct <i>minor</i> errors in a nomination paper, for example obvious errors of spelling in the details of a candidate name or registered party.</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 4pm from Tuesday 17 March 2026 to Wednesday 1 April 2026.</p> <p>You must keep to these dates/times. 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 returning.officer@shetland.gov.uk to arrange an appointment.</p> <p>Your papers must be delivered by hand to SIC Headquarters, 8 North Ness, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0LX.</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 and they have authority to answer questions or correct errors on your behalf.</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 at www.shetland.gov.uk/elections-voting/scottish-parliament-elections-7-may-2026 and on the Electoral Commission website. We will provide paper copies of the forms if you need them printed out.</p>
f	<p>Completing your Nomination Papers</p> <p>It is important that you pay close 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 or you can ask the Election Team for advice.</p>

2	Guidance for completing the forms
a	<p>You should consult the Electoral Commission Guidance and the relevant legislation. Guidance for Candidates and Agents at Scottish Parliament elections Electoral Commission</p> <p>The Electoral Commission also has a video to accompany their guidance Completing your nomination papers Guidance for Scottish Parliament constituency candidates - YouTube</p> <p>These links are also available on the SIC Elections webpage. Scottish Parliamentary Elections - 7 May 2026 – Shetland Islands Council</p>
b	<p>Guidance for completing the Withdrawal of Nomination</p> <p>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.</p>
3	Paying your Deposit
a	<p>You must pay a deposit of £500 to stand for election.</p> <p>We must get your deposit by the Closing Date (4pm Wednesday 1 April 2026). If you use an electronic, online or BACS payment, it is your responsibility to make sure that your deposit is actually in our bank account by the Closing Date.</p>
b	<p>How to pay your deposit</p> <p>You can pay by legal tender (cash), banker's cheque (where the drawer is a UK bank), credit or debit card, or an electronic transfer of funds. Certified cheques and banker's cheques should be made payable to The Returning Officer for the Shetland Islands Constituency.</p> <p>Electronic, Online or BACS Payments OUR PREFERENCE</p> <p>If you wish to pay your deposit by electronic, online or BACS payment please note the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online via the Council's website https://www.shetland.gov.uk/pay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Choose: Council/All Items/Legal Fees/Legal Fees/Candidate Election Fee Deposit ○ Please quote reference GRB23154230 <surname of candidate> • Electronic Bank Transfer:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bank of Scotland ○ Sort Code – 80-08-82 ○ Account Name – Shetland Islands Council ○ Account No. – 00729160 ○ Please quote reference GRB23154230 <surname of candidate> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Debit or credit card – Tel: 01595 693535 option 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please quote reference GRB 2315 4230 <surname of candidate> <p>Make sure your “payment reference” is clear and shows name of candidate or party. If your reference is not clear then the payment might not be accepted, or your payment may be difficult for us to trace and this may cause a delay in processing 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>
4	Returning Your Deposit
	<p>As long as you get 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 get the necessary number of votes, your deposit will not be returned but will, instead, be paid to the Scottish Government.</p> <p>We will make arrangements to refund deposits 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 payment will be arranged on Monday 11 May. In the Nomination Pack there is a form that tells us the details of the account you want the deposit to be paid into if we are able to refund it.</p>
5	Your Election Expenses
	<p>A table showing the basis for the calculation of election expenses in relation to the short and long campaigns are shown in the Nomination Pack. Please note that the electorate figure used to calculate the figures is based on the Register as at 1 March 2026 – the final updated figure will be providing to Election Agents following the closing date.</p> <p>Queries about election expenditure are best directed to the Electoral Commission as they monitor and regulate this area. Our role is to collect the records from you after the election and make them available for inspection.</p>

6	People that you can appoint to help you in the election
a	<p>An Election Agent</p> <p>If you choose to do so, you must appoint an 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 doing this job yourself and we will publish your name on our formal notice listing the Election Agents for the constituency.</p> <p>Your Election Agent may appoint Sub-Agents to act on their behalf in any part of the constituency in which you are standing, as long as those parts do not overlap. The Election Agent can determine the parts into which they wish to sub-divide 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. Forms for this will be provided to your Election Agent after the close of nominations.</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 Agents</p> <p>You can appoint Postal Vote Agents to attend the opening of the Postal Votes. Forms for this will be provided to your Election Agent after the close of nominations.</p> <p>The number of agents who may be appointed will be confirmed in a formal notice about the opening of Postal Votes.</p>

	<p>Agents at Postal Vote openings 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>
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. Forms for this will be provided to your Election Agent after the 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. We may need to reduce the number of Agents if the venue cannot safely hold that many people.</p> <p>In this election we expect that you will be allowed to appoint at least 4 Counting Agents. All candidates have the same allocation of Counting Agents.</p> <p>You must tell us the names and addresses of your Counting Agents in writing no later than 29 April 2026. Forms for this will be provided to your Election Agent after the close of nominations.</p> <p>Counting 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>
7	Useful Information for your Campaign
a	<p>The Register of Electors and the Absent Voters List</p> <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.</p> <p>By law, you can only use the register and/or list for electoral purposes.</p> <p>To request the register/list fill in the forms provided in the Nomination Pack. We will confirm that you are a valid Candidate and then send it to the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO).</p>
b	<p>List of Polling Places</p> <p>There is a list of all the Polling Places in the Constituency in the Nominations Pack.</p>

8	Conducting your campaign
a	<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>
b	<p>Posters and Signage</p> <p>The placing of posters is authorised by the Shetland Islands Council Roads Service. A copy of the Policy is included in the Nomination Pack.</p>
9	Some general information about this election
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. http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/scottish-parliamentary-elections</p>
b	<p>The Constituency Returning Officer</p> <p>The Constituency Returning Officer (CRO) for the Shetland Islands Constituency is Jan-Robert Riise. He is also the Executive Manager – Governance and Law/Monitoring Officer for the 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 day to day elements of this work the CRO has appointed Anne Cogle, Team Leader – Administration, as the Depute Returning Officer (DRO) to exercise some or all of his powers.</p>
c	<p>Postal Votes</p> <p>The first issue of Postal Vote packs will be delivered to voters around 15 April 2026.</p> <p>After the close of nominations we will provide information to Election Agents about the time and date of 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 verify or count any Postal Ballot Papers until 9am on Friday 8 May 2026.</p>

	<p>We will issue invitations to attend these Postal Vote opening sessions to your Election Agent. These will be issued at least 48 hours in advance.</p>
<p>d</p>	<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, procedures and the standards of behaviour that will be enforced.</p> <p>This year the count will be held in the Clickimin Centre, <u>Main Hall</u>. The Count will start at 9am on Friday 8 May 2026. There are a range of security measures in place for the transport of ballot boxes and the storage of papers and we will provide details of these of these arrangements at a Candidate briefing session (date/time to be arranged).</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; • any appointed Counting Agents; • guests invited by the Constituency Returning Officer; • representatives of the Electoral Commission; and • any accredited Election Observers <p>We will provide security authorisation for each of these individuals and security wristbands will be issued at the count reception on the day. 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>
<p>e</p>	<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 20 Commercial Road, Lerwick). Email ERO@shetland.gov.uk or telephone 01595 745700.). The Voter registration, Postal and Proxy vote application deadlines for the Scottish Parliament election are as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications to register to vote must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by 12 midnight on Monday 20 April 2026. Applications can be made online: https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. • Applications, amendments or cancellation of postal votes must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by 5pm on Tuesday 21 April 2026.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications to vote by proxy at this election must reach the relevant Electoral Registration Officer at the address below by 5pm on Tuesday 28 April 2026. <p>Candidates may encourage potential electors to apply as voters. Care must be taken to ensure that you are not handling elector’s applications nor that you are encouraging voters who are already registered to submit a duplicate application.</p>
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Further information about all aspects of the election is available on the Council website at <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/elections-voting/scottish-parliament-elections-7-may-2026>

Contact details of Returning Officer in the constituency		
Election Office	8 North Ness, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0LZ	returning.officer@shetland.gov.uk 01595 744066
Contact details of Electoral Registration Officer in the constituency		
Electoral Registration Office	20 Commercial Road, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0LX	ero@shetland.gov.uk 01595 745700

END OF LOCAL NOTES

March 2026