

**SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
SHETLAND ISLANDS AREA / HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS REGION
THURSDAY 7 MAY 2026**

**Arrangements in Force at the Poll
(as at 16 March 2026)**

(1) Entitlement to attend the polling station

Candidates and authorised election agents are entitled to visit any polling station within the constituency during polling day; polling agents may also attend at the polling station(s) for which they have been appointed. Only one polling agent for each Candidate is allowed to enter the polling station at any time. Those attending must have received notification, in writing, of the requirement of secrecy, and must hold the appropriate certificate from me otherwise admission to the polling stations will not be allowed.

The following people are entitled to attend the poll:-

- Returning Officer and members of the Returning Officer's staff
- clerks appointed to attend at the polling station
- voters
- persons under the age of 16 accompanying voters
- companions of voters with disabilities
- candidates
- Election agents or Sub-agents
- Polling agents appointed to attend at the polling station
- Police officers and community support officers on duty
- persons entitled to attend from the Electoral Commission
- accredited observers

(2) What does a polling agent do?

The main duties and responsibilities of polling agents on polling day are:-

- to observe the Presiding Officer showing the empty ballot box prior to sealing;
- to detect personation and prevent people from voting more than once at the Election;
- to report to their Candidate or Party any improper occurrences;
- to be present when the Presiding Officer marks ballot papers at the request of voters;
- to be present at the close of poll when the various packets of documents are sealed;
- to maintain the secrecy of the ballot.

A Candidate or Agent can also do any of the things that a polling agent is authorised to do. However, just because a polling agent is entitled to witness various aspects of the polling procedure, the procedure is not invalidated if they have not witnessed it.

Any number of people may be appointed as a polling agent to attend any particular polling station, although only one polling agent for each Candidate will be allowed into a particular polling station at any time. A person may be appointed as a polling agent for more than one polling station.

(3) Fly Posting

The fixing of posters to any part of the walls, railings, etc, within and surrounding the perimeter of the polling place is not allowed. The Council has a separate policy on posters, attached as Appendix 1.

(4) Canvassing/Campaigning on Polling Day

Within the polling place and polling station, agents must not:

- Interfere with the voting process
- Campaign, canvass voters, or distribute literature

There should be no long-term parking of vehicles for campaign purposes, for example displaying campaign materials or using loudspeakers, immediately outside entrances. Cars being used in campaigns that are also used to transport voters may need to wait for the voter while at the polling station, but this should not be unduly prolonged. The Returning Officer will be alerted to actions that may lead to electors feeling intimidated or influenced. Influencing includes deterring an elector from voting at all, as well as influencing them to vote or not for a particular candidate.

Presiding Officer No 1 will have absolute and final discretion to decide on the appropriateness of the conduct of any person in the polling place.

Consideration for electors when voting, is of prime concern at all times.

(5) Information for Voters

While authorised agents can and do help direct voters to the polling station, a duty is placed on the Presiding Officer at No. 1 station to ensure that the information as to the appropriate room in which each voter has to vote is clearly displayed near the entrance of the polling place. Authorised agents must not engage in canvassing in these circumstances.

(6) Rosettes

There will be no restriction on the wearing of rosettes or other means of party political or campaign identification within a polling station by (a) an authorised agent making a brief visit to a polling station or (b) any person entering a polling station for the purposes of (i) voting personally or (ii) assisting another voter to vote where permitted so to do by Statute or Regulation.

(7) Cars

If it is necessary for a car bringing a disabled/older person to the poll to be permitted to bring that person to the door of the polling place and the car has affixed to it campaign material, then the car should be allowed to wait in an inconspicuous place until the person has voted. The police, in consultation with the Presiding Officer at No.1 Station, have discretion where the local conditions give rise to doubt.

(8) Use as offices and for public meetings

A council may allow political parties to use its premises as offices, where such facilities are provided on a first-come, first-served basis on normal commercial terms. Parties or candidates may use a school room or other listed 'meeting rooms' for a public meeting, in a school within the candidate's constituency. The let will be free of charge, but a council is entitled to be reimbursed for heating, lighting and other utilities, as well for any damage caused to the room by the let. Candidates or their agents are required to give reasonable notice in booking a room and any booking should not interfere with existing arrangements such as prior bookings or school opening hours. The current list of rooms available for hire is attached as Appendix 2.

(9) Disabled Voters

Presiding Officers are reminded of the needs of voters who are disabled and should offer to assist such voters if requested (including helping voters to and from the polling booth) whilst, at all times, observing the voter's right to secrecy. Disabled voters may also be accompanied

to and from the entrance to the polling place; the poll clerk can assist here. It is of the utmost importance, however, that the polling station is **never** left unattended at any time. Presiding Officers should pay particular attention to disabled voters and should familiarise themselves with the arrangements for disabled access.

(10) Voting Information

While there is no specific entitlement to authorised agents to be informed of the numbers of persons who have voted, it will be permissible for Presiding Officers to give authorised agents a note of the **actual number** of persons who have voted from time to time throughout the day. Information as to whether or not a particular person has or has not voted shall not be given for the purpose of a canvass although such information may be necessary in a case where an authorised agent has raised a question of personation. The Presiding Officer shall ensure that meeting these requests does not interfere with his/her official duties.

(11) Press and Media

Press and media representatives are NOT permitted to undertake interviews, filming or photography within the polling place. Accredited press and media representatives will be allowed within the premises where the counting of the votes is taking place.

(12) Admission to the Count

No persons other than the candidates, Election agents or Sub-Agents, the prescribed number of counting agents, representatives of the Electoral Commission, official observers, the Returning Officer and his staff, and any other person whom the Returning Officer is prepared to admit at his discretion will be allowed into the premises where and when the count is taking place. The public will not be admitted at any time to the count centre.

(13) Conduct of the Poll

Any matters relating to the conduct of the Election should be referred to the election office in the first instance.

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

Election Office Helpline: 01595 744066
Returning.officer@shetland.gov.uk

Appendix 1 - SIC Policy on the Placement of Roadside Posters

Shetland Islands Council requires permission to be sought to display any posters on Council property. In the case of roadside posters, permission should be sought from the Roads Service, and the following conditions must be met:

1. That for election posters, application is made, not for every poster, but for all posters within the roads authority's area;
2. All election posters must contain an imprint including: the name of the promoter; the name of any person on behalf of whom the material is being published (and who is not the promoter); and the printer. It is an offence for material that is required to have an imprint by law to be published or displayed without an imprint.

All other posters must clearly state the name and address of the person and/or organisation responsible for its placement;

3. All posters must be backed by boards or printed on card of adequate stiffness and tied with string or fixed with plastic cable ties. They must not be fixed with adhesive of any type;
4. Before posters are erected, the applicant or in relation to election posters the Chairman or Secretary of the relevant party association (or candidate if there is no such association) must state by letter to the Director of Infrastructure Services that the association (or, where appropriate, the candidate) agrees to indemnify the Council against any damages as a result of the display of election posters and may be liable for reimbursing the Council for the cost of removing any signs or posters after the deadline for their removal specified at paragraph 8 below. Applicants, associations (and candidates) must ensure that they are in a position to meet any successful claims in these respects.
5. Any posters fixed by adhesive to any item of street furniture will be treated as illegal fly posting and the offending person may face prosecution under Section 200 of the Roads Scotland Act 1984. This carries a maximum fine of £1000 per offence. The Council will also act under Section 59 of the Act to recover costs incurred in the removal of fly posting from the offending party;
6. All posters shall be erected on street lighting columns. The size and placing of posters must not cause any obstruction to pedestrians and shall not obscure any traffic signs or signals or interrupt any sightline essential for road safety. The size should, not exceed 0.16 sq m and the maximum overall dimension in any direction should not exceed 500mm. The mounting height to the underside must be no less than 2.25m;
7. Posters must not be attached to any traffic signal post, or control box, any traffic sign, refuge islands in the centre of roadways, or upon roundabouts, pedestrian guardrail or bus stop or any public utilities apparatus;
8. Election signs and posters are required to be removed within 48 hours of polling day. All other posters must be removed on the date specified by the Roads Service in any permission granted.

In addition, the Returning Officer does not permit the placement of any individual or party campaign posters or sandwich boards on or within the boundaries of polling places, during the hours of polling.

Correspondence with the Roads Service for application, enquiries or complaints, in particular with regard to the location and dimensions of posters, should be addressed to:

Shetland Islands Council
Executive Manager - Roads
Infrastructure Services Department
Gremista
Lerwick
ZE1 0PX

Telephone: Lerwick (01595) 744866
Fax: Lerwick (01595) 744869
e-mail: roads@shetland.gov.uk

March 2026

Appendix 2 - Council premises available for use as offices and for public meetings

Public Meeting Rooms	Contact Details
Lerwick Town Hall	Reception: 01595 744 511 Website: http://www.shetland.gov.uk/about_registrar/TownHall.asp Email: info@shetland.gov.uk
Islesburgh Community Centre	Reception: 01595 745100 Website: http://www.shetland.gov.uk/islesburgh/Roomshire.asp Email: islesburgh@shetland.gov.uk
School Rooms	Contact Details
<p><u>Important Note:</u> The following is a list of schools within the Shetland Islands Area. You should contact the School directly to enquire on availability or to make a booking, giving reasonable notice to reduce the risk of the request being refused.</p> <p>There is no hire charge for using these rooms, but you must pay for any expenses incurred, such as preparing, heating, lighting and cleaning the room, providing attendance for the meeting and restoring the room to its usual condition after the meeting, and for any damage to the premises.</p> <p>Your right to use a room in a school does not include hours during which a school is used for educational purposes or when any prior letting of a room has been agreed.</p>	

Establishment	Telephone Number
High Schools	
Anderson High	(01595) 808008
Brae	(01595) 745601 (primary) (01595) 745600 (secondary)
Junior High Schools	
Aith	(01595) 807400
Baltasound	(01595) 807020
Mid Yell	(01595) 745050/1
Sandwick	(01595) 745320
Whalsay School	(01595) 743800
Primary Schools	
Bell's Brae	(01595) 743720
Burravoe	(01595) 807088
Cullivoe	(01595) 807080
Cunningsburgh	(01595) 807250
Dunrossness	(01595) 745440
Fair Isle	(01595) 760254
Foula	(01595) 745026
Hamnavoe	(01595) 807440
Happyhansel	(01595) 807450
Lunnasting	(01595) 745690
Establishment	
Mossbank	(01595) 807280
Nesting	(01595) 743701
North Roe	(01595) 745685

Ollaberry	(01595) 807270
Sandness	(01595) 744236
Scalloway	(01595) 743777
Sound	(01595) 744982
Tingwall	(01595) 807244
Urafirth	(01595) 807460
Whiteness	(01595) 745380

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