

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Highland Council By-Election  
Ward 20 (Fort William and Ardnamurchan)  
Thursday 21 November 2024



## 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
- 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);

(\*) To qualify to be registered to vote you must be resident or deemed resident in the registration area and a British, Irish, European Union, Commonwealth or Foreign National citizen with the legal right to remain in the UK

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.

You are not entitled to vote more than once in the same electoral area at any local government election.

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.

## Electoral Registration Office:

Freephone 0800 393783

Mail: [ero@highland.gov.uk](mailto:ero@highland.gov.uk)

Web: [www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/](http://www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/)

## How do I register to vote?

You can apply to register to vote online. Please visit [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://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.

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.

For any support or advice please contact the Electoral Registration Office.



[www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

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**I have moved to a new house am I registered to vote?**

If you have recently moved home and live within the Highland Council area, you will need to register to vote at your new address.

You can visit [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

Alternatively, you can request a paper application to be sent to you.

For further information please contact the Electoral Registration Office.

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**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.

**Electoral Registration Office:**

Tel 0800 393783

Mail: [ero@highland.gov.uk](mailto:ero@highland.gov.uk)

Web: [www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/how-to-vote/](http://www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/how-to-vote/)

Postal votes for this election are being issued on Friday 8 November 2024

**Deadlines:**

Wednesday 6 November 2024 by 5pm for new postal vote applications and for changes to existing postal or proxy votes.

Wednesday 13 November 2024 by 5pm for new applications to vote by proxy (not postal proxy), except for medical emergencies.

**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 13 November 2024 on the grounds of: -

- In the case of a medical condition, illness or disability arising after the deadline for ordinary proxy applications.
- Are a mental health patient detained under civil powers.
- If your occupation, service or employment means you cannot go to the polling station in person and you only become aware of this after the deadline for ordinary proxy applications.
- For Scottish local council elections, an elector may be able to change their proxy if their appointed proxy's circumstances have changed and they cannot reasonably be expected to vote at the polling station.
- If you are a Scottish prisoner serving a sentence of 12 months or less.

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

**Deadline:**

Thursday 21 November 2024 by 5pm for emergency proxy applications.

**Electoral Registration Office:**

Freephone 0800 393783

Mail: [ero@highland.gov.uk](mailto:ero@highland.gov.uk)

Web: [www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/](http://www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/)

**What happens if I lose or spoil my postal vote?**

If you have not received your postal vote or mislaid it, then please contact us, as a replacement can be issued from our Election office until 10pm on polling day.

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

You must retain all papers that were accidentally spoilt and await instructions that will be issued by the Election Office.

**Deadline:**

Thursday 21 November 2024 by 10pm, last time for re-issue of spoilt and lost postal votes.

Election Helpline

**01349 886657**

Mon - Fri (excl. Bank Holidays)  
between the hours of 8am and 5pm.

### 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.

### Deadline:

By 10pm Thursday 21 November 2024

### How do I vote at my polling station?

You can still vote in person at a polling place.

Polling places will be open from 7am to 10pm. If there's a queue, you'll still be able vote as long as you have joined it before 10pm.

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 stations 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 pen or pencil, however clean pencils will be provided for every voter.



### 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 **AS21S 123 Ann Other** would be an elector in the 'A' polling district of Ward 19. Each elector's 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 by contacting the Electoral Registration Office for a postal or proxy vote (absent vote).

### Polling takes between 7am and 10pm on Thursday 21 November 2024

The list of polling places can be found here on our website at [www.highland.gov.uk/byelection](http://www.highland.gov.uk/byelection)

Or search with your postcode at [www.wheredoivote.co.uk](http://www.wheredoivote.co.uk) or click on the QR code below



[www.wheredoivote.co.uk](http://www.wheredoivote.co.uk)

### 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 **Tuesday 22 October 2024**. If you have not received a Poll Card 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 21 November 2024) and the hours during which you can vote in person at your polling station on the day (7am to 10pm).

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.

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

Election 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/](http://www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/) or by telephoning 0800 393783 or emailing [ero@highland.gov.uk](mailto:ero@highland.gov.uk).

### When will the polling station be open?

Voting hours at your polling station will be on Thursday 21 November 2024 from 7am to 10pm.

The list of polling places can be found here [www.highland.gov.uk/byelection](http://www.highland.gov.uk/byelection)

Or search with your postcode at [www.wheredoivote.co.uk](http://www.wheredoivote.co.uk) or click on the QR code below



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## 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.

Voting aids are available at each of our polling stations. These include among others: -

**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.

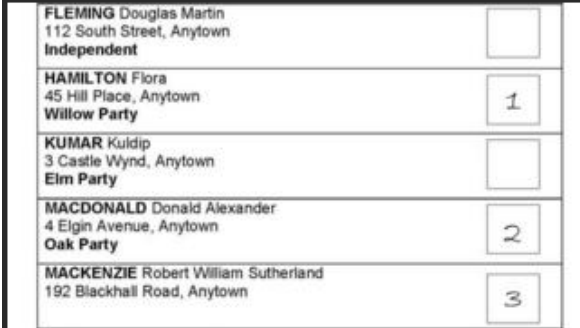

**Plastic voting device:** Polling places will have a plastic strip to fit over a ballot paper so that a blind or visually impaired voter can vote in secret. Staff will demonstrate how this voting aid works to any voter wishing to use the device.

**Pencil Grippers:** available on request to assist with voters completing their ballot paper.

**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.



<p><b>Who are the candidates?</b></p> <p>A list of all persons nominated for election is now published on the council's web-site <a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/byelection">www.highland.gov.uk/byelection</a>.</p>	<p>The list of candidates can be found at <a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/byelection">www.highland.gov.uk/byelection</a></p>										
<p><b>How many ballot papers and how many votes will I have?</b></p> <p>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.</p>	 <table border="1" data-bbox="868 376 1449 703"> <tr> <td>FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KUMAR Kuldeep 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Elm Party</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MACKENZIE Robert William Sutherland 192 Blackhall Road, Anytown</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table>	FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party	1	KUMAR Kuldeep 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Elm Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party	2	MACKENZIE Robert William Sutherland 192 Blackhall Road, Anytown	3
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<p><b>What are the electoral areas?</b></p> <p>The Electoral area for Ward 21 (Fort William and Ardnamurchan), comprising approximately of 8,905 electors</p>	<p>The map can be viewed <a href="#">online</a></p>										
<p><b>How do I find out the results after the elections?</b></p> <p>Counting of the votes will take place in the Lochaber High School, Camaghael, Fort William PH33 7ND at 10am on Friday 22 November 2024.</p>	<p>The results will be posted on the Council's website and the live stream for the Inverness South by-election will be available online at <a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/byelection">www.highland.gov.uk/byelection</a></p>										
<p><b>THE ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICE</b></p> <p>Moray House, 16-18 Bank Street, Inverness, IV1 1QY.</p> <p>Freephone: 0800 393783 Mail: <a href="mailto:ero@highland.gov.uk">ero@highland.gov.uk</a> Web: <a href="http://www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/">www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb/the-electoral-register/</a></p>											
<p><b>THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL ELECTION OFFICE</b></p> <p>If you require further information please contact the Election Helpline on <b>01349 886657</b> or email the Council at <a href="mailto:election@highland.gov.uk">election@highland.gov.uk</a></p>	