



The  
Electoral  
Commission

# Scotland's electoral systems

Mary Pitcaithly, Convener, Electoral Management Board,  
Scotland

Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland

Chris Highcock, Secretary, EMB

31 August 2016

## Outline

- Who we are and what we do
- Scotland's electoral systems
- Why 4 electoral systems
- Some issues to consider

# Who does what in Scottish elections

- Governments and parliaments responsible for legislation and policy development
  - UK and European Parliament elections (UK)
  - Scottish Parliament and Council elections (SP)
- Local officials (Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers) maintain electoral registers and run elections.
- Electoral Management Board provides co-ordination and on occasion direction of EROs and ROs
- Electoral Commission advises governments and parliaments and gives guidance to local electoral officials, parties, candidates and agents to help deliver the process successfully

## The Electoral Commission

## Who we are and what we do

- Established 2000
- Accountable and funded by UK and Scottish Parliaments, not Governments
- 10 Commissioners [ 6 non-partisan]
- UK Parliament approves forward plan and budgets and receives its annual report and accounts
- Scottish Parliament funds activities in relation to Scottish Parliament and council elections and we report on these matters to it

## Who we are and what we do

- register political parties and 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties
- regulate party and election finance and set standards for well-run elections and referendums.
- make sure people understand and follow the rules on party and election finance
- publish details of where political parties get money from and how they spend it
- provide guidance for running elections and report on how well they are met
- Administer Observers scheme
- make sure people register to vote, and know how to vote

## Aim and objectives

- Our aim is public confidence in the democratic process
- Transparency and integrity in party and election finance matters
- Well-run elections, referendums and electoral registration
  - So that people trust the process and have confidence in the result
  - We put the voter first



# The Electoral Commission

## The Electoral Management Board for Scotland: role and remit

- Established 2009
- Statutory role from 2011 for council elections
- Independent of governments; accountable to the Scottish Parliament
- Has “the general function of co-ordinating the administration of local elections in Scotland.”
- Aims for consistency, co-ordination, single point of contact, economies of scale.
- Voter at the centre



The  
Electoral  
Commission

## The Electoral Management Board for Scotland:

### role and remit

- Seeks to:
  - Assist Returning Officer;
  - Promote best practice
  - ensure that the interests of the voter are kept at the centre of all election planning, delivery and administration
- Preferred approach is to operate through a progression of
  - consensus where possible;
  - guidance when helpful; and
  - direction if necessary.





The  
Electoral  
Commission

# Electoral process in Scotland



The  
Electoral  
Commission

## Scotland's electoral systems

- **Scottish Parliament:** 129 Members, Additional Member System (First Past the Post and closed party lists - modified d'hondt)
- **32 Councils,** 1223 Councillors, Single Transferable Vote (353 wards of 3 or 4 members)
- **UK Parliament: House of Commons:** 650 Members, [59 from Scotland] First Past the Post
- **European Parliament:** 73 UK Members Closed List (regional list, pure D'Hondt) Scotland is a single electoral region and elects 6 members



The  
Electoral  
Commission

## Voter Registration

- Foundation of the electoral system administered by 15 EROs employed by the 32 councils
- c4.2 million entries currently on the electoral register in Scotland
- In 2016, Commission research estimated that 14% not registered in Scotland – research suggests this made up of 17-24 year olds, private renters and home movers
- Individual electoral registration introduced September 2014



The  
Electoral  
Commission

UK Parliament

- 59 Scottish constituencies
- First past the post (single X)



The  
Electoral  
Commission

## European Parliament

- UK returns 73 MEPs
- UK split into 12 electoral regions
- Scotland a single electoral region – 6 seats
- Single X vote for one party or individual candidate
- Closed list system – d'Hondt allocation

## Scottish Parliament

- First election 1999
- 129 Members – Additional member system (AMS or MMP)
  - 73 Constituency (First Past the Post, single member, 57% of the seats)
  - 56 Regional (8 regions of 7 seats each. A closed list counted via modified d'Hondt. 43% of the seats)
- An X on each ballot paper for candidate or party/individual of choice
- Maximum 12 names on a list

## Overview – voting system

- Voting system – Additional Member System
- 2 ballot papers. Constituency & Region

### Constituency - lilac

Election of Members of the Scottish Parliament for the [XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX] Constituency	
Vote for only one candidate by putting a cross in the box next to your choice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Candidate A</b> A Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Candidate B</b> B Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Candidate C</b> Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Candidate D</b> D Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Candidate E</b> Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Region - peach

Election of Members of the Scottish Parliament for the [XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX] Region	
Vote only once by putting a cross in the box next to your choice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
C Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate D Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate E Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Modified D'Hondt allocation

	Party 1	Party 2	Party 3	Party 4
Regional votes	61,974	63,362	61,189	37,206
Constituency Seats	2	4	1	0
1 <sup>st</sup> Win party 4	$\div 3 = 20,658$	$\div 5 = 12,672$	$\div 2 = 30,595$	$\div 1 = \mathbf{37,206}$
2 <sup>nd</sup> win party 3	20,658	12,672	<b>30,595</b>	$\div 2 = 18,603$
3 <sup>rd</sup> win party 1	<b>20,658</b>	12,672	$\div 3 = 20,396$	18,603
4 <sup>th</sup> win party 3	$\div 4 = 15,494$	12,672	<b>20,396</b>	18,603
5 <sup>th</sup> win party 4	15,494	12,672	$\div 4 = 15,297$	<b>18,603</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> win party 1	<b>15,494</b>	12,672	15,297	$\div 3 = 12,402$
7 <sup>th</sup> win party 3	$\div 5 = 12,395$	12,672	<b>15,297</b>	12,402
Add'l seats	2	0	3	2
Total seats in region	4	4	4	2





The  
Electoral  
Commission

## Council elections

- 1,223 seats
- 32 councils
- From 18 to 80 councillors per council
- Single transferable vote since 2007
- 353 wards of 3-4 members
- Preference 1,2,3, 4 and so on

BALLOTSHIRE COUNCIL: ANYTOWN & DISTRICT WARD

**Three of the candidates listed below will be elected.**

**You can make as many or as few choices as you wish.**

Put the number **1** in the voting box next to your **first** choice.

Put the number **2** in the voting box next to your **second** choice.

Put the number **3** in the voting box next to your **third** choice. **And so on.**

**ANDERSON** Hans

57 Easter Road, Anytown

**Rowan Party**

5

**CRANSTON** Helen

912 Main Street, Anytown

**Beech Party**

4

**FLEMING** Douglas Martin

112 South Street, Anytown

**Independent**

**HAMILTON** Flora

45 Hill Place, Anytown

**Willow Party**

1

**KUMAR** Kuldip

3 Castle Wynd, Anytown

**Elm Party**

**MACDONALD** Donald Alexander

4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown

**Oak Party**

2

**MACKENZIE** Robert William Sutherland

192 Blackhall Road, Anytown

3

**MASTERS** Susan Caroline

93 Holyrood Road, Anytown

**Willow Party**

The  
Electoral  
Commission



## STV

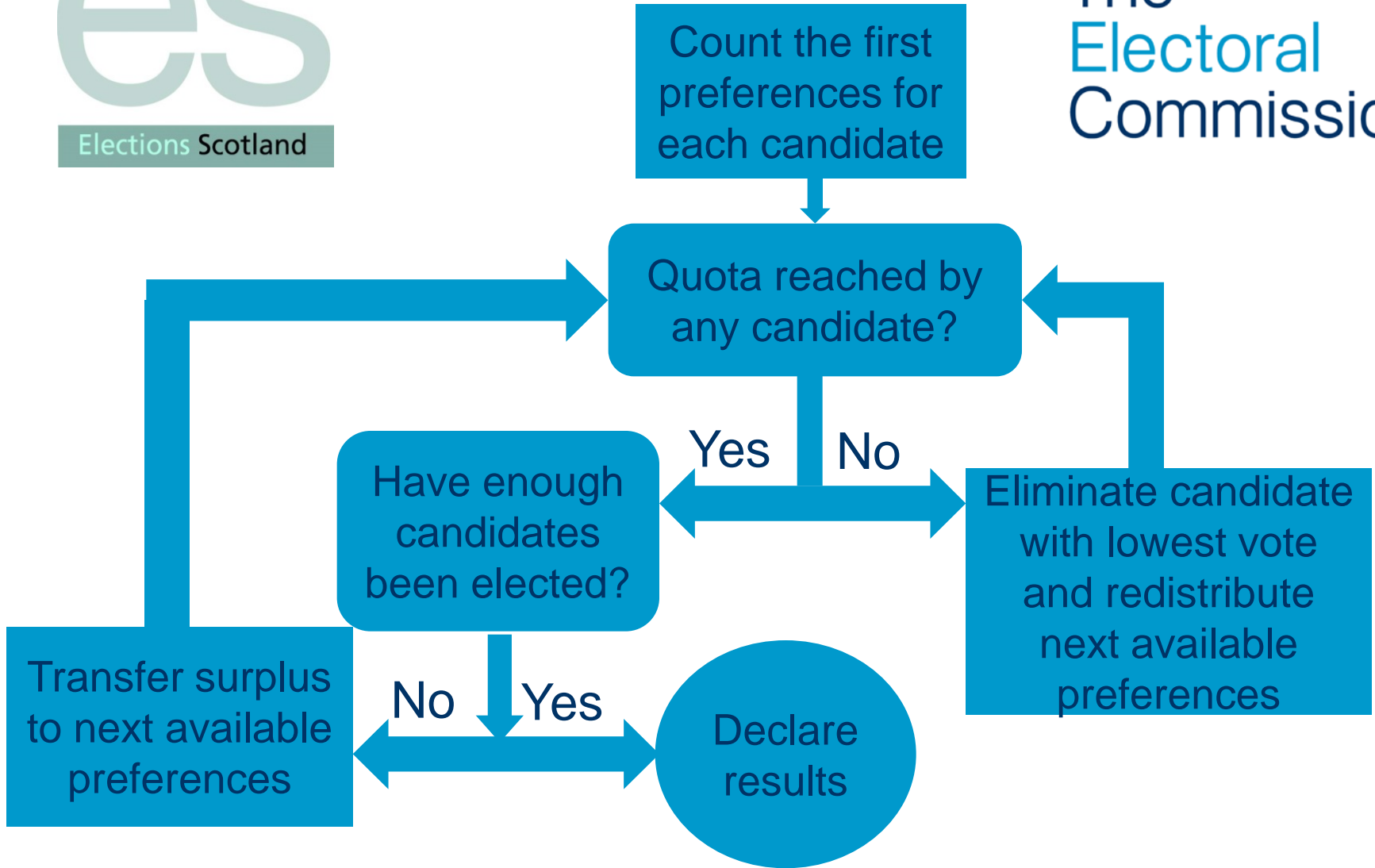
- First used in 2007
- WIG – Weighted Inclusive Gregory method
- E-counted the next morning
- 32 count centres
- System procured via a national contract but administered locally

## How STV works

- The first step is to calculate the 'quota' - the number of votes required for a candidate to be elected

$$\frac{\text{TOTAL VALID VOTES}}{\text{NUMBER OF PLACES TO BE FILLED} + 1} + 1$$

- If a candidate achieves the quota of first preferences then they are elected.



## Why 4 electoral systems

- Decision of politicians
- We advise on workability
- UK and European Parliaments
  - Acts of UK Parliament

## Why 4 electoral systems

- Scottish Parliament – AMS
  - Desire to maintain the constituency link with voter
  - Scottish Constitutional Convention
  - Scotland's Parliament: Scotland's Right
  - Scotland Act 1998
  - AMS first used 1999

## Why 4 electoral systems

- Council elections – STV
  - Commission on Local Government and Scottish Parliament
  - Renewing Local Democracy Working Group
  - Coalition agreement in 2003
  - Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004
  - STV first used 2007



## Some issues to consider

- Change needs
  - time
  - Planning
  - resource
  - testing
- Good ballot paper design and tested
  - ‘Making your mark’ guidance
- Size of ward/constituency and link

## Some issues to consider

- STV Ballot paper design
  - Alphabetic
  - Robson's rotation
  - Bracketing
  - Rotation within a bracket
- Voter use of the electoral systems
  - Explain each electoral system as used
  - Public awareness campaigns
  - Well trained polling station staff

## Public awareness campaigns

- Seek to maximise the number of eligible electors who are **registered to vote**
- Explain **how to complete the ballot paper**
- To reach key ‘under-registered’ groups identified by research
  - e.g. young adults, students, service voters, overseas voters
- Encourage people to seek information they require via **aboutmyvote.co.uk** or our **freephone helpline**

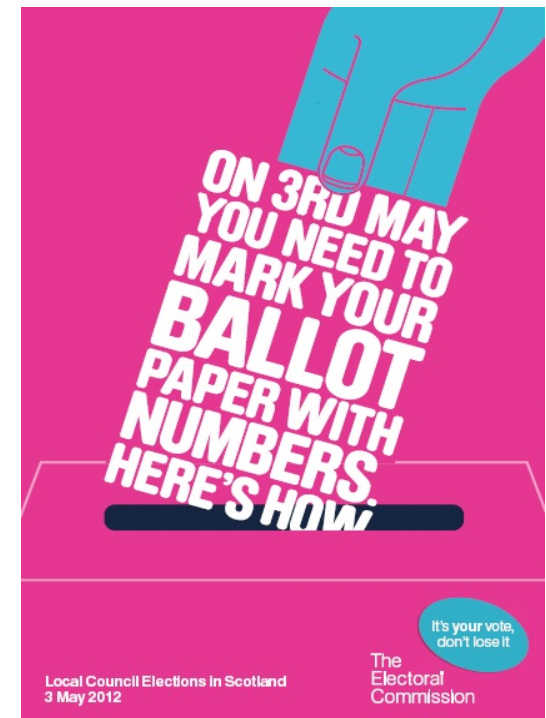


# The Electoral Commission

Public awareness campaigns- multi media

Typical components

- TV, radio
- Household voting guide
- Digital adverts
- Social media
- Partnerships
- Media supported



# The Electoral Commission

## Public awareness - partnerships

Working in partnership with range of organisations to reach under-registered groups. Examples include:

- Shelter Scotland
- Enable
- FCA Associates / CELCIS
- NUS Scotland
- MOD



# The Electoral Commission

Public awareness – young voters

Specific activity to target younger voters:

- #ReadyToVote campaign
- #RegAFriend campaign
- Hollyoaks partnership





‘Make sure nothing stops you voting’

# The Electoral Commission

MUSIC Great service. Fantastic fares. Click here >

Home Rock & Pop Hip Hop & R&B Alternative Dance Interviews Showbiz Videos Movies More

Google register to vote Search: the web pages from the UK

facebook UK Elections Get registered today if you want to vote, produced by The Electoral Commis...

How to register and vote in UK elections. ... You need to be on the Electoral Register to vote in UK elections and referendums. ... www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/ - Cached - Similar

Register to vote Am I already registered to vote in the Postal vote application Search for a local Electoral Regis Home movers Students

IF YOU WANT TO VOTE Register by 20th April Click here to get started

WIN MusicRooms COMPETITIONS

ALBUM NOW!

SPEAK OUT

OUT NOW!

IF YOU WANT TO VOTE Register by 20th April Click here to get started

**DON'T BE PART OF THE SILENT GENERATION!**

MAKE SURE NOTHING STOPS YOU VOTING

KEERANI!

**DON'T BE PART OF THE SILENT GENERATION!**

WANT TO MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD THEN MAKE SURE NOTHING STOPS YOU VOTING...

IT ONLY TAKES 5 MINUTES!

**Don't miss your chance to vote in the 2010 General Election**

YOU CAN'T VOTE IF YOU'RE NOT REGISTERED. MAKE SURE YOU MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

**MAKE SURE NOTHING STOPS YOU VOTING**

Register now to vote in the General & Local Elections

Visit [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk) or call 0800 3 286 280



**Don't miss your chance to vote in the 2010 General Election**

You can register to vote even if you don't have a permanent address. A general election will be held if you need to be registered in a constituency.

To find out more, contact:

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

英國國會 2010 年大選投票

Voting in the 2010 UK Parliamentary general election





The  
Electoral  
Commission

## Contact Details:

Andy O'Neill  
Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland  
The Electoral Commission  
Lothian Chambers,  
59-63 George IV Bridge  
Edinburgh EH1 1RN

Tel: 0131 225 0201

Fax: 0131 225 0205

E-Mail: [jmccormick@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:jmccormick@electoralcommission.org.uk)

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)