



Local Authority Elections 2022

Overview

The 2022 Scottish local elections are due to take place on 5 May 2022, as part of the 2022 United Kingdom local elections. All 1,219 seats across all 32 Scottish local authorities will be up for election. The last Scottish local election was in 2017. Councils operate independently of central government and are accountable to their electorates for the services they provide. These services include:

- business support
- housing and planning
- licensing
- local roads and public transport
- registrar services
- schools
- social care
- waste management

In the 2017 elections, the [Scottish National Party](#) (SNP) maintained its position as largest party in local government, while the Scottish Conservatives displaced Scottish Labour as the second-largest party. Independent candidates, the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Scottish Greens also won councillors across Scotland. You can see the current make up of each of the Local Authority councils, and information about the proportional voting system [here](#).

Two possible issues to raise with candidates

1. Peace education

The provision of education in Scotland is the responsibility of local authorities who are under a statutory duty to ensure that there is adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) are signed up to the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs), including SDG 4.7 which states that, by 2030, all learners should acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development including the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence. And yet ties between the military and Scottish society remain strong, with all 32 Local Authorities signing up to the armed forces covenant; Armed Forces day being celebrated within many Scottish towns; and the continued soft recruitment of young people into the armed forces through armed forces visits to, and cadet forces within, schools.

Quakers would like to see:

- Guidance for schools on how visits by the armed forces should be conducted, taking account of the unique nature of armed forces careers.
- Guidance for schools on maintaining a balanced message, through the inclusion of SDG4.7 in the curriculum planning.
- A framework whereby schools must consult parents/guardians as to whether they are happy for their child to take part in armed forces activities at school.
- Greater emphasis on creating a culture of peace within schools including the teaching of restorative and non-violent responses to conflict.
- A curriculum place for conflict resolution training in schools: these life skills have great value in enabling young people better to deal with issues of conflict and tension in their own lives as they move into the adult world.

Questions for candidates:

- What are your views on the role of the military in state education?
- The teaching of conflict resolution has proven benefits for students' wellbeing and development. Would you take steps to ensure it receives more attention and support in our schools?
- Should parents have a say over whether their children are exposed to greater military involvement in their education?

2. The climate and ecological emergency: Steps towards low carbon housing

13% of Scotland's carbon emissions are from its 2.5m homes. Moving towards low carbon housing, through **tough planning regulation on new development** and an **urgent, clear programme of retrofitting** for older homes, would not only help us reach Scotland's carbon emissions reduction targets but also, if properly prioritised, help to address issues of fuel poverty, so it could be a doubly important element of a just transition away from fossil fuels.

We are pleased that social housing has been prioritised in the Scottish government's [Heat in buildings-strategy](#) for changing how we heat our homes. However, we are concerned that there is a lack of clarity and urgency in the public's perception of how the necessary changes in how we heat all our homes will be brought about. Quakers, speaking from our strong belief in the values of **equality, simplicity** and **sustainability**, would like to see the following actions:

- **Planning policy** should have an overarching priority to contribute both to achieving Scotland's carbon emission reductions targets set for 2030, 2040 and 2045 when "net-zero" is to be reached. We're concerned that the current National Planning Framework 4 has worrying loopholes. For example it states: *where significant emissions are likely (even as minimised) in relation to national decarbonisation pathways but the planning authority is minded to grant consent, emissions off-setting measures may be considered.*
- **A public information campaign** – not just online – straightforwardly explaining methods, funding, and supply chain plans (including training programmes) for **changing how we heat our homes**, and how these will be implemented over the rest of this year and during the next four years (i.e. before next LA elections).

Questions for candidates:

- Do you agree that the primary guiding principle for development must be to contribute to achieving Scotland's carbon emission reduction targets? How would you ensure that local planning authorities' decisions prioritise this overarching goal above more short-term considerations?
- Local Heat and Energy Strategies [are due to be published by all Local Authorities by the end of 2023](#). What would be your key points in for your Local Authority's heat and energy strategy?
- What job opportunities do you envisage emerging in your area from the necessary work on retrofitting and renewable heating installation? Where can young people in your area train for the new world of sustainably heated homes?

Hustings

In the period before an election, faith groups and community organisations often put on election meetings (sometimes known as hustings). At these events members of the public can listen to and ask questions of the candidates who are standing for election. These meetings can provide an opportunity for respectful dialogue in a space which is impartial. This guide is designed to help you plan such an event should you wish to do so.

Forming a coordinating group

Are there other faith or community groups with whom you can work in partnership to host an election meeting? Forming a small coordinating group of people who will be able to make decisions and act can lighten the load and ensure a smooth delivery. As events are likely to include an online element, your coordinating group should include people who are confident organising and hosting online events. You might already have a group who organised a hustings for a previous election, who could work together again to adapt your previous model. If you are trying something for the first time, try to find out whether there are local faith or community groups with hustings experience who would be willing to work in partnership with you.

Setting a date

Any time between now and the elections is possible. To ensure that your hustings is helpful to voters making use of a postal vote it is worth taking the deadline for postal voting into account when exploring dates. Ultimately the date will depend on a number of factors including the availability of candidates. Experience from previous years shows that candidates often respond positively to invitations to in-person meetings held on Sunday evenings, although possibilities for in person meetings may be limited this year. It is always worth contacting the candidates as early as possible to begin discussing dates.

What are the rules around holding a hustings event?

In Scotland charities, such as faith groups, are regulated by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). During election periods campaigning activities are also covered by the Electoral Commission. Hustings are legitimate activities for charities during this period.

The Electoral Commission's guidance on hosting a husting can be found at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/are-you-holding-a-hustings>.

If you would like more advice on this, contact the Andrew Tomlinson, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, at andrewt@quaker.org.uk