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 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
THURSDAY, 19TH MAY, 2022

The STATUTORY MEETING of the SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL will be held VIA

MICROSOFT TEAMS on THURSDAY, 19TH MAY, 2022 at 10.00 AM.

All attendees, including members of the public, should note that the public business in this meeting

will be livestreamed and video recorded and that recording will be available thereafter for public

view for 180 days.

J. J. WILKINSON,
Clerk to the Council,
12 May 2022

	BUSINESS	
1.	**Apologies for Absence.**	
2.	**Convener** Consider appointment of Convener.	5 mins
3.	**Order of Business.**	
4.	**Declarations of Interest.**	
5.	**Leader** Consider appointment of Leader.	5 mins
6.	**Vice-Convener** Consider appointment of Vice-Convener.	5 mins
7.	**Election of Councillors to the Scottish Borders Council on 5 May 2022** (Pages 3 - 8) Consider report by Returning Officer. (Attached)	2 mins
8.	**Any Other Items Previously Circulated**	
9.	**Any Other Items Which the Convener Decides Are Urgent**	

NOTES

1. **Timings given above are only indicative and not intended to inhibit Members' discussions.**

2. **Members are reminded that, if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business coming before the meeting, that interest should be declared prior to commencement of discussion on that item. Such declaration will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.**

Please direct any enquiries to Louise McGeoch Tel 01835 825005
email lmcgeoch@scotborders.gov.uk

ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS TO THE SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL ON 5 MAY 2022

Report by Returning Officer

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

19 May 2022

1   PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

   1.1   **This report gives details of those persons elected to serve as Members of the Scottish Borders Council, along with an update regarding other aspects of the election.**

2   RECOMMENDATIONS

   2.1   **I recommend that the Council records the details of those individuals elected on 5 May 2022 to serve as Members of the Scottish Borders Council for the period to the next Local Government Election in 2027.**

3 THE ELECTION

3.1 In preparation for the Local Government Election 2022, I appointed two Depute Returning Officers and an Election Project Manager. We also put in place a clear Project plan and Project Team, and met formally on 10 occasions from December 2021, although preparation work had started in early autumn of 2021. A Project Plan and Risk Register were developed and continuously reviewed and updated to ensure all aspects of managing an election were taken into account and progressed accordingly.

3.2 There were 109 polling places, containing 150 polling stations, staffed by over 350 Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks and Information Clerks. All staff received training on their roles, including the completion of a ballot paper account exercise. The layout of Polling Stations was the same as those used during the Scottish Parliament election in 2021 to minimise the risks around COVID. All Polling Stations were visited by Polling Station Inspectors at least once during the day to ensure that the polling process ran efficiently.

3.3 Over 86,500 ballot papers were printed, with 22,319 postal ballot packs issued, to ensure that the 94,198 electors in the Scottish Borders were able to cast their votes. Prior to polling day postal voting statements were verified and ballot papers put forward to the Count at Springwood Park. Over 700 postal votes were handed in at polling stations which required verification on the Thursday night at Springwood Park prior to the Count on Friday 6 May. The process of verifying postal votes is quite time consuming so electors are to be encouraged to send back their postal votes as early as possible so that the Count is not delayed unduly.

3.4 Following the receipt of all ballot boxes, the Count itself took place on Friday 6 May at Springwood Park, Kelso. Around 80 staff were in attendance to carry out the electronic count which involved registering and verifying ballot box contents, scanning ballot papers, first level adjudication and Returning Officer adjudication, before the results were collated for each Ward and announced. We believe Scottish Borders Council was the first Council in Scotland to declare the first Ward result. Out of the 34 Councillors elected, 14 were women, which significantly improves the gender balance and is the highest ratio to date (41%) for Scottish Borders Council.

3.5 The Council website and social media were updated regularly both in the run up to the election, on polling day, and during the Count by the Communication Team. The Electoral Registration Officer's staff provided electors' data for poll cards and postal votes, printed Registers for the Polling Stations and dealt with registration queries on polling day. Customer Services staff also handled election related calls along with the wider Election Project team.

4 THE RESULTS

4.1 The Count at Springwood Park, Kelso on Friday 6 May 2022 resulted in the following candidates being elected as Councillors:

Ward 1 – Tweeddale West
- Drummond Begg (Scottish Liberal Democrats)

- Eric Small (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)
- Viv Thomson (Scottish National Party)

Ward 2 – Tweeddale East
- Marshall Douglas (Scottish National Party)
- Julie Pirone (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)
- Robin Tatler (Independent)

Ward 3 – Galashiels & District
- Euan Jardine (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)
- Neil Mackinnon (Scottish Green Party)
- Fay Sinclair (Scottish National Party)
- Hannah Steel (Scottish Liberal Democrats)

Ward 4 - Selkirkshire
- Caroline Cochrane (Independent)
- Leagh Douglas (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)
- Elaine Thornton-Nicol (Scottish National Party)

Ward 5 – Leaderdale & Melrose
- Jenny Linehan (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)
- David Parker (Independent)
- John PatonDay (Scottish National Party)

Ward 6 – Mid Berwickshire
- John Greenwell (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)
- Donald Moffat (Scottish National Party)
- Mark Rowley (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)

Ward 7 – East Berwickshire
- James Anderson (Independent)
- Carol Hamilton (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)
- Aileen Orr (Scottish National Party)

Ward 8 – Kelso & District
- Simon Mountford (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)
- Euan Robson (Scottish Liberal Democrats)
- Tom Weatherston (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)

Ward 9 – Jedburgh & District
- Pam Brown (Scottish National Party)
- Scott Hamilton (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)
- Sandy Scott (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)

Ward 10 – Hawick & Denholm
- Stuart Marshall (Independent)
- Clair Ramage (Independent)
- Neil Richards (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)

Ward 11 – Hawick & Hermitage
- Jane Cox (Scottish Conservative & Unionist)
- Watson McAteer (Independent)
- Annette Smart (Scottish National Party

5   IMPLICATIONS

5.1   **Financial**
The costs of the election were funded from within the election budget, supported by government grant. The Electoral Registration Officer's staff costs were paid from the service budget.

5.2   **Risk and Mitigations**
A Project Plan and a Risk Register were prepared and continuously reviewed throughout the planning and implementation process for the election. This was part of the requirement for the Returning Officer to meet the Electoral Commission's performance standards for Returning Officers.

5.3   **Integrated Impact Assessment**
As this was not a new policy or strategy and the election is open to all registered voters - regardless of age, disability, gender re-assignment, trans/transgender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race groups, religion or belief, sex-gender identity or sexual orientation - no Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken.

5.4   **Sustainable Development Goals**
The election process contributes to 3 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals –
- (3) Ensure healthy lives and promoted wellbeing for all ages – by encouraging community involvement in the election process and using local venues for polling places
- (5) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – by encouraging women into elected office
- (10) Reduce inequalities within and among countries – by providing the election service in a non-discriminatory way and promoting participation by all

5.5   **Climate Change**
By ensuring polling stations are spread across the Borders, in both rural and urban areas, many electors are able to walk to their local polling station to vote and car journeys are therefore minimised. The increase in postal votes (to 23% of the electorate) also reduces the need for car journeys.

5.6   **Rural Proofing**
All registered electors across the Scottish Borders were able to vote either at a polling station or through a postal or proxy vote. There were 110 polling places across the Borders, covering both urban and rural areas.

5.7   **Data Protection Impact Statement**
There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report. Data protection legislation was followed at all times throughout the election process

5.8   **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**
No changes are needed to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of this report.

6   CONSULTATION

6.1   The Director (Finance & Corporate Governance), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Electoral Registration Officer and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Name   Netta Meadows   Title Returning Officer

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jenny Wilkinson	Clerk to the Council Tel: 01835 825004

Background Papers: Nil
Previous Minute Reference: Nil

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenny Wilkinson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Jenny Wilkinson, Democratic Services, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA. Tel: 01835 825004 Email: jjwilkinson@scotborders.gov.uk

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