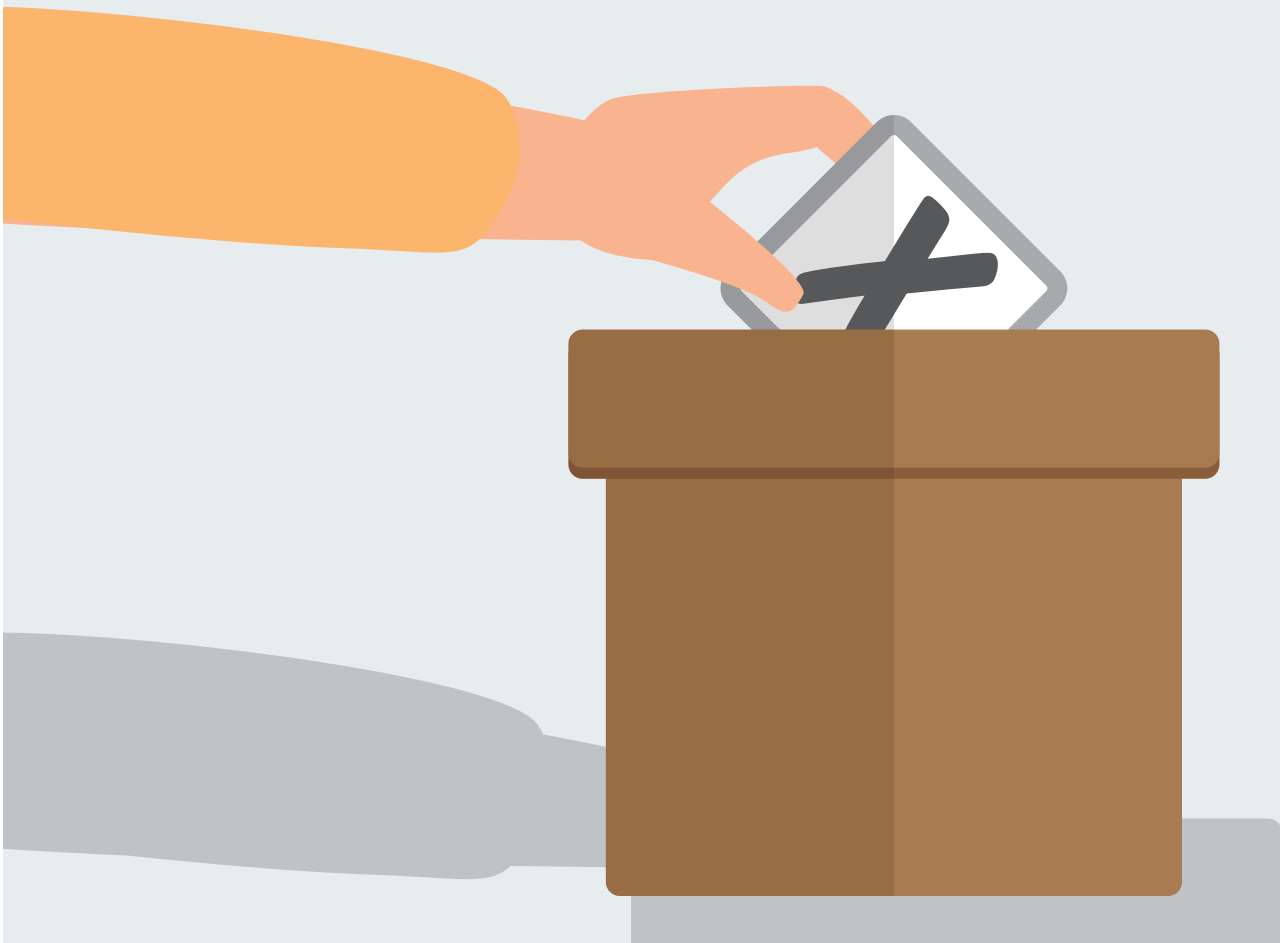


Guidance for Voters



Isle of Man
Government

Reilrys Ellan Vannin

House of Keys General Election 2021

1. Make your vote count

The House of Keys is the popularly elected Branch of Tynwald, the Island's parliament.

Every five years the people of the Isle of Man have an opportunity to vote in a General Election to choose who will represent them in the House of Keys.

The next House of Keys General Election takes place on **Thursday 23 September 2021**.

Each Member of the House of Keys (MHK) represents a constituency. There are 12 constituencies, with two MHKs for each.

- Arbory, Castletown and Malew
- Ayre and Michael
- Douglas Central
- Douglas East
- Douglas North
- Douglas South
- Garff
- Glenfaba and Peel
- Middle
- Onchan
- Ramsey
- Rushen

The choices made by Members of the House of Keys directly affect our daily lives.

They make policy, pass laws and regulations, decide how income from taxpayers is spent on public services, and debate issues of national and international importance.

House of Keys elections provide an opportunity to make your feelings known on the issues that matter to you.

By voting you can influence the decisions that will shape the Island's future.

There are three methods of voting in House of Keys elections.

This guide will assist you if you need to register to vote and explain how to:

- 1) Cast your vote at a polling station
- 2) Apply for a postal vote
- 3) Apply, in exceptional circumstances only, for the appointment of a proxy who will be able to vote on your behalf

2. Registering to vote

Taking part in elections is a fundamental democratic right. But remember – you must first be registered to vote.

The electoral register is a list of all the people entitled to vote in elections in the Isle of Man. It includes your name, address and an electoral number that is unique to you.

Your vote is important – you should ensure your registration details are always kept up to date.

You are entitled to be registered if you have reached the age of 16, have had your usual home in the Isle of Man for the last 12 months, and you are not prohibited from voting due to being found guilty of offences under the Elections (Keys and Local Authorities) Act 2020 or in other, very limited circumstances.

There are also special arrangements to enable the following Isle of Man residents to register and vote in an election:

- Those who are serving in HM Armed Forces
- Those studying off-Island
- Those temporarily working overseas
- Those considered to be vulnerable who can register safely and anonymously

If you are not registered to vote, you can apply for a registration form by –

- Visiting the Government website www.gov.im/elections
- Telephoning the Electoral Registration Unit on 685754 or emailing elections@gov.im
- Visiting the Electoral Registration Office at 3rd Floor, Government Office, Bucks Road, Douglas

If you want to check whether your name is on the electoral register you should visit your local authority or contact Crown & Elections on 685754 or email elections@gov.im

Full electoral registers can also be viewed at the following locations –

- Crown & Elections, 3rd Floor, Government Office, Bucks Road, Douglas
- Tynwald Library, Finch Road, Douglas
- General Registry, Deemsters' Walk, Bucks Road, Douglas

The last opportunity to register in order to vote in the 2021 House of Keys General Election is **Thursday 2 September 2021**.

Don't lose your right to vote – take action now!

3. Are you 16 or over?

If you are 16 years of age on or before polling day and have lived in the Island for the last 12 months you can register to vote in Isle of Man elections.

The Isle of Man was the first country in Western Europe to allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote in national elections. This is different to the UK where you have to be 18 to vote and continues the Island's proud tradition of democratic firsts.

The Isle of Man was also one of the first places in the world to enable women to vote in 1881, while Tynwald is widely recognised as the world's oldest continuous parliament having been established in 979.

Why should young people bother to vote?

Voting is a way to make your voice heard and to choose who you think will represent your interests.

Political decisions have a direct impact on your life and MHKs will consider new laws and policies on important issues including your education, work prospects and university support, as well as topics such as climate change.

Further information is available on the Government website and from Island High Schools and from University College Isle of Man.

4. Assessing the candidates

Before you cast your vote you will wish to assess the merits of the candidates standing for election in your constituency.

Manifesto

A manifesto is a statement published by an election candidate in which they highlight their key messages, aims and policies.

Candidates will often post a copy of their manifesto to every household in their constituency.

Copies of manifestos can also be accessed via the Government website at www.gov.im/elections and local media outlets.

Door-to-door canvassing

During the weeks leading up to an election, candidates will often try to visit as many households within their constituency.

This gives you an opportunity to meet the candidates face to face and ask them about their policies or highlight any issues or concerns you may have.

Election meetings

Pre-election meetings provide an opportunity for you to hear from the candidates standing for election in your constituency.

The Government organises a series of pre-election meetings across all constituencies and details of the venue, date and time of the meetings will be publicised in advance.

Further meetings can be requested by members of the public. You must submit a petition signed by a specified numbers of electors within your constituency to the Captain of the Parish.

The list of Captains of the Parish is available on the Culture Vannin website at www.culturevannin.im/parishcaptains

Local media

Extensive coverage of the 2021 House of Keys General Elections and interviews with the candidates will be published and broadcast by media outlets in the Isle of Man, including –

Isle of Man Newspapers: <http://www.iomtoday.co.im/>

Manx Radio: www.manxradio.com

Three FM: www.three.fm

Energy FM: www.energyfm.net

BBC Isle of Man: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/europe/isle_of_man

ITV Isle of Man: www.itv.com/news/granada/topic/isle-of-man

Gef the Mongoose: www.gefthemongoose.com

Isle of Man TV: <https://www.facebook.com/IsleOfManTV/>

Business 365: <http://www.business365iom.co.uk/>

Social media

Social media is playing an increasingly important part in election campaigning.

Candidates in your constituency may promote their policies and views or engage in debate via channels such as Facebook and Twitter.

5. Voting in person at a polling station

In order to vote, your name must appear on the electoral register for your constituency.

During the month before the election a Notice of Poll will appear in a local newspaper. This will give you the location of the polling station in your area. Details are also available on the Government website at www.gov.im/elections

You will be sent a poll card in the week preceding the election which will also provide the location of your polling station.

If you have not been able to find the location of your polling station, you should contact the Returning Officer for your constituency who will advise you. The list of Returning Officers for the 12 constituencies for the 2021 House of Keys General Election can be viewed at www.gov.im/elections

If you have registered to vote but have not received your polling card you are still entitled to vote.

Polling stations will be clearly signed and are open between the hours of 8am to 8pm on polling day, **Thursday 23 September 2021.**

When you arrive at your polling station you will be directed to a poll clerk who will mark your name off on the electoral register and give you your ballot paper. You do not have to take your poll card with you.

You will then be able to go to the voting booth to secretly cast your vote by putting an 'X' in the space on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name(s) of the candidate(s) you wish to vote for.

You can vote for one or two candidates, as each of the 12 constituencies elects two members.

If you put any other mark on the ballot paper your vote may not be counted.

If you have difficulty marking your ballot paper and need help, please ask to speak to the presiding officer as soon as you arrive at the polling station. The presiding officer is there to help you and, if required, may mark the ballot paper on your behalf.

Fold your completed ballot paper in two to conceal your vote, show the official mark on the back to the presiding officer and place your paper in the ballot box.

If you make a mistake on your ballot paper, don't worry, – as long as you haven't already put it in the ballot box, just let the polling station staff know and they can issue you with a replacement ballot paper.

Do not take a photograph or selfie that shows your ballot paper and how you voted – as this is an offence.

Tellers

Tellers are candidates' representatives who stand outside polling stations and record the elector numbers of individuals who have voted.

By identifying electors who have not voted and relaying this information to the candidates, tellers play an important role in elections. Voters who have not yet been to vote during polling day can then be contacted and potentially persuaded to vote, thereby increasing turnout.

However, you have the right to refuse to give tellers any information.

Also, tellers must behave in accordance with code of practice and should avoid creating an air of intimidation outside polling stations that may deter voters.

6. Voting by post

Postal voting is being introduced for the 2021 House of Keys General Election.

It is an easy and convenient way of voting if you are unable to vote at a polling station or choose not to vote in person.

First you must complete the postal vote application form, which is available from –

- The Government website at www.gov.im/elections
- The Cabinet Office, Third Floor, Government Office, Bucks Road, Douglas, IM1 3PN
- The Returning Officer for your constituency

You are advised to apply for a postal vote well in advance to ensure that it can be sent to you in time. Postal voting packs can be sent to addresses in the Isle of Man, UK and abroad.

The closing date for the receipt of postal voting applications is:

- If you are going to be voting by post in the Isle of Man – Wednesday 15 September 2021
- If you are going to be voting by post within the British Isles, but outside the Isle of Man – Thursday 9 September 2021
- If you are going to be voting by post overseas (outside the Isle of Man and the British Isles) – Tuesday 31 August 2021

Make sure you complete all sections of the application form and supply your date of birth and signature.

Your date of birth and signature are required on the application form, and again when you use your postal vote. This information is needed to prevent fraud.

If you are physically unable to sign the application you are entitled to a signature waiver. Please contact your constituency Returning Officer to discuss and arrange this.

You will be sent a postal ballot pack containing two envelopes ('A' and 'B'), a postal voting statement and a ballot paper featuring your unique identification number.

When voting by post, you should:

- Complete your ballot paper in secret, on your own
- Don't let anyone else vote for you
- Don't let anyone else see your vote
- Don't give the ballot paper to anyone else
- Put the completed ballot paper in the envelope marked 'A' and seal it up yourself
- Complete and sign the postal voting statement
- Put the postal voting statement and envelope 'A' containing your ballot paper into the larger envelope 'B' and seal it.
- Post your ballot back as quickly as possible to make sure it's counted

Do not take a photograph or selfie that shows your ballot paper and how you voted – as this is an offence.

Completed postal ballots and voting statements must be posted in sufficient time to be delivered to the Returning Officer for your constituency by 5pm on Wednesday 22 September 2021.

If you're too late to post your ballot paper

If you are within the Isle of Man you can deliver your postal ballot by hand on Election Day, to any polling station in your constituency before it closes at 8pm.

More detailed information about how to vote by post, including a privacy statement, is available on the Government website at www.gov.im/elections

7. Voting by proxy

You can apply to appoint a person to vote on your behalf, known as a proxy, only if you have a medical emergency or you have urgent business which requires you to travel overseas.

An application for the appointment of a proxy is available from –

- The Government website at www.gov.im/elections
- The Cabinet Office, Third Floor, Government Office, Bucks Road, Douglas, IM1 3PN
- The Deputy Returning Officer for your constituency

A person who is appointed as a proxy voter must –

- Be age 16 years or over; and
- Not be appointed proxy to vote on behalf of more than two individuals, except where the proxy is the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or

grandchild of those individuals. A proxy may be appointed for any number of these individuals.

Please note that an application for the appointment of a proxy must be received by the Electoral Registration Officer on or before Friday 17 September 2021.

When a proxy has been appointed to vote on your behalf you may still vote in person, provided you apply at the polling station for a ballot paper for the purpose of voting in person BEFORE a ballot paper has been issued to your proxy.

8. Returning Officers for the constituency

The powers and authority to run House of Keys elections are invested in the Returning Officers for each of the 12 constituencies and any additional deputies that may be appointed.

The Returning Officers for the 12 House of Keys constituencies for the 2021 General Election are listed below:

Arbory, Castletown and Malew

Mr Laurence Vaughan-Williams

Tel: 836757; email: quotes@laurencevaughan-williams.com

Ayre and Michael

To be confirmed

Tel: TBC; email: TBC

Douglas Central

Mr Tim Swift

Tel: 647607; email: TSwift@applebyglobal.com

Douglas East

Mr Andrew Bridson

Tel: 614422; email: abridson@iomlaw.com

Douglas North

Mr Geoffrey Kermeen

Tel: 0333 939 80000; email:

Geoff.Kermeen@keystonelaw.co.im

Douglas South

Mr James Quinn

Tel: 665522; email: james@quinnlegal.im

Garff

Mr Miles Benham

Tel: 639351; email: MilesBenham@mannbenham.com

Glenfaba and Peel

Mrs Sally Bolton

Tel: 676868; email: sally.bolton@corlettbolton.com

Middle

Mr Steven Quayle

Tel: 638300; email: steven.quayle@cains.com

Onchan

Mr Jeremy Callin

Tel: 676763; email: jeremy@callinwild.com

Ramsey

Mr Robert Jelski

Tel: 812107; email: rjelski@dc-ramsey.com

Rushen

Mr Mark Humphrey

Tel: 651951; email: rushenro@longandhumphrey.com

Useful contacts

Crown and Elections Unit

Cabinet Office

Third Floor

Government Office

Bucks Road

Douglas

IM1 3PN

Website: www.gov.im/elections

Tel: (01624) 685754

Email: elections@gov.im

Glossary of election terms

Agent: A person who represents candidates in their dealings with the electoral authorities and runs their campaigns.

Ballot: Another term for vote.

Ballot box: Sealed box with a slit in the lid, into which voters place their ballot papers.

Ballot paper: Paper containing a list of all candidates standing in a constituency. Voters mark their choice with a cross.

By-election: An election held between general elections, usually because the sitting MHK has been elected to the Legislative Council or resigned.

Candidate: Someone who is standing for election, either as an independent or representing a political party.

Canvassing: In the run up to polling day candidates will mount an election campaign. They will go door to door to speak to people in their constituency and publish a manifesto to try to drum up support.

Constituency: The geographical unit which elects a Member of the House of Keys. There are 12 constituencies in the Isle of Man, each electing two MHKs.

Count: The process of add all the votes cast in a constituency in order to declare a result.

Election expenses: Candidates are only allowed to spend a limited amount of money on their election campaign. Accounts must be submitted as evidence they did not exceed this limit.

Electoral register: A list of all members of the public in a constituency who are entitled to vote. Also known as electoral roll.

Exit poll: A poll carried out by researchers or media outlets asking people how they have voted as they leave the polling station on Election Day.

First past the post: Term used to describe the Isle of Man's election system.

Franchise: The right to vote. Available to those aged 16 or over who are on the electoral register.

General election: Election at which all seats in the House of Keys are contested.

Legislative Council: The upper branch of Tynwald. Members are not directly elected.

Manifesto: A public declaration of a candidate's ideas and policies, usually printed during the campaign. Once elected, MHKs are often judged by how many of their manifesto promises they manage to deliver.

MHK: Member of the House of Keys, the popularly-elected branch of Tynwald, the Isle of Man parliament.

Nomination papers: A candidate must be nominated on these documents by 20 registered electors living in the constituency.

Personation: The offence of impersonating someone else in order to use their vote.

Poll: Another term for vote or election.

Polling clerk: The person in the polling station who checks the electoral register to verify that the voter is eligible to cast their vote.

Polling day: The day of the election.

Polling station: the place where people go to cast their votes.

Postal vote: People unable to get to a polling station are allowed to vote by post if they apply in advance.

Presiding officer: The person responsible for ensuring the conduct of the ballot in polling stations. Presiding officers have to ensure that ballot boxes are kept secure and are responsible for transferring them safely to the count.

Proxy vote: In exceptional circumstances, such as a medical emergency, people unable to get to a polling station are allowed to appoint someone to vote on their behalf.

Recount: If a result is close, any candidate may ask for a recount. The process can be repeated several times if necessary until the candidates are satisfied. The Returning Officer has the final say on whether a recount takes place.

Returning Officer for the constituency: The official in charge of elections in each of the 12 constituencies.

Speaker: An MHK elected by other Members of the House of Keys to chair debates and deal with the running of the Keys.

Spoilt ballots: Ballot papers which have been filled in incorrectly. The returning officer has the final say over whether any paper not marked with a single cross is valid.

Tellers: Representatives of candidates who wait outside polling stations and ask people for their number on the electoral roll. This is to help candidates ensure all their supporters have voted. Tellers have no official status and no-one is obliged to give them any information.

Turnout: The number or percentage of people eligible to vote in a constituency who actually turn out to the polling station to do so or send in their postal vote.

Tynwald: The Isle of Man parliament, comprising the two branches – the House of Keys and Legislative Council.

Voter: An individual who is entitled to vote in an election by virtue of being on the electoral register, having attained the age of 16 years and having lived in the Island for the preceding 12 months.



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