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# Ballot for the election of the Speaker

## Introduction

- 1 This note describes the practical arrangements for the election of the Speaker by secret ballot. The procedure is set out in detail in Standing Order No. 1B. The election is due to take place on 4 November 2019.

## Nominations

- 2 Nominations should be submitted in writing to the Lower Table Office between 9.30 am and 10.30 am on the day of the election. Nomination forms will be available in advance from the Table Office, Vote Office and Procedural Hub but need not be used, provided that in all respects nominations meet the provisions of Standing Order No. 1B. To be valid, nominations must contain a signed statement from the candidate declaring willingness to stand, and must be signed by not fewer than 12 nor more than 15 Members, of whom at least three must have been elected to the House as members of a party other than that of the candidate (or as members of no party). No Member may sign more than one statement of nomination—and if any Member does so, their signature will be invalidated for all nominations.
- 3 A list of validly nominated candidates, and the names of those who have nominated them, will be made available by 11.00 am in the Members' Lobby (Vote Office window) and online.

## Candidates address the House

- 4 The House will meet at 2.30 pm, with the Senior Member, Rt Hon Mr Kenneth Clarke MP, presiding in the Chair. Prayers will not be read, although the prayer card system can be used to reserve seats. If there is only one valid nomination, the Presiding Member will invite the Member so nominated to submit himself or herself to the House and then put the question for that Member's election as Speaker to the House forthwith. There will be no ballot.
- 5 If there is more than one candidate a ballot is held. The candidates will address the House in turn, the order having been determined by lot drawn by the Presiding Member. The order of speaking will be announced in advance on the annunciator and the candidates will be contacted directly to inform them. The Presiding Member has requested that candidates limit their speech to 5 minutes.

## The Ballot

- 6 The start of the first ballot will be declared by the Presiding Member after the conclusion of the candidates' addresses and the ballot will run for 20 minutes from that time. Members with surnames A to K should vote in the Aye Lobby, entering by the doors behind the Speaker's Chair; Members with surnames starting L to Z should vote in the No Lobby, entering by the doors off the Members' Lobby. Only one entrance to each lobby will be open. Members will have their name recorded at temporary division desks before being issued with a ballot paper from a station set up further down the lobby.

The ballot paper will give the names of candidates in alphabetical order. Members should approach the division desks in three queues as follows.

In the Aye Lobby:

surnames beginning with A to C  
surnames beginning with D to G  
surnames beginning with H to K

In the No Lobby:

surnames beginning with L to O  
surnames beginning with P to S  
surnames beginning with T to Z

- 7 Any Member who is on the Parliamentary Estate but incapacitated from voting in the lobbies may ask for a Clerk to obtain a ballot paper in the lobby on their behalf, bring it to them to complete, and return to cast it for them in the ballot box. Members who need to use this service should make such a request by email to Joanna Dodd, Clerk of Elections, Public Bill Office ([doddj@parliament.uk](mailto:doddj@parliament.uk)). Requests should arrive not later than one hour before the ballot opens.
- 8 Members who have proxy votes for parental absence in operation must ask their nominated proxy to cast their vote on their behalf.
- 9 Members should complete the ballot paper at one of the stations erected in the lobby, and then deposit it in the ballot box at the exit from the lobby. Members may vote for only one candidate.
- 10 The ballot will be open for 20 minutes at which point the Presiding Member will order the entry doors to the lobby to be locked. All Members in the lobby when the doors are locked will be allowed to vote.
- 11 It is expected that the counting of the first ballot will take approximately one hour.
- 12 As soon as counting is complete the House will be summoned. The Presiding Member will announce the number of votes cast for each candidate. If one has received more than half of the votes cast, the question will be put “that [that Member] do take the Chair of the House as Speaker”. Otherwise the House will proceed to a second ballot. At this stage no new nominations may be received. A new ballot paper will be prepared without the names of (a) the candidate who received the fewest votes<sup>1</sup>, (b) any candidate who received less than 5% of the votes cast in the previous ballot, and (c) any candidate who within ten minutes of the announcement of the previous ballot has notified the Presiding Member of an intention to withdraw.
- 13 It is expected that the next ballot would be opened about 30 minutes after the announcement of the result of the previous ballot. The timing will appear on the annunciator. Again, the ballot will be open for 20 minutes.
- 14 Successive ballots will be held until either one candidate receives more than half the votes cast or the elimination of other candidates leaves only one candidate on the ballot paper. The question will then be put “that [that Member] do take the Chair of the House as Speaker”. If that question is agreed, the Member will then take the Chair as Speaker-elect.
- 15 The Speaker-Elect then makes a short speech and this is followed by speeches from party leaders. The conclusion of the process is the Queen’s Royal Approbation, which is signified in the House of Lords. The Speaker returns to the House of Commons to report that the Queen has signified her approval.

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<sup>1</sup> SO No. 1B(12) provides that if two Members are equal in receiving the fewest votes but each amounts to more than 5% of the votes, their names may remain on the next ballot paper.

## Contacts

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