

30 July 2014

Hereditary Peers' By-election

The death of Lord Methuen on 9 July 2014 has created a vacancy among the excepted hereditary peers who sit in the House of Lords. Under Standing Order 10, this vacancy is to be filled by means of a by-election. This notice sets out the arrangements for the by-election.

The ballot for this by-election will be held on Tuesday 21 October, between 10am and 8pm in Committee Room 3. Members unable to attend the House on that day in order to vote in person are entitled to apply for a postal vote – the deadline for applying for a postal vote will be during recess, on Thursday 2 October at 3pm.

Background

Lord Methuen was one of the 15 hereditary peers elected by the whole House in 1999, from among those ready to serve as Deputy Speakers or in any other office. Therefore, under Standing Order 10(3), his successor will be elected by the whole House. In 1999 the Procedure Committee recommended that any peer elected at a by-election in this category should not be expected to serve as a Deputy Speaker.

All Members of the House who have taken the Oath, and who are not subject to statutory disqualification, suspended from the service of the House, or on Leave of Absence, are entitled to vote in this by-election.

Those eligible to stand are all those hereditary peers whose names are listed in the register of hereditary peers wishing to stand for election as members of the House of Lords maintained by the Clerk of the Parliaments. All those on this register are being asked to indicate by Thursday 11 September whether they wish to be a candidate in this by-election. A notice including the list of candidates and their statements will be sent to all Members on Monday 15 September.

The deadline for electors wishing to apply for a postal vote is Thursday 2 October, and the form attached to this notice should reach the House of Lords Journal Office no later than 3pm on that date. Ballot papers will be sent to electors at “House of Lords”, unless the Journal Office is notified of an alternative address. A form for notifying the Journal Office of an alternative address is enclosed with this notice.

Postal ballots are to be returned to the Clerk of the Parliaments, either by post or in person, by 5pm on Tuesday 21 October. Ballot papers received after this time will not be counted.

Timetable and conduct of the by-elections

As the whole House will be entitled to vote in the by-election following the death of Lord Methuen, it has been agreed that for this by-election:

- Candidates will be invited, but not required, to declare party affiliation, or, where appropriate, their intention to stand as independent “Crossbenchers”.



- Candidates will also be invited, but not required, to submit statements in support of their candidature. Such statements, which will not exceed 75 words, will be circulated by the House Administration to all electors.

For this by-election the House Administration will make no arrangements for a hustings.

The Code of Conduct for the by-election is set out in the Annex to this Notice.

Electoral Reform Services are assisting the Clerk of the Parliaments with the organisation of the by-election.

The timetable for the by-election is as follows:

By Thursday 11 September, 3pm	Deadline for notification of candidature and candidate statements to reach the Journal Office.
Monday 15 September	List of candidates and statements published and a Notice sent to electors.
By Thursday 2 October, 3pm	Deadline for applications for postal ballots.
Monday 6 October	Ballot papers issued to those requesting a postal vote.
Tuesday 21 October, 10am – 8pm	Voting in Committee Room 3.
By Tuesday 21 October, 5pm	Deadline for postal ballots to be received.
Wednesday 22 October	Count to take place. The Clerk of the Parliaments will then report the result of the by-election to the House.

The Alternative Vote System will be used. Voters place the figure 1 in the box next to the name of the candidate they most strongly support, the figure 2 against the next most favoured candidate, and so on. Voters may cast as many or as few votes as they wish. In order to be elected, the successful candidate must receive at least as many votes as all the other candidates put together. In the event of this not happening after first preference votes have been allocated, the votes of the candidates receiving the lowest number of first preference votes will be shared out according to the second preference marked on them. This will be repeated until one candidate has at least half of the total valid vote.

Ballot papers will be invalidated if:

- Any number is used more than once, or
- In the opinion of the Returning Officer (the Clerk of the Parliaments) the ballot paper is illegible or ambiguous.

The count will be conducted by Electoral Reform Services.

The result will be announced in the House of Lords chamber by the Clerk of the Parliaments at a convenient moment (likely to be after oral questions) on Wednesday 22 October.



The full results, including the number of first preference votes cast for each candidate and the position after each transfer of votes, will be made available in the Printed Paper Office and the Library as soon as possible after the announcement by the Clerk of the Parliaments. The results will also be published online at www.parliament.uk.

Enquiries

Enquiries may be addressed as follows:

- By post: The Registry, Journal Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW
- By telephone: House of Lords Duty Clerk, 020 7219 3036
- By e-mail: holjournaloffice@parliament.uk

DAVID BEAMISH
Clerk of the Parliaments

Annex: Code of Conduct

1. Ballot papers will not indicate any qualification or reason why a candidate should be elected.
2. Candidates may not offer hospitality, entertainment or financial inducements to electors intended to influence their votes or likely to have that effect.
3. Candidates may not engage in any activity intended or likely to discredit other candidates in the by-election.
4. Candidates may not solicit votes near the room where the by-election is taking place.
5. If the Clerk of the Parliaments suspects, on reasonable grounds, that some material irregularity or improper conduct may have occurred in the electoral process, he may refer the matter to the Committee for Privileges and Conduct. The Committee may, if it thinks fit, recommend the disqualification of a successful candidate if their election appears to have been influenced by material irregularity or improper conduct.
6. In this code of conduct, “candidate” includes an agent or supporter acting on behalf of the candidate.



House of Lords By-election: vacancy created by the death of Lord Methuen on 9 July 2014

APPLICATION FOR POSTAL VOTE

I wish to apply for a postal vote in this by-election.

I understand that the ballot paper will be posted on Monday 6 October 2014, and that it will be sent to me at the House of Lords, unless I provide an alternative address in the box below.

I would like the ballot paper to be sent to me at the following address:

Signature: _____

Name (please print): _____

Please return this form no later than 3pm on Thursday 2 October 2014 to:

Journal Office
House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW

