

General Election 2019 – guidance for Living Streets Local Groups

As you'll be aware, the UK will be having a General Election on 12 December. We are now in the "purdah" period, the time before an election when specific restrictions on communications are in place.

There are laws governing the conduct of Living Streets as a charity during the election campaign. It is important that those working for and associated with Living Streets, including our Local Groups, take these seriously. Living Streets, like all charities, needs to be **neutral** throughout the campaign, both online and offline. This is enforced by the Charity Commission.

Political campaigning

Supporters and volunteers are able to campaign for parties in their own time but **must** ensure that they do not associate Living Streets or its name with any party political activity.

Local Groups **must** not use the Living Streets brand in any way that would suggest endorsement of a particular party or candidate

If you engage politically:

- **please make sure you don't wear Living Streets branded clothes.**
- Take care with any comments you make on social media that could be inadvertently associated with Living Streets.

Political liaison and social media

There are also important rules governing Living Streets conduct as a charity during the election campaign, which again we expect our supporters, volunteers and Local Groups to follow.

MPs officially cease to be MPs – and will be one of several candidates in parliamentary constituencies. **Any outreach or activity on behalf of Living Streets needs, therefore, to be directed at all candidates, rather than just at one single party or candidate. This is the case at constituency and national level.**

This policy also applies to social media. Outreach on behalf of Living Streets is very welcome, but again any activity **needs to be directed at all candidates in an area, rather than just at one single party or candidate.**

Local Groups must also keep a clear record of any expenditure they may undertake on events during the election campaigning period.

The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and the 2014 Lobbying Act set out the rules on regulated campaign activity in the run-up to some elections. We need to keep a record of spending on lobbying activity (under the Lobbying Act), for the year prior to a General Election so we can check if it qualifies as regulated spend. Charities have to register as "third parties" with the Electoral Commission if they will be spending over certain limits – including election material, media events, press conferences and other public events (and staff time associated with these activities).

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If you have any questions or comments regarding the above, or if you would like to discuss any campaigning activity you are planning, please contact Will Griffiths-Stent, Engagement Manager, at will.griffiths-stent@livingstreets.org.uk.