



Living Streets Election Guidance – 2026

Welsh Senedd, Scottish Parliament, and some English local government elections will take place on 7 May 2026. This document provides some information on the guidance that Living Streets staff and Local Groups must follow when engaging in political activity as part of their work for the charity.

Overview

Charity law and government guidance around charities and political activity in [England](#), [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#) – is well-established and relatively clear. Charities can engage in ‘political activity’ as long as it’s in the service of their charitable objectives. For Living Streets, this means that all political campaigning must be related to our mission to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.

The Electoral Commission recognises that *“campaigning, advocacy and political activity are all legitimate and valuable activities for charities to undertake”*.

Charities are free to write letters to councillors, MSs, MSPs, MPs or Ministers, to seek to influence political parties to adopt policies that would support their beneficiaries (or to reverse or alter policies that harm them), to speak in public or to the press about these things, and to engage supporters and the public in campaigns to make change happen. This is the case during election periods just as at any other time.

Senedd and Scottish Parliament elections

In Scotland and Wales, the important thing is that those activities must be done in a politically neutral manner. We cannot promote or influence the success of any single party or candidate. We can campaign on issues that are supported by one party and not by another, but we cannot lend support to one candidate over another on this basis.

Guidance on specific activity

In general, the distinction between campaigning that is allowed and not allowed should be quite straightforward using the guidance outlined above. Please see some specific examples outlined below.

- No Living Streets material, including on our website or social media pages, can urge people to vote for or against a certain party or candidate. Supporters and volunteers can 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. Do not wear any Living Streets branded clothing when campaigning for a political party.
- We cannot compare the policies of different parties on any material we produce such as leaflets, website or social media, unless doing so objectively as a statement of fact.
- We cannot ask only one party to adopt our policy recommendations or exclude any major party candidate from a hustings event (including events you are involved in but have not organised). We cannot highlight the endorsement of any of our specific policies by a candidate. Remember that MSs and MSPs officially cease to be MSs or MSPs upon the dissolution of the government – and will be one of several candidates in electoral 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.
- On social media be careful what you are saying from the Living Streets account or from your own personal accounts if they are linked to Living Streets. We shouldn't be promoting anything about an elected official, candidate or party or policies known to be favoured by a particular party. Be safe not sorry and check in with us before you post.

Pre-election period

Formerly known as Purdah, the pre-election period is a regulated period before an election. During this time, spending on campaigning activity is regulated, elected officials are restricted from certain activities and using the resources available to them in their public office. In practice this means that officials can only campaign as a prospective candidate, and not as the holder of a current post.

The pre-election period in Wales will begin after the dissolution of The Senedd on Wednesday 8 April 2026. The pre-election period in Scotland will begin six weeks before the election on 26 March 2026. The pre-election period for local elections in England is currently being reviewed.

Finally...

Living Streets is always politically neutral and we must take due diligence around our activities.

If you need any help or have further questions, please contact Ruth (ruth.billingham@livingstreets.org.uk) or Zak (zak.viney@livingstreets.org.uk).