

Hereditary peers: By-elections briefing

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The result of the [most recent hereditary peer by-election](#) will be announced on Wednesday 19 July.

This by-election was called following the retirement of Lord Walpole. As a Crossbench Peer, his replacement will be selected by hereditary peers of the Crossbench group - 31 in total.

Eligible candidates are drawn from the Register of Hereditary Peers held by the Clerk of Parliaments. This list contains any hereditary peer who has expressed an interest in standing in a by-election.

Peers can join or leave the list at any time and the list is published annually. [Available here](#).

There were 10 candidates in this Crossbench group by-election (and 31 eligible voters). On the basis of recent turnout, around 25 Peers will decide which aristocrat remains in Parliament to vote on our laws, for the rest of their lives.

Here are some of the statements for this by-election:

Cadman, L.

[No statement submitted.]

Somerleyton, L.

I think the hereditary peerage worth preserving. In a time of great uncertainty, its principle creates a sense of underrated commitment to the welfare of the nation. 20 years' experience and entrepreneurship in hospitality; in East Anglia 12 years' practical experience of rural affairs, agriculture, environment, tourism and housing. Special interests include re-wilding movement and animal welfare, Middle Eastern affairs/sustainable justice for Palestinians. I would make a distinctive contribution in these areas as a liberal pro-European Crossbencher.

Hill, V.

I wish to come and give my support for Brexit.
I have been in farming.

Background

The 1999 House of Lords Act removed all but 90 of the hereditary peers (plus holders of the offices of Earl Marshall and Lord Great Chamberlain) – 92 in total. 667 hereditary peers lost their right to sit in the Lords in these reforms.

Subsequently, vacancies that result from death (or retirement, resignation or exclusion since the House of Lords Reform Act 2014 and House of Lords (Expulsion and Suspension) Act 2015) are filled by by-election.

By-elections take place within party groups (except for 15 hereditary peers, originally elected to serve as office holders, whose successors are elected by the whole house). These party groups reflected the proportion of party affiliation at the time of the 1999 reforms. There are 49 Conservative hereditary peers, 4 Labour, 4 Liberal Democrat and 31 Crossbench hereditary peers (1 UKIP, 1 non-affiliated). See full breakdown [here](#).

Where are the women?

There is only one female hereditary peer currently sitting in the House of Lords (The Countess of Mar).

Three of the original five female hereditary peers that remained following the 1999 reforms have since died and one retired in 2014. All four were replaced by male peers and there is only one female hereditary peer listed on the register of future candidates (June 2017). No female hereditary peer has been admitted to the House of Lords by by-election.

Previous hereditary by-elections

Elections to the House of Lords use the *Alternative Vote*. <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/voting-systems/types-of-voting-system/alternative-vote/>

- The first hereditary by-election was held in 2003 following the death of Viscount Oxfuird
- The average turnout for by-elections is 82%. Three by-elections have had 100% turnout (all of which have had an electorate of 4 or fewer).
- At its highest, the electorate was 803, at its lowest just 3.
- Four by-elections have had more candidates than electors. Including the only by-election within the Labour group of hereditary peers for which there were 11 candidates and only 3 voters.

Previous 5 years of by-elections

Previous Peer	Reason ceased to be a member	Electorate	Date of result	No of candidates	No of voters	Turnout (no.)	Turnout %	Winning candidate
Earl Ferrers	Died	Conservative group	06/02/2013	27	48	46	96	Viscount Ridley
Lord Reay	Died	Whole House	17/07/2013	23	753	334	45	Lord Borwick
Lord Moran	Died	Crossbench group	09/04/2014	13	29	27	93	Lord Cromwell
Lord Methuen	Died	Whole House	22/10/2014	15	776	283	36	Earl of Oxford and Asquith
Viscount Allenby of Megiddo	Died	Crossbench group	10/12/2014	18	27	25	93	Lord Russell of Liverpool
Lord Cobbold	Retired							Duke of Somerset
Lord Chorley	Retired	Crossbench group	03/02/2015	18	28	26	93	Lord Thurlow
Lady Saltoun of Abernethy	Retired							Earl of Kinnoull
Viscount Tenby	Retired	Crossbench group	07/07/2015	19	28	25	89	Lord Mountevans
Lord Luke	Retired	Conservative group	16/09/2015	16	48	41	85	Duke of Wellington
Viscount Montgomery of Alamein	Retired	Crossbench group	20/10/2015	17	29	26	90	Lord Trevethin and Oaksey
Lord Montagu of Beaulieu	Died	Conservative group	24/11/2015	14	48	44	92	Lord Fairfax of Cameron
Lord Avebury	Died	Lib Dem	19/04/2016	7	3	3	100	Viscount Thurso
Lord Bridges	Non-attendance	Crossbench group	12/07/2016	17	31	27	87	Earl of Cork and Orrery
Lord Lyell	Died	Whole House	21/03/2017	27	803	346	43	Lord Colgrain