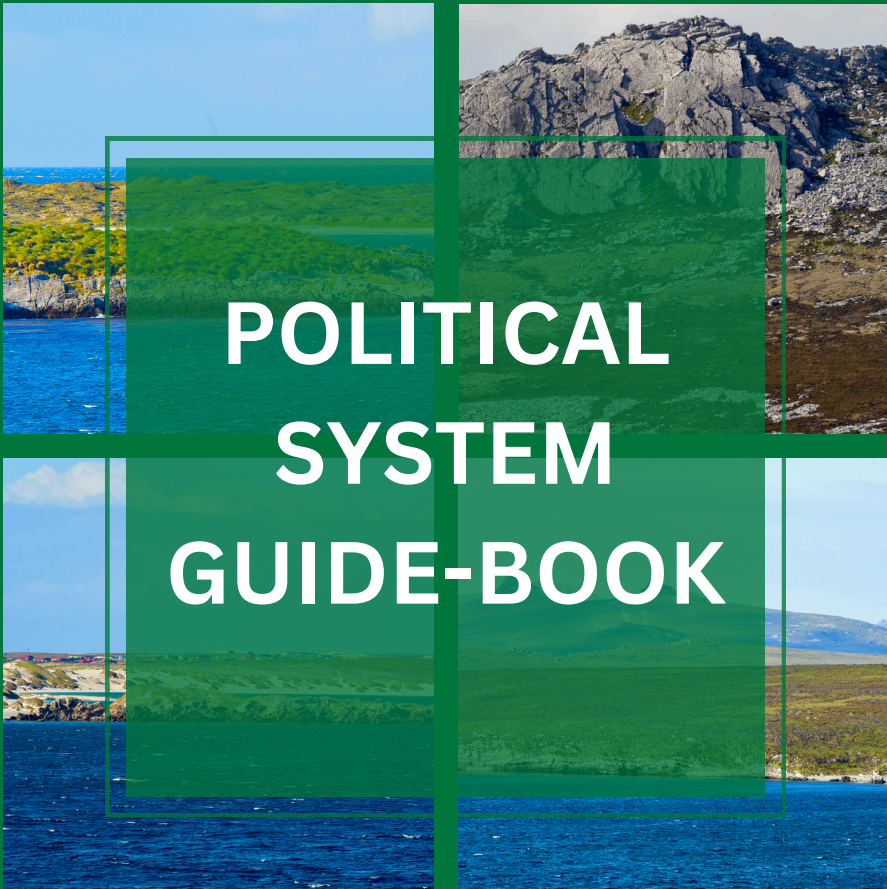




THE FALKLAND ISLANDS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
General Election Supporting Materials

Booklet produced and distributed by
the Office of the Legislative Assembly

THE 2025 GENERAL ELECTION



POLITICAL SYSTEM GUIDE-BOOK

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GENERAL ELECTION

Elections are at the heart of democracy, giving people the power to shape the future of their community and country. In the Falkland Islands, our General Election is more than just a vote—it is a vital expression of self-determination, a principle that allows us to govern ourselves and make decisions that reflect the will of the people who live here.

Self-Determination and the Falkland Islands

As a self-governing British Overseas Territory, the Falkland Islands elects its own representatives to lead and make decisions on behalf of the people. By voting in a General Election, Islanders actively participate in shaping policies, laws, and the future direction of the Islands. Every vote cast strengthens our right to self-determination and demonstrates our commitment to democratic governance.

The Role of MLAs in Our Community

Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are elected to represent the people of the Falklands. Their responsibilities go beyond making laws—they advocate for the Islands internationally, oversee the government's work, and make crucial decisions about policies and budgets. MLAs are accountable to the public, meaning they must listen to and act in the best interests of the people they serve.

Why Every Voice Matters

Even if you cannot vote—whether due to age, residency status, or other reasons—you can still be part of the democratic process. Elections are not just about marking a ballot; they are about discussion, debate, and engagement. You can:

- ✓ Attend public meetings to hear from candidates and ask them questions.
- ✓ Engage with MLAs and candidates about issues that matter to you.
- ✓ Encourage others to vote and participate in civic discussions.
- ✓ Stay informed about policies and decisions that affect the Islands.

A Collective Responsibility

Democracy thrives when people engage with it. By voting, standing as a candidate, or simply taking part in discussions, Islanders contribute to a stronger, more representative government. Elections are not just about the present—they shape the future for generations to come.

Your participation—whether as a voter, candidate, or engaged citizen—helps ensure the Falkland Islands remains a fair, democratic, and self-determined society.

THE ELECTION YEAR

AT A GLANCE

PROCLAMATION & NOTICE OF ELECTION

Friday, 31 October

Following the notice of election nomination packs will be made available, and candidates will have roughly two weeks to get the information required and submitted. After which candidates will be announced and campaigning will properly begin.

ELECTION DAY

Thursday, 11 December

Polling takes place across the Islands, mobile polling stations driving and flying across the Falklands collecting votes to be counted later on.

For more information on your vote check the election handbook..

MLA oaths sworn

First week in office

During their first week as MLAs they will visit Government House, making their oaths and affirmations.

For more on what happens after MLAs are elected check the election handbook.

WORKSHOPS

July-October

Throughout the year there will be various Pre-Election Workshops, giving opportunity for voters and potential candidates to learn more about the FIG and the role of MLAs.

For more information on the Pre-Election Workshops turn to page 10.

CAMPAIGNING

Second half of November

Candidates will share manifestos, speak to the press, and attend debates. This is the opportunity for voters to make up their minds on who to support.

For more on the election and campaigning process check the election handbook..

ELECTION NIGHT

Thursday, 11 December

Votes are counted in the Town Hall in Stanley, usually the same day as polling. Members of the public and candidates can usually attend to observe the vote counting. Usually before 11pm the successful candidates are announced.

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

THE FALKLANDS

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

AND WHY IT MATTERS

The Falkland Islands are a self-governing British Overseas Territory under a constitutional monarchy. While the King is the head of state, executive authority is exercised on his behalf by an appointed Governor.

The government consists of three key branches:

- *Legislature*: The Legislative Assembly, elected by the people, makes laws and policies, and sets budgets.
- *Executive*: The Executive Branch includes the whole civil service, lead by the Chief Executive. There is also *the Executive Council* as the Executive decision making body, it is Chaired by the Governor, with most decisions made by the elected members.
- *Judiciary*: An independent legal system ensures fair enforcement of laws.

The UK is responsible for defence and foreign policy, but all domestic affairs are governed and funded locally.

THE NON-MINISTERIAL SYSTEM

Unlike many parliamentary democracies, the Falkland Islands do not operate a ministerial system. Instead of government ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) take on individual portfolios and work with civil servants to oversee specific areas like education, health, or island security.

Why This Matters:

- It allows for collective discussion on a range of issues by the Assembly, but limits executive decisions to Executive Council.
- There is no official opposition; all MLAs are independent and focus on representing their constituents rather than party politics.
- MLAs cannot command FIG Officers other than through papers passed in Executive Council.

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (THE LEGISLATURE)

The Legislative Assembly (the meeting, not the group) is the Falklands' law-making body.

The Legislative Assembly meetings (sometimes referred to as LegCo)

- Usually meets monthly, on the last Thursday of the month.
- Includes the 8 elected MLAs (5 from Stanley, 3 from Camp).
- Also includes 2 ex-officio (non-voting) members - Chief Executive & Financial Secretary. It is also attended by the Commander of the British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI) and the Attorney General.
- Is Chaired by The Speaker of the House, who is chosen by each new Assembly after potential speakers put themselves forwards.

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH & THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Executive Council

- The highest decision-making body of Government, made up of:
 - Three MLAs, elected annually by the Assembly.
 - The Chief Executive & Financial Secretary (non-voting members).
 - The Attorney General and Commander of the British Forces South Atlantic Islands (CBFSAI) can attend but are not formal ex-officio members.
 - The Governor chairs the meetings - but is not a member.

The Chief Executive

- The head of the Civil Service, responsible for implementing policies decided by the Executive Council.

The Governor

- Represents The Monarchy in the Falklands.
- Presides over Executive Council meetings but acts on the advice of elected MLAs.

Only the three elected MLAs have voting power on Executive Council (ExCo), ensuring decisions reflect the people's interests.

THE JUDICIARY: INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL

The Falklands Judiciary closely follows the legal system of England and Wales but is separate to them, with Falklands Laws being made in the Falklands. The sections of the Judiciary are:

- *Supreme Court*: Handles the most serious legal cases, akin to the UK High Court.
- *Magistrates' Court*: Handles more serious legal matters than The Summary Court, matters being judged by the Senior Magistrate.
- *The Summary Court*: The first court which cases will appear in, with Falkland Islanders judging cases as Justices of the Peace or passing more serious cases to higher courts.
- *Court of Appeal*: Reviews cases from the Supreme Court.
- *Privy Council*: The final court of appeal for the Falklands.

ELECTIONS & POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- General elections occur every four years.
- Any person with Falkland Islands status, and who is over 18 and on the electoral register, can vote or stand for election.
- MLAs are elected as independents (no political parties).

The Falklands, unlike the UK, also has a constitution. *Read more about the Falklands Islands constitution on page 8.*

The Falkland Islands operate a unique, independent, and non-partisan political system. While governance follows many British traditions, the absence of a ministerial system and political parties ensures a community-driven approach to decision-making.

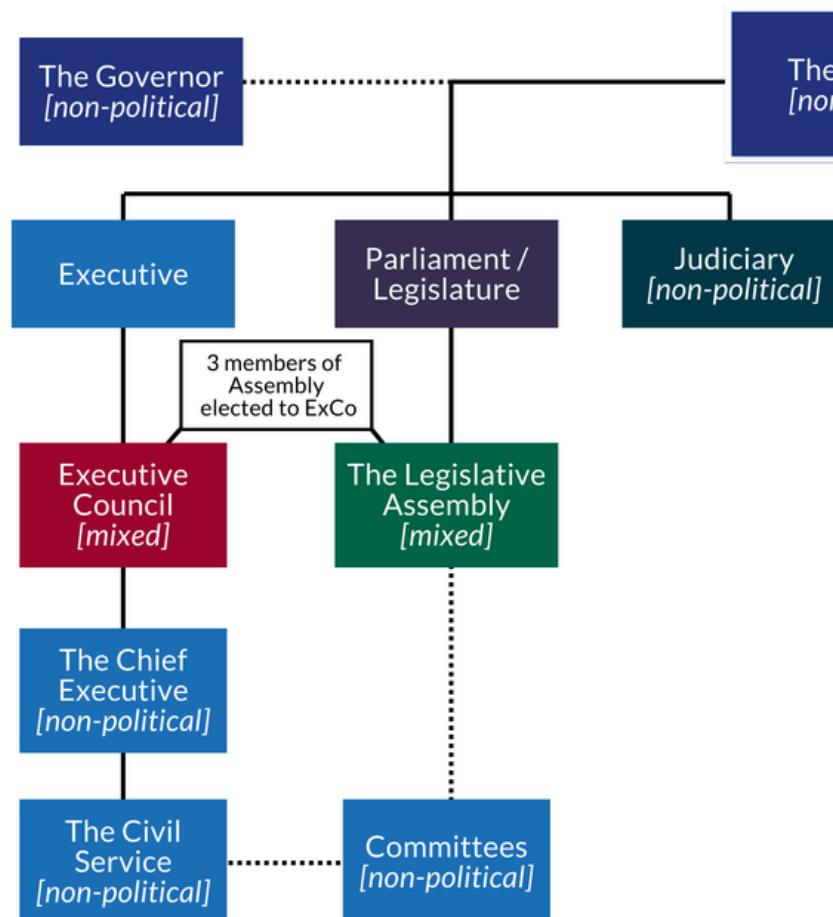
By understanding this system, voters can engage effectively, hold representatives accountable, and contribute to the continued self-governance of the Falklands.

POLITICAL SYSTEMS

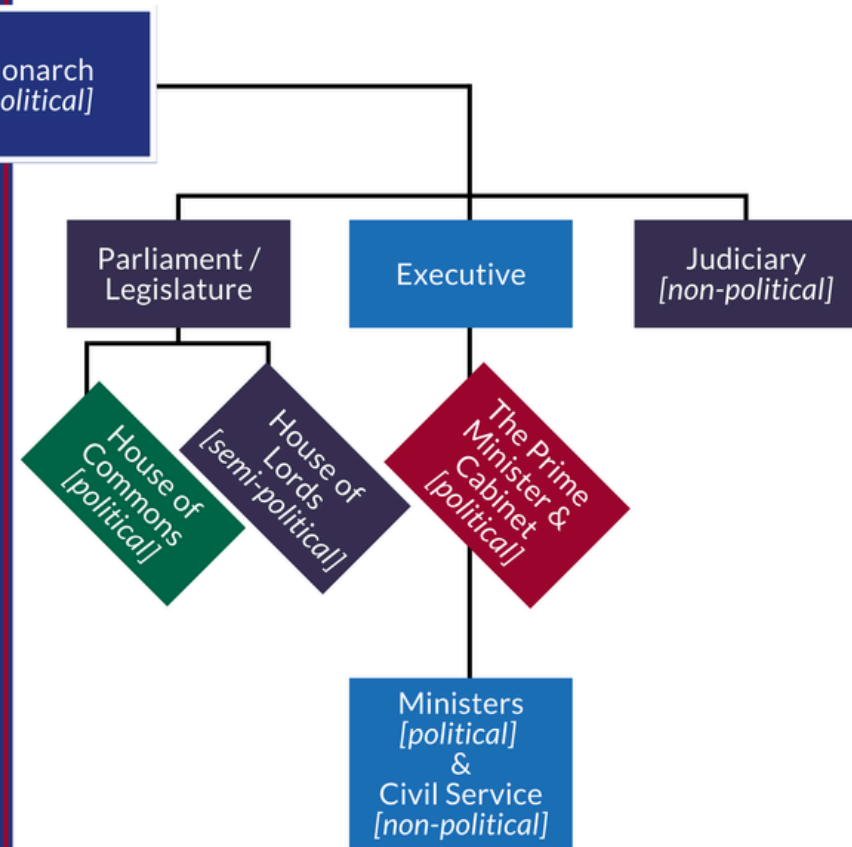
TO UNDERSTAND OUR DEMOCRACY



The Falkland Islands Government



The United Kingdom Government



UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

The Falkland Islands Constitution is the foundational legal document that defines the political and legal framework of the Falkland Islands. It outlines the rights and freedoms of the people, the structure of government, and the relationship with the United Kingdom. The current constitution, established under the Falkland Islands Constitution Order 2008, came into force on 1 January 2009, replacing the 1985 constitution.

This constitution is significant because:

- It enshrines the right to self-determination, a crucial aspect of the Falkland Islanders' political identity.
- It modernized fundamental rights and governance structures.
- It reduced the powers of the Governor, giving more responsibility to elected representatives.
- It defines the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council, ensuring democratic decision-making.
- It establishes judicial independence and public accountability mechanisms.

CONTENTS OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS CONSTITUTION

1. *Fundamental Rights and Freedoms* – Protects civil liberties based on international human rights standards, with emphasis on self-determination.
2. *The Governor* – Defines the Governor's role, appointment, and responsibilities, including defence and internal security.
3. *The Legislature* – Establishes the Legislative Assembly, made up of elected members, and outlines its composition, elections, and dissolution.
4. *Powers and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* – Details law-making powers, voting procedures, and members' rights.
5. *The Executive* – Sets up the Executive Council, which advises the Governor, and outlines decision-making processes.
6. *Finance* – Regulates public finances, including the Consolidated Fund, taxation, and budgeting.
7. *The Public Service* – Establishes the Chief Executive and public administration structure.
8. *The Judiciary* – Defines the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, ensuring judicial independence.
9. *Complaints Commissioner* – Provides an independent process for investigating complaints against the government.
10. *Miscellaneous Provisions* – Covers official seals, appointments, resignations, and legal definitions.

The Constitution also includes Annexes detailing legal procedures and official oaths.

THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

THE GOVERNMENT

COMMITTEES SYSTEM

AND HOW IT AFFECTS THE FALKLANDS

Committees play a vital role in the Falkland Islands' political system, providing specialised knowledge, and ensuring accountability. Most committees have both expert members, and "lay-members" - people without expertise in the given field but have volunteered to serve.

- **Advisory Committees:** Provide non-binding advice to the government or other committees.
- **Statutory Committees:** Have legal authority to make decisions, enforce regulations, or oversee particular areas defined by law.

STATUTORY COMMITTEES

- **Education Board:** Oversees educational policy and standards.
- **Fisheries Committee:** Provides insight on fisheries management.
- **Health, Medical, and Social Services Committee (HMSC):** Advisory to ExCo in relation to the administration and operation of the health services. Also has some delegated powers in relation to public health concerns.
- **Historic Buildings:** Manages historic sites and structures.
- **Planning & Building:** Regulates construction and development.
- **Police Committee:** Provides oversight and accountability for police operations.
- **Safeguarding Children's Board, and Safeguarding Adults Board:** Boards with responsibility for ensuring effective systems are in place to safeguard children and adults at risk respectively. Each are also responsible for undertaking serious case reviews.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

- **Agricultural Advisory:** Supports agricultural development and sustainability.
- **Environment:** Provides insights on environmental protection and sustainability, including licences for research on islands.
- **Housing:** Advises on housing policies and FIG housing.
- **Stamp Advisory Committee:** Guides design and issuance of commemorative stamps.
- **Transport Advisory:** Advises regarding transport infrastructure.

OTHER BODIES

- **Standing Finance Committee (SFC):** A committee of the Legislative Assembly, and manages government spending and financial oversight.
- **Public Accounts Committee (PAC):** An entirely independent body which provides external review of government spending.
- **Falklands Landholdings Board (FLH):** Manages government-owned farmland and agricultural resources.
- **Falkland Islands Museum & National Trust (FIMNT):** Protects the Islands' cultural and historical heritage.
- **FI Tourist Board (FITB):** Supports tourism development.

UNDERSTANDING MLA DUTIES

EXAMPLE

MLA SCHEDULE

IN A REGULAR WEEK

The following is an example of how what an MLA schedule may look like in an average week, once established in office.

Period	Meeting	Purpose
Monday morning	<i>Portfolio meeting</i>	Get updated by Directors and Heads of Service on key developments and actions needed in the portfolio.
Monday morning	<i>Office time</i>	An opportunity for the member to respond to emails, send questions and take action on matters following their portfolio meeting.
Monday morning	<i>Video call</i>	The member has an individual video call with overseas partners on an issue related to their portfolio.
Monday afternoon	<i>Joint MLA meeting</i>	All members meet to discuss key matters of the week. MLAs are briefed on coming press releases; share information from each other's portfolios; one member raises a matter which they plan to pursue in the coming week; responses are planned to received letters/emails; views of Non-ExCo members are shared about ExCo papers.
Monday afternoon	<i>Office time</i>	Time remaining of the afternoon after the MLA meeting is used to act on individual tasks.
Tuesday morning	<i>Chief Exec meeting</i>	All MLAs meet with the Chief Executive, speaking about work taking place in FIG, including capital programme progress; several officers attend throughout to brief Members on ExCo papers and key projects.
Tuesday morning	<i>Governor meeting</i>	MLAs meet with the Governor to speak about matters affecting International Relations.
Tuesday afternoon	<i>Office time</i>	The member gets an opportunity to write and respond to emails, read written updates on projects, and research individual projects.

UNDERSTANDING MLA DUTIES

Period	Meeting	Purpose
Tuesday afternoon	<i>Committee meeting</i>	The member chairs a committee relating to their portfolio in the afternoon, helping to lead the committee in effective decision-making.
Weds morning	<i>Project meeting</i>	With assistance from the Assembly PA a meeting has been arranged with constituents and FIG officers to resolve an arising issue.
Weds morning	<i>Office time</i>	The member gets a moment to respond to emails and phone calls, and reviews draft letters and press releases sent by FIG officers.
Weds morning	<i>Press interview</i>	An interview with a member of the press, the MLA answering questions about matters in their portfolio, as well as wider government matters.
Weds afternoon	<i>Office time</i>	The member gets an opportunity to catch up on emails, research and projects.
Weds evening	<i>Reception</i>	The member attends a public event relating to their portfolio, speaking to constituents and making a speech to celebrate all involved.
Thursday morning	<i>Video call</i>	All MLAs have a video call with UK FCDO staff to speak about anything which may impact Falklands international relationships globally.
Thursday morning	<i>Office time</i>	The member has a meeting with FIG officers in the afternoon about an Islands Plan goal they have been working to meet, and so the member pre-reads their briefing to discuss it.
Thursday afternoon	<i>Islands Plan</i>	The member meets with FIG officers to discuss progress on meeting an Islands Plan goal.
Thursday afternoon	<i>Individual meeting</i>	Having received a phone call from a constituent about an issue they're having, the member has arranged a meeting, and takes on speaking to members of FIG about the issue.
Friday morning	<i>MLA meeting</i>	The member meets with several other MLAs to discuss a letter which has to be sent to a UK MP.
Friday morning	<i>Office time, reading</i>	MLAs have received ExCo papers, and this MLA spends Friday and some of the weekend reading the papers to make informed decisions.

GETTING FAMILIAR WITH **CONTACTS** FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION

You may have more questions or queries than can be answered by this booklet ahead of the election, whether you're planning to vote, or you're planning to run for office.

Here are some key contacts which may be of use:

The Registry

+500 27271 // registryenquiries@townhall.gov.fk

For questions on whether you're on the electoral roll, whether you're eligible to stand for office, or similar queries about registration, the registrar is the best place to contact.

Gilbert House, the Office of the Legislative Assembly

+500 27451 // paassembly@sec.gov.fk

For questions about the Pre-Election Workshops, or for queries directly to current MLAs, contact Gilbert House.

THE PRESS

Whether it's to share your manifesto, try to organise press coverage or adverts, or you want to put a question to candidates through the press, the media have a vital role in an Election.

Falkland Islands TV

+500 22649 // news@fitv.co.fk

Falklands Radio

+500 27279 // newseditor@radio.co.fk

Penguin News

+500 22684 // editor@penguinnews.co.fk