



In Focus

Hereditary By-elections: Results

Background

The House of Lords Act 1999 removed most hereditary peers from the House of Lords. Under the Act, 90 hereditary peers retained their places, elected by their fellow party/group colleagues to remain as Members.¹ Since the start of the 2002–03 session, when one of the 90 hereditary peers dies, retires or is excluded, [a replacement is chosen in a by-election](#).² Hereditary peers wishing to stand in a by-election are listed in a register of hereditary peers, maintained and published by the Clerk of the Parliaments.

There are two different types of by-election. Of the 90 hereditary peers, 15 were elected to provide the House with Members able to act as Deputy Speakers and other office-holders. They are voted for by the whole House.³ Replacements for vacancies among the remaining 75 are voted for by the other hereditary peers in a particular party or by the Crossbench hereditary peers. In 1999, the 75 seats were allocated proportionally to reflect the affiliations of the hereditary peers who sat prior to the House of Lords Act. Consequently, for the purposes of by-elections, 42 are elected by Conservative hereditary peers; two are elected by Labour hereditary peers; three are elected by Liberal Democrat hereditary peers; and 28 are elected by Crossbench hereditary peers.

By-election Results: 2002–Present

Former Member	Reason Ceased to be a Member	Electorate	Date of results	No of candidate	No of voters	Turnout in percent	Winning candidate
Viscount Oxfuird	Died	Whole House	27/03/2003	81	661	64	Viscount Ullswater
Lord Milner of Leeds	Died	Labour	30/10/2003	11	3	100	Lord Grantchester
Lord Vivian	Died	Conservative	13/05/2004	37	48	94	Viscount Trenchard
Earl Russell	Died	Lib Dem	13/01/2005	3	4	100	Earl of Glasgow
Lord Burnham	Died	Conservative	10/03/2005	36	47	89	Lord de Mauley
Lord Aberdare	Died	Whole House	22/03/2005	36	687	51	Viscount Eccles
Baroness Strange	Died	Crossbench	23/06/2005	26	29	97	Viscount Montgomery of Alamein
Lord Mowbray and Stourton	Died	Conservative	07/03/2007	43	47	91	Earl Cathcart
Baroness Darcy de Knayth	Died	Crossbench	22/05/2008	33	29	90	Earl of Stair
Viscount Bledisloe	Died	Crossbench	15/07/2009	33	29	93	Lord Aberdare

Earl of Northesk	Died	Conservative	23/06/2010	33	47	96	Viscount Younger of Leckie
Viscount Colville of Culross	Died	Crossbench	23/06/2010	24	29	90	Earl of Clancarty
Lord Strabolgi	Died	Whole House	23/03/2011	24	769	54	Viscount Hanworth
Lord Monson	Died	Crossbench	11/05/2011	14	28	96	Earl of Lytton
Lord Ampthill	Died	Whole House	20/07/2011	20	769	41	Viscount Colville of Culross
Earl of Onslow	Died	Conservative	20/07/2011	21	47	96	Lord Ashton of Hyde
Earl Ferrers	Died	Conservative	06/02/2013	27	48	96	Viscount Ridley
Lord Reay	Died	Whole House	17/07/2013	23	753	45	Lord Borwick
Lord Moran	Died	Crossbench	09/04/2014	13	29	93	Lord Cromwell
Lord Methuen	Died	Whole House	22/10/2014	15	776	36	Earl of Oxford and Asquith
Viscount Allenby of Megiddo	Died	Crossbench	10/12/2014	18	27	93	Lord Russell of Liverpool and Duke of Somerset ⁴
Lord Cobbold	Retired						
Lord Chorley	Retired	Crossbench	03/02/2015	18	28	93	Lord Thurlow and Earl of Kinnoull ⁵
Lady Saltoun of Abernethy	Retired						
Viscount Tenby	Retired	Crossbench	07/07/2015	19	28	89	Lord Mountevans
Lord Luke	Retired	Conservative	16/09/2015	16	48	85	Duke of Wellington
Viscount Montgomery of Alamein	Retired	Crossbench	20/10/2015	17	29	90	Lord Trevethin and Oaksey
Lord Montagu of Beaulieu	Died	Conservative	24/11/2015	14	48	92	Lord Fairfax of Cameron
Lord Avebury	Died	Lib Dem	19/04/2016	7	3	100	Viscount Thurso
Lord Bridges	Non-attendance ⁶	Crossbench	12/07/2016	17	31	87	Earl of Cork and Orrery
Lord Lyell	Died	Whole House	21/03/2017	27	803	43	Lord Colgrain

Further Information

- House of Lords Library, [Hereditary Peers in the House of Lords Since 1999](#), 27 March 2014

¹ In addition to these 90 Members, two peers—the Earl Marshal and the Lord Great Chamberlain—remain Members of the Lords by virtue of the royal offices they hold. Some hereditary peers who were Members of the House prior to the 1999 Act were also given life peerages.

² Prior to the 2002–03 session, any vacancy that arose amongst the 90 hereditary peers was filled by the nearest runner-up in the original ballots, held in October and November 1999.

³ To date, the successful candidates in by-elections among the 15 have been Members of the same party or group as the hereditary peer being replaced.

⁴ Following the creation of two vacancies in close succession for the same group, both winning candidates listed were selected in the same ballot.

⁵ As above.

⁶ Lord Bridges ceased to be a Member of the House by virtue of non-attendance during the 2015–16 session, in accordance with section 2 of the House of Lords Reform Act 2014.

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