

Document Name	Procedures Manual for National Director & Branch officer Elections
Version reference	1.8
Document Owner	Company Secretary
Governance Code Principle no	Principle: Leading people Standard:3.6 Recruitment of volunteers
Approved by	Board
Date approved	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Date for revision or review	To be updated as issues arise during election and Post-election September 2022



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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to explain concisely, the process to be followed by members of the Irish Kidney Association when voting for the election of National Director and Branch Officers in this election year, 2022.

At the time of writing, the Board of Directors recognised that Covid-19 was still prevalent in our society. In order to protect our patient group by managing the health risks associated with bringing members together for in-person voting at the respective Branch AGMs and to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations, the Board of the Irish Kidney Association has opted to run postal elections in 2022.

## 2. Objective

Postal voting is a new process for the Irish Kidney Association; however, the Board and senior management of the organisation want to assure all members who have the entitlement to vote, that time and effort will be invested to ensure that this process:

- Is clear and transparent
- Is managed honestly, fairly, securely and with full confidentiality
- Upholds the privacy of the individual vote
- Facilitates all those entitled to vote
- Gives members advance notice of key balloting dates across a range of media
- Provides members with all the information they require well in advance to inform and cast their vote
- Delivers all the relevant information to voting members on time
- Allows all members the time for reflection and consideration in advance of completing their ballot
- Does not cause an administrative burden on the voting membership, with the Irish Kidney Association covering all the costs that arise as a result of undertaking postal voting
- Produces a result that is a true reflection of the voting membership's wishes

## 3. Scope

The scope of this policy extends to all voting members of the Irish Kidney Association as determined under the Constitution (Votes of Members Section 32-41):

- All renal patients (who are members) shall have one vote (S32)
- All ordinary members of at least 3-year standing shall have one vote (S32)
- Associate members shall not be entitled to vote (S32)

- No person shall be entitled to vote until he/she has received confirmation in writing from the Board that his/her application for membership has been approved by the Board in accordance with Article 6 (S32)
- A member who lacks capacity to make a decision and in respect of whom an order has been made by any court having jurisdiction to make declarations as to capacity, may vote, whether on a show of hands or on a poll, by his/her decision-making representative or other person appointed by that court, and any such decision-making representative or other person may vote by proxy on a show of hands or on a poll. (S33)
- Votes may be given either personally or by proxy provided that only members who have received written confirmation from the Board that their application for membership has been approved by the Board in accordance with Article 6 may be appointed as a proxy. (S35)
- The instrument appointing a proxy shall be in writing under the hand of the appointer or his / her attorney duly authorised in writing. (S36)
- An instrument appointing a proxy shall be in the form outlined in S38 of the Constitution or in a form as near thereto as circumstances permit (S38).

#### 4. Policy Statement

The Board and CEO of the Irish Kidney Association hereby commit to running these postal elections in a fair, transparent and honest manner so that the outcome will be the true reflection and wishes of the national membership. If a cause for grievance arises then equally, it shall be managed through a clear process that supports the individual's right to raise a concern, treats all involved in the process fairly and equitably and maintains the dignity of all concerned and the integrity of the process.

Our postal election shall not discriminate for reasons of gender, ethnicity, faith or disability.

#### 5. Definitions

**Abstention** - is a term in election procedure for when a person, entitled to vote either does not go to vote (if elections are held in person) or, does not return a vote during postal elections.

**Ballot** - A ballot is the sheet of paper on which you will cast your secret vote during an election. In other circumstances, it can be where you express your opinion about something.

**Ballot Box** – This is the closed safe into which votes will be deposited once they are received into the Irish Kidney Association Head Office at Donor House. They will be retained in this safe until counting of ballots commences.

**Branch Election** – elections that take place at local branch level for the positions of National Director, Branch Chair, Secretary and Treasurer

**Spoiled Vote** - A "spoiled vote" is a vote that is deemed to be invalid and is not including in the vote count. A vote can be "spoiled" intentionally as a form of protest (i.e. not voting for anyone / or adding in someone's name that is not on the ballot and ticking that) or accidentally (by voting for too many people so the choice is unclear)

**Tally Sheet** – this is the name given to the record of the number of votes an individual receives during the election.

**Valid Vote** – a valid vote is one where the ballot paper has been completed in compliance with the rules outlined on the ballot paper and the ballot can be counted.

## 6. Principles of a Democratic Election

The principles of a democratic election for political elections were established in Article 21, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948:

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

*The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.*

Whilst organisational elections are not as complex as those of government it is important that the same principles of integrity, equality and transparency exist. It is vital that each member's ability to vote should be unhindered by others i.e. that member's should be free to vote in line with their views rather than be forced or coerced into voting for what others would like.

The Irish Kidney Association remains steadfast in the implementation of a postal voting process that promotes participation, inclusivity and transparency, with the outcome being a true and fair reflection on the will of the membership.

## 7. How will the Postal Voting Process work in 2022?

Irish Kidney Association Branch Elections	
Statement:	Branch elections will take place before the National AGM in order to ensure that a Director is appointed from each branch prior to the National AGM.  Branch Elections will have 2 Phases:

	(i) Nominations for Director and Branch Officer roles (ii) Balloting (voting) for Director and Branch Officer roles	
<b>Phase:</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Proposed Timeline:</b>
<b>(i) Nominations for Director and Branch Officers</b>		
	(a) Membership will be advised through the website, Support magazine and by e-mail of the forthcoming elections and what they need to do.	W/e 31.03
	(b) A clear explanatory note clarifying those who are ineligible to vote will be included in the Support magazine and all other media promoting the elections. This will avoid any unnecessary confusion.	W/e 31.03
	(c) Nomination forms are issued by post to all members who are allowed to vote as per the Constitution. -These nomination forms (including a pre-paid envelope addressed back to Donor House) will also include notification of the AGM. -Nomination forms and AGM notifications will leave Donor House by the 07.04 to allow for An Post to process all the mail and process out by 11.04. -Nomination forms are to highlight the latest return date accepted (17:00 hours 22.04)	W/e 11.04  07.04 IKA deadline  11.04 An Post deadline
	(d) Completed nomination forms are returned <b>by 17:00 hours to HQ latest either by post or delivered by hand</b>	W/e 22.04
	(e) 2 members of staff shall open and record nominations. -Nominations are <u>collated per branch.</u> -All nomination forms will be <u>opened, date stamped, nominations recorded and stored in a secure location.</u>	W/e 29.04  29.04 IKA deadline

	<p>-Nomination forms are checked against the active membership list to authenticate the voting privileges.</p> <p>-Staff contact nominees to confirm they are accepting the nomination.</p> <p>A briefing on the National Director role will be issued to Director nominees.</p> <p>-Ballot papers with nominees listed shall be sent from Donor House to An Post by 29.04 for processing to members.</p>	From 30.04-05.05 An Post deadline
<b>Phase:</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Proposed Timeline:</b>
<b>(ii) Balloting commences at Branch level for Director and Branch Officer Roles (4 Roles)</b>		
	(a) Balloting commences at individual Member level	W/e 06.05-13.05
	<p>(b) Completed ballots are posted back to and received <b>no later than 17:00 hours on 13.05 at HQ</b> either by post or hand delivered.</p> <p>2 members of staff are assigned the task of processing all incoming ballots.</p> <p>- Envelopes are date stamped (unopened) and put into safe.</p>	By 13.05
	<p>(c) Counting of ballots takes place at HQ.</p> <p>- 2 Directors shall be present to serve as independent observers and to validate the transparency of the process.</p>	By 23.05
	(d) Notify each elected candidate by email that they have been elected and request that he/she confirms in writing by close of business that day, that they are willing to accept the position.	By 24.05
	(e) Notify other nominees by e-mail that they have not been appointed at this time.	By 25.05

	Thank them for their ongoing commitment to the Irish Kidney Association.	
	(f) Notify Branch Officers of the voting results.	By 25.05
	(g) Notify branch members of the results for their branch.	By 25.05
	(h) Post results of branch network elections on the website.	By 27.05
	(i) Issue congratulations to all new National Directors and to all new Branch Officers.	By 03.06
	(j) Notify new Officers of Training events (this can be included in the above congratulatory note (i)).	By 03.06
	(k) Host training events.	13.06
	(l) Issue evaluation surveys to training participants.	By 20.06
	(m) Collate findings and implement feedback into future training.	By 01.07
	<u>Information Only:</u> As per the new constitution adopted at the September 2021 AGM, the appointment by the Board of three of their members to the three National Officer roles (Chairperson / Secretary and Treasurer) will take place at the next board meeting after the AGM.	

## 8. The Voting Calendar

The table below details the primary dates to be aware of in the 2022 Irish Kidney Association Election. While the Irish Kidney Association will do its utmost to ensure that everyone who is entitled to vote does so, **we cannot be held responsible for individuals who do not return their nominations or complete and post their ballots back after the deadline. If your nomination or ballot is received into the office after the closing date of nominations or balloting then it will not be counted and will be deemed to be invalid.**

For the avoidance of doubt, all nominations or ballots received in during the timeframe specified below shall be date stamped on receipt, prior to being stored in a locked safe in a secure location at Head Office.

If you need assistance with this process, please do not hesitate to contact Ashling Hand in Donor House on 01-6205306 and we shall be happy to help you.

No:	Action:	Critical Date:	Members to action:	Branch Officers to action:	Board to action:
1.	Notification on forthcoming elections across all media	31.03	Awareness only	Awareness only	Awareness only
2.	Nominations forms are sent to all members eligible to vote for the four positions of National Director, Branch Chair, Secretary and Treasurer	11.04	Awareness only	Awareness only	Awareness only
3.	<b>Completed nomination forms to be received in Donor House by 17:00 hours on the 22.04 at the latest either by post or hand delivered.</b>	<b>22.04</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
4.	Nominations are collated and put into ballot sheets and reissued to each branch and its membership	29.04	Awareness only	Awareness only	Awareness only
5.	<b>Balloting takes place</b>	<b>06.05-13.05</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>

6.	<b>Completed ballots must be received by Donor House no later than 17:00 hours on the 13.05 either by post or hand delivered.</b>	13.05	Yes	Yes	Yes
7.	Counting takes place with 2 Directors present as independent observers	By 23.05	Awareness only	Awareness only	Awareness only
8.	<b>Notification to newly elected Branch Officers</b>	By 24.05	Yes	Yes	Yes
9.	Notification on election results to existing Branch Officers, unsuccessful nominees and branch members	25.05	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	Branch Secretaries shall confirm receipt to the Office of the names and addresses of all officer roles within seven days of being of elected.	By 07.06	No	Yes	No
11.	<b>Training takes place for all new Branch Officers</b>	13.06	Yes	Yes	Awareness only

## 9.The Role of National Director

Being appointed to the Board of a charity is an especially significant role. With increased governance in the charity sector over the last decade, board directors now have legal responsibilities under the Charities Act, 2009 and under the Companies Act 2014.

The Charities Act, 2009, states that a charity director must:

- Ensure the charity is carrying out its charitable purposes for the public benefit (the reason it exists);
- Comply with your charity's governing document ;
- Be accountable and comply with the law;
- Manage the charity's resources responsibly;
- Act in the best interests of the charity;
- Act with reasonable care and skill;

National Board Directors attend meetings of their local branch. A minimum of 50% attendance at branch meetings is expected.

Members who wish to who nominate themselves or others for this position should have a look at the Charity Regulators Guidance for Charity Trustees document which is extremely helpful. Refer to <https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/media/1078/guidance-for-charity-trustees-july-2017.pdf>

## 10. The Branch Roles

Within the branch network the Branch Officers play an enormously important role in supporting our patient cohort, their families and caregivers, and we are extremely grateful for their ongoing passion and commitment. Without them giving of their free time as a dedicated volunteer and team member, we could not provide the level of support that we do.

At Branch level, we have three roles. While all three roles are a public support network to local branch members, each position has specific duties:

### (i) Branch Chairperson

- Provides leadership, co-ordinates and runs branch meetings
- Facilitates discussion and decision-making
- Manages sensitive information
- Provides a sense of direction for the branch
- Ensures National Director is kept informed of branch developments

### (ii) Branch Secretary

- Organises meeting venues and sends notices of meetings
- Records the minutes of meetings and any actions to be taken
- Keeps safe all incoming correspondence in compliance with the Irish Kidney Association Privacy Policy
- Ensure member details are kept private with access by Branch Officers only.

### (iii) Branch Treasurer

- Keeps up to date records of all financial activities of the branch
- Makes a written financial report at branch meeting every two months / or provides written report if he/she cannot attend in person
- Keeps control of stocks of merchandise
- Submits a report to Head Office Finance Manager every quarter
- Manages branch financial queries

## 11. Am I eligible to vote – case studies

David: *"I am a renal patient and have been a member of the Irish Kidney Association for 2 years.... can I vote?"*

Yes. In line with our Constitution, Votes of Members (S32), all renal patients shall have one vote.

Marie: *"I am a carer for an end-stage renal disease patient, and member for the last 4 years, can I vote?"*

Yes. As a person who is directly affected by end-stage renal disease and a person who supports the cause and objectives of the Association (4 (b)), as an ordinary member for more than three years you are entitled to vote.

Luca: *"I am an Associate Member, can I vote?"*

No. In line with our Constitution, Votes of Members (S32), associate members shall not be entitled to vote.

Claire: *"Hi, I'm 16 and would like to become a member of the Irish Kidney Association, can I vote when I do?"*

No. Our Constitution states that membership of the Association shall be open to people who are over 18 years of age (S4).

Matthew: *"Hi, I am visually impaired and cannot complete my own ballot paper, what do I do?"*

Yes Matthew, you can still vote. You can appoint a proxy who can vote on your behalf (S38) of the Constitution.

## 12. When will I receive a nomination paper

Nominations papers will be sent to all members who are eligible to vote on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2022.

## 13. How to nominate an individual for a role

The nomination paper will have four boxes. Each box will have the role being nominated for, i.e. National Director, Branch Chairperson, Branch Secretary, Branch Treasurer.

If you wish to nominate an individual for a role, please write their name into the relevant box. Please write one name only in each box. Permission of the nominee must be obtained by contacting the nominee.

Their contact details (email and phone) must be provided as staff will contact the nominee to confirm their acceptance of the nomination.

If you do not have direct contact details for your nominee, please contact your local Branch Secretary or Donor House who will assist you.

**14. Can I nominate myself?**

Yes. If you wish to nominate yourself for a role/s, you can certainly do so. Please remember that you can only nominate one individual for each role.

**15. Can I nominate myself for more than one role?**

Yes. Providing only one name appears in each of the boxes.

**16. How many nominations do I need to get before my name appears on the ballot paper?**

We do not anticipate multiple nominations for each role, so all individuals receiving at least one correctly completed nomination will be included in the ballot paper

**17. If I am not aware that I have been nominated, will I be contacted in advance of seeing my name on a ballot paper?**

A person cannot be nominated without their agreement. If an individual is nominated they must be contacted by the person nominating them. Staff will also contact the nominee to confirm their acceptance of the nomination. See 13 above.

**18. When will the ballot papers issue?**

Balloting takes place between the 6<sup>th</sup> of May and the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022, you will receive the ballot papers by the 6<sup>th</sup> of May.

**19. Will I have to pay for postage?**

No. All nomination papers and ballot papers will be sent with a prepaid envelope with a return address of Donor House.

**20. When do I have to return my ballot paper?**

Completed ballot papers must be received by Donor House by 17:00 hours latest on the 13<sup>th</sup> May. On receipt, returning ballots will be date-stamped to leave no room for error. If ballots are not received by this time and date they will be deemed invalid in the final tally.

**21. I put 2 names on one box in error, will this cause my vote to be discounted?**

Yes. For this role only as it does not comply with the voting rules of one name per role. If you nominated only one individual for each of the other three roles, then these will be counted and deemed valid.

**22. I didn't vote for all four roles – is this okay?**

Where you chose not to vote for a particular role, this will be deemed to be an invalid vote. Your votes for the other three remaining positions, if you nominated one individual only per role (as per the voting rules), will be deemed valid and be counted.

**23. What security protocols are in place to protect the nominations?**

- (i) Nominations received will be opened, date stamped with the official date stamp and recorded for each branch by 2 members of IKA staff (1 recording the vote on the Tally sheet).
- (ii) Branch nominations will be stored (once opened and recorded) in a safe. These will be added to daily as nominations are returned and opened.
- (iii) Once the date for receipt of nominations has passed, all nominations are recounted and the final tallies cross-referenced to earlier results. This will be overseen by the CEO.
- (iv) If counters need to take a break, then ballot papers will be kept securely locked in the safe where the counts are ongoing.
- (v) Nomination papers shall be kept for 2 months in case of a post-election query.

**24. What security protocols are in place to protect the ballots?**

- (i) Two Directors will act as independent observers during the counting of ballots.
- (ii) Two members of the IKA staff, together with the CEO shall be in-situ to count the ballots when opened in the company of the Directors.
- (iii) When ballots are returned to Donor House the envelope containing the completed voting paper shall be date stamped and stored unopened in the ballot box for the specific branch, where it will remain until counting commences.
- (iv) Branch ballots will be stored in a box in a locked room where only the CEO and Office Manager has access. These will be added to daily as ballots are returned.
- (v) Once the date for receipt of ballots has passed, all ballots are counted 3 times with the final tally's cross-checked to ensure that the results are correct. This process is overseen by the two Board Directors.
- (vi) If counters need to take a break, then ballot papers will be kept securely locked in the room where the counts is ongoing.
- (vii) Ballot papers shall be kept for 2 months in case of a challenge.

**25. How is my vote to be counted**

- (i) Each ballot paper will have potentially 4 votes. Once the envelope is opened and the date of receipt is date stamped on the ballot with the initials of the staff member opening it (copied from the official date stamp on the outside envelope), your vote will be written down on the tally sheets of the nominees who appeared on the ballot.
- (ii) Where you have 4 votes listed, your vote will be recorded on 4 tally sheets, 3 votes on 3 sheets etc.

(iii) Once logged, each vote will then be Marked "X" with a yellow marker to record that it has been counted.

(iv) Over the course of all the 4 counts, a different colour X will be marked on the ballot:

1<sup>st</sup> Count – yellow

2<sup>nd</sup> Count - blue

3<sup>rd</sup> Count – green

4<sup>th</sup> Count - pink

This way it will be possible to see that the ballot paper has been counted 4 times as part of the checking process.

(v) All ballots once counted will be stored in a secure location for 2 months in case there is a challenge to the results.

**26. When will I know the results?**

The results of branch elections will be communicated to:

- Those elected on the 24<sup>th</sup> May
- All other branch members on the 25<sup>th</sup> May
- General membership and public through the website by the 27<sup>th</sup> May

**27. When the newly elected assume to their roles?**

Branch Officers will commence their roles as from the end of the branch AGM in accordance article 26 of the Articles of Association.

National Directors will assume their role on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July after the national AGM.

**28. Will there be training?**

(i) All newly appointed branch officers and directors will receive induction training in the early weeks of their appointments. They will receive notification of these dates once appointed.

(ii) In addition, the Irish Kidney Association believes in the importance of ongoing personal development so we would envisage access to training will increase for all officers and directors over time.

(iii) It is our intention to provide board mentors for new directors where we can for the first 6 – 12 months.

**29. I have a grievance about the results who do I talk to?**

We at the Irish Kidney Association respect an individual's right to raise a concern, therefore, any individual unhappy with the outcome of the postal vote can contact the CEO Carol Moore who will respond to your query within 10 days. In the event you are unhappy with her response, you can then contact the Chairperson of the Board and your complaint shall be dealt with at that level.

**30. Is it likely that postal voting will be used again?**

This is a tricky question to answer as facilitating a postal vote this year has been in response to the pandemic and protecting our vulnerable patient group. We see a huge value in active participation that takes place within AGM's and would hope to return to that in the future or consider a hybrid of both if it is were to be considered more successful for our members.

**32. What happens if there are no nominations received for a particular Branch role?**

In the event that a Branch role does not receive a nominee, then the Board will discuss this and review what may need to be done. This may involve directly approaching a retiring Branch officer and asking them to stay in the role until a replacement can be found, or contacting a potential candidate and seeing if they would be interested in filling the role on a temporary basis until the next election.

Appendix:

Sample nominations form

Sample ballot form

AGM notice (to follow)

Proxy voting form (to follow)

# BRANCH NOMINATIONS CARD

To be returned by: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022

I hereby wish to nominate the following branch members for the role of National Director, Branch Chairperson, Branch Secretary and Branch Treasurer. If I am nominating someone other than myself, I understand that I must have their permission to be nominated prior to returning my nomination card to Donor House.

Branch Name \_\_\_\_\_

National Director			
Name of Nominee:		Email:	
		Phone No:	
Name of Nominating Member		Signature of Nominating Member:	

Branch Chairperson			
Name of Nominee:		Email:	
		Phone No:	
Name of Nominating Member		Signature of Nominating Member:	

Branch Secretary			
Name of Nominee:		Email:	
		Phone No:	
Name of Nominating Member		Signature of Nominating Member:	

Branch Treasurer			
Name of Nominee:		Email:	
		Phone No:	
Name of Nominating Member		Signature of Nominating Member:	

Phone number of nominating member \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_



# National Director and Branch Officers Ballot Paper

**To be returned by: 13<sup>th</sup> May at 5pm**

Branch Name \_\_\_\_\_ Member name \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby confirm my vote for the positions as outlined below:

National Director		
	Names of Nominees:	Vote Once only: Please tick the line beside the individual you wish to have the role:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Branch Chairperson		
	Names of Nominees:	Vote Once only: Please tick the line beside the individual you wish to have the role:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Branch Secretary		
	Names of Nominees:	Vote Once only: Please tick the line beside the individual you wish to have the role:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Branch Treasurer		
	Names of Nominees:	Vote Once only: Please tick the line beside the individual you wish to have the role:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

