



Northern Ireland Assembly Elections Act 2003

2003 CHAPTER 3

An Act to make provision about the date of the poll for the election of the next Northern Ireland Assembly, and for disregarding certain days for the purposes of the period after a poll within which an Assembly must meet; and for connected purposes. [20th March 2003]

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Dates of election, etc

- (1) The Northern Ireland (Date of Next Assembly Poll) Order 2001 (SI 2001/3959) is revoked.
- (2) In section 31 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (c. 47) (“the 1998 Act”), which provides for dates of Assembly elections and dissolutions, etc—
 - (a) for subsection (2) there is substituted—

“(2) The date of the poll for the election of the Assembly next following the Assembly elected under section 2 of the Northern Ireland (Elections) Act 1998 shall be 29th May 2003; and the Assembly elected under that section shall be dissolved on 28th April 2003.”,
 - (b) in subsection (3), “or (2)” is omitted,
 - (c) in subsection (5), at the end there is added “, as shall any day on which section 1 of the Northern Ireland Act 2000 is in force”.
- (3) Subsections (4) to (6) apply in relation to the ordinary general election the poll for which is to be held on 29th May 2003.

- (4) Paragraph 7 of each of Schedules 9 and 10 to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c. 41) (which provide for limits on campaign expenditure and controlled expenditure respectively in relation to Assembly elections) is to have effect as if “the relevant period” for the purposes of that paragraph were the period beginning four months before 29th May 2003 and ending on that date (and sub-paragraphs (3) and (4) of that paragraph are not to apply).
- (5) In calculating campaign expenditure or controlled expenditure incurred in the relevant period (as provided for in subsection (4)), any such expenditure incurred in connection with the extraordinary general election provided for by the Order revoked by subsection (1) is to count towards the total, but only if it was incurred during that relevant period.
- (6) The entry for Rule 1 of the Parliamentary Elections Rules (timetable) in Schedule 1 to the Northern Ireland Assembly (Elections) Order 2001 (SI 2001/2599) (which provides for the application with modifications to Assembly elections of provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c. 2) and other Acts) is to have effect as if the first entry in the second column of the substituted Timetable (which relates to publication of notice of an election) read “Not later than the 20th day before the date of the poll.”.
- (7) Subsection (1) does not revive any duty of the Secretary of State under section 32 of the 1998 Act (which provides for extraordinary elections) which he has already discharged.
- (8) In this section, “Assembly” means Northern Ireland Assembly.

2 Short title

This Act may be cited as the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections Act 2003.