

UK Parliamentary Election
Midlothian County Constituency
Thursday 4 July 2024
Notes for Candidates and Agents on polling procedures

1 For the purpose of these Notes:

“Polling Place” = The school or other building used for polling, the grounds of and any buildings ancillary to such school or other building and the walls, railings or fences surrounding such school or other building.

“Polling Station” = The room or hall in a polling place where polling takes place.

2 In terms of Rule 32 of Schedule 1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983 the following applies in relation to admission to a polling station:-

*“28.—(1) The presiding officer shall exclude all persons from the polling station **except—***

- (a) voters;*
- (b) persons under the age of 18 who accompany voters to the polling station;*
- (c) the candidates and their election agents;*
- (d) the polling agents appointed to attend at the polling station;*
- (e) the clerks appointed to attend at the polling station;*
- (f) persons entitled to attend in accordance with sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.*
- (g) the constables on duty; and*
- (h) the companions of voters with disabilities;*

(2) The presiding officer shall regulate the total number of voters and persons under the age of 18 who accompany them to be admitted to the polling station at the same time.

(3) Not more than one polling agent shall be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same candidate.

(4) A constable or person employed by a returning officer shall not be admitted to vote in person elsewhere than at the polling station allotted under these rules, except on production and surrender of a certificate as to such employment which shall be in the prescribed form and signed by the prescribed officer of police or by the Returning Officer as may be.

(5) Any certificate surrendered under this rule shall forthwith be cancelled.”

Candidates, Election Agents and Polling Agents, etc are reminded that they must have the appropriate admission card (otherwise admission to polling stations will be delayed until credentials have been verified). Admission cards will be requested on each occasion a candidate, agent, etc enters a polling station – **this will be strictly enforced.**

3 The offering of literature or any attempt by whatever means to influence voters as to how they cast their votes within a polling place is strictly forbidden.

4 Poll letters are the property of voters. They are not required to surrender them to agents and must not be pressurised to do so. Any letters surrendered to Presiding Officers will be destroyed forthwith.

5 Marked registers or lists of electors who have or have not voted may not be taken out of polling stations before the close of poll.

6 Tellers

- (a) Tellers must not give the impression that they are employed by the Returning Officer. They should concern themselves **ONLY** with checking who has voted. **They must not ask voters who they intend to vote for or how they have voted; and**
- (b) **Voters must not be approached until after they have left the polling station.**

The usual means of telling is to ask voters for the poll letter (but see paragraph 4 above) or electoral number. If a voter does not have a poll letter and does not know his or her electoral number, tellers may ask the voter's name and address but must not give the impression that the information must be provided for official purposes.

Tellers are only permitted inside a building in which a polling station is situated at the No 1 Presiding Officer's discretion. They are not permitted, as tellers, to enter a polling station. Tellers must respect the Presiding Officer's decision as to their location. That decision may vary from polling place to polling place.

7 Candidates, Election Agents and Polling Agents must not publish before the poll is closed -

- (a) *any statement relating to the way in which voters have voted in the poll where that statement is (or might reasonably be taken to be) based on information given by voters after they have voted, or*
- (b) *any forecast as to the result of the election which is (or might reasonably be taken to be) based on information so given.*

8 The fixing of bills, banners, etc to any part of a polling place, ie walls, railings, fences, etc is not allowed. Bills on 'A' Boards will normally be allowed on the pavements outside a polling place provided that they are positioned so as not to cause any obstruction to pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

However, the Returning Officer has agreed that the car park at certain polling places, generally where the car park/premises/etc are being used concurrently by the public for purposes other than for the Election or are remote from the main polling station entrance, will be designated outwith the polling place. These are as follows:

- *The paved areas directly outside the Polling Place entrances at the Lasswade Centre, Edinburgh College, Newbattle Community Campus and Danderhall Community Hub,*
- *Car parks at: Bonnyrigg Primary School and The Glencorse Centre.*

9 **Insignia ie - a Badge or Rosette** may be worn within the external curtilage outwith the polling place of a POLLING PLACE (but **not** displayed within a POLLING STATION).

10 Cars displaying election material are not normally allowed within the polling place except where there is suitable discreet parking away from the general ingress of electors.

However, cars which bring disabled or infirm persons to the poll may, where local conditions permit, be allowed to bring those persons to the door of the polling place. In such circumstances the cars should not wait in a conspicuous place while the persons are voting and should leave the polling place without delay as soon as the persons have voted.

11 While there is no specific entitlement to Candidates, Election Agents and Polling Agents to be informed of the number of persons who have voted, it will be permissible for Presiding Officers to give Agents a note of the actual number of persons who have voted from time to time throughout the day.

Information as to whether or not a particular person has or has not voted shall not be given. The Presiding Officers shall ensure that meeting these requests does not interfere with their official duties.

12 **Smoking/Vaping in Polling Stations is not allowed.**

Dr Grace Vickers
Returning Officer
31 May 2024