

UK Parliamentary General Election

Thursday 4 July 2024

Arrangements at the Poll

At this election the following arrangements will apply:

1. What is a Polling Place?

For the purposes of these arrangements, a polling place comprises:

- the buildings in which the polling stations are situated;
- the boundary of the property at which those buildings are located;
- the entrances to those buildings and the approach to those entrances;
- the surroundings grounds;
- the car parks within the grounds; and
- in relation to schools (and equivalent for non school premises), the playground.

Entrances to a polling place must not be impeded.

A **polling station** is the room (within a polling place) in which voting takes place.

2. Who May Attend the Polling Station?

Candidates and election agents are entitled to visit any polling station within their respective constituencies/ wards during polling day. Any number of people may be appointed as a polling agent to attend any particular polling station, however, only one polling agent from each candidate/ party is allowed to enter the polling station at any time. Those attending the poll, must have received notification, in writing, of the requirements of secrecy, and must hold the appropriate admission pass from the Returning Officer, otherwise admission to the polling stations will not be admitted.

The following people are also entitled to attend the poll:

- voters;
- persons under the age of 16 accompanying voters;
- companions aged 18 years and over of voters with disabilities;
- candidates;
- election agents
- the Returning Officer and members of the Returning Officer's staff;
- constables on duty;
- polling agents;
- persons entitled to attend from the Electoral Commission and accredited observers.

3. What Does a Polling Agent Do?

The main duties and responsibilities of polling agents on polling day are:

- to observe the Presiding Officer showing the empty ballot box prior to sealing;
- to detect personation and prevent people from voting more than once at the same election;
- to report to their election agent any improper occurrences;
- to be present when the Presiding Officer marks ballot papers at the request of electors;
- to be present at the close of poll when the various packets of documents are sealed; and may add their seal to the ballot box; and
- to maintain the secrecy of the ballot.

A candidate and their election agent can also do any of the things that a polling agent is authorised to do. Just because a polling agent is entitled to witness various aspects of the polling procedure, the procedure is not invalidated if they have not witnessed it.

4. Campaigning on Polling Day

Presiding Officers must ensure that electors can quietly and privately cast their vote free of any intimidation and provide a space where the secrecy of the ballot will be respected. Electors should be able to enter the polling place (as defined above) in the same manner.

Campaigning is not permitted within a polling station or a polling place (ie - not within the area delineated by the red line boundary on the plan for each polling place.)

5. Display of Campaign Material

Since 1 July 2010, the display of campaign material on any Council property, including lighting columns, traffic sign poles and street furniture, has been prohibited. Candidates and agents should ensure that all election campaign material, including any bills, placards and posters, complies with this requirement. Materials breaching this will be removed by the Council as a priority in line with agreed practice.

Please also remember that no advertisement should be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or anyone else with an interest in the site.

Should South Ayrshire Council require to remove campaign material a levy of £30 per hour will be charged to the political party/ candidate at fault.

6. Signs and Notices

The Presiding Officer will ensure that appropriate signs and notices are in place to provide information for voters. The following notices will be in place:

- 'Instruction for Voters' will be displayed in the polling booth and this notice details the instructions for voting as shown on the ballot papers.
- Guidance for Voters will be exhibited inside and outside the polling station.
- A notice containing the details of the accepted forms of photographic ID that a voter needs to produce before they can be issued with a ballot paper will be displayed inside the polling station.
- A large sample copy of the ballot paper will be displayed inside the polling station and an enlarged hand-held copy marked 'sample' will also be available in the polling station.
- A 'no photography or filming' notice.

No posters or other material that might be construed as supporting the views of any political

party involved in the election shall be permitted to be displayed in or on the polling place. If any such materials are found, they must be removed or covered up.

7. Tellers

What do tellers do?

Tellers are volunteers for a particular political party and/ or candidate. They stand outside polling places with a view to seeking permission from electors to record whether they have voted. By identifying electors who have not yet voted and by relaying this information to the candidates or their supporters, tellers play an important role in the election. The candidates may then contact voters who have not yet cast their votes and persuade them to do so, which may help to increase turnout.

Tellers have no legal status and voters have the right to refuse to give them any information

Tellers must:

- (a) always remain outside the polling place – ie outwith the area delineated by the red line boundary on the plan for each polling place; and
- (b) only enter the polling station to cast their own vote, to vote as a proxy or to assist a voter with disabilities.

Tellers must not:

- (a) be able to see or hear what is happening inside the polling station;
- (b) impede, obstruct or intimidate voters on their way in or out of the polling place;
- (c) demand any information relating to a voter's electoral number, name or address;
- (d) ask to see or check a voter's photographic ID;
- (e) ask voters to re-enter the polling station to ascertain their electoral numbers or to retrieve their polling cards;
- (f) have discussions with voters that may give rise to allegations of undue influence (for example, voting intentions or political party affiliations); or
- (g) display any campaign material in support of or against any particular political party or candidate other than a rosette or badge.

8. Rosettes

Tellers and Polling agents may wear a coloured rosette or badge displaying the name of the candidate or party and/or emblem or description; the rosette/badge should not bear a slogan and must not be oversized..

9. Cars

Long-term parking of vehicles used for campaign purposes (for example, displaying election materials or using loudspeakers) is not permitted:

- within car parks within polling places;
- immediately outside the entrances to polling places; or
- within a reasonable distance of the entrances to polling places.

Cars being used in campaigns that are also being used to transport voters may need to wait for the voter while they visit the polling station, but this should not be unduly prolonged.

10. Disabled Voters

Disabled voters may request the assistance of the Presiding Officer to mark the ballot paper for them. Alternatively, disabled voters may be assisted by a companion, with the permission of the Presiding Officer who must be satisfied that the voter's disabilities would prevent them from casting their vote unaided. Presiding Officers should pay particular attention to disabled voters and should familiarise themselves with the arrangements for disabled access.

The companion of a disabled voter can be anyone aged 18 years or over.

11. Voting Information provided by Presiding Officer to Agents

An election or polling agent, entitled to be within the polling station, may ask polling station staff for information on the number of ballot papers issued.

Information may not be released which may risk breaching the secrecy of the ballot.

Information as to whether or not a particular person has or has not voted shall **not** be given although such information may be relevant for consideration in a case where an agent has raised a question of personation.

The Presiding Officer shall ensure that meeting these requests does not interfere with his/ her official duties.

12. Press and Media/ Photography/ Film

No press or media are entitled to enter polling places/ stations. They are not permitted to film or to interview voters inside the polling station.

Notices will be displayed to this effect within the polling station and each polling booth.

13. Conduct of the Poll

Any matters relating to the conduct of the Poll should be referred to the Depute Returning Officers in the first instance: Catriona Caves (01292 612556) or Wynne Carlaw (01292 612192).