

SCHEDULE 3

Rules for Conduct of an Election of Councillors of a Parish or Community where the Poll is taken together with the Poll at a relevant Election or Referendum

PART 3

Contested Elections

CHAPTER 2

Action to be Taken Before the Poll

Notice of poll

21.—(1) The returning officer must publish notice of the poll stating—

- (a) the day and hours fixed for the poll;
- (b) the number of councillors to be elected;
- (c) the particulars of each candidate remaining validly nominated (the names and other particulars of the candidates, and the order of the candidates' names being the same as in the statement of persons nominated); and
- (d) the names of the proposer and seconder signing a candidate's nomination paper.

(2) Where a candidate is nominated by more than one nomination paper, the nomination paper referred to in paragraph (1)(d) must be that from which the names and other particulars of the candidate shown in the statement of persons nominated are taken.

(3) The returning officer must, not later than the time of the publication of the notice of the poll, also give public notice of—

- (a) the situation of each polling station; and
- (b) the description of voters entitled to vote there,

and he must as soon as practicable after giving such a notice give a copy of it to each of the candidates or their election agents (if appointed).

(4) The notice published under paragraph (3) must—

- (a) state that the poll at the parish or community election is to be taken together with the poll at a relevant election or referendum;
- (b) specify the parliamentary constituency⁽¹⁾, local counting area, voting area or, as the case may be, the relevant local authority and, in the case of an election to fill a casual vacancy, the electoral area for which the relevant election is held; and
- (c) where any of the polls are to be taken together in part of the local government area only, specify that part.

Postal ballot papers

22.—(1) The returning officer must, in accordance with regulations made under the 1983 Act⁽²⁾, issue to those entitled to vote by post a ballot paper and a postal voting statement in the appropriate

(1) For the meaning of "parliamentary constituency", see section 1 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (c.56).

(2) See the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001/341) as amended by S.I. 2002/1871, 2006/752 and 2006/2910.

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form in the Appendix, or a form to like effect together with such envelopes for their return as may be prescribed by such regulations.

(2) The returning officer must also issue to those entitled to vote by post such information as he thinks appropriate about how to obtain—

- (a) translations into languages other than English of any directions to or guidance for voters sent with the ballot paper;
- (b) a translation into Braille of such directions or guidance;
- (c) graphical representations of such directions or guidance;
- (d) the directions or guidance in any other form (including any audible form).

(3) The postal voting statement must include provision for the form to be signed and for stating the date of birth of the elector or proxy (as the case may be).

(4) In the case of a ballot paper issued to a person at an address in the United Kingdom, the returning officer must ensure that the return of the ballot paper and postal voting statement is free of charge to the voter.

Provision of polling stations

23.—(1) The returning officer must provide a sufficient number of polling stations and, subject to the following provisions of this rule, must allot the electors to the polling stations in such manner as he thinks most convenient.

(2) One or more polling stations may be provided in the same room.

(3) The polling station allotted to electors from any parliamentary polling district wholly or partly within the electoral area must, in the absence of special circumstances, be in the parliamentary polling place for that district, unless that place is outside the electoral area.

(4) The returning officer must provide each polling station with such number of compartments as may be necessary in which the voters can mark their votes screened from observation.

Appointment of presiding officers and clerks

24.—(1) The returning officer must appoint and pay a presiding officer to attend at each polling station and such clerks as may be necessary for the purposes of the election, but he must not appoint any person who has been employed by or on behalf of a candidate in or about the election.

(2) The returning officer may, if he thinks fit, preside at a polling station and the provisions of these Rules relating to a presiding officer shall apply to a returning officer so presiding with the necessary modifications as to things to be done by the returning officer to the presiding officer or by the presiding officer to the returning officer.

(3) A presiding officer may do, by the clerks appointed to assist him, any act (including the asking of questions) which he is required or authorised by these Rules to do at a polling station except order the arrest, exclusion or removal of any person from the polling station.

Issue of official poll cards

25.—(1) The council of the parish or community may, not later than noon on the nineteenth day before the day of the election, request the returning officer to issue official poll cards for that election.

(2) Where the returning officer receives a request under paragraph (1), he must, as soon as practicable, send to electors and their proxies an official poll card.

(3) An elector's official poll card must be sent or delivered to his qualifying address, and a proxy's to his address as shown in the list of proxies.

(4) The official poll card must be in the appropriate form in the Appendix, or a form to the like effect, and must set out—

- (a) the name of the council and, where appropriate, of the ward to which councillors are to be elected;
- (b) the elector's name, qualifying address and number on the register;
- (c) the date and hours of the poll and the situation of the elector's polling station.
- (d) such other information as the returning officer thinks appropriate,

and different information may be provided in pursuance of sub-paragraph (d) to different electors or descriptions of elector.

(5) In the case of an elector with an anonymous entry—

- (a) the returning officer must issue an official poll card in the appropriate form in the Appendix to every such elector or to his proxy (if appointed) whether or not the local council of the parish or community make the request mentioned in paragraph (1);
- (b) instead of containing the elector's name and qualifying address, the polling card must contain the elector's number on the register and such other matter as is specified in the appropriate form in the Appendix; and
- (c) the official poll card must be sent in an envelope or other form of covering so as not to disclose that the elector has an anonymous entry in the register.

(6) Paragraph (7) of rule 6 shall apply for the interpretation of this rule.

(7) If the returning officer and the returning officer for each relevant election or referendum think fit, an official poll card issued under this rule may be combined with the official poll card issued at every relevant election or referendum.

Equipment of polling stations

26.—(1) The returning officer must provide each presiding officer with such number of ballot boxes and ballot papers as in the returning officer's opinion may be necessary.

(2) The same ballot box may be used for the poll at the parish or community election and the poll at every relevant election or referendum, if the returning officer thinks fit.

(3) Every ballot box must be so constructed that the ballot papers can be put in it, but cannot be withdrawn from it, without the box being unlocked or, where the box has no lock, the seal being broken.

(4) The returning officer must provide each polling station with—

- (a) materials to enable voters to mark the ballot papers;
- (b) copies of the register of electors for the electoral area or such part of it as contains the names of the electors allotted to the station;
- (c) the parts of any special lists prepared for the election corresponding to the register of electors for the electoral area or the part of it provided under sub-paragraph (b);
- (d) a list consisting of that part of the list prepared under rule 17 which contains the numbers (but not the other unique identifying marks) corresponding to those on the ballot papers provided to the presiding officer of the polling station.

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(5) The reference in paragraph (4)(b) to the copies of the register of electors includes a reference to copies of any notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act⁽³⁾ in respect of alterations to the register.

(6) The returning officer must also provide each polling station with—

- (a) at least one large version of the ballot paper which must be printed on the same colour paper as the ballot papers and displayed inside the polling station for the assistance of voters who are partially sighted; and
- (b) a device of such description as is set out in paragraph (11) for enabling voters who are blind or partially sighted to vote without any need for assistance from the presiding officer or any companion (within the meaning of rule 37(1)).

(7) Where notwithstanding paragraph (2) separate ballot boxes are to be used, each ballot box must be clearly marked with—

- (a) the election or referendum to which it relates, as shown on the ballot papers for that election or referendum; and
- (b) the words “Place the [specify colour of ballot papers in question] ballot papers in here”.

(8) A notice in the form in the Appendix, giving directions for the guidance of voters in voting, must be printed in conspicuous characters and exhibited inside and outside every polling station.

(9) The returning officer may also provide copies of the notice mentioned in paragraph (8) in Braille or translated into languages other than English as he considers appropriate, provided that these notices are accurate reproductions in Braille or that other language of that notice.

(10) In every compartment of every polling station there must be exhibited the notice—

*PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

([Specify colour] ballot paper)

vote for ONE candidate only

*EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

([specify colour] ballot paper)

vote for ONE party or individual candidate only

*[specify name of council] COUNCIL ELECTION

([specify colour] ballot paper)

*vote for no more than Candidates

*vote for ONE candidate only

*[specify other] ELECTION/REFERENDUM

([specify colour] ballot paper)

*[vote for one candidate/answer only]/[vote ONCE for your first choice and ONCE for your second choice]

PUT NO OTHER MARK ON THE BALLOT PAPERS, OR YOUR VOTE MAY NOT BE COUNTED

*Complete or omit as necessary.

(11) The device referred to in paragraph (6)(b) must—

- (a) allow a ballot paper to be inserted into and removed from, or attached to and detached from, the device easily and without damage to the paper;

(3) Section 13B of the 1983 Act was inserted by paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 to the Representation of the People Act 2000 (c.2) and amended by section 11(3) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22). Subsections (3B) and (3D) of section 13B were inserted by section 11(4) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22).

- (b) hold the ballot paper firmly in place during use; and
- (c) provide suitable means for the voter to—
 - (i) identify the spaces on the ballot paper on which he may mark his vote;
 - (ii) identify the registered party or individual candidate to which each such space refers; and
 - (iii) mark his vote on the space he has chosen.

Appointment of polling and counting agents

27.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (3) and (4), each candidate may, before the commencement of the poll, appoint—

- (a) polling agents to attend at polling stations for the purpose of detecting personation; and
- (b) counting agents to attend at the counting of the votes.

(2) The same person may be appointed as a polling agent or counting agent by more than one candidate.

(3) Not more than four polling agents, or such greater number as the returning officer may by notice allow, shall be permitted to attend at any particular polling station and if the number of such agents appointed to attend at a particular polling station exceeds that number, the returning officer must determine which agents are permitted to attend by lot and only the agents on whom the lot falls shall be deemed to have been duly appointed.

(4) The returning officer may limit the number of counting agents, so however that—

- (a) the number must be the same in the case of each candidate; and
- (b) the number allowed to a candidate must not (except in special circumstances) be less than the number obtained by dividing the number of clerks employed on the counting by the number of candidates.

For the purposes of the calculations required by this paragraph, a counting agent who has been appointed for more than one candidate is a separate agent for each of the candidates by whom he has been appointed.

(5) Notice in writing of the appointment, stating the names and addresses of the persons appointed, must be given by the candidate to the returning officer and must be so given not later than the fifth day (computed like any period of time in the Timetable) before the day of the poll.

(6) Notices of the appointment of polling agents and counting agents which are required by paragraph (5) above and paragraph (7) below to be given to the returning officer shall be given to that returning officer who discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations(4).

(7) If an agent dies, or becomes incapable of acting, the candidate may appoint another agent in his place, and must forthwith give to the returning officer notice in writing of the name and address of the agent appointed.

(8) In the following provisions of these Rules references to polling agents and counting agents must be taken as references to agents—

- (a) whose appointments have been duly made and notified; and
- (b) where the number of agents is restricted, who are within the permitted numbers.

(9) Any notice required to be given to a counting agent by the returning officer may be delivered at, or sent by post to, the address stated in the notice of appointment.

(4) Regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations has been amended by [S.I. 2006/3278](#).

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(10) A candidate may himself do any act or thing which any polling or counting or election agent of his, if appointed, would have been authorised to do, or may assist his agent in doing any such act or thing.

(11) Where by these Rules any act or thing is required or authorised to be done in the presence of the polling or counting agents, the non-attendance of any agent or agents at the time and place appointed for the purpose shall not, if the act or thing is otherwise duly done, invalidate the act or thing done.

Notification of requirement of secrecy

28. The returning officer must make such arrangements as he thinks fit to ensure that—

- (a) every person attending at a polling station (otherwise than for the purpose of voting or assisting a voter with disabilities to vote or as a constable on duty there) has been given a copy in writing of the provisions of subsections (1), (3) and (6) of section 66 of the 1983 Act⁽⁵⁾; and
- (b) every person attending at the counting of the votes (other than any constable on duty at the counting) has been given a copy in writing of the provisions of subsections (2) and (6) of that section.

Return of postal ballot papers

29.—(1) Where—

- (a) a postal vote has been returned in respect of a person who is entered on the postal voters list, or
- (b) a proxy postal vote has been returned in respect of a proxy who is entered on the proxy postal voters list,

the returning officer must mark the list in the manner prescribed by regulations made under the 1983 Act⁽⁶⁾.

(2) Rule 45(5) does not apply for the purpose of determining whether, for the purposes of this rule, a postal vote or a proxy postal vote is returned.

(5) Subsections (1), (2) and (3) of section 66 of the 1983 Act were amended by paragraphs 69, 82, 86(b) and 96 of Schedule 1 to the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22); subsection (6) was amended by paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 to the Representation of the People Act 1985 (c.50).

(6) See regulation 84A of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001/341) as inserted by S.I. 2006/2910.