

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

ELECTORAL WARD NO. 19 – MOTHERWELL SOUTH EAST AND RAVENSCRAIG BY-ELECTION

THURSDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2023

ARRANGEMENTS IN FORCE AT THE POLL

This document has been prepared to highlight specific issues relating to the Poll for the above By-Election and should be read in conjunction with other guidance provided.

At this By-Election the following arrangements will apply:-

(1) Entitlement to attend the Polling Place

Candidates and Election Agents are entitled to visit any Polling Place and the polling stations contained therein within the above Electoral Ward in which the candidate is standing. Polling Agents may also attend at the Polling Place/Station(s) for which they have been appointed. Only one Polling Agent on behalf of each Candidate is allowed to enter the Polling Station at any time. Those attending must have received notification, in writing, of the requirement of secrecy, and must hold the appropriate admission pass or similar authority from me otherwise admission to the Polling Stations will not be allowed. On entering the Polling Station you must maintain and adhere to the requirements of secrecy and your pass must be shown to the Presiding Officer.

(2) What does a Polling Agent do?

On polling day Polling Agents are entitled:-

- ◆ to observe the Presiding Officer showing the empty ballot box prior to sealing it;
- ◆ to detect personation and prevent people from voting more than once at the same By-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 ballot box and the various packets of documents are sealed;

An Election Agent can also carry out any of the functions that a Polling Agent is authorised to do. However, even although a Polling Agent is entitled to witness various aspects of the polling procedure, the procedure is not invalidated if they have not witnessed it.

Any number of people may be appointed as a Polling Agent to attend any particular Polling Station, although only one Polling Agent on behalf of each Candidate will be allowed into a particular Polling Station at any time. A person may be appointed as a Polling Agent for more than one Polling Station.

(3) Display of advertisements

No advertisement should be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or anyone else with an interest in the site. It should be noted that the Council prohibits the display of all election or campaign material on street furniture. Agents or Tellers should not display campaign material (eg billboards, posters, placards or leaflets) on walls, fences etc or distribute such material within the Polling Place. Any display of such material should be brought to the attention of the Presiding Officer immediately.

(4) Campaigning on polling day

Campaigning must not take place within a Polling Station (the room where people vote) or the Polling Place (building and perimeter area eg playground). There should be no more than one Teller at a Polling Place for each Candidate at any time. Where a Polling Place contains more than one Polling Station with separate entrances, it may be appropriate for there to be Tellers at each entrance, but no more than one per Candidate. Tellers must remain outside the Polling Station except when entering to cast their own vote, to vote as a proxy or to accompany a disabled voter. Presiding Officers must ensure that electors can cast their vote in private and must provide a space where the secrecy of the ballot will be maintained. Electors should be able to enter the surrounding area in the same manner.

(5) Signs and Notices

The Presiding Officer at Station No 1 will ensure that signs and notices are in place to provide information for voters. The following notices will be in place:-

- A 'How to Vote' notice will be displayed inside and outside 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.

No party posters or other material that might be construed as supporting the views of any Candidate or Campaign Group involved in the By-Election should be displayed in or on the premises. If any such materials are found, they will be removed.

(6) Identification of Agents and Tellers

Tellers may stand outside the polling place or the polling station. There should be no more than one teller at a polling station for each candidate at any one time. They should wear coloured rosettes of a reasonable size, as this assists electors by making it clear that they are campaign workers and not electoral officials. The rosette may display the name of a candidate and/or an emblem or description. Tellers must not wear, carry or display any garment, headwear, footwear or other apparel, apart from a rosette that has any writing, picture or sign relating to any campaign group. In exercise of my discretion, I have decided that a Polling Agent within a Polling Station for the purpose of detecting personation shall be allowed to wear a coloured rosette. They should, however, wear no other means of campaign identification. For this purpose, the Polling Station is the classroom or other room in which the actual voting takes place. There will, however, be no restriction on the wearing of rosettes or other means of campaign identification within a Polling Station by (a) a Candidate, Election Agent or Polling Agent making a brief visit to a Polling Station or (b) any person entering a Polling Station for the purposes of (i) voting personally or (ii) assisting another voter to vote where permitted so in terms of the relevant legislation.

(7) Vehicles

There should be no parking of vehicles used for campaign purposes, for example displaying Election materials or using loudspeakers within the curtilage of, or outside the entrances to, the polling place or within close proximity to the entrance. The Police, in consultation with the Presiding Officer at No 1 station, have discretion where the local conditions give rise to doubt.

(8) Disabled Voters

Disabled voters may request the assistance of the Presiding Officer to mark the ballot paper for them. Alternatively, they may be assisted by a companion, with the permission of the Presiding Officer who must be satisfied that the voter's disabilities prevent them from casting their vote unaided. The companion of a disabled voter must be either a close relative (spouse, civil partner, parent, sibling, child and aged 16 or over) or a qualified elector. Presiding Officers should pay particular attention to disabled voters and should familiarise themselves with the arrangements for disabled access.

(9) Voting Information

While there is no specific entitlement for agents to be informed of the numbers 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 although such information may be necessary in a case where an agent has raised a question of personation. The Presiding Officer shall ensure that dealing with such requests does not interfere with his/her official duties, and those of the other polling staff, and such requests will be answered accordingly.

(10) Press and Media

Press and media representatives will not be allowed within a Polling Station. Accreditation to the counting of the votes will be given on request. Photographs must not be taken within any Polling Station.

(11) **Admission to the Poll and Count**

The following individuals are entitled to attend the Poll and Count, on production of the relevant official pass:-

- Candidate and guest
- Election Agents
- any appointed Polling Agents (for the Poll)
- any appointed Counting agents (for the Count)
- Only in respect of the Count, any other individuals invited by me.
- representatives of the Electoral Commission
- accredited observers

I may also permit others to attend, such as the media and police officers, at my discretion, but I am not obliged to do so. My decision as to who may attend the Poll and Count is final.

(12) **Conduct of the Poll**

Any matters relating to the conduct of the poll should be referred to the Election Office in the first instance **by the candidate or Election Agent only**; issues raised by others connected with a campaign will not be considered. Similarly, any matters requiring attention from a campaign with respect to the conduct of the poll will be communicated to the Election Agent by a member of the Election Office or a Depute Returning Officer, and the Election Agent must act upon any decision taken in this respect. Where a Depute Returning Officer makes a decision about the conduct of the poll or any of the matters contained within these arrangements, that decision is final.

Des Murray
Returning Officer