

Shetland Islands Council**Thursday 4 May 2017**

At this Election the following arrangements will apply:

(1) Entitlement to attend the polling station

Candidates and authorised election agents are entitled to visit any polling station within the Local Authority area during polling day; polling agents may also attend at the polling station(s) for which they have been appointed. Only one polling agent for 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 certificate from me otherwise admission to the polling stations will not be allowed.

The following people are entitled to attend the poll:-

- ◆ Returning Officer and members of the Returning Officer's staff
- ◆ clerks appointed to attend at the polling station
- ◆ voters
- ◆ persons under the age of 16 accompanying voters
- ◆ companions of voters with disabilities
- ◆ candidates
- ◆ Election agents
- ◆ polling agents appointed to attend at the polling station, and
- ◆ Police officers and community support officers on duty
- ◆ persons entitled to attend from the Electoral Commission
- ◆ accredited observers

(2) 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 Election;
- ◆ to report to their Candidate any improper occurrences;
- ◆ to be present when the Presiding Officer marks ballot papers at the request of voters;
- ◆ to be present at the close of poll when the various packets of documents are sealed;
- ◆ to maintain the secrecy of the ballot.

A Candidate can also do any of the things that a polling agent is authorised to do. However, 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.

Any number of people may be appointed as a polling agent to attend any particular polling station, although only one polling agent for 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) Fly Posting

The fixing of posters to any part of the walls, railings, etc, within and surrounding the perimeter of the polling place is not allowed. The Council has a separate policy on posters, attached as Appendix 1.

(4) Canvassing/Campaigning on Polling Day

Within the polling place and polling station, agents must not:

- Interfere with the voting process
- Campaign, canvass voters, or distribute literature

There should be no long-term parking of vehicles for campaign purposes, for example displaying campaign materials or using loudspeakers, immediately outside entrances. Cars being used in campaigns that are also used to transport voters may need to wait for the voter while at the polling station, but this should not be unduly prolonged. The Returning Officer will be alerted to actions that may lead to electors feeling intimidated or influenced. Influencing includes deterring an elector from voting at all, as well as influencing them to vote or not for a particular candidate.

Presiding Officer No 1 will have absolute and final discretion to decide on the appropriateness of the conduct of any person in the polling place.

Consideration for electors when voting, is of prime concern at all times.

(5) Information for Voters

While authorised agents can and do help direct voters to the polling station, a duty is placed on the Presiding Officer at No. 1 station to ensure that the information as to the appropriate room in which each voter has to vote is clearly displayed near the entrance of the polling place. Authorised agents must not engage in canvassing in these circumstances.

(6) Rosettes

There will be no restriction on the wearing of rosettes or other means of party political or campaign identification within a polling station by (a) an authorised 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 to do by Statute or Regulation.

(7) Cars

If it is necessary for a car bringing a disabled/older person to the poll to be permitted to bring that person to the door of the polling place and the car has affixed to it campaign material, then the car should be allowed to wait in an inconspicuous place until the person has voted. 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

Presiding Officers are reminded of the needs of voters who are disabled and should offer to assist such voters if requested (including helping voters to and from the polling booth) whilst, at all times, observing the voter's right to secrecy. Disabled voters may also be accompanied to and from the entrance to the polling place; the poll clerk can assist here. It is of the utmost importance, however, that the polling station is **never** left unattended at any time. 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 to authorised agents to be informed of the numbers of persons who have voted, it will be permissible for Presiding Officers to give authorised 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 for the purpose of a canvass although such information may be necessary in a case where an authorised agent has raised a question of personation. The Presiding Officer shall ensure that meeting these requests does not interfere with his/her official duties.

(10) Press and Media

Press and media representatives are NOT permitted to undertake interviews, filming or photography within the polling place. Accredited press and media representatives will be allowed within the premises where the counting of the votes is taking place.

(11) Admission to the Count

No persons other than the candidates, Election agents, the prescribed number of counting agents, representatives of the Electoral Commission, official observers, the Returning Officer and his staff, and any other person whom the Returning Officer is prepared to admit at his discretion will be allowed into the premises where and when the count is taking place. The public will not be admitted at any time to the count centre.

(12) Conduct of the Poll

Any matters relating to the conduct of the Election should be referred to the election office in the first instance.

Mrs Anne Cogle
Depute Returning Officer
Shetland Islands Council
Burgh Road
LERWICK
Shetland
ZE1 0LA

Election Office Helpline: 01595 744066
Returning.officer@shetland.gov.uk



Policy on the Placement of Posters

Shetland Islands Council requires permission to be sought to display any posters on Council property.

In the case of roadside posters, permission should be sought from the Roads Service, and the following conditions must be met:

1. That for election posters, application is made, not for every poster, but for all posters within the roads authority's area;
2. All posters must clearly state the name and address of the person and/or organisation responsible for its placement;
3. All posters must be backed by boards or printed on card of adequate stiffness and tied with string or fixed with plastic cable ties. They must not be fixed with adhesive of any type;
4. Any posters fixed by adhesive to any item of street furniture will be treated as illegal fly posting and the offending person may face prosecution under Section 200 of the Roads Scotland Act 1984. This carries a maximum fine of £1000 per offence. The Council will also act under Section 59 of the Act to recover costs incurred in the removal of fly posting from the offending party;
5. All posters shall be erected on street lighting columns. The size and placing of posters must not cause any obstruction to pedestrians and shall not obscure any traffic signs or signals or interrupt any sightline essential for road safety. The size should generally be no larger than A3, and the mounting height to the underside must be no less than 2.25m;
6. Posters must not be attached to any traffic signal post, or control box, any traffic sign, pedestrian guardrail or bus stop or any public utilities apparatus;
7. Signs and posters would require to be removed within 48 hours of polling day;
8. The applicant would indemnify the Authority for any damage or loss caused by signs or posters, and would be liable for reimbursing the Council for the cost of removing any signs or posters after the deadline for their removal.

Correspondence with the Roads Service, in particular with regard to the location and dimensions of posters, should be addressed to:

Shetland Islands Council Executive Manager - Roads Infrastructure Services Department Gremista Lerwick ZE1 0PX	Telephone: Lerwick (01595) 744866 Fax: Lerwick (01595) 744869 e-mail: roads@shetland.gov.uk
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In addition, the Returning Officer does not permit the placement of any individual or party campaign posters or sandwich boards on or within the boundaries of polling places, during the hours of polling.

February 2017