

Dealing with doubtful ballot papers in the UK

Supporting UK Parliamentary elections

Translations and other formats

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1 Introduction

1.1 This booklet is designed to assist (Acting) Returning Officers ((A)ROs) in adjudicating doubtful ballot papers at UK Parliamentary elections.

This booklet should also be read in conjunction with our general guidance on managing the verification and count contained in [our guidance for \(A\)ROs](#).

1.2 The (A)RO may delegate the final decision on adjudication to one or more deputies, but this should be done explicitly in writing.

1.3 Because the (A)RO discharges a statutory function in adjudicating doubtful votes, the (A)RO or authorised Deputy (A)RO, and not any other staff employed by the (A)RO at the count, should carry out this function.

1.4 One of the aims of this booklet is to help to ensure consistency of approach across the UK.

1.5 This booklet is based on existing doubtful ballot paper guidance for other elections, which has been developed in consultation with representatives from across the electoral community, including members of the Elections, Referendum and Registration Working Group and the UK Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board, and the Electoral Commission is grateful for their assistance throughout this process.

1.6 When undertaking the adjudication of ballot papers it is important to ensure that the process is carried out in full view of all candidates and agents present at the count, as well as in the presence of any Commission representatives and accredited observers in attendance.

Managing the adjudication at UK Parliamentary elections

1.7 (A)ROs should not wait until towards the end before starting the adjudication process; this should be carried out regularly throughout the count in clear view of those entitled to be present.

1.8 Those ballot papers that have been rejected should be stamped with the word 'rejected' and placed in the appropriate package.¹ All other ballot papers must be counted.

1.9 A statement must be prepared showing the number of ballot papers rejected under each of the following headings:²

- want of official mark

¹ Rule 47(3), Schedule 1, Representation of the People Act 1983.

² Rule 47(4), Schedule 1, Representation of the People Act 1983.

- voting for more than one candidate
- writing or mark by which the voter could be identified
- unmarked or void for uncertainty

2 Principles of adjudication

2.1 Any doubtful ballot papers should be placed in a tray for the supervisor to take to the (A)RO for adjudication. The whole of the ballot paper needs to be considered when adjudicating doubtful votes in case the voter has made any marks outside of the voting boxes.

2.2 The (A)RO may only reject a ballot paper on the following grounds:

- it does not contain an official mark
- a vote for more than one candidate has been given
- it contains a mark or writing by which the voter can be identified

2.3 A ballot paper must not be rejected because the vote is:³

- not marked in the proper place
- marked other than by a cross
- marked by more than one mark

if an intention to give a vote for not more than one candidate clearly appears on the ballot paper.

2.4 Therefore, the following ballot papers will need to be passed to the (A)RO for adjudication:

- those that appear to have no official mark
- those appearing to contain more than one vote
- those with any writing or mark by which the voter may be identified
- those where there is no mark or uncertainty as to the vote

2.5 In addition, in order to help maintain the integrity of the election, the following ballot papers should be passed to the (A)RO for further consideration:

- any paper torn or damaged in any way
- any paper with anything unusual about it (for example, any paper that appears to have been altered, either with a clearly different writing instrument or with correction fluid)

2.6 In the case of ballot papers that appear to have been altered, (A)ROs may consider packaging them separately in case of later challenge or investigation.

³ Rule 47(2), Schedule 1, Representation of the People Act 1983.

Want of official mark

2.7 Absence of the official mark must lead to an automatic rejection. The (A)RO has no discretion.

2.8 However, where instead of a pre-printed official mark a stamping instrument has been used, a partial piercing or embossing of the ballot paper should not in itself result in a rejection.⁴ As long as it is clear that the ballot paper has been stamped by polling station staff or postal vote issuing staff the fact that not all the pins have stamped through the ballot paper or that the perforation is not wholly on the paper is immaterial.

Voting for more than one candidate

2.9 This is a matter for the (A)ROs judgement.

2.10 Additional marks must not lead to a rejection if it is clear that those marks were not intended as a vote.⁵

2.11 A paper on which each of the candidates are marked 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. instead of with a cross (see example 25-A) should not be rejected on the grounds of voting for more than one candidate. It is reasonable to conclude that in ranking the candidates the voter is putting them into order of preference and a ballot paper marked in this way should therefore be accepted as a valid vote for the candidate against which the number 1 is marked. This position is consistent with the position set out in the legislation for Scottish Parliamentary elections which states that a paper marked 1, 2, 3 etc. instead of with a cross must be allowed as a good vote for the candidate or party against which the number 1 is marked.

Writing or mark by which the voter can be identified

2.12 There are two aspects to this:

- either any writing or mark on the ballot paper which, of itself, identifies the voter, or
- the voter can be identified by such writing or mark

2.13 It is important to bear in mind that the legislation states that the voter **can be**, not may be or might possibly be, identified (which does not include the ballot paper number and unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper).

⁴ Cirencester case, *Lawson v. Chester-Master* (1893) 4 O'M & H 194 and Newington case, *Lewis v. Sheppardson* (1948) 2 All ER 503.

⁵ *Woodward v. Sarsons* (1875), LR 10, CP74 and Cirencester case (1893).

Writing or mark which, of itself, identifies the voter

2.14 A ballot paper should be rejected if:

- the electoral number of the voter written on the ballot paper unequivocally identifies the voter
- it may reasonably be held to bear the name (or signature) or unique address of the voter on its front

The voter can be indirectly identified by any writing or mark on the ballot paper

2.15 The (A)RO is not required to investigate the matter or require evidence to be produced to identify the writing or mark, but the (A)RO should consider any evidence that is given to them at the time.

2.16 Where there is doubt about the identity of the person who marked the ballot paper, (A)ROs should allow rather than reject the ballot paper.

Unmarked ballot papers

2.17 Unmarked ballot papers should be rejected.

2.18 A ballot paper marked by means other than a pencil should not be rejected simply because of that.

2.19 Marks other than a cross, however faint, may still be valid.

Void for uncertainty

2.20 Establishing voter intention is crucial when determining doubtful ballot papers.

2.21 The key phrase in the Rules is: 'A ballot paper [...] shall not [...] be deemed to be void if an intention that the vote shall be for one of the candidates **clearly** appears'.⁶

2.22 Each ballot paper should be considered on its own merits and decisions should be taken on a case-by-case basis.

2.23 The key question an (A)RO should ask is whether the voter has, on the face of the paper, indicated a reasonably clear intention to vote for a candidate.

Decisions on ballot papers

⁶ Rule 47(2), Schedule 1, Representation of the People Act 1983.

2.24 The decision of the (A)RO is final, subject only to review on election petition.⁷

⁷ Rule 48, Schedule 1, Representation of the People Act 1983.

3 Summary

3.1 The principles to be applied are set out above. In practical terms, the general approach can be summarised as follows:

- always be clear and consistent
- take time to ensure that a considered decision is given in every case
- determine whether the intention of the voter clearly appears on the ballot paper
As part of this, (A)ROs will need to:
 - consider the whole of the ballot paper
 - consider whether the way a ballot paper has been marked means that a vote for one candidate is clearly apparent

4 Examples

4.1 The examples provided here under 'allowed' and 'rejected' are based on previous case law or taken from the specific rules for UK Parliamentary elections.

4.2 Ultimately, the decision on any particular ballot paper, including the question as to whether an intention to vote for a particular candidate clearly appears, rests with the (A)RO.

Case law references


4.3 Abbreviated case law references have been used throughout this booklet. The following table lists the full case law references.

Abbreviation	Full reference
Berwick-upon-Tweed case	Berwick-upon-Tweed case [1880] 3 O'M&H 178
Buckrose case	Buckrose case, <i>Sykes v. McArthur</i> [1886] 5 O'M&H 110
Cirencester case	<i>Lawson v. Chester Master</i> [1893]
Cornwell v. Marshall	<i>Cornwell v. Marshall</i> [1977] 75 LGR 676 DC
Eley v. Durant	<i>Eley v. Durant</i> [1900] 4SJ 430
Levers v. Morris	<i>Levers v. Morris</i> [1971] 3 All ER QBD
Richmond case	Richmond London, Election, Re [1976] Times, 6 August
Rowe v. Cox	<i>Rowe v. Cox</i> [2001] QBD, Case M/294/01
Ruffle v. Rogers	<i>Ruffle v. Rogers</i> [1982] QB 1220
South Newington case	South Newington case, <i>Lewis v. Shepperdson</i> [1948] 2 All ER 503
West Bromwich case	West Bromwich case, <i>Hazel v. Viscount Lewisham</i> [1911] 6 O'M&H 256
Woodward v. Sarsons	<i>Woodward v. Sarsons</i> [1875] LR10 CP 733

Allowed votes

The following are suggested examples of allowed votes.

Example 1

Election of the Member of Parliament for the <i>[insert name of constituency]</i> constituency
Vote for only one candidate by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY

Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ

League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34

Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)

Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT

The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK


Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Boots – Cirencester case, *Eley v. Durant* and Rule 47(2)(c).

Example 2

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



~~**CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary**~~

~~9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 L34
Independent~~

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Miller – *Woodward v. Sarsons* and Rule 47(2)(c).

Example 3

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross in the box next to your choice.

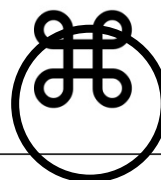
BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy


7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Boots – Rule 47(2)(b) and (c).

Example 4

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



*Hood
The Forest
Party!*

MILLER, Windy


7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Hood – *Ruffle v. Rogers* and Rule 47(2)(b).

Example 5

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY

Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ

League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34

Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)

Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT

The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK

Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Miller – West Bromwich case and Rule 47(2)(a).

Example 6

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Clover – Rule 47(2)(b).

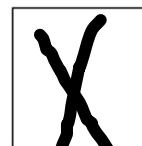
Example 7

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross in the box next to your choice.

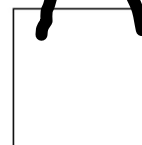
BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent



GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



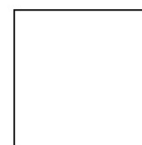
HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy


7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Barber – Berwick-upon-Tweed case and Rule 47(2)(a).

Example 8

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY

Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ

League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34

Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)

Mad Hatter's Tea Party

 *Yes*

HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT

The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK


Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Grey – Rule 47(2)(b).

Example 9

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Miller – Rule 47 (a) and (b).

Example 10

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY

Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ

League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34

Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)

Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT

The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK


Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Boots – Rule 47(2) (b).

Example 11

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali
5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty
63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary
9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl
(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin
64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy
7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum




ELECT BARBER

Allow for Barber – *Ruffle v. Rogers* and Rule 47(2)(a) and (b) [provided there is no other candidate by the name of Barber].

Example 12

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy


7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Miller – Rule 47(2)(a) and (b).

Example 13

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

~~**BARBER, Ali**~~
5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
~~**Pelican Party**~~



BOOTS, Dusty
63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary
9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl
(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin
64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party




MILLER, Windy
7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Barber – *Levers v. Morris* and Rule 47(2)(a).

Example 14

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6G1

Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ

League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34

Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)

Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT

The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK

Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Clover – *Levers v. Morris* and Rule 47(2)(b). See also *Schofield's Election Law*, Volume 5, Appendix E, E20 (Shaw & Sons, 2008 as updated by supplement issue no.1).

Example 15


Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali
5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party




BOOTS, Dusty
63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers




CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary
9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E24
Independent

GREY, Earl
(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin
64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy
7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Boots – *Levers v. Morris* and Rule 47(2)(b). See also *Schofield's Election Law*, Volume 5, Appendix E, E20 (Shaw & Sons, 2008 as updated by supplement issue no.1).

Example 16

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Allow for Boots – vote marked otherwise than by means of a cross. Rule 47(2)(b).

Rejected votes

The following are suggested examples of rejected votes.


Example 17

Election of the Member of Parliament for the <i>[insert name of constituency]</i> constituency		
Vote for only one candidate by putting a cross <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in the box next to your choice.		
BARBER, Ali 5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY Pelican Party		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BOOTS, Dusty 63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ League of Line Dancers		<input type="checkbox"/>
CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary 9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34 Independent		<input type="checkbox"/>
GREY, Earl (address in the Anytown Constituency) Mad Hatter's Tea Party		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HOOD, Robin 64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT The Forest Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
MILLER, Windy 7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK Alternative Power Forum		<input type="checkbox"/>

Reject – voting for more than one candidate. Rule 47(1)(b).

Example 18

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY

Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ

League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34

Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)

Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT

The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK

Alternative Power Forum



Reject – voter's intention uncertain. Buckrose case and Rule 47(1)(d).

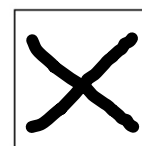
Example 19

Election of the Member of Parliament for the [insert name of constituency] constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross in the box next to your choice.

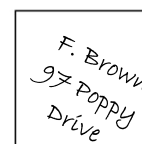
BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



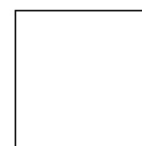
BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent



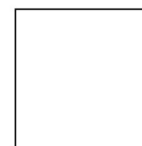
GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



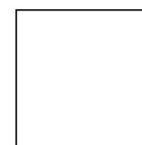
HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy


7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Reject – voter can be identified. *Woodward v. Sarsons*, South Newington case and Rule 47(1)(c).

Example 20

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum








Reject – voting for more than one candidate. Rule 47(1) (b).

Example 21

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency


Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali 5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY Pelican Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
BOOTS, Dusty 63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ League of Line Dancers		<input type="checkbox"/>
CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary 9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT18 E34 Independent		<input type="checkbox"/>
GREY, Earl (address in the Anytown Constituency) Mad Hatter's Tea Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
HOOD, Robin 64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT The Forest Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
MILLER, Windy 7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK Alternative Power Forum		<input type="checkbox"/>

Reject – voter's intention is uncertain. *Rowe v. Cox* and Rule 47(1)(d).

Example 22

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy


7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Reject – voting for more than one candidate. Rule 47(1)(b).

Example 23

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY
Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ
League of Line Dancers



M. Jones
AB 561

CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34
Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT
The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy


7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK
Alternative Power Forum



Reject – voter can be identified. *Woodward v. Sarsons* and Rule 47(1)(c).

Example 24

Election of the Member of Parliament for the *[insert name of constituency]* constituency

Vote for **only one candidate** by putting a cross  in the box next to your choice.

BARBER, Ali

5 Anytown Close, Anytown, AT34 6CY

Pelican Party



BOOTS, Dusty

63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown, AT33 5XZ

League of Line Dancers



CLOVER, Elizabeth Mary

9 Seymour Court, Anytown, AT12 E34

Independent

GREY, Earl

(address in the Anytown Constituency)

Mad Hatter's Tea Party



HOOD, Robin

64 Purple Road, Anytown, AT12 7HT

The Forest Party



MILLER, Windy

7 Daisy Drive, Anytown, AT98 7RK

Alternative Power Forum



None of the above ✓

Reject – voter's intention uncertain. Rule 47(1)(d).

Annex – Legislation

The election rules

The relevant rules in Schedule 1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and are as follows:

Rejected ballot papers

Rule 47 –

(1) Any ballot paper –

- (a) which does not bear the official mark, or
- (b) on which votes are given for more than one candidate, or
- (c) on which anything is written or marked by which the voter can be identified except the printed number and other unique identifying mark on the back, or
- (d) which is unmarked or void for uncertainty,

shall, subject to the provisions of the next following paragraph, be void and not counted.

(2) A ballot paper on which the vote is marked –

- (a) elsewhere than in the proper place, or
- (b) otherwise than by means of a cross, or
- (c) by more than one mark,

shall not for such reason be deemed to be void if an intention that the vote shall be for one or other of the candidates clearly appears, and the way the paper is marked does not itself identify the voter and it is not shown that he can be identified by it.

(3) The returning officer shall endorse the word “rejected” on any ballot paper which under this rule is not to be counted, and shall add to the endorsement the words “rejection objected to” if any objection is made by a counting agent to his decision.

(4) The returning officer shall draw up a statement showing the number of ballot papers rejected under the several heads of –

- (a) want of official mark;
- (b) voting for more than one candidate;
- (c) writing or mark by which voter could be identified; and
- (d) unmarked or void for uncertainty.

Decisions on ballot papers

Rule 48 – The decision of the (Acting) Returning Officer on any question arising in respect of a ballot paper is final, but may be subject to review on an election petition.