

DOWNHAM WARD BY-ELECTION SURVEY

Appendix 1

What was your role in the election?

Candidate	Election Agent
6	3

How many times have you acted in this capacity?

First time	1-3 times	More than 3 times
1	2	5

Your general contacts with the Elections Office

Did we provide a satisfactory response to your inquiries -

In person

Yes x 4

By telephone

Yes x 4

Yes
excellent

All very prompt and courteous

By email

Yes x 4

By letter

Yes x 3

Nomination packs & nomination process

We issued the nomination packs from 13th January to those who had contacted us in advance of the election and subsequently on request. This included the timetable, the nomination forms and the expenses returns.

Are there any comments that you want to make about the nomination packs and/or the nomination process?

None, all fine. Excellent service. It would have been helpful to know total number of electors at that stage (even though registrations had not closed) in order to be able to work out expenses limit. Too much paper work. Maybe use different coloured paper to divide sections. Straight forward.

Meeting with Agents (AGENTS ONLY)

We had a meeting with Election Agents on 28th January to discuss the election arrangements.

Do you have any comments about the meeting with Agents?

Excellent. Generally well run. Questions were answered fully. Some confusion about how many counting agents were to be allowed.

Poll Cards

The main poll card issue was on 28th January, with a supplementary despatch for 'late' registrations. on

Do you have any comments about the poll cards?

Several people had not received poll cards, a number in certain streets. No. Had reports from voters about not receiving poll cards in many roads. Erratic delivery in some flats, left on stairs etc. Maps & highlighting changes in Polling Stations were useful. Satisfactory. Some people did not receive cards & thought they could not vote.

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Postal Voting

The initial and main postal vote issue was on 6th February with the supplementary despatch for 'late' applications on 12th February. We had a number of postal vote openings on 11th/13th/16th/18th and 19th February. We welcome your comments about this part of the election.

Did you receive any voters' comments about the postal voting packs?

A few people did not receive - can remember at least 2 on Barridale Rd. No. Postal vote packs not delivered in Blacklands Rd. Probably now as clear & simple as it can be. Some people did not receive postal votes.

Do you have any comments on the arrangements for postal vote issue and openings?

All Fine. No. See previous section. Smooth operation. Once IT glitches were sorted it went smoothly. I was glad a fairly flexible approach was taken to signature matching, so as not to disallow too many votes. Some councils in other parts of the country open ballot papers face up so that the parties can take samples, could you do the same?

Polling Stations

Obviously, we were constrained in our use of polling stations by the availability of suitable buildings. We would welcome your comments on:

The location of the polling stations.

Preferable to be in the same place at each election, however I know disruptions were avoidable. Convenient to all residents. Portakabins used at Bromley Rd OBR & Rangefield School. OK. Good disabled access especially at EDD. Some electors confused as to where the Catford Sports Club was, also voters at Good Shepherd thought they had to go to Downham Way Family Church.

The conduct of the polling staff.

Excellent x 2. Fine x 2. Generally helpful. Apparent reluctance of staff at EDF to refute a complaint by Labour activists about wearing of rosettes with party names which intimidated our teller, resolved without recourse to ERO.

Any comments that you have received from voters?

Polling station for Shroffold Rd a long way away for elderly. None. No. Portakabins are unpopular with voters & political parties. Only that parts of EDD (East of Northover) are a long way from the Polling Station at Good Shepherd. Worth considering re-drawing the boundary along Northover at the next review of polling districts.

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The Count

We would welcome your comments on:

The general organisation of the count?

Good x 3. Very well organised. Generally well run. Very smooth. Excellent, the best and quickest I had been to. Efficiency of staff was amazing and I was very impressed to get the results so quickly.

Were the procedures followed well-explained to you?

Yes x 5. Excellently explained. Yes throughout election.

Did you have ample opportunities to oversee the proceedings?

Yes x 7.

Do you have any further comments on how the count was dealt with?

None. No. Candidates should have been called to the front for the declaration - I can guess why it was not done but the formality matters. Overall very impressed. The 1st time I have stood as a candidate in Lewisham and thought it all ran incredibly well. Thank you for all the hard work.