

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG!

How can timely and effective Communications help?



POLLING
STATION



POLLING
STATION
WAY IN



What can go wrong and why?

- Large scale event, short timeframes
- High level of scrutiny
- Fewer resources
- Reliance on partners / providers
- Already complex legislative background compounded by new legislation

Why is good Communications important?

- Explains
- Open and transparent
- Can reduce risk of formal challenge
- Deflects from conspiracy theories
- Damage limitation
- Limits public loss of confidence
- Transparency & Accountability
- Assurance for candidates

Example 1: Ambridge City Council

UKPGE 2017, no Electoral Services Manager in post, elections being supported by variety of consultants

- Issue (a) – some postal voters did not receive postal vote packs



- Issue (b) – counted ballot papers from one or more teams were not included in overall result totals



Example 2: Royston Vasey District Council

- All- out elections, count lasts from 10pm to 7am
- Dibley Parish Council counted last, 12 seats and 14 candidates
- Husband and wife candidates; husband declared elected, wife doesn't win a seat
- Next morning, error comes to light – Mrs Trott should have been declared the winner



Example 3: Midsomer Unitary Council

- More than 800 uncounted postal votes discovered during election count
- PVs discovered after counting had concluded for Causton ward and provisional result had been accepted
- Result was extremely close



Example 4: Walmington-on- Sea Borough Council

- 4-way combined election
- Parishes counted last
- Largest parish - Hotton – numbers don't add up after 3 attempts! Staff are leaving and sports hall staff are dismantling furniture
- RO takes decision to abandon count and resume after the weekend
- Social media storm ensues....



Example 5: Weatherfield District Council

- Local elections May 2023 - Voter ID introduced
- Polling station staff recruited very late after lots of drop-outs
- Voter challenges staff in station, refuses to accept that a gun licence, issued by the Local Authority, cannot be accepted as ID
- Staff could not give a clear response; called PSI who advises that BP must not be issued
- Elector rants on social media



Feedback & questions

Thank you!