

# **ACT Electoral Commission**

## **ACT Elections Ballot Scanning – Verification 1 and Verification 2 User Guide**

## **Overview**

The Ballot Paper Scanning System (BPSS) is used to successfully scan 2020 ACTLA election ballot papers, read and interpret handwritten preference numbers, allow for verification of the captured data and correction when needed, and provide an output file that is able to be read by eVACS (the Electronic Voting and Counting System).

The roles of the operators are to conduct verification of handwritten preferences when they are unclear. There are three levels of verification – V1, V2 and V3. This training will explain what you need to do if you are a V1/V2/V3 operator and how you need to conduct verification.

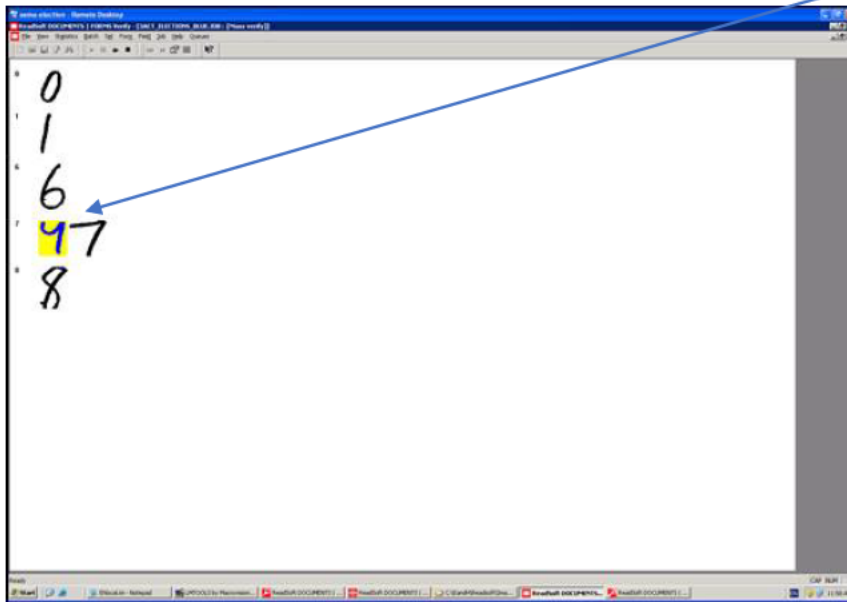
### **First verification check (V1)**

- This check is undertaken by V1 operators.
- V1 operators perform the following functions:
  - validating preferences interpreted by the ICR software,
  - correcting the preference numbers where appropriate,
  - highlighting preference numbers when unclear for passing onto V2 verification.

### **Overview of V1 Process**

- Following the scanning and imaging of the ballot papers, the V1 operator will select a scanned batch of ballot papers.
- Once a V1 operators starts reviewing a batch, they will need to complete the batch.
- On opening the batch, the operator will be presented with a screen showing the snippet image and ICR result of each of the preferences on each ballot paper as imaged.

Where the preference is not clearly identified that image will be highlighted



- Next to the image is the number the ICR software has interpreted the preference to be (as figure above).
- The operator at this stage does not see the actual ballot paper – only the image snippets and what the ICR software has identified them to be, and whether they are unclear.
- **The operator will validate the preference numbers, correct preference numbers or highlight preference numbers as unclear.**
- To highlight, move the mouse over the number and click. To undo highlight, click a second time.
- Any numbers that is unclear at this stage, will be shown on an extract of the ballot paper showing where that unclear number is on the ballot paper. If the number in this context is clear, then the operator will key in that number for the preference.
- **If the operator is still unsure of the number, then the operator will key '0'.**
- Where the preference number is corrected or marked as unclear (marked with '0'), the ballot paper image that has that preference number, is passed to the electoral officer/V2 Operator undertaking the second verification check.

## Second Verification check (V2)

- There are two instances that require second verification checks:
  - a) On ballot papers where the preference numbers identified by the ICR software have been altered at the first verification check; and
  - b) Where the first verification check operator highlighted, or could not verify, an unclear preference number.
- This check is undertaken by electoral officials/V2 operators.
- V1 Operators will not be able to open the batch ending in 999 and will be dealt by authorised operator).

### Overview of V2 Process

- Operators at this stage will select a batch from the list presented. **Only authorised operators are to select batches ending in 999<sup>1</sup>**. Batches ending with 999 are to be processed by a senior electoral official. The operator is to update the captured preference results to reflect the preference numbers shown on the ballot paper as recorded on stickers by the Electoral Commissioner or Deputy Electoral Commissioner next to the names of candidates. The operator verifying these batches is also to ensure the preferences reflect those recorded on stickers by the Electoral Commissioner or Deputy Electoral Commissioner next to the names of candidates.
- The operator undertaking Verification 2 check must be different to the operator who conducted the first verification check. The scanning system will not allow the same operator to do both the first and second checks of the same ballot paper.
- The operator will be presented with an image of the ballot paper with the changed or unclear preference number highlighted.
- Where the preference had been changed at the first verification check stage, the operator will either verify the change or further alter the preference number.
  - a) In the former case, the ballot paper preferences will then be passed against the business rules and if passed, the ballot paper will be marked as verified.

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<sup>1</sup> Batch numbers ending in 999 contain ballot papers that were deemed to be informal at the polling place but have been determined to be formal by the Electoral Commissioner or Deputy Electoral Commissioner during the recheck of informal ballots. These batches will also contain ballot papers with writing, including preference numbers written, outside the candidate squares. These batches are to be processed by a senior electoral official. The operator is to update the captured preference results to reflect the preference numbers shown on the ballot paper as recorded on stickers by the Electoral Commissioner or Deputy Electoral Commissioner next to the names of candidates. The operator verifying these batches is also to ensure the preferences reflect those recorded on stickers by the Electoral Commissioner or Deputy Electoral Commissioner next to the names of candidates.

- b) In the latter case, the ballot paper preferences will be passed to the senior electoral staff (V3) who will verify or further change the preferences.

### **Third verification check (V3)**

- V3 Operators will be senior electoral officers.
- Ballot papers that are unverified entering the thirds stage will be those where the preferences do not meet the business rules or have been changed by the operator at the second verification (V2) check stage.
- During this stage, V3 Operators may need to view the actual ballot paper to determine the ballot paper preferences. (Ballot papers may also need to be retrieved at the request of scrutineers.)
- The functions that V3 operators will perform are:
  - a) Verify, update, approve ballot papers
  - b) Deleting a batch
  - c) Approving pending deletes
  - d) Committing a batch
  - e) Create reports
  - f) Create output files for eVACS
  - g) User management

Details of each function will be explained in V3 user guide.

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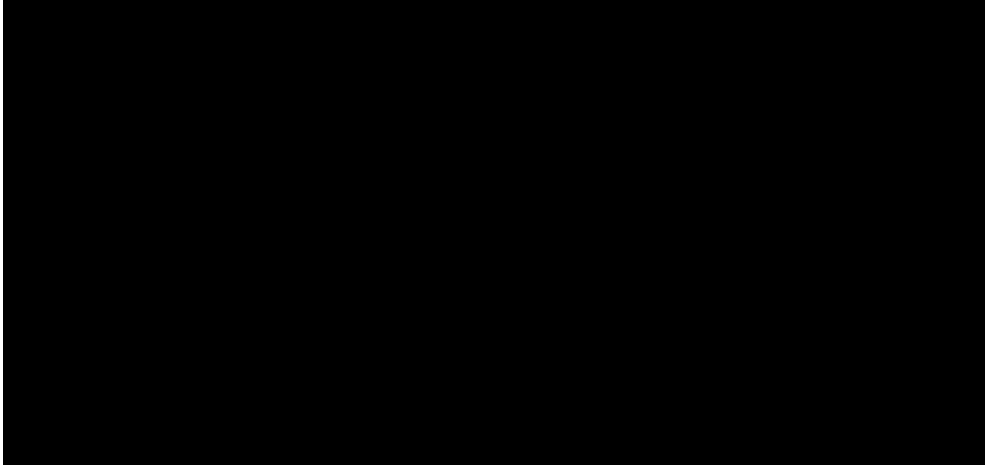
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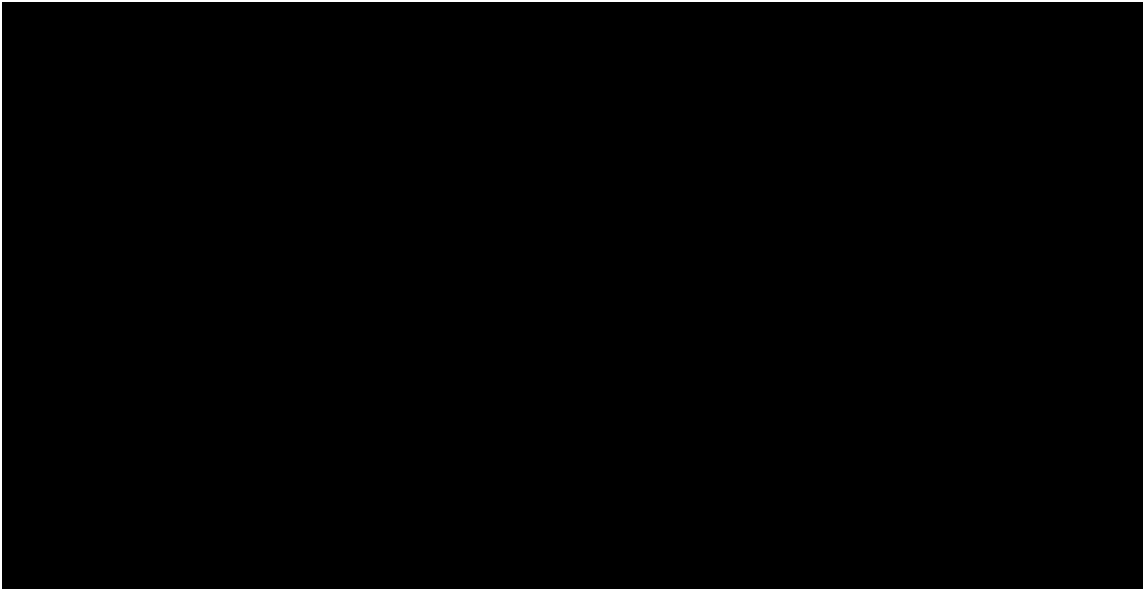


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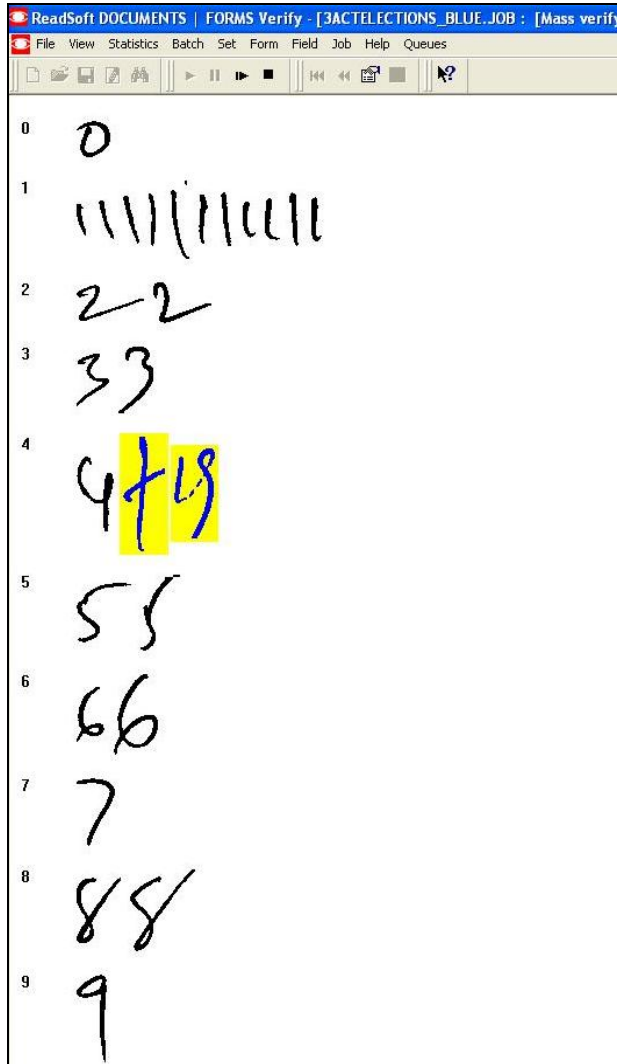
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### Step 3: Ballot paper verification

The scanning software may be unsure of some numbers depending on the legibility of handwriting. In the first stage of verification the software will attempt to automatically interpret all the numbers it can identify on a given page. These numbers are then presented to the operator to either confirm or flag as needing to be manually re-keyed.



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Any number written that is unreadable or that the Electoral Officer is unsure of must be keyed as a 0.

A1	Nancy-Louise SCHERGER	A5	Richard MULCAHY
A2	Owen SADDLER	1	Ben O'NEILL
A3	Norvan VOGT	A6	Joanne ALLEN

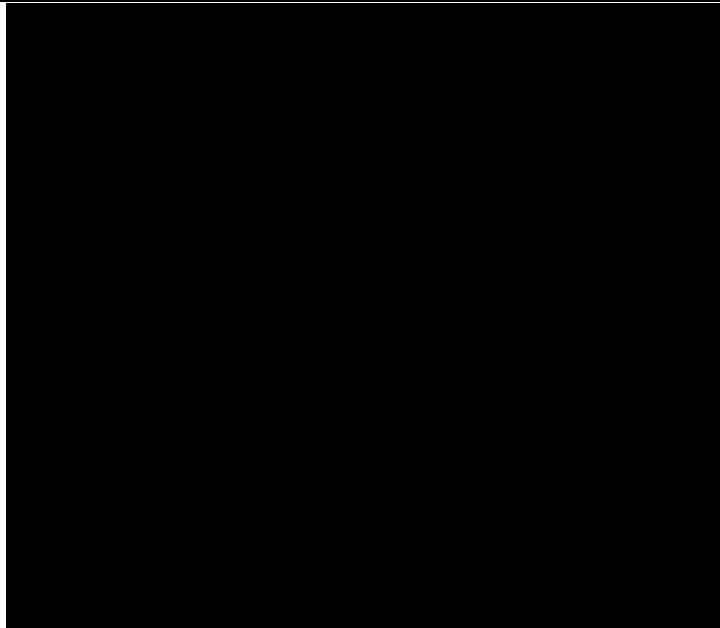
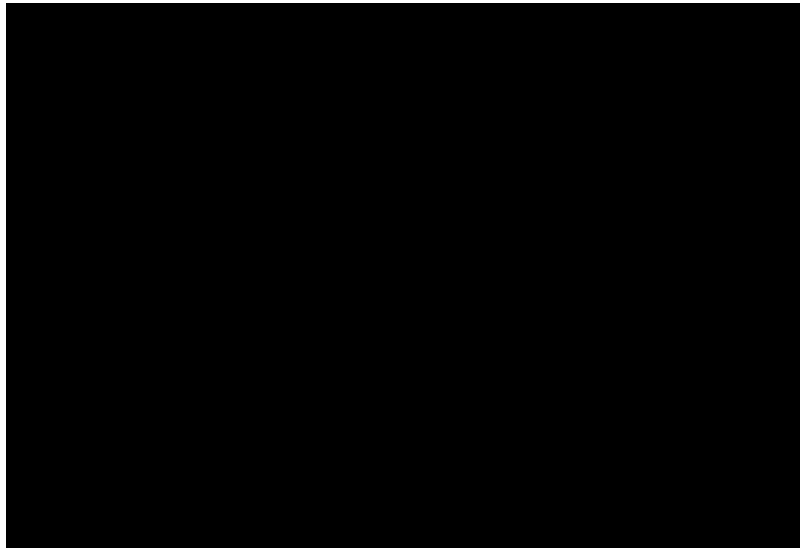


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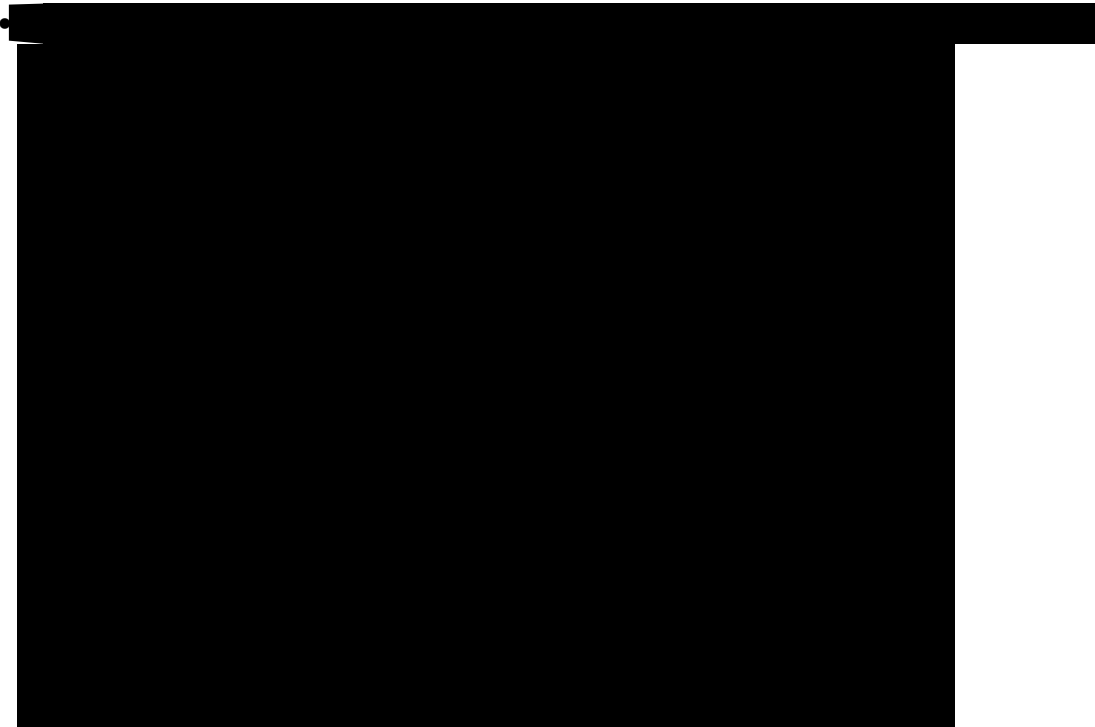
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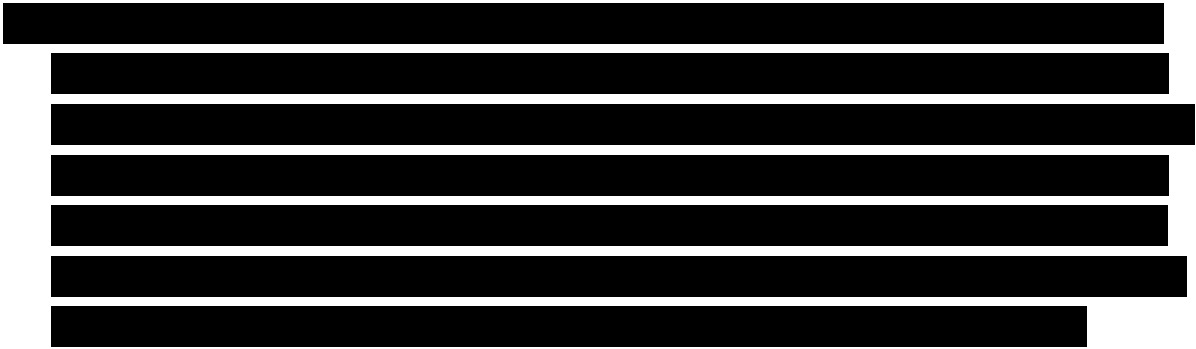
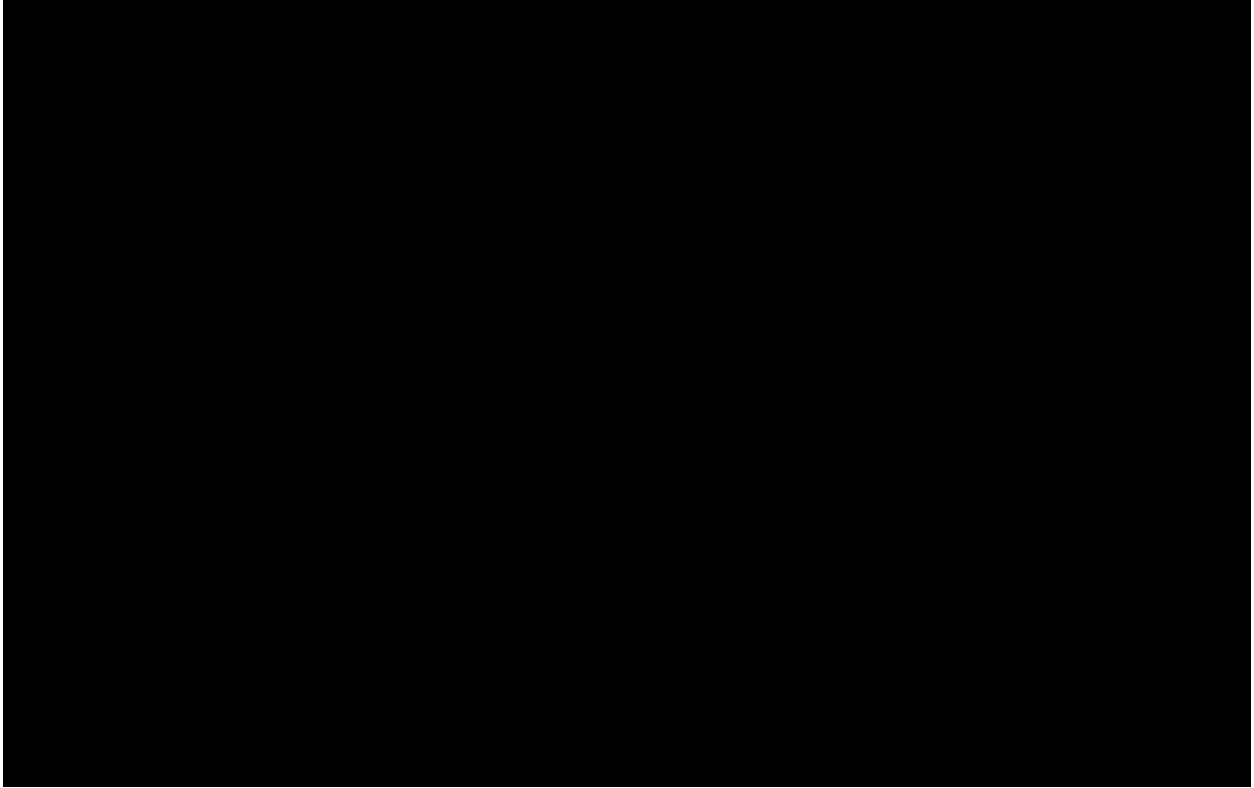
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Every ballot that doesn't meet the business rules will have to be confirmed within the batch in the second stage of verification.

**Special Cases:**

**1. Declaration ballot papers in a batch of ordinary ballots**

Where a declaration ballot paper appears in a batch that is for ordinary ballot papers, the declaration ballot paper is to be made informal. Unlike any other unverified ballot papers found in a batch, the captured preference results (on the left of the screen) are NOT to be checked against the preference markings on the ballot paper for correct interpretation. Instead, the captured preference results are to be deleted entirely, so that the captured preference results will reflect a blank ballot paper.

**2. Batch numbers ending in 999**

Batch numbers ending in 999 contain ballot papers that were deemed to be informal at the polling place but have been determined to be formal by the Electoral Commissioner or Deputy Electoral Commissioner during the recheck of informal ballots. These batches will also contain ballot papers with writing, including preference numbers written, outside the candidate squares. These batches are to be processed by a senior electoral official.

The operator is to update the captured preference results to reflect the preference numbers shown on the ballot paper as recorded on stickers by the Electoral Commissioner or Deputy Electoral Commissioner next to the names of candidates.

The operator verifying these batches is also to ensure the preferences reflect those recorded on stickers by the Electoral Commissioner or Deputy Electoral Commissioner next to the names of candidates.

An example will be demonstrated during training.

### **3. Apparently blank ballot papers**

Where an unverified ballot paper that appears to be blank when viewed in the scanning portal is found, unless it is a declaration ballot paper in a batch of ordinary ballot papers (see special case 1), the operator must call for and check the original ballot paper. This is because the writing on the ballot paper may be very faint and therefore has not been detected in the scanning process. The ballot paper may also appear blank where it has writing, or preference numbers written, outside the candidate squares, although these ballot papers should be in batch ending 999.

### **4. Ballot papers with apparent missing numbers**

As with the apparently blank ballot papers, where the voter has faintly written preferences the scanner may have picked up some of the preferences but not all.

Where a ballot paper is unverified because it has a missing first preference, the original ballot paper must be retrieved to check that the voter's writing of the first preference isn't so faint that it not been imaged by the scanner.

Similarly, where a ballot paper is unverified because there is a missing number in a sequence, and it is apparent from the image of the ballot paper that other numbers are faint, then the original ballot paper must be retrieved to check that the voter's writing of the missing number isn't so faint that it has not been imaged by the scanner.

**NOTE – The Electoral Officer or Supervisor can not go back to correct any ballot that has been verified in V1 or V2. If the Scrutineer asks for a ballot to be rechecked, then they will have to record the batch number and send a request the supervisor, this ballot will then to be viewed within the portal.**