

NO MORE LOST VOTES. LET'S LEARN THE LESSON OF 2007 ELECTION

20 January 2011

Labour's Banffshire and Buchan Holyrood candidate Alan Duffill has expressed dismay that Liberal Democrat Scottish Secretary Michael Moore has not followed the Electoral Commission's recommendation to sample test ballot papers ahead of next May's Scottish Parliament elections.

Alan Duffill commented:-

"There was confusion at the last Scottish Election when a record number of spoilt ballot papers were returned. In Banff and Buchan there were 1473 and just over 1000 in Moray. Local people were being asked to vote for a Constituency MSP, Regional list MSPs and local councillors so it's hardly surprising there was confusion. Three lots of ballot papers all set out in different ways. I accept people spoil ballots for all sorts of reasons but it is clear that in 2007 the layout of the ballot papers didn't help.

That problem wasn't anticipated; but perhaps this time it can be. True democrats would be keen to try and avoid any repetition and to have as many votes count whether they are for them or their opponents. The next election is going to be a tight contest with Labour and the SNP both vying for control of Scotland's Parliament. We should all seek clarity when it comes to the result.

However, the UK government see no urgency in attending this and Michael Moore, Liberal Democrat Scottish Secretary shows shocking complacency in not seeking to progress the Electoral Commission's proposal that ballot papers be "user tested" in advance of May's elections. He is already intent for party political reasons in squeezing in a vote on changes to the voting system on the same day. He shows no regard for the potential confusion that may bring

The last thing that I want are tens of thousands of spoiled ballot papers across Scotland and a pile of uncounted votes here in Banffshire and Buchan Coast. I would urge Michael Moore to Act I intend lobbying him to do so and hope that other candidates will do likewise"