

Farage: his vote was for instability

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Watching the Clacton by-election count declaration has been an odd experience.

Farage, unsurprisingly, increased the number of votes that he won in this election compared to 2024, although not by much.

That said, he did take 63% of the vote amongst the 44% of eligible voters who decided to partake in this election.

Count Binface did, remarkably, get 27%. Between them, they took 90% of the vote, with the rest spread across spoiled papers and 32 other candidates, one of whom secured just 7 votes, with no one else securing 500 votes.

But the most bizarre aspect of this totally unnecessary by-election is that Nigel Farage did not turn up for the count at an election that he effectively called.

As has been pointed out on Sky News by Jon Craig, with whom I co-edited the Southampton University Students' Union newspaper in 1977, the last time that a by-election victor did that was in 1981, when the late Bobby Sands could not attend the count after winning a by-election because he was serving a prison sentence in the Maze prison in Northern Ireland, and subsequently died following a hunger strike.

I think that contextualises just how unusual Farage's behaviour is. And this refusal has to be linked to the fact that we now know that he has cancelled a press conference previously announced for 10.30 this morning.

The inevitable speculation about the cause for his doing so suggests that this must be linked to his awareness that, now that he is an MP again, the inquiry into his personal finances, and the broader questions that are arising with regard to the financing of his party, will inevitably resurface across the media, and he is unwilling to face questions on those issues.

I will be recording a video on my reflections on this result fairly early this morning, which we will publish as soon as we can. However, before ever getting to the

microphone to do that, I think it is entirely appropriate to note that what Nigel Farage has proved with his behaviour throughout this by-election episode is that he is contemptuous of Parliament, democracy, the media, the police, the electorate and all the institutions that underpin society in the UK.

That said, we do, however, have to note that 63% of those who turned out in the election voted for him. What we have to worry about are the consequences of that for the stability of this country.