

	<p>Are you ready to vote in the County Council elections on 6th May?</p>
	<p>This leaflet will help you to understand how you can vote.</p>
<p>What is an Election?</p>	
	<p>An election is when you have a say in who becomes a local councillor by voting for them.</p>
	<p>Each council area is split up into smaller areas, called Division (areas). You can find out which division (area) you live in by contacting your local council.</p>
	<p>Each division (area) has a councillor that represents the people who live in that area on the council.</p>



A lot of local councillors are members of a political party, although some councillors are independent (not linked to a political party)



There are local elections every 4 years where you can vote to decide who will become a councillor.



Almost anyone can try and become a local councillor if they want to. There are some rules about this and to find out more you can contact your local council.



People who want to become a councillor will often print leaflets and put them through your door before an election to tell you what they want to do if they get elected.



Once they have been elected, your local councillors start the job of representing the people who live in their area.

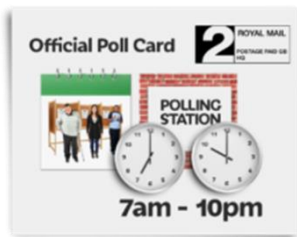
What is Voting?



Voting is what happens when there is an election.



By voting in an election, you are saying who you would like to become a politician and represent your views when decisions are made



Before an election or a referendum, the council will send you a polling card. Polling is another name for voting. This card will tell you when the voting day is and where you can vote.



When you are on the electoral register, you can vote in the next election or referendum.

How to register to vote



You can register to vote at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Or you can contact your local council.



To be able to vote in the next election or referendum you have to be over 18 years old and on the electoral register.



The electoral register is a list of all the names and addresses of people in the area who can vote. You can only vote if your name is on the register.



On the day of the vote, you can go to the polling station which is the name for the place where people vote.

This is usually in a local hall or school. It will be near where you live.



You can usually vote up until 10pm at night on voting day.

Going to the polling station to vote



You do not need your polling card to vote but you might find it helpful to have it with you.



At the polling station, you will be given a ballot paper. The ballot paper will give you a choice of who you can vote for.



The people at the polling station will help you by showing you what to do if you ask them to.



Once you have your ballot paper, you go to one of the polling booths. A polling booth is an area where you can vote in private.



To vote, you put a cross in the box on the ballot paper next to the option or person you want to vote for.



When you have chosen the option or person you want to vote for, fold up your ballot paper so no one can see it and put it in the ballot box.
A ballot box is a locked box where all votes are kept safely.

Postal Voting



If you do not want to go to the polling station to vote in person, you can ask to make a postal vote.



A postal vote means that you are sent a ballot paper to fill in at home.



You choose the option or person you want to vote for, put a cross next to it on the ballot paper and then send the ballot paper back to the council by post.

Proxy voting



A proxy vote means that you can let someone else vote for you.



You can ask the council for a proxy vote if you cannot go to the polling station yourself.



This might be because you are in hospital or on holiday or away from home on voting day.



You can register for a proxy vote and find out more at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/how-do-i-vote/voting-by-proxy

Or you can your local council.



The person you choose to vote for you will be given a proxy voting card. You have to trust the person to vote for who you choose.

After you have voted



When the voting is finished, the ballot boxes are taken to a safe place where the votes are counted.



There are people there to make sure this is done fairly.



The option or person with the most votes will win.