



**ON 3RD MAY  
YOU NEED TO  
MARK YOUR  
BALLOT  
PAPER WITH  
NUMBERS.  
HERE'S HOW.**

It's **your** vote,  
don't lose it

**Local Council Elections in Scotland  
3 May 2012**

**The  
Electoral  
Commission**

## About this booklet

On **Thursday 3 May 2012** local council elections are taking place in Scotland. This year you will need to vote using numbers on the ballot paper. This booklet explains how.

## Your local council

On 3 May you will be asked to vote for councillors to represent you on your local council.

Your local council is responsible for providing public services including:

- education
- care for the elderly
- housing
- recycling and waste collection.

Each council in Scotland is divided into smaller areas called wards. Each ward has three or four councillors who are elected to represent you and your local community.

For more information on the voting system for these elections, see [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

## How do I fill in the ballot paper?

For this election you will need to vote using numbers. Your ballot paper will list all the candidates standing to be councillors in your ward.

You will be asked to number the candidates in order of your choice using **1, 2, 3** and **so on**.

**You can make as many or as few choices as you wish.** You don't have to number every candidate. As long as you number at least one, your vote will be counted. If you make a mistake on your ballot paper, you can ask for a new one.

Put the number **1** in the voting box next to your **first** choice.

Put the number **2** in the voting box next to your **second** choice.

Put the number **3** in the voting box next to your **third** choice.

**And so on.**

**The ballot paper will look similar to the one below.**

Ballot paper	
ANDERSON Hans Rowan Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
CRANSTON Helen Beech Party	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FLEMING Douglas Martin Independent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HAMILTON Flora Willow party	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
KUMAR Kuldip Elm Party	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MASTERS Susan Caroline Sycamore Party	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Can I vote?

To be able to vote in this election, you must be **18 or over** on 3 May 2012 and:

- a British citizen living in Scotland, or
- a qualifying Commonwealth citizen\* living in Scotland, or
- a European Union citizen living in Scotland

British citizens living overseas can't vote in the Scottish local elections.

To vote in your local council elections, you must be registered to vote. You must be registered by **Wednesday 18 April**.

## Am I registered to vote?

If you aren't sure whether you're registered to vote, your local electoral registration office can tell you. You can find their contact details on [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

If you're not registered, you won't be able to vote. Most people register to vote using the form they receive in the post from their local electoral registration office each year.

If you haven't completed one of these forms, you may not be on the electoral register. If so, you will need to complete a voter registration form and send it to your local electoral registration office to arrive by **Wednesday 18 April**. For a voter registration form, go to [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

---

\*Qualifying Commonwealth citizens are people who have leave (permission) to enter or remain in the UK, do not need to have such leave or are treated as having such leave.

## Ways of voting

There are three ways you can vote:

### In person on Thursday 3 May

Most people vote in person at their polling station. It's straightforward and a member of staff is always there to help if you're not sure what to do. You'll receive a poll card by post telling you where your polling station is – it's often a nearby school or community centre. If you don't receive your poll card, you can contact your local council to find out where your polling station is. You don't need to have your poll card with you to vote, so don't worry if you lose or forget it.

Polling stations are open from **7am to 10pm**. Make sure you arrive in plenty of time. As long as you're in the queue to vote by 10pm, you'll be given a ballot paper and be able to vote.

## Ways of voting (continued)

### By post

You can apply to vote by post. You'll need to fill in an application form and send it to your local electoral registration office to arrive by 5pm on **Wednesday 18 April**. You can get an application form at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

You'll need to give your signature and date of birth on your postal vote application form. You'll need to provide these again when you return your postal vote at the election. As long as your signature and date of birth on your postal vote match the information you gave on your postal application form, your vote will be counted.

If you're unable to sign the application form, or your signature changes from day to day, perhaps because you're ill, injured or disabled, then contact your local electoral registration office for a 'waiver'. This means you'll only have to give your date of birth when you apply, and again when you vote. You can get their contact details from [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

Your local council can send a postal ballot paper to your home address or to any other address you give. Ballot papers can be sent overseas, but you need to ensure you allow enough time to receive and return your ballot paper by Thursday 3 May. If you don't have enough time, you may want to consider applying for a proxy vote (see page 7).

You should receive your ballot paper about a week before polling day. If it doesn't arrive, you can get a replacement from your local council up to 5pm on Thursday 3 May.

## Ways of voting (continued)

### By proxy

If you can't go to the polling station and don't wish to vote by post, you may be able to vote by proxy. This means allowing somebody you trust to vote on your behalf. You will need to fill in an application form and send it to your local electoral registration office to arrive by **5pm on Wednesday 25 April**. You can get a form at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

When you apply for a proxy vote you have to state why you cannot vote in person.

Anyone can be your proxy as long as they are eligible to vote in the election and are willing to vote on your behalf. You will have to tell them how you want to vote.

## How to find out more

If you have any questions, please go to [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk) or call our helpline on **0800 3 280 280**.

You can download further copies of this booklet from [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

This booklet has been produced by the Electoral Commission.

The Electoral Commission is an independent body that works across the UK. The Scottish Parliament has given us a duty to provide public information about voting in the local council elections in Scotland.

### **This booklet is also available in alternative formats.**

Please call **0800 3 280 280** for more information.

This is printed on 50% recycled paper.

When you have finished with this please recycle it.

