

In the Polling Station

A Step by Step Guide

Tellers

The first people you will probably see at the polling station are the candidates' helpers taking elector numbers (this is on your poll card). They are there to check that their supporters are voting.

They are not part of the polling station staff; they should not get in the way of voters going in or out. You are not obliged to give any information.

The candidates and their appointed agents are allowed into the polling station, but only to observe that the correct procedures are being followed.

Confirm your name and address

Polling station staff will ask for your name and address, and check that you are on the voters list.

You will be asked to confirm your details even if you have handed over your poll card. This is to make sure the right person is marked off the list.

Your name will be crossed off the voters list to make sure you cannot vote again.

The staff will hand over your ballot paper. Ballot papers are no longer stamped as there are security designs printed on the back.

Go into the booth on your own and mark your vote with a cross (X). Fold your ballot papers. The presiding officer will check the back of your ballot papers before you place them in the ballot box.



REMEMBER TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON POLLING DAY

**IF YOU ARE NOT REGISTERED YOU
CANNOT VOTE**

Do not hesitate to contact the Electoral Services Team if you have any questions, queries or to check if you are registered.

HELP

Help for Disabled Voters

For many years, we have been providing special facilities to help disabled voters. We can provide equipment and assistance to meet your needs.

HELP FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED VOTERS

In the polling station there are large print versions of the ballot papers. You can now vote in secret using a special device that can be fitted to ballot papers. The polling station staff will read out the candidates numbers for you before you go into the voting booth. The device has Braille as well as raised numbers.

VOTING COMPANIONS

Any voter with a physical disability can take a relative or friend to help them vote. A simple form has to be filled in at the polling station before the ballot papers are issued.

DISABLED ACCESS

Most polling stations are now accessible for wheelchair users. Many stations now have level access or permanent ramps.

HELP FROM THE PRESIDING OFFICER IN CHARGE

The staff in charge of the polling station can help any elector to mark their ballot papers. **They are bound by law to keep your vote secret.**

Who is standing for Election

Candidates' details will be available from Electoral Services, and on Election Day, notices outside and inside the Polling Station will give you the candidates' details.

Please see also www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk

How to Contact us:

Write or visit:

Electoral Services, West Somerset House,
Killick Way, Williton, Somerset TA4 4QA

Email: eday@westsomerset.gov.uk

Web: www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk

HELPLINE: 01984 635272

Open 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday,
8.30am to 4.30pm Friday.



VOTER GUIDE 2011



Incorporating How to Become a Councillor



A Guide to the Election Process

How do I become a District Councillor?

You would need to stand for election. West Somerset Council has 28 Councillors, each elected by, and representing a small part of the district (called a 'Ward'). There are 16 Wards.

WHEN ARE ELECTIONS HELD?

The next local elections are on **Thursday 5 May 2011**. Elections are held in all wards every four years on the first Thursday in May. From time to time there may be by-elections caused by Councillors resigning or the death of a Councillor.

YOU CAN BE A CANDIDATE IF YOU ARE:

Over 18 and a British citizen, Commonwealth citizen or a European Union citizen; and are either:

- (a) on the electoral register for West Somerset **Or**
- (b) for at least the whole of the 12 months before nomination day

you match **ONE** of the following:

- * You live in the West Somerset – as owner or tenant
- * Your principal or only place of work is in West Somerset
- * You have occupied, as owner or tenant, land or premises in West Somerset

YOU CANNOT BE A CANDIDATE IF:

- * You are bankrupt
- * You have a criminal conviction which has a minimum penalty of three months in prison or more
- * You work for West Somerset Council or hold paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees) or hold a politically restricted post with another local authority
- * You have been disqualified under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which relates to donations and other offences) or under the Audit Commission Act 1998.

About this Guide

On 5th May 2011, you will have the opportunity to vote for your District Councillor, your Parish Councillor and have your say in the National Referendum on the voting system for Parliamentary Elections.

This guide tells you about the elections and answers questions electors ask us at election time.

We hope you find this guide helpful and welcome your comments on it. If you have any queries please contact Electoral Services.

Who Can Vote?

You can vote in the District and Parish Elections if you are:

- ✓ **A British, Commonwealth or European Union Citizen**
- ✓ **Aged 18 or older on Election Day**
- ✓ **And you are registered** - your name is on the voters list

European Citizens are not entitled to vote in the Referendum

YOU CANNOT VOTE IF YOU ARE NOT REGISTERED.

Registering for other services or paying Council Tax does not register you to vote. If you are unsure please contact us **NOW**.

Poll Cards

Every **Registered Elector** will receive an **Official Poll Card**.

The Card tells you when, where and how to vote in person at this election.

The Poll Card is for information only, and you do not need it to vote. As long as you are registered, you can simply give the polling staff your name and address.



Secure your vote in this election, it only takes a minute...



Call: 01984 635272



Ways to Vote

In Person

There are 49 Polling Stations in this District and these are usually in village halls or other community buildings.



Stations open at **7.00am**

You have to vote at the Polling Station for the address where you are registered. You cannot vote at any other station.

Stations close at **10.00pm**



ALL POLLING STATIONS OPEN AT 7.00 AM AND CLOSE AT 10.00 PM

By Post

Instead of going to the Polling Station, you can vote by post.

You have to fill in an application form; this has to reach us by 5.00pm 11 working days before Election Day.

Please remember - if you sign up for a postal vote, you will NOT be able to vote in person at a polling station. However, you can hand in your completed voting pack into a polling station in the electoral area.

POSTAL VOTES MUST REACH YOUR RETURNING OFFICER BY 10.00 PM ON ELECTION DAY

By Proxy

A Proxy is someone who is pre-registered to vote on your behalf.

If you have a proxy vote, you may still vote in person yourself as long as your proxy has not already voted for you.

However, you cannot do this if your proxy has arranged to vote for you by post.

