On 3rd May you need to mark your ballot paper with numbers. Here’s how…

Local Council Elections in Scotland
3 May 2012
About this booklet

This easy read booklet tells you about the local **elections** in Scotland on Thursday 3 May 2012.

An election is a public vote when you are asked to choose people to represent you.

There are some difficult words in this booklet which are in **red**.

There is a list of words and what they mean on page 8.

You may want to have someone to help you when you look at this booklet.
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Local elections

On Thursday 3 May 2012 there will be an election in Scotland to choose local councillors. An election is a public vote.

Your local council provides services such as:

- education
- housing
- care for older people
- recycling and rubbish collection.

In Scotland each local council is divided into smaller areas called wards. Each ward has 3 or 4 local councillors who are elected to represent you and your local community.

You can find out more about these elections by going to the website called www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.
Voting in the election

A ballot paper is a form you can use for voting. The ballot paper has the names of the candidates on it and looks like the one in the picture.

Candidates are the people who want to be local councillors in your area.

You can choose as many candidates as you want. You must number them in the order of your choice:

- 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.
Who is allowed to vote in the election?

You can vote in the election if you are:

- registered to vote in Scotland, and
- aged 18 or over on Thursday 3 May 2012.

You must also be:

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

To vote in this election you must be registered by **Wednesday 18 April 2012**.

You can find out more about registering to vote by going to the website called [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

A citizen of a country is someone who has the right to live there all the time.
How to vote

There are three ways you can vote.

1. In person on polling day
Polling is another word for voting.

Polling day is the day there is a public vote.

The polling day for this local election is Thursday 3 May 2012.

On Thursday 3 May you can go to your polling place/polling station to vote.

A polling place/polling station is a public building near your home – for example a school or library – where people can vote.

You will get a letter in the post which tells you where your polling place/polling station is. The letter is called a poll card.

Voting at the polling place/polling station is easy and there are people there to help you if you are not sure what to do.

Polling places/polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm on Thursday 3 May 2012. You need to make sure you arrive in plenty of time.

You can find out more about voting on the website called www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.
2. By post

If you want, you can arrange to send your vote in the post instead.

You need to fill in a form if you want to send your vote by post.

To get the form, go to the website called www.aboutmyvote.co.uk. In a section of the website called How do I vote?, go to Voting by post and follow the instructions to get the form.

You need to print this form, fill it in and send it to your local electoral registration office by 5pm on Wednesday 18 April 2012.

Your local council will then send a ballot paper to your home. A ballot paper is a voting form.

Fill in the ballot paper, put it in the envelope provided and post it to your local council.

Make sure it gets to your council by Thursday 3 May 2012.

You can find out more about how to vote by post by going to the website called www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.
3. By proxy

A proxy is someone you trust to vote for you.

Voting by proxy means asking someone to vote for you. You will need to tell your proxy who you want to vote for in the local election.

You need to fill in a form if you want to vote by proxy.

To get the form, go to the website called [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk). In a section of the website called How do I vote?, go to Voting by proxy and follow the instructions to get the form.

You need to print this form, fill it in and send it to your local electoral registration office to arrive by 5pm on Wednesday 25 April 2012.

You will need to say why you cannot vote in person or by post.

Who can be my proxy?

You can ask anyone to be your proxy and vote for you, so long as:

- they are allowed to vote in this election
- they only vote for you and possibly one other person
- they are happy to vote for you.
What the words mean

**Ballot paper**: a form used for voting

**Candidate**: a person who wants to become a local councillor

**Citizen**: someone who has the right to live in a certain country all the time

**Election**: a public vote when you are asked to choose a person (or people) to represent you

**Local councillor**: someone who is chosen by people in a vote to represent them on a local council

**Poll card**: a letter which tells you the date of the public vote and where your polling place/polling station is

**Polling day**: the day when there is a public vote

**Polling place/polling station**: a public building near you where you can vote

**Proxy**: someone you ask to vote for you

**Qualifying Commonwealth citizen**: a person who is from a Commonwealth country and is allowed to stay in the 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.

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

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