

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

- **What Elections are being held in the district this year?**
On Thursday 4 June 2009 there are combined elections – European Parliamentary and Hertfordshire County Council Elections for all areas within the St Albans City and District. We also have a District By-Election on the same day for Harpenden South Ward only – this is due to a councillor resigning.
- **Am I registered to vote?**
You need to contact Electoral Services department (see below for contact numbers).
- **How do I register to vote for the June elections?**
Electoral Services will need to send a rolling registration form to your address to complete and return. Each person wishing to register must sign the form themselves. The 'Previous Address' and 'Nationality' sections of the form should be completed. The deadline to register is 19 May 2009 for voting in the June elections.
- **How do I register for future elections?**
By rolling registration forms (monthly), or Annual Canvass forms delivered to each address (Aug to Nov each year). If your name appears on the current Register of Electors you need to ensure that the Canvass form is returned each year.
- **I sent my electoral registration form in ages ago but I'm still not on the register**
It can take up to seven weeks to register depending on the date received in the council offices. Rolling registration takes place on a monthly basis– to be eligible to vote on 4 June 2009 you will need to complete and return a form by 19 May
- **Am I eligible to vote?**
You can only vote if you are registered. You can register if you are 16 and over, British, Irish or qualifying commonwealth, resident in UK or a citizen of the European Union but you cannot vote until your 18th birthday. Service Voters and Overseas Voters should contact electoral services for clarification.
- **If I pay Council Tax am I automatically registered?**
No, electoral registration is a separate process – you should contact both departments.

- **I'm a student and I am not sure where I should register to vote.**
Students are entitled to register at both their home and university address but it is an offence to vote more than once.
- **I have just turned 18 and want to register.**
See 'how do I register to vote' mentioned above.
- **What are the Full and Edited registers?**
The Full Register includes the names of all those registered to vote and is used for electoral and limited statutory purposes only. One of which is credit referencing. You can view your details on the Full Register at the council offices under supervision.

The Edited Register can be sold on to anyone for any purpose and includes the names of all those who have not 'opted out'. This is also available at the Reception desk in the council offices.
- **How do I find out if my details are on the edited register and how can I change it?**
Contact electoral services for guidance.
- **Who can apply for a postal vote?**
Anyone who is eligible to vote. You will need an application form which can either be down loaded from the website or obtained from electoral services. Political Parties also issue their own postal vote application forms.
- **What is the deadline for registering to vote by post on 4 June elections?**
You must have returned your completed application to the electoral services department of the council by 5pm on 19 May 2009.
- **If someone calls after 5pm on 19 May.**
You have missed the deadline for a postal vote. You may be able to apply for a proxy (deadline 5pm 27 May – a reason is required) You can still apply for a postal vote for future elections.
- **I have not received my postal ballot paper yet.**
You should receive it about a week before the elections. If it hasn't arrived 5 days before polling day, or you lose it, you can get a replacement ballot paper in person from your local elections office up until 5pm on polling day. If you have spoilt your ballot paper, again you can get a replacement but do not destroy or throw away your postal ballot papers you will need to return them as proof of receipt.
- **For what period does my postal vote last?**
You can apply for just this election only on a temporary basis or for a specific time period or permanently if you are resident in the uk – postal voting on a permanent basis abroad is not permitted.

- **How does the postal voting statement work?**
You will need to provide your signature and date of birth. More detailed instruction will be provided in your postal ballot pack which will be delivered to your address prior to the election.
- **Why do I have to give my date of birth and signature. How is it secret?**
When you apply you must provide date of birth and signature – after scanning they are stored securely within the council offices. When you get your postal ballot paper there will be a separate statement on which you will be asked for the same details this is for security reasons and must match those provided in your application for your vote to be counted. However rest assured this statement is separated from the ballot paper when it is received - this happens before the sealed ballot paper envelope is opened and the vote is counted.
- **How secure is a postal vote?**
It is an offence to complete a postal vote that is not your own. Your signature and date of birth provided when you return your completed postal vote will be verified for authenticity from the original application stored on our database. If any mismatches are found the postal vote is not valid and cannot be included in the count. If you have any allegations of fraud these should be referred to your Local Returning Officer immediately.
- **I opted for a postal vote but I do not want to post it/ or is it too late to post it?**
You can drop your ballot paper off on the day to your normal polling station, or to the Council Offices **before** 10.00pm on 4 June 2009 (European and County Council Elections). If it arrives after 10.00pm it will not be counted. You cannot be given another ballot paper at the polling station. Contact your electoral services department to find out where your polling station is or check the council website www.stalbans.gov.uk under the local democracy heading.
- **Who can apply for a proxy vote?**
Only those with a specific reason – such as a disability or being overseas for a period of time eg on holiday, or working away from home.
- **What is the deadline?**
If you are amending an existing proxy vote 5pm on 19 May. New proxy vote applications must be received by 5pm 27 May. You can apply to vote by proxy for emergency medical reasons (for which a doctors/hospital confirmation will be required) up until 5pm 4 June. A new proxy letter will be issued by Electoral Services which will need to be taken to the polling station. Polling station staff will be informed of the emergency proxy details.

- **I have been made a proxy for someone but I do not know how it works.**
You will be sent a special proxy poll card with details of where you should vote as proxy. If you cannot attend then you can apply for a vote as a proxy by post but must apply by 19 May. If you are going to a polling station tell the staff you are voting as a proxy for someone and they will tell you what to do. Don't forget to take your proxy poll card – this will speed things up with the ballot paper issuing process.
- **How do I find out where my polling station is?**
Your poll card will tell you the location of your polling station given on a map. Alternatively contact the electoral services team. Our website also has a list available to view.
- **What are the polling hours?**
7am to 10pm for all elections.
- **What are the different ways for me to vote?**
Polling station, postal voting, or by proxy.
- **How does the count work?**
Managed locally by the Local Returning Officer. Verification for both the European and County Council elections will take place the next day (Friday 5 June) for this year only. The County Council result will be announced Friday afternoon. The European Parliamentary votes will be counted on Sunday 7 June with an announcement from the Regional Returning Officer for the Eastern Region Mr David Monks.
- **How do I fill in the ballot paper?**
Information will be provided by the polling clerk at your polling station, or if you opted to vote by post, it will be in your ballot pack. Please contact Electoral Services if you have any queries.

Electoral Registration Officer Mike Lovelady
Electoral Services contact numbers

01727 819565, 819550, 819291, 819294 during working hours