Local Elections 2012 – the who and the how of it

 Who am I voting for and how do I vote at this election?

At first sight the council election which is taking place on 3 May 2012 may appear to be a complicated kind of affair, but at least this year we are only being asked to vote for the local councillors who will represent each ward, and it is not further muddied by a national government election being held at the same time.

Here is the first thing you should know – there are at least three councillors who represent each ward or council area.

There are 17 council Wards in the city. You can find out which one you live in by putting your postcode into the search bar on the council website, which you [will find by clicking here.](#) There are 58 councillor positions to be filled and the number of councillors who will be elected to each ward varies between three and four.

The three councillor Wards are Almond, Pentland Hills, Drum Brae/Gyle, Corstorphine/Murrayfield, Colinton/Fairmilehead, Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart, City Centre, Leith, Craigentinny/Duddingston and Portobello/Craigmillar.

The four councillor Wards are Forth, Inverleith, Sighthill/Gorgie, Meadows/Morningside, Leith Walk, Southside/Newington and Liberton/Gilmerton.

To find out more about the candidates standing in your local Ward then please go to our Local Elections Page where there are [lists of all the candidates sorted by Ward](#), with individual profiles for each.

Your polling station will be clearly set out on the polling

card which you will have been sent in the post. (If you have not received one then it is possible you have not registered which you should have done by 18 April). There is a list of all the polling stations here:-

[Situation of Polling Places](#)

And there is a map of the [Wards and polling places here](#). When you get to the polling station you will be handed a form to cast your vote. Councillors are elected under the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system. This means you put a **number** on the form and not a tick.

The Ballot Paper will list the candidates along with their party name, logo and their address.

When voting at this election **you should number the candidates in your order of preference.** Put a 1 next to your first choice candidate, a 2 next to your second choice, a 3 next to your third choice and so on. You can vote for as many or as few candidates as you like.

The successful candidate may be elected immediately if they get more than the 'quota' set after the valid papers have been counted. The quota is calculated by arithmetic – dividing the total number of valid votes by the number of vacancies to be filled + 1 and then + 1 again. For example if there are 2,397 valid papers in a Ward where there are 4 vacancies then the following arithmetic has to be done:-

(2397 / (3 + 1)) + 1 = (2397 / 4) + 1 = 599 + 1 = 600 votes which is then the quota for that Ward. If one of the candidates gets 600 votes on the first count then he or she is immediately elected. If not, then there is a method of assessing surplus votes and attributing them to the other candidates and the arithmetic applied once more. For a blow by blow account of the By-Election in the City Centre ward last

August then [you can read our Liveblog here.](#)

To find out more you can view a [booklet](#) produced by the Electoral Commission which explains the voting system and for more information about how the election count will take place under STV you can download [the detailed description of an STV count](#). And you can also watch this video here where the Electoral Commission offers you guidance:-

The result of the election will be made known on Friday 4 May 2012. Counting will take place at Meadowbank starting no earlier than 8a.m and the results should be issued in [Ward number order.](#) We will be running a [Liveblog](#) on Friday to bring you minute by minute coverage of the results.