

Polling Stations are safe places to vote, but if you wish to vote by post – apply now

Residents of Mid Sussex go to the polls from time to time to have their say on who represents them or to vote in local referenda.

Electoral events can proceed at a time when Covid-19 continues to present risks to public health. Depending on the infection rate, measures taken to control the spread of the virus may change. However, we continue to work with HM Government, the Electoral Commission, the wider electoral community, and public health authorities to help ensure you can stay safe when casting your vote.

How can I vote at elections and/or local referenda?

There are several ways to have your say - you can vote in a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone you trust to vote on your behalf, known as a proxy vote.

How are you making polling stations safe?

We have arrangements in place to help ensure polling stations are safe places to vote. You can expect many of the measures you've become used to over the past year in shops and other public places. The measures will include:

- You must wear a face covering when attending the polling station (unless medically exempt), follow physical distancing rules and heed any advice given to you by staff.
- In most places at the 'Way In' you will be greeted by a polling station steward and asked to use hand sanitiser as you enter the polling station.
- Floor markings and signage will direct you to follow a one-way system to the ballot paper issuing desk and beyond.
- **Please bring your Official Poll Card** with you to the polling station and show it to poll clerk.
- The poll clerk will issue your ballot paper(s) and if you don't have your own, a sanitised pencil. They will tell you which numbered polling booth you must go to.
- In the polling booth, mark your ballot papers straight away. Then, go to where the ballot box is situated.
- The ballot box label will be the same paper colour as your ballot paper. Put your vote in the ballot box – avoid touching the ballot box lid, if you can.
- Follow the 'Way Out' signs to leave the polling station straight away. More hand sanitiser will be available as you exit – please do use it.
- We ask that you take your poll card (and any disposable mask/rubbish) home with you to dispose of safely and securely.

- Poll staff will sanitise issuing desks, polling booths, ballot box lids and other touch points after every 15 electors or every 30-minutes, whichever is earliest.
- For everyone's safety, poll staff will be wearing face masks and face shields.
- There will be a limit on the number of people allowed in the polling station at any one time. The limit depends on the size of the room and other things that have been risk assessed in advance.
- Any need to queue is likely to be only for a very short time but please remember to follow physical distancing rules at all times.

Will I need to bring my own pen or pencil?

You are always welcome to use your own pen or pencil, though the poll clerk will offer you a freshly sanitised pencil if you don't have one.

Is it safer to vote by post, instead of going in person?

We are working hard to ensure that polling stations will remain safe places to vote, but if you wish vote by post, apply now.

How can I apply to vote by post or proxy?

To vote in the elections - either at a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone you trust to vote on your behalf as your proxy - you must first be registered to vote. If you are not already registered to vote in Mid Sussex, perhaps because you have recently moved into the area, you can do so online in just 5 minutes. You can register at: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

To then apply to vote by post you need to download, print and fill in a postal vote application form. Visit www.midsussex.gov.uk/postalvoting to download the form. Once you have completed the form and signed it, you need to send it to our electoral services team. You may scan and email completed applications to: elections@midsussex.gov.uk

If you're thinking about voting by post, you can apply to do this now. This will make sure your application is processed early, and your postal vote can be sent to you more quickly once any candidates for elections are confirmed.

If you can't cast your vote in person, you can ask someone you trust to cast your vote for you. This is called a proxy vote and the person casting your vote is often referred to as your proxy. The person voting on your behalf can either go to your polling station to cast your vote or can apply to vote for you by post.

To apply for a proxy vote, complete the form to vote by proxy, explaining why you can't go to your polling station in person. This form is also available at the council's website.

**For further information about electoral events visit: midsussex.gov.uk/elections
Email the electoral services team: elections@midsussex.gov.uk
Or telephone: 01444 477003**