

Are you ready for the elections? Voters encouraged to make sure they are registered and have photo ID ahead of the May Police and Crime Commissioner elections



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Voters across Cotswold District are being encouraged to make sure they are registered, have applied for postal voting, and applied for identification if needed ahead of the deadlines so that they can vote in the Police and Crime Commissioner elections on 2 May.

To take part in any election anyone over the age of 18 must be registered in the area they live in. Some people eligible to vote may not be registered and

therefore will not be able to cast a vote. This may be because they have recently moved or are voting for the first time.

Residents can make an application to register to vote through the Government website which takes only five minutes to complete. They must register by 16 April and can do so at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

Some residents prefer to vote by post. By using a postal vote residents can make sure their voice is heard at the local elections from the safety of their home. Residents must apply to receive their vote by post, before the application deadline of 5pm on 17 April.

Anyone applying to vote by post will need to provide their national insurance number as part of the application. If you have an existing postal vote arrangement, you will not need to apply again.

Electors may also choose to vote by proxy - where another individual casts a vote on a registered voter's behalf when that individual cannot vote themselves. To be able to use a proxy vote, applications must be in by Tuesday 24 April by 5pm. Proxy voters will be required to show their own valid ID when voting on behalf of someone else.

Electors choosing to vote in person are being urged to make sure they are ready to vote in May by checking they have an accepted form of photographic ID.

Accepted forms of photographic ID include a UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth passport; a UK, EEA or Commonwealth photocard driver's licence; and some concessionary travel passes, such as an older person's bus pass. Voters will be able to use expired ID as long as the photograph is still a good likeness. Voters may be required to provide further proof of identity if there is any discrepancy between the name shown on the form of photographic ID and the name the voter claims at the polling station.

Anyone who does not have one of the accepted forms of ID will be able to apply for free ID online at voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk or by completing a paper form which is available from the Council.

More information is available on the Cotswold District Council website, including details of how to apply for the free ID. Anyone not able to visit the council website, or apply for a Voter Authority Certificate online, is being encouraged to contact the Council by calling 01285 623002 or emailing elections@cotswold.gov.uk. Residents must have applied for a Voter Authority Certificate by 5pm Tuesday 24 April.

Robert Weaver, Local Returning Officer for Cotswold District Council, said:

“With Police and Crime Commissioner elections taking place in Gloucestershire on 2 May 2024, it is important that those who want to vote make sure they are registered, have applied for postal votes and have an accepted form of ID.

“It may seem early but applying now means you will be ready to vote in May and won’t risk missing the national deadlines.

“Anyone voting at a polling station will need to show photo ID before they can be given their ballot paper as part of national law. It’s important that everyone understands what types of ID they can use, and how to apply for free ID if they need it.

“Residents who do not have one of the accepted forms of ID can apply for free ID either online or by completing a paper application form which is available at our offices or by calling us at 01285 623002. If you need any help with applying for the free ID or want to request an application form, please contact us at the number above.”

Contact Information

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Notes to editors

1. The requirement to show photo ID at the polling station is a new requirement, introduced by the UK Government's Elections Act which was passed in 2022.
2. The legislation requires voters at polling stations to show an accepted form of photo ID before they receive their ballot paper. Voters will need to show photo ID before voting in local council elections in England, parliamentary by-elections, and police and crime commissioner elections in England and Wales. From October 2023, photo ID will be needed at UK parliamentary general elections. It will not be a requirement at local elections in Scotland or Wales, or elections to Scottish Parliament or Senedd. The requirement already exists in Northern Ireland.
3. Applications for the free ID available, called the Voter Authority Certificate, are now open.
4. To apply for the Voter Authority Certificate, voters will need to provide a photo, full name, date of birth, the address at which they are registered to vote and their National Insurance number.
5. The UK Government's Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities is responsible for the new voter ID policy and for the free voter ID application system. Enquiries relating to the application system or the policy itself should be directed to the Department.
6. The Electoral Commission is responsible for ensuring voters are aware of the new voter ID requirement, and for supporting local authorities with the process. Questions related to the public awareness campaign should be

directed to the Electoral Commission. Cotswold District Council will be supporting this campaign at a local level.

7. Local authorities are responsible for implementing voter ID at the local level.