

The Electoral Commission

On Thursday 6 May 2021 residents in Welwyn Hatfield Borough will go to the polls to have their say on who represents them at the Borough, County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner and Northaw & Cuffley Parish elections.

We have been preparing for Covid-safe elections and have taken steps to help you take part safely and confidently.

We will update this page with further information as it becomes available. Further information can also be found on the website of the Electoral Commission at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the election? What elections are taking place?

On Thursday 6 May, residents in Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council will be voting for Borough, County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner and (if called) Northaw & Cuffley Parish elections. The elections for Borough and Police and Crime Commissioner will be held in May after being postponed in May 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

How can I vote at the May 2021 elections?

There are a number of ways to have your say in May - 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.

To vote in any election in the UK, you must be registered to vote. The deadline to register is midnight on 19 April 2021.

How do I register to vote?

It takes 5 minutes to register and you can do this online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

If you're unable to register online, you can apply by post. You can download the relevant forms from the [Electoral Commission](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk).

If you were registered to vote in the last election and your details have not changed, you don't need to take any action. If in doubt, you can check with us by email: elections@welhat.gov.uk or by phone: 01707 357 300.

How can I apply to vote by post or proxy?

To apply to vote by post you need to download, print and fill in a [postal vote application form](#). Once you have completed the form and signed it, you need to send it to the electoral services team at Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6AE or you can email scanned forms to elections@welhat.gov.uk. If you can't print the form, contact the electoral services team so that a form can be posted to you.

If you want to vote 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 the candidates for the elections are confirmed.

If you aren't able to vote in person, you can ask someone you trust to vote for you. This is called a proxy vote and the person is often referred to as your proxy.

To apply for a proxy vote, complete the [form to vote by proxy](#), explaining why you can't get to your polling station in person. The person voting on your behalf can either go to your polling station to vote, or can apply to vote for you by post.

The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on 20 April. The deadline to apply for a proxy vote is 5pm on 27 April.

If you already have a postal or proxy vote arrangement in place, and your details have not changed, you don't need to take any action. If in doubt, you can check with the electoral services team.

Don't forget that however you choose to vote, you must be registered first.

How do you protect postal voting from fraud?

When voting by post, you should mark your vote on the ballot paper in secret, and seal the envelope yourself.

You will be asked to give your date of birth and signature when applying for a postal or proxy vote. When you return your postal voting pack you will again be asked for your signature and date of birth, and these will be checked against those you have already provided in order to confirm your identity.

Your signature and date of birth are separated from your ballot paper before it is looked at or counted, so giving this information will not affect the secrecy of your vote.

Is voting in person safe?

Polling stations will be safe places to vote. If you choose to vote in person, you can keep yourself and others safe by:

- wearing a face covering
- bringing your own pen or pencil
- cleaning your hands when entering and leaving the polling station
- keeping a safe distance

You should not attend the polling station if you have symptoms of Covid-19, or if you have been asked to self-isolate.

We will continue to follow the most up to date public health guidance as we prepare for the elections, and will update this page as more information and guidance becomes available.

What happens if I fall ill with Covid-19 or need to self-isolate at the last minute?

If you are self-isolating or become unwell as a result of Covid-19 shortly before polling day, or on the day itself, you don't need to miss out on your vote. You will be able to apply for an emergency proxy vote – where someone you trust can vote on your behalf. Speak to the electoral registration team at your local council who will tell you what you need to do to arrange this.

Will I need to bring my own pen or pencil?

Yes, you should bring your own pen and pencil to minimise contact.

There will be clean pencils available at the polling station if you forget to bring your own.

How are you making polling stations safe?

We are putting 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 recent months in shops and banks, such as hand sanitiser, floor markings and face coverings.

We will continue our discussions with public health authorities as we prepare for the elections to make sure we are following the most up to date guidance. We will continue to update this page as more information and guidance becomes available.

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

Polling stations will be safe places to vote in May, but you can choose to apply to vote by post or by proxy instead if you wish.