

## May 2025 How will you vote?

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, many regions across the UK, including our local area, will be electing new councillors. As I write this, I have already had leaflets through my letterbox trying to convince me why I should vote for particular candidates.

I am sure you will have heard the view that religion and politics should not be mixed, but this is a view that I disagree with. Underpinning all of Christianity is Jesus' teaching about how to live well in community with one another. Even though the power of elected councillors is less than that of national government, they still have the ability to influence much that happens across local areas. The work of our elected representatives affects the lives of us all, and so I believe that all people of goodwill should seek to be aware of the work of our councillors and politicians, and should use their influence in legitimate ways where they can.

Christianity has always taught that 'loving our neighbour as ourselves' means acting in support of those who are treated unjustly, and speaking out on behalf of those unable to speak for themselves. How we use our vote is one of the ways in which we can do that. Of course, Christians will still end up supporting different political parties, as Christians will have different views about how the needs of all are best met, but I believe that Christian faith calls us not only to vote when we can but also to vote, not for the candidates that we believe will be 'best for us personally,' but for the candidates who will do most to create the kind of communities where all can flourish.

So my prayer is that we will not succumb to voter fatigue, but will treat our opportunity to vote as a responsibility and a privilege rather than a chore. I pray that each of us will use our vote in whatever way we believe will best build up our common life together, remembering our neighbours both local and far away and yet to be born, rather than focusing on ourselves alone. And I pray too that our councillors will use wisely the power they are given, seeking to work well with those they agree with and those they don't, for the good of those who voted for them, and those who didn't. Above all, I pray for justice and generosity in all our dealings with one another and the world around us.

Yours in Christ,  
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