

*A study of the Staffordshire County Council
Election results of 2025 reveals that:-*

There was no Reform UK Landslide

*It was the outdated voting system that gifted Reform UK
absolute power, not the voters of Staffordshire.*

My name is David Green. I run the Supervote Project in aid of reform of our antiquated voting system. I am currently undertaking a study of the latest round of local election results and have found that, in Staffordshire on May 1st last:

- Reform UK won 79% of the seats with just 42% of the vote and took absolute power with 49 of the 62 seats on the County Council notwithstanding the fact that nearly 6 out of 10 voters did not support them;
- The Labour Party was seriously under-represented and other parties also deserved more seats;
- Only 18 of the 62 councillors were elected with an outright majority; the rest were elected on a minority of the vote in their division; for example, in Lichfield City South Division, the Conservative Candidate was elected on a mere 29% of the vote;
- Only 43.5% of the votes cast in the County were effective. A majority of those who voted – 56.5% - failed to elect a candidate of their choice;
- Only 33% of Staffordshire Council's electorate bothered voting.
- In a recently compiled "Top 10" of County Councils with the most undemocratic local election results in 2025, Staffordshire's results were the worst.

The 2025 round of county council elections in Staffordshire left much to be desired. What sort of democracy do the County's residents have when the composition of their County Council does not reflect how they voted? Reform UK did well but not well enough to deserve nearly 8 out of 10 seats on the Council. By rights, Reform UK should have around 42% of the seats to show for their 42% share of the vote, not 79%.

Our dodgy voting system is to blame!

To elect Staffordshire's County Councillors, residents were obliged to use an outdated and inefficient Victorian voting system known as First-past-the-post, which wasted most of the votes cast and produced a distorted result with the remainder. Just look at the following table based on statistics published on the County Council's website:-

Votes for the Parties in Staffordshire's Elections in 2025	% Votes Won	% Seats Taken
Reform UK	42%	79.0%
Conservative	27%	16.2%
Labour and Labour Co-op	16%	1.6%
Green	6%	1.6%
Liberal Democrat	5%	0.0%
Others	4%	1.6%

There is something very wrong with a voting system that has the ability to award nearly 8 out of 10 seats to a party that has won just over 4 out of 10 votes. Moreover, detailed analysis shows that our outdated voting system denied a majority of those who voted representation of their choice: Of the 219,747 votes cast, only 95,620 (43.5%) were successful in electing someone; 124,127 (56.4%) failed to elect anybody. **While any election is bound to result in losing candidates, a voting system which fails well over half of those who voted clearly needs replacing.**

And then there is the abysmal turnout – just 33%, according to the Staffordshire County Council's website. Perusal of the results reveals that many divisions' turnouts were below 30%, with East Staffordshire Burton Town Division taking the wooden spoon with just 17% - over 8 out of 10 voters there did not take part in the election. Declining public participation in elections, coupled with shrinking membership of political parties and the inevitable reduction in the quality of party candidates that will result, all spell disaster for our democracy unless something is done. And the current fad for merging local councils into distant, impersonal regional authorities isn't helping either.

First-past-the-post is past it and continued use of this Victorian museum piece makes about as much sense as using Stephenson's Rocket to haul trains on the HS2. Staffordshire needs to have its voting system brought up to date so that results reflect votes cast, transforming the County's elections into a vibrant, diverse and inclusive event where there is everything for everyone everywhere to play for, whether they be voters, local party organisations or candidates.

To achieve this, Staffordshire needs to have a system of proportional representation, a type of voting system which shares out seats in proportion to votes cast. So, if Labour were to poll 6 out of 10 votes, they would be awarded 6 out of 10 seats. Our current outdated Victorian voting system does not do this.

The Supervote: an end to "King of the Castle" politics using the most powerful and democratic vote on Earth.

The Single Transferable Vote (STV) is the British system of proportional representation. While Continental list systems of PR are designed simply to deliver proportionality of parties, STV allows voters to cast preferences for candidates in multi-member areas, which gives them more choice of candidates and an ability to vote according to what is important to them, whether it be according to party affiliation, independence of thought, gender, culture or position on an issue. Wasted votes are minimised because in the counting, the votes are distributed among the candidates according to the expressed preferences of each individual voter, allowing votes for a no-hoper or those surplus to a candidate's requirements to be recycled. The way the votes are counted ensures that the corporate will of the voters in the area is reflected in the result and that seats are awarded in proportion to votes cast. STV is the most powerful vote you can bequeath to an electorate and has justifiably been described as "**the Supervote**".

The Irish Republic has used STV since the 1920s. In the UK, Conservative and Labour Governments have supported STV's use in Northern Ireland for local council, Assembly and European elections over a 50 year period. In 2007, STV was successfully introduced for local elections in Scotland, and the Welsh Senedd has passed legislation that allows local councils in Wales to use it if they so resolve. English Councils need to catch up.

Additionally, the introduction of STV should increase voter participation, breathing new life into local party politics, and thereby strengthen our democracy at the grassroots. Hopefully this will in turn open the door to a new era in our representative democracy, leading to more consensual and less adversarial "King of the Castle" politics, with more input from people with different ideas and a better quality of decision-making as a result.

So, don't just sit there...

Clearly, the UK's claim to be a democracy is bogus if the way people vote in an election is not reflected in the result. Quite apart from the undemocratic situation in Westminster, the sheer volume of electoral injustices at local level – whether it is over-representation of Reform UK in Staffordshire, of the Liberal Democrats in Kingston-on-Thames or of the Labour Party in Manchester -can no longer be tolerated, demanding urgent action. All recipients of this circular can do their bit.

- Journalists are asked to give this issue as much coverage as possible;
- All recipients are invited to forward this document on to anyone they think might be interested;
- County Councillors are asked to do what they can to have the matter debated by Staffordshire County Council with a view to their resolving to lobby the Government to pass legislation to change the voting system (As unrepresentative as the Council now is, there is a clear majority of Green and Reform UK Councillors on the Council whose parties support reform of the voting system, so this shouldn't be a problem);
- Parliamentarians are asked to lobby HMG to introduce PR by STV for all local elections. While English local governance is currently a hotchpotch of single and multi-member representation, thankfully STV can operate in 1,2 and 3 member wards and divisions. This would allow for the system to be introduced immediately for all local elections pending boundary reviews for each council by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. This Commission would over time be tasked with drawing up new wards for every English local authority returning between 4 and 6 councillors per ward/division, which is the ideal level of representation to achieve proportional representation of voters;
- All recipients are asked to write to the Right Hon Angela Rayner MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF. They could usefully send her a copy of this document for her comments and ask for legislation to be introduced so that voters in Staffordshire and beyond can use a fairer voting system for their local elections in future.

Additional Notes and Information

More info on the case for voting reform can be found at: www.supervote.org.uk

The Supervote Project campaigns to replace First-past-the-post with a fairer electoral system. The project focuses on council elections in the belief that untold damage is being done to the fabric of our democracy at the grassroots by the First-past-the-post voting system.

Other groups campaigning for voting reform include:-

The Electoral Reform Society(www.electoral-reform.org.uk)

Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform (www.labourforelectoralreform.org.uk)

Conservative Action for Electoral Reform (www.conservativeelectoralreform.org.uk)

Liberal Democrats for Electoral Reform (www.lider.org)

The aforementioned “*Top 10 of County Councils with the most undemocratic election results in 2025*” according to the percentage gap between votes won and seats taken is as follows:-

Ranking and County	Dominant Party	% Seats taken by that Party	% Votes won by that Party	% Disparity
1. Staffordshire	Reform UK	79.0%	42.0%	37.0%
2. Kent	Reform UK	70.4%	37.0%	33.4%
3. Derbyshire	Reform UK	65.6%	36.8%	28.8%
4. Lancashire	Reform UK	63.1%	35.7%	27.4%
5. Nottinghamshire	Reform UK	60.6%	36.3%	24.3%
6. Lincolnshire	Reform UK	62.9%	39.2%	23.7%
7. Cambridgeshire	LibDem	50.8%	27.4%	23.4%
8. Shropshire	LibDem	56.8%	34.2%	22.6%
9. Oxfordshire	LibDem	52.2%	30.1%	22.1%
10. Gloucestershire	LibDem	49.1%	27.2%	21.9%

This circular has been sent to the Council's Chief Executive, County Councillors & the County's Members of Parliament, local party associations and a selection of local and national media.

Those wanting to know more about the nuts and bolts of First-past-the-post and the Single Transferable Vote are invited to have a look at the attachment to this document.

Please note that, while best endeavours have been used to ensure that the information in this document is accurate and correct, this is an amateur publication.

Contact Details

david.green@supervote.org.uk

6th July 2025

ends