

South Cambridgeshire is the Supervote Project's Dodgy Democracy of the Week.

The LibDems might have won South Cambridgeshire but most voters there lost.

The undemocratic First-past-the-post voting system used in 7th May's Council elections effectively disenfranchised a majority of those who voted in South Cambridgeshire while gifting the Liberal Democrats a thumping majority - 96% - of the seats and absolute power on the Council, even though they were supported by under half of those who voted. These were the voting percentages based on the results listed on the Council's website:

	Con	Green	Labour	LibDem	Reform	Others
Votes %	19 %	15%	6%	42%	18%	6%
Seats	2	0	0	43	0	0
Seats %	4%	0%	0%	96%	0%	0%

Polling just over 4 out of 10 votes, the LibDems did well, but nowhere near well enough to warrant walking off with over 9 out of 10 of the Council seats at the expense of the Conservative, Green and Reform UK parties, who were all cheated out of their fair share of the seats.

Moreover, drilling down to ward level reveals poor levels of representation: Councillors in 22 of the 26 wards were elected on a minority of the vote, so we have the ridiculous situation in the multi-

member ward of Cambourne, for example, where 36% of those who voted enjoy 3 councillors of their political persuasion, while 64% of ward voters have none. This explains why only 43% of the vote across South Cambridgeshire was effective and why 57% of the vote was wasted.

Given that over a half of the District's voters did not participate (53%), it can rightly be claimed that a majority in South Cambridgeshire did not vote and, of the minority who did, a majority failed to elect anybody. What sort of democracy is that?

These crazy results are a disgrace. This was not what the residents of South Cambridgeshire had voted for on May 7th.

The fault lies with continued use of the Victorian First-past-the-post voting system, an outdated steam age device which wastes many, if not most, of the votes shovelled into it, while producing a distorted result with the remainder. Moreover, outcomes are neither consistent nor certain. First-past-the-post is past it. Continued use of this museum piece makes about as much sense as having Stephenson's Rocket haul trains on HS2.

We need to replace First-past-the-post with a system of proportional representation which awards seats to parties in proportion to the votes cast for them so that, say, if Labour won 4 out of 10 votes, they would be awarded 4 out of 10 seats. First-past-the-post is not designed to achieve this. Not only would voting reform deliver more accurate representation, there would be no need for tactical voting and there would be no more safe seats as every vote would be keenly contested. More choice would revitalise interest and participation in local politics, with everything for everyone everywhere to play for.

Only Westminster can reform the local election voting system but all is not lost. The Liberal Democrats are staunch supporters of voting reform so should use what has happened in South Cambridgeshire to highlight the fact that they have won far more seats than their support warranted and demand that the Government takes action to reform our outdated voting system. They could even offer up South Cambridgeshire as the location for a pilot exercise for a fairer voting system before it is rolled out for use in the rest of England.

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This press statement is published by David Green, a Merseyside resident who runs the Supervote Project, a small campaign which, in the company of others, seeks to reform the voting

system in the UK. While colleagues tend to concentrate on elections to Westminster, the Supervote Project focuses on council elections in the belief that far more damage is being done to the fabric of our democracy at the grassroots by the continued use of the First-past-the-post voting system in council elections. This is evidenced by the appalling results in many of the local authorities on May 7th and the Supervote Project is intent on calling out the worst examples at the rate of one "dodgy democracy" a week. Please note that, while best endeavours have been used to ensure that the above information is accurate, this is an amateur publication.

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