

Community turned out rather than turned off

Congratulations to all the candidates who took part in the elections for our borough and parish councils. But I'm reserving my biggest praise for another group of people – Stafford Borough people.

In the run up to 5 May there was a lot of talk by national commentators about how people were 'turned off' by politics and that they wouldn't 'turn out' for the alternative vote (AV) referendum and local elections.

Well, yet again in Stafford Borough, the electorate turned out - rather than being turned off.

In fact, 46% of all those eligible to vote, did. And in some areas of our borough more than half the electorate turned out to put their cross on the ballot paper. I had a look at some comparisons with average turn out from other regions and guess what? Ours was higher...and in some cases, a lot higher!

So although the Conservatives got the most seats; although Labour gained an extra five councillors; and although the Green Party had its first candidate elected; the real winner in these elections was democracy.

That suggests to me that residents in this area do care about how they want things to be run - from bin collections to cleaning streets; what we offer in terms of our leisure centres, theatre, and museums; how we improve the prosperity of the borough, attract new businesses and development; to ensuring we have the right infrastructure to do this.

Welcome to all the new members of the council. I hope that whatever political colour you may be, working for the benefit of everyone associated with this wonderful borough of ours is the reason you ran for office.

Finally, organising three elections (borough, parish and the alternative vote referendum) is a huge job, so congratulations to all those who worked extremely hard to make them run successfully.

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