

# Local and national government

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# National government

- Two Houses of Parliament
  - House of Commons
  - House of Lords
- Your MP sits in the Commons
- House of Lords is unelected



Image source: Wikipedia

# National government

- What issues do MPs deal with?
  - Local government funding
  - Defense
  - Taxation (except council tax)
  - Our relationship with other nations
  - Aspects of public services including the NHS
  - Aspects of housing
  - Aspects of the Environment (think plastic bag levy)
  - Aspects of transport (e.g railways)
  - and a lot more!



Green Party MP Caroline Lucas speaking in a Commons debate on the railways.

Image source: Caroline Lucas on Twitter

# Local government

- Local government setups vary across the UK
- In Bicester:
  - Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall in Oxford (most powerful)
  - Cherwell District Council, Bodicote House near Banbury
  - Bicester Town Council, The Garth in Garth Park (least powerful)

# Local government

- In Bicester elections happen pretty much every year
  - House of Commons elections get the most publicity (usually every 5 years)
  - But voters in Bicester go to the polls almost every year to elect councillors to one of our local councils
  - You can take part when you're 18 - but only if you register!

# Oxfordshire County Council

- Your county councillor deals with:
  - Education
  - Social services
  - Highway (road) maintenance
  - A lot of money (the 2013-14 budget was £899 million)
  - and many other issues



Last year's county council budget meeting

Image source: Oxfordshire County Council on Twitter

# Cherwell District Council

- Your district councillors deal with:
  - Collecting your rubbish
  - Recycling
  - Housing
  - Planning
  - and a lot more
- You can watch all CDC meetings via their website.



A Cherwell District Council meeting coming to an end.

Image Source: Cherwell District Webcasting

# Bicester Town Council

- Least powerful local council – but still important!
- Your town councillors deal with various local amenities:
  - Bus shelters
  - Footpaths
  - Public benches
  - Allotments
  - Playing fields and parks
  - and more
- May not seem too important but, they still decide how some of your money is spent.



A Bicester Town Council Meeting  
Image Source: Bicester Town Council

# Local elections need YOU

- The turnout in local elections in this area is very poor.
- Local elections do matter.
- It's vital that when you're able to you use your vote in local and national elections.
- It takes less than 5 minutes to register online.

Voting Summary	
Details	Number
Seats	1
Total votes	2381
Electorate	6411
Number of ballot papers issued	2392
Number of ballot papers rejected	9
Number of postal votes sent	858
Number of postal votes returned	613
Turnout	37%

I contested the election of a County councillor (Oxfordshire County Council) last year. Less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of registered voters actually voted!

# Find out more

- Download these slides: [goo.gl/LX2WY9](http://goo.gl/LX2WY9)
- Visit these websites:
  - North Oxfordshire Green Party: [nogp.org.uk](http://nogp.org.uk)
  - The Green Party of England and Wales: [greenparty.org.uk](http://greenparty.org.uk)
  - UK Parliament: [parliament.uk](http://parliament.uk)
  - Oxfordshire County Council: [oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://oxfordshire.gov.uk)
  - Cherwell District Council: [cherwell.gov.uk](http://cherwell.gov.uk)
  - Bicester Town Council: [bicester.gov.uk](http://bicester.gov.uk)
  - Simple Politics: [simplepolitics.co.uk](http://simplepolitics.co.uk)