



## BRISTOL CITY SUPPORTERS TRUST

### Illustration of Single Transferable Vote Voting System

The Single Transferable Vote (STV) system is generally considered to be a more democratic way of voting than First Past The Post (FPTP).

FPTP simply gives victory to the candidate with the most votes. This works well as long as only two candidates are standing in the election. But if there are more than two candidates then FPTP may result in someone winning the election that would not be the choice of the majority of voters. The more candidates that stand in an election, the more likely it is that the result will not reflect the wishes of the voters.

To explain why, let's consider a simple example. Suppose there are three candidates standing in an election. Suppose that two candidates have similar policies with just a few minor differences. Suppose also that under FPTP the vote goes as follows:

Adam Stone	29%
Susan Chandler	31%
Mark Richards	40%

Under FPTP, Mark Richards wins the election, even though only 40% of people voted for him. The majority of people, 60%, wanted one of the two other candidates to be elected. If we were stuck with FPTP, the only way to find out who the voters really want to be elected would be to eliminate the candidate with the smallest vote (Adam Stone) and run another election with just Susan Chandler and Mark Richards standing. In that election, let's suppose that all the people who voted originally for Adam Stone now switch their vote for their second choice candidate, Susan Chandler, since her policies are very similar to those of Adam Stone. The result of the second vote would then be:

Susan Chandler	60%
Mark Richards	40%

So now we have a fair election between just two people, and the result is that Susan Chandler is elected because she had the support of more than half of the voters. But it's not practical to hold multiple elections. And of course if there were 6 candidates standing there would have to be 5 separate elections, eliminating one candidate each time. The ideal solution is to get all the information from voters about their second and third choices at a single visit. That is what STV achieves.

With STV, instead of putting a single vote on the voting paper next to one candidate, voters number all the candidates they like in order of preference. All the first choice votes are added up, then if no one candidate has more than 50% of the votes, all the votes from the weakest candidate are transferred to their second preference candidates. The process is repeated until one candidate has more than 50% of the vote. That candidate is then elected.

With STV nobody ever needs to vote tactically any more. People can vote for the candidate they like best, knowing that if their preferred candidate isn't so popular, their vote will be transferred to their second choice candidate. In this way, no vote is ever wasted.