



Senior Council for Devon

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Strength in Later Life

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PRESS RELEASE

VOTING FOR CHANGE?

SHOULD our MPs be elected in a different way – yes or no? In advance of the national referendum on the issue in May residents of Mid Devon are to have the chance to hear how a change in the voting system might affect everyone – and even the government we elect.

Opponents of altering the UK's first-past-the-post voting system say a switch to the Alternative Vote (AV), where voters rank candidates in their constituency in order of preference, would harm democratic principles. But reformers say moving to AV would be a victory for fairness.

Professor Colin Rallings, of the Elections Unit at the University of Plymouth, will talk on the pros and cons of the two systems, and answer questions, when he addresses an open meeting of Tiverton Voice, the local branch of the Senior Council for Devon, the forum for the over-50s.

Members of the audience will be asked by show of hands for their preferences at the beginning and end of the meeting. There will also be a mock AV ballot based on how people would have chosen at the time of the general election in May 2010, when five candidates stood in the Tiverton & Honiton constituency.

Peter Lineham, chair of Tiverton Voice, said: 'The vote on 5 May on whether to change the UK's voting system is the first national referendum on any issue since 1975, and we think it is important that the issues are debated and understood by the public before a decision is made.'

'Although Tiverton Voice represents older people, we are inviting young people to the event as well, because they are the voters of the future. Prof Rallings is a distinguished political commentator, with a great record of explaining complex matters to the wider public in an interesting and entertaining manner. I urge as many residents of Mid Devon as possible to turn up at the meeting. They won't be disappointed.'

The event will take place on Wednesday 6 April at Tiverton High School, Bolham Road, Tiverton EX16 6SQ, from 7pm for a 7.30pm start. For more information, contact Tiverton Voice on 01884 252460 or email jose_kimber@msn.com