

Voting

General details	Voter turnout in local and general elections
Area output	Available at ward level
Time period	1994 to 2003 for local elections and for 2001 and 2005 for general elections
Source	KMC Elections and the Electoral Commission
Provider	KMC Elections and the Electoral Commission
Comments	

1 Introduction

1.1 Voter turnout in the UK has declined significantly over the last decade. Turnout, which has traditionally been lower in local elections sank to less than 30% in 2000 and was at its lowest for 80 years in the General Election of 2001.

1.2 Academic analysis in the UK and elsewhere suggests that there are a number of important factors influencing turnout:

- the nature of the competition between the parties
- the likelihood of an individual vote making a difference to the outcome of the election (especially in areas where there is a historically large majority for one particular party)
- the style and content of national media coverage
- a decline in the sense of civic duty, especially among younger people.

In any particular election, these factors will have varying degrees of impact.

2 National and Regional Figures

2.1 The worldwide average for voter turnout in national elections for the years after 1990 was 64% and the UK ranked 65 out of 163 countries.

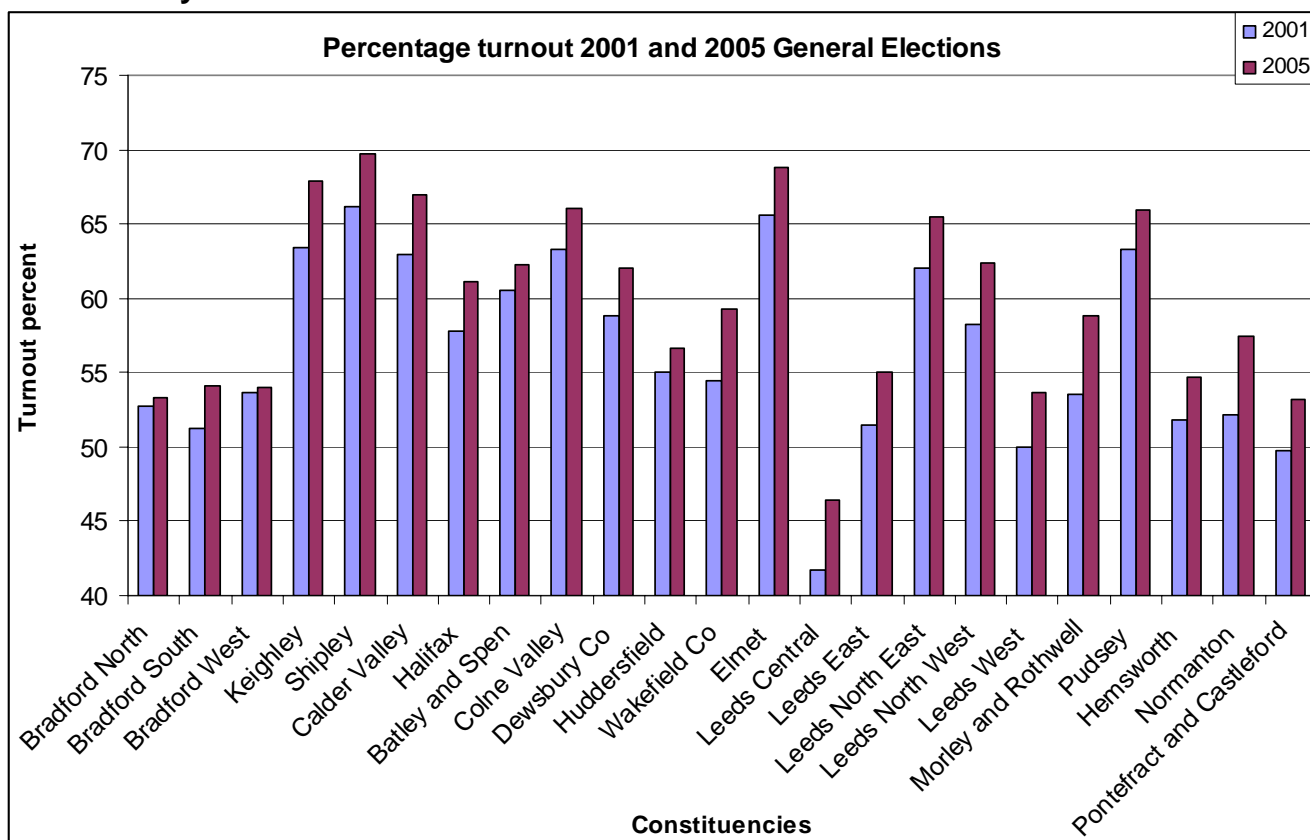
2.2 In 2001, the General Election voter turnout was 59.4%, which was the lowest since the first election after the Great War in 1918.

2.3 Turnout in the previous General Election in 1997 was a post-war low of 71.4% however 5 million more people voted in 1997 than in 2001.

2.4 Turnout rose nationally to 61.3% at the 2005 General Election; turnout in Yorkshire and Humberside was slightly lower at 58.7%.

2.5 Among the constituencies of West Yorkshire, the highest turnout was in Shipley (69.7%) and the lowest turnout in Leeds Central (46.4%) In Kirklees, the highest turnout was in Colne Valley (67.0%) and lowest in Huddersfield (56.6%)

Figure 1: Voter turnout for the last two General Elections by West Yorkshire constituency



Source: Electoral Commission

3 Kirklees Figures

3.1 In 2000, the average turnout for the local elections in the United Kingdom was 29.6%, down from an average figure for the period 1976 to 1996 of 41%.

3.2 Figures 2 and 3 show the ward turnout for local council elections for the period 1994 to 2003. Ward boundaries were revised in 2004 under a Periodic Electoral Review by the Electoral Commission and all-out elections were held in June 2004 exclusively by postal vote. Therefore the voting figures for 2004 have not been included in this analysis.

3.3 North Kirklees

- From 1994 to 1998, voter turnout in local elections in North Kirklees declined significantly and from that low point it has risen in all wards.
- Cleckheaton Ward had the highest turnout in 1994 (49.6%) and the lowest turnout in 2003 (29.2%).
- Batley East, Batley West and Thornhill, despite experiencing a decline in turnout to 1998, all had higher turnouts in 2003 than 1994.
- Dewsbury West and Cleckheaton are the only two wards in North Kirklees to show a decline in voter turnout between 2002 and 2003.

Figure 2: Voter turnout for local elections by wards of North Kirklees

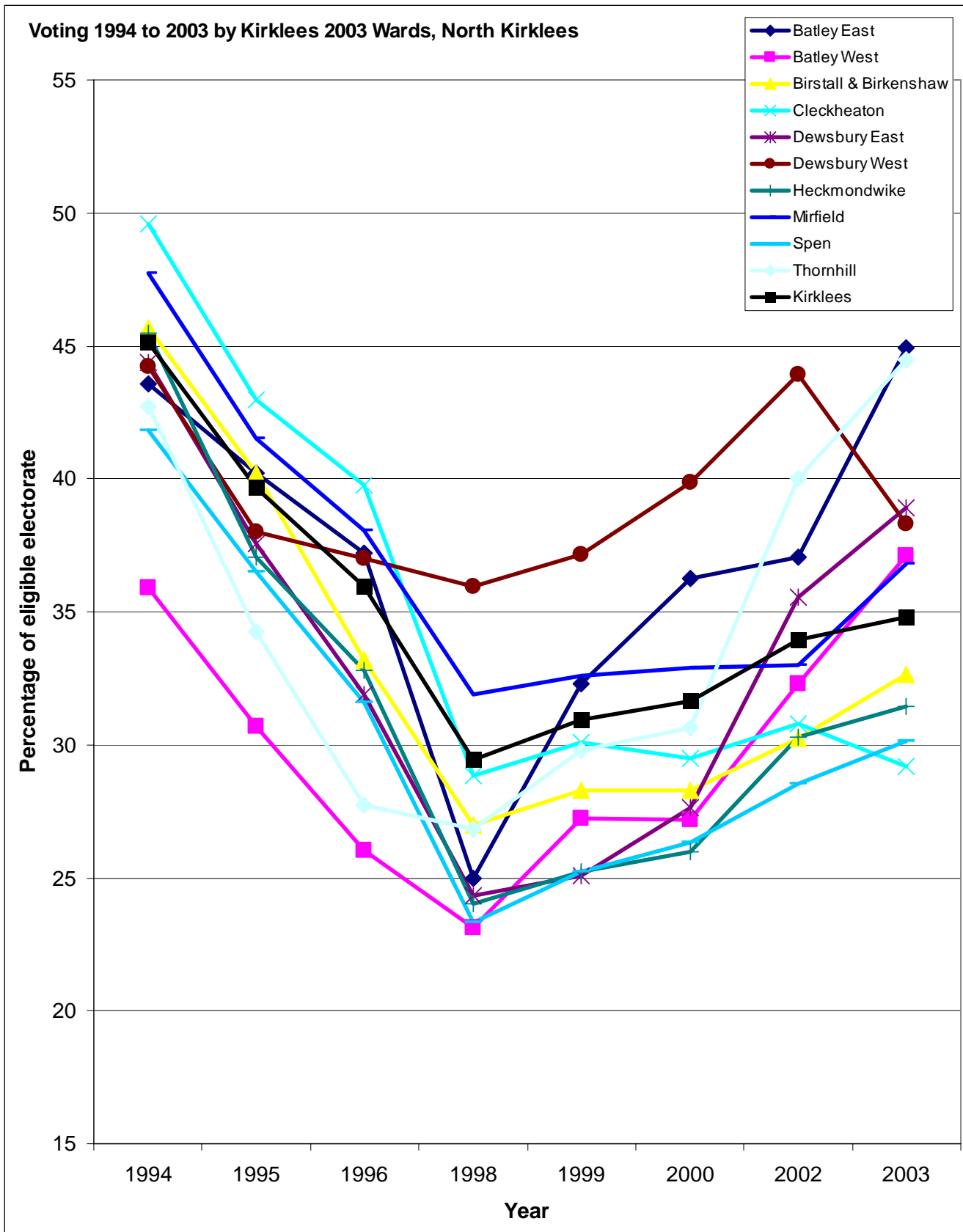
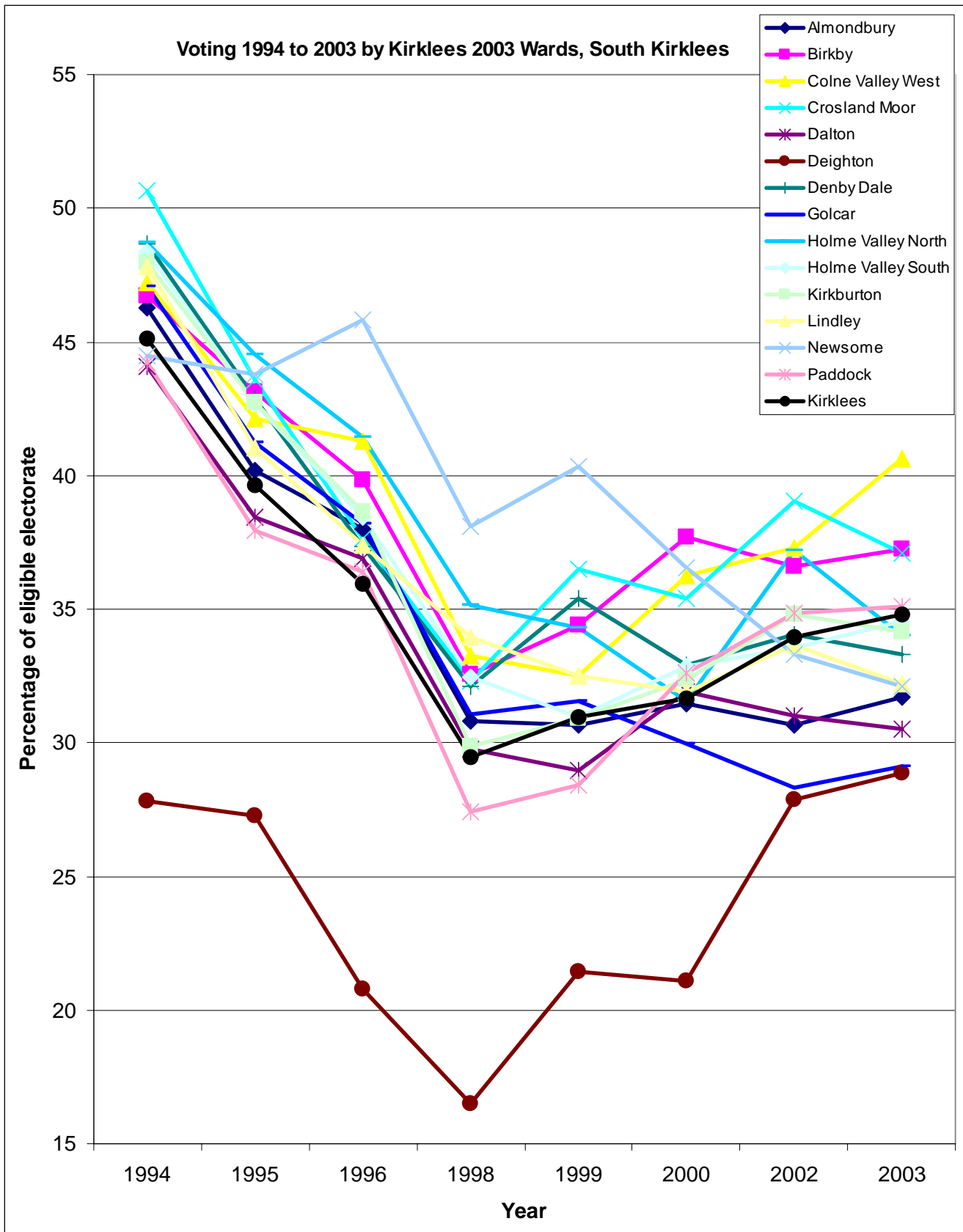


Figure 2: Voter turnout for local elections by wards of South Kirklees



- From 1994 to 1998, voter turnout in local elections in South Kirklees declined significantly from which low point it has risen in most wards.
- Deighton stands out as the ward with the lowest turnout in South Kirklees (and Kirklees as a whole) with a low in 1998 of 16.5%. However voter turnout recovered after 1998 so that the 2003 figure (28.9%) was higher than the 1994 figure (27.8%)
- The largest drops in voter turnout over the ten year between 1994 and 2003 occurred in Golcar (18%), Lindley (15.6%) and Denby Dale (15.4%)

3.5 Table 2 shows that changes in voter turnout vary between wards over the ten years from 1994 to 2003. Some wards that had a high turnout in 1994 had a low turnout in 2003 (e.g. Golcar and Cleckheaton). Turnout in some wards was low in 1994 but recovered to 1994 figures by 2003 which then meant they had a relatively high turnout (e.g. Batley West, Thornhill and Dewsbury East.)

3.6 Voter turnout held up best mostly in wards with a high proportion of residents from Black and Ethnic Minority backgrounds such as Batley East and West, Dewsbury West, Birkby and Deighton.

Table 2: Comparison of ward local election turnout 1994 and 2003

2003 wards	1994			2003			Difference 2003 - 1994
	Eligible Electorate	Total turnout	% Total turnout	Eligible Electorate	Total turnout	% Total turnout	
Deighton	10266	2858	27.8	8047	2323	28.9	1.0
Golcar	12768	6013	47.1	12604	3670	29.1	-18.0
Cleckheaton	11841	5874	49.6	11436	3339	29.2	-20.4
Spennithorne	12606	5269	41.8	11960	3602	30.1	-11.7
Dalton	12145	5355	44.1	11517	3513	30.5	-13.6
Heckmondwike	12765	5808	45.5	13168	4140	31.4	-14.1
Almondbury	10112	4678	46.3	9604	3047	31.7	-14.5
Newsome	11337	5044	44.5	10199	3273	32.1	-12.4
Lindley	12893	6166	47.8	12826	4128	32.2	-15.6
Birstall & Birkenhead	13858	6332	45.7	13210	4310	32.6	-13.1
Denby Dale	13136	6394	48.7	14214	4731	33.3	-15.4
Holme Valley North	11760	5730	48.7	12433	4225	34.0	-14.7
Kirkburton	12010	5759	48.0	13718	4684	34.1	-13.8
Holme Valley South	12900	6239	48.4	13356	4615	34.6	-13.8
Paddock	11551	5106	44.2	10662	3743	35.1	-9.1
Mirfield	12564	6000	47.8	12215	4494	36.8	-11.0
Crosland Moor	12048	6102	50.6	11380	4222	37.1	-13.5
Batley West	13528	4860	35.9	12740	4728	37.1	1.2
Birkby	11912	5568	46.7	11152	4153	37.2	-9.5
Dewsbury West	12411	5491	44.2	12297	4711	38.3	-5.9
Dewsbury East	11182	4964	44.4	11077	4312	38.9	-5.5
Colne Valley West	10633	5020	47.2	10340	4200	40.6	-6.6
Thornhill	12340	5269	42.7	11831	5263	44.5	1.8
Batley East	12324	5369	43.6	12375	5559	44.9	1.4

4 Links and further information

The Electoral Commission

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/election-data/>

Office for National Statistics

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/default.asp>

5 Indicator archive

Date of the original document	July 2005
Author	Steve Jones: KMC CDU
Details of consultation	Susan Hutson, Kirklees Elections, August 2005
Document update date	
Update author	
Details of update consultation	