

How to become a councillor

Community councillors are elected by the public and serve four-year terms. Following elections, councils appoint a chair, or town mayor in town councils.



The Election Procedure

Ordinary elections of local councillors take place on the first Thursday in May every four years. For most local councils in Wales election year is 2004, 2008 etc. but where the unitary authority councillor is elected in some other year that is also the year of the local council election. Reorganisation of local government may cause alteration of the election day and election year in some cases.

The election timetable is as follows:

- Publication of notice of election: Not later than the twenty-fifth day before the day of election.
- Delivery of Nomination papers: Not later than noon on the nineteenth day before the day of election.
- Publication of list of candidates: Not later than noon on the seventeenth day before the day of election.
- Delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature: Not later than noon on the sixteenth day before the day of election.
- Notice of Poll: Not later than the sixth day before the day of election.
- Polling: Between 07:00 and 22:00 on the day of election.

In calculating the timetable the Bank holidays and weekends are disregarded.

Nomination process

A prospective candidate must deliver or send by post (recorded delivery) to the Returning Officer a valid nomination paper. This form is obtained from the Officer. The candidate's surname, forenames, residence and description (if required) must be entered and his or her number and prefix letter from the current register of electors. The Returning Officer has a copy of this register, and the clerk of the local council normally has one.

The nomination paper must also contain similar particulars of a proposer and a seconder. They must be electors for the area for which the candidate seeks election (i.e. the community or town or the ward if it is divided into wards): they must sign it.

What Next?

The returning officer appointed by a unitary authority is the person responsible for the conduct and arrangement for community and town council elections. If you are considering becoming a candidate for election it could be wise to contact the Returning Officer to obtain any more detailed information. Also for more information about what life is like as a councillor contact One Voice Wales or alternatively your local community or town council.

There is an election on 3 May 2012

After the May, 2012 Election, if a seat becomes vacant mid-term (or if there are not enough candidates to fill all council seats at election time) the council may be required to hold a by-election. In certain circumstances the council may then co-opt members to the council.