

Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council

Swyddfeydd Bank Place,
Treffynnon,
Sir y Fflint, CH8 7TJ



Bank Place Offices,
Holywell,
Flintshire, CH8 7TJ

Fax/Ffacs: (01352) 711757

Tel: (01352) 711757

e-mail: holywell@bankplace.freeserve.co.uk
Web Site: www.holywell-town.gov.uk

24 August 2006

Your Ref:

Dear Madam,

Electoral Arrangements in Wales

I refer to your letter of 2 June 2006 and append below this council's response to the Discussion Document – Electoral Arrangements in Wales.

Question 1. Although registration is compulsory in Wales, the penalties for non registration are hardly ever used. Should penalties be used and would this encourage more people to register?

Registration is already compulsory and penalties should be used now.

Question 2. What methods could be used to ensure that more people living with their parents, who have moved recently or are living in rented accommodation register?

This assumes that the young person wishes to move their vote for what might prove to be a very short period of time. If they are intending to return to their home constituency in a year or so, one has to ask why should they transfer their registration? They can still cast their vote by post or proxy and if they have a long term connection with an area they may be more inclined to vote.

Question 3. Will individual registration with personal identification help to increase registration?

Will it help to make voting more secure if the personal identification has to be produced before you can vote?

No.

Question 4. Should there be some form of automatic registration as in other countries? If yes, what sources of information could be used to ensure that everyone was automatically registered?

Yes – identity cards.

Question 5. What methods could be used to encourage more Black and Ethnic Minority people to register?

Shouldn't we be looking at encouraging more people of all groups to register? Why should a separate system, based upon race, even be considered?

Question 6. Would an all postal vote be workable in Wales? Please give your reasons for your views.

No. Whilst in theory it could work, there is considerable resistance to postal voting from quite large numbers of the electorate. Many quite like the act of casting their vote at a polling station and it is difficult to see why they should not be allowed to continue.

Also open to abuse.

Question 7. What forms of electronic voting (e.g. internet, text, at polling stations) could be used in Wales? What could be the benefits/problems of using the methods you have suggested?

Until the security of such systems can be guaranteed, it would be foolish to adopt electronic voting methods. Even if an electronic vote were to be cast at a polling station there is presently no way of ensuring that the data is not later manipulated. The lack of a paper trail is an open invitation to electoral fraud and experience in the U.S.A. does not encourage trust in electronic voting.

Question 8. Could alternative venues be used as polling stations? (e.g. supermarkets, post offices etc).

No.

Question 9. Why do so few young people in Wales vote? Please give any examples you have come across (leaving out any personal details).

Lack of interest. We seem to have raised a generation to whom personal social and recreational activities are the prime concern, whilst society in general is of little interest. There are young people who seek to take an active part in politics but these seem to be in an ever dwindling minority. Self-interest seems to dominate and there is an expectation amongst large sections of the younger community that some group known as 'they' will sort things out leaving 'us' to carry on with more important things such as binge drinking or texting our friends.

Question 10. Are young people given enough information in schools to make?

an informed decision about how they are going to vote?

There seems to be adequate information. The problem is that with lack of interest little regard is paid to it.

Question 11. Should party politics be taught in schools? If so, how? If not, why not?

No – concerned that this would be open to abuse.
You can't keep adding subjects to the school curriculum as other subjects would suffer.

Question 12. Should political parties be involved in informing young people about politics in schools and other youth groups?

Yes provided all parties were allowed the same facilities.

Question 13. Are there examples of good practice in informing young people about politics in your area Please tell us about them (leaving out any personal details).

There is an input into schools but not aware of details.

Question 14. Is there enough provision for people with disabilities to help with the registration process? If not, what practical things could be done?

Yes as no problems have been brought to notice in regard to this issue. It would, therefore, be reasonable to assume that there is enough provision.

Question 15. Is there enough provision for people with disabilities to help with voting? If not, what practical things could be done?

Yes as no problems have been brought to notice in regard to this issue. It would, therefore, be reasonable to assume that there is enough provision.

Question 16. Should there be statutory standards for the accessibility of registration and voting material and polling stations?

It could be argued that there is a case for this, as most premises providing services to disabled people are required by law to make adequate provision for access. It can, however, be argued that the service can be provided by other means – (post). Most polling stations are temporary facilities and to make costly provision for just 1 or 2 days every 4 years or so seems an unreasonable requirement.

Question 17. What are your views on the use of mobile ballot boxes for people who have difficulty getting to polling stations?

Not required. A postal alternative already exists and there would be security concerns about mobile ballot boxes.

Question 18. Should polling station managers be required to produce a report similar to that in the Netherlands?

No.

Question 19. What are your views on the availability of help and advice available bilingually at elections in Wales?

No problems have come to light in this area although it has not been confirmed that all polling stations are manned by at least one Welsh speaker should the need for bilingual advice arise.

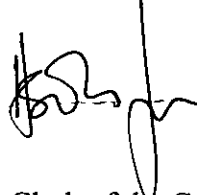
Question 20. What could be done in terms of documents and advice to encourage more BME people to register and vote?

One questions the need to make a distinction. Surely all should be encouraged to register and vote.

Question 21. Do you consider the forms and information given about registration and voting to be straightforward and easily understandable?

Yes.

Yours faithfully



Clerk of the Council

Ms. Ann Jones
Chair
Local Government and Public Services Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF
CF99 1NA