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Vote 2011



Pleidleiswch
—
Vote

What is the National Assembly for Wales?

The National Assembly for Wales is made up of 60 Assembly Members from across Wales. They are elected by the people of Wales to represent them and their communities, make laws for Wales and to ensure the Welsh Government is doing its job properly.

01

Vote 2011

During 2011, the people of Wales will have three opportunities to vote.

01 National Assembly election

In May 2011, if you're over 18 you'll have the opportunity to vote on who you would like to represent you as your Assembly Members, when the National Assembly for Wales holds an election.

02 The referendum on the National Assembly's law-making powers

You will also have an opportunity to vote on whether you think the Parliament in Westminster should allow the Assembly to pass laws on all 20 subjects in the devolved areas without needing the agreement of the UK Parliament in London first.

03 The referendum on changing the UK's voting system

In addition you will be asked to vote in another referendum in 2011. The UK Government intends to hold a referendum on 5 May 2011 on introducing the alternative vote (AV) system for Westminster elections. If people vote for a new system, it will be used to elect Members of Parliament to the House of Commons at the next UK general election.

A referendum is a general vote by people of voting age on a single, direct question which always has a yes or no answer.

Voting in the National Assembly election

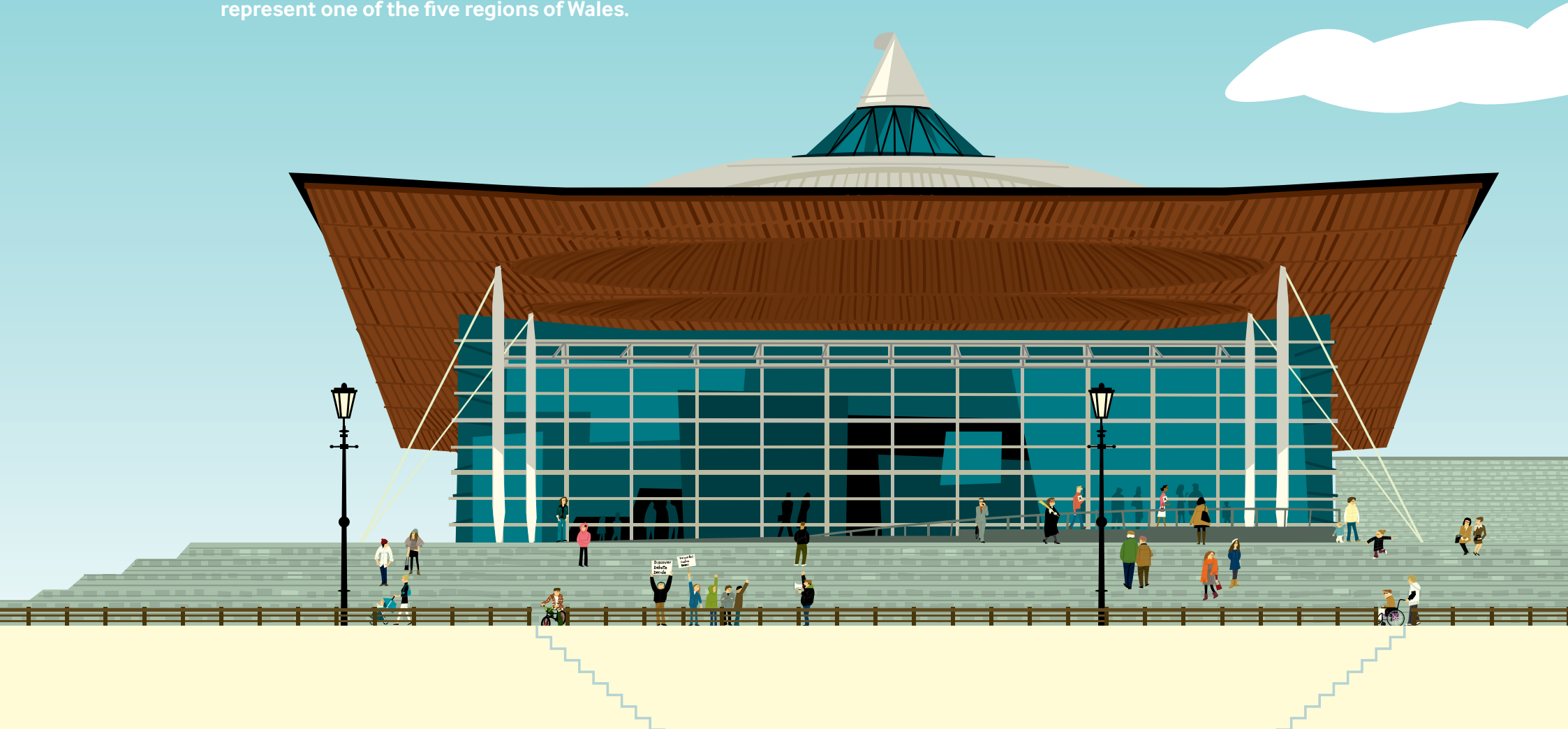
National Assembly elections are held every four years, usually on the first Thursday in May. The 2011 election gives voters in Wales the opportunity to vote for who they would like to represent them in the Assembly.

The National Assembly for Wales is made up of 60 Assembly Members. 40 of them are Constituency Assembly Members, representing the same local constituencies as Westminster MPs; the other 20 are Regional Assembly Members, who represent one of the five regions of Wales.

Everyone in Wales is represented by one Constituency Member and four Regional Members.

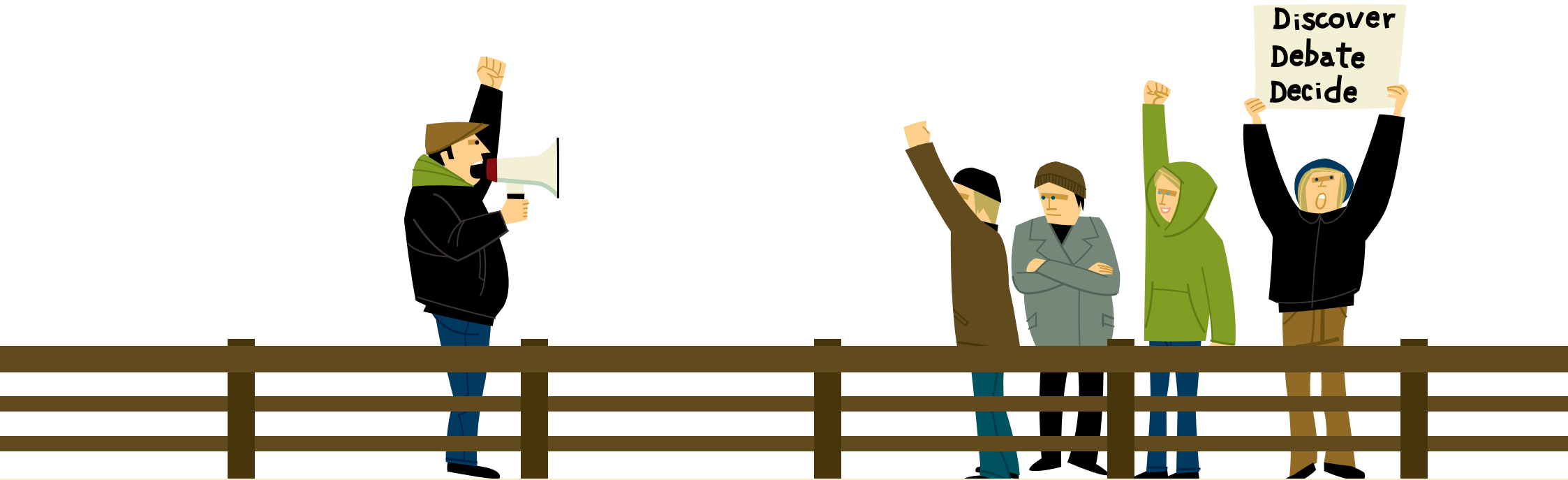
This means that each voter in Wales will have two votes in the Assembly election; one for their Constituency Member and one for their Regional Member.

You can find out the name of your constituency and region, and who represents you at the moment, by visiting www.assemblywales.org or calling our information line on **0845 010 5500**.



Dissolution

The 2011 election will be the first time the Assembly is dissolved in the run up to the election. This means that the Assembly Members will stop working for approximately four weeks before the election and Members will stop being Assembly Members for that period. This is to ensure that existing Assembly Members standing for re-election don't have an advantage over other candidates.



Voting in the referendum

In the spring of 2011, a referendum will be held on how the Assembly makes laws for Wales.

At present, the National Assembly has powers to make laws for Wales on some subjects within the 20 devolved areas.

The Assembly can gain further powers to make laws in those areas with the agreement of the UK Parliament on a subject by subject basis.

If most people vote 'yes' in this referendum, the Assembly will gain powers to pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas without first needing the agreement of the UK Parliament.

If most people vote 'no', then the present law-making system in Wales will continue.

www.assemblywales.org/vote2011



The referendum

At the moment, the National Assembly has powers to make laws for Wales within the 20 devolved areas shown in the box on the following page of this booklet. These areas are known as 'fields'.

These fields are broad in scope and are broken down into more detailed areas (known as 'matters') which define the precise areas in which the Assembly can make law.

So, for example, the Assembly is currently looking at changing the law to reduce the amount of waste and litter in Wales. This falls within the 'environment' field.

In June 2007, the Welsh Government asked Parliament in London to transfer to Wales the power to make laws on the specific issue of preventing and reducing waste and litter. After discussing the proposal in the National Assembly and in Parliament, and following a period of talks between the UK and Welsh Governments, Parliament agreed to that request in February 2010. This meant the Assembly could then start to make the necessary laws.



The referendum will ask the people of Wales whether they think Westminster should give the Assembly the power to make laws in all the subjects within the 20 areas on the right, instead of having to ask for them one at a time as the Assembly carries out its work of making laws for Wales.

So in the example of the waste and litter law mentioned above, under the new system, the Assembly would have been able to make law in all subjects within the 'environment' field without having to ask Westminster first.

If people vote 'no' in the referendum, then the current system will remain – in other words, the Assembly's law-making powers will be transferred bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time.

Whatever the result, the Assembly will still only be able to make laws in these 20 areas. Areas that have not been devolved to Wales, like taxes and defence, will stay with the UK Government.

The Assembly can make laws in the 20 following areas:

- 01 Agriculture, fisheries forestry, and rural development
- 02 Ancient monuments and historic buildings
- 03 Culture
- 04 Economic development
- 05 Education and training
- 06 Environment
- 07 Fire and rescue services and promotion of fire safety
- 08 Food
- 09 Health and health services
- 10 Highways and transport
- 11 Housing
- 12 Local government
- 13 National Assembly for Wales
- 14 Public administration
- 15 Social welfare
- 16 Sport and recreation
- 17 Tourism
- 18 Town and country planning
- 19 Water and flood defence
- 20 Welsh language



So what would a 'yes' vote mean?

A 'yes' vote in the referendum would take away the need for talks between the governments of the UK and Wales over what parts of law-making powers should be given to the National Assembly. It would also take away the involvement of Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords in questioning any requests to give the Assembly the power to make laws. Instead, the responsibility would rest on the Welsh Government and the Members of the National Assembly to decide how to use the Assembly's law-making powers.

So the choice to be made in the referendum is whether the Assembly should:

- stay as it is now - able to gain powers to change the law, but piece by piece if the UK Parliament agrees; or
- move instead to a position where it can make laws without first having to get the approval of the UK Parliament for the power to do so.

It's really important that voters use their votes in 2011 to decide who their Assembly Members will be and how laws for Wales are made.

Keep an eye on our website, www.assemblywales.org/vote2011 for Vote 2011 news and dates for your diary.



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