



# CYNGOR TREF PONTARDAWE TOWN COUNCIL

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Maer / Mayor:

11 July 2006

Councillor Mel Richards

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

Dear Ms Jones

### Electoral Arrangement for Wales

With reference to the above, Pontardawe Town Council has the following observations:-

#### Registering Voters

**Question 1:** Although registration is compulsory in Wales, the penalties for non registration are hardly ever used.

**Question 2:** What methods could be used to ensure that more people living with parents or in rented accommodation would register?

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

**Question 4:** Should there be some form of automatic registration as in other countries?

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

The Council felt that penalties were not the way forward and that registration problems would be eliminated if registration was automatic at the age of 18 years. The possibility of attaching a bar code that would bring up the National Insurance

number or signature or some other electronic identification would also be advisable. This would also apply to Black and Ethnic minorities.

### **Ways of Voting**

**Question 6:** Would an all postal vote be workable in Wales?

**Question 7:** What forms of electronic voting (e.g internet, text, at polling stations) could be used in Wales?

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

The Council had concerns regarding an all postal vote; also internet and text; they felt all were open to abuse. Other venues were also frowned on and it was felt that the polling stations were the best options with postal voting for those persons unable to get to the polling stations. Polling booths could have an electronic system of recording the votes.

### **Voter Turnout**

**Question 9:** Why do so few young people in Wales vote?

**Question 10:** Are young people given enough information in schools to make an informed decision about how they are going to vote?

**Question 11:** Should party politics be taught in schools?

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

**Question 13:** Are there examples of good practice in informing young people about politics in your area?

The Council felt that there was a general apathy about politics in general, and the youth of today do not seem to be as interested in debating societies, as they did in the past. In these groups politics and party politics was often explored and debated. It was also felt that many politicians were poor role models for the young with some of their behaviour being quite unacceptable. Government needed to be more creative in engaging the young.

### **Access to registration and voting**

**Question 14:** Is there enough provision for people with disabilities to help with the registration process?

**Question 15:** Is there enough provision for people with disabilities to help with voting?

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

The Council felt that the new Disability Discrimination Act already covered the above.

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

The Committee felt that postal voting covered question 17, mobile ballot boxes was unnecessary.

**Question 18:** Should polling station managers be required to produce a report.

The Council was very surprised that this questions had been asked as they thought that the Returning Officer was likely to have reports from each station during debriefing.

**Language**

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

The Council felt that there was no problem as documents were produced bilingually.

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

The Committee felt that abbreviation should not be used unless an index was clearly supplied.

**Question 21:** Do you consider the forms and information given about registration and voting to be straightforward and easy to understand?

The Council felt that simplification of all documents should always be foremost in the designer's mind.

Yours sincerely

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A D HOWELLS  
CLERK