

WELSH STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2021 No. 1459 (W. 374)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, WALES REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE, WALES

The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021

Made - - - - 15 December 2021

Coming into force - - 17 December 2021

The Welsh Ministers, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 36A(1), (2), (4), (5) and (9) of the Representation of the People Act 1983⁽¹⁾ and section 26(2) of the Welsh Language Act 1993⁽²⁾, make the following Rules.

In accordance with section 36A(7) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Welsh Ministers have consulted such persons as they considered appropriate.

In accordance with section 36A(10) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, a draft of this instrument has been laid before and approved by a resolution of Senedd Cymru⁽³⁾.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1 Rules applied (with modifications) (10.3.2022) by [S.I. 2007/236, Sch. 4 Pt. 3](#) (as substituted by [The Local Elections \(Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/263\)](#), reg. 1(2), [Sch. 3 para. 4](#) (with reg. 12(f))

Title and commencement

1. The title of these Rules is the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021 and they come into force on 17 December 2021.

-
- (1) [1983 c. 2](#). Section 36A was inserted by section 13(3) of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act [2021 \(asc 1\)](#).
(2) [1993 c. 38](#). Functions of the Secretary of State, so far as exercisable in relation to Wales, were transferred to the National Assembly for Wales by the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999 ([S.I. 1999/672](#)), article 2 and Schedule 1. Those functions were subsequently transferred to the Welsh Ministers by virtue of paragraph 30 of Schedule 11 to the Government of Wales Act [2006 \(c. 32\)](#). See also section 59A of, and Schedule 3A to, the Government of Wales Act 2006. The power to make an order under section 26(2) of the Welsh Language Act 1993 may be exercised to make rules by virtue of section 39 of the Legislation (Wales) Act [2019 \(anaw 4\)](#).
(3) See also section 40 of the Legislation (Wales) Act 2019 for provision about the procedure that applies to this instrument.

Commencement Information

I1 Rule 1 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Transitional provision

2. The coming into force of these Rules does not affect the conduct of an election of councillors to a county council or county borough council if, in the event of the election being contested, the poll would take place before 5 May 2022.

Commencement Information

I2 Rule 2 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Interpretation

3.—(1) In these Rules—

“the 1983 Act” (“*Deddf 1983*”) means the Representation of the People Act 1983;

“the Combination of Polls Regulations” (“*Rheoliadau Cyfuno Pleidleisiau*”) means the Representation of the People (Combination of Polls) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004(4);

“county” (“*sir*”) means a county in Wales;

“county borough” (“*bwrdeistref sirol*”) means a county borough in Wales;

“excluded day” (“*diwrnod eithriedig*”) means a day that is—

- (a) a Saturday;
- (b) a Sunday;
- (c) Christmas Eve;
- (d) Christmas Day;
- (e) Good Friday;
- (f) a day that is a bank holiday in England and Wales under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971(5);

(g) [^{F1}a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning;]

“home address information” (“*gwybodaeth am gyfeiriad cartref*”) in relation to a person nominated—

- (a) in Schedule 1, has the meaning given by rule 13(3) of that Schedule, and
- (b) in Schedule 2, has the meaning given by rule 13(3) of that Schedule;

“principal area” (“*prif ardal*”) means a county or county borough.

(2) For the purposes of these Rules, an election is a “relevant election” if it is one of the following elections and the poll at the election is taken together with the poll at an election of councillors to a county council or county borough council—

- (a) a parliamentary election;

(4) [S.I. 2004/294](#) as amended by paragraph 17 of Schedule 2 to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and by [S.I. 2006/3278](#), [S.I. 2012/1917](#), [S.I. 2014/920](#) and [S.I. 2015/654](#).

(5) [1971 c. 80](#).

- (b) an election of councillors to a community council;
- (c) a mayoral election, that is, an election conducted under the Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007(6);
- (d) a police and crime commissioner election, that is, an election of a police and crime commissioner in accordance with Chapter 6 of Part 1 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011(7).

(3) In these Rules, unless otherwise indicated, the following words and expressions have the same meaning as in the 1983 Act (see section 202(1)(8) of that Act)—

- “anonymous entry” (“*cofnod dienw*”);
- “disability” (“*anabled*”);
- “election court” (“*llys etholiad*”);
- “election petition” (“*deiseb etholiad*”);
- “elector” (“*etholwr*”);
- “list of proxies” (“*rhestr dirprwyon*”);
- “postal voters list” (“*rhestr pleidleiswyr post*”);
- “proxy postal voters list” (“*rhestr pleidleiswyr post drwy ddirprwy*”);
- “proper officer” (“*swyddog priodol*”);
- “record of anonymous entries” (“*cofnod cofnodion dienw*”);
- “voter” (“*pleidleisiwr*”).

F1 Words in [rule 3\(1\)](#) inserted (10.3.2022) by [The Local Elections \(Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/263\)](#), regs. 1(2), **5(2)** (with [reg. 12\(b\)](#))

Commencement Information

I3 Rule 3 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Section 22(3)(a) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000: use of “Annibynol”

4. For the purposes of section 22(3)(a) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000(9), the description “Annibynol” may be given in a candidate’s nomination paper at an election of councillors to a county council or county borough council in Wales, instead of, or in addition to, the description “Independent”.

- (6) [S.I. 2007/1024](#); relevant amending instruments are [S.I. 2010/1172](#), [S.I. 2011/926](#), [S.I. 2012/1917](#), [S.I. 2014/1370](#) and [S.I. 2018/1310](#).
- (7) [2011 c. 13](#). Chapter 6 of Part 1 was amended by the Crime and Courts Act 2013 ([c. 22](#)) (Schedule 8, paragraph 184), by the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (anaw 4) (Schedule 1, paragraph 5), by the Policing and Crime Act 2017 ([c. 3](#)) (section 122(1), Schedule 2, paragraph 117 and Schedule 9, paragraph 73) and by the Wales Act 2017 ([c. 4](#)) (section 8). It was also amended by [S.I. 2014/268](#), [S.I. 2015/1376](#), [S.I. 2015/1526](#), [S.I. 2016/997](#), [S.I. 2017/470](#) and [S.I. 2018/1310](#).
- (8) Section 202(1) was amended by the Representation of the People Act 1985 ([c. 50](#)) (Schedule 2, paragraph 3), by the Greater London Authority Act 1999 ([c. 29](#)) (Schedule 3, paragraph 38), by the Representation of the People Act 2000 ([c. 2](#)) (Schedule 6, paragraph 9), by the Electoral Administration Act 2006 ([c. 22](#)) (Schedule 1, paragraphs 13, 76 and 128) and by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (Schedule 2, paragraph 2(17)). There are other amendments but they are not relevant to these Rules.
- (9) [2000 c. 41](#).

Commencement Information

I4 Rule 4 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Conduct of elections to the council of a principal area

5.—(1) Schedule 1 sets out the rules that apply to the conduct of an election of councillors to a county council or county borough council where the poll at the election is not taken together with the poll at another election.

(2) References in the rules in Schedule 1 to the returning officer are references to the returning officer at the election of councillors to a county council or county borough council.

(3) Schedule 2 sets out the rules that apply to the conduct of an election of councillors to a county council or county borough council where the poll at the election is taken together with the poll at one or more relevant elections.

(4) References in the rules in Schedule 2 to the co-ordinating returning officer are references to the returning officer who, under regulation 4 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, is responsible for discharging functions specified in regulation 5 of those Regulations.

(5) References in the rules in Schedule 2 to the returning officer are references to the returning officer at the election of councillors to a county council or county borough council (whether or not that person is also the co-ordinating returning officer), unless a particular rule otherwise provides.

(6) Where a rule in Schedule 1 or 2 requires the returning officer to publish a document, then (unless the rule provides otherwise) the document must be published—

- (a) online, and
- (b) in such other ways as the returning officer considers appropriate for bringing the contents of the document to the attention of the public.

(7) Where a rule in Schedule 1 or 2 requires or authorises a notice to be given, the notice may be—

- (a) sent by post,
- (b) sent electronically, or
- (c) delivered personally.

Commencement Information

I5 Rule 5 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Rebecca Evans
Minister for Finance and Local Government, one
of the Welsh Ministers

SCHEDULES

SCHEDULE 1

Rule 5(1)

Rules for conduct of an election of councillors for a principal area where poll is not taken together with poll at another election

PART 1

Provisions as to Time

Timetable

1.—(1) The proceedings at the election must be conducted in accordance with the following timetable.

Timetable

<i>Proceedings</i>	<i>Time</i>
Publication of notice of election	Not later than the twenty-fifth day before the day of election
Delivery of nomination papers	Not later than 4 p.m. on the nineteenth day before the day of election
Delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature	Not later than 4 p.m. on the nineteenth day before the day of election
Publication of statement as to persons nominated	Not later than 4 p.m. on the eighteenth day before the day of election
Notice of uncontested election	Not later than the sixth day before the day of election
Notice of poll in contested election	
Polling	Between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. on the day of election

(2) Paragraph (3) applies where—

- (a) a nomination paper is sent electronically or submitted online in accordance with arrangements set out in the notice of election (see rule 3), or
- (b) a notice of withdrawal of candidature under rule 12 is sent electronically.

(3) For the purpose of determining whether the paper or notice has been delivered in accordance with the timetable in paragraph (1), the paper or notice is to be treated as having been delivered at the time when its delivery is recorded on the computer system in use by the returning officer for receiving the paper or notice.

(4) In this rule, “the day of election” means the day specified in the notice of election as the day on which a poll would take place in the event of a contest.

Commencement Information

I6 Sch. 1 rule 1 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Computation of time

2.—(1) An excluded day is to be disregarded in calculating any period set out in the second column of the timetable in rule 1.

(2) No proceedings under these rules up to the close of the poll may take place on an excluded day.

(3) The returning officer is not required to proceed with the counting of votes on an excluded day.

Commencement Information

I7 Sch. 1 rule 2 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

PART 2

Notice of Election, Nomination and Method of Election

Notice of Election

Notice of election

3.—(1) The returning officer must publish notice of the election.

(2) The notice must state—

- (a) the number of councillors to be returned for each electoral ward in the principal area,
- (b) the date of the poll in the event of a contest,
- (c) the place where, and the times at which, forms of nomination paper may be obtained and information about how and when forms of nomination paper may be obtained online,
- (d) the latest time for the delivery of nomination papers, and
- (e) the place where nomination papers may be delivered and the times at which they may be delivered to that place.

(3) The notice must also state the date by which applications to vote by post or by proxy, and other applications and notices about postal or proxy voting, must reach the registration officer in order to be effective for the election.

(4) The place specified in the notice as the place where forms of nomination paper may be obtained, and where they may be delivered, must be at the offices of the council for the principal area.

(5) The returning officer must also include in the notice an electronic delivery statement.

(6) An electronic delivery statement is a statement that nomination papers may be delivered—

- (a) by being sent electronically to an email address in accordance with arrangements set out in the statement,
- (b) by submission online in accordance with arrangements set out in the statement, or
- (c) either by being sent electronically as mentioned in sub-paragraph (a) or by submission online as mentioned in sub-paragraph (b).

Commencement Information

I8 Sch. 1 rule 3 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Nomination

Duty of returning officer to supply forms of nomination etc.

4.—(1) At the place and times for obtaining forms of nomination paper set out in the notice of election, the returning officer must—

- (a) supply any person with as many forms of nomination paper as the person may require, and
- (b) on request, prepare a nomination paper for signature.

(2) The returning officer must also make arrangements to ensure that forms of nomination paper may be obtained online in accordance with the information given in the notice of election.

(3) It is not, however, necessary for a nomination to be made on a form supplied by the returning officer or obtained online.

Commencement Information

I9 Sch. 1 rule 4 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Nomination of candidates

5.—(1) A candidate must nominate themselves using a nomination paper in the form in Appendix 1 or a form to the like effect.

(2) The nomination paper may be delivered either—

- (a) at the place specified by the returning officer in the notice of election, or
- (b) in accordance with the arrangements set out in the electronic delivery statement.

(3) The nomination paper must—

- (a) state the candidate's full names, with the surnames placed first,
- (b) if the candidate wishes, include a description that complies with rule 6,
- (c) include a statement of party membership that complies with rule 8, and
- (d) include the declarations set out in the form in Appendix 1, signed by the candidate.

(4) If a candidate commonly uses forenames or surnames that are different in any respect from the forenames or surnames stated in accordance with paragraph (3)(a) (including where the difference is that the commonly used forenames or surnames are in a different order, include only some of the names or include additional names), the nomination paper may also state the commonly used forenames or surnames.

(5) The nomination paper must be signed by the candidate in the presence of a witness who must attest the signature.

(6) The nomination paper must be accompanied by a form (a “home address form”) that complies with rule 9.

Commencement Information

I10 Sch. 1 rule 5 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Nomination papers: descriptions

6.—(1) This rule sets out requirements about the descriptions that may be included in a nomination paper as mentioned in rule 5(3)(b).

(2) The description may be either—

- (a) a description that is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party or with two or more registered political parties and is permitted under paragraph (3) or (as the case may be) paragraph (4), or
- (b) the word “Independent” or the word “Annibynnol”, or both those words.

(3) A description that is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party is permitted where—

- (a) the party is a qualifying party,
- (b) the description is either—
 - (i) the party’s registered name or, if the party has registered a name in English and a name in Welsh, either or both of those names, or
 - (ii) a registered description of the party or, in the case of a description that has been registered in both English and Welsh, either or both of those descriptions, and
- (c) the use of the description by the candidate is authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the registered nominating officer of the party and received by the returning officer before the last time for the delivery of nomination papers.

(4) A description that is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with two or more registered political parties is permitted where—

- (a) the parties are each qualifying parties,
- (b) the description consists of the registered name of each of the parties shown in either or both of the versions described in paragraph (5), and
- (c) the use of the description by the candidate is authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the registered nominating officer of each of the parties and received by the returning officer before the last time for the delivery of nomination papers.

(5) The versions referred to in paragraph (4)(b) are—

- (a) a version showing (in any order) the parties’ registered names, together with the addition of any appropriate conjunctions and punctuation in English (“the English version”);
- (b) a version showing (in any order) the parties’ registered names, together with the addition of any appropriate conjunctions and punctuation in Welsh (“the Welsh version”).

(6) Where any of the parties has registered a name in English and a name in Welsh—

- (a) the party’s registered name in English (and not the party’s registered name in Welsh) may be used in the English version, and
- (b) the party’s registered name in Welsh (and not the party’s registered name in English) may be used in the Welsh version.

(7) See also rule 7 (which sets out when and how the word “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” or “Cymreig” may be added to descriptions permitted under paragraph (3) or (4)).

(8) A person is guilty of a corrupt practice if that person fraudulently purports to be authorised to issue a certificate under paragraph (3)(c) or (4)(c) on behalf of a registered political party’s nominating officer.

(9) In this rule—

- (a) references to a registered name of a registered political party are to a name of the party registered under section 28 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000⁽¹⁰⁾;
 - (b) references to a registered description of a registered political party are to a description of the party registered under section 28A of that Act⁽¹¹⁾.
- (10) For the purposes of the application of this rule in relation to an election—
- (a) “registered political party” means a party that is registered under Part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 on the day that is two days before the last day for the delivery of nomination papers at the election (disregarding any excluded day);
 - (b) a registered political party is a qualifying party if, on that day, the party is registered in respect of Wales in the Great Britain register maintained under Part 2 of that Act.

Commencement Information

III Sch. 1 rule 6 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Addition of “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” or “Cymreig”

7.—(1) This rule sets out when and how a candidate may make additions in a nomination paper to a description that the candidate is permitted to use under rule 6(3) or (4).

(2) Paragraph (3) applies where—

- (a) a registered name is or forms part of a description that a candidate is permitted to use under rule 6(3), and
- (b) the registered name includes none of the words “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” and “Cymreig”.

(3) The candidate may do one of the following—

- (a) add the word “Wales” before the name;
- (b) add the word “Welsh” before the name;
- (c) add the word “Cymru” after the name;
- (d) add the word “Cymreig” after the name.

(4) Paragraphs (5) and (6) apply where—

- (a) a registered name forms part of a description that a candidate is permitted to use under rule 6(4), and
- (b) the registered name includes none of the words “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” and “Cymreig”.

(5) If the registered name is in the English version of the description (whether or not it is also in the Welsh version), the candidate may add either the word “Wales” or the word “Welsh” before the name in that version.

(6) If the registered name is in the Welsh version of the description (whether or not it is also in the English version), the candidate may add either the word “Cymru” or the word “Cymreig” after the name in that version.

(7) Paragraph (8) applies where—

⁽¹⁰⁾ Section 28 was amended by section 48 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

⁽¹¹⁾ Section 28A was inserted by section 49(1) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

- (a) a registered description is or forms part of a description that a candidate is permitted to use under rule 6(3), and
 - (b) the registered description includes none of the words “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” and “Cymreig”.
- (8) The candidate may do one of the following—
- (a) add the word “Wales” at the beginning of the registered description;
 - (b) add the word “Welsh” at the beginning of the registered description;
 - (c) add the word “Cymru” at the end of the registered description;
 - (d) add the word “Cymreig” at the end of the registered description.
- (9) For the purposes of paragraphs (3)(a) and (b) and (5), where the word “the” (or any word in another language that has the same function as the word “the”) appears at the beginning of a registered name, it must be ignored.
- (10) Where a candidate adds anything to a description in a nomination paper in accordance with this rule, references in the following provisions of this Schedule to the description are references to the description with the addition.

Commencement Information

I12 Sch. 1 rule 7 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Nomination papers: statements of party membership

8.—(1) This rule sets out the requirements for statements of party membership that must be included in nomination papers as mentioned in rule 5(3)(c).

(2) The statement must state whether the candidate has been a member of any registered political party at any time during the relevant period.

(3) If the candidate has been a member of one or more registered political parties at any time during the relevant period, the statement must also include the following information in relation to the party or (as the case may be) each of the parties of which the candidate has been a member—

- (a) the party’s registered name or, where the party has two registered names, the party’s registered names, and
- (b) the dates during the relevant period when the candidate has been a member of the party.

(4) Paragraph (3) does not apply where—

- (a) the nomination paper includes a description that is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party or with two or more registered political parties and is permitted under rule 6(3) or (as the case may be) rule 6(4), and
- (b) the candidate has not at any time during the relevant period been a member of a registered political party other than the party or parties to which that description relates.

(5) A candidate who knowingly fails to include in the nomination paper a statement of party membership that complies with the requirements of this rule is guilty of a corrupt practice.

(6) In this rule—

- (a) “registered political party” means a party that is registered under Part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 at any time during the relevant period when the candidate is a member;
- (b) references to a registered name of a registered political party are to a name of the party registered under section 28 of that Act;

- (c) “the relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which the notice of election is published.

Commencement Information

I13 Sch. 1 rule 8 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Home address forms

9.—(1) This rule sets out the requirements for home address forms that must accompany nomination papers under rule 5(6)

(2) A home address form must state—

- (a) the candidate’s full names,
- (b) the candidate’s home address in full,
- (c) the candidate’s qualifying address or addresses, and
- (d) the qualification to which each qualifying address relates.

(3) The candidate’s qualifying address or addresses, and the qualification to which each qualifying address relates, depend on which one or more of options (a) to (d) on the nomination paper have been selected by the candidate, as set out in the following table.

<i>Option selected on nomination paper</i>	<i>Candidate’s qualifying address</i>	<i>Qualification to which candidate’s qualifying address relates</i>
Option (a)	The address in full in respect of which the candidate is registered as a local government elector	The qualification described in option (a) (registration as a local government elector for the area of the county or county borough council)
Option (b)	A description and the address of the land or premises that the candidate has occupied as owner or tenant (or, if the candidate is relying on more than one occupation to meet the qualification, the descriptions and addresses)	The qualification described in option (b) (occupation as owner or tenant, of land or other premises in the area of the county or county borough council)
Option (c)	The address of the candidate’s place of work (or, if the candidate is relying on more than one place of work to meet the qualification, the addresses)	The qualification described in option (c) (principal or only place of work in the area of the county or county borough council)
Option (d)	The address or addresses in full where the candidate has resided	The qualification described in option (d) (residence in the area of the county or county borough council)

(4) If the candidate’s nomination paper includes commonly used forenames or surnames, the home address form must also state the commonly used names.

(5) The home address form must also state—

- (a) the full names of the person who witnesses the candidate's signature on the nomination paper, and
 - (b) that person's home address in full.
- (6) The home address form may contain a statement made and signed by the candidate that the candidate's home address must not be made public.
- (7) If the home address form contains such a statement, it must—
- (a) where the candidate's home address is in the United Kingdom, state the name of the relevant area (see paragraph (8));
 - (b) where the candidate's home address is outside the United Kingdom, state the country in which it is situated.
- (8) In this rule, "relevant area" means—
- (a) where the candidate's home address is in Wales—
 - (i) if the address is within a county, that county;
 - (ii) if the address is within a county borough, that county borough;
 - (b) where the candidate's home address is in England—
 - (i) if the address is within a district for which there is a district council, that district;
 - (ii) if the address is within a county in which there are no districts with councils, that county;
 - (iii) if the address is within a London borough, that London borough;
 - (iv) if the address is within the City of London (including the Inner and Middle Temples), the City of London;
 - (v) if the address is within the Isles of Scilly, the Isles of Scilly;
 - (c) where the candidate's home address is in Scotland, the local government area in which the address is situated;
 - (d) where the candidate's home address is in Northern Ireland, the local government district in which it is situated.

Commencement Information

I14 Sch. 1 rule 9 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Decisions as to validity of nomination papers

10.—(1) This rule applies where a nomination paper and the accompanying home address form are delivered in accordance with these rules.

- (2) The candidate stands nominated unless and until one of the following events occurs—
 - (a) the returning officer decides that the nomination paper is invalid;
 - (b) the returning officer is satisfied that the candidate has died;
 - (c) the candidate withdraws.
- (3) The returning officer is entitled to hold a nomination paper invalid only on one of the following grounds—
 - (a) that the particulars of the candidate are not as required by law;
 - [^{F2}(aa) that the nomination paper does not include the declarations required by rule 5(3)(d), signed by the candidate;]

- (b) that the candidate's home address form does not comply with rule 9(2) to (6);
- (c) where the candidate's home address form contains a statement that the home address must not be made public, that the form does not comply with rule 9(7);
- (d) that the nomination paper is not signed by the candidate, or that the candidate's signature has not been attested, as required by rule 5(5).

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), the returning officer must, as soon as reasonably practicable after each nomination paper and home address form have been delivered, examine them and decide whether the candidate has been validly nominated.

(5) If in the opinion of the returning officer a description in a nomination paper has been included in breach of rule 6(3) or (4) or 7, the returning officer must give a decision that the candidate's particulars are not as required by law—

- (a) as soon as reasonably practicable after the delivery of the nomination paper, and
- (b) in any event, before the end of the period of 24 hours beginning with the close of the period for delivery of nomination papers.

(6) Where the returning officer decides that a nomination paper is invalid, the returning officer must endorse on the paper the fact of the decision and the reasons for it and sign the endorsement.

(7) The returning officer must give a notice to each candidate stating the returning officer's decision as to whether the candidate's nomination paper is valid or invalid.

(8) The returning officer's decision that a nomination paper is valid is final and may not be questioned in any proceedings.

(9) Except as provided by paragraph (8), nothing in this rule prevents the validity of a nomination being questioned on an election petition.

F2 Sch. 1 rule. 10(3)(aa) inserted (10.3.2022) by [The Local Elections \(Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/263\)](#), regs. 1(2), **2(2)** (with reg. 12(a))

Commencement Information

I15 Sch. 1 rule 10 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Nomination in more than one electoral ward

11.—(1) A candidate who is validly nominated for more than one electoral ward of the same principal area must withdraw from candidature in all those electoral wards except one.

(2) A candidate who does not withdraw as required by paragraph (1) is to be treated as having withdrawn from candidature in all the electoral wards in which the candidate was validly nominated.

Commencement Information

I16 Sch. 1 rule 11 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Withdrawal of candidates

12.—(1) A candidate may withdraw from candidature by giving a notice of withdrawal to the returning officer.

(2) The notice of withdrawal must be signed by the candidate in the presence of a witness who must attest the candidate's signature.

Commencement Information

I17 Sch. 1 rule 12 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Publication of statement of persons nominated

13.—(1) The returning officer must prepare and publish a statement (a “statement of persons nominated”) showing—

- (a) the persons who have been and stand nominated, and
- (b) any other persons who have been nominated but no longer stand nominated, with the reason why they no longer stand nominated.

(2) The statement must show—

- (a) the names and descriptions (if any) of the persons nominated, as given in their nomination papers,
- (b) their home address information (see paragraph (3)), and
- (c) the information contained in their statements of party membership, as given in their nomination papers.

(3) In these rules, references to the home address information of a person nominated are to the following information as given in the home address form accompanying the nomination paper—

- (a) where the home address form contains a statement that the home address must not be made public, the information given in accordance with rule 9(7);
- (b) where the home address form does not contain such a statement, the address of the person nominated.

(4) The statement must show the persons standing nominated arranged alphabetically in the order of their surnames, and if there are two or more of them with the same surnames, the statement must show those persons arranged alphabetically in the order of their other names.

(5) Rule 14 (use of commonly used names) and rule 15 (names that are the same or similar) make further provision about the content of the statement of persons nominated.

Commencement Information

I18 Sch. 1 rule 13 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Use of commonly used names in statement of persons nominated

14.—(1) This rule applies where a person’s nomination paper gives commonly used forenames or surnames in accordance with rule 5(4).

(2) The statement of persons nominated must show the person’s commonly used forenames or surnames (instead of the forenames or surnames stated in the nomination paper in accordance with rule 5(3)(a)) unless the returning officer decides—

- (a) that the use of the person’s commonly used forenames or surnames may be likely to mislead or confuse electors, or
- (b) that the commonly used forenames or surnames are obscene or offensive.

(3) Where paragraph (2)(a) or (b) applies—

- (a) the statement of persons nominated must show the person's other forenames or surnames as stated in the nomination paper in accordance with rule 5(3)(a) (instead of the commonly used forenames or surnames), and
- (b) the returning officer must give a notice to the candidate stating the reasons for refusing to allow the use of the commonly used forenames or surnames.

Commencement Information

I19 Sch. 1 rule 14 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Names that are the same or similar

15.—(1) This rule applies where, in preparing a statement of persons nominated, the returning officer decides that—

- (a) two or more of the names that would be shown on the statement are the same or so similar as to be likely to cause confusion,
- (b) each of the persons concerned has made a statement that they require their home address not to be made public (see rule 9(6)), and
- (c) the information given in accordance with rule 9(7) is the same for each of them.

(2) The returning officer may arrange for any of their particulars to be shown on the statement of persons nominated with such amendments or additions as the returning officer thinks appropriate to reduce the likelihood of confusion.

(3) In deciding whether to make amendments or additions under this rule, the returning officer must have regard to any guidance given by the Electoral Commission for the purposes of this rule.

(4) Where it is practicable to do so before the publication of the statement, the returning officer must consult any persons whose particulars are to be amended or added to under this rule.

(5) The returning officer must give a notice to any person whose particulars are amended or added to under this rule, setting out the amendments or additions.

(6) Anything done by a returning officer under this rule may not be questioned in any proceedings other than proceedings on an election petition.

Commencement Information

I20 Sch. 1 rule 15 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Correction of minor errors in nomination papers or home address forms

16.—(1) A returning officer may, at any time before the publication of the statement of persons nominated, correct minor errors in a nomination paper or home address form.

(2) Errors which may be corrected include—

- (a) errors as to a person's electoral number;
- (b) obvious errors of spelling;
- (c) errors as to the information given in accordance with rule 9(7) (information that must be included where the candidate has stated that the home address must not be made public).

(3) Anything done by a returning officer in pursuance of this rule may not be questioned in any proceedings other than proceedings on an election petition.

(4) In deciding whether to correct minor errors under this rule, a returning officer must have regard to any guidance given by the Electoral Commission for the purposes of this rule.

Commencement Information

I21 Sch. 1 rule 16 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Inspection of nomination papers

17.—(1) During the time for inspection, any person may inspect nomination papers that have been delivered.

(2) In paragraph (1), “the time for inspection” means ordinary office hours on any day after the last day for the delivery of nomination papers and before the day of the poll, other than an excluded day.

(3) A person inspecting nomination papers may take a copy of, or make extracts from, the papers.

Commencement Information

I22 Sch. 1 rule 17 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Inspection of home address forms

18.—(1) During the time for inspection, the home address form of a candidate standing nominated may be inspected by any of the following who wish to inspect it—

- (a) another candidate standing nominated in the same electoral ward;
- (b) the election agent of another candidate standing nominated in that ward;
- (c) in the case of another candidate standing nominated in that ward who is acting as their own election agent, another person selected by that candidate.

(2) In paragraph (1), “the time for inspection” means ordinary office hours on any day after the last day for the delivery of nomination papers and before the day of the poll, other than an excluded day.

(3) A candidate or other person carrying out an inspection under this rule must not take a copy of, or make extracts from, a home address form.

(4) The returning officer must not permit a home address form to be inspected otherwise than in accordance with this rule or for some other purpose authorised by law.

Commencement Information

I23 Sch. 1 rule 18 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Adjournment of nomination proceedings in the case of riot

19.—(1) This rule applies if proceedings for, or in connection with, nomination are interrupted or obstructed on any day by riot or open violence.

(2) The proceedings must be abandoned for that day.

(3) If the day on which the proceedings are abandoned is the last day for the delivery of nomination papers, the proceedings must be resumed on the next day.

(4) Where paragraph (3) requires proceedings to be resumed on the next day, the deadlines specified in the second column of the timetable in rule 1 for the delivery of nomination papers, the delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature and the publication of the statement as to persons nominated are each extended by one day.

(5) Where proceedings are abandoned under this rule—

- (a) nothing may be done after the proceedings are resumed if the time for doing it had passed when the proceedings were abandoned, and
- (b) nothing done before the proceedings were abandoned is invalidated by reason of the abandonment.

Commencement Information

I24 Sch. 1 rule 19 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Method of Election

Decision as to whether election is contested and declaration of result if uncontested

20.—(1) The returning officer must determine whether the number of persons remaining validly nominated for the electoral ward after any withdrawals under rule 12 exceeds the number of councillors to be elected.

(2) If the number of persons remaining validly nominated does not exceed the number of councillors to be elected, the returning officer must declare the person or persons standing validly nominated to be elected.

(3) The returning officer must also—

- (a) give a notice stating the names and addresses of those declared to be elected to the proper officer of the council for the principal area, and
- (b) publish their names.

(4) If the number of persons remaining validly nominated exceeds the number of councillors to be elected, a poll must be taken in accordance with Part 3.

Commencement Information

I25 Sch. 1 rule 20 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

PART 3

The Poll at Contested Elections

General Provisions

Poll to be taken by ballot

21.—(1) The votes at the poll must be given by ballot.

(2) The result must be ascertained in accordance with Part 4 (counting of votes).

Commencement Information

I26 Sch. 1 rule 21 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The ballot papers

22.—(1) The ballot of every voter must consist of a ballot paper.

(2) The only persons entitled to have their names inserted on the ballot paper are those remaining validly nominated for the electoral ward after any withdrawals under rule 12.

(3) A ballot paper must be—

- (a) in the form in Appendix 2, and
- (b) printed in accordance with the directions in that Appendix.

(4) The ballot paper must—

- (a) contain the names and descriptions (if any) of the candidates and their home address information, as shown in the statement of persons nominated,
- (b) be capable of being folded up, and
- (c) have a number and other unique identifying mark printed on the back.

(5) At the request of a candidate who is authorised under rule 6(3)(c) to use a description likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party, the ballot paper must contain, against the candidate's particulars, one registered emblem of the party.

(6) At the request of a candidate who is authorised under rule 6(4)(c) to use a description likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with two or more registered political parties, the ballot paper must contain, against the candidate's particulars, one registered emblem of one of the parties.

(7) The candidate's request under paragraph (5) or (6) must be—

- (a) made in writing to the returning officer, and
- (b) received by the returning officer before the last time for the delivery of nomination papers as set out in the timetable in rule 1.

(8) The order of the names in the ballot paper must be the same as in the statement of persons nominated.

Commencement Information

I27 Sch. 1 rule 22 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Corresponding number list

23.—(1) The returning officer must prepare a list ("the corresponding number list") in accordance with this rule.

(2) The corresponding number list must be in two parts.

(3) Part 1 must contain the numbers and unique identifying marks of all ballot papers to be issued in pursuance of rule 28(1) (postal ballot papers).

(4) Part 2 must contain the numbers (but not the unique identifying marks) of all ballot papers to be provided in pursuance of rule 32(1) (provision of ballot boxes and ballot papers at polling stations).

(5) The corresponding number list must be in the form set out in Appendix 3 or a form to the like effect.

Commencement Information

I28 Sch. 1 rule 23 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The official mark

24.—(1) Each ballot paper must contain an appropriate security marking (“the official mark”).

(2) The official mark must be kept secret.

(3) An interval of not less than five years must intervene between the use of the same official mark at elections for the same county or county borough.

(4) The returning officer may use a different official mark for different purposes at the same election.

Commencement Information

I29 Sch. 1 rule 24 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Prohibition of disclosure of vote

25. A person who has voted at the election may not be required to state for whom they voted in any legal proceedings to question the election.

Commencement Information

I30 Sch. 1 rule 25 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Use of schools and public rooms

26.—(1) The returning officer may use any of the following rooms free of charge for the purpose of taking the poll or counting the votes—

- (a) a room in a school maintained or assisted by a county or county borough council;
- (b) a room in a school in respect of which grants are made out of money provided by Senedd Cymru to the person or body responsible for the management of the school;
- (c) any other room if the expense of maintaining the room is payable wholly or mainly out of public funds.

(2) Where a room described in paragraph (1) is used for the purpose of taking the poll or counting the votes, the returning officer must—

- (a) make good any damage to the room resulting from its use for that purpose, and
- (b) defray any expense incurred by the person or body having control over the room by reason of its use for that purpose.

Commencement Information

I31 Sch. 1 Appendices in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

I32 Sch. 1 rule 26 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Action to be taken before the poll

Notice of poll

27.—(1) The returning officer must publish notice of the poll stating—

- (a) the day and hours fixed for the poll,
- (b) the number of councillors to be elected for the electoral ward, and
- (c) the names and descriptions (if any) of each candidate remaining validly nominated and their home address information.

(2) The candidates' particulars, and the order of the candidates' names, must be the same as in the statement of persons nominated.

(3) The returning officer must, before or at the same time as publishing notice of the poll, also publish notice of—

- (a) the situation of each polling station, and
- (b) the description of voters entitled to vote there.

(4) The returning officer must, as soon as practicable after publishing notice under paragraph (3), give a copy of it to each of the election agents.

Commencement Information

I33 Sch. 1 rule 27 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Postal ballot papers

28.—(1) The returning officer must, in accordance with regulations under the 1983 Act⁽¹²⁾, issue to those entitled to vote by post—

- (a) a ballot paper,
- (b) a postal voting statement in the form set out in Appendix 4 or a form to the like effect, and
- (c) such envelopes for the return of the ballot paper and postal voting statement as may be prescribed by regulations under the 1983 Act.

(2) The returning officer must also issue to those entitled to vote by post such information as the returning officer considers appropriate about how to obtain—

- (a) translations into languages other than English and Welsh of any directions to or guidance for voters sent with the ballot paper,
- (b) a translation into Braille of such directions or guidance,
- (c) graphical representations of such directions or guidance, and
- (d) the directions or guidance in any other form (including any audible form).

(3) The postal voting statement must include provision—

- (a) for the form to be signed by the elector or, where the elector is voting by proxy, the proxy, unless the registration officer has dispensed with the requirement for a signature, and
- (b) for stating the date of birth of the elector or, where the elector is voting by proxy, the proxy.

⁽¹²⁾ See the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 ([S.I. 2001/341](#)); relevant amending instruments are [S.I. 2002/871](#), [S.I. 2006/752](#), [S.I. 2006/2910](#) and [S.I. 2013/3198](#).

(4) In the case of a ballot paper issued to a person at an address in the United Kingdom, the returning officer must ensure that the return of the ballot paper and postal voting statement is free of charge to the voter.

Commencement Information

I34 Sch. 1 rule 28 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Provision of polling stations

29.—(1) The returning officer must—

- (a) provide a sufficient number of polling stations, and
- (b) allot the electors to the polling stations.

(2) One or more polling stations may be provided in the same room.

(3) The returning officer must provide each polling station with such number of compartments as may be necessary in which voters can mark their votes screened from observation.

Commencement Information

I35 Sch. 1 rule 29 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Appointment of presiding officers and clerks

30.—(1) The returning officer must appoint and pay—

- (a) a presiding officer to attend at each polling station, and
- (b) such number of clerks as may be necessary for the purposes of the poll or the count or otherwise for the purposes of the election.

(2) The returning officer must not knowingly appoint, as a presiding officer or clerk, a person who has been employed by or on behalf of a candidate in connection with the election.

(3) The returning officer may preside at a polling station.

(4) Where the returning officer presides at a polling station, these rules apply to the returning officer so presiding with the necessary modifications as to things done by the returning officer in relation to the presiding officer or by the presiding officer in relation to the returning officer.

(5) A presiding officer may authorise the clerks to do anything (including asking questions) that the presiding officer is required or authorised by these rules to do ^{F3}..., except ordering the exclusion or removal of any person from the polling station.

F3 Words in [Sch. 1 rule. 30\(5\)](#) omitted (10.3.2022) by virtue of [The Local Elections \(Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/263\)](#), regs. 1(2), **3(2)(a)** (with reg. 12(a))

Commencement Information

I36 Sch. 1 rule 30 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Issue of official poll cards

31.—(1) The returning officer must, as soon as practicable after publishing notice of the election, send or deliver—

- (a) an official poll card to electors not voting by post,
- (b) an official postal poll card to electors voting by post and not by proxy,
- (c) an official proxy poll card to a person voting as proxy for an elector and not by post, and
- (d) an official proxy postal poll card to a person voting as proxy for an elector by post.

(2) An official poll card or an official postal poll card must be sent or delivered to the elector's qualifying address.

(3) An official proxy poll card or an official proxy postal poll card must be sent or delivered to the proxy's address, as shown in the list of proxies.

(4) Each poll card must be in the appropriate form in Appendix 5 or a form to the like effect and must set out—

- (a) the name of the council to which councillors are to be elected,
- (b) the electoral ward for which councillors are to be elected,
- (c) the number of councillors to be elected for that electoral ward,
- (d) the elector's name, qualifying address and number on the register,
- (e) the date and hours of the poll and the situation of the elector's polling station, and
- (f) such other information as the returning officer considers appropriate.

(5) Different information may be provided under paragraph (4)(f) to different electors or descriptions of elector.

(6) In the case of an elector with an anonymous entry, the poll card—

- (a) must contain such information as is specified in Appendix 5 instead of the information set out in paragraph (4)(d), and
- (b) must be sent or delivered in an envelope or other form of covering so as not to disclose that the elector has an anonymous entry.

(7) In this rule—

- (a) “elector” means a person who is registered in the register of local government electors for the electoral ward in question on the last day for the publication of notice of the election, except that it includes a person then shown in the register (or, in the case of a person with an anonymous entry in the register, in the record of anonymous entries) as below voting age only if it appears from the register (or the record of anonymous entries) that the person will be of voting age on the day fixed for the poll;
- (b) “qualifying address” has the same meaning as in the 1983 Act (see section 202(1) of that Act(13)).

Commencement Information

I37 Sch. 1 rule 31 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

(13) Section 202(1) was amended to insert a definition of “qualifying address” by paragraph 22 of Schedule 1 to the Representation of the People Act 2000.

Equipment of polling stations

32.—(1) The returning officer must provide each presiding officer with such number of ballot boxes and ballot papers as the returning officer considers necessary.

(2) Each ballot box must be constructed so that ballot papers can be put in it, but cannot be withdrawn from it, without the box being unlocked or, where the box has no lock, without the seal being broken.

(3) The returning officer must provide each polling station with—

- (a) materials to enable voters to mark the ballot papers,
- (b) copies of the relevant register of electors,
- (c) copies of any notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act⁽¹⁴⁾ so far as relating to the relevant register of electors,
- (d) copies of the parts of any lists of persons entitled to vote by post or by proxy that correspond to the relevant register of electors, and
- (e) a list (“the polling station’s corresponding number list”) consisting of that part of Part 2 of the corresponding number list prepared under rule 23 that contains the numbers, but not the other unique identifying marks, corresponding to those on the ballot papers provided to the presiding officer under paragraph (1).

(4) In paragraph (3), “the relevant register of electors” means the register of electors for the electoral ward or such part of it as contains the entries relating to the electors allotted to the polling station.

(5) The returning officer must cause to be displayed at each polling station an enlarged sample copy of the ballot paper.

(6) The returning officer must also provide each polling station with—

- (a) an enlarged hand-held sample copy of the ballot paper for the assistance of voters who are partially-sighted, and
- (b) a device for enabling voters who are blind or partially-sighted to vote without any need for assistance from the presiding officer or a companion (see rules 43 to 45 for the assistance that may be obtained from the presiding officer or a companion).

(7) The sample copy of the ballot paper required to be displayed and provided by paragraphs (5) and (6)(a) must be clearly marked as specimen and provided only for the guidance of voters.

(8) The device referred to in paragraph (6)(b) must—

- (a) allow a ballot paper to be inserted into and removed from, or attached to and detached from, the device easily and without damage to the paper,
- (b) hold the ballot paper firmly in place during use, and
- (c) provide a suitable means for the voter to—
 - (i) identify the spaces on the ballot paper on which votes may be marked,
 - (ii) identify the candidate to which each space refers, and
 - (iii) mark their vote on the space chosen.

(9) The returning officer must also cause a notice in the form in Appendix 6, giving directions for the guidance of votes in voting, to be displayed—

- (a) inside each polling station (but outside the voting compartments), and

⁽¹⁴⁾ Sections 13 to 13B of the 1983 Act were substituted for section 13 of that Act by paragraph 6 of Schedule 1 to the Representation of the People Act 2000 (c. 2). Section 13B(3B) and (3D) were inserted by section 11(4) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

(b) outside each polling station.

(10) The returning officer may also provide copies of the notice in Braille or in such languages other than English and Welsh as the returning officer considers appropriate.

(11) A notice containing the following information must be exhibited inside each voting compartment in each polling station—

- (a) where only one councillor is to be elected, an instruction to the voter to vote only once by putting a cross [X] in the box next to their choice;
- (b) where more than one councillor is to be elected, an instruction to the voter to vote for no more than the number to be elected by putting a cross [X] in the box next to each of their choices;
- (c) a warning to the voter to put no other mark on the ballot paper or their vote may not count.

Commencement Information

I38 Sch. 1 rule 32 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Appointment of polling and counting agents

33.—(1) A candidate may, before the poll begins, appoint—

- (a) polling agents to attend at polling stations for the purpose of detecting personation, and
- (b) counting agents to attend at the counting of votes.

(2) The same person may be appointed as a polling agent or counting agent by more than one candidate.

(3) The maximum number of polling agents who may attend a polling station is four or such greater number as the returning officer may by notice permit.

(4) If the number of polling agents appointed to attend at a particular polling station exceeds four (or any greater number that the returning officer has by notice permitted)—

- (a) the returning officer must decide which agents are permitted to attend by lot, and
- (b) only the agents on whom the lot falls are to be treated as having been appointed.

(5) The returning officer may impose a limit on the number of counting agents who may be appointed by each candidate but the limit—

- (a) must be the same for all the candidates, and
- (b) unless there are special circumstances, must not be less than the number obtained by dividing the number of clerks employed at the count by the number of candidates (ignoring any remainder).

(6) For the purposes of the calculations required by paragraph (5), a counting agent who has been appointed for more than one candidate is a separate agent for each of the candidates by whom they have been appointed.

(7) The candidate must give a notice to the returning officer where polling agents or counting agents are appointed.

(8) The notice must—

- (a) give the names and addresses of the persons appointed, and
- (b) be given no later than the fifth day before the day of the poll, disregarding any excluded day.

(9) If a polling agent or counting agent dies or becomes incapable of acting, the candidate—

- (a) may appoint another agent instead, and
- (b) must immediately give the returning officer a notice stating the other agent's name and address.

Commencement Information

I39 Sch. 1 rule 33 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Polling and counting agents: supplemental provision

34.—(1) A candidate or the candidate's election agent may—

- (a) do anything that the candidate's polling or counting agent is authorised to do (or would, if appointed, have been authorised to do);
- (b) assist the candidate's polling or counting agent to do anything that the polling or counting agent is authorised to do.

(2) Anything required or authorised by these rules to be done in the presence of the polling or counting agents may be done instead in the presence of the candidate's election agent.

(3) Where these rules require or authorise something to be done in the presence of the polling or counting agents, the non-attendance of the agent or agents at the time and place appointed does not invalidate the thing done.

(4) Where a candidate does not have a counting agent, the returning officer may give the candidate any notice that is required by these rules to be given to the counting agent.

Commencement Information

I40 Sch. 1 rule 34 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Notification of requirement of secrecy

35.—(1) The returning officer must make arrangements to ensure that every person attending at a polling station, other than a person described in paragraph (2)(a) to (d), has been given a notice setting out the provisions of section 66(1), (3) and (6) of the 1983 Act(**15**).

(2) The persons to whom the duty under paragraph (1) does not apply are—

- (a) a person attending the polling station for the purpose of voting;
- (b) a person under the age of 16 who accompanies a voter to the polling station;
- (c) a person attending the polling station as the companion of a voter with disabilities;
- (d) a person attending the polling station as a constable on duty.

(3) In this rule, a reference to a constable includes a person designated as a community support officer or community support volunteer under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002(**16**) (police powers for civilian staff and volunteers).

(15) Section 66 of the 1983 Act was amended by paragraphs 82 and 86 of Schedule 1 to the Electoral Administration Act 2006 and paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 to the Representation of the People Act 1985; there are other amendments but none are relevant to these Rules.

(16) [2002 c. 30](#). Section 38 was amended by section 38 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

Commencement Information

I41 Sch. 1 rule 35 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Return of postal ballot papers

36.—(1) Where a postal vote has been returned in respect of a person who is entered on the postal voters list, the returning officer must mark the list in the manner prescribed by regulations under the 1983 Act.

(2) Where a proxy postal vote has been returned in respect of a proxy who is entered on the proxy postal voters list, the returning officer must mark the list in the manner prescribed by regulations under that Act.

(3) Rule 54(7) does not apply for the purpose of deciding whether, for the purposes of this rule, a postal vote or a proxy postal vote is returned.

Commencement Information

I42 Sch. 1 rule 36 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The Poll

Admission to polling station

37.—(1) The presiding officer must exclude all persons from the polling station except—

- (a) voters allotted to the polling station,
- (b) persons under the age of 16 who accompany voters to the polling station,
- (c) the candidates and their election agents,
- (d) the polling agents appointed to attend at the polling station,
- (e) the clerks appointed to attend at the polling station,
- (f) the returning officer or members of the returning officer's staff,
- (g) persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers)(**17**),
- (h) the constables on duty, and
- (i) the companions of voters with disabilities.

(2) The presiding officer must regulate the total number of voters and persons under the age of 16 who accompany them who are admitted to the polling station at the same time.

(3) Only one polling agent may be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same candidate.

(4) A constable voting in person may do so either—

- (a) at the polling station allotted under these rules, or
- (b) at another polling station, if the constable produces and surrenders a certificate in the form in Appendix 7 or a form to the like effect, signed by an officer of police of or above the rank of inspector.

(17) Sections 6A to 6D were inserted by section 29 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

- (5) A person employed by the returning officer, if voting in person, may do so either—
- (a) at the polling station allotted under these rules, or
 - (b) at another polling station, if the person produces and surrenders a certificate in the form in Appendix 7 or a form to the like effect, signed by the returning officer.
- (6) A certificate surrendered under paragraph (4) or (5) must immediately be cancelled.
- (7) In this rule, a reference to a constable includes a reference to a person designated as a community support officer or community support volunteer under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002 (police powers for civilian staff and volunteers).

Commencement Information

I43 Sch. 1 rule 37 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Keeping of order in station

- 38.**—(1) The presiding officer must keep order at the polling station.
- (2) If a person engages in misconduct in a polling station, or fails to obey any orders lawfully given by the presiding officer, the presiding officer may order that the person be removed from the polling station.
- (3) Where the presiding officer orders that a person be removed, the person may be removed immediately—
- (a) by a constable in or near the polling station, or
 - (b) by any other person authorised in writing by the returning officer to remove people from the polling station.
- (4) Where a person is removed, the person must not, without the presiding officer’s permission, re-enter the polling station on the day of the poll.
- (5) Where a person who is removed is charged with the commission of an offence in the polling station, the person may be dealt with as a person taken into custody by a constable for an offence without a warrant.
- (6) The powers conferred by this rule must not be exercised so as to prevent a voter who is otherwise entitled to vote at a polling station from having an opportunity of voting at that station.

Commencement Information

I44 Sch. 1 rule 38 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Sealing of ballot boxes

- 39.**—(1) The presiding officer must take the following steps immediately before the poll begins.
- (2) The presiding officer must show the empty ballot box to those people (if any) who are present in the polling station, so that they may see that it is empty.
- (3) The presiding officer must then—
- (a) lock up the box, if it has a lock, and
 - (b) place the returning officer’s seal on it, in such a way as to prevent it being opened without breaking the seal.

(4) The presiding officer must then place the box, within the presiding officer's view, for the receipt of ballot papers.

(5) The presiding officer must keep the box locked and sealed or (if it does not have a lock) keep it sealed.

Commencement Information

I45 Sch. 1 rule 39 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Questions that may be put to voters

40.—(1) At the time of an application for a ballot paper (but not afterwards), the presiding officer may put to any person described in the first column of Table 1 (set out in paragraph (3)) or in the first column of Table 2 (set out in paragraph (4)), one or more of the questions set out in the corresponding entry in the second column.

(2) If required to do so by the candidate or the candidate's election or polling agent, the presiding officer must put to any person described in the first column of Table 1 one or more of the questions set out in the corresponding entry in the second column.

(3) Table 1 sets out questions that a presiding officer may put under paragraph (1) and that a candidate (or the candidate's election or polling agent) may require to be put under paragraph (2).

Table 1

<i>Description</i>	<i>Questions</i>
1. A person applying as an elector	<p>1(a) Are you the person registered in the register of local government electors for this election as follows?</p> <p>Notes to 1(a)</p> <p>The presiding officer must then read the whole entry from the copies of the registration records.</p> <p>1(b) Have you already voted, in this or another electoral ward, at the election of councillors for this county/county borough, otherwise than as proxy for some other person?</p> <p>Notes to 1(b)</p> <p>The presiding officer must say either “county” or “county borough”, as appropriate.</p> <p>The words “, in this or another electoral ward,” may be omitted if an election is taking place only in one electoral ward.</p>
2. A person applying as proxy for an elector other than an elector who has an anonymous entry	<p>2(a) Are you the person whose name appears as AB in the list of proxies for this election as entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of CD?</p> <p>2(b) Have you already voted, in this or another electoral ward, at the election of councillors for the county/county borough, as proxy on behalf of CD?</p>

Description	Questions
	<p>2(c) Are you the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild of CD?</p> <p>Notes to 2(a) to (c)</p> <p>Where a question refers to AB, the presiding officer reads out the name as it appears in the list of proxies. Where a question refers to CD, the presiding officer reads out the name of the elector.</p> <p>Note to 2(b)</p> <p>The presiding officer must say either “county” or “county borough”, as appropriate.</p> <p>The words “, in this or another electoral ward,” may be omitted if an election is taking place only in one electoral ward.</p>
<p>3. A person applying as proxy for an elector who has an anonymous entry</p>	<p>3(a) Are you the person entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is [x]?</p> <p>3(b) Have you already voted as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is [x]?</p> <p>3(c) Are you the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild of the person whose number on the register of electors is [x]?</p> <p>Note to 3(a) to (c)</p> <p>Where the questions in this entry refer to [x], the presiding officer must read the elector’s number from the copies of the registration records.</p>
<p>4. A person applying as proxy who has been asked the question numbered 2(c) or 3(c) in column 2 and has not answered “Yes”</p>	<p>4. Have you already voted, in this or another electoral ward, at the election of councillors for the county/county borough, on behalf of two persons of whom you are not the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild?</p> <p>Note to 4</p> <p>The presiding officer must say either “county” or “county borough”, as appropriate.</p> <p>The words “, in this or another electoral ward,” may be omitted if an election is taking place only in one electoral ward.</p>

(4) Table 2 sets out the questions that a presiding officer may put under paragraph (1) (but cannot be required to put under paragraph (2)).

Table 2

<i>Description</i>	<i>Questions</i>
1. A person applying as an elector in relation to whom there is an entry in the postal voters list	1(a) Did you apply to vote by post? 1(b) Why have you not voted by post?
2. A person applying as proxy who is named in the proxy postal voters list	2(a) Did you apply to vote by post as proxy? 2(b) Why have you not voted by post as proxy?

(5) A ballot paper must not be given to any person required to answer one or more of the questions in Table 1 or 2 unless the person has answered the question or questions satisfactorily.

(6) Except as authorised by this rule, no inquiry is permitted as to the right of any person to vote.

(7) In this rule, “the copies of the registration records” means the copies provided by the returning officer for the polling station under rule 32(3)(b) and (c) (copies of the relevant register of electors and copies of any notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act relating to the relevant register of electors).

Commencement Information

I46 Sch. 1 rule 40 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Challenge of voter

41. A person must not be prevented from voting by reason only that either or both of the following apply—

- (a) a candidate or a candidate’s election or polling agent declares that they have reasonable cause to believe that the person has committed an offence of personation;
- (b) the person is arrested on the grounds that they are suspected of committing or being about to commit an offence of personation.

Commencement Information

I47 Sch. 1 rule 41 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Voting procedure

42.—(1) A ballot paper must be given to a voter who applies for one.

(2) Immediately before the ballot paper is given—

- (a) the number of the elector, as stated in the copies of the registration records, must be called out,
- (b) unless the elector has an anonymous entry, the name of the elector, as stated in the copies of the registration records, must also be called out,
- (c) the number of the elector must be marked on the polling station’s corresponding number list beside the number of the ballot paper to be issued,

- (d) a mark must be placed in the copies of the registration records against the number of the elector to note that a ballot paper has been received, but without showing the particular ballot paper that has been received, and
 - (e) in the case of a person applying for a ballot paper as proxy, a mark must also be placed against the person's name in the list of proxies.
- (3) In the case of an elector who has an anonymous entry—
- (a) the ballot paper may be given only if the elector's official poll card or, where the elector is voting by proxy, the proxy's official poll card is shown to the presiding officer, and
 - (b) only the elector's number may be called out.
- (4) On receiving the ballot paper, the voter must go immediately into one of the compartments in the polling station.
- (5) Without undue delay, the voter must then—
- (a) secretly mark the ballot paper,
 - (b) fold the ballot paper up so as to conceal the vote,
 - (c) show the presiding officer the back of the ballot paper, so as to disclose the number and other unique identifying mark, and
 - (d) put the ballot paper into the ballot box in the presiding officer's presence.
- (6) As soon as the voter has put the ballot paper in the ballot box, the voter must leave the polling station.
- (7) If a voter is in the polling station, or in a queue outside the polling station, at the close of the poll and has not yet been able to cast their vote, the presiding officer must permit the voter to cast their vote as soon as practicable.
- (8) In this rule, "the copies of the registration records" has the same meaning as in rule 40 (see paragraph (7) of that rule).

Commencement Information

148 Sch. 1 rule 42 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Voters with a disability or unable to read: marking of votes by presiding officer

- 43.**—(1) A voter may apply to the presiding officer for their vote to be marked if the voter—
- (a) is unable, because of blindness or other disability, to vote in the manner directed by these rules, or
 - (b) declares orally that they are unable to read.
- (2) Where an application is made, the presiding officer must, in the presence of any polling agents who are in the polling station when the application is made—
- (a) cause the voter's vote to be marked on a ballot paper in the manner directed by the voter, and
 - (b) cause the ballot paper to be placed in the ballot box.
- (3) Where a voter's vote is marked in pursuance of paragraph (2), the presiding officer must enter the following details on a list maintained by the presiding officer for the purposes of this rule ("the list of votes marked by the presiding officer")—
- (a) the name and number of the voter, as shown in the copies of the registration records, and
 - (b) the reason why the vote was marked.

(4) In the case of a person voting as proxy for an elector, the number to be entered together with the voter's name in the list of votes marked by the presiding officer is the elector's number.

(5) In this rule, "the copies of the registration records" has the same meaning as in rule 40 (see paragraph (7) of that rule).

Commencement Information

I49 Sch. 1 rule 43 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Voters with a disability or unable to read: assistance of companions

44.—(1) A voter may apply to the presiding officer, on the ground of blindness or other disability or inability to read, to be allowed to vote with the assistance of a companion.

(2) Where an application is made, the presiding officer must require the voter to declare, orally or in writing, whether the voter is so affected by blindness or other disability, or by inability to read, as to be unable to vote without the assistance of a companion.

(3) In the following provisions of this rule, a voter who declares that they are so affected by blindness or other disability, or by inability to read, as to be unable to vote without the assistance of a companion is referred to as a voter with disabilities.

(4) At the time when an application to vote with the assistance of a companion is made, the companion must make a written declaration before the presiding officer that the companion—

- (a) has attained the age of 16, and
- (b) has not previously assisted more than one voter with disabilities to vote at the election.

(5) The companion's declaration—

- (a) must be in the form in Appendix 8, and
- (b) must be given to the presiding officer who must attest it and retain it.

(6) The presiding officer must grant the voter's application for the assistance of a companion if the presiding officer—

- (a) is satisfied that the voter is so affected by blindness or other disability, or by inability to read, as to be unable to vote without the assistance of a companion, and
- (b) is also satisfied by the companion's written declaration that the companion has attained the age of 16 and has not previously assisted more than one voter with disabilities to vote at the election.

(7) Where the application is granted—

- (a) anything that is required to be done by these rules to the voter in connection with the giving of the vote may be done instead to the companion, and
- (b) the voter may do anything that needs to be done in connection with the giving of the vote with the assistance of the companion.

Commencement Information

I50 Sch. 1 rule 44 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Voting with the assistance of a companion: supplemental provision

45.—(1) Where a vote is given with the assistance of a companion in accordance with rule 44, the presiding officer must then enter the following details in a list maintained by the presiding officer (“the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions”)—

- (a) the name and number of the voter, as shown in the copies of the registration records, and
- (b) the name and address of the companion.

(2) In the case of a person voting as proxy for an elector, the number to be entered together with the voter’s name in the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions is the elector’s number.

(3) Where the voter has an anonymous entry, only the voter’s number in the copies of the registration records may be entered in the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions.

(4) No fee or other payment may be charged in respect of a declaration made by a companion under rule 44(4).

(5) In this rule, “the copies of the registration records” has the same meaning as in rule 40 (see paragraph (7) of that rule).

Commencement Information

151 Sch. 1 rule 45 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Tendered ballot papers: circumstances where available

46.—(1) This rule sets out circumstances where a person who applies for a vote (“the applicant”) is entitled to vote on satisfactorily answering the questions permitted by law to be asked at the poll but where the procedure for giving the vote is modified in the following two ways—

- (a) the person must use a ballot paper that is of a different colour to other ballot papers, and
- (b) the person must give the ballot paper to the presiding officer (instead of putting it in the ballot box).

Circumstances where vote already given in person

(2) The first set of circumstances is where—

- (a) the applicant represents themselves to be a particular elector named in the copies of the registration records and not named in the postal voters list or list of proxies, and
- (b) another person has already voted in person either as that elector or as that elector’s proxy.

(3) The second set of circumstances is where—

- (a) the applicant represents themselves to be a particular person named in the list of proxies as proxy for an elector and not entitled to vote by post as proxy, and
- (b) another person has already voted in person either as that elector or as that elector’s proxy.

Circumstances where applicant on postal voters list claims not to have applied for postal vote

(4) The third set of circumstances is where—

- (a) the applicant represents themselves to be a particular elector named in the copies of the registration records,
- (b) the applicant is also named in the postal voters list, and
- (c) the applicant claims not to have made an application to vote by post at the election.

(5) The fourth set of circumstances is where—

- (a) the applicant represents themselves to be a particular person named as a proxy in the list of proxies,
- (b) that person is also named in the proxy postal voters list, and
- (c) the applicant claims not to have made an application to vote by post as proxy at the election.

Circumstances where applicant claims to have lost postal ballot paper etc.

- (6) The fifth set of circumstances is where—
 - (a) after the last time at which a person may apply for a replacement postal ballot paper but before the close of the poll, the applicant represents themselves to be a particular elector named in the copies of the registration records who is also named in the postal voters list, and
 - (b) the applicant claims to have lost or not to have received that person's postal ballot paper.
- (7) The sixth set of circumstances is where—
 - (a) after the last time at which a person may apply for a replacement postal ballot paper but before the close of the poll, the applicant represents themselves to be a particular person named as a proxy in the list of proxies who is also named in the proxy postal voters list, and
 - (b) the applicant claims to have lost or not to have received that person's postal ballot paper.
- (8) A ballot paper that is given to the presiding officer in accordance with this rule is referred to in these rules as a “tendered ballot paper”.
- (9) Where an elector has an anonymous entry, the references in this rule to a person named in the copies of the registration records or a list are to be read as a references to a person who has a number in the copies or list.
- (10) In this rule, “the copies of the registration records” has the same meaning as in rule 40 (see paragraph (7) of that rule).

Commencement Information

I52 Sch. 1 rule 46 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Duties of presiding officer in relation to tendered ballot papers

- 47.**—(1) This rule sets out the duties of the presiding officer in relation to tendered ballot papers.
- (2) The presiding officer must endorse the following information on the ballot paper—
 - (a) the name of the voter, and
 - (b) the voter's number in the copies of the registration records or, if the voter is voting as proxy for an elector, the number of the elector.
 - (3) The presiding officer must put the ballot paper in a separate packet.
 - (4) The following information must be entered on a list (the “tendered votes list”)—
 - (a) the name of the voter, and
 - (b) the voter's number in the copies of the registration records or, if the voter is voting as proxy for an elector, the number of the elector.
 - (5) Where an elector has an anonymous entry, the presiding officer must not include the name of the voter on the ballot paper or in the tendered votes list.
 - (6) In this rule, “the copies of the registration records” has the same meaning as in rule 40 (see paragraph (7) of that rule).

Commencement Information

I53 Sch. 1 rule 47 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Spoilt ballot papers

48.—(1) This rule applies where a voter has inadvertently dealt with their ballot paper in such a manner that it cannot conveniently be used as a ballot paper.

(2) The voter may obtain another ballot paper by—

- (a) giving the ballot paper that was inadvertently dealt with (the “spoilt ballot paper”) to the presiding officer, and
- (b) proving to the presiding officer’s satisfaction that it was dealt with inadvertently.

(3) Where the voter is given another ballot paper, the spoilt ballot paper must be cancelled immediately.

Commencement Information

I54 Sch. 1 rule 48 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Correction of errors on day of poll

49. The presiding officer must keep a list of persons to whom ballot papers are given in consequence of an alteration to the register made by virtue of section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act which takes effect on the day of the poll.

Commencement Information

I55 Sch. 1 rule 49 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Adjournment of poll in case of riot

50.—(1) This rule applies where proceedings at any polling station are interrupted or obstructed by riot or open violence.

(2) The presiding officer must—

- (a) adjourn the proceedings until the following day, and
- (b) immediately inform the returning officer.

(3) Where the poll is adjourned at a polling station—

- (a) the hours of polling on the day to which it is adjourned must be the same as for the original day, and
- (b) references in these rules to the close of the poll are to be read as references to the end of the hours of polling on the day to which it is adjourned.

Commencement Information

I56 Sch. 1 rule 50 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Procedure on close of poll

51.—(1) This rule sets out the steps that must be taken by the presiding officer as soon as practicable after every voter has cast their vote.

(2) In the presence of any polling agents who are in the polling station, the presiding officer must seal each ballot box (with the key if any attached) in use at the polling station so as to prevent the introduction of additional ballot papers, using the presiding officer's seal and the seals of any polling agents who wish to affix their seal.

(3) ^{F4}... The presiding officer must place each of the following in separate packets, sealed using the presiding officer's seal and the seals of any polling agents who wish to affix their seal—

- (a) the unused and spoilt ballot papers (together);
- (b) the tendered ballot papers;
- (c) the marked copies of the registration records and list of proxies (together);
- (d) the polling station's corresponding number list, as marked (see rule 42(2)(c)) (referred to in the following provisions of these rules as "the completed corresponding number list");
- (e) any certificates surrendered under rule 37(4) or (5) (surrender of certificates issued to constables or staff of returning officers);
- (f) the following lists and declarations (together)—
 - (i) the list of votes marked by the presiding officer, together with a statement of the number of voters whose votes are marked under the heads "disability" and "unable to read" (see rule 43);
 - (ii) the declarations made by the companions of voters with disabilities (see rule 44);
 - (iii) the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions (see rule 45);
 - (iv) the tendered votes list (see rule 47);
 - (v) the list maintained under rule 49 (correction of errors on day of poll).

[^{F5}(3A) The presiding officer must do anything required by paragraph (3)(a), (b), (e) or (f) in the polling station, in the presence of any polling agents who are there.

(3B) The presiding officer may do anything required by paragraph (3)(c) or (d)—

- (a) in the polling station, in the presence of any polling agents who are there, or
- (b) if the presiding officer has informed the polling agents and given them an opportunity to attend, at any other place that the presiding officer considers appropriate, in the presence of any polling agents who are there.]

(4) The presiding officer must deliver the sealed ballot boxes and packets to the returning officer or cause them to be delivered in accordance with arrangements approved by the returning officer.

(5) The packets must be accompanied by a statement ("a ballot paper account") prepared by the presiding officer showing—

- (a) the number of ballot papers given to the presiding officer, and
- (b) how the ballot papers are accounted for under the following headings—
 - (i) the number of ballot papers issued and not otherwise accounted for;
 - (ii) the number of ballot papers unused;
 - (iii) the number of spoilt ballot papers;
 - (iv) the number of tendered ballot papers.

(6) In this rule, "the marked copies of the registration records" means the copies of the registration records (as defined by rule 40(7)), as marked in accordance with these rules.

- F4** Words in [Sch. 1 rule. 51\(3\)](#) omitted (10.3.2022) by virtue of [The Local Elections \(Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/263\)](#), regs. 1(2), [3\(2\)\(b\)\(i\)](#) (with reg. 12(a))
- F5** [Sch. 1 rule. 51\(3A\)\(3B\)](#) inserted (10.3.2022) by [The Local Elections \(Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/263\)](#), regs. 1(2), [3\(2\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#) (with reg. 12(a))

Commencement Information

- I57** Sch. 1 rule 51 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

PART 4

Counting of Votes and Declaration of Result at Contested Elections

Arrangements for the counting of votes

52.—(1) The returning officer must make arrangements for the votes to be counted in the presence of the counting agents as soon as practicable after the close of the poll.

(2) The returning officer must give the counting agents a notice stating the time and place at which the returning officer will begin to count the votes.

Commencement Information

- I58** Sch. 1 rule 52 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Attendance at the counting of votes

53.—(1) The following persons are entitled to be present at the counting of votes—

- (a) the returning officer and members of the returning officer's staff;
- (b) each candidate and a guest of each candidate;
- (c) the election agents;
- (d) the counting agents;
- (e) any person who is entitled to attend by virtue of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers);
- (f) the constables on duty.

(2) The returning officer may permit any other person to attend at the counting of votes.

(3) Permission may not be given under paragraph (2) unless the returning officer—

- (a) is satisfied that the person's attendance will not impede the efficient counting of votes, and
- (b) has either consulted the election agents about whether to give permission or decided that it is not practicable to consult them.

(4) The returning officer must give the counting agents all such reasonable facilities for overseeing the proceedings, and all such information about them, as the returning officer is able to give consistently with the orderly conduct of the proceedings and the discharge of the returning officer's duties.

(5) In particular, where the votes are counted by sorting the ballot papers according to the candidate for whom the vote is given and then counting the number of ballot papers for each

candidate, the counting agents are entitled to satisfy themselves that the ballot papers are correctly sorted.

(6) The returning officer must make arrangements to ensure that every person attending at the counting of votes (other than the constables on duty) has been given a notice setting out the provisions of section 66(2) and (6) of the 1983 Act (notification of requirement of secrecy).

(7) In this rule, a reference to a constable includes a reference to a person designated as a community support officer or community support volunteer under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002 (police powers for civilian staff and volunteers).

Commencement Information

I59 Sch. 1 rule 53 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The count: steps

54.—(1) The returning officer must take the following steps.

(2) The returning officer must, in the presence of the counting agents, open each ballot box, take out the ballot papers, count them and record the number of ballot papers.

(3) The returning officer must not count any tendered ballot paper.

(4) The returning officer must, in the presence of the election agents, verify each ballot paper account by comparing it with the number of ballot papers recorded, the unused and spoilt ballot papers in the returning officer's possession and the tendered votes list (opening and resealing the packets containing the unused and spoilt ballot papers and tendered votes list).

(5) The returning officer must prepare a statement as to the result of the verification and give a copy of the statement to any election agent who requests it.

(6) The returning officer must also—

- (a) count the postal ballot papers that have been properly returned (see paragraph (7)), and
- (b) record the number counted.

(7) A postal ballot paper is to be treated as properly returned if the ballot paper and the accompanying postal voting statement properly completed are—

- (a) handed in at a polling station in the electoral ward before the close of the poll,
- (b) given by hand to the returning officer before the close of the poll, or
- (c) received by the returning officer by post before the close of the poll.

(8) A postal voting statement is properly completed if—

- (a) it is signed by the elector or (as the case may be) the proxy, unless the registration officer has dispensed with the requirement for a signature,
- (b) it states the date of birth of the elector or (as the case may be) the proxy, and
- (c) in a case where steps for verifying the date of birth and signature of an elector or proxy have been prescribed by regulations under the 1983 Act, the returning officer has taken those steps and verified the date of birth and (except in a case where the requirement for a signature has been dispensed with) the signature.

(9) Where, at the close of the poll, a person is in the polling station, or in a queue outside the polling station, for the purpose of handing in a postal ballot paper and postal voting statement—

- (a) the person must be permitted to hand the ballot paper and statement in at the polling station, and

- (b) where handed in, they are to be treated as having been handed in before the close of the poll for the purposes of this rule.
- (10) The returning officer must not count the votes given on any ballot paper until—
 - (a) in the case of postal ballot papers, they have been mixed with the ballot papers from at least one ballot box, and
 - (b) in the case of ballot papers from a ballot box, they have been mixed with the ballot papers from at least one other ballot box.
- (11) While counting and recording the number of ballot papers and counting the votes, the returning officer must—
 - (a) keep the ballot papers with their faces upwards, and
 - (b) take such other precautions as are appropriate for preventing any person from seeing the numbers or other unique identifying marks printed on the back of the papers.

Commencement Information

I60 Sch. 1 rule 54 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The count: general

- 55.**—(1) The result of the poll must be ascertained by counting the votes given to each candidate.
- (2) The candidate or candidates to whom more votes have been given than to the other candidates, up to the number of councillors to be elected, must be declared to have been elected.
- (3) Subject to paragraph (4), the returning officer must, so far as practicable, proceed continuously with the counting of votes, allowing only time for refreshment.
- (4) The returning officer may exclude any hours between 7 p.m. and 9 a.m. on the following morning.
- (5) During any time that is excluded, the returning officer must—
 - (a) place the ballot papers and other documents relating to the election under the returning officer's seal and the seals of any counting agents who wish to affix their seals, and
 - (b) otherwise take proper precautions for the security of the ballot papers and other documents.

Commencement Information

I61 Sch. 1 rule 55 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The count: rejected ballot papers

- 56.**—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (4), the following ballot papers are void and must not be counted—
 - (a) a ballot paper that does not bear the official mark;
 - (b) a ballot paper on which votes are given for more candidates than the voter is entitled to vote for;
 - (c) a ballot paper on which anything is written or marked by which the voter can be identified except the printed number and other unique identifying mark on the back;
 - (d) a ballot paper that is unmarked or void for uncertainty.

(2) Where the voter is entitled to vote for more than one candidate, a ballot paper is not to be treated as void for uncertainty as respects any vote as to which no uncertainty arises and that vote must be counted.

(3) Paragraph (4) applies to a ballot paper on which a vote is marked—

- (a) elsewhere than in the proper place,
- (b) otherwise than by means of a cross, or
- (c) by more than one mark.

(4) The ballot paper is not, by reason only of how the vote is marked, to be treated as void (either wholly or as respects that vote) if—

- (a) it is clear from the ballot paper that the voter intended to vote for one or other of the candidates,
- (b) the way the ballot paper is marked does not itself identify the voter, and
- (c) the returning officer is satisfied that the voter cannot be identified from the ballot paper.

(5) The returning officer must—

- (a) endorse the word “rejected” on any ballot paper which, in accordance with this rule, is not to be counted;
- (b) endorse the word “rejected in part” on any ballot paper on which a vote is counted in accordance with paragraph (2) and indicate which vote or votes have been counted.

(6) If a counting agent objects to the returning officer’s decision, the returning officer must add the words “rejection objected to” to the endorsement.

(7) The returning officer must prepare a statement showing the number of ballot papers rejected and the number rejected in part.

(8) The statement must set out the number rejected or rejected in part under each of the headings in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d) of paragraph (1).

Commencement Information

I62 Sch. 1 rule 56 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Re-count

57.—(1) A candidate or the candidate’s election agent may, if present when the count is completed, request that the returning officer re-count the votes.

(2) The returning officer must comply with the request unless the returning officer’s opinion is that the request is unreasonable.

(3) No step may be taken on the completion of the count until the candidates and election agents who are present have been given a reasonable opportunity to request that the votes are re-counted.

(4) Where a re-count takes place, this rule also applies in relation to the re-count (so that, for example, the candidate or the candidate’s election agent may, if present when the re-count is completed, request that the returning officer re-count the votes).

Commencement Information

I63 Sch. 1 rule 57 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Equality of votes

58.—(1) This rule applies where, after the counting of the votes (including any re-count), there is an equality of votes between any candidates and the addition of a vote would entitle any of those candidates to be elected.

(2) The returning officer must immediately decide between the candidates by lot and proceed as if the candidate on whom the lot falls had received an additional vote.

Commencement Information

I64 Sch. 1 rule 58 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Decision on ballot papers

59. The decision of the returning officer on any question arising in respect of a ballot paper is final, but may be reviewed on an election petition.

Commencement Information

I65 Sch. 1 rule 59 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Declaration of result

60.—(1) When the count has been completed, the returning officer must declare to be elected the candidate or candidates to whom more votes have been given than to other candidates, up to the number of councillors to be elected.

(2) The returning officer must give a notice stating the names and addresses of the candidates elected to the proper officer of the council for which the election was held.

(3) The returning officer must also publish notice of—

- (a) the names of the candidates elected,
- (b) the total number of votes given for each candidate (whether elected or not), and
- (c) the number of rejected ballot papers under each head shown in the statement of rejected ballot papers (see rule 56).

Commencement Information

I66 Sch. 1 rule 60 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

PART 5

Disposal of Documents

Sealing up of ballot papers at contested elections

61.—(1) This rule applies on the completion of the counting of votes at a contested election.

(2) The returning officer must seal up in separate packets—

- (a) the counted ballot papers, and

- (b) the rejected ballot papers (including the ballot papers rejected in part).
- (3) The returning officer must not open any packets sealed under rule 51(3) that contain—
 - (a) tendered ballot papers,
 - (b) completed corresponding number lists,
 - (c) certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5),
or
 - (d) marked copies of the registration records and list of proxies.

Commencement Information

I67 Sch. 1 rule 61 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Delivery of documents to registration officer at contested elections

62.—(1) This rule applies where the returning officer has sealed up the counted and rejected ballot papers under rule 61(2).

(2) The returning officer must forward the following documents to the registration officer of the county or county borough council in whose area the election is held—

- (a) the packets of ballot papers in the returning officer’s possession;
- (b) the ballot paper accounts prepared under rule 51(5);
- (c) the statements of rejected ballot papers prepared under rule 56(7);
- (d) the statements as to the result of the verification of the ballot paper accounts prepared under rule 54(5);
- (e) the following lists and declarations—
 - (i) the lists of votes marked by the presiding officer, together with a statement of the number of voters whose votes are marked under the heads “disability” and “unable to read” (see rule 43);
 - (ii) the declarations made by the companions of voters with disabilities (see rule 44);
 - (iii) the lists of voters with disabilities assisted by companions (see rule 45);
 - (iv) the tendered votes lists (see rule 47);
 - (v) the lists maintained under rule 49 (correction of errors on the day of the poll);
- (f) the packets containing completed corresponding number lists;
- (g) the packets containing certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5);
- (h) the packets containing copies of registration records and lists of proxies;
- (i) the packets containing the postal voters list and the proxy postal voters list.

Commencement Information

I68 Sch. 1 rule 62 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Production etc. of documents

63.—(1) This rule applies in relation to the following documents when in the custody of the registration officer (having been forwarded under rule 62)—

- (a) rejected and counted ballot papers;
 - (b) sealed packets containing completed corresponding number lists;
 - (c) sealed packets containing certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5).
- (2) A county court may make any of the following orders, if satisfied by evidence on oath that the order is required either for the purpose of instituting or maintaining a prosecution for an offence in relation to ballot papers or for the purpose of an election petition—
- (a) an order for the inspection or production of any of the rejected ballot papers (including any ballot papers rejected in part);
 - (b) an order for the inspection of any of the counted ballot papers;
 - (c) an order for the opening of any of the sealed packets containing—
 - (i) completed corresponding number lists, or
 - (ii) certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5);
 - (d) where an order for the opening of any of the sealed packets is made under subparagraph (c), an order for the inspection or production of the whole or part of its contents.
- (3) An election court may make—
- (a) an order for the inspection of any of the counted ballot papers;
 - (b) an order for the opening of any of the sealed packets containing—
 - (i) completed corresponding number lists, or
 - (ii) certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5);
 - (c) where an order for the opening of any of the sealed packets is made under subparagraph (b), an order for the inspection or production of the whole or part of its contents.
- (4) An order under this rule may be made subject to such of the following conditions as the court thinks appropriate—
- (a) conditions as to persons;
 - (b) conditions as to time;
 - (c) conditions as to the place and method of inspection;
 - (d) conditions as to production or opening.
- (5) A court, in making an order under this rule for the inspection of counted ballot papers or for the opening of a sealed packet, must impose such conditions under paragraph (4) as the court considers appropriate to ensure that the way in which an elector has given their vote is not disclosed unless and until it has been proved—
- (a) that the elector has given their vote, and
 - (b) that the vote has been declared by a competent court to be invalid.
- (6) Any person giving effect to an order under this rule for the inspection of counted ballot papers or for the opening of a sealed packet must take care to ensure that the way in which an elector has given their vote is not disclosed unless and until it has been proved—
- (a) that the elector has given their vote, and
 - (b) that the vote has been declared by a competent court to be invalid.
- (7) An appeal lies to the High Court from an order of a county court under this rule.

(8) The powers of a county court under this rule may be exercised by any judge of the court otherwise than in open court.

(9) Except as provided by this rule, no person may—

- (a) inspect any of the rejected or counted ballot papers;
- (b) open any of the sealed packets containing—
 - (i) completed corresponding number lists, or
 - (ii) certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5).

Commencement Information

I69 Sch. 1 rule 63 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Orders for the production etc. of documents: supplemental provision

64.—(1) Paragraphs (2) and (3) apply where an order is made under rule 63 for the production by a registration officer of a document in the registration officer's custody relating to an election specified in the order.

(2) The production by the registration officer or the registration officer's agent of the document in the manner directed by the order is conclusive evidence that the document relates to the specified election.

(3) If a packet of ballot papers with an endorsement on the packet is produced by the registration officer or the registration officer's agent to comply with the order, the endorsement is prima facie evidence that the ballot papers are what they are stated to be by the endorsement.

(4) Paragraph (5) applies where, to comply with an order under rule 63, a registration officer or a registration officer's agent has produced—

- (a) a ballot paper purporting to have been used at an election, and
- (b) a completed corresponding number list in use at the election, with a number marked in writing beside the number of that ballot paper on the list.

(5) The production of the ballot paper and the list are prima facie evidence that the elector whose vote was given by that ballot paper was the person whose entry at the time of the election in the register of electors, or on a notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, contained the same number as the number written on the ballot paper.

Commencement Information

I70 Sch. 1 rule 64 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Retention and destruction of documents forwarded to registration officer

65.—(1) The registration officer must retain all documents forwarded under rule 62 for a period of one year beginning with the day on which they were received by the registration officer.

(2) At the end of that period of one year, the registration officer must cause the documents to be destroyed unless otherwise directed by an order of a county court, a Crown Court, a magistrates' court or an election court.

Commencement Information

I71 Sch. 1 rule 65 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Destruction of home address forms by returning officer

66.—(1) The returning officer must destroy each candidate's home address form—

- (a) on the next day following the 35th day after the returning officer has returned the names of the councillors elected, unless an election petition questioning the election or the return of candidates is presented before that day;
- (b) if an election petition questioning the election or return of councillors is presented before that day, as soon as practicable following the conclusion of proceedings on the petition (including, where there is an appeal, the proceedings on the appeal).

(2) For the purpose of deciding the day on which candidates' home address forms must be destroyed, any day that is an excluded day must be disregarded.

Commencement Information

I72 Sch. 1 rule 66 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

PART 6

Death of Candidate

Countermand or abandonment of poll on death of a candidate

67.—(1) This rule applies where, at a contested election, the returning officer is satisfied before the result of the election is declared that one of the persons named or to be named as a candidate in the ballot papers has died.

(2) The returning officer must countermand notice of the poll or, if polling has begun, the returning officer must direct that the poll be abandoned and no further ballot papers may be issued.

(3) Where the poll is abandoned, the presiding officer at any polling station in use at the election must take the steps (so far as not already taken) that the presiding officer would be required to take under rule 51 on the close of the poll, except that it is not necessary for the presiding officer to prepare a ballot paper account.

(4) The returning officer must deal with ballot papers and other documents that are in the returning officer's possession when the poll is abandoned, or that are subsequently delivered to the returning officer to comply with paragraph (3), in the same way that the returning officer would be required to deal with ballot papers and other documents under rules 61 and 62 on the completion of the counting of votes, except that—

- (a) the returning officer must seal up all the ballot papers (whether the votes on them have been counted or not), and
- (b) it is not necessary to seal up counted and rejected ballot papers in separate packets.

(5) The provisions of rules 63 to 65 apply to ballot papers and other documents relating to a poll that is abandoned by reason of a candidate's death, except that—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the *The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021*. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) ballot papers on which the votes were neither counted nor rejected are to be treated as counted ballot papers, and
 - (b) an order may be made under rule 63(2) or (3) only for the purpose of instituting or maintaining a prosecution for an offence in relation to ballot papers.
- (6) For what happens after notice of a poll is countermanded or a poll is abandoned, see section 39 of the 1983 Act⁽¹⁸⁾.

Commencement Information

I73 Sch. 1 rule 67 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

⁽¹⁸⁾ Section 39 was amended by section 19 of the Representation of the People Act 1985, paragraph 68 of Schedule 16 to the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 (c. 19) and paragraph 2(7) of Schedule 2 to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

APPENDICES

Note: The forms contained in these Appendices may be adapted so far as circumstances require.

Appendix 1

Rule 5(1)

Form of nomination paper
<p>Section 1: Details of election</p> <p>Election of councillors to the [insert name of the county or county borough council]</p> <p>Electoral ward:</p> <p>Date of election (see note 1):</p>
<p>Section 2: Candidate's personal details</p> <p>Candidate's surnames:</p> <p>Candidate's forenames:</p> <p>Candidate's commonly used surnames (see note 2 below):</p> <p>Candidate's commonly used forenames (see note 2 below):</p> <p>Candidate's date of birth:</p>
<p>Section 3: Description (if any) (see note 3 below)</p>
<p>Section 4: Candidate's statement of party membership (see note 4 below)</p> <p>Have you been a member of any registered political party at any time during the period of 12 months ending with the day on which the notice of election is published? Yes/No</p> <p>If you have answered "Yes", complete the table below in relation to each registered political party of which you have been a member at any time during that period. Add further rows if necessary. You must complete the table even if the party has ceased to exist or is no longer a registered political party.</p>

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021. (See end of Document for details)

It is not necessary to complete the table if you have included a permitted party description in section 3 of this form and you have not been a member of any registered political party during the 12 months period other than the party or parties to which the description relates.

Please take care to ensure that the information you provide is accurate. The returning officer is required by rule 13 of Schedule 1 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021 to include this information in the statement of persons nominated, which is published.

Registered name or names of each registered political party	The dates during the 12 months period when you were a member (using the format dd/mm/yyyy to dd/mm/yyyy)

Section 5: Declarations (see note 5)

Complete and sign the following declarations.

I declare that I am qualified on the day on which I complete this nomination paper, and that I will be qualified on the day of election, to be elected as councillor on the basis that I am on the day on which I complete this nomination paper, and will be on the day of election, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a relevant citizen of the Union or a qualifying foreign citizen who has attained the age of 18 years and that*—

(a) I am registered as a local government elector for the area of [insert the name of the county or county borough council] on the day on which I complete this nomination paper and will continue to be on the day of election;

(b) I have occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the area of [insert the name of the county or county borough council] during the whole of the period of 12 months preceding the day on which I complete this nomination paper and I will have occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in that area during the whole of the period of 12 months

preceding the day of election;

(c) my principal or only place of work during the period of 12 months preceding the day on which I complete this nomination paper has been in the area of [insert the name of the county or county borough council] and my principal or only place of work during the 12 months preceding the day of election will have been in that area;

(d) I have resided in the area of [insert the name of the county or county borough council] during the whole of the period of 12 months preceding the day on which I complete this nomination paper and I will have resided in that area during the whole of the period of 12 months preceding the day of election.

*Candidates should indicate which one or more of paragraphs (a) to (d) apply to them by ticking those that apply and putting a line through those that do not apply.

I also declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief I am not disqualified from being elected as councillor by reason of any disqualification set out in section 80A of the Local Government Act 1972 or any decision made under section 79 of the Local Government Act 2000 and I do not hold a politically restricted post, within the meaning of Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, under a local authority, within the meaning of that Part.

Candidate's signature to declarations:

Date of signature:

Section 6: Candidate's signature to nomination paper and attestation by witness

Candidate's signature:

Date of signature:

Signed in the presence of a witness: [Name of witness]

Signature of witness:

Notes to the form of nomination paper

Note 1: The date to be given here is the date on which the poll is to take place.

Note 2: If a candidate commonly uses forenames or surnames that are different in any respect from the forenames or surnames that are given in the first part

of section 2, the candidate's commonly used forenames or surnames may be given in the appropriate place in the second part of section 2 if the candidate so wishes. This includes (but is not limited to) cases where the difference is that the commonly used forenames or surnames are in a different order, include only some of the names or include additional names. Where commonly used forenames or surnames are given, those names will generally appear in the statement of persons nominated and on the ballot paper (instead of any other names). There are circumstances in which the returning officer may refuse to use the commonly used names and these are set out in rule 14 of Schedule 1 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021.

Note 3: The only descriptions that may be given are (a) a description that is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party or with two or more registered political parties and is permitted under rule 6 of Schedule 1 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021 ("a permitted party description"), or (b) the word "Independent" or the word "Annibynnol", or both those words.

In certain circumstances, a candidate using a permitted party description may add the word "Wales", "Welsh", "Cymru" or "Cymreig" to the description. Those circumstances are set out in rule 7 of Schedule 1 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021.

Note 4: The requirements for statements of party membership are set out in rule 8 of Schedule 1 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021.

Note 5: The first declaration reflects the requirements set out in section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972. That section defines "qualifying Commonwealth citizen", "relevant citizen of the Union" and "qualifying foreign citizen".

Note 6: When the nomination paper is delivered, it must be accompanied by the candidate's home address form which must comply with rule 9 of Schedule 1 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021.

Appendix 2**Rule 22(3)**

Form of front of ballot paper			
Election of councillors to [insert the name of the county or county borough council]			
<p>Vote for only one candidate by putting a cross [x] in the box next to your choice.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Vote for no more than [insert number of candidates to be elected] candidates by putting a cross [x] in the box next to each of your choices.*</p> <p>*The returning officer must select the wording that is appropriate for the election.</p>			
JAMES, Lisa 6, Y Stryd, Y Dre CY36 4EZ Promotion of Ethics in Local Government Party	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Emblem</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Emblem	
Emblem			
THOMAS, Gareth Iceland Electoral Law Improvement Party	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Emblem</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Emblem	
Emblem			
THOMAS RICHARDS, Angharad The County of Hafod Good Law Party	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Emblem</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Emblem	
Emblem			
WYATT, Cath The County of Cornwall Efficiency Party	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Emblem</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Emblem	
Emblem			
Form of back of ballot paper Number: Other unique identifying mark: Election for the [insert name] electoral ward of the [insert name of the county or county borough] on [insert date of poll]			
Form of Directions as to Printing the Ballot Paper 1. Nothing may be printed on the ballot paper except in accordance with these directions. 2. So far as practicable, the directions set out in paragraphs 3 to 13 must be followed in the printing of the ballot paper.			

3. No word may be printed on the front of the ballot paper except:
 - (a) the heading "Election of councillors to [insert the name of the county or county borough council]";
 - (b) the direction "Vote for only one candidate by putting a cross [x] in the box next to your choice" or, where more than one candidate is to be elected, "Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates by putting a cross [x] in the box next to each of your choices";
 - (c) the names and descriptions (if any) of the candidates and their home address information, as shown in the statement of persons nominated;
 - (d) words forming part of any emblem to be included against the candidate's particulars.
4. A box must be printed around the heading referred to in paragraph 3(a) and the direction referred to in paragraph 3(b), and the heading and direction must be separated within the box by a horizontal line extending across it.
5. No line may be printed on the front of the ballot paper except:
 - (a) as part of the box referred to in paragraph 4;
 - (b) the horizontal line referred to in that paragraph;
 - (c) a horizontal line above the particulars of the first candidate;
 - (d) horizontal lines separating the particulars of each candidate from the particulars of the other candidates;
 - (e) a horizontal line below the particulars of the last candidate; and
 - (f) as part of the boxes on the right-hand side of the ballot paper where the vote is to be marked.
6. The horizontal lines referred to in paragraph 5(c), (d) and (e) must be equally spaced and the space between each of them must be a minimum of 2.5 centimetres.
7. The boxes referred to in paragraph 5(f) must not touch any horizontal line and each one must be equidistant between the horizontal line above it and the horizontal line below it.
8. Each of the horizontal lines referred to in paragraph 5(c) and (d) must extend from a point level with the text on the left-hand side of the page to a point directly above the centre of the box below that line.
9. The horizontal line referred to in paragraph 5(e) must:
 - (a) extend from a point level with the text on the left-hand side of the page to a point directly below the right-hand edge of the box above that line; and
 - (b) be thicker than the other horizontal lines.

10. Where a registered emblem is to be printed against a candidate's particulars:

- (a) it must be printed adjacent to and to the right of the candidate's particulars; and
- (b) its size as printed must not exceed 2 centimetres square.

11. All the words on the front of the ballot paper must appear in the same large type except that:

- (a) the heading referred to in paragraph 3(a) must appear in very large and bold type;
- (b) in the direction referred to in paragraph 3(b), the words "only one candidate" or, as the case may be, "no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates" must appear in very large and bold type;
- (c) the remainder of that direction must appear in very large type; and
- (d) the names of the candidates and the descriptions (if any) must appear in bold type.

12. The surnames of each candidate must appear in capitals and the candidate's other names and any description must be in lower case with initial capitals.

13. The number and other unique identifying mark must be printed close to each other on the back of the ballot paper.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021. (See end of Document for details)

Appendix 3**Rule 23(5)****Corresponding Number List**

Corresponding Number List: Part 1
(to be completed in respect of ballot papers to be
issued to postal voters)

Electoral ward:

Date of poll:

Sheet no:

Ballot Paper Number	Unique Identifying Mark	Elector Number

Corresponding Number List: Part 2
(to be completed in respect of ballot papers to be
provided at polling stations)

Electoral ward:

Date of poll:

Polling station:

Sheet no:

Ballot Paper Number	Elector Number

Appendix 4

Rule 28(1)(b)

Form of Postal Voting Statement

Elector's name*:

*The returning officer must omit the name where the ballot paper is sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry in the register or to the proxy of an elector with an anonymous entry in the register.

[Voter's name (where this differs from the elector's name because the elector is voting by proxy)*:]

*The line relating to the voter's name may be omitted where the elector is not voting by proxy.

Ballot paper No:

Please read the instructions at the end before completing this form and the ballot paper.

I AM THE PERSON THE BALLOT PAPER
NUMBERED ABOVE WAS SENT OR DELIVERED
TO.

My date of birth (in the format dd/mm/yyyy):

*My Signature:

(Keep signature within border)

* The returning officer must omit the requirement for a signature where the person has been granted a waiver.

Warning: Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot paper. It is illegal to vote more than once (unless you are appointed as proxy for another elector) at the same election.

Instructions on marking the ballot paper and completing the postal voting statement

1. Vote for ONE candidate only OR Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates. (The returning officer must select the wording that is appropriate for the election.)

2. Mark a cross [x] in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate(s) you are voting for. Do not mark your ballot paper in any other way or your vote(s) may not be counted.*

*Where the ballot paper has been sent to a person voting as proxy, this paragraph should be amended so

that it reads:

2. Mark a cross [x] in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate(s) the elector is voting for. Do not mark the ballot paper in any other way or the vote(s) may not be counted.

3. If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone for whom the vote was given.

4. Put the ballot paper in the small envelope marked **A** and seal it.

5. Complete the postal voting statement by signing it and providing your date of birth. If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and the vote(s) will not be counted. Note that it is your **date of birth** that is required, not the date on which you sign the statement.*

*Where the requirement for a signature has been waived, the returning officer must change this instruction so that it reads:

5. Complete the postal voting statement by providing your date of birth. If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and the vote(s) will not be counted. Note that it is your **date of birth** that is required, not the date on which you complete the postal voting statement.

6. Then put the envelope marked **A** together with the postal voting statement in the larger envelope marked **B**. Return it as soon as possible.

7. After receiving the postal vote, you cannot vote in person at a polling station at this election.*

*Where the ballot paper has been sent to a person voting as proxy, this paragraph should be amended so that it reads:

7. After receiving the postal vote, you cannot vote as proxy for the elector in person at a polling station at this election.

8. If you accidentally spoil the ballot paper, you can apply to the returning officer for a replacement before 5 p.m. on [insert the date of the poll]. You must return the spoiled ballot paper, the postal voting statement and the envelopes marked A and B. Make sure you contact the returning officer as soon as possible. [Returning officer to provide contact details for assistance]

9. The ballot paper and the postal voting statement must be—

(a) sent by post to the returning officer in sufficient time for them to be received by the returning officer before 10 p.m. on [insert the date of the poll];

(b) given by hand to the returning officer before 10 p.m. on [insert the date of the poll]; or
(c) handed in on [insert date of the poll] at any polling station in the electoral ward before 10 p.m.

Appendix 5

Rule 31(4)

Poll Cards

Official Poll Card (to be sent or delivered to an elector voting in person)

Front of card

Official Poll Card	
Council: Electoral ward: Number of councillors to be elected for the electoral ward: Polling Day: Polling Hours: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Your polling station will be:	Number on register: *Name: *Address: *Note: The name and address must be omitted where the poll card is sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry. A poll card sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry must be sent or delivered in a sealed envelope.
<p>*This card is for information only. You can vote without it but it will save you time if you take it to the polling station and show it to the clerk there.</p> <p>See further information on the back of this card.</p>	

Back of card

<p>Local Government Election</p> <p>*When you go to the polling station, tell the clerk your name and address, as shown on the front of this card.</p> <p>*The clerk will confirm your details on the register.</p> <p>When you are given your ballot paper, go to one of the polling booths. Mark a cross (x) in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name(s) of the candidate(s) you are voting for.</p> <p>Vote for ONE candidate only OR Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates. (The returning officer must select the wording that is appropriate for the election.)</p> <p>Do not put any other mark on the ballot paper or your vote may not be counted.</p> <p>If you spoil the ballot paper by mistake, show it to the presiding officer and ask for a replacement.</p> <p>When you have marked the ballot paper, fold it in two. Show the presiding officer the number and other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper but do not let anyone see your vote. Put the ballot</p>
--

paper in the ballot box and leave the polling station.

If you will be away on the date of the poll, there are other ways of voting.

(1) You can apply to vote by post. Your application must be received by the returning officer before 5 p.m. on [insert the deadline date]. If you are given a postal vote, you will not be entitled to vote in person at this election.

(2) You can apply to vote by proxy (this means someone can vote on your behalf). Your application must normally be received before 5p.m. on [insert the deadline date]. If you appoint a proxy, you can still vote in this election yourself if you do so before your proxy has voted for you.

In certain circumstances it may be possible to apply to vote by proxy after [insert the deadline date].

If you want to vote by post or proxy, please contact [insert helpline number] as soon as possible.

Issued by the returning officer

Alternative text where elector has an anonymous entry

*Where the poll card is sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry substitute for the paragraphs on the front and back of this card marked with an asterisk the following paragraphs:

You must have this card with you when you vote.

You cannot vote without it.

When you go to the polling station, ask to speak to the presiding officer and show them this card.

The presiding officer will confirm your entry on the register.

Official Postal Poll Card (to be sent or delivered to an elector voting by post)

Front of card

Official Postal Poll Card	
Council:	This card is to tell you that you have asked to vote by post for this election, and you will not be able to vote in person in a polling station. If you want to cancel your postal vote please call the helpline number [insert helpline number] before 5 p.m. on [insert deadline
Electoral ward:	
Number of councillors to be elected for the electoral ward:	
For the election on:	
[insert date of poll]	
Number on register:	
*Name and address:	
*Note: The name and address must be omitted where the poll card is	

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021. (See end of Document for details)

<p>sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry. A poll card sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry must be sent or delivered in a sealed envelope.</p>	<p>date].</p> <p>We will send or deliver your postal voting papers around [insert date], addressed to [insert name and address].</p> <p>If your postal voting papers have not arrived by [insert date], call [insert helpline number] and ask for help.</p>
<p>If you lose or accidentally spoil your postal ballot paper, please call the helpline number shown above as soon as possible. Replacement ballot papers can only be issued before 5p.m. on [insert date of poll.]</p> <p>This card is to provide you with information about voting by post.</p> <p>See further information on the back of this card.</p>	

Back of card

Local Government Election

When you receive your postal voting pack, please read the instructions with it carefully when completing your postal ballot paper.

Do not let anyone see your vote. If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone how you have voted. You can get independent help from the returning officer by calling the helpline on [insert helpline number].

You must **sign** the postal voting statement and **provide your date of birth**. This is a security measure. It will not affect your vote or mean that the way in which you gave your vote is known. Without your signature and date of birth, the statement will not be valid and your vote will not be counted. The returning officer can cross-check your signature and date of birth against other records that they hold.*

*Where the requirement for a signature has been waived, the returning officer must include the following paragraph instead.

You must **provide your date of birth**. This is a security measure. It will not affect your vote or mean that the way in which you gave your vote is known. Without your date of birth, the statement will not be valid and your vote will not be counted. The returning officer can cross-check your date of birth against other records that they hold.

If you lose or accidentally spoil your ballot paper, please call the helpline number shown below as soon as possible. We can only issue replacement postal

ballot papers before 5 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

Complete and return your postal vote as soon as possible. The returning officer must receive your postal vote before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

You can deliver your completed postal voting statement and ballot paper in one of three ways.

You can send them by post to the returning officer so that they are received before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

You can hand them to the returning officer before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

On the day of the poll, you can deliver them to any polling station in the electoral ward before 10 p.m.

If you want to vote in person at the elections, you must cancel your postal vote before 5 p.m. on [insert deadline].

If you need any assistance, please call the helpline on [insert helpline number].

It is an offence to vote using a ballot paper that was not addressed to you.

Issued by the returning officer

Official Proxy Poll Card (to be sent or delivered to a proxy voting in person)

Front of card

Official Proxy Poll Card	
Council: Electoral ward: Number of councillors to be elected for the electoral ward: Polling Day: Polling Hours: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Your polling station will be:	*This poll card is to tell you that for this election the elector named on the back of this card has appointed you as their proxy. *Proxy's name: *Proxy's address: *Note: This section is to be omitted where the poll card is sent or delivered to the proxy of an elector with an anonymous entry. A poll card sent or delivered to the proxy of an elector with an anonymous entry must be sent or delivered in a sealed envelope.
*This card is for information only. You can vote without it but it will save you time if you take it to the polling station and show it to the clerk there.	

See further information on the back of this card.

Back of card

Local Government Election

*This poll card is to tell you that for this election you are appointed as proxy for:

*[Insert elector's name]

*[Insert elector's address]

*[Insert elector's number on register]

*When you go to the polling station, tell the clerk that you wish to vote as proxy on behalf of the elector shown above.

*The clerk will confirm the details on the register.

When you are given the ballot paper, go to one of the polling booths. Mark a cross (x) in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name(s) of the candidate(s) the elector is voting for.

Vote for ONE candidate only OR Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates. (The returning officer must select the wording that is appropriate for the election.)

Do not put any other mark on the ballot paper or the vote may not be counted.

If you spoil the ballot paper by mistake, show it to the presiding officer and ask for a replacement.

When you have marked the ballot paper, fold it in two. Show the presiding officer the number and other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper but do not let anyone see the vote. Put the ballot paper in the ballot box and leave the polling station.

The person who appointed you as proxy may vote at this election. If they wish to do so, they must vote in person before you vote on their behalf.

If you will be away on the date of the poll, you can apply to vote by post as proxy. Your application must be received by the returning officer before 5 p.m. on [insert the deadline date]. If you are given a proxy postal vote, neither you (on the elector's behalf) nor the elector will be entitled to vote in person at this election.

It is illegal to do any of the following—

Vote more than once (unless you are appointed as proxy for another elector) at the same election.

Vote as proxy at the same election for two or more persons unless you are their spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild.

Vote as proxy for a person if you know that the person is subject to a legal incapacity to vote.

If you need any assistance, please call our helpline on [insert helpline number].

Issued by the returning officer

Alternative text where elector has an anonymous entry

*Where the poll card is sent or delivered to the proxy of an elector with an anonymous entry substitute for the paragraphs on the front and back of this card marked with an asterisk the following paragraphs:

You must have this card with you when you vote.

You cannot vote as proxy without it.

You are entitled to vote as proxy for the elector whose electoral number is shown below.

[Insert elector's number on register]

To vote as proxy you must go to the polling station shown on the front of this card. Ask to speak to the presiding officer and show them this card. The clerk will confirm the details on the register.

Official Proxy Postal Poll Card (to be sent or delivered to a proxy voting by post)

Front of card

Official Proxy Postal Poll Card	
Council:	*This poll card is to tell
Electoral ward:	you that for this election
Number of councillors to	the elector named on the
be elected for the	back of this card has
electoral ward:	appointed you as their
For the election on:	proxy and you have
[insert date of poll]:	decided to vote by post.
Proxy's name and	You will not be able to
address:	vote on behalf of the
	elector in a polling
	station. If you want to
	cancel this postal vote
	and vote in person on
	polling day, please call
	the helpline shown
	below before 5p.m. on
	[insert date of deadline].
	We will send or deliver
	the proxy postal voting
	papers around [insert
	date].
	If the proxy postal
	voting papers have not
	arrived by [insert
	date], please call
	[insert helpline
	number] and ask for

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021. (See end of Document for details)

	help.
<p>If you lose or accidentally spoil the elector's postal ballot paper, please call the helpline number shown above as soon as possible. Replacement ballot papers can only be issued before 5 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].</p> <p>This card is to provide you with information about voting by post as proxy. See further information on the back of this card.</p>	
Back of card	
<p>Local Government Election</p> <p>*This poll card is to tell you that for this election you are appointed as proxy for the elector named below and you have decided to vote by post:</p> <p>*[Insert elector's name] *[Insert elector's address]</p> <p>When you receive the postal voting pack, please read the instructions with it carefully when completing your postal ballot paper.</p> <p>Do not let anyone see the vote. If you need help voting as proxy, the person helping you must not tell anyone how you have voted as proxy. You can get independent help from the returning officer by calling the helpline on [insert helpline number].</p> <p>You must sign the postal voting statement and provide your date of birth. This is a security measure. It will not affect the vote or mean that the way in which you gave the vote as proxy is known. Without your signature and date of birth the statement will not be valid and the vote will not be counted. The returning officer can cross-check your signature and date of birth against other records that they hold.**</p> <p>**Where the requirement for a signature has been waived, the returning officer must include the following paragraph instead. You must provide your date of birth. This is a security measure. It will not affect the vote or mean that the way in which you gave the vote as proxy is known. Without your date of birth, the statement will not be valid and the vote will not be counted. The returning officer can cross-check your date of birth against other records that they hold.</p> <p>If you lose or accidentally spoil the ballot paper, please call the helpline number as soon as possible. We can only issue replacement postal ballot papers before 5 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].</p> <p>Complete and return the postal vote as soon as possible. The returning officer must receive the postal vote before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll]. You can deliver your completed postal voting statement and</p>	

the ballot paper in one of three ways.
You can send them by post to the returning officer so that they are received before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

You can hand them to the returning officer before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

On the day of the poll, you can deliver them to any polling station in the electoral ward before 10 p.m.

If you want to vote in person as proxy at the election, you must cancel your postal vote before 5 p.m. on [insert deadline].

It is illegal to do any of the following—

Vote more than once (unless you are appointed as proxy for another elector) at the same election

Vote as proxy at the same election for two or more persons unless you are their spouse, civil partner,

parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild

Vote as proxy for a person if you know that the person is subject to a legal incapacity to vote.

If you need any assistance, please call our helpline on [insert helpline number].

Issued by the returning officer

Alternative text where the elector has an anonymous entry

*Where the poll card is sent or delivered to the proxy of an elector with an anonymous entry, substitute for the paragraphs on the front and back of this card marked with an asterisk the following paragraphs:

This poll card is to tell you that for this election you are appointed as proxy for the elector whose electoral number is shown below and you have decided to vote by post.

You are entitled to vote as proxy for the elector whose electoral number is shown below:

[Insert elector's number on register]

Appendix 6

Rule 32(9)

Guidance for Voters

1. When you are given your ballot paper, go to one of the polling booths.
2. Mark a cross [x] in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name(s) of the candidate(s) you are voting for.
3. Vote for ONE candidate only OR Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates.*
4. Put no other mark on the ballot paper or your vote(s) may not be counted.
5. Fold the ballot paper in two.
6. Show the presiding officer the number and other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper but do not let anyone see your vote.
7. Put the ballot paper in the ballot box and leave the polling station.
8. If you spoil your ballot paper by mistake, show it to the presiding officer and ask for a replacement.

* The returning officer must choose whichever direction is appropriate for the election.

Appendix 8

Rule 44(5)

Form of declaration to be made by the companion of a voter with disabilities

I [insert name of companion] of [insert address of companion] having been asked to assist [insert name of voter being assisted], whose number on the register is [insert number of voter being assisted], to give their vote at the election now being held in this electoral ward, hereby declare that*—

I have attained the age of 16.

I have not previously assisted any voter with disabilities to vote except [insert the name and address of any other voter who has been assisted by the companion to vote at the election] (see note 2).

Signed by companion:

Date:

*If the companion is asked to assist a voter with disabilities voting as proxy the opening words of the declaration must instead be “I [insert name of companion] of [insert address of companion] having been asked to assist [insert name of voter being assisted] who is voting as proxy for [insert name of elector], whose number on the register is [insert number of elector], to give their vote at the election now being held in this electoral ward hereby declare that—”.

I, the undersigned, being the presiding officer for [insert name of polling station] for the [insert name] electoral ward of [insert name of the county or county borough] hereby certify that the above declaration was read to the companion and was signed by the companion in my presence.

Signed by presiding officer:

Date:

Time:

Notes to the form of declaration to be made by the companion of a voter with disabilities

1. A voter with disabilities is a voter who has made a declaration under rule 44(2) that they are so affected by blindness or other disability, or by inability to read, as to be unable to vote without the assistance of a companion.
2. The companion may have assisted one (and only one) other person to vote at the election.

SCHEDULE 2

Rule 5(3)

Rules for conduct of an election of councillors for a principal area where poll is taken together with poll at a relevant election

PART 1

Provisions as to Time

Timetable

1.—(1) The proceedings at the election must be conducted in accordance with the following timetable.

Timetable

<i>Proceedings</i>	<i>Time</i>
Publication of notice of election	Not later than the twenty-fifth day before the day of election
Delivery of nomination papers	Not later than 4 p.m. on the nineteenth day before the day of election
Delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature	Not later than 4 p.m. on the nineteenth day before the day of election
Publication of statement as to persons nominated	Not later than 4 p.m. on the eighteenth day before the day of election
Notice of uncontested election	Not later than the sixth day before the day of election
Notice of poll in contested election	
Polling	Between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. on the day of election

(2) Paragraph (3) applies where—

- (a) a nomination paper is sent electronically or submitted online in accordance with arrangements set out in the notice of election (see rule 3), or
- (b) a notice of withdrawal of candidature under rule 12 is sent electronically.

(3) For the purpose of determining whether the paper or notice has been delivered in accordance with the timetable in paragraph (1), the paper or notice is to be treated as having been delivered at the time when its delivery is recorded on the computer system in use by the returning officer for receiving the paper or notice.

(4) In this rule, “the day of election” means the day specified in the notice of election as the day on which a poll would take place in the event of a contest.

Commencement Information

I74 Sch. 2 Appendices in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

I75 Sch. 2 rule 1 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Computation of time

2.—(1) An excluded day is to be disregarded in calculating any period set out in the second column of the timetable in rule 1.

(2) No proceedings under these rules up to the close of the poll may take place on an excluded day.

(3) The returning officer is not required to proceed with the counting of votes on an excluded day.

Commencement Information

I74 Sch. 2 Appendices in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

I76 Sch. 2 rule 2 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

PART 2

Notice of Election, Nomination and Method of Election

Notice of Election

Notice of election

3.—(1) The returning officer must publish notice of the election.

(2) The notice must state—

- (a) the number of councillors to be returned for each electoral ward in the principal area,
- (b) the date of the poll in the event of a contest,
- (c) the place where, and the times at which, forms of nomination paper may be obtained and information about how and when forms of nomination paper may be obtained online,
- (d) the latest time for the delivery of nomination papers, and
- (e) the place where nomination papers may be delivered and the times at which they may be delivered to that place.

(3) The notice must also state the date by which applications to vote by post or by proxy, and other applications and notices about postal or proxy voting, must reach the registration officer in order to be effective for the election.

(4) The place specified in the notice as the place where forms of nomination paper may be obtained, and where they may be delivered, must be at the offices of the council for the principal area.

(5) The returning officer must also include in the notice an electronic delivery statement.

(6) An electronic delivery statement is a statement that nomination papers may be delivered—

- (a) by being sent electronically to an email address in accordance with arrangements set out in the statement,
- (b) by submission online in accordance with arrangements set out in the statement, or
- (c) either by being sent electronically as mentioned in sub-paragraph (a) or by submission online as mentioned in sub-paragraph (b).

Commencement Information

I74 Sch. 2 Appendices in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

I77 Sch. 2 rule 3 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Nomination

Duty of returning officer to supply forms of nomination etc.

4.—(1) At the place and times for obtaining forms of nomination paper set out in the notice of election, the returning officer must—

- (a) supply any person with as many forms of nomination paper as the person may require, and
- (b) on request, prepare a nomination paper for signature.

(2) The returning officer must also make arrangements to ensure that forms of nomination paper may be obtained online in accordance with the information given in the notice of election.

(3) It is not, however, necessary for a nomination to be made on a form supplied by the returning officer or obtained online.

Commencement Information

I78 Sch. 2 rule 4 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Nomination of candidates

5.—(1) A candidate must nominate themselves using a nomination paper in the form in Appendix 1 or a form to the like effect.

(2) The nomination paper may be delivered either—

- (a) at the place specified by the returning officer in the notice of election, or
- (b) in accordance with the arrangements set out in the electronic delivery statement.

(3) The nomination paper must—

- (a) state the candidate's full names, with the surnames placed first,
- (b) if the candidate wishes, include a description that complies with rule 6,
- (c) include a statement of party membership that complies with rule 8, and
- (d) include the declarations set out in the form in Appendix 1, signed by the candidate.

(4) If a candidate commonly uses forenames or surnames that are different in any respect from the forenames or surnames stated in accordance with paragraph (3)(a) (including where the difference is that the commonly used forenames or surnames are in a different order, include only some of the names or include additional names), the nomination paper may also state the commonly used forenames or surnames.

(5) The nomination paper must be signed by the candidate in the presence of a witness who must attest the signature.

(6) The nomination paper must be accompanied by a form (a “home address form”) that complies with rule 9.

Commencement Information

I74 Sch. 2 Appendices in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

I79 Sch. 2 rule 5 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Nomination papers: descriptions

6.—(1) This rule sets out requirements about the descriptions that may be included in a nomination paper as mentioned in rule 5(3)(b).

(2) The description may be either—

- (a) a description that is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party or with two or more registered political parties and is permitted under paragraph (3) or (as the case may be) paragraph (4), or
- (b) the word “Independent” or the word “Annibynnol”, or both those words.

(3) A description that is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party is permitted where—

- (a) the party is a qualifying party,
- (b) the description is either—
 - (i) the party’s registered name or, if the party has registered a name in English and a name in Welsh, either or both of those names, or
 - (ii) a registered description of the party or, in the case of a description that has been registered in both English and Welsh, either or both of those descriptions, and
- (c) the use of the description by the candidate is authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the registered nominating officer of the party and received by the returning officer before the last time for the delivery of nomination papers.

(4) A description that is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with two or more registered political parties is permitted where—

- (a) the parties are each qualifying parties,
- (b) the description consists of the registered name of each of the parties shown in either or both of the versions described in paragraph (5), and
- (c) the use of the description by the candidate is authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the registered nominating officer of each of the parties and received by the returning officer before the last time for the delivery of nomination papers.

(5) The versions referred to in paragraph (4)(b) are—

- (a) a version showing (in any order) the parties’ registered names, together with the addition of any appropriate conjunctions and punctuation in English (“the English version”);
- (b) a version showing (in any order) the parties’ registered names, together with the addition of any appropriate conjunctions and punctuation in Welsh (“the Welsh version”).

(6) Where any of the parties has registered a name in English and a name in Welsh—

- (a) the party’s registered name in English (and not the party’s registered name in Welsh) may be used in the English version, and
- (b) the party’s registered name in Welsh (and not the party’s registered name in English) may be used in the Welsh version.

(7) See also rule 7 (which sets out when and how the word “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” or “Cymreig” may be added to descriptions permitted under paragraph (3) or (4)).

(8) A person is guilty of a corrupt practice if that person fraudulently purports to be authorised to issue a certificate under paragraph (3)(c) or (4)(c) on behalf of a registered political party’s nominating officer.

(9) In this rule—

- (a) references to a registered name of a registered political party are to a name of the party registered under section 28 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000;

- (b) references to a registered description of a registered political party are to a description of the party registered under section 28A of that Act.
- (10) For the purposes of the application of this rule in relation to an election—
 - (a) “registered political party” means a party that is registered under Part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 on the day that is two days before the last day for the delivery of nomination papers at the election (disregarding any excluded day);
 - (b) a registered political party is a qualifying party if, on that day, the party is registered in respect of Wales in the Great Britain register maintained under Part 2 of that Act.

Commencement Information

I80 Sch. 2 rule 6 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Addition of “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” or “Cymreig”

7.—(1) This rule sets out when and how a candidate may make additions in a nomination paper to a description that the candidate is permitted to use under rule 6(3) or (4).

(2) Paragraph (3) applies where—

- (a) a registered name is or forms part of a description that a candidate is permitted to use under rule 6(3), and
- (b) the registered name includes none of the words “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” and “Cymreig”.

(3) The candidate may do one of the following—

- (a) add the word “Wales” before the name;
- (b) add the word “Welsh” before the name;
- (c) add the word “Cymru” after the name;
- (d) add the word “Cymreig” after the name.

(4) Paragraphs (5) and (6) apply where—

- (a) a registered name forms part of a description that a candidate is permitted to use under rule 6(4), and
- (b) the registered name includes none of the words “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” and “Cymreig”.

(5) If the registered name is in the English version of the description (whether or not it is also in the Welsh version), the candidate may add either the word “Wales” or the word “Welsh” before the name in that version.

(6) If the registered name is in the Welsh version of the description (whether or not it is also in the English version), the candidate may add either the word “Cymru” or the word “Cymreig” after the name in that version.

(7) Paragraph (8) applies where—

- (a) a registered description is or forms part of a description that a candidate is permitted to use under rule 6(3), and
- (b) the registered description includes none of the words “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” and “Cymreig”.

(8) The candidate may do one of the following—

- (a) add the word “Wales” at the beginning of the registered description;

- (b) add the word “Welsh” at the beginning of the registered description;
- (c) add the word “Cymru” at the end of the registered description;
- (d) add the word “Cymreig” at the end of the registered description.

(9) For the purposes of paragraphs (3)(a) and (b) and (5), where the word “the” (or any word in another language that has the same function as the word “the”) appears at the beginning of a registered name, it must be ignored.

(10) Where a candidate adds anything to a description in a nomination paper in accordance with this rule, references in the following provisions of this Schedule to the description are references to the description with the addition.

Commencement Information

I81 Sch. 2 rule 7 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Nomination papers: statements of party membership

8.—(1) This rule sets out the requirements for statements of party membership that must be included in nomination papers as mentioned in rule 5(3)(c).

(2) The statement must state whether the candidate has been a member of any registered political party at any time during the relevant period.

(3) If the candidate has been a member of one or more registered political parties at any time during the relevant period, the statement must also include the following information in relation to the party or (as the case may be) each of the parties of which the candidate has been a member—

- (a) the party’s registered name or, where the party has two registered names, the party’s registered names, and
- (b) the dates during the relevant period when the candidate has been a member of the party.

(4) Paragraph (3) does not apply where—

- (a) the nomination paper includes a description that is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party or with two or more registered political parties and is permitted under rule 6(3) or (as the case may be) rule 6(4), and
- (b) the candidate has not at any time during the relevant period been a member of a registered political party other than the party or parties to which that description relates.

(5) A candidate who knowingly fails to include in the nomination paper a statement of party membership that complies with the requirements of this rule is guilty of a corrupt practice.

(6) In this rule—

- (a) “registered political party” means a party that is registered under Part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 at any time during the relevant period when the candidate is a member;
- (b) references to a registered name of a registered political party are to a name of the party registered under section 28 of that Act;
- (c) “the relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which the notice of election is published.

Commencement Information

I82 Sch. 2 rule 8 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Home address forms

9.—(1) This rule sets out the requirements for home address forms that must accompany nomination papers under rule 5(6).

(2) A home address form must state—

- (a) the candidate's full names,
- (b) the candidate's home address in full,
- (c) the candidate's qualifying address or addresses, and
- (d) the qualification to which each qualifying address relates.

(3) The candidate's qualifying address or addresses, and the qualification to which each qualifying address relates, depend on which one or more of options (a) to (d) on the nomination paper have been selected by the candidate, as set out in the following table.

<i>Option selected on nomination paper</i>	<i>Candidate's qualifying address</i>	<i>Qualification to which candidate's qualifying address relates</i>
Option (a)	The address in full in respect of which the candidate is registered as a local government elector	The qualification described in option (a) (registration as a local government elector for the area of the county or county borough council)
Option (b)	A description and the address of the land or premises that the candidate has occupied as owner or tenant (or, if the candidate is relying on more than one occupation to meet the qualification, the descriptions and addresses)	The qualification described in option (b) (occupation as owner or tenant of land or other premises in the area of the county or county borough council)
Option (c)	The address of the candidate's place of work (or, if the candidate is relying on more than one place of work to meet the qualification, the addresses)	The qualification described in option (c) (principal or only place of work in the area of the county or county borough council)
Option (d)	The address or addresses in full where the candidate has resided	The qualification described in option (d) (residence in the area of the county or county borough council)

(4) If the candidate's nomination paper includes commonly used forenames or surnames, the home address form must also state the commonly used names.

(5) The home address form must also state—

- (a) the full names of the person who witnesses the candidate's signature on the nomination paper, and
- (b) that person's home address in full.

(6) The home address form may contain a statement made and signed by the candidate that the candidate's home address must not be made public.

(7) If the home address form contains such a statement, it must—

- (a) where the candidate's home address is in the United Kingdom, state the name of the relevant area (see paragraph (8));
 - (b) where the candidate's home address is outside the United Kingdom, state the country in which it is situated.
- (8) In this rule, "relevant area" means—
- (a) where the candidate's home address is in Wales—
 - (i) if the address is within a county, that county;
 - (ii) if the address is within a county borough, that county borough;
 - (b) where the candidate's home address is in England—
 - (i) if the address is within a district for which there is a district council, that district;
 - (ii) if the address is within a county in which there are no districts with councils, that county;
 - (iii) if the address is within a London borough, that London borough;
 - (iv) if the address is within the City of London (including the Inner and Middle Temples), the City of London;
 - (v) if the address is within the Isles of Scilly, the Isles of Scilly;
 - (c) where the candidate's home address is in Scotland, the local government area in which the address is situated;
 - (d) where the candidate's home address is in Northern Ireland, the local government district in which it is situated.

Commencement Information

183 Sch. 2 rule 9 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Decisions as to validity of nomination papers

10.—(1) This rule applies where a nomination paper and the accompanying home address form are delivered in accordance with these rules.

(2) The candidate stands nominated unless and until one of the following events occurs—

- (a) the returning officer decides that the nomination paper is invalid;
- (b) the returning officer is satisfied that the candidate has died;
- (c) the candidate withdraws.

(3) The returning officer is entitled to hold a nomination paper invalid only on one of the following grounds—

- (a) that the particulars of the candidate are not as required by law;
- [^{F6}(aa) that the nomination paper does not include the declarations required by rule 5(3)(d), signed by the candidate;]
- (b) that the candidate's home address form does not comply with rule 9(2) to (6);
- (c) where the candidate's home address form contains a statement that the home address must not be made public, that the form does not comply with rule 9(7);
- (d) that the nomination paper is not signed by the candidate, or that the candidate's signature has not been attested, as required by rule 5(5).

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), the returning officer must, as soon as reasonably practicable after each nomination paper and home address form have been delivered, examine them and decide whether the candidate has been validly nominated.

(5) If in the opinion of the returning officer a description in a nomination paper has been included in breach of rule 6(3) or (4) or 7, the returning officer must give a decision that the candidate's particulars are not as required by law—

- (a) as soon as reasonably practicable after the delivery of the nomination paper, and
- (b) in any event, before the end of the period of 24 hours beginning with the close of the period for delivery of nomination papers.

(6) Where the returning officer decides that a nomination paper is invalid, the returning officer must endorse on the paper the fact of the decision and the reasons for it and sign the endorsement.

(7) The returning officer must give a notice to each candidate stating the returning officer's decision as to whether the candidate's nomination paper is valid or invalid.

(8) The returning officer's decision that a nomination paper is valid is final and may not be questioned in any proceedings.

(9) Except as provided by paragraph (8), nothing in this rule prevents the validity of a nomination being questioned on an election petition.

F6 Sch. 2 rule. 10(3)(aa) inserted (10.3.2022) by [The Local Elections \(Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/263\)](#), regs. 1(2), **2(3)** (with reg. 12(a))

Commencement Information

I84 Sch. 2 rule 10 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Nomination in more than one electoral ward

11.—(1) A candidate who is validly nominated for more than one electoral ward of the same principal area must withdraw from candidature in all those electoral wards except one.

(2) A candidate who does not withdraw as required by paragraph (1) is to be treated as having withdrawn from candidature in all the electoral wards in which the candidate was validly nominated.

Commencement Information

I85 Sch. 2 rule 11 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Withdrawal of candidates

12.—(1) A candidate may withdraw from candidature by giving a notice of withdrawal to the returning officer.

(2) The notice of withdrawal must be signed by the candidate in the presence of a witness who must attest the candidate's signature.

Commencement Information

I86 Sch. 2 rule 12 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Publication of statement of persons nominated

13.—(1) The returning officer must prepare and publish a statement (a “statement of persons nominated”) showing—

- (a) the persons who have been and stand nominated, and
- (b) any other persons who have been nominated but no longer stand nominated, with the reason why they no longer stand nominated.

(2) The statement must show—

- (a) the names and descriptions (if any) of the persons nominated, as given in their nomination papers,
- (b) their home address information (see paragraph (3)), and
- (c) the information contained in their statements of party membership, as given in their nomination papers.

(3) In these rules, references to the home address information of a person nominated are to the following information as given in the home address form accompanying the nomination paper—

- (a) where the home address form contains a statement that the home address must not be made public, the information given in accordance with rule 9(7);
- (b) where the home address form does not contain such a statement, the address of the person nominated.

(4) The statement must show the persons standing nominated arranged alphabetically in the order of their surnames, and if there are two or more of them with the same surnames, the statement must show those persons arranged alphabetically in the order of their other names.

(5) Rule 14 (use of commonly used names) and rule 15 (names that are the same or similar) make further provision about the content of the statement of persons nominated.

Commencement Information

187 Sch. 2 rule 13 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Use of commonly used names in statement of persons nominated

14.—(1) This rule applies where a person’s nomination paper gives commonly used forenames or surnames in accordance with rule 5(4).

(2) The statement of persons nominated must show the person’s commonly used forenames or surnames (instead of the forenames or surnames stated in the nomination paper in accordance with rule 5(3)(a)) unless the returning officer decides—

- (a) that the use of the person’s commonly used forenames or surnames may be likely to mislead or confuse electors, or
- (b) that the commonly used forenames or surnames are obscene or offensive.

(3) Where paragraph (2)(a) or (b) applies—

- (a) the statement of persons nominated must show the person’s other forenames or surnames as stated in the nomination paper in accordance with rule 5(3)(a) (instead of the commonly used forenames or surnames), and
- (b) the returning officer must give a notice to the candidate stating the reasons for refusing to allow the use of the commonly used forenames or surnames.

Commencement Information

I88 Sch. 2 rule 14 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Names that are the same or similar

15.—(1) This rule applies where, in preparing a statement of persons nominated, the returning officer decides that—

- (a) two or more of the names that would be shown on the statement are the same or so similar as to be likely to cause confusion,
- (b) each of the persons concerned has made a statement that they require their home address not to be made public (see rule 9(6)), and
- (c) the information given in accordance with rule 9(7) is the same for each of them.

(2) The returning officer may arrange for any of their particulars to be shown on the statement of persons nominated with such amendments or additions as the returning officer thinks appropriate to reduce the likelihood of confusion.

(3) In deciding whether to make amendments or additions under this rule, the returning officer must have regard to any guidance given by the Electoral Commission for the purposes of this rule.

(4) Where it is practicable to do so before the publication of the statement, the returning officer must consult any persons whose particulars are to be amended or added to under this rule.

(5) The returning officer must give a notice to any person whose particulars are amended or added to under this rule, setting out the amendments or additions.

(6) Anything done by a returning officer under this rule may not be questioned in any proceedings other than proceedings on an election petition.

Commencement Information

I89 Sch. 2 rule 15 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Correction of minor errors in nomination papers or home address forms

16.—(1) A returning officer may, at any time before the publication of the statement of persons nominated, correct minor errors in a nomination paper or home address form.

(2) Errors which may be corrected include—

- (a) errors as to a person's electoral number;
- (b) obvious errors of spelling;
- (c) errors as to the information given in accordance with rule 9(7) (information that must be included where the candidate has stated that the home address must not be made public).

(3) Anything done by a returning officer in pursuance of this rule may not be questioned in any proceedings other than proceedings on an election petition.

(4) In deciding whether to correct minor errors under this rule, a returning officer must have regard to any guidance given by the Electoral Commission for the purposes of this rule.

Commencement Information

I90 Sch. 2 rule 16 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Inspection of nomination papers

17.—(1) During the time for inspection, any person may inspect nomination papers that have been delivered.

(2) In paragraph (1), “the time for inspection” means ordinary office hours on any day after the last day for the delivery of nomination papers and before the day of the poll, other than an excluded day.

(3) A person inspecting nomination papers may take a copy of, or make extracts from, the papers.

Commencement Information

I91 Sch. 2 rule 17 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Inspection of home address forms

18.—(1) During the time for inspection, the home address form of a candidate standing nominated may be inspected by any of the following who wish to inspect it—

- (a) another candidate standing nominated in the same electoral ward;
- (b) the election agent of another candidate standing nominated in that ward;
- (c) in the case of another candidate standing nominated in that ward who is acting as their own election agent, another person selected by that candidate.

(2) In paragraph (1), “the time for inspection” means ordinary office hours on any day after the last day for the delivery of nomination papers and before the day of the poll, other than an excluded day.

(3) A candidate or other person carrying out an inspection under this rule must not take a copy of, or make extracts from, a home address form.

(4) The returning officer must not permit a home address form to be inspected otherwise than in accordance with this rule or for some other purpose authorised by law.

Commencement Information

I92 Sch. 2 rule 18 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Adjournment of nomination proceedings in the case of riot

19.—(1) This rule applies if proceedings for, or in connection with, nomination are interrupted or obstructed on any day by riot or open violence.

(2) The proceedings must be abandoned for that day.

(3) If the day on which the proceedings are abandoned is the last day for the delivery of nomination papers, the proceedings must be resumed on the next day.

(4) Where paragraph (3) requires proceedings to be resumed on the next day, the deadlines specified in the second column of the timetable in rule 1 for the delivery of nomination papers, the delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature and the publication of the statement as to persons nominated are each extended by one day.

(5) Where proceedings are abandoned under this rule—

- (a) nothing may be done after the proceedings are resumed if the time for doing it had passed when the proceedings were abandoned, and

- (b) nothing done before the proceedings were abandoned is invalidated by reason of the abandonment.

Commencement Information

I93 Sch. 2 rule 19 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Method of Election

Decision as to whether election is contested and declaration of result if uncontested

20.—(1) The returning officer must determine whether the number of persons remaining validly nominated for the electoral ward after any withdrawals under rule 12 exceeds the number of councillors to be elected.

(2) If the number of persons remaining validly nominated does not exceed the number of councillors to be elected, the returning officer must declare the person or persons standing validly nominated to be elected.

(3) The returning officer must also—

(a) give a notice stating the names and addresses of those declared to be elected to the proper officer of the council for the principal area, and

(b) publish their names.

(4) If the number of persons remaining validly nominated exceeds the number of councillors to be elected, a poll must be taken in accordance with Part 3.

Commencement Information

I94 Sch. 2 rule 20 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

PART 3

The Poll at Contested Elections

General Provisions

Poll to be taken by ballot

21.—(1) The votes at the poll must be given by ballot.

(2) The result must be ascertained in accordance with Part 4 (counting of votes at elections).

Commencement Information

I95 Sch. 2 rule 21 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The ballot papers

22.—(1) The ballot of every voter must consist of a ballot paper.

(2) The only persons entitled to have their names inserted on the ballot paper are those remaining validly nominated for the electoral ward after any withdrawals under rule 12.

- (3) A ballot paper must be—
 - (a) in the form in Appendix 2, and
 - (b) printed in accordance with the directions in that Appendix.
- (4) The ballot paper must—
 - (a) contain the names and descriptions (if any) of the candidates and their home address information, as shown in the statement of persons nominated,
 - (b) be capable of being folded up,
 - (c) have a number and other unique identifying mark printed on the back, and
 - (d) be of a different colour to that of any ballot papers used at a relevant election.
- (5) At the request of a candidate who is authorised under rule 6(3)(c) to use a description likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party, the ballot paper must contain, against the candidate’s particulars, one registered emblem of the party.
- (6) At the request of a candidate who is authorised under rule 6(4)(c) to use a description likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with two or more registered political parties, the ballot paper must contain, against the candidate’s particulars, one registered emblem of one of the parties.
- (7) The candidate’s request under paragraph (5) or (6) must be—
 - (a) made in writing to the returning officer, and
 - (b) received by the returning officer before the last time for the delivery of nomination papers as set out in the timetable in rule 1.
- (8) The order of the names in the ballot paper must be the same as in the statement of persons nominated.

Commencement Information

I96 Sch. 2 rule 22 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Corresponding number list

- 23.**—(1) The returning officer must prepare a list (“the corresponding number list”) in accordance with this rule.
- (2) The corresponding number list must be in two parts.
 - (3) Part 1 must contain the numbers and unique identifying marks of all ballot papers to be issued in pursuance of rule 28(1) (postal ballot papers).
 - (4) Part 2 must contain the numbers (but not the unique identifying marks) of all ballot papers to be provided in pursuance of rule 32(1) (provision of ballot boxes and ballot papers at polling stations).
 - (5) The corresponding number list must be in the form set out in Appendix 3 or a form to the like effect.
 - (6) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, see also regulations 4 and 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations (which provide for circumstances in which the functions of the returning officer under this rule are to be discharged by the co-ordinating returning officer).

Commencement Information

I97 Sch. 2 rule 23 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The official mark

- 24.**—(1) Each ballot paper must contain an appropriate security marking (“the official mark”).
- (2) The official mark must be kept secret.
- (3) An interval of not less than five years must intervene between the use of the same official mark at elections for the same county or county borough.
- (4) The returning officer may use a different official mark for different purposes at the same election.

Commencement Information

I98 Sch. 2 rule 24 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Prohibition of disclosure of vote

- 25.** A person who has voted at the election may not be required to state for whom they voted in any legal proceedings to question the election.

Commencement Information

I99 Sch. 2 rule 25 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Use of schools and public rooms

- 26.**—(1) The returning officer may use any of the following rooms free of charge for the purpose of taking the poll or counting the votes—
- (a) a room in a school maintained or assisted by a county or county borough council;
 - (b) a room in a school in respect of which grants are made out of money provided by Senedd Cymru to the person or body responsible for the management of the school;
 - (c) any other room if the expense of maintaining the room is payable wholly or mainly out of public funds.
- (2) Where a room described in paragraph (1) is used for the purpose of taking the poll or counting the votes, the returning officer must—
- (a) make good any damage to the room resulting from its use for that purpose, and
 - (b) defray any expense incurred by the person or body having control over the room by reason of its use for that purpose.

Commencement Information

I100 Sch. 2 rule 26 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Action to be taken before the poll

Notice of poll

- 27.**—(1) The returning officer must publish notice of the poll stating—
- (a) the day and hours fixed for the poll,
 - (b) the number of councillors to be elected for the electoral ward, and

- (c) the names and descriptions (if any) of each candidate remaining validly nominated and their home address information.
- (2) The candidates' particulars, and the order of the candidates' names, must be the same as in the statement of persons nominated.
- (3) The returning officer must, before or at the same time as publishing notice of the poll, also publish notice of—
 - (a) the situation of each polling station, and
 - (b) the description of voters entitled to vote there.
- (4) The notice published under paragraph (3) must—
 - (a) state that the poll at the principal area election is to be taken together with the poll at one or more relevant elections,
 - (b) specify the constituency or, as appropriate, other area to which each relevant election relates, and
 - (c) where any of the polls are to be taken together only in part of the county or county borough, specify that part.
- (5) The returning officer must, as soon as practicable after publishing notice under paragraph (3), give a copy of it to each of the election agents.
- (6) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, see also regulations 4 and 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations (which provide for circumstances in which the functions of the returning officer under paragraphs (3) to (5) are to be discharged by the co-ordinating returning officer).

Commencement Information

1101 Sch. 2 rule 27 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Postal ballot papers

- 28.**—(1) The returning officer must, in accordance with regulations under the 1983 Act, issue to those entitled to vote by post—
- (a) a ballot paper,
 - (b) a postal voting statement in the form set out in Appendix 4 or a form to the like effect, and
 - (c) such envelopes for the return of the ballot paper and postal voting statement as may be prescribed by regulations under the 1983 Act.
- (2) The returning officer must also issue to those entitled to vote by post such information as the returning officer considers appropriate about how to obtain—
- (a) translations into languages other than English and Welsh of any directions to or guidance for voters sent with the ballot paper,
 - (b) a translation into Braille of such directions or guidance,
 - (c) graphical representations of such directions or guidance, and
 - (d) the directions or guidance in any other form (including any audible form).
- (3) The postal voting statement must include provision—
- (a) for the form to be signed by the elector or, where the elector is voting by proxy, the proxy, unless the registration officer has dispensed with the requirement for a signature, and
 - (b) for stating the date of birth of the elector or, where the elector is voting by proxy, the proxy.

(4) In the case of a ballot paper issued to a person at an address in the United Kingdom, the returning officer must ensure that the return of the ballot paper and postal voting statement is free of charge to the voter.

(5) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, see also regulations 4 and 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations (which provide for circumstances in which the functions of the returning officer under this rule are to be discharged by the co-ordinating returning officer).

Commencement Information

I102 Sch. 2 rule 28 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Provision of polling stations

29.—(1) The returning officer must—

- (a) provide a sufficient number of polling stations, and
- (b) allot the electors to the polling stations.

(2) One or more polling stations may be provided in the same room.

(3) The returning officer must provide each polling station with such number of compartments as may be necessary in which voters can mark their votes screened from observation.

(4) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, see also regulations 4 and 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations (which provide for circumstances in which the functions of the returning officer under this rule are to be discharged by the co-ordinating returning officer).

Commencement Information

I103 Sch. 2 rule 29 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Appointment of presiding officers and clerks

30.—(1) The returning officer must appoint and pay—

- (a) a presiding officer to attend at each polling station, and
- (b) such number of clerks as may be necessary for the purposes of the poll or the count or otherwise for the purposes of the election.

(2) The returning officer must not knowingly appoint, as a presiding officer or clerk, a person who has been employed by or on behalf of a candidate in connection with the election.

(3) The returning officer may preside at a polling station.

(4) Where the returning officer presides at a polling station, these rules apply to the returning officer so presiding with the necessary modifications as to things done by the returning officer in relation to the presiding officer or by the presiding officer in relation to the returning officer.

(5) A presiding officer may authorise the clerks to do anything (including asking questions) that the presiding officer is required or authorised by these rules to do^{F7} ..., except ordering the exclusion or removal of any person from the polling station.

(6) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, see also regulations 4 and 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations (which provide for circumstances in which the functions of the returning officer under this rule in relation to the appointment of presiding officers and clerks are to be discharged by the co-ordinating returning officer).

F7 Words in [Sch. 2 rule. 30\(5\)](#) omitted (10.3.2022) by virtue of [The Local Elections \(Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/263\)](#), regs. 1(2), **3(3)(a)** (with reg. 12(a))

Commencement Information

I104 Sch. 2 rule 30 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Issue of official poll cards

31.—(1) The returning officer must, as soon as practicable after publishing notice of the election, send or deliver—

- (a) an official poll card to electors not voting by post,
- (b) an official postal poll card to electors voting by post and not by proxy,
- (c) an official proxy poll card to a person voting as proxy for an elector and not by post, and
- (d) an official proxy postal poll card to a person voting as proxy for an elector by post.

(2) An official poll card or an official postal poll card must be sent or delivered to the elector's qualifying address.

(3) An official proxy poll card or an official proxy postal poll card must be sent or delivered to the proxy's address, as shown in the list of proxies.

(4) Each poll card must be in the appropriate form in Appendix 5 or a form to the like effect and must set out—

- (a) the name of the council to which councillors are to be elected,
- (b) the electoral ward for which councillors are to be elected,
- (c) the number of councillors to be elected for that electoral ward,
- (d) the elector's name, qualifying address and number on the register,
- (e) the date and hours of the poll and the situation of the elector's polling station, and
- (f) such other information as the returning officer considers appropriate.

(5) Different information may be provided under paragraph (4)(f) to different electors or descriptions of elector.

(6) In the case of an elector with an anonymous entry, the poll card—

- (a) must contain such information as is specified in Appendix 5 instead of the information set out in paragraph (4)(d), and
- (b) must be sent or delivered in an envelope or other form of covering so as not to disclose that the elector has an anonymous entry.

(7) If the returning officer and the returning officer for each relevant election consider it appropriate, a poll card issued under this rule may be combined with a poll card of the same type issued at each relevant election.

(8) In this rule—

- (a) “elector” means a person who is registered in the register of local government electors for the electoral ward in question on the last day for the publication of notice of the election, except that it includes a person then shown in the register (or, in the case of a person with an anonymous entry in the register, in the record of anonymous entries) as below voting age only if it appears from the register (or the record of anonymous entries) that the person will be of voting age on the day fixed for the poll;

- (b) “qualifying address” has the same meaning as in the 1983 Act (see section 202(1) of that Act).

Commencement Information

I105 Sch. 2 rule 31 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Equipment of polling stations

32.—(1) The returning officer must provide each presiding officer with such number of ballot boxes and ballot papers as the returning officer considers necessary.

(2) Each ballot box must be constructed so that ballot papers can be put in it, but cannot be withdrawn from it, without the box being unlocked or, where the box has no lock, without the seal being broken.

(3) If the returning officer considers it appropriate, the same ballot box may be used for the poll at the principal area election and the poll at each relevant election.

(4) If separate ballot boxes are to be used, each ballot box must be clearly marked with—

- (a) the election to which it relates, as shown on the ballot papers for that election, and
- (b) information specifying the colour of the ballot papers that may be placed in the box.

(5) The returning officer must provide each polling station with—

- (a) materials to enable voters to mark the ballot papers,
- (b) copies of the relevant register of electors,
- (c) copies of any notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act so far as relating to the relevant register of electors,
- (d) copies of the parts of any lists of persons entitled to vote by post or by proxy that correspond to the relevant register of electors, and
- (e) a list (“the polling station’s corresponding number list”) consisting of that part of Part 2 of the corresponding number list prepared under rule 23 that contains the numbers, but not the other unique identifying marks, corresponding to those on the ballot papers provided to the presiding officer under paragraph (1).

(6) In paragraph (5), “the relevant register of electors” means the register of electors for the electoral ward or such part of it as contains the entries relating to the electors allotted to the polling station.

(7) The returning officer must cause to be displayed at each polling station an enlarged sample copy of the ballot paper.

(8) The returning officer must also provide each polling station with—

- (a) an enlarged hand-held sample copy of the ballot paper for the assistance of voters who are partially-sighted, and
- (b) a device for enabling voters who are blind or partially-sighted to vote without any need for assistance from the presiding officer or a companion (see rules 43 to 45 for the assistance that may be obtained from the presiding officer or a companion).

(9) The sample copy of the ballot paper required to be displayed and provided by paragraphs (7) and (8)(a) must be clearly marked as specimen and provided only for the guidance of voters.

(10) The device referred to in paragraph (8)(b) must—

- (a) allow a ballot paper to be inserted into and removed from, or attached to and detached from, the device easily and without damage to the paper,

- (b) hold the ballot paper firmly in place during use, and
 - (c) provide a suitable means for the voter to—
 - (i) identify the spaces on the ballot paper on which votes may be marked,
 - (ii) identify the candidate to which each space refers, and
 - (iii) mark their vote on the space chosen.
- (11) The returning officer must also cause a notice in the form in Appendix 6, giving directions for the guidance of voters in voting, to be displayed—
- (a) inside each polling station (but outside the voting compartments), and
 - (b) outside each polling station.
- (12) The returning officer may also provide copies of the notice in Braille or in such languages other than English and Welsh as the returning officer considers appropriate.
- (13) A notice containing instructions for marking the ballot paper at the principal area election and each relevant election must be exhibited inside each voting compartment in each polling station and, in relation to the principal area election, that information must include the following—
- (a) where only one councillor is to be elected, an instruction to the voter to vote only once by putting a cross [X] in the box next to their choice;
 - (b) where more than one councillor is to be elected, an instruction to the voter to vote for no more than the number to be elected by putting a cross [X] in the box next to each of their choices;
 - (c) a warning to the voter to put no other mark on the ballot paper or their vote may not count.
- (14) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, see also regulations 4 and 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations (which provide for circumstances in which the functions of the returning officer under this rule are to be discharged by the co-ordinating returning officer).

Commencement Information

1106 Sch. 2 rule 32 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Appointment of polling and counting agents

- 33.**—(1) A candidate may, before the poll begins, appoint—
- (a) polling agents to attend at polling stations for the purpose of detecting personation, and
 - (b) counting agents to attend at the counting of votes.
- (2) The same person may be appointed as a polling agent or counting agent by more than one candidate.
- (3) The maximum number of polling agents who may attend a polling station is four or such greater number as the returning officer may by notice permit.
- (4) If the number of polling agents appointed to attend at a particular polling station exceeds four (or any greater number that the returning officer has by notice permitted)—
- (a) the returning officer must decide which agents are permitted to attend by lot, and
 - (b) only the agents on whom the lot falls are to be treated as having been appointed.
- (5) The returning officer may impose a limit on the number of counting agents who may be appointed by each candidate but the limit—
- (a) must be the same for all the candidates, and

- (b) unless there are special circumstances, must not be less than the number obtained by dividing the number of clerks employed at the count by the number of candidates (ignoring any remainder).
- (6) For the purposes of the calculations required by paragraph (5), a counting agent who has been appointed for more than one candidate is a separate agent for each of the candidates by whom they have been appointed.
- (7) The candidate must give a notice to the co-ordinating returning officer where polling agents or counting agents are appointed.
- (8) The notice must—
 - (a) give the names and addresses of the persons appointed, and
 - (b) be given no later than the fifth day before the day of the poll, disregarding any excluded day.
- (9) If a polling agent or counting agent dies or becomes incapable of acting the candidate—
 - (a) may appoint another agent instead, and
 - (b) must immediately give the co-ordinating returning officer a notice stating the other agent's name and address.

Commencement Information

I107 Sch. 2 rule 33 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Polling and counting agents: supplemental provision

- 34.—**(1) A candidate or the candidate's election agent may—
- (a) do anything that the candidate's polling or counting agent is authorised to do (or would, if appointed, have been authorised to do);
 - (b) assist the candidate's polling or counting agent to do anything that the polling or counting agent is authorised to do.
- (2) Anything required or authorised by these rules to be done in the presence of the polling or counting agents may be done instead in the presence of the candidate's election agent.
- (3) Where these rules require or authorise something to be done in the presence of the polling or counting agents, the non-attendance of the agent or agents at the time and place appointed does not invalidate the thing done.
- (4) Where a candidate does not have a counting agent, the returning officer may give the candidate any notice that is required by these rules to be given to the counting agent.

Commencement Information

I108 Sch. 2 rule 34 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Notification of requirement of secrecy

- 35.—**(1) The returning officer must make arrangements to ensure that every person attending at a polling station, other than a person described in paragraph (2)(a) to (d), has been given a notice setting out the provisions of section 66(1), (3) and (6) of the 1983 Act.
- (2) The persons to whom the duty under paragraph (1) does not apply are—

- (a) a person attending the polling station for the purpose of voting;
- (b) a person under the age of 16 who accompanies a voter to the polling station;
- (c) a person attending the polling station as the companion of a voter with disabilities;
- (d) a person attending the polling station as a constable on duty.

(3) In this rule, a reference to a constable includes a person designated as a community support officer or community support volunteer under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002 (police powers for civilian staff and volunteers).

(4) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, see also regulations 4 and 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations (which provide for circumstances in which the functions of the returning officer under this rule are to be discharged by the co-ordinating returning officer).

Commencement Information

I109 Sch. 2 rule 35 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Return of postal ballot papers

36.—(1) Where a postal vote has been returned in respect of a person who is entered on the postal voters list, the returning officer must mark the list in the manner prescribed by regulations under the 1983 Act.

(2) Where a proxy postal vote has been returned in respect of a proxy who is entered on the proxy postal voters list, the returning officer must mark the list in the manner prescribed by regulations under that Act.

(3) Rule 58(2) does not apply for the purpose of deciding whether, for the purposes of this rule, a postal vote or a proxy postal vote is returned.

(4) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, see also regulations 4 and 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations (which provide for circumstances in which the functions of the returning officer under this rule are to be discharged by the co-ordinating returning officer).

Commencement Information

I110 Sch. 2 rule 36 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The Poll

Admission to polling station

37.—(1) The presiding officer must exclude all persons from the polling station except—

- (a) voters allotted to the polling station,
- (b) persons under the age of 16 who accompany voters to the polling station,
- (c) the candidates and their election agents,
- (d) the polling agents appointed to attend at the polling station,
- (e) the clerks appointed to attend at the polling station,
- (f) the returning officer or members of the returning officer's staff,
- (g) persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers),

- (h) the constables on duty,
 - (i) the companions of voters with disabilities, and
 - (j) persons entitled to be present at the polling station for the purposes of a relevant election.
- (2) The presiding officer must regulate the total number of voters and persons under the age of 16 who accompany them who are admitted to the polling station at the same time.
- (3) Only one polling agent may be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same candidate.
- (4) A constable voting in person may do so either—
- (a) at the polling station allotted under these rules, or
 - (b) at another polling station, if the constable produces and surrenders a certificate in the form in Appendix 7 or a form to the like effect, signed by an officer of police of or above the rank of inspector.
- (5) A person employed by the returning officer, if voting in person, may do so either—
- (a) at the polling station allotted under these rules, or
 - (b) at another polling station, if the person produces and surrenders a certificate in the form in Appendix 7 or a form to the like effect, signed by the returning officer.
- (6) A single certificate may be used for the principal area election and each relevant election.
- (7) A certificate surrendered under paragraph (4) or (5) must immediately be cancelled.
- (8) In this rule, a reference to a constable includes a reference to a person designated as a community support officer or community support volunteer under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002 (police powers for civilian staff and volunteers).
- (9) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, see also regulations 4 and 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations (which provide for circumstances in which the function of signing a certificate for the purposes of paragraph (5) of this rule is to be discharged by the co-ordinating returning officer).

Commencement Information

II11 Sch. 2 rule 37 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Keeping of order in station

- 38.—**(1) The presiding officer must keep order at the polling station.
- (2) If a person engages in misconduct in a polling station, or fails to obey any orders lawfully given by the presiding officer, the presiding officer may order that the person be removed from the polling station.
- (3) Where the presiding officer orders that a person be removed, the person may be removed immediately—
- (a) by a constable in or near the polling station, or
 - (b) by any other person authorised in writing by the returning officer to remove people from the polling station.
- (4) Where a person is removed, the person must not, without the presiding officer's permission, re-enter the polling station on the day of the poll.

(5) Where a person who is removed is charged with the commission of an offence in the polling station, the person may be dealt with as a person taken into custody by a constable for an offence without a warrant.

(6) The powers conferred by this rule must not be exercised so as to prevent a voter who is otherwise entitled to vote at a polling station from having an opportunity of voting at that station.

(7) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, see also regulations 4 and 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations (which provide for circumstances in which the function of the returning officer under paragraph (3)(b) of this rule is to be discharged by the co-ordinating returning officer).

Commencement Information

I112 Sch. 2 rule 38 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Sealing of ballot boxes

39.—(1) The presiding officer must take the following steps immediately before the poll begins.

(2) The presiding officer must show the empty ballot box to those people (if any) who are present in the polling station, so that they may see that it is empty.

(3) The presiding officer must then—

(a) lock up the box, if it has a lock, and

(b) place the returning officer's seal on it, in such a way as to prevent it being opened without breaking the seal.

(4) The presiding officer must then place the box, within the presiding officer's view, for the receipt of ballot papers.

(5) The presiding officer must keep the box locked and sealed or (if it does not have a lock) keep it sealed.

Commencement Information

I113 Sch. 2 rule 39 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Questions that may be put to voters

40.—(1) At the time of an application for a ballot paper (but not afterwards), the presiding officer may put to any person described in the first column of Table 1 (set out in paragraph (3)) or in the first column of Table 2 (set out in paragraph (4)), one or more of the questions set out in the corresponding entry in the second column.

(2) If required to do so by the candidate or the candidate's election or polling agent, the presiding officer must put to any person described in the first column of Table 1 one or more of the questions set out in the corresponding entry in the second column.

(3) Table 1 sets out questions that a presiding officer may put under paragraph (1) and that a candidate (or the candidate's election or polling agent) may require to be put under paragraph (2).

Table 1

<i>Description</i>	<i>Questions</i>
1. A person applying as an elector	<p>1(a) Are you the person registered in the register of local government electors for this election as follows?</p> <p>Notes to 1(a)</p> <p>The presiding officer must then read the whole entry from the copies of the registration records.</p> <p>1(b) Have you already voted, in this or another electoral ward, at the election of councillors for this county/county borough, otherwise than as proxy for some other person?</p> <p>Notes to 1(b)</p> <p>The presiding officer must say either “county” or “county borough”, as appropriate.</p> <p>The words “, in this or another electoral ward,” may be omitted if an election is taking place only in one electoral ward.</p>
2. A person applying as proxy for an elector other than an elector who has an anonymous entry	<p>2(a) Are you the person whose name appears as AB in the list of proxies for this election as entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of CD?</p> <p>2(b) Have you already voted, in this or another electoral ward, at the election of councillors for the county/county borough, as proxy on behalf of CD?</p> <p>2(c) Are you the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild of CD?</p> <p>Notes to 2(a) to (c)</p> <p>Where a question refers to AB, the presiding officer reads out the name as it appears in the list of proxies. Where a question refers to CD, the presiding officer reads out the name of the elector.</p> <p>Note to 2(b)</p> <p>The presiding officer must say either “county” or “county borough”, as appropriate.</p> <p>The words “, in this or another electoral ward,” may be omitted if an election is taking place only in one electoral ward.</p>
3. A person applying as proxy for an elector who has an anonymous entry	<p>3(a) Are you the person entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is [x]?</p> <p>3(b) Have you already voted as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is [x]?</p>

<i>Description</i>	<i>Questions</i>
	<p>3(c) Are you the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild of the person whose number on the register of electors is [x]?</p> <p>Note to 3(a) to (c)</p> <p>Where the questions in this entry refer to [x], the presiding officer must read the elector's number from the copies of the registration records.</p>
4. A person applying as proxy who has been asked the question numbered 2(c) or 3(c) in column 2 and has not answered "Yes"	<p>4. Have you already voted, in this or another electoral ward, at the election of councillors for the county/county borough, on behalf of two persons of whom you are not the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild?</p> <p>Note to 4</p> <p>The presiding officer must say either "county" or "county borough", as appropriate.</p> <p>The words " , in this or another electoral ward, " may be omitted if an election is taking place only in one electoral ward.</p>

(4) Table 2 sets out the questions that a presiding officer may put under paragraph (1) (but cannot be required to put under paragraph (2)).

Table 2

<i>Description</i>	<i>Questions</i>
1. A person applying as an elector in relation to whom there is an entry in the postal voters list	<p>1(a) Did you apply to vote by post?</p> <p>1(b) Why have you not voted by post?</p>
2. A person applying as proxy who is named in the proxy postal voters list	<p>2(a) Did you apply to vote by post as proxy?</p> <p>2(b) Why have you not voted by post as proxy?</p>

(5) A ballot paper must not be given to any person required to answer one or more of the questions in Table 1 or 2 unless the person has answered the question or questions satisfactorily.

(6) Except as authorised by this rule, no inquiry is permitted as to the right of any person to vote.

(7) In this rule, "the copies of the registration records" means the copies provided by the returning officer for the polling station under rule 32(5)(b) and (c) (copies of the relevant register of electors and copies of any notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act relating to the relevant register of electors).

Commencement Information

I114 Sch. 2 rule 40 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Challenge of voter

41. A person must not be prevented from voting by reason only that either or both of the following apply—

- (a) a candidate or a candidate's election or polling agent declares that they have reasonable cause to believe that the person has committed an offence of personation;
- (b) the person is arrested on the grounds that they are suspected of committing or being about to commit an offence of personation.

Commencement Information

I115 Sch. 2 rule 41 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Voting procedure

42.—(1) A ballot paper must be given to a voter who applies for one.

(2) Immediately before the ballot paper is given—

- (a) the number of the elector, as stated in the copies of the registration records, must be called out,
- (b) unless the elector has an anonymous entry, the name of the elector, as stated in the copies of the registration records, must also be called out,
- (c) the number of the elector must be marked on the polling station's corresponding number list beside the number of the ballot paper to be issued,
- (d) a mark must be placed in the copies of the registration records against the number of the elector to note that a ballot paper has been received, but without showing the particular ballot paper that has been received, and
- (e) in the case of a person applying for a ballot paper as proxy, a mark must also be placed against the person's name in the list of proxies.

(3) In the case of an elector who has an anonymous entry—

- (a) the ballot paper may be given only if the elector's official poll card or, where the elector is voting by proxy, the proxy's official poll card is shown to the presiding officer, and
- (b) only the elector's number may be called out.

(4) On receiving the ballot paper, the voter must go immediately into one of the compartments in the polling station.

(5) Without undue delay, the voter must then—

- (a) secretly mark the ballot paper,
- (b) fold the ballot paper up so as to conceal the vote,
- (c) show the presiding officer the back of the ballot paper, so as to disclose the number and other unique identifying mark, and
- (d) put the ballot paper into the ballot box in the presiding officer's presence.

(6) As soon as the voter has put the ballot paper in the ballot box, the voter must leave the polling station.

(7) If a voter is in the polling station, or in a queue outside the polling station, at the close of the poll and has not yet been able to cast their vote, the presiding officer must permit the voter to cast their vote as soon as practicable.

(8) The copies of the registration records that are used for the principal area election may also be used for each relevant election.

(9) Where ballot papers are issued to a voter in respect of the principal area election and in respect of each relevant election, one mark may be placed in the copies of the registration records and, where appropriate, in the list of proxies to denote that the ballot papers have been issued.

(10) In any other case, the copies of the registration records and, where appropriate, the list of proxies must be marked in such a way as to identify each election in respect of which a ballot paper has been issued.

(11) In this rule, “the copies of the registration records” has the same meaning as in rule 40 (see paragraph (7) of that rule).

Commencement Information

I116 Sch. 2 rule 42 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Voters with a disability or unable to read: marking of votes by presiding officer

43.—(1) A voter may apply to the presiding officer for their vote to be marked if the voter—

- (a) is unable, because of blindness or other disability, to vote in the manner directed by these rules, or
- (b) declares orally that they are unable to read.

(2) Where an application is made, the presiding officer must, in the presence of any polling agents who are in the polling station when the application is made—

- (a) cause the voter’s vote to be marked on a ballot paper in the manner directed by the voter, and
- (b) cause the ballot paper to be placed in the ballot box.

(3) Where a voter’s vote is marked in pursuance of paragraph (2), the presiding officer must enter the following details on a list maintained by the presiding officer for the purposes of this rule (“the list of votes marked by the presiding officer”)—

- (a) the name and number of the voter, as shown in the copies of the registration records, and
- (b) the reason why the vote was marked.

(4) In the case of a person voting as proxy for an elector, the number to be entered together with the voter’s name in the list of votes marked by the presiding officer is the elector’s number.

(5) The same list of votes marked by the presiding officer may be used for the principal area election and each relevant election.

(6) Where the same list is used, an entry in the list is to be taken as meaning that the voter’s vote was marked in respect of the principal area election and in respect of each relevant election, unless the list identifies one or more elections at which the voter’s vote was marked.

(7) In this rule, “the copies of the registration records” has the same meaning as in rule 40 (see paragraph (7) of that rule).

Commencement Information

I117 Sch. 2 rule 43 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Voters with a disability or unable to read: assistance of companions

44.—(1) A voter may apply to the presiding officer, on the ground of blindness or other disability or inability to read, to be allowed to vote with the assistance of a companion.

(2) Where an application is made, the presiding officer must require the voter to declare, orally or in writing, whether the voter is so affected by blindness or other disability, or by inability to read, as to be unable to vote without the assistance of a companion.

(3) In the following provisions of this rule, a voter who declares that they are so affected by blindness or other disability, or by inability to read, as to be unable to vote without the assistance of a companion is referred to as a voter with disabilities.

(4) At the time when an application to vote with the assistance of a companion is made, the companion must make a written declaration before the presiding officer that the companion—

- (a) has attained the age of 16, and
- (b) has not previously assisted more than one voter with disabilities to vote at the election.

(5) The companion's declaration—

- (a) must be in the form of the declaration relating to the principal area election in Appendix 8, and
- (b) must be given to the presiding officer who must attest it and retain it.

(6) The companion's declaration at the principal area election and each relevant election may be made in the same document.

(7) The presiding officer must grant the voter's application for the assistance of a companion if the presiding officer—

- (a) is satisfied that the voter is so affected by blindness or other disability, or by inability to read, as to be unable to vote without the assistance of a companion, and
- (b) is also satisfied by the companion's written declaration that the companion has attained the age of 16 and has not previously assisted more than one voter with disabilities to vote at the election.

(8) Where the application is granted—

- (a) anything that is required to be done by these rules to the voter in connection with the giving of the vote may be done instead to the companion, and
- (b) the voter may do anything that needs to be done in connection with the giving of the vote with the assistance of the companion.

Commencement Information

I118 Sch. 2 rule 44 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Voting with the assistance of a companion: supplemental provision

45.—(1) Where a vote is given with the assistance of a companion in accordance with rule 44, the presiding officer must then enter the following details in a list maintained by the presiding officer ("the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions")—

- (a) the name and number of the voter, as shown in the copies of the registration records, and
- (b) the name and address of the companion.

(2) In the case of a person voting as proxy for an elector, the number to be entered together with the voter's name in the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions is the elector's number.

(3) Where the voter has an anonymous entry, only the voter's number in the copies of the registration records may be entered in the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions.

(4) No fee or other payment may be charged in respect of a declaration made by a companion under rule 44(4).

(5) The same list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions may be used for the principal area election and each relevant election.

(6) Where the same list is used, an entry in the list is to be taken as meaning that the voter's vote was given with assistance in respect of the principal area election and in respect of each relevant election, unless the list identifies one or more elections at which the voter's vote was given with assistance.

(7) In this rule, "the copies of the registration records" has the same meaning as in rule 40 (see paragraph (7) of that rule).

Commencement Information

1119 Sch. 2 rule 45 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Tendered ballot papers: circumstances where available

46.—(1) This rule sets out circumstances where a person who applies for a vote ("the applicant") is entitled to vote on satisfactorily answering the questions permitted by law to be asked at the poll but where the procedure for giving the vote is modified in the following two ways—

- (a) the person must use a ballot paper that is of a different colour to other ballot papers, and
- (b) the person must give the ballot paper to the presiding officer (instead of putting it in the ballot box).

Circumstances where vote already given in person

(2) The first set of circumstances is where—

- (a) the applicant represents themselves to be a particular elector named in the copies of the registration records and not named in the postal voters list or list of proxies, and
- (b) another person has already voted in person either as that elector or as that elector's proxy.

(3) The second set of circumstances is where—

- (a) the applicant represents themselves to be a particular person named in the list of proxies as proxy for an elector and not entitled to vote by post as proxy, and
- (b) another person has already voted in person either as that elector or as that elector's proxy.

Circumstances where applicant on postal voters list claims not to have applied for postal vote

(4) The third set of circumstances is where—

- (a) the applicant represents themselves to be a particular elector named in the copies of the registration records,
- (b) the applicant is also named in the postal voters list, and
- (c) the applicant claims not to have made an application to vote by post at the election.

(5) The fourth set of circumstances is where—

- (a) the applicant represents themselves to be a particular person named as a proxy in the list of proxies,
- (b) that person is also named in the proxy postal voters list, and

- (c) the applicant claims not to have made an application to vote by post as proxy at the election.

Circumstances where applicant claims to have lost postal ballot paper etc.

- (6) The fifth set of circumstances is where—

- (a) after the last time at which a person may apply for a replacement postal ballot paper but before the close of the poll, the applicant represents themselves to be a particular elector named in the copies of the registration records who is also named in the postal voters list, and
- (b) the applicant claims to have lost or not to have received that person's postal ballot paper.

- (7) The sixth set of circumstances is where—

- (a) after the last time at which a person may apply for a replacement postal ballot paper but before the close of the poll, the applicant represents themselves to be a particular person named as a proxy in the list of proxies who is also named in the proxy postal voters list, and
- (b) the applicant claims to have lost or not to have received that person's postal ballot paper.

(8) A ballot paper that is given to the presiding officer in accordance with this rule is referred to in these rules as a “tendered ballot paper”.

(9) Where an elector has an anonymous entry, the references in this rule to a person named in the copies of the registration records or a list are to be read as references to a person who has a number in the copies or list.

(10) In this rule, “the copies of the registration records” has the same meaning as in rule 40 (see paragraph (7) of that rule).

Commencement Information

I120 Sch. 2 rule 46 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Duties of presiding officer in relation to tendered ballot papers

47.—(1) This rule sets out the duties of the presiding officer in relation to tendered ballot papers.

- (2) The presiding officer must endorse the following information on the ballot paper—

- (a) the name of the voter, and
- (b) the voter's number in the copies of the registration records or, if the voter is voting as proxy for an elector, the number of the elector.

- (3) The presiding officer must put the ballot paper in a separate packet.

- (4) The following information must be entered on a list (the “tendered votes list”)—

- (a) the name of the voter, and
- (b) the voter's number in the copies of the registration records or, if the voter is voting as proxy for an elector, the number of the elector.

(5) Where an elector has an anonymous entry, the presiding officer must not include the name of the voter on the ballot paper or in the tendered votes list.

(6) The same tendered votes list may be used for the principal area election and each relevant election.

(7) Where the same list is used, an entry in the list is to be taken as meaning that the presiding officer was given a tendered ballot paper in respect of the principal area election and in respect of each relevant election, unless the list identifies one or more elections at which a tendered ballot paper was given.

(8) In this rule, “the copies of the registration records” has the same meaning as in rule 40 (see paragraph (7) of that rule).

Commencement Information

I121 Sch. 2 rule 47 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Spoilt ballot papers

48.—(1) This rule applies where a voter has inadvertently dealt with their ballot paper in such a manner that it cannot conveniently be used as a ballot paper.

(2) The voter may obtain another ballot paper by—

- (a) giving the ballot paper that was inadvertently dealt with (the “spoilt ballot paper”) to the presiding officer, and
- (b) proving to the presiding officer’s satisfaction that it was dealt with inadvertently.

(3) Where the voter is given another ballot paper, the spoilt ballot paper must be cancelled immediately.

Commencement Information

I122 Sch. 2 rule 48 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Correction of errors on day of poll

49.—(1) The presiding officer must keep a list of persons to whom ballot papers are given in consequence of an alteration to the register made by virtue of section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act which takes effect on the day of the poll.

(2) The same list may be used for the principal area election and each relevant election.

(3) Where the same list is used, an entry in the list is to be taken as meaning that ballot papers were given in consequence of an alteration to the register in respect of the principal area election and in respect of each relevant election, unless the list identifies one or more elections at which ballot papers were so given.

Commencement Information

I123 Sch. 2 rule 49 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Adjournment of poll in case of riot

50.—(1) This rule applies where proceedings at any polling station are interrupted or obstructed by riot or open violence.

(2) The presiding officer must—

- (a) adjourn the proceedings until the following day, and
- (b) immediately inform the co-ordinating returning officer.

(3) Where the poll is adjourned at a polling station—

- (a) the hours of polling on the day to which it is adjourned must be the same as for the original day, and

- (b) references in these rules to the close of the poll are to be read as references to the end of the hours of polling on the day to which it is adjourned.

Commencement Information

I124 Sch. 2 rule 50 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Procedure on close of poll

51.—(1) This rule sets out the steps that must be taken by the presiding officer as soon as practicable after every voter has cast their vote.

(2) In the presence of any polling agents appointed for the purposes of the principal area election or a relevant election who are in the polling station, the presiding officer must seal each ballot box (with the key if any attached) in use at the polling station so as to prevent the introduction of additional ballot papers, using the presiding officer's seal and the seals of any polling agents who wish to affix their seal.

(3) ^{F8}... The presiding officer must place each of the following in separate packets, sealed using the presiding officer's seal and the seals of any polling agents who wish to affix their seal—

- (a) the unused and spoilt ballot papers (together);
- (b) the tendered ballot papers;
- (c) the marked copies of the registration records and list of proxies (together);
- (d) the polling station's corresponding number list, as marked (see rule 42(2)(c)) (referred to in the following provisions of these rules as “the completed corresponding number list”);
- (e) any certificates surrendered under rule 37(4) or (5) (surrender of certificates issued to constables or staff of returning officers);
- (f) the following lists and declarations (together)—
 - (i) the list of votes marked by the presiding officer, together with a statement of the number of voters whose votes are marked under the heads “disability” and “unable to read” (see rule 43);
 - (ii) the declarations made by the companions of voters with disabilities (see rule 44);
 - (iii) the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions (see rule 45);
 - (iv) the tendered votes list (see rule 47);
 - (v) the list maintained under rule 49 (correction of errors on day of poll).

[^{F9}(3A) The presiding officer must do anything required by paragraph (3)(a), (b), (e) or (f) in the polling station, in the presence of any polling agents who are there.

(3B) The presiding officer may do anything required by paragraph (3)(c) or (d)—

- (a) in the polling station, in the presence of any polling agents who are there, or
- (b) if the presiding officer has informed the polling agents and given them an opportunity to attend, at any other place that the presiding officer considers appropriate, in the presence of any polling agents who are there.]

(4) The presiding officer must deliver the sealed ballot boxes and packets to the co-ordinating returning officer or cause them to be delivered in accordance with arrangements approved by that returning officer.

(5) The packets must be accompanied by a statement (“a ballot paper account”) prepared by the presiding officer showing—

- (a) the number of ballot papers given to the presiding officer, and
- (b) how the ballot papers are accounted for under the following headings—
 - (i) the number of ballot papers issued and not otherwise accounted for;
 - (ii) the number of ballot papers unused;
 - (iii) the number of spoilt ballot papers;
 - (iv) the number of tendered ballot papers.
- (6) The contents of the packets containing the unused and spoilt ballot papers and the tendered ballot papers must not be combined with the contents of the packets made under the corresponding rule that applies at any relevant election.
- (7) The ballot paper account must not be combined with the ballot paper account prepared under the corresponding rule that applies at any relevant election.
- (8) In this rule, “the marked copies of the registration records” means the copies of the registration records (as defined by rule 40(7)), as marked in accordance with these rules.

- F8** Words in [Sch. 2 rule. 51\(3\)](#) omitted (10.3.2022) by virtue of [The Local Elections \(Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/263\)](#), regs. 1(2), **3(3)(b)(i)** (with reg. 12(a))
- F9** [Sch. 2 rule. 51\(3A\)\(3B\)](#) inserted (10.3.2022) by [The Local Elections \(Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/263\)](#), regs. 1(2), **3(3)(b)(ii)** (with reg. 12(a))

Commencement Information

- I125** Sch. 2 rule 51 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

PART 4

Counting of Votes and Declaration of Result at Contested Elections

Overview of rules and interpretation

- 52.**—(1) This rule provides an overview of the application of this Part.
- (2) Where the returning officer is the co-ordinating returning officer, the following rules apply—
- (a) rule 53 (attendance at proceedings);
 - (b) rule 54 (preliminary and general duties);
 - (c) rule 55 (separation of ballot papers etc.);
 - (d) rules 58 to 64 (provisions relating to counting etc.).
- (3) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, the following rules apply—
- (a) rule 53(1) and (3) to (9) (attendance at proceedings);
 - (b) rule 56 (preliminary and general duties);
 - (c) rule 57 (opening of containers etc.);
 - (d) rules 58 to 64 (provisions relating to counting etc.).
- (4) In this Part—
- (a) references to the principal area counting agents are to the counting agents appointed for the purposes of the principal area election;

- (b) references to the other counting agents are to the counting agents appointed for the purposes of any relevant election;
- (c) references to the principal area election agents are to the election agents appointed for the purposes of the principal area election;
- (d) references to the other election agents are to the election agents appointed for the purposes of any relevant election.

Commencement Information

I126 Sch. 2 rule 52 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Attendance at proceedings under this Part

53.—(1) The following persons are entitled to attend proceedings under rules 55(2) to (10), 57 and 59 to 64—

- (a) the returning officer and members of the returning officer’s staff;
- (b) each candidate and a guest of each candidate;
- (c) the principal area election agents;
- (d) the principal area counting agents;
- (e) any person who is entitled to attend by virtue of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers);
- (f) the constables on duty.

(2) In addition, any person who is entitled to attend the counting of votes at a relevant election is entitled to attend proceedings under rule 55(2) to (10).

(3) The returning officer may permit any other person to attend proceedings under any of rules 55(2) to (10), 57 or 59 to 64.

(4) Permission may not be given under paragraph (3) unless the returning officer—

- (a) is satisfied that the person’s attendance will not impede the efficient discharge of the returning officer’s functions, and
- (b) has either consulted the appropriate persons about whether to give permission or decided that it is not practicable to consult them.

(5) For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), “the appropriate persons” are—

- (a) in the case of proceedings under rule 55(2) to (10), the principal area election agents and the other election agents;
- (b) in the case of any other proceedings, the principal area election agents.

(6) The returning officer must give any counting agents who are entitled to attend all such reasonable facilities for overseeing the proceedings, and all such information about them, as the returning officer is able to give consistently with the orderly conduct of the proceedings and the discharge of the returning officer’s duties.

(7) In particular, where the votes are counted by sorting the ballot papers according to the candidate for whom the vote is given and then counting the number of ballot papers for each candidate, the principal area counting agents are entitled to satisfy themselves that the ballot papers are correctly sorted.

(8) The returning officer must make arrangements to ensure that every person attending at the counting of votes (other than the constables on duty) has been given a notice setting out the provisions of section 66(2) and (6) of the 1983 Act (notification of requirement of secrecy).

(9) In this rule, a reference to a constable includes a reference to a person designated as a community support officer or community support volunteer under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002 (police powers for civilian staff and volunteers).

Commencement Information

I127 Sch. 2 rule 53 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Preliminary and general duties where returning officer is co-ordinating returning officer

54.—(1) This rule applies where the returning officer is the co-ordinating returning officer.

(2) The returning officer must make arrangements for discharging the functions under rule 55 as soon as practicable after the close of the poll.

(3) The returning officer must give the principal area counting agents and the other counting agents a notice stating the time and place at which the returning officer will begin to discharge the functions under rule 56.

(4) While counting and recording the number of ballot papers and counting the votes, the returning officer must—

- (a) keep the ballot papers with their faces upwards, and
- (b) take such other precautions as are appropriate for the purpose of preventing any person from seeing the numbers or other unique identifying marks printed on the back of the papers.

Commencement Information

I128 Sch. 2 rule 54 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Separation of ballot papers etc. where returning officer is co-ordinating returning officer

55.—(1) This rule applies where the returning officer is the co-ordinating returning officer.

(2) The returning officer must, in the presence of the principal area counting agents and the other counting agents, open each ballot box, take out the ballot papers, count them and record separately the number of ballot papers used in each election.

(3) The returning officer must not count any tendered ballot paper.

(4) Where separate ballot boxes were used at the poll, no vote for a candidate at the principal area election is to be treated as invalid because it was placed in the ballot box intended for use at a relevant election.

(5) The returning officer must, in the presence of the principal area election agents and the other election agents, verify each ballot paper account by comparing it with the number of ballot papers recorded, the unused and spoilt ballot papers in the returning officer's possession and the tendered votes list (opening and resealing the packets containing the unused and spoilt ballot papers and tendered votes list).

(6) The returning officer must prepare a statement as to the result of the verification and give a copy of the statement to any principal area election agent, and to any other election agent, who requests it.

- (7) The returning officer must also—
- (a) count the postal ballot papers that have been properly returned (as to which see rule 58), and
 - (b) record separately the number counted at the poll at the principal area election and at each relevant election.
- (8) The returning officer must then—
- (a) separate the ballot papers relating to the principal area election from the ballot papers relating to each relevant election,
 - (b) make up into packets the ballot papers for each relevant election, and
 - (c) seal up the packets in separate containers endorsing on each a description of the area to which the ballot papers relate.
- (9) The returning officer must then deliver or cause to be delivered to the returning officer for each relevant election—
- (a) the containers of ballot papers relating to the election, together with a list of the containers and their contents,
 - (b) the ballot paper accounts relating to the election, together with a copy of the statements as to the result of the verification, and
 - (c) the packets of unused and spoilt ballot papers and tendered ballot papers.
- (10) The returning officer must then mix together all the ballot papers used at the principal area election.

Commencement Information

I129 Sch. 2 rule 55 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Preliminary and general duties where returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer

- 56.**—(1) This rule applies where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer.
- (2) The returning officer must make arrangements for counting the votes in the presence of the principal area counting agents as soon as practicable after the delivery of the ballot papers by the returning officer who is the co-ordinating returning officer.
- (3) The returning officer must give the principal area counting agents a notice stating the time when the counting of votes will begin (on the assumption that the ballot papers have been delivered) and the place at which the count will take place.
- (4) While counting and recording the number of ballot papers and counting the votes, the returning officer must—
- (a) keep the ballot papers with their faces upwards, and
 - (b) take such other precautions as are appropriate for the purpose of preventing any person from seeing the numbers or other unique identifying marks printed on the back of the papers.

Commencement Information

I130 Sch. 2 rule 56 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Opening of containers etc. where returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer

57.—(1) This rule applies where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer.

(2) On receipt of the containers of ballot papers from the returning officer who is the co-ordinating returning officer, and after the time specified in the notice given under rule 56(3), the returning officer must open each container in the presence of the principal area counting agents.

(3) Where the proceedings on the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers are not taken together with those proceedings at a relevant election under regulation 65 of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001⁽¹⁹⁾ or under that regulation as applied by regulations under section 44 of the Local Government Act 2000⁽²⁰⁾, the returning officer must count the postal ballot papers that have been properly returned and record the number counted.

(4) The returning officer must then mix together all the postal ballot papers and all the ballot papers from the containers.

Commencement Information

I131 Sch. 2 rule 57 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Further provision about postal ballot papers

58.—(1) This rule applies for determining whether a postal ballot paper is to be treated as properly returned as mentioned in rules 55(7)(a) and 57(3).

(2) A postal ballot paper is to be treated as properly returned if the ballot paper and the accompanying postal voting statement properly completed are—

- (a) handed in at a polling station in the appropriate area before the close of the poll,
- (b) given by hand to the returning officer before the close of the poll, or
- (c) received by the returning officer by post before the close of the poll.

(3) A postal voting statement is properly completed if —

- (a) it is signed by the elector or (as the case may be) the proxy, unless the registration officer has dispensed with the requirement for a signature,
- (b) it states the date of birth of the elector or (as the case may be) the proxy, and
- (c) in a case where steps for verifying the date of birth and signature of an elector or proxy have been prescribed by regulations under the 1983 Act, the returning officer has taken those steps and verified the date of birth and (except in a case where the requirement for a signature has been dispensed with) the signature.

(4) Where, at the close of the poll, a person is in the polling station, or in a queue outside the polling station, for the purpose of handing in a postal ballot paper and postal voting statement—

- (a) the person must be permitted to hand the ballot paper and statement in at the polling station, and
- (b) where handed in, they are to be treated as having been handed in before the close of the poll for the purposes of this rule.

(5) “The appropriate area” referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is the area which is identified by—

⁽¹⁹⁾ [S.I. 2001/341](#). Regulation 65 was amended by paragraph 16(4) of Schedule 2 to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

⁽²⁰⁾ [2000 c. 22](#). Section 44 was amended by paragraph 18(2) of Schedule 21 to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. Functions of a Minister of the Crown under section 44, so far as exercisable within devolved competence, were transferred to the Welsh Ministers by article 45 of, and Schedule 1 to, the Welsh Ministers (Transfer of Functions) Order 2018 ([S.I. 2018/644](#)).

- (a) establishing the polls in respect of which the postal voter has been issued with a ballot paper,
- (b) identifying the constituency or other area in respect of which each of those polls is being held, and
- (c) then identifying the area that is common to all those areas.

Commencement Information

I132 Sch. 2 rule 58 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The count: general

59.—(1) This rule applies where the returning officer has mixed the ballot papers under rule 55(10) or 57(4).

(2) The result of the poll must be ascertained by counting the votes given to each candidate.

(3) The candidate or candidates to whom more votes have been given than to the other candidates, up to the number of councillors to be elected, must be declared to have been elected.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5) the returning officer must, so far as practicable, proceed continuously with the counting of votes, allowing only time for refreshment.

(5) The returning officer may exclude any hours between 7 p.m. and 9 a.m. on the following morning.

(6) During any time that is excluded, the returning officer must—

- (a) place the ballot papers and other documents relating to the election under the returning officer's seal and the seals of any principal area counting agents who wish to affix their seals, and
- (b) otherwise take proper precautions for the security of the ballot papers and other documents.

Commencement Information

I133 Sch. 2 rule 59 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

The count: rejected ballot papers

60.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (4), the following ballot papers are void and must not be counted—

- (a) a ballot paper that does not bear the official mark;
- (b) a ballot paper on which votes are given for more candidates than the voter is entitled to vote for;
- (c) a ballot paper on which anything is written or marked by which the voter can be identified except the printed number and other unique identifying mark on the back;
- (d) a ballot paper that is unmarked or void for uncertainty.

(2) Where the voter is entitled to vote for more than one candidate, a ballot paper is not to be treated as void for uncertainty as respects any vote as to which no uncertainty arises and that vote must be counted.

(3) Paragraph (4) applies to a ballot paper on which a vote is marked—

- (a) elsewhere than in the proper place,

- (b) otherwise than by means of a cross, or
 - (c) by more than one mark.
- (4) The ballot paper is not, by reason only of how the vote is marked, to be treated as void (either wholly or as respects that vote) if—
- (a) it is clear from the ballot paper that the voter intended to vote for one or other of the candidates,
 - (b) the way the ballot paper is marked does not itself identify the voter, and
 - (c) the returning officer is satisfied that the voter cannot be identified from the ballot paper.
- (5) The returning officer must—
- (a) endorse the word “rejected” on any ballot paper which, in accordance with this rule, is not to be counted;
 - (b) endorse the word “rejected in part” on any ballot paper on which a vote is counted in accordance with paragraph (2) and indicate which vote or votes have been counted.
- (6) If a principal area counting agent objects to the returning officer’s decision, the returning officer must add the words “rejection objected to” to the endorsement.
- (7) The returning officer must prepare a statement showing the number of ballot papers rejected and the number rejected in part.
- (8) The statement must set out the number rejected or rejected in part under each of the headings in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d) of paragraph (1).

Commencement Information

I134 Sch. 2 rule 60 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Re-count

- 61.—**(1) A candidate or the candidate’s election agent may, if present when the count is completed, request that the returning officer re-count the votes.
- (2) The returning officer must comply with the request unless the returning officer’s opinion is that the request is unreasonable.
- (3) No step may be taken on the completion of the count until the candidates and election agents who are present have been given a reasonable opportunity to request that the votes are re-counted.
- (4) Where a re-count takes place, this rule also applies in relation to the re-count (so that, for example, the candidate or the candidate’s election agent may, if present when the re-count is completed, request that the returning officer re-count the votes).

Commencement Information

I135 Sch. 2 rule 61 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Equality of votes

- 62.—**(1) This rule applies where, after the counting of the votes (including any re-count), there is an equality of votes between any candidates and the addition of a vote would entitle any of those candidates to be elected.

(2) The returning officer must immediately decide between the candidates by lot and proceed as if the candidate on whom the lot falls had received an additional vote.

Commencement Information

I136 Sch. 2 rule 62 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Decision on ballot papers

63. The decision of the returning officer on any question arising in respect of a ballot paper is final, but may be reviewed on an election petition.

Commencement Information

I137 Sch. 2 rule 63 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Declaration of result

64.—(1) When the count has been completed, the returning officer must declare to be elected the candidate or candidates to whom more votes have been given than to other candidates, up to the number of councillors to be elected.

(2) The returning officer must give a notice stating the names and addresses of the candidates elected to the proper officer of the council for which the election was held.

(3) The returning officer must also publish notice of—

- (a) the names of the candidates elected,
- (b) the total number of votes given for each candidate (whether elected or not), and
- (c) the number of rejected ballot papers under each head shown in the statement of rejected ballot papers (see rule 60(7)).

Commencement Information

I138 Sch. 2 rule 64 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

PART 5

Disposal of Documents

Sealing up of ballot papers at contested elections

65.—(1) This rule applies on the completion of the counting of votes at a contested election.

(2) The returning officer must seal up in separate packets—

- (a) the counted ballot papers, and
- (b) the rejected ballot papers (including the ballot papers rejected in part).

(3) The returning officer must not open any packet sealed under rule 51(3) that contains tendered ballot papers.

(4) Where the returning officer is the co-ordinating returning officer, the returning officer must not open any packets sealed under rule 51(3) that contain—

- (a) completed corresponding number lists;
- (b) marked copies of the registration records and list of proxies;
- (c) certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5).

Commencement Information

I139 Sch. 2 rule 65 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Delivery of documents to registration officer at contested elections

66.—(1) This rule applies where the returning officer has sealed up the counted and rejected ballot papers under rule 65(2).

(2) The returning officer must forward the following documents to the registration officer of the county or county borough council in whose area the election is held—

- (a) the packets of ballot papers in the returning officer’s possession;
- (b) the ballot paper accounts prepared under rule 51(5);
- (c) the statements of rejected ballot papers prepared under rule 60(7);
- (d) the statements as to the result of the verification of the ballot paper accounts prepared under rule 55(6);
- (e) the packets containing the postal voters list and the proxy postal voters list.

(3) Where the returning officer is also the co-ordinating returning officer, the returning officer must also forward the following documents to the registration officer of the county or county borough council in whose area the election is held—

- (a) the following lists and declarations—
 - (i) the lists of votes marked by the presiding officer, together with a statement of the number of voters whose votes are marked under the heads “disability” and “unable to read” (see rule 43);
 - (ii) the declarations made by the companions of voters with disabilities (see rule 44);
 - (iii) the lists of voters with disabilities assisted by companions (see rule 45);
 - (iv) the tendered votes lists (see rule 47);
 - (v) the lists maintained under rule 49 (correction of errors on the day of the poll);
- (b) the packets containing completed corresponding number lists;
- (c) the packets containing marked copies of the registration records and list of proxies;
- (d) the packets containing certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5).

Commencement Information

I140 Sch. 2 rule 66 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Production etc. of documents

67.—(1) This rule applies in relation to the following documents when in the custody of the registration officer (having been forwarded under rule 66)—

- (a) rejected and counted ballot papers;
- (b) sealed packets containing completed corresponding number lists;
- (c) sealed packets containing certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5).

(2) A county court may make any of the following orders, if satisfied by evidence on oath that the order is required either for the purpose of instituting or maintaining a prosecution for an offence in relation to ballot papers or for the purpose of an election petition—

- (a) an order for the inspection or production of any of the rejected ballot papers (including any ballot papers rejected in part);
- (b) an order for the inspection of any of the counted ballot papers;
- (c) an order for the opening of any of the sealed packets containing—
 - (i) completed corresponding number lists, or
 - (ii) certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5);
- (d) where an order for the opening of any of the sealed packets is made under subparagraph (c), an order for the inspection or production of the whole or part of its contents.

(3) An election court may make—

- (a) an order for the inspection of any of the counted ballot papers;
- (b) an order for the opening of any of the sealed packets containing—
 - (i) completed corresponding number lists, or
 - (ii) certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5);
- (c) where an order for the opening of any of the sealed packets is made under subparagraph (b), an order for the inspection or production of the whole or part of its contents.

(4) An order under this rule may be made subject to such of the following conditions as the court thinks appropriate—

- (a) conditions as to persons;
- (b) conditions as to time;
- (c) conditions as to the place and method of inspection;
- (d) conditions as to production or opening.

(5) A court, in making an order under this rule for the inspection of counted ballot papers or for the opening of a sealed packet, must impose such conditions under paragraph (4) as the court considers appropriate to ensure that the way in which an elector has given their vote is not disclosed unless and until it has been proved—

- (a) that the elector has given their vote, and
- (b) that the vote has been declared by a competent court to be invalid.

(6) Any person giving effect to an order under this rule for the inspection of counted ballot papers or for the opening of a sealed packet must take care to ensure that the way in which an elector has given their vote is not disclosed unless and until it has been proved—

- (a) that the elector has given their vote, and

- (b) that the vote has been declared by a competent court to be invalid.
- (7) An appeal lies to the High Court from an order of a county court under this rule.
- (8) The powers of a county court under this rule may be exercised by any judge of the court otherwise than in open court.
- (9) Except as provided by this rule, no person may—
 - (a) inspect any of the rejected or counted ballot papers;
 - (b) open any of the sealed packets containing—
 - (i) completed corresponding number lists, or
 - (ii) certificates surrendered by constables or staff of returning officers under rule 37(4) or (5).

Commencement Information

1141 Sch. 2 rule 67 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Orders for the production etc. of documents: supplemental provision

68.—(1) Paragraphs (2) and (3) apply where an order is made under rule 67 for the production by a registration officer of a document in the registration officer's custody relating to an election specified in the order.

(2) The production by the registration officer or the registration officer's agent of the document in the manner directed by the order is conclusive evidence that the document relates to the specified election.

(3) If a packet of ballot papers with an endorsement on the packet is produced by the registration officer or the registration officer's agent to comply with the order, the endorsement is prima facie evidence that the ballot papers are what they are stated to be by the endorsement.

(4) Paragraph (5) applies where, to comply with an order under rule 67, a registration officer or a registration officer's agent has produced—

- (a) a ballot paper purporting to have been used at an election, and
- (b) a completed corresponding number list in use at the election, with a number marked in writing beside the number of that ballot paper on the list.

(5) The production of the ballot paper and the list are prima facie evidence that the elector whose vote was given by that ballot paper was the person whose entry at the time of the election in the register of electors, or on a notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, contained the same number as the number written on the ballot paper.

Commencement Information

1142 Sch. 2 rule 68 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Retention and destruction of documents forwarded to registration officer

69.—(1) The registration officer must retain all documents forwarded under rule 66 for a period of one year beginning with the day on which they were received by the registration officer.

(2) At the end of that period of one year, the registration officer must cause the documents to be destroyed unless otherwise directed by an order of a county court, a Crown Court, a magistrates' court or an election court.

Commencement Information

I143 Sch. 2 rule 69 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

Destruction of home address forms by returning officer

70.—(1) The returning officer must destroy each candidate's home address form—

- (a) on the next day following the 35th day after the returning officer has returned the names of the councillors elected, unless an election petition questioning the election or the return of candidates is presented before that day;
- (b) if an election petition questioning the election or return of councillors is presented before that day, as soon as practicable following the conclusion of proceedings on the petition (including, where there is an appeal, the proceedings on the appeal).

(2) For the purpose of deciding the day on which candidates' home address forms must be destroyed, any day that is an excluded day must be disregarded.

Commencement Information

I144 Sch. 2 rule 70 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

PART 6

Death of Candidate

Countermand or abandonment of poll on death of a candidate

71.—(1) This rule applies where, at a contested election, the returning officer is satisfied before the result of the election is declared that one of the persons named or to be named as a candidate in the ballot papers has died.

(2) The returning officer must countermand notice of the poll or, if polling has begun, the returning officer must direct that the poll be abandoned and no further ballot papers may be issued.

(3) The countermanding of the poll or a direction that it be abandoned does not affect the poll at any relevant election.

(4) At the close of the poll at each relevant election, the presiding officer at any polling station in use at the election must take the steps (so far as not already taken) that the presiding officer would be required to take under rule 51 had the poll at the principal area election not been abandoned, except that it is not necessary for the presiding officer to prepare a ballot paper account.

(5) Where the returning officer is the co-ordinating returning officer, the returning officer must take the steps (so far as not already taken) that the returning officer would be required to take under Part 4, except that—

- (a) the returning officer must not proceed with counting any ballot papers or votes relating to the abandoned poll, and
- (b) it is not necessary to verify any ballot paper account relating to that poll.

(6) Where the returning officer is not the co-ordinating returning officer, the returning officer—

- (a) must receive any ballot papers or other documents relating to the abandoned poll that may be delivered by or on behalf of the co-ordinating returning officer, but

- (b) must not otherwise proceed with any step under Part 4 relating to the abandoned poll.
- (7) The returning officer must take the same steps as the returning officer would be required to take under rules 65 and 66 on the completion of the counting of votes (had the poll not been abandoned), except that—
 - (a) the returning officer must seal up all the ballot papers (whether the votes on them have been counted or not), and
 - (b) it is not necessary to seal up counted and rejected ballot papers in separate packets.
- (8) The provisions of rules 67 to 69 apply to ballot papers and other documents relating to a poll that is abandoned by reason of a candidate's death, except that—
 - (a) ballot papers on which the votes were neither counted nor rejected are to be treated as counted ballot papers, and
 - (b) an order may be made under rule 67(2) or (3) only for the purpose of instituting or maintaining a prosecution for an offence in relation to ballot papers.
- (9) For what happens after notice of a poll is countermanded or a poll is abandoned, see section 39 of the 1983 Act.

Commencement Information

I145 Sch. 2 rule 71 in force at 17.12.2021, see [rule 1](#)

APPENDICES

Note: The forms contained in these Appendices may be adapted so far as circumstances require.

Appendix 1

Rule 5(1)

Form of nomination paper
<p>Section 1: Details of election</p> <p>Election of councillors to the [insert name of the county or county borough council]</p> <p>Electoral ward:</p> <p>Date of election (see note 1):</p>
<p>Section 2: Candidate's personal details</p> <p>Candidate's surnames:</p> <p>Candidate's forenames:</p> <p>Candidate's commonly used surnames (see note 2 below):</p> <p>Candidate's commonly used forenames (see note 2 below):</p> <p>Candidate's date of birth:</p>
<p>Section 3: Description (if any) (see note 3 below)</p>
<p>Section 4: Candidate's statement of party membership (see note 4 below)</p> <p>Have you been a member of any registered political party at any time during the period of 12 months ending with the day on which the notice of election is published? Yes/No</p> <p>If you have answered "Yes", complete the table below in relation to each registered political party of which you have been a member at any time during that period. Add further rows if necessary. You must complete the table even if the party has ceased to exist or is no longer a registered political party.</p> <p>It is not necessary to complete the table if you have included a permitted party description in section 3 of this form and you have not been a member of any registered political party during the 12 months period other than the party or parties to which the description relates.</p>

Please take care to ensure that the information you provide is accurate. The returning officer is required by rule 13 of Schedule 2 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021 to include this information in the statement of persons nominated, which is published.

Registered name or names of each registered political party	The dates during the 12 months period when you were a member (using the format dd/mm/yyyy to dd/mm/yyyy)

Section 5: Declarations (see note 5)

Complete and sign the following declarations.

I declare that I am qualified on the day on which I complete this nomination paper, and that I will be qualified on the day of election, to be elected as councillor on the basis that I am on the day on which I complete this nomination paper, and will be on the day of election, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a relevant citizen of the Union or a qualifying foreign citizen who has attained the age of 18 years and that—*

(a) I am registered as a local government elector for the area of [insert the name of the county or county borough council] on the day on which I complete this nomination paper and will continue to be on the day of election;

(b) I have occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the area of [insert the name of the county or county borough council] during the whole of the period of 12 months preceding the day on which I complete this nomination paper and I will have occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in that area during the whole of the period of 12 months preceding the day of election;

(c) my principal or only place of work during the period of 12 months preceding the day on which I complete this nomination paper has been in the area of [insert the name of the county or county borough council] and my principal or only place of work during the 12 months preceding the day of election will have been in that area;

(d) I have resided in the area of [insert the name of the county or county borough council] during the whole of the period of 12 months preceding the day on which I complete this nomination paper and I will have resided in that area during the whole of the period of 12 months preceding the day of election.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021. (See end of Document for details)

*Candidates should indicate which one or more of paragraphs (a) to (d) apply to them by ticking those that apply and putting a line through those that do not apply.

I also declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief I am not disqualified from being elected as councillor by reason of any disqualification set out in section 80A of the Local Government Act 1972 or any decision made under section 79 of the Local Government Act 2000 and I do not hold a politically restricted post, within the meaning of Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, under a local authority, within the meaning of that Part.

Candidate's signature to declarations:

Date of signature:

Section 6: Candidate's signature to nomination paper and attestation by witness

Candidate's signature:

Date of signature:

Signed in the presence of a witness: [Name of witness]

Signature of witness:

Notes to the form of nomination paper

Note 1: The date to be given here is the date on which the poll is to take place.

Note 2: If a candidate commonly uses forenames or surnames that are different in any respect from the forenames or surnames that are given in the first part of section 2, the candidate's commonly used forenames or surnames may be given in the appropriate place in the second part of section 2 if the candidate so wishes. This includes (but is not limited to) cases where the difference is that the commonly used forenames or surnames are in a different order, include only some of the names or include additional names. Where commonly used forenames or surnames are given, those names will generally appear in the statement of persons nominated and on the ballot paper (instead of any other names). There are circumstances in which the returning officer may refuse to use the commonly used names and these are set out in rule 14 of Schedule 2 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021.

Note 3: The only descriptions that may be given are (a) a description that is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party or with

two or more registered political parties and is permitted under rule 6 of Schedule 2 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021 (“a permitted party description”), or (b) the word “Independent” or the word “Annibynnol”, or both those words.

In certain circumstances, a candidate using a permitted party description may add the word “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” or “Cymreig” to the description. Those circumstances are set out in rule 7 of Schedule 2 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021.

Note 4: The requirements for statements of party membership are set out in rule 8 of Schedule 2 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021.

Note 5: The first declaration reflects the requirements set out in section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972. That section defines “qualifying Commonwealth citizen”, “relevant citizen of the Union” and “qualifying foreign citizen”.

Note 6: When the nomination paper is delivered, it must be accompanied by the candidate’s home address form which must comply with rule 9 of Schedule 2 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the *The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021*. (See end of Document for details)

Appendix 2**Rule 22(3)**

Form of front of ballot paper	
Election of councillors to [insert the name of the county or county borough council]	
<p>Vote for only one candidate by putting a cross [x] in the box next to your choice.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Vote for no more than [insert number of candidates to be elected] candidates by putting a cross [x] in the box next to each of your choices.*</p> <p>*The returning officer must select the wording that is appropriate for the election.</p>	
JAMES, Lisa 6 Y Stryd, Y Dre CY36 4EZ Promotion of Ethics in Local Government Party	<div>Emblem</div> <div></div>
THOMAS, Gareth Iceland Electoral Law Improvement Party	<div>Emblem</div> <div></div>
THOMAS RICHARDS, Angharad The County of Hafod Good Law Party	<div>Emblem</div> <div></div>
WYATT, Cath The County of Cornwall Efficiency Party	<div>Emblem</div> <div></div>

Form of back of ballot paper Number: Other unique identifying mark: Election for the [insert name] electoral ward of the [insert name of the county or county borough] on [insert date of poll]
--

Form of Directions as to Printing the Ballot Paper 1. Nothing may be printed on the ballot paper except in accordance with these directions. 2. So far as practicable, the directions set out in paragraphs 3 to 13 must be followed in the printing of
--

the ballot paper.

3. No word may be printed on the front of the ballot paper except:

- (a) the heading “Election of councillors to [insert the name of the county or county borough council]”;
- (b) the direction “Vote for only one candidate by putting a cross [x] in the box next to your choice” or, where more than one candidate is to be elected, “Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates by putting a cross [x] in the box next to each of your choices”;
- (c) the names and descriptions (if any) of the candidates and their home address information, as shown in the statement of persons nominated;
- (d) words forming part of any emblem to be included against the candidate’s particulars.

4. A box must be printed around the heading referred to in paragraph 3(a) and the direction referred to in paragraph 3(b), and the heading and direction must be separated within the box by a horizontal line extending across it.

5. No line may be printed on the front of the ballot paper except:

- (a) as part of the box referred to in paragraph 4;
- (b) the horizontal line referred to in that paragraph;
- (c) a horizontal line above the particulars of the first candidate;
- (d) horizontal lines separating the particulars of each candidate from the particulars of the other candidates;
- (e) a horizontal line below the particulars of the last candidate; and
- (f) as part of the boxes on the right-hand side of the ballot paper where the vote is to be marked.

6. The horizontal lines referred to in paragraph 5(c), (d) and (e) must be equally spaced and the space between each of them must be a minimum of 2.5 centimetres.

7. The boxes referred to in paragraph 5(f) must not touch any horizontal line and each one must be equidistant between the horizontal line above it and the horizontal line below it.

8. Each of the horizontal lines referred to in paragraph 5(c) and (d) must extend from a point level with the text on the left-hand side of the page to a point directly above the centre of the box below that line.

9. The horizontal line referred to in paragraph 5(e) must:

- (a) extend from a point level with the text on the left-hand side of the page to a point directly below the right-hand edge of the box above that line; and

(b) be thicker than the other horizontal lines.

10. Where a registered emblem is to be printed against a candidate's particulars:

- (a) it must be printed adjacent to and to the right of the candidate's particulars; and
- (b) its size as printed must not exceed 2 centimetres square.

11. All the words on the front of the ballot paper must appear in the same large type except that:

- (a) the heading referred to in paragraph 3(a) must appear in very large and bold type;
- (b) in the direction referred to in paragraph 3(b), the words "only one candidate" or, as the case may be, "no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates" must appear in very large and bold type;
- (c) the remainder of that direction must appear in very large type; and
- (d) the names of the candidates and the descriptions (if any) must appear in bold type.

12. The surnames of each candidate must appear in capitals and the candidate's other names and any description must be in lower case with initial capitals.

13. The number and other unique identifying mark must be printed close to each other on the back of the ballot paper.

Appendix 3

Rule 23(5)

Corresponding Number List

Corresponding Number List: Part 1
(to be completed in respect of ballot papers to be issued to postal voters)

Electoral ward:

Date of poll:

Sheet no:

Ballot Paper Number Identify the number issued for each election	Unique Identifying Mark Identify the mark for each ballot paper	Elector Number

Corresponding Number List: Part 2
(to be completed in respect of ballot papers to be provided at polling stations)

Electoral ward:

Date of poll:

Polling station:

Sheet no:

Ballot Paper Number Identify the number issued for each election	Elector Number

Appendix 4**Rule 28(1)(b)**

**Form of Postal Voting Statement
(for use where there is a joint issue and receipt of
postal ballot papers)**

Elector's name*:

*The returning officer must omit the elector's name where the ballot papers are sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry in the register or to the proxy of an elector with an anonymous entry in the register.

[Voter's name (where this differs from the elector's name because the elector is voting by proxy)*:]

*The line relating to the voter's name may be omitted where the elector is not voting by proxy.

Ballot paper Nos:

Please read the instructions at the end before completing this form and the ballot papers.

**I AM THE PERSON THE BALLOT PAPERS
NUMBERED ABOVE WERE SENT OR
DELIVERED TO.**

My date of birth (in the format dd/mm/yyyy):

*My Signature:

(Keep signature within border)

* The returning officer must omit the requirement for a signature where the person has been granted a waiver.

Warning: Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot paper. It is illegal to vote more than once (unless you are appointed as proxy for another elector) at the same election.

**Instructions on marking the ballot papers and
completing the postal voting statement**

1. You have been supplied with [returning officer to insert the number] ballot papers. [The returning officer must then identify which colour of ballot paper is in use at the election of councillors to a county or county borough council and which colour of ballot paper is in use at each relevant election.]

2. [The returning officer must then set out the instructions for marking the ballot paper in use at the

election of councillors to a county or county borough council and the instructions for marking the ballot paper in use at each relevant election. Unless the ballot papers have been sent to a person voting as proxy, a suitable form of words for the instructions for marking the ballot paper in use at the election of councillors to a county or county borough council would be the following:

“When you are voting at the election of councillors to the [insert name of county or county borough council], mark a cross [x] in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate(s) you are voting for. Do not mark your ballot paper in any other way or your vote(s) may not be counted.

Vote for ONE candidate only OR Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates. (The returning officer must select the wording that is appropriate for the election.)”

Where the ballot papers have been sent to a person voting as proxy, a suitable form of words for the instructions for marking the ballot paper in use at the election of councillors to a county or county borough council would be the following:

“When you are voting at the election of councillors to the [insert name of county or county borough council], mark a cross [x] in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate(s) the elector is voting for. Do not mark your ballot paper in any other way or the vote(s) may not be counted.

Vote for ONE candidate only OR Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates. (The returning officer must select the wording that is appropriate for the election.)”]

3. If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone for whom the vote was given.

4. Put the ballot papers in the small envelope marked **A** and seal it.

5. Complete the postal voting statement by signing it and providing your date of birth. If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and the vote(s) will not be counted. Note that it is your **date of birth** that is required, not the date on which you sign the statement.*

*Where the requirement for a signature has been waived, the returning officer must change this instruction so that it reads:

5. Complete the postal voting statement by providing

your date of birth. If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and the vote(s) will not be counted. Note that it is your **date of birth** that is required, not the date on which you complete the postal voting statement.

6. Then put the envelope marked **A** together with the postal voting statement in the larger envelope marked **B**. Return it as soon as possible.

7. After receiving the postal vote, you cannot vote in person at a polling station at the elections.*

*Where the ballot papers have been sent to a person voting as proxy, this paragraph should be amended so that it reads:

7. After receiving the postal vote, you cannot vote as proxy for the elector in person at a polling station at the elections.

8. If you accidentally spoil any of the ballot papers, you can apply to the returning officer for a replacement before 5 p.m. on [insert the date of the poll]. You must return all the ballot papers, the postal voting statement and the envelopes marked A and B. Make sure you contact the returning officer as soon as possible. [Returning officer to provide contact details for assistance.]

9. The ballot papers and the postal voting statement must be—

- (a) sent by post to the returning officer in sufficient time for them to be received by the returning officer before 10 p.m. on [insert the date of the poll];
- (b) given by hand to the returning officer before 10 p.m. on [insert the date of the poll]; or
- (c) handed in on [insert date of the poll] at any polling station in the appropriate area before 10 p.m.

The appropriate area referred to in paragraph (c) is [returning officer to insert a description of the appropriate area].

Form of Postal Voting Statement (for use where polls are combined but the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers is not combined)

Elector's name*:

*The returning officer must omit the elector's name where the ballot papers are sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry in the register or to the proxy of an elector with an anonymous entry in the register.

[Voter's name (where this differs from the elector's name because the elector is voting by proxy)*:]

*The line relating to the voter's name may be omitted where the elector is not voting by proxy.

Ballot paper No:

Colour:

Please read the instructions at the end before completing this form and the ballot paper.

I AM THE PERSON THE BALLOT PAPER
NUMBERED ABOVE WAS SENT OR DELIVERED
TO.

My date of birth (in the format dd/mm/yyyy):

My Signature*:

(Keep signature within border)

*The returning officer must omit the requirement for a signature where the person has been granted a waiver.

Warning: Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot paper. It is illegal to vote more than once (unless you are appointed as proxy for another elector) at the same election.

Instructions on marking the ballot paper and completing the postal voting statement

1. The poll at the election of councillors to the [insert name of the county or county borough council] has been combined with the poll at [returning officer to insert appropriate details of each relevant election]. You have chosen to vote by post. You have been issued with [returning officer to insert number] ballot papers. [The returning officer must then identify which colour of ballot paper is in use at the election of councillors to a county or county borough council and which colour of ballot paper is in use at each relevant election.]

Each ballot paper has its own ballot paper envelope (marked **A**), postal voting statement and return envelope (marked **B**). The postal voting statement and return envelope for use with a particular ballot paper are the same colour as the ballot paper. You may find it helpful to sort the documents into separate sets.

These instructions relate to the ballot paper coloured [insert colour] for use at the election of councillors to the [insert name of county or county borough council] and the postal voting statement of the same colour

relating to that ballot paper.

2. Mark a cross [x] in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate(s) you are voting for. Do not mark your ballot paper in any other way or your vote(s) may not be counted.

Vote for ONE candidate only OR Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates. (The returning officer must select the wording that is appropriate for the election.)

*Where the ballot paper has been sent to a person voting as proxy, this paragraph should be amended so that it reads:

2. Mark a cross [x] in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate(s) the elector is voting for. Do not mark the ballot paper in any other way or the vote(s) may not be counted.

3. If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone for whom the vote was given.

4. Put the ballot paper in the small envelope marked **A** and seal it.

5. Complete the postal voting statement by signing it and providing your date of birth. If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and the vote(s) will not be counted. Note that it is your **date of birth** that is required, not the date on which you sign the statement.*

*Where the requirement for a signature has been waived, the returning officer must change this instruction so that it reads:

5. Complete the postal voting statement by providing your date of birth. If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and the vote(s) will not be counted. Note that it is your **date of birth** that is required, not the date on which you complete the postal voting statement.

6. Then put the envelope marked **A** together with the postal voting statement in the larger envelope marked **B**. Return it as soon as possible.

7. After receiving the postal vote, you cannot vote in person at a polling station at the elections.*

*Where the ballot paper has been sent to a person voting as proxy, this paragraph should be amended so that it reads:

7. After receiving the postal vote, you cannot vote as proxy for the elector in person at a polling station at the elections.

8. If you accidentally spoil the ballot paper, you can apply to the returning officer for a replacement before 5 p.m. on [insert the date of the poll]. You must return the spoiled ballot paper, the postal voting statement and the envelopes marked A and B. Make sure you contact the returning officer as soon as possible. [Returning officer to provide contact details for assistance.]

9. The ballot paper and the postal voting statement must be—

- (a) sent by post to the returning officer in sufficient time for them to be received by the returning officer before 10 p.m. on [insert the date of the poll];
- (b) given by hand to the returning officer before 10 p.m. on [insert the date of the poll]; or
- (c) handed in on [insert date of the poll] at any polling station in the appropriate area before 10 p.m.

The appropriate area referred to in paragraph (c) is [returning officer to insert a description of the appropriate area].

Appendix 5**Rule 31(4)****Poll Cards**

Where a decision is made to combine poll cards (see rule 31(7)), the poll cards shown in this Appendix may be adapted.

Official Poll Card (to be sent or delivered to an elector voting in person)

Front of card

Official Poll Card	
Council: Electoral ward: Number of councillors to be elected for the electoral ward: Polling Day: Polling Hours: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Your polling station will be:	Number on register: *Name: *Address: *Note: The name and address must be omitted where the poll card is sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry. A poll card sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry must be sent or delivered in a sealed envelope.
<p>*This card is for information only. You can vote without it but it will save you time if you take it to the polling station and show it to the clerk there.</p> <p>See further information on the back of this card.</p>	

Back of card

<p>Local Government Election</p> <p>*When you go to the polling station, tell the clerk your name and address, as shown on the front of this card.</p> <p>*The clerk will confirm your details on the register.</p> <p>When you are given your ballot paper, go to one of the polling booths. Mark a cross (x) in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name(s) of the candidate(s) you are voting for.</p> <p>Vote for ONE candidate only OR Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates. (The returning officer must select the wording that is appropriate for the election.)</p> <p>Do not put any other mark on the ballot paper or your vote may not be counted.</p> <p>If you spoil the ballot paper by mistake, show it to the presiding officer and ask for a replacement.</p> <p>When you have marked the ballot paper, fold it in two. Show the presiding officer the number and other</p>
--

unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper but do not let anyone see your vote. Put the ballot paper in the ballot box and leave the polling station.

If you will be away on the date of the poll, there are other ways of voting.

(1) You can apply to vote by post. Your application must be received by the returning officer before 5 p.m. on [insert the deadline date]. If you are given a postal vote, you will not be entitled to vote in person at this election.

(2) You can apply to vote by proxy (this means someone can vote on your behalf). Your application must normally be received before 5p.m. on [insert the deadline date]. If you appoint a proxy, you can still vote in this election yourself if you do so before your proxy has voted for you.

In certain circumstances it may be possible to apply to vote by proxy after [insert the deadline date].

If you want to vote by post or proxy, please contact [insert helpline number] as soon as possible.

Issued by the returning officer

Alternative text where elector has an anonymous entry

*Where the poll card is sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry substitute for the paragraphs on the front and back of this card marked with an asterisk the following paragraphs:

You must have this card with you when you vote.

You cannot vote without it.

When you go to the polling station, ask to speak to the presiding officer and show them this card.

The presiding officer will confirm your entry on the register.

Official Postal Poll Card (to be sent or delivered to an elector voting by post)

Front of card

Official Postal Poll Card

Council:	This card is to tell you that you have asked to vote by post for this election, and you will not be able to vote in person in a polling station. If you want to cancel your postal vote please call the helpline
Electoral ward:	
Number of councillors to be elected for the electoral ward:	
For the election on: [insert date of poll]	
Number on register:	
*Name and address:	

<p>*Note: The name and address must be omitted where the poll card is sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry. A poll card sent or delivered to an elector with an anonymous entry must be sent or delivered in a sealed envelope.</p>	<p>number [insert helpline number] before 5 p.m. on [insert deadline date].</p> <p>We will send or deliver your postal voting papers around [insert date], addressed to [insert name and address].</p> <p>If your postal voting papers have not arrived by [insert date], call [insert helpline number] and ask for help.</p>
<p>If you lose or accidentally spoil your postal ballot paper, please call the helpline number shown above as soon as possible. Replacement ballot papers can only be issued before 5p.m. on [insert date of poll.]</p> <p>This card is to provide you with information about voting by post.</p> <p>See further information on the back of this card.</p>	

Back of card

<p>Local Government Election</p> <p>When you receive your postal voting pack, please read the instructions with it carefully when completing your postal ballot paper.</p> <p>Do not let anyone see your vote. If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone how you have voted. You can get independent help from the returning officer by calling the helpline on [insert helpline number].</p> <p>You must sign the postal voting statement and provide your date of birth. This is a security measure. It will not affect your vote or mean that the way in which you gave your vote is known. Without your signature and date of birth, the statement will not be valid and your vote will not be counted. The returning officer can cross-check your signature and date of birth against other records that they hold.*</p> <p>*Where the requirement for a signature has been waived, the returning officer must include the following paragraph instead.</p> <p>You must provide your date of birth. This is a security measure. It will not affect your vote or mean that the way in which you gave your vote is known. Without your date of birth, the statement will not be valid and your vote will not be counted. The returning officer can cross-check your date of birth against other records that they hold.</p>
--

If you lose or accidentally spoil your ballot paper, please call the helpline number shown below as soon as possible. We can only issue replacement postal ballot papers before 5 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

Complete and return your postal vote as soon as possible. The returning officer must receive your postal vote before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll]. You can deliver your completed postal voting statement and ballot paper in one of three ways. You can send them by post to the returning officer so that they are received before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

You can hand them to the returning officer before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

On the day of the poll, you can deliver them to any polling station in the appropriate area before 10 p.m. The appropriate area is [returning officer to insert a description of the appropriate area].

If you want to vote in person at the elections, you must cancel your postal vote before 5 p.m. on [insert deadline].

If you need any assistance, please call the helpline on [insert helpline number].

It is an offence to vote using a ballot paper that was not addressed to you.

Issued by the returning officer

Official Proxy Poll Card (to be sent or delivered to a proxy voting in person)

Front of card

Official Proxy Poll Card	
Council:	*This poll card is to tell
Electoral ward:	you that for this election
Number of councillors	the elector named on the
to be elected for the	back of this card has
electoral ward:	appointed you as their
Polling Day:	proxy.
Polling Hours: 7 a.m. to	*Proxy's name:
10 p.m.	*Proxy's address:
Your polling station will	*Note: This section is to
be:	be omitted where the
	poll card is sent or
	delivered to the proxy of
	an elector with an
	anonymous entry. A poll
	card sent or delivered to
	the proxy of an elector
	with an anonymous
	entry must be sent or
	delivered in a sealed

	envelope.
<p>*This card is for information only. You can vote without it but it will save you time if you take it to the polling station and show it to the clerk there.</p> <p>See further information on the back of this card.</p>	

Back of card

<p>Local Government Election</p> <p>*This poll card is to tell you that for this election you are appointed as proxy for:</p> <p>*[Insert elector's name]</p> <p>*[Insert elector's address]</p> <p>*[Insert elector's number on register]</p> <p>*When you go to the polling station, tell the clerk that you wish to vote as proxy on behalf of the elector shown above.</p> <p>*The clerk will confirm the details on the register.</p> <p>When you are given the ballot paper, go to one of the polling booths. Mark a cross (x) in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name(s) of the candidate(s) the elector is voting for.</p> <p>Vote for ONE candidate only OR Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates. (The returning officer must select the wording that is appropriate for the election.)</p> <p>Do not put any other mark on the ballot paper or the vote may not be counted.</p> <p>If you spoil the ballot paper by mistake, show it to the presiding officer and ask for a replacement.</p> <p>When you have marked the ballot paper, fold it in two. Show the presiding officer the number and other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper but do not let anyone see the vote. Put the ballot paper in the ballot box and leave the polling station.</p> <p>The person who appointed you as proxy may vote at this election. If they wish to do so, they must vote in person before you vote on their behalf.</p> <p>If you will be away on the date of the poll, you can apply to vote by post as proxy. Your application must be received by the returning officer before 5 p.m. on [insert the deadline date]. If you are given a proxy postal vote, neither you (on the elector's behalf) nor the elector will be entitled to vote in person at this election.</p> <p>It is illegal to do any of the following—</p> <p>Vote more than once (unless you are appointed as proxy for another elector) at the same election.</p>

Vote as proxy at the same election for two or more persons unless you are their spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild. Vote as proxy for a person if you know that the person is subject to a legal incapacity to vote.

If you need any assistance, please call our helpline on [insert helpline number].

Issued by the returning officer

Alternative text where elector has an anonymous entry

*Where the poll card is sent or delivered to the proxy of an elector with an anonymous entry substitute for the paragraphs on the front and back of this card marked with an asterisk the following paragraphs:

You must have this card with you when you vote.

You cannot vote as proxy without it.

You are entitled to vote as proxy for the elector whose electoral number is shown below.

[Insert elector's number on register]

To vote as proxy you must go to the polling station shown on the front of this card. Ask to speak to the presiding officer and show them this card. The clerk will confirm the details on the register.

Official Proxy Postal Poll Card (to be sent or delivered to a proxy voting by post)

Front of card

Official Proxy Postal Poll Card

Council:
Electoral ward:
Number of councillors to be elected for the electoral ward:
For the election on: [insert date of poll]:
Proxy's name and address:

*This poll card is to tell you that for this election the elector named on the back of this card has appointed you as their proxy and you have decided to vote by post. **You will not be able to vote on behalf of the elector in a polling station.** If you want to cancel this postal vote and vote in person on polling day, please call the helpline shown below before 5p.m. on [insert date of deadline]. **We will send or deliver the proxy postal voting papers around [insert date].**
If the proxy postal

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the *The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021*. (See end of Document for details)

	<p>voting papers have not arrived by [insert date], please call [insert helpline number] and ask for help.</p>
<p>If you lose or accidentally spoil the elector's postal ballot paper, please call the helpline number shown above as soon as possible. Replacement ballot papers can only be issued before 5 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].</p> <p>This card is to provide you with information about voting by post as proxy. See further information on the back of this card.</p>	
<p>Back of card</p> <p>Local Government Election</p> <p>*This poll card is to tell you that for this election you are appointed as proxy for the elector named below and you have decided to vote by post: *[Insert elector's name] *[Insert elector's address]</p> <p>When you receive the postal voting pack, please read the instructions with it carefully when completing your postal ballot paper.</p> <p>Do not let anyone see the vote. If you need help voting as proxy, the person helping you must not tell anyone how you have voted as proxy. You can get independent help from the returning officer by calling the helpline on [insert helpline number].</p> <p>You must sign the postal voting statement and provide your date of birth. This is a security measure. It will not affect the vote or mean that the way in which you gave the vote as proxy is known. Without your signature and date of birth the statement will not be valid and the vote will not be counted. The returning officer can cross-check your signature and date of birth against other records that they hold.**</p> <p>**Where the requirement for a signature has been waived, the returning officer must include the following paragraph instead. You must provide your date of birth. This is a security measure. It will not affect the vote or mean that the way in which you gave the vote as proxy is known. Without your date of birth, the statement will not be valid and the vote will not be counted. The returning officer can cross-check your date of birth against other records that they hold.</p> <p>If you lose or accidentally spoil the ballot paper, please call the helpline number as soon as possible. We can only issue replacement postal ballot papers before 5</p>	

p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

Complete and return the postal vote as soon as possible. The returning officer must receive the postal vote before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll]. You can deliver your completed postal voting statement and the ballot paper in one of three ways.

You can send them by post to the returning officer so that they are received before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

You can hand them to the returning officer before 10 p.m. on [insert date of the poll].

On the day of the poll, you can deliver them to any polling station in the appropriate area before 10 p.m. The appropriate area is [returning officer to insert description of the appropriate area].

If you want to vote in person as proxy at the election, you must cancel your postal vote before 5 p.m. on [insert deadline].

It is illegal to do any of the following—

Vote more than once (unless you are appointed as proxy for another elector) at the same election

Vote as proxy at the same election for two or more persons unless you are their spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild

Vote as proxy for a person if you know that the person is subject to a legal incapacity to vote.

If you need any assistance, please call our helpline on [insert helpline number].

Issued by the returning officer

Alternative text where the elector has an anonymous entry

*Where the poll card is sent or delivered to the proxy of an elector with an anonymous entry, substitute for the paragraphs on the front and back of this card marked with an asterisk the following paragraphs:

This poll card is to tell you that for this election you are appointed as proxy for the elector whose electoral number is shown below and you have decided to vote by post.

You are entitled to vote as proxy for the elector whose electoral number is shown below:

[Insert elector's number on register]

Appendix 6

Rule 32(11)

Guidance for Voters at Combined Polls

1. When you are given your ballot papers, go to one of the polling booths.

2. You have been supplied with [returning officer to insert the number] ballot papers. [The returning officer must then identify which colour of ballot paper is in use at the election of councillors to a county or county borough council and which colour of ballot paper is in use at each relevant election.]

3. [The returning officer must then set out the instructions for marking the ballot paper in use at the election of councillors to a county or county borough council and the instructions for marking the ballot paper at each relevant election. A suitable form of words for the instructions for marking the ballot paper in use at the election of councillors to a county or county borough council would be the following.

“When you are voting at the election of councillors to the [insert name of county or county borough council], mark a cross [x] in the box on the right-hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate(s) you are voting for. Do not mark your ballot paper in any other way or your vote(s) may not be counted.

Vote for ONE candidate only OR Vote for no more than [insert the number of candidates to be elected] candidates.*

Put no other mark on the ballot paper or your vote(s) may not be counted.”]

4. Fold each of the ballot papers in two.

5. Show the presiding officer the number and other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot papers but do not let anyone see your votes.

6. Put each ballot paper in the appropriate ballot box OR Put the ballot papers in the ballot box.* Then, leave the polling station.

7. If you spoil any of your ballot papers by mistake, show it to the presiding officer and ask for a replacement.

* The returning officer must choose whichever direction is appropriate for the election. In relation to point 6, the first alternative is appropriate where separate ballot boxes are used for each election. The second alternative is appropriate where the same ballot box is being used for each.

Appendix 7

Rule 37(4), (5)

Form of certificate as to duties

Returning officer to insert details of the election to a county or county borough council and each relevant election*

For the election to a county or county borough council, a suitable form of words would be:

“Election in the [insert name] electoral ward of [insert name of the county or county borough in respect of which the election is held]”

*If the certificate is issued in respect of only one or some of the elections, the form may be adapted accordingly.

I certify that [insert name] whose number in the register of electors is [insert number on the register] cannot reasonably be expected to go in person to the polling station allotted to them at the elections described above on [insert date of the poll] because of the circumstances of their duties on that day for a purpose connected with the elections.

Appropriate signature:

Date:

The appropriate signature is the signature of a returning officer where the person named is a member of the returning officer’s staff and the signature of a police officer of the rank of inspector or above where the person named is a constable (which, for these purposes, includes a community support officer or community support volunteer).

Note: The person named is entitled to vote at any polling station in use for the elections on production and surrender of the certificate to the presiding officer.

Appendix 8**Rule 44(5)**

**Form of declaration to be made by the companion
of a voter with disabilities**

This form shows the declaration to be used at an election of councillors for a county or county borough. The declaration to be used at each relevant election may be included in the same form. Alternatively, separate forms may be used for each declaration instead.

I [insert name of companion] of [insert address of companion] having been asked to assist [insert name of voter being assisted], whose number on the register is [insert number of voter being assisted]*, to give their vote at the election of councillors to the [insert name of county or county borough council] now being held in this electoral ward hereby declare that—

I have attained the age of 16.

I have not previously assisted any voter with disabilities to vote except [insert the name and address of any other voter who has been assisted by the companion to vote at the election] (see note 2).

Signed by companion:
Date:

*If the companion is asked to assist a voter with disabilities voting as proxy the opening words of the declaration must instead be “I [insert name of companion] of [insert address of companion] having been asked to assist [insert name of voter being assisted] who is voting as proxy for [insert name of elector], whose number on the register is [insert number of elector]”

I, the undersigned, being the presiding officer for [insert name of polling station] hereby certify that the above declaration was read to the companion and was signed by the companion in my presence.

Signed by presiding officer:
Date:
Time:

**Notes to the form of declaration to be made by the
companion of a voter with disabilities at the
election of councillors to a county or county
borough council**

1. A voter with disabilities is a voter who has made a declaration under rule 44(2) that they are so affected

by blindness or other disability, or by inability to read, as to be unable to vote without the assistance of a companion.

2. The companion may have assisted one (and only one) other person to vote at the election.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Rules)

These Rules, the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021, set out the rules of conduct (referred to in the notes as “the Conduct Rules”) by which the election of councillors to county councils and county borough councils (“principal councils”) in Wales are to take place.

These Rules replace, in relation to Wales, the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 (“the 2006 Rules”) which applied to principal council elections in England and Wales.

These Rules will apply to elections to principal councils in Wales held on and after 5 May 2022.

These Rules are the first to be made by the Welsh Ministers for the conduct of principal council elections in Wales. Accordingly, they are the first such rules to apply solely to Wales and are the first to be made bilingually, in Welsh and English, for principal council elections.

In making these Rules, the Welsh Ministers have updated the language throughout and re-ordered certain rules to improve clarity and accessibility.

Rules 1 to 5

Rules 1 and 2 set out the title and commencement date of the Rules and make transitional provision so that any principal council elections in Wales held after the coming into force of these Rules, but before 5 May 2022, will be held in accordance with the 2006 Rules.

Rule 3 provides definitions of certain terms used in these Rules, including “excluded day” and “relevant election”.

Section 22(1) and (3) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 has the effect that a candidate at an election to a county or county borough council in Wales who is not standing for election in the name of a registered party has a choice between including no description in their nomination paper or including the word “Independent”. Rule 4, which is made under the powers conferred by section 26(2) of the Welsh Language Act 1993, extends the candidate’s choice by allowing the use of the word “Annibynnol” instead of, or in addition to, the word “Independent”. This extended choice is also reflected in rule 6 of Schedules 1 and 2.

Rule 5 introduces Schedule 1 (which sets out the rules for the conduct of a principal council election where the poll is not taken with a poll at another election) and Schedule 2 (which sets out

the rules for the conduct of a principal council election where the poll is combined with the poll at one or more relevant elections).

Rule 5 also provides that where a rule in those Schedules requires the returning officer to publish a document, then (unless the rule provides otherwise) the document should be published online and in such other ways as the returning officer considers appropriate for bringing the contents of the document to the attention of the public.

The Conduct Rules (Schedules 1 and 2)

Unless stated otherwise, the explanatory notes are common to the provisions in Schedules 1 and 2.

Parts 1 and 2

Part 1 sets out the deadlines for specified key actions to be completed or undertaken in an election. Excluded days, as defined in rule 3(1)) of these Rules, are to be disregarded in calculating the periods set out in the timetable.

Part 2 sets out the arrangements the returning officer must make to give notice of the election and for obtaining and submitting nomination forms. In particular it sets out the requirements for the notice of election, the content of nomination forms and determining whether the number of persons validly nominated is sufficient to proceed to the holding of a poll.

The notice of election must include certain particulars about the election as set out in rule 3. For example, rule 3(5) and (6) requires that returning officers must include within it an electronic delivery statement providing that nomination papers may be delivered by being sent electronically to an email address, by submission online or by either of these means (in accordance with arrangements set out in the statement).

Rule 5 provides for self-nomination; candidates must nominate themselves by way of completing and signing the nomination paper in the presence of a witness. The candidate need not use a nomination paper supplied by the returning officer or obtained online, but they must provide all the information as set out in the form of the nomination paper.

Rule 5(3)(a) requires that the candidate's full names be stated in the nomination paper. The candidate may also give their commonly used names (including where these differ from their full names only because they are in a different order, include only some of those names or include additional names).

Rule 5(3)(b) permits a candidate to include in their nomination paper a description, which, subject to certain restrictions, will be included in the ballot paper against their name. The following rules are relevant to descriptions:

- Rule 6 – which sets out the general requirements about using a description;
- Rule 7 - permits a candidate to add the words “Wales”, “Welsh”, “Cymru” or “Cymreig” to a registered party name or registered description, where the name or description in question does not already include a territorial descriptor. A candidate is permitted to use the word “Wales” or “Welsh” before the permitted registered name or registered description or may use the word “Cymru” or “Cymreig” after the permitted registered name or registered description. A candidate must not use the territorial descriptors permitted under rule 7 if one of the words is already part of the registered name or registered description or if the candidate is using the word “Independent” or “Annibynnol” or both those words as their description.

Rule 5(3)(c) requires a candidate to include, in their nomination paper, a statement of party membership.

- Rule 8 sets out the requirements for the statement of party membership. The candidate must declare on their nomination paper if they are, or have been, members of any registered political parties in the last 12 months (“the relevant period”), but that is not a party for which they are seeking to stand in the election in question. The “relevant period” is the period of 12 months

ending with the day on which the notice of election was published. If a candidate knowingly fails to provide this information they will be guilty of a corrupt practice.

Rule 5(3)(d) requires a candidate to include the relevant declarations set out in the form in Appendix 1, signed by the candidate.

Rule 5(6) requires a candidate to include with their nomination paper a separate home address form as set out in rule 9. The requirements in terms of providing an address which establishes the candidate's qualification to stand for election in the principal area in question are set out in the table in rule 9(3).

- Rule 9(6) allows a candidate to state that they do not want their home address to be made public. If a candidate makes such a statement, the home address form must state: if the candidate's home address is in the United Kingdom, they must state the "relevant area", which is defined in rule 9(8); or if the home address is outside the United Kingdom, they must state the country in which it is located.

The returning officer is responsible for ensuring, where a candidate has indicated the home address is not to be published, that the wishes of the candidate are actioned.

Rule 13 requires the returning officer to publish the statement of persons nominated. In doing so, the returning officer must include:

- the names and descriptions of the persons who stand nominated;
- the home address information for each candidate (in the manner requested by the candidate – see rule 9); and
- the information contained in the statements of membership of political parties, as appropriate (see rule 8).

The statement must also include any other persons who have been nominated but who no longer stand nominated along with the reason for that.

Rule 19 allows the nomination proceedings to be abandoned if they are interrupted on any day by riot or open violence. If the day on which the proceedings are abandoned is the last day for the delivery of nomination papers, the proceedings must continue the following day.

Part 3

Part 3 of each Schedule sets out the rules that govern the conduct of the poll where an election is contested. The rules in Part 3 deal with the form and content of ballot papers and other documents to be used at the poll (rules 21 to 24) and they enable returning officers to make use of school rooms and other public rooms for polling (rule 26). They set out the action the returning officer must take before the poll (rules 27 to 36), which includes giving notice of the poll, issuing postal ballot papers and poll cards, providing polling stations and equipment and appointing presiding officers and clerks. They also set out the procedure at the polling station on the day of the poll (rules 37 to 51), including the questions that may be put to voters and the assistance that may be given to voters who have a disability or are unable to read.

The content of the rules in Part 3 of Schedule 1 and the rules in Part 3 of Schedule 2 is broadly similar. There are some minor differences because the rules in Part 3 of Schedule 2 regulate the conduct of the poll where it is combined with the poll at a relevant election (as defined in rule 3 of these Rules). For example, in Schedule 2, rule 22(4)(d) requires the ballot paper at the principal area election to be a different colour to the ballot paper in use at a relevant election. There is no similar requirement in Schedule 1 because it is unnecessary.

Certain rules in Part 3 of each Schedule refer to other legislation. Where some explanation of that other legislation would be helpful, it is given below.

- Rule 28(1) of each Schedule (which relates to the issue of postal ballot papers etc.) and rule 36(1) and (2) of each Schedule (which relates to the marking of postal voting lists) refer to regulations under the 1983 Act. At the time when these Rules are made, it is the Representation

of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 ([S.I. 2001/341](#)) that make provision for the issue of postal ballot papers, postal voting statements and envelopes for their return and the marking of postal voting lists.

- Rule 32(3) of Schedule 1 and rule 32(5) of Schedule 2 provide for the returning officer to provide each polling station with (among other things) copies of relevant notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act. These are notices that supplement the copies of the relevant parts of the register that are also supplied to the polling station. Notices under section 13B(3B) deal with situations where there has been an appeal against a decision by a registration officer (for example, a decision refusing registration) and the appeal is successful. Notices under section 13B(3D) deal with situations where representations have been made about a clerical error in the register (for example, as to a person's name or address) and the registration officer agrees that there is an error.
- Rule 35(1) of each Schedule requires the returning officer to give every person attending the polling station, other than voters and their companions, persons under the age of 16 and constables on duty, a notice setting out the provisions of section 66(1), (3) and (6) of the 1983 Act. Section 66(1) requires returning officers, clerks, candidates, election agents, polling agents, representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers who attend a polling station to maintain the secrecy of voting and it prohibits them from communicating certain information to anyone, for example, the names of voters or the official mark. Section 66(3) prohibits anyone from certain conduct, for example, interfering with a voter when voting. Under section 66(6), it is an offence not to comply with the requirements and prohibitions set out in the section.
- Rule 37 of each Schedule includes among those who are entitled to attend a polling station "persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000" (see rule 37(1)(g)). The persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of those sections are representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers (who are either individuals whose applications to observe have been granted by the Electoral Commission or representatives of organisations whose applications to observe have been granted by the Electoral Commission).

Where the poll at a principal area election is combined with the poll at a relevant election, the legal position is governed partly by these Rules and partly by the Representation of the People (Combination of Polls) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004 ([S.I. 2004/294](#)) ("Combination of Polls Regulations"). The role of the returning officer at the principal area election varies according to whether that returning officer is also "the co-ordinating returning officer". This is defined in rule 5(4) of these Rules as the person who, under regulation 4 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, exercises functions specified in regulation 5 of those Regulations.

The effect of this depends on the combination. For example, where the poll at a parliamentary general election is combined with the poll at a principal area election, the returning officer at the parliamentary general election is the co-ordinating returning officer and exercises the functions specified in regulation 5 at the principal area election (as well as the returning officer's usual functions at the parliamentary general election). By contrast, where the poll at a community election is combined with the poll at an ordinary principal area election, the returning officer at the principal area election is the co-ordinating returning officer and exercises the functions specified in regulation 5 at the community election (as well as the returning officer's usual functions at the principal area election).

One consequence of this is that, in order to understand responsibilities for the exercise of functions under particular rules in Part 3 of Schedule 2, it is necessary to read both those rules and the Combination of Polls Regulations. To assist the reader, the rules in question include some signposts to the Combination of Polls Regulations. For example, rule 29 of Schedule 2 sets out the function of the returning officer to ensure a sufficient number of polling stations at the principal area election. If the returning officer at the principal area election is the co-ordinating returning officer, the returning

officer at that election exercises this function in the usual way (and also exercises the comparable function at the other election in accordance with the Combination of Polls Regulations).

However, as has been explained, there are cases where the returning officer will not be the co-ordinating returning officer, for example, where the other election is a parliamentary general election. In that example, the returning officer at the parliamentary general election will be the co-ordinating returning officer and under the Combination of Polls Regulations will exercise the function of ensuring a sufficient number of polling stations at the principal area election (as well as at the parliamentary general election). Rule 29(4) therefore includes a signpost to those Regulations with the aim of assisting the reader.

The other functions in Part 3 of Schedule 2 that are sometimes exercisable under the Combination of Polls Regulations by the returning officer at a relevant election instead of the principal area returning officer are the following (and the relevant rules accordingly include signposts to assist the reader):

- the preparation of the corresponding number list under rule 23 or, if proceedings on the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers at the principal area election and the relevant election are not taken together, the preparation of Part 2 of the list;
- the publication of notice of the situation of polling stations etc. under rule 27(3) to (5);
- the issue of postal ballot papers under rule 28 where proceedings on the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers at the principal area election and the relevant election are taken together;
- the provision of polling stations under rule 29;
- the appointment of presiding officers and clerks under rule 30;
- the provision of equipment at polling stations under rule 32;
- the notification under rule 35 of the requirements of section 66(1), (3) and (6) of the 1983 Act;
- the marking of the postal voters and proxy postal voters lists under rule 36, where proceedings on the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers at the principal area election and the relevant election are taken together;
- the signing of certificates under rule 37(5) relating to the duties of staff of the returning officer;
- the authorisation under rule 38(3)(b) of individuals who may remove those engaging in misconduct from polling stations.

Part 4

Part 4 of each Schedule (rules 52 to 60 in Schedule 1 and rules 52 to 64 in Schedule 2) sets out the rules that govern the counting of votes and declaration of result at contested elections, including rules about who may attend, the practical arrangements at the count, the preliminary steps that must be taken, the method of counting, the rejection of ballot papers, re-counts and the steps that must be taken when the result is declared.

The content of the rules in Part 4 of Schedule 1 and the rules in Part 4 of Schedule 2 is broadly similar. Votes at the principal area election are counted in the same way regardless of whether the poll at the election has been combined with the poll at a relevant election. However, there are some differences in the content of the rules. This is because the rules in Part 4 of Schedule 2, which apply where the poll at the principal area election has been combined with the poll at a relevant election, need to distinguish between the position where the returning officer at the principal area election is the co-ordinating returning officer and the position where another returning officer is the co-ordinating returning officer. In particular, where the returning officer at the principal area election is the co-ordinating returning officer, the returning officer separates the ballot papers used at the combined poll according to each election (rule 55).

Where the returning officer at the principal area election is not the co-ordinating returning officer, the returning officer simply receives the ballot papers for the principal area election from the co-

ordinating returning officer after their separation from the other ballot papers (rule 57). To assist with understanding, rule 52 provides an overview, setting out which rules apply where the principal area returning officer is the co-ordinating officer and which rules apply where the principal area returning officer is not.

Certain rules in Part 4 refer to other legislation. Where some explanation of that other legislation would be helpful, it is given below.

- Rule 53 of each Schedule includes among those who are entitled to attend a polling station “persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000” (see rule 53(1)(e)). As explained above, the persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of those sections are representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers.
- Rule 53(6) of Schedule 1 and rule 53(8) of Schedule 2 requires the returning officer to make arrangements for everyone attending the counting of votes other than constables on duty to be given a notice setting out the provisions of section 66(2) and (6) of the 1983 Act. Section 66(2) requires every person attending the counting of votes to maintain the secrecy of voting and it prohibits them from ascertaining or attempting to ascertain the number or other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper or communicating to anyone about the candidate for whom a particular vote has been given. Under section 66(6), it is an offence not to comply with the requirements and prohibitions set out in the section.
- Rule 54(8)(c) of Schedule 1 and rule 58(3)(c) of Schedule 2 refer to cases where steps for verifying the date of birth and signature of an elector or proxy voting by post have been prescribed by regulations under the 1983 Act. At the time when these Rules are made, it is the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 that make provision for verification.

Part 5

Part 5 of each Schedule (rules 61 to 66 of Schedule 1 and rules 65 to 70 of Schedule 2) sets out the rules that govern what happens to ballot papers and other documents in use at elections, including rules about the delivery of documents to registration officers, the powers of courts to make orders relating to the documents and when they must be destroyed.

The content of the rules in Part 5 of Schedule 1 and the rules in Part 5 of Schedule 2 is broadly similar. There are minor differences because the rules in Schedule 2 (which apply where the poll at the principal area election has been combined with the poll at a relevant election) need to distinguish between the position where the returning officer at the principal area election is the co-ordinating returning officer and the position where another returning officer is the co-ordinating returning officer. In particular, where the returning officer is the co-ordinating returning officer, the returning officer has responsibility for delivering a wider range of documents to the registration officer (rule 66 of Schedule 2).

Part 6

Part 6 sets out the rules that govern what happens when a candidate dies. The rules ensure that proceedings at the election come to an end and also deal with consequential matters of administration (for example, to ensure that documents in use at the election are sent to the registration officer). As indicated by the sign-posting provision in rule 67(6) of Schedule 1 and rule 71(9) of Schedule 2, section 39 of the 1983 Act deals more generally with what happens where a candidate dies and, in consequence, a poll is countermanded or abandoned. It requires the returning officer to order a fresh election but also provides that fresh nominations are not required for candidates who remain validly nominated at that election.

Regulatory Impact Assessment

The Welsh Ministers' Code of Practice on the carrying out of Regulatory Impact Assessments was considered in relation to these Rules. As a result, a regulatory impact assessment has been prepared as to the likely costs and benefit of complying with these Rules. A copy can be obtained from the Local Government Democracy Division, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ and on the Welsh Government website at www.gov.wales.

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Wales) Rules 2021.