

Becoming a Community and Town Councillor: valuing and encouraging your involvement

Panel Annibynnol Cymru
ar Gydabyddiaeth Ariannol
Independent Remuneration
Panel for Wales

Town and community councillors are office holders who sign a declaration of acceptance of office upon their election or appointment - they are therefore a part of the local government structure of Wales. Although they carry out many community activities on a voluntary basis, they are not volunteers.

Do I receive annual payments as a Town or Community Councillor?

You are entitled to receive a payment of £150 per year towards the costs and expenses (telephone, broadband, stationery, etc.) of serving your community. If you take on additional specific responsibilities, further payments may be available: a mayor/civic head may receive up to £1500, a deputy mayor/civic head up to £500 and other roles (leader, chair or coordinator of a specific policy area) up to £500. Councils may also pay a financial loss allowance and costs of travel and subsistence when engaged on approved duties. (Executive members of principal authorities who are also town or community councillors can only receive travel and subsistence expenses and reimbursement of costs of care).

If you have personal support needs or caring responsibilities for children or others who are dependent on you, the council must reimburse the costs of providing care (should you claim them) in order to enable you to carry out approved duties. Reimbursement is made on the submission of receipts. There is an individual monthly limit for this payment, currently £403.

Why are these payments made?

The membership of councils should reflect the diversity in the population it represents. Many councils do not have a fair representation of women or younger people or those who have caring responsibilities or personal needs. Also, a significant number of members are elected unopposed. These payments are made available to encourage those who would otherwise be deterred by the costs involved in being a community or town councillor to seek election.

Do I have to receive these payments?

No. You may formally opt out of receiving all or any payments by writing a letter to the council clerk advising them of your wish not to receive payments. It is expected that all members will respect the decision of colleagues to be paid without exerting pressure or influence not to do so. If you leave the office of councillor before the end of your term, you may need to pay back some of the payments.

Are these payments taxed?

Depending on your personal circumstances, under current HMRC rules these payments may be subject to tax.

Are details of such payments published?

The council must publish by September each year the details of individual payments made to its members in the previous financial year. Reimbursement of costs of care may be published as a global sum without identifying individual recipients.

Who sets these payments?

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) is responsible for determining all payments received by members of Town and Community Councils as well as members of Principal Councils and other bodies. Every year IRPW sets out its determinations in draft form for consultation in October before publishing a final report in February for implementation at the beginning of the municipal year. The Annual Report is available on its website together with associated information, guidance and contact details.

Full details of the determinations concerning payments to town and community councillors are given in Section 13 of the current IRPW Annual Report available on the Panel's website <https://gov.wales/independent-remuneration-panel-wales>. This leaflet is intended as advice to members and potential candidates.