

Dear Stakeholder,

Re: Police and Crime Commissioner Elections (Gwent Police Area) – 6 May 2021

As the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) for the Gwent Police Area, I am writing to provide key information and relevant dates for the Police and Crime Commissioner Election on Thursday 6 May 2021.

Introduction

In Wales there are four police areas South Wales, Gwent, Dyfed Powys and North Wales. Gwent covers the administrative areas of five Unitary Authorities – Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen.

The Election process is governed by the terms of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections Order 2012 and various other legislative requirements and guidance. I will be assisted in my duties by four Local Returning Officers (LRO's) in the other authorities who are also subject to national legislative requirements and guidance.

PARO Role

As PARO I am responsible for the overall conduct of the PCC election for the Gwent Area, and for liaising with the LRO's in the Gwent Police Area, I am also responsible for giving notice of the election, the nomination procedure, encouraging participation, ensuring that the candidates election addresses requirements and the procedures for submitting those addresses are complied with, the collation of local totals and calculation of the result and finally the declaration of the result.

LRO role

LROs are responsible for ensuring the election is administered effectively in their voting area including the provision of polling stations, the printing of ballot papers, appointing polling station staff, the conduct of the poll, managing the postal vote process, the verification and count in their voting area and transmission of the local totals to the PARO.

Combined Election

In Wales, the 2021 PCC Elections will be combined with the Senedd Elections, in respect of which I have been appointed Regional Returning Officer for the South Wales East Region.

Key Dates

Date	Event
Tuesday 16 March 2021 (4pm)	Candidate & Agent briefing session
Monday 22 March 2021	Notice of Election
Tuesday 23 March 2021 to Thursday 8 April 2021 (Between 10 am and 4pm on any working day)	Delivery of nomination papers
Thursday 8 April 2021 (By 12 Noon)	Delivery of Election Address
Friday 9 April 2021	Statement of Persons Nominated and publication of Notice of Poll.
Monday 19 April 2021	Deadline for receiving applications for registration
Tuesday 20 April 2021 (5pm)	Deadline for receiving or amending postal vote applications
Tuesday 27 April 2021 (5pm)	Deadline for receiving proxy applications
Thursday 6 May 2021	Poll Day
Friday 7 May 2021 (Commence by 10 am)	Verification for Senedd Cymru and PCC
Sunday 9 May 2021 (Commence by 10 am)	PCC Count followed by declaration of results

The Electoral Commission's combined timetable for the PCC and Senedd elections is attached. https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/Senedd%20PCC%20Timetable_0.doc

Candidates and Agents

A dedicated website is available, providing essential information for Candidates and Agents, and will be updated in due course with downloadable forms (including the nomination pack) and PARO updates. <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/voting-elections/>

A briefing will be held on Tuesday 16 March 2021 at 16.00 via Microsoft Teams. This will be attended by the Chief Executive of the Gwent Police Commissioner's Office, the Chief Constable of Gwent Police, a representative of the Electoral Commission and myself as PARO. The briefing session will provide an overview for candidates and agents and provide vital information including the nomination procedure, polling information, the verification and count process, candidate spending and election expenses and finally the role and responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner and arrangements for the declaration of acceptance of office for the elected candidate.

Covid-19 Measures

A number of measures will be put in place that will make this election look and feel different. You can expect to see many of the changes you've become used to over recent months in banks, shops and other indoor spaces.

In polling stations and the verification and count centres individuals will be expected to use the hand sanitiser provided when you enter and leave and wear a face covering at all times (unless you are subject to an exemption).

Other social distancing measures may also be in place such as one-way systems, queue management and the use of clear safety screens designed to ensure the protection and safety of all stakeholders involved in the election process.

Useful links and contact

- PARO website, Police and Crime Commissioner Election (Gwent Police Area) - <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/voting-elections/>
- The Electoral Commission - <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/>
- Michelle Morris, michelle.morris@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk - PARO for the Gwent Police Area and LRO for Blaenau Gwent
- Christina Harray, harrhc@caerphilly.gov.uk – LRO for Caerphilly
- Paul Matthews, PaulMatthews@monmouthshire.gov.uk – LRO for Monmouthshire
- Beverly Owen, beverly.owen@newport.gov.uk – LRO for Newport
- Lyndon Puddy, lyndon.puddy@torfaen.gov.uk – LRO for Torfaen

Polling Day

The poll will take place on **Thursday 6 May 2021 from 7am until 10pm**. Each LRO will be responsible for the conduct of the poll and polling stations in their voting area. Ballot papers will be printed with a Unique Identifying Mark (UIM) individual to each LRO voting area along with an official mark set by the PARO.

Verification and Count

The verification and counting of the PCC Election will be conducted at local counting centres across the Gwent area with a Regional Hub based in Blaenau Gwent at Ebbw Vale Sports Centre, Lime Avenue, Ebbw Vale NP23 6GL where I shall declare the final result of the Election. The process to be followed requires local declarations of the result in each authority area followed by a collated, overall result for Gwent.

All LROs in the Gwent Police Area will commence the verification by 10am on Friday 7 May 2021. Each LRO will be responsible for communicating the verification totals to myself. At the close of the verification each LRO will secure all ballot papers until the commencement of the count.

The count will commence by 10.00am on Sunday 9 May 2021. Details of when each LRO will be starting their count will be made available on the PARO website - <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/voting-elections/>

It is anticipated that the count will be administered using the Supplementary Voting (SV) system and therefore if one candidate fails to secure 50% plus 1 vote on the first round, a second round of counting will be required. Consequently, it is difficult to estimate how long the count process will take in the Gwent Police Area.

As PARO I will provide regular updates at the Regional Hub via social media and direct to LROs throughout both the verification and count.

I trust the above information is of assistance and sets out the initial planning towards an effective and efficient PCC election in the Gwent Police Area. Should you require any further information please visit <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/voting-elections/> or contact Audra Williams, Service Manager – Registration, Elections & Corporate Complaints for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (Tel: 01495 355087 email: audra.williams@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) I am also asking LRO's to make this letter available more widely as they see fit e.g. to Local Authority Elected Members.

Yours sincerely



Michelle Morris
Police Area Returning Officer Gwent