

7th February, 2024



Christina Harrhy
Electoral Services
Bargoed House
1 St Gwladys Way
Bargoed
CF81 8AB

Dear Stakeholder,

Re: Police and Crime Commissioner Election Gwent - Thursday 2 May 2024

As the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) for the Gwent area, I am writing to provide key information and relevant dates for the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections (PCC) on Thursday 2 May 2024.

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 and other relevant legislation. I will be assisted in my duties by four Local Returning Officers (LROs) from the other local authorities who are also subject to national legislative requirements and guidance.

Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) Role

As Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) I am responsible for the overall conduct of the PCC election for the Gwent Police Area, and for liaising with the LROs in the Gwent Police Area.

I am also responsible for giving notice of the election, the nomination procedure, encouraging participation, ensuring that the candidate election address 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.

Local Returning Officer (LRO) role

Local Returning Officers (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.

Potential Combined Election

In Wales, the 2024 PCC Elections are scheduled to take place on Thursday 2 May. However, there is a possibility for a UK Parliamentary general election to be held on the same day at very short notice.

Due to the complexity this arrangement could involve and to try and minimise risk within the electoral process, the potential of combined elections has been factored into all my logistic election planning including the verification and timing of the PCC count processes.

Candidates and Agents

A dedicated page on Caerphilly's website will be available soon, providing essential information for candidates and agents, and will be updated in due course with links to the downloadable forms (including the nomination pack) and PARO updates. Please visit:

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/my-council/voting-and-elections

On **20 February at 10am via Microsoft Teams** a representative from the Electoral Commission, the Chief Executive of the Gwent Police Commissioner's Office, the Chief Constable and I will be hosting a candidate and agents briefing session and providing an overview of the role of Police and Crime Commissioner.

The briefing session will provide vital information for potential candidates and their agents 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.

A further briefing session will also be provided after the close of nominations if required.

Polling Day

The poll will take place on **Thursday 2 May 2024 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.

The Ballot Paper colour for the South Wales police area will be **Salmon**.

Verification and Count

The verification and count of the PCC Election will be conducted at local counting centres across the Gwent area with a regional hub based at the Caerphilly Leisure Centre, Virginia Close, Caerphilly CF83 3SW, where I shall declare the final result of the election. The process to be followed requires local declarations of result in each authority area followed by a collated, overall result for Gwent.

All LROs in the Gwent Police Area will commence the verification on Friday, 3 May, 2024 if the PCC election take place as a stand-alone poll.

The count will commence after the conclusion of the verification process on Friday, 3 May, 2024, if the PCC election takes place as a stand-alone poll.

In the event that the poll is combined with a UK Parliamentary election, for both elections, the verification process will take place following the close of polls at 10pm on Thursday 2 May, with the count deferred until Sunday, 5 May, 2024.

Each LRO will be responsible for communicating the verification totals to myself, and at the close of the verification each LRO will also secure all ballot papers until the commencement of the count process.

The count will be administered using the 'First Past the Post' voting system, as opposed to the Supplementary Vote system as used for previous Police and Crime Commissioner elections. This is due to a change in the law introduced by the UK Government via the Elections Act 2022.

As PARO I will provide updates at the regional hub venue via social media and direct to LROs throughout both the verification and count, although due to the size of the Gwent Police Area it remains difficult to estimate how long the count process will take and my emphasis will be on accuracy as opposed to speed.

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:

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/my-council/voting-and-elections

or contact Dave Beecham, Electoral Services Manager for Caerphilly County Borough Council Tel: 01443 864405 email: beechd@caerphilly.gov.uk

I am also asking LROs to arrange for this letter to be made more widely available, including elected members of their local authority.

Yours sincerely,

Christina Harrhy
Gwent Police Area Returning Officer

Appendix 1
Stand-alone PCC election key dates

Date	Event
Monday 25 March 2024	Notice of election
Tuesday 26 March 2024 - Friday 5 April 2024 (between 10am and 4pm on any working day)	Delivery of nomination papers
Friday 5 April 2024 (by 4:00pm)	Deadline for withdrawals of nomination
Friday 5 April 2024 (by 4:00pm)	Deadline for notification of appointment of election agents
Monday 8 April 2024 (by 4:00pm)	Statement of Persons Nominated
Tuesday 16 April 2024	Deadline for receiving applications for registration.
Wednesday 17 April 2024 (by 5:00pm)	Deadline for receiving or amending postal vote applications
Wednesday 24 April 2024 (by 5:00pm)	Deadline for receiving applications for Voter Authority Certificates
Wednesday 24 April 2024 (by 5:00pm)	Deadline for receiving proxy applications
no later than Wednesday 24 April 2024 (by 5:00pm)	Publication of Notice of Poll
Thursday 2 May 2024	Polling Day
Friday 3 May 2024 (commence by 10am) if stand-alone or Sunday 5 May 2024 (commence by 10am) if combined with UKPGE	PCC Verification and Count process

Appendix 2

Useful links and contacts

Contact	web links
Gwent PARO website	www.caerphilly.gov.uk/my-council/voting-and-elections
The Electoral Commission	www.electoralcommission.org.uk
Office of the Gwent PCC	www.gwent.pcc.police.uk

Contact	e-mail address
PARO Gwent – Christina Harrhy	harrhc@caerphilly.gov.uk
Deputy PARO – Dave Street	streed@caerphilly.gov.uk
LRO – Blaenau Gwent – Andrea Jones	andrea.jones@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
LRO – Monmouthshire – Paul Matthews	paulmatthews@monmouthshire.gov.uk
LRO – Newport – Bev Owen	Beverly.Owen@newport.gov.uk
LRO – Torfaen – Stephen Vickers	Stephen.Vickers@torfaen.gov.uk
Electoral Services – Blaenau Gwent	electoral.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Electoral Services – Caerphilly	electoralservices@caerphilly.gov.uk
Electoral Services – Monmouthshire	elections@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Electoral Services – Newport	uvote@newport.gov.uk
Electoral Services – Torfaen	Voting@torfaen.gov.uk