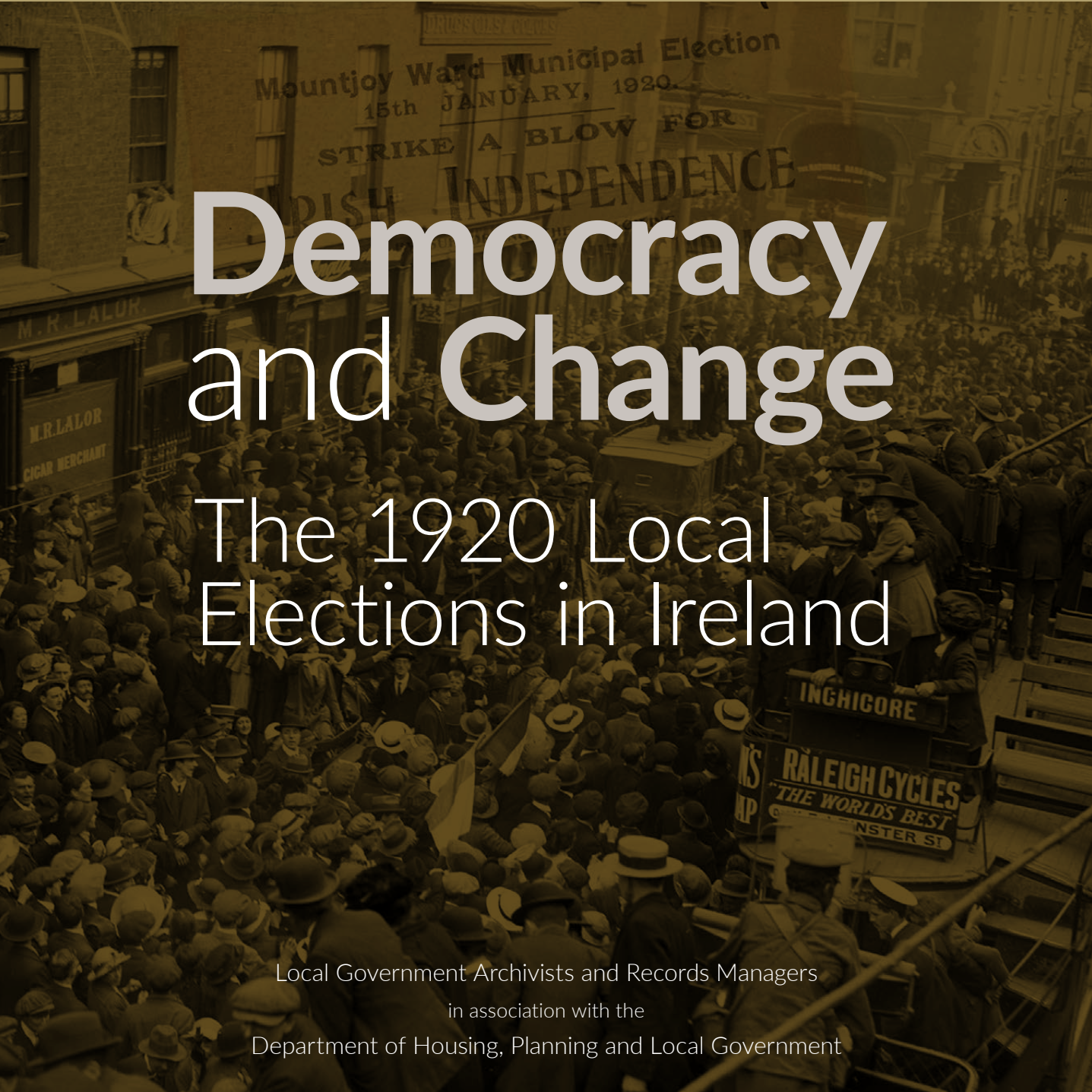




Democracy and Change

The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

Local Government Archivists and Records Managers
in association with the
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

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Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Published by the Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government

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Designed by: Yellowstone

Cover image: Crowds at rally in Westland Row, Dublin, following the release of prisoners 1917. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

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Foreword

It is my honour as Minister of State for Local Government and Planning to provide a foreword to this publication: Democracy and Change – the 1920 Local Elections in Ireland.

Local Government is a fundamental part of our society. Understanding the history and development of Local Government in this country, allows us to reflect on its significance in our lives now, but also on how it has shaped the communities of previous generations.



There is no doubt that Local Government has been an important driver of economic, social and community development at local level, as well as of public service delivery in our communities. It has represented all of Irish society for 100 years. It has enabled the voice of every member of society to be heard in the democratic process and local decision-making structures. The role and importance of Local Government may go unnoticed at times, but publications such as this outline how important it was 100 years ago and, as highlighted during the current COVID-19 pandemic, how important it is today.

We are fortunate that our local authority archives services have such a collection of historic documents that allows us to study and understand better the context of perhaps the most important local elections in the history of the state. Having the ability to read minutes of meetings, ballot papers and archival material that previous generations had access to, provides a real flavour of what life was like 100 years ago.

However, it is also notable that, despite the many differences in our lives today compared to 100 years ago, the fundamentals of democracy and the importance of local government are the same.

Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

We can see similarities between the two periods in time – how local authorities established committees to tackle and address public health issues and deliver on public services in times of crisis whilst depending on revenue from rates and local charges. The publication also highlights the ways in which women were encouraged to participate in local politics 100 years ago, work that Government is also very determined to advance today in cooperation with key partners that this Department funds and supports.

I extend my congratulations and warm appreciation to the Local Government Archivists and Records Managers and all involved in the production of this important publication marking the 1920 Local Elections. I hope that this booklet will serve to educate and enlighten readers on the significance of local government and democratic representation in our communities. I would encourage readers to go one step further and actively engage with your local authority to understand the vital work that it is doing for you and your community.

Peter Burke, T.D.,
Minister of State for
Local Government and Planning

Introduction

Local authority archives contain a wealth of original materials that document the workings of local government, including for the period 1919-23.

The local elections of 1920 (urban authorities in January and other authorities in May and June) were a key point in the history of local government in Ireland. They were the first in which Proportional Representation voting was used. Following the elections many local authorities declared their allegiance to Dáil Éireann, which had major repercussions for the system of local government in Ireland.



In the context of the Decade of Centenaries, it is important to mark these events; they show that the struggle for independence was not only a military struggle but also a political and community one. Local government support and its allegiance to the new Dáil Éireann was hugely important to the cause of Irish freedom in this period. The election of so many candidates who sought independence demonstrates the support of the people for a new form of independence and Irish government.

Local authorities would be penalised for their support of Dáil Éireann and struggled with the loss of grants and financial support from the British Local Government Board, based in Dublin Castle. Many councils attempted to collect rates while resisting raids from the Royal Irish Constabulary and British Army. Infrastructure was damaged and funds were hard to come by but local authorities managed to survive and provide services to their communities.

The introduction of Proportional Representation was also a key change and it was to become the bedrock of our political system. The municipal election in Sligo Corporation, where it was first used, can be seen as one of the most important local elections in Irish history and was for the first time truly representative and democratic.

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There is much to learn from our history and much of which we should be proud. Local authorities provide local archives services, museums and library services to enable people to learn from their history and to take pride in their place in Irish history. Local authorities continue to work to support local communities and to provide infrastructure through, sometimes, challenging economic times, and we are proud to continue this tradition of service to our communities.

Michael Walsh, Chairman
City and County Management Association (CCMA)

The value of local archives

What we now know as the Decade of Centenaries, including the period covered in this booklet, 1919-1923 was a momentous time in modern Irish history, spanning a decade of rebellion, revolution, partition and war in Ireland as well as the foundation of the State. It is a period of time that has been well documented in national and British archival institutions, and many of their archival collections have been well exploited for research purposes over several decades. Much research has also been carried out in local archives services in Ireland in recent years. In an effort to increase public understanding of this complex period in Irish history, local archivists have catalogued collections relating to the War of Independence and Civil War periods pertinent to their counties. Research has been further enhanced by local online exhibitions and talks on some of the key events of the period including the centenary of the first Dáil in 1919, through oral history programmes and by the digitisation of local government archival material.



Much of what happened during the revolutionary years took place at a local level. Local Government Archivists and Records Managers maintain and preserve the archives of local authorities. They promote local and academic research, including research into this crucial period in our recent history. The local elections of 1918 and 1920 were among the defining events in this period, and the content of local archives reflect their importance. Many of the activities of the men and women who played nationally significant roles in the War of Independence are preserved and documented in local archives. Archives include local authorities' minutes of meetings, correspondence, photographs and promotional material and papers privately donated by individuals or organisations connected to the period in a county, city or town. Most local archives' collections of this period are accessible for research; some are now also online and thus accessible globally. Local archives of the 'Decade of Centenaries' can fill in some of the gaps in the history of this hugely significant time in Ireland's recent history.

Dr Niamh Brennan, Chair,
Local Government Archivists and Records Managers (LGARM)

Acknowledgements

Local Government Archivists and Records Managers wish to thank the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for funding this booklet. In particular, we wish to thank the Local Government Division of the Department, for all their assistance and support.

Thanks are also extended to Michèle Cashman, Local Studies, Sligo Central Library; Mike Murphy, Department of Geography, UCC; Dr John Crowley, Department of Geography, UCC; Dr Mark Humphrys; Liam Kenny, AILG; the Bulfin family and the National Library of Ireland.



Rally in Grand Parade Cork, 1917 - 1920
Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

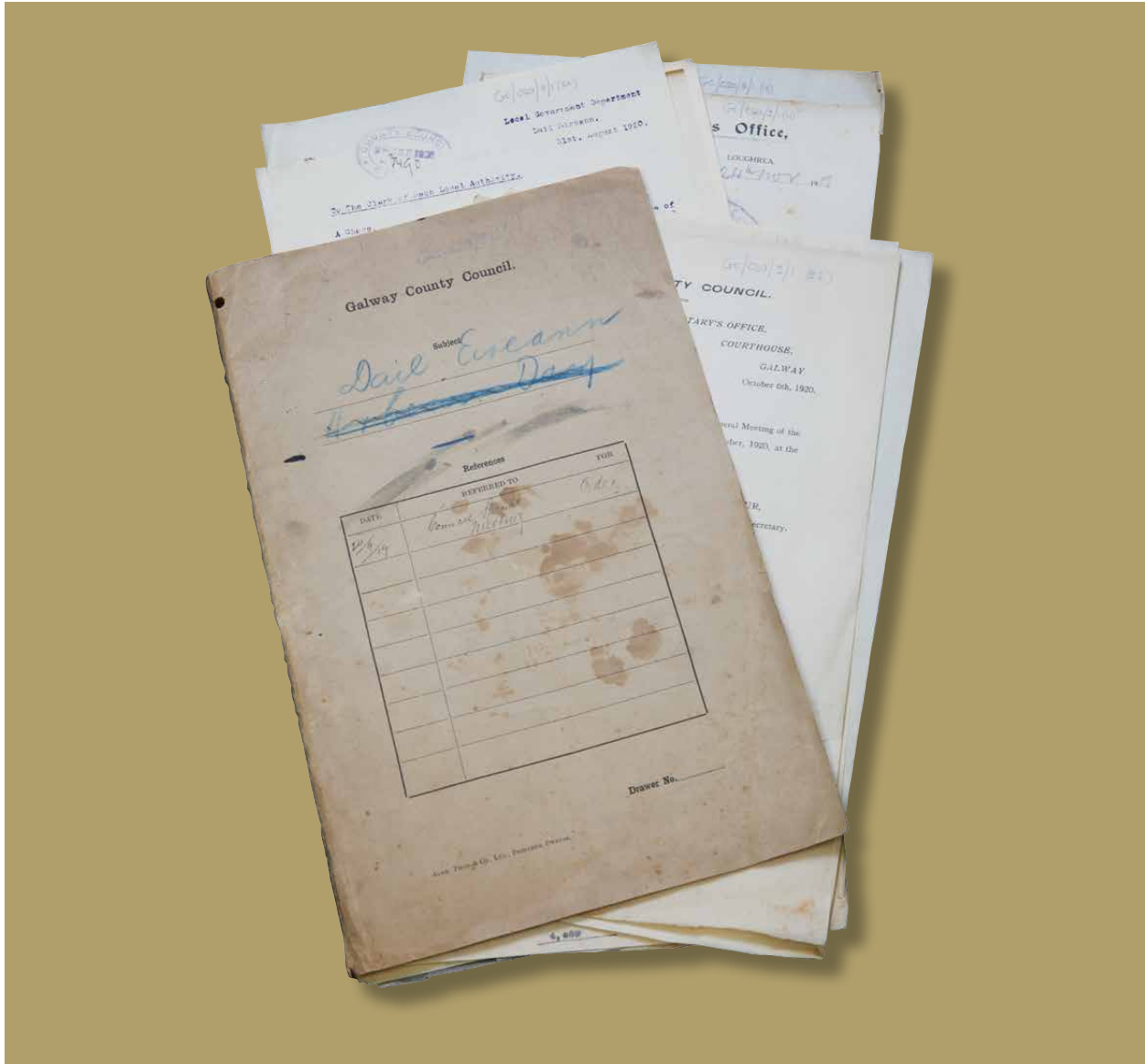
Background

The political landscape of Ireland had significantly changed in the space of less than a decade by the time of the local elections in 1920.

One major change in this period was the extension of voting rights to include women. The Representation of the People Act 1918 gave many people in Ireland the right to vote for the first time, including women over 30 years of age, and was seen as a major advance towards real democracy. The expanded electorate was a game-changer, but the biggest change in the period coming up to the 1920 local elections was the massive increase in support for national independence.

Home Rule for Ireland had seemed inevitable, but it was repeatedly blocked. In 1913, in response to the likelihood of Home Rule, Northern Unionists established the Ulster Volunteers, a heavily armed paramilitary organisation of over 100,000 men and supported by British conservatives. The same year, the Irish Volunteers was established in Dublin 'to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to the whole people of Ireland', backed by all nationalist groups, including the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Sinn Féin, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Gaelic League, and the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP).

With the outbreak of the First World War, the Volunteers split between the republicans and Home Rulers following the call by IPP leader John Redmond MP for volunteers to enlist in the British forces. The war froze any possibility of Home Rule, and by 1916 the likelihood of mass conscription was looming over Ireland. Seizing a political and military opportunity, the Irish Volunteers rose in Dublin in Easter 1916. The ferocious response to the Easter Rising by the British military, the threat of conscription, and the successful republican campaign of political and cultural mobilisation, helped to bring about a change in nationalist public opinion in favour of establishing an independent republic. This sea-change was first illustrated at the ballot box in 1917, with republican electoral success in a number of by-elections, including Éamon de Valera in East Clare.

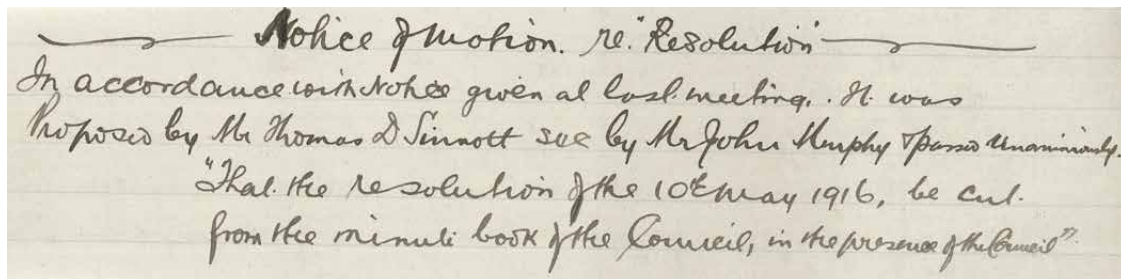


Folder of correspondence from Dáil Éireann, 1919-20

Image courtesy of Galway County Council Archives

Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

With the co-operation of the Labour Party, Sinn Féin gained 73 out of 105 seats in the general election of December 1918, thus effectively wiping out the constitutional IPP, the Home Rulers. Newly elected Sinn Féin republicans would not take their seats at Westminster and established the first Dáil Éireann in January 1919, declaring national independence. At the same time, the War of Independence/Anglo-Irish War began with an ambush on the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) in Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary. The War of Independence initially involved mainly the capture of arms and freeing of prisoners. However it grew in intensity from September 1919 with the RIC, Army, and British authorities boycotted, isolated and under attack. Dáil Éireann established a functioning government and courts, effectively replacing the British-run Dublin Castle administration. During January to July 1920, the period of the local elections, temporary recruits were enlisted from Britain, comprising the 'Black and Tans' and Auxiliaries, and a fierce guerrilla conflict ensued of ambush, arbitrary reprisal and counter-reprisal against both activists and civilians right across the country. Many RIC barracks, especially in rural areas, that had been abandoned, were burned down or destroyed by the IRA. The domination of local government by republicans, Dáil Éireann and the IRA seemed inevitable.



Motion carried by members of Enniscorthy Urban District Council to cut the resolution of 13 May 1916 (condemning the 1916 Rising) from the minute book 'in the presence of the Council' (4 February 1920) Image courtesy of Wexford County Archive

General Election Results - All Ireland

1910	Irish Parliamentary Party	73
	Independent Nationalist	2
	All-for-Ireland	8
	Liberal	1
	Liberal Unionist	1
	Irish Unionist Alliance	18
1918	Sinn Féin	73
	Irish Parliamentary Party	6
	Labour Unionist	3
	Independent Unionist	1
	Irish Unionist	22

U271/H/2

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT, 1918.

**PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH OF THE COUNTY OF
THE CITY OF CORK.**

Local Government Electoral Area of No. 5 Urban Electoral Division

Registration Unit of No. 5 Urban Electoral Division.

Polling District of College "K."

REGISTER OF ELECTORS.

GUY & COMPANY LIMITED, CORK

Cover of Register of Electors, 1920 for the parliamentary borough of the county of the city of Cork

Image courtesy of Cork City and County Archives

Local government reform

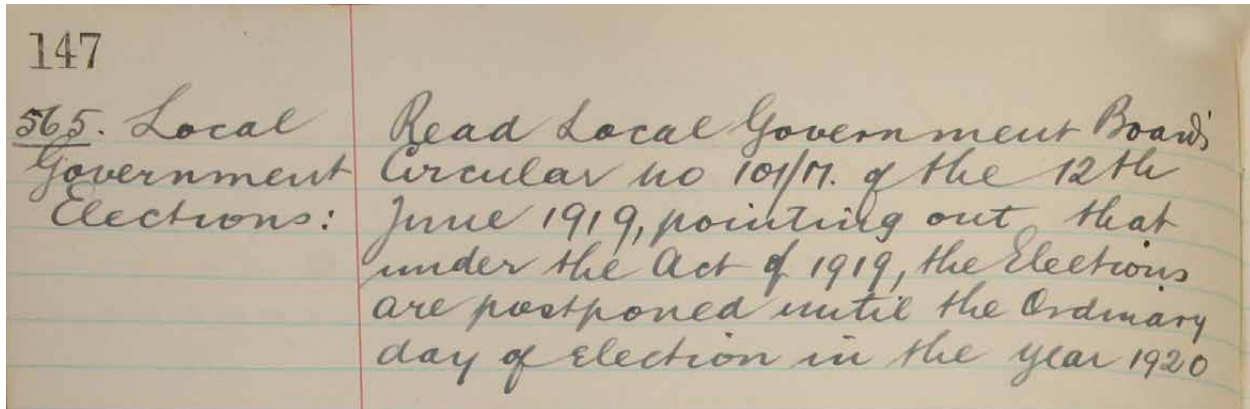
The passing into law of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898 streamlined local government. It abolished the governing, though not the legal, functions of the grand juries and established county, urban and rural district councils.

As a result of the widened franchise there was a shift from a landlord-dominated system of governance to a much more representative one. Over 4,000 district elections took place in Ireland on 6 April 1899¹, which resulted in a landslide victory for the nationalist majority, and thus the ‘.....great revolution in Irish local government was accomplished remarkably swiftly and smoothly’².

The principal responsibilities of the councils were those transferred from the grand juries and the boards of guardians. The presentment sessions were abolished and the grand jury ceased to have any responsibility with regard to public works while the two main functions of the boards of guardians – the poor rate and the duties of the rural sanitary authority – were assigned to the councils.

What was a Grand Jury

Grand Juries were in existence since Norman times. They were unelected and made up of landowners selected by the Sheriff of the County. They mainly functioned as local government authorities at the county level. The system was so-called as the grand jurors had to present their public works proposals and budgets (known as **presentments**) in court for official sanction by a judge. Services provided and paid for by Grand Jury Cess, a rate payable by occupiers, included making and repair of roads and bridges, construction of courthouses and levying for support of district hospitals, schools and prisons. Grand Juries, as an administrative body, were replaced by today’s county, urban and district councils under the 1898 Local Government (Ireland) Act.



Extract from Galway County Council minutes, 14 June 1919, GC/1/3, p147
(re postponement of elections until 1920)

Image courtesy of Galway County Council Archives

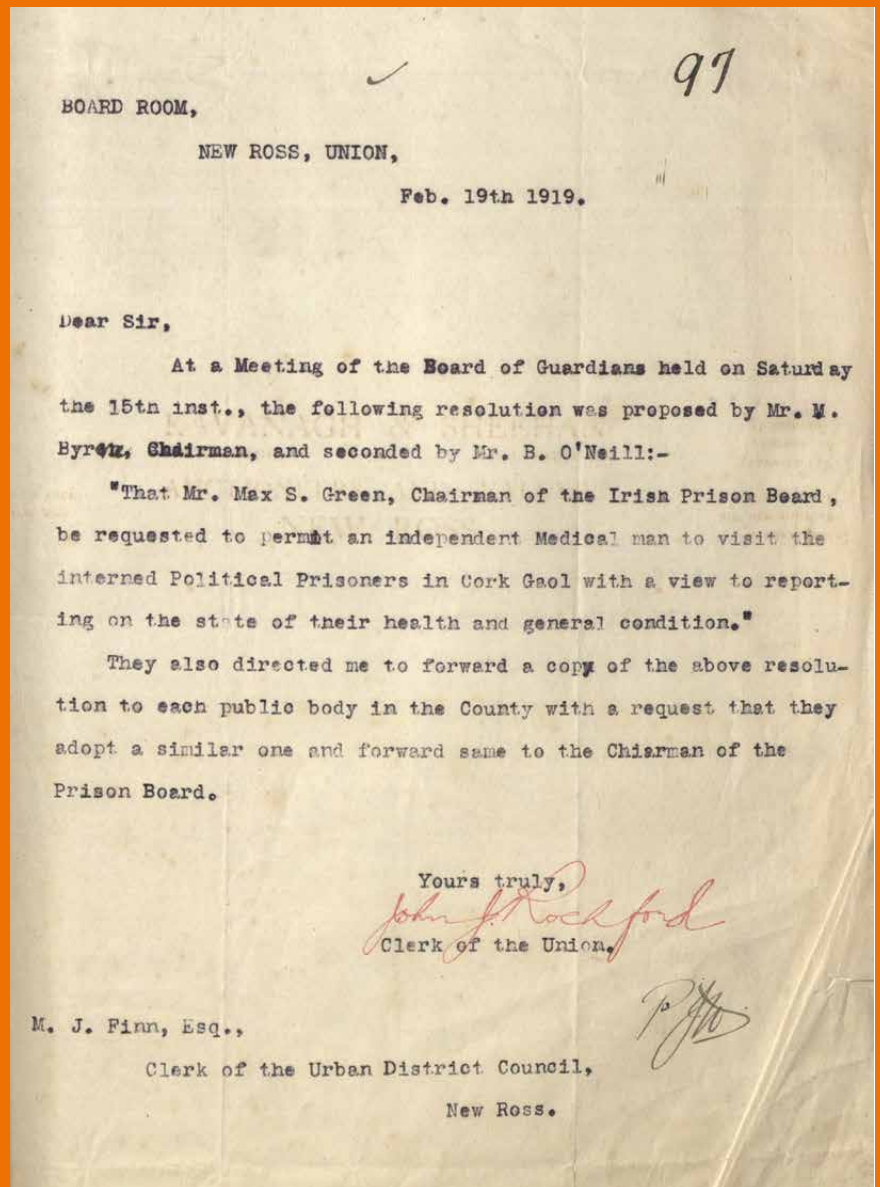
The main powers of the county councils included the construction and repair of roads and bridges; construction and maintenance of courthouses; support of mental asylums, county infirmaries and fever hospitals; appointment of coroners; levying and collecting of the poor rate; and duties under the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894.

The district councils took over the business of the baronial presentment sessions and that of the grand juries in relation to roads and public works, the cost of which was borne by the district. The boards of guardians continued to be responsible for poor relief and for the operation of the dispensary system and the registration of births, marriages and deaths. The election of guardians was integrated into the new local government system. The full membership of the rural district councils became members of the boards of guardians, while special elections associated with those for the urban district councils were held for guardians from the urban areas³.

Boards of Guardians

The Poor Law (Ireland) Act came into being in 1838. Under the Act, Ireland was divided into poor law unions each of which had a workhouse. An area **board of guardians** ran each union. Their responsibilities increased over time to include the areas of public health, boarding-out of children and rural housing and sanitation.

After the passing of the Local Government (Ireland) Act in 1898, many of the functions of the boards of guardians were transferred to the newly-formed county councils and a scaling down of the workhouses began. The boards, workhouses and the poor law system of relief were abolished in the early 1920s.



Resolution adopted by New Ross Board of Guardians requesting that the chairman of the Irish Prison Board permit an independent medical examination of interned prisoners in Cork Gaol, 19 February 1919

Image courtesy of Wexford County Archive

Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

Initially, most councils were comprised primarily of members and supporters of the Irish Parliamentary Party, which supported the bid for Home Rule. However, as Diarmaid Ferriter, historian and professor of Modern Irish History at University College Dublin pointed out, 'the profound conservatism of the membership and indeed aims of the new local authorities betrayed any idea of the introduction of local government heralding a revolutionary new mind-set in Ireland'⁴.

Nevertheless, the various local government institutions generally worked well without incessant interference from, or oversight by Westminster⁵, right up until 1920.

In the aftermath of the 1916 Rising, as the political situation in the country evolved and tensions escalated, so too did the attitudes of the various councils, with many, for instance, campaigning vigorously for prisoner rights and releases.

Local elections were to be held every three years, but the 1917 local elections were postponed due to the continuance of the First World War. Subsequent postponements resulted in a gap of six years before the next elections in 1920.

In the meantime, the General Election of 1918, 'carried out in a country under military repression'⁶ resulted in an overwhelming victory for Sinn Féin giving them 73 out of the 105 available seats. The Declaration of Independence made by Dáil Éireann on 21 January 1919 in the Round Room in the Mansion House, Dublin marked the first session of a National Parliament to meet on Irish soil for 300 years.

The first shots of the War of Independence were fired on the same day at Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary and District Republican Courts were introduced in April 1920 in almost every constituency in Ireland⁷. So, when the borough and urban district council elections were held in January, and those for the county and rural district councils in May and June 1920, all had changed, 'changed utterly' (in the words of WB Yeats), since the previous elections in 1914.

Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

Registration Unit of No. 5 Urban Electoral Division.				Registration Unit of No. 5 Urban Electoral Division.			
DIVISION III. Persons entitled to Vote as Local Government Electors only.				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	No.	Names in full. Surname first.	Residence or Property occupied and abode of non-resident occupier.	Nature of Qualification
BANDON ROAD.				GREENMOUNT VILLAS.			
3229	Bradley, Frank	15 (82 North Main Street)	0	3256	Prenderville, James	2	0
3230	Lavallin, Ellen	78	0	3257	Dillon, Patrick	3	0
3231	Madden, Norah	109	0	3258	McCarthy, Denis	4	0
3232	McSweeney, Elizabeth	128	0	GREEN STREET.			
3233	Murphy, Catherine	132	0	3259	Mulcahy, Margaret	11	0
3234	O'Toole, Mary	151	0	3260	Browne, John	40	0
3235	Caniffe, Catherine	152	0	GUNPOWDER LANE.			
3236	Murphy, Margaret	159	0	3261	Maibony, Mary	7	0
COLLEGE ROAD.				LOUGH ROAD.			
3237	Crowley, Sheila	40	0	3262	Cambell, Agnes	16	0
3238	Keating, Mary	56	0	3263	O'Connor, Elizabeth	23	0
CONVENT PLACE.				3264	O'Connor, Eva	23	0
3239	O'Riordan, Mary	3	0	3265	O'Callaghan, Margaret	46	0
3240	O'Riordan, Abina	3	0	3266	Carey, Catherine	56	0
CROSSES GREEN QUAY.				MALACHY'S LANE.			
3241	Woods, Edward	1	0	3267	Morley, Kate	19	0
3242	Meagher, William	15 (3 Hardwick Street)	0	NINETY-EIGHT STREET.			
FULLER'S LANE.				3268	Looney, Mary	4	0
3243	McSweeney, Kate	30	0	3269	Coleman, Ellen	31	0
3244	Scannell, Bridget	41	0	3270	Foley, Mary	39	0
GILLABBEY STREET.				3271	O'Driscoll, Eliza	45	0
3245	Crowley, Ellen	7	0	PROTESTANT LANE.			
3246	Wagner, Caroline E.	22	0	3272	Armstrong, Julia	2	0
3247	Fleming, Nora	31	0	ROCK VILLAS.			
GILLABBEY TERRACE.				3273	Shaw, Marguerite Emilie	3	0
3248	Blennerhassett, Richard	6	0	RUSSELL'S LANE.			
GOULD STREET.				3274	Ahern, Kate	2	0
3249	O'Sullivan, Nora	46	0	3275	Ahern, Nora	2	0
3250	O'Neill, Kate	51	0	SHARMAN CRAWFORD STREET.			
GREENMOUNT AVENUE.				3276	Maguire, Sadie	3	0
3251	Ryan, Marion	1a	0	3277	Beford, Winnie	3	0
3252	Creedon, Margaret	1a	0	3278	Clifford, Kathleen	4	0
3253	McCarthy, Ellen	8	0	3279	Donovan, Annie	5	0
3254	Curtin, Mary	12	0	3280	Holland, Rita	7	0
3255	Reddin, Ellen	21	0	3281	McKechnie, John	21 (Sunday's Well)	0
College 73				ST. FINNBARR'S ROAD.			
				3282	Sheehan, Hannah	14	0
				3283	Cronin, Julia	23	0
				3284	McCarthy, Cornelius	36	0
				3285	McCarthy, Alexander	36	0
				College 74			

Extract from a Register of Electors, 1920 for the parliamentary borough of the county of the city of Cork
Image courtesy of Cork City and County Archives

Proportional Representation

The Single Transferable Vote



Introduction of Proportional Representation to Ireland

The Proportional Representation Society of Ireland was founded in 1911. The society endorsed the system of the single transferable vote for multi-member electoral areas. Its aims were supported by nationalists such as Sinn Féin leader Arthur Griffith. He believed that its introduction into Irish elections would ensure fair representation of both nationalists and unionists under a Home Rule government. Many southern unionists also backed Proportional Representation. The system was included in the Home Rule Act of 1914, which was ultimately never implemented.

The Proportional Representation system was first used in the General Election of 1918 in just one constituency, the University of Dublin. The stunning electoral success of Sinn Féin in this election caused the British government to reflect on Ireland's electoral system. It was noted that there was a discrepancy between Sinn Féin's overall share of the vote and the proportion of seats the party won, due to the 'first past the post' system. The government sought ways to prevent a repetition of this domination by the party and encouraged the adoption of Proportional Representation in subsequent elections.

Locally the system was first tried out in an election in Sligo Corporation in 1919. The Corporation's financial position was extremely poor, and there had been a growing recognition among prominent unionist and nationalist businessmen of the need for local government reform. They sought to improve the condition of the town, to widen representation on the Corporation and to extend powers to levy rates. Protestants in particular felt deprived of their position of power by the 'first past the post' system of elections which meant that, even with over 15% of the population, their community held no seats on the Corporation. In late 1917, the Sligo Ratepayers' Association (SRA), made up of both Protestant and Catholic ratepayers, was formed. They quickly gained the support of prominent nationalists and town councillors, and demands for electoral reform grew within the town.

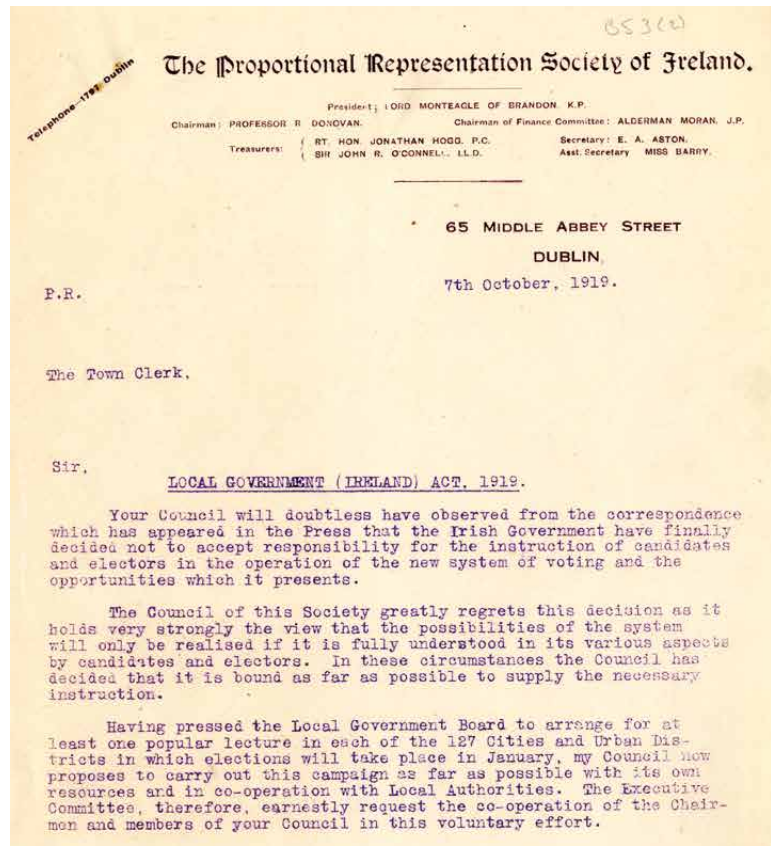
Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland



Thomas Scanlan MP

Image courtesy of
Sligo Central Library

Early in 1918, the North Sligo Nationalist MP, Thomas Scanlan, introduced a bill in the House of Commons which became the Sligo Corporation Act on 30 July 1918. The borough election took place in January 1919, and drew widespread interest, as it was the first local authority to use Proportional Representation in an election in Ireland or Britain. Turnout was high, and the result was a balanced one in terms of parties and religious denomination. Sinn Féin and Labour (plus one nationalist independent candidate) took 13 seats on the new Corporation, while the SRA and other independents gained 11 seats altogether.



Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

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2.

When the Sligo election was held, the Mayor convened a Town's Meeting, invited all the citizens to attend, and himself presided. A large gathering took place in the Town Hall, a lecture was delivered and followed by illustrative demonstrations and questions. That meeting and other popular means of education contributed greatly to the smooth working and general success of the Sligo Election.

My Council therefore suggest that the Lord Mayor, Mayor or Chairman of each Local Authority should consider taking immediate action upon similar lines. This Society will, as far as possible, meet demands for lecturers, and will be prepared to furnish the necessary equipment to enable those present at all meetings, by means of ballot papers and otherwise, to take part in an experimental operation of the system.

The time now available for such an extensive effort is very limited and my Committee would accordingly greatly esteem an early reply as to such arrangements as they may be desired to co-operate in in your District.

In order to avoid confusion I may add that my Council are gratified to know that the Local Government Board have accepted full responsibility for the technical instruction of Returning Officers and their staffs. This instruction, nevertheless, will not cover the necessities of the case as they will affect possible candidates and electors. But it is believed that the Society's work may be of real assistance to officials as an auxiliary to the technical assistance to be provided at the Government's expense.

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully,

Secretary.

This and previous page: Circular letter from The Proportional Representation Society of Ireland to each local authority, referring to training needed for electors and candidates in the upcoming local elections in Ireland, 7 October 1919
Image courtesy of Donegal County Archives

No. 9.

P.R. now ensures to every substantial section or interest the power to obtain its full and just representation upon all County, Municipal, Rural and Urban Councils and Boards of Guardians in Ireland.

NOTE.—This shows the form of Ballot Paper to be employed in all future Elections of Irish Local Authorities

P.R. would ensure the effective representation of all minorities in any Irish Assembly constituted to deal with National Affairs.

NOTE.—Local Authorities and Voluntary Organisations can obtain supplies of this leaflet, and leaflet P.R.I. 8, at 2d/6 per 1,000, or 4/- per 100, post free.

P.R. LEAFLET No. 8.

Experimental P.R. Election

THE SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE.

This illustration shows a method by which several candidates have been elected.

Although there are six candidates to be elected, each elector has one vote only. If the candidate for whom the elector votes, either for his own vote or for another elector's vote, or for the vote of the poll, is defeated, the elector's vote instead of being wasted will be transferred to the elector's next choice.

Ballot Paper.

NAME OF CANDIDATE	NAME OF CANDIDATE
CARSON, Rt. Hon. Sir E. K.C., M.P.	
CRAIG, Col. Sir James, M.P.	
DE VALERA, Eamon, T.D.	
DEVLIN, Joseph, M.P.	
DILLON, John.	
FARREN, Thomas, Pres. Irish Trade Congress.	
FORAN, Thomas, Pres. Transport Workers Union.	
GRIFFITH, Arthur, T.D.	
HEALY, Timothy M., K.C.	
PLUNKETT, Sir Horace, K.C.V.O.	
WOODS, Sir Robert, F.R.C.S.I., M.P.	

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS.

You are to place the figure 1 opposite the name of the candidate you like best.

You are also to place the figure 2 opposite the name of your second choice.

The figure 3 opposite the name of your third choice, and so on, according to your preference for any other candidate in the order of your preference.

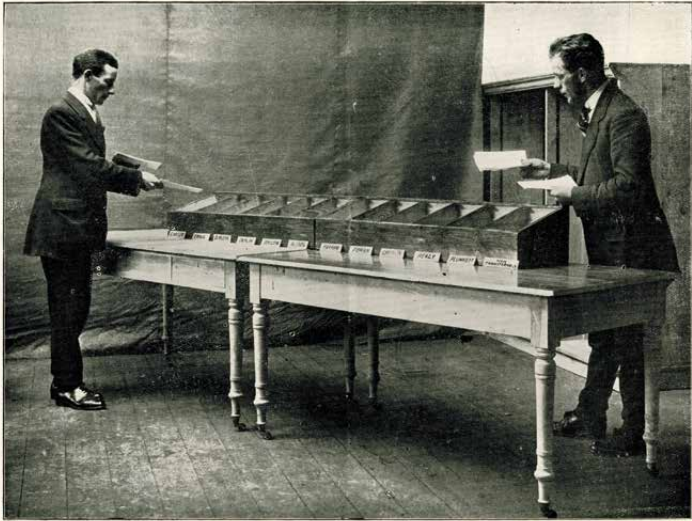
Note.—You will be told if only the figure 1 is marked, but you are not to place the figure 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35 or 36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41 or 42 or 43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 or 62 or 63 or 64 or 65 or 66 or 67 or 68 or 69 or 70 or 71 or 72 or 73 or 74 or 75 or 76 or 77 or 78 or 79 or 80 or 81 or 82 or 83 or 84 or 85 or 86 or 87 or 88 or 89 or 90 or 91 or 92 or 93 or 94 or 95 or 96 or 97 or 98 or 99 or 100 or 101 or 102 or 103 or 104 or 105 or 106 or 107 or 108 or 109 or 110 or 111 or 112 or 113 or 114 or 115 or 116 or 117 or 118 or 119 or 120 or 121 or 122 or 123 or 124 or 125 or 126 or 127 or 128 or 129 or 130 or 131 or 132 or 133 or 134 or 135 or 136 or 137 or 138 or 139 or 140 or 141 or 142 or 143 or 144 or 145 or 146 or 147 or 148 or 149 or 150 or 151 or 152 or 153 or 154 or 155 or 156 or 157 or 158 or 159 or 160 or 161 or 162 or 163 or 164 or 165 or 166 or 167 or 168 or 169 or 170 or 171 or 172 or 173 or 174 or 175 or 176 or 177 or 178 or 179 or 180 or 181 or 182 or 183 or 184 or 185 or 186 or 187 or 188 or 189 or 190 or 191 or 192 or 193 or 194 or 195 or 196 or 197 or 198 or 199 or 200 or 201 or 202 or 203 or 204 or 205 or 206 or 207 or 208 or 209 or 210 or 211 or 212 or 213 or 214 or 215 or 216 or 217 or 218 or 219 or 220 or 221 or 222 or 223 or 224 or 225 or 226 or 227 or 228 or 229 or 230 or 231 or 232 or 233 or 234 or 235 or 236 or 237 or 238 or 239 or 240 or 241 or 242 or 243 or 244 or 245 or 246 or 247 or 248 or 249 or 250 or 251 or 252 or 253 or 254 or 255 or 256 or 257 or 258 or 259 or 260 or 261 or 262 or 263 or 264 or 265 or 266 or 267 or 268 or 269 or 270 or 271 or 272 or 273 or 274 or 275 or 276 or 277 or 278 or 279 or 280 or 281 or 282 or 283 or 284 or 285 or 286 or 287 or 288 or 289 or 290 or 291 or 292 or 293 or 294 or 295 or 296 or 297 or 298 or 299 or 300 or 301 or 302 or 303 or 304 or 305 or 306 or 307 or 308 or 309 or 310 or 311 or 312 or 313 or 314 or 315 or 316 or 317 or 318 or 319 or 320 or 321 or 322 or 323 or 324 or 325 or 326 or 327 or 328 or 329 or 330 or 331 or 332 or 333 or 334 or 335 or 336 or 337 or 338 or 339 or 340 or 341 or 342 or 343 or 344 or 345 or 346 or 347 or 348 or 349 or 350 or 351 or 352 or 353 or 354 or 355 or 356 or 357 or 358 or 359 or 360 or 361 or 362 or 363 or 364 or 365 or 366 or 367 or 368 or 369 or 370 or 371 or 372 or 373 or 374 or 375 or 376 or 377 or 378 or 379 or 380 or 381 or 382 or 383 or 384 or 385 or 386 or 387 or 388 or 389 or 390 or 391 or 392 or 393 or 394 or 395 or 396 or 397 or 398 or 399 or 400 or 401 or 402 or 403 or 404 or 405 or 406 or 407 or 408 or 409 or 410 or 411 or 412 or 413 or 414 or 415 or 416 or 417 or 418 or 419 or 420 or 421 or 422 or 423 or 424 or 425 or 426 or 427 or 428 or 429 or 430 or 431 or 432 or 433 or 434 or 435 or 436 or 437 or 438 or 439 or 440 or 441 or 442 or 443 or 444 or 445 or 446 or 447 or 448 or 449 or 450 or 451 or 452 or 453 or 454 or 455 or 456 or 457 or 458 or 459 or 460 or 461 or 462 or 463 or 464 or 465 or 466 or 467 or 468 or 469 or 470 or 471 or 472 or 473 or 474 or 475 or 476 or 477 or 478 or 479 or 480 or 481 or 482 or 483 or 484 or 485 or 486 or 487 or 488 or 489 or 490 or 491 or 492 or 493 or 494 or 495 or 496 or 497 or 498 or 499 or 500 or 501 or 502 or 503 or 504 or 505 or 506 or 507 or 508 or 509 or 510 or 511 or 512 or 513 or 514 or 515 or 516 or 517 or 518 or 519 or 520 or 521 or 522 or 523 or 524 or 525 or 526 or 527 or 528 or 529 or 530 or 531 or 532 or 533 or 534 or 535 or 536 or 537 or 538 or 539 or 540 or 541 or 542 or 543 or 544 or 545 or 546 or 547 or 548 or 549 or 550 or 551 or 552 or 553 or 554 or 555 or 556 or 557 or 558 or 559 or 560 or 561 or 562 or 563 or 564 or 565 or 566 or 567 or 568 or 569 or 570 or 571 or 572 or 573 or 574 or 575 or 576 or 577 or 578 or 579 or 580 or 581 or 582 or 583 or 584 or 585 or 586 or 587 or 588 or 589 or 590 or 591 or 592 or 593 or 594 or 595 or 596 or 597 or 598 or 599 or 600 or 601 or 602 or 603 or 604 or 605 or 606 or 607 or 608 or 609 or 610 or 611 or 612 or 613 or 614 or 615 or 616 or 617 or 618 or 619 or 620 or 621 or 622 or 623 or 624 or 625 or 626 or 627 or 628 or 629 or 630 or 631 or 632 or 633 or 634 or 635 or 636 or 637 or 638 or 639 or 640 or 641 or 642 or 643 or 644 or 645 or 646 or 647 or 648 or 649 or 650 or 651 or 652 or 653 or 654 or 655 or 656 or 657 or 658 or 659 or 660 or 661 or 662 or 663 or 664 or 665 or 666 or 667 or 668 or 669 or 670 or 671 or 672 or 673 or 674 or 675 or 676 or 677 or 678 or 679 or 680 or 681 or 682 or 683 or 684 or 685 or 686 or 687 or 688 or 689 or 690 or 691 or 692 or 693 or 694 or 695 or 696 or 697 or 698 or 699 or 700 or 701 or 702 or 703 or 704 or 705 or 706 or 707 or 708 or 709 or 710 or 711 or 712 or 713 or 714 or 715 or 716 or 717 or 718 or 719 or 720 or 721 or 722 or 723 or 724 or 725 or 726 or 727 or 728 or 729 or 730 or 731 or 732 or 733 or 734 or 735 or 736 or 737 or 738 or 739 or 740 or 741 or 742 or 743 or 744 or 745 or 746 or 747 or 748 or 749 or 750 or 751 or 752 or 753 or 754 or 755 or 756 or 757 or 758 or 759 or 760 or 761 or 762 or 763 or 764 or 765 or 766 or 767 or 768 or 769 or 770 or 771 or 772 or 773 or 774 or 775 or 776 or 777 or 778 or 779 or 780 or 781 or 782 or 783 or 784 or 785 or 786 or 787 or 788 or 789 or 790 or 791 or 792 or 793 or 794 or 795 or 796 or 797 or 798 or 799 or 800 or 801 or 802 or 803 or 804 or 805 or 806 or 807 or 808 or 809 or 810 or 811 or 812 or 813 or 814 or 815 or 816 or 817 or 818 or 819 or 820 or 821 or 822 or 823 or 824 or 825 or 826 or 827 or 828 or 829 or 830 or 831 or 832 or 833 or 834 or 835 or 836 or 837 or 838 or 839 or 840 or 841 or 842 or 843 or 844 or 845 or 846 or 847 or 848 or 849 or 850 or 851 or 852 or 853 or 854 or 855 or 856 or 857 or 858 or 859 or 860 or 861 or 862 or 863 or 864 or 865 or 866 or 867 or 868 or 869 or 870 or 871 or 872 or 873 or 874 or 875 or 876 or 877 or 878 or 879 or 880 or 881 or 882 or 883 or 884 or 885 or 886 or 887 or 888 or 889 or 890 or 891 or 892 or 893 or 894 or 895 or 896 or 897 or 898 or 899 or 900 or 901 or 902 or 903 or 904 or 905 or 906 or 907 or 908 or 909 or 910 or 911 or 912 or 913 or 914 or 915 or 916 or 917 or 918 or 919 or 920 or 921 or 922 or 923 or 924 or 925 or 926 or 927 or 928 or 929 or 930 or 931 or 932 or 933 or 934 or 935 or 936 or 937 or 938 or 939 or 940 or 941 or 942 or 943 or 944 or 945 or 946 or 947 or 948 or 949 or 950 or 951 or 952 or 953 or 954 or 955 or 956 or 957 or 958 or 959 or 960 or 961 or 962 or 963 or 964 or 965 or 966 or 967 or 968 or 969 or 970 or 971 or 972 or 973 or 974 or 975 or 976 or 977 or 978 or 979 or 980 or 981 or 982 or 983 or 984 or 985 or 986 or 987 or 988 or 989 or 990 or 991 or 992 or 993 or 994 or 995 or 996 or 997 or 998 or 999 or 1000 or 1001 or 1002 or 1003 or 1004 or 1005 or 1006 or 1007 or 1008 or 1009 or 1010 or 1011 or 1012 or 1013 or 1014 or 1015 or 1016 or 1017 or 1018 or 1019 or 1020 or 1021 or 1022 or 1023 or 1024 or 1025 or 1026 or 1027 or 1028 or 1029 or 1030 or 1031 or 1032 or 1033 or 1034 or 1035 or 1036 or 1037 or 1038 or 1039 or 1040 or 1041 or 1042 or 1043 or 1044 or 1045 or 1046 or 1047 or 1048 or 1049 or 1050 or 1051 or 1052 or 1053 or 1054 or 1055 or 1056 or 1057 or 1058 or 1059 or 1060 or 1061 or 1062 or 1063 or 1064 or 1065 or 1066 or 1067 or 1068 or 1069 or 1070 or 1071 or 1072 or 1073 or 1074 or 1075 or 1076 or 1077 or 1078 or 1079 or 1080 or 1081 or 1082 or 1083 or 1084 or 1085 or 1086 or 1087 or 1088 or 1089 or 1090 or 1091 or 1092 or 1093 or 1094 or 1095 or 1096 or 1097 or 1098 or 1099 or 1100 or 1101 or 1102 or 1103 or 1104 or 1105 or 1106 or 1107 or 1108 or 1109 or 1110 or 1111 or 1112 or 1113 or 1114 or 1115 or 1116 or 1117 or 1118 or 1119 or 1120 or 1121 or 1122 or 1123 or 1124 or 1125 or 1126 or 1127 or 1128 or 1129 or 1130 or 1131 or 1132 or 1133 or 1134 or 1135 or 1136 or 1137 or 1138 or 1139 or 1140 or 1141 or 1142 or 1143 or 1144 or 1145 or 1146 or 1147 or 1148 or 1149 or 1150 or 1151 or 1152 or 1153 or 1154 or 1155 or 1156 or 1157 or 1158 or 1159 or 1160 or 1161 or 1162 or 1163 or 1164 or 1165 or 1166 or 1167 or 1168 or 1169 or 1170 or 1171 or 1172 or 1173 or 1174 or 1175 or 1176 or 1177 or 1178 or 1179 or 1180 or 1181 or 1182 or 1183 or 1184 or 1185 or 1186 or 1187 or 1188 or 1189 or 1190 or 1191 or 1192 or 1193 or 1194 or 1195 or 1196 or 1197 or 1198 or 1199 or 1200 or 1201 or 1202 or 1203 or 1204 or 1205 or 1206 or 1207 or 1208 or 1209 or 1210 or 1211 or 1212 or 1213 or 1214 or 1215 or 1216 or 1217 or 1218 or 1219 or 1220 or 1221 or 1222 or 1223 or 1224 or 1225 or 1226 or 1227 or 1228 or 1229 or 1230 or 1231 or 1232 or 1233 or 1234 or 1235 or 1236 or 1237 or 1238 or 1239 or 1240 or 1241 or 1242 or 1243 or 1244 or 1245 or 1246 or 1247 or 1248 or 1249 or 1250 or 1251 or 1252 or 1253 or 1254 or 1255 or 1256 or 1257 or 1258 or 1259 or 1260 or 1261 or 1262 or 1263 or 1264 or 1265 or 1266 or 1267 or 1268 or 1269 or 1270 or 1271 or 1272 or 1273 or 1274 or 1275 or 1276 or 1277 or 1278 or 1279 or 1280 or 1281 or 1282 or 1283 or 1284 or 1285 or 1286 or 1287 or 1288 or 1289 or 1290 or 1291 or 1292 or 1293 or 1294 or 1295 or 1296 or 1297 or 1298 or 1299 or 1300 or 1301 or 1302 or 1303 or 1304 or 1305 or 1306 or 1307 or 1308 or 1309 or 1310 or 1311 or 1312 or 1313 or 1314 or 1315 or 1316 or 1317 or 1318 or 1319 or 1320 or 1321 or 1322 or 1323 or 1324 or 1325 or 1326 or 1327 or 1328 or 1329 or 1330 or 1331 or 1332 or 1333 or 1334 or 1335 or 1336 or 1337 or 1338 or 1339 or 1340 or 1341 or 1342 or 1343 or 1344 or 1345 or 1346 or 1347 or 1348 or 1349 or 1350 or 1351 or 1352 or 1353 or 1354 or 1355 or 1356 or 1357 or 1358 or 1359 or 1360 or 1361 or 1362 or 1363 or 1364 or 1365 or 1366 or 1367 or 1368 or 1369 or 1370 or 1371 or 1372 or 1373 or 1374 or 1375 or 1376 or 1377 or 1378 or 1379 or 1380 or 1381 or 1382 or 1383 or 1384 or 1385 or 1386 or 1387 or 1388 or 1389 or 1390 or 1391 or 1392 or 1393 or 1394 or 1395 or 1396 or 1397 or 1398 or 1399 or 1400 or 1401 or 1402 or 1403 or 1404 or 1405 or 1406 or 1407 or 1408 or 1409 or 1410 or 1411 or 1412 or 1413 or 1414 or 1415 or 1416 or 1417 or 1418 or 1419 or 1420 or 1421 or 1422 or 1423 or 1424 or 1425 or 1426 or 1427 or 1428 or 1429 or 1430 or 1431 or 1432 or 1433 or 1434 or 1435 or 1436 or 1437 or 1438 or 1439 or 1440 or 1441 or 1442 or 1443 or 1444 or 1445 or 1446 or 1447 or 1448 or 1449 or 1450 or 1451 or 1452 or 1453 or 1454 or 1455 or 1456 or 1457 or 1458 or 1459 or 1460 or 1461 or 1462 or 1463 or 1464 or 1465 or 1466 or 1467 or 1468 or 1469 or 1470 or 1471 or 1472 or 1473 or 1474 or 1475 or 1476 or 1477 or 1478 or 1479 or 1480 or 1481 or 1482 or 1483 or 1484 or 1485 or 1486 or 1487 or 1488 or 1489 or 1490 or 1491 or 1492 or 1493 or 1494 or 1495 or 1496 or 1497 or 1498 or 1499 or 1500 or 1501 or 1502 or 1503 or 1504 or 1505 or 1506 or 1507 or 1508 or 1509 or 1510 or 1511 or 1512 or 1513 or 1514 or 1515 or 1516 or 1517 or 1518 or 1519 or 1520 or 1521 or 1522 or 1523 or 1524 or 1525 or 1526 or 1527 or 1528 or 1529 or 1530 or 1531 or 1532 or 1533 or 1534 or 1535 or 1536 or 1537 or 1538 or 1539 or 1540 or 1541 or 1542 or 1543 or 1544 or 1545 or 1546 or 1547 or 1548 or 1549 or 1550 or 1551 or 1552 or 1553 or 1554 or 1555 or 1556 or 1557 or 1558 or 1559 or 1560 or 1561 or 1562 or 1563 or 1564 or 1565 or 1566 or 1567 or 1568 or 1569 or 1570 or 1571 or 1572 or 1573 or 1574 or 1575 or 1576 or 1577 or 1578 or 1579 or 1580 or 1581 or 1582 or 1583 or 1584 or 1585 or 1586 or 1587 or 1588 or 1589 or 1590 or 1591 or 1592 or 1593 or 1594 or 1595 or 1596 or 1597 or 1598 or 1599 or 1600 or 1601 or 1602 or 1603 or 1604 or 1605 or 1606 or 1607 or 1608 or 1609 or 1610 or 1611 or 1612 or 1613 or 1614 or 1615 or 1616 or 1617 or 1618 or 1619 or 1620 or 1621 or 1622 or 1623 or 1624 or 1625 or 1626 or 1627 or 1628 or 1629 or 1630 or 1631 or 1632 or 1633 or 1634 or 1635 or 1636 or 1637 or 1638 or 1639 or 1640 or 1641 or 1642 or 1643 or 1644 or 1645 or 1646 or 1647 or 1648 or 1649 or 1650 or 1651 or 1652 or 1653 or 1654 or 1655 or 1656 or 1657 or 1658 or 1659 or 1660 or 1661 or 1662 or 1663 or 1664 or 1665 or 1666 or 1667 or 1668 or 1669 or 1670 or 1671 or 1672 or 1673 or 1674 or 1675 or 1676 or 1677 or 1678 or 1679 or 1680 or 1681 or 1682 or 1683 or 1684 or 1685 or 1686 or 1687 or 1688 or 1689 or 1690 or 1691 or 1692 or 1693 or 1694 or 1695 or 1696 or 1697 or 1698 or 1699 or 1700 or 1701 or 1702 or 1703 or 1704 or 1705 or 1706 or 1707 or 1708 or 1709 or 1710 or 1711 or 1712 or 1713 or 1714 or 1715 or 1716 or 1717 or 1718 or 1719 or 1720 or 1721 or 1722 or 1723 or 1724 or 1725 or 1726 or 1727 or 1728 or 1729 or 1730 or 1731 or 1732 or 1733 or 1734 or 1735 or 1736 or 1737 or 1738 or 1739 or 1740 or 1741 or 1742 or 1743 or 1744 or 1745 or 1746 or 1747 or 1748 or 1749 or 1750 or 1751 or 1752 or 1753 or 1754 or 1755 or 1756 or 1757 or 1758 or 1759 or 1760 or 1761 or 1762 or 1763 or 1764 or 1765 or 1766 or 1767 or 1768 or 1769 or 1770 or 1771 or 1772 or 1773 or 1774 or 1775 or 1776 or 1777 or 1778 or 1779 or 1780 or 1781 or 1782 or 1783 or 1784 or 1785 or 1786 or 1787 or 1788 or 1789 or 1790 or 1791 or 1792 or 1793 or 1794 or 1795 or 1796 or 1797 or 1798 or 1799 or 1800 or 1801 or 1802 or 1803 or 1804 or 1805 or 1806 or 1807 or 1808 or 1809 or 1810 or 1811 or 1812 or 1813 or 1814 or 1815 or 1816 or 1817 or 1818 or 1819 or 1820 or 1821 or 1822 or 1823 or 1824 or 1825 or 1826 or 1827 or 1828 or 1829 or 1830 or 1831 or 1832 or 1833 or 1834 or 1835 or 1836 or 1837 or 1838 or 1839 or 1840 or 1841 or 1842 or 1843 or 1844 or 1845 or 1846 or 1847 or 1848 or 1849 or 1850 or 1851 or 1852 or 1853 or 1854 or 1855 or 1856 or 1857 or 1858 or 1859 or 1860 or 1861 or 1862 or 1863 or 1864 or 1865 or 1866 or 1867 or 1868 or 1869 or 1870 or 1871 or 1872 or 1873 or 1874 or 1875 or 1876 or 1877 or 1878 or 1879 or 1880 or 1881 or 1882 or 1883 or 1884 or 1885 or 1886 or 1887 or 1888 or 1889 or 1890 or 1891 or 1892 or 1893 or 1894 or 1895 or 1896 or 1897 or 1898 or 1899 or 1900 or 1901 or 1902 or 1903 or 1904 or 1905 or 1906 or 1907 or 1908 or 1909 or 1910 or 1911 or 1912 or 1913 or 1914 or 1915 or 1916 or 1917 or 1918 or 1919 or 1920 or 1921 or 1922 or 1923 or 1924 or 1925 or 1926 or 1927 or 1928 or 1929 or 1930 or 1931 or 1932 or 1933 or 1934 or 1935 or 1936 or 1937 or 1938 or 1939 or 1940 or 1941 or 1942 or 1943 or 1944 or 1945 or 1946 or 1947 or 1948 or 1949 or 1950 or 1951 or 1952 or 1953 or 1954 or 1955 or 1956 or 1957 or 1958 or 1959 or 1960 or 1961 or 1962 or 1963 or 1964 or 1965 or 1966 or 1967 or 1968 or 1969 or 1970 or 1971 or 1972 or 1973 or 1974 or 1975 or 1976 or 1977 or 1978 or 1979 or 1980 or 1981 or 1982 or 1983 or 1984 or 1985 or 1986 or 1987 or 1988 or 1989 or 1990 or 1991 or 1992 or 1993 or 1994 or 1995 or 1996 or 1997 or 1998 or 1999 or 2000 or 2001 or 2002 or 2003 or 2004 or 2005 or 2006 or 2007 or 2008 or 2009 or 2010 or 2011 or 2012 or 2013 or 2014 or 2015 or 2016 or 2017 or 2018 or 2019 or 2020 or 2021 or 2022 or 2023 or 2024 or 2025 or 2026 or 2027 or 2028 or 2029 or 2030 or 2031 or 2032 or 2033 or 2034 or 2035 or 2036 or 2037 or 2038 or 2039 or 2040 or 2041 or 2042 or 2043 or 2044 or 2045 or 2046 or 2047 or 2048 or 2049 or 2050 or 2051 or 2052 or 2053 or 2054 or 2055 or 2056 or 2057 or 2058 or 2059 or 2060 or 2061 or 2062 or 2063 or 2064 or 2065 or 2066 or 2067 or 2068 or 2069 or 2070 or 2071 or 2072 or 2073 or 2074 or 2075 or 2076 or 2077 or 2078 or 2079 or 2080 or 2081 or 2082 or 2083 or 2084 or 2085 or 2086 or 2087 or 2088 or 2089 or 2090 or 2091 or 2092 or 2093 or 2094 or 2095 or 2096 or 2097 or 2098 or 2099 or 2

Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

The adoption of Proportional Representation for the Sligo election was lauded by politicians of all persuasions and by the local and national press (it was described by the Sligo Champion on 18 January as 'an historic event'). The overwhelmingly positive reaction thus paved the way for the British government to extend the system to all local authorities in Ireland in time for countrywide local elections in 1920. This extension was legalised under the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1919. The elections took place in 1920 in the midst of the War of Independence. Proportional Representation was later enshrined in the Constitution of the Irish Free State.

KENNY'S P.R. FRAMES FOR RETURNING OFFICERS' TABLES

MADE OF SELECTED TIMBER, HIGHLY FINISHED AND VARNISHED,
AND FITTED WITH WIRE-HOLDERS FOR REMOVABLE CARDS.



One compartment should be provided for each Candidate whose votes are to be concurrently analysed. 12 compartments are shown in illustration.

Useful for office equipment when not required for election purposes. Each compartment 8 inches deep and 7½ inches wide. 10 inches from front to back.

For each Section of Six Compartments £2 : 5 : 0
Carriage and Packing Extra.

Advertisement for Returning Officers' tables for Proportional Representation elections, 1920

Image courtesy of Donegal County Archives

Council Chamber
 30 January 1920

First Meeting of the Newly Elected
 Aldermen & Councillors Elected
 under Local Government (Ireland) Act
 1919 on the System of *Proportional*
Representation

Present:

Alderman Maurice Quinlan in the Chair

Alderman Dwyer	Councillor Morris
Connell	Quinlan
White D ^r	Hughes
Cullen	Larkin
Quinlan P.	Walsh (John)
Keane	Jones
Brett	Callaghan
Dawson	Cullen
Brazill	Heaney (R)
Councillor Cummings (W ^r)	Twomey
Dunne	Whittle
Powell	Conry
Walsh (John)	Moyle (John)
Murray	Moyle (John)

Extract from the minutes of the first meeting of Waterford City Council held after the first Proportional Representation election, 30 January 1920

Image courtesy of Waterford City and County Archive

FORM OF DIRECTIONS

FOR THE

GUIDANCE OF THE VOTER IN VOTING

THE Voter will go into one of the compartments, and mark his Ballot Paper by placing the figure 1 opposite the name of the Candidate for whom he votes. He may also place the figures 2, 3, and so on, in accordance with the order of his choice or preference opposite the names of other Candidates (that is to say):—

He must place the figure 1 opposite to the name of the Candidate for whom he votes.

He may also place the figure 2 opposite to the name of the Candidate he likes second best, and place the figure 3 opposite to the name of the Candidate he likes third best; and so on.

If the Voter does not place the figure 1 on his Ballot Paper, or places the figure 1 opposite more than one name, or places the figure 1 and some other figure opposite the same name, or places any mark on the Paper by which he may be identified, or otherwise not authorised by the Local Elections (P.R.I.) Order, 1919, his Ballot Paper will be invalid and will not be counted.

After marking the Ballot Paper, the Voter will fold up the Ballot Paper so as to show the official mark on the back, and leaving the compartment will, without showing the front of the Paper to any person, show the official mark on the back to the presiding officer, and then in the presence of the presiding officer put the Paper in the Ballot Box and forthwith quit the Polling Station.

If the Voter inadvertently spoils a Ballot Paper, he may return it to the presiding officer, who will, if satisfied of such inadvertence, give him another Paper.

If the Voter takes the Ballot Paper out of the Polling Station or deposits in the Ballot Box any other Paper than the one given him by the officer, he will be guilty of a misdemeanour, and be subject to imprisonment for any term not exceeding six months, with or without hard labour.

Examples of Ballot Papers validly marked.

Mark Order of Preference in Spaces below	Names of Candidates
3	DOYLE (JAMES DOYLE, of 10 High Street, Oilman).
4	LYNCH (JANE ELLEN LYNCH, of 12 Main Street, Grocer).
2	O'BRIEN (JOHN O'BRIEN, of 22 Welclose Place, Accountant).
5	O'CONNOR (CHARLES O'CONNOR, of 7 Green Street, Gentleman).
1	THOMPSON (WILLIAM HENRY THOMPSON, of 14 Queen St., Silversmith).
6	WILSON (ROBERT WILSON, of 22 Ranelagh Square, Chemist).

Mark Order of Preference in Spaces below	Names of Candidates
	DOYLE (JAMES DOYLE, of 10 High Street, Oilman).
3	LYNCH (JANE ELLEN LYNCH, of 12 Main Street, Grocer).
	O'BRIEN (JOHN O'BRIEN, of 22 Welclose Place, Accountant).
1	O'CONNOR (CHARLES O'CONNOR, of 7 Green Street, Gentleman).
	THOMPSON (WILLIAM HENRY THOMPSON, of 14 Queen St., Silversmith).
2	WILSON (ROBERT WILSON, of 22 Ranelagh Square, Chemist).

DOLLARD, PRINTINGHOUSE, DUBLIN L.d.

Printed notice regarding form of directions for the guidance of the voter in voting, 1920
Image courtesy of Donegal County Archives

January 1920 election – borough and urban councils

With the War of Independence escalating, great importance was attached to the 1920 local elections. It was seen as an opportunity to further challenge British political control in a period of hostilities and growing political crisis. By the time of the local elections on 15 January 1920, the fighting that had begun a year earlier had seen 14 Irish police killed and over 20 wounded⁸.

The borough and urban 1920 elections were the first held under the new system of Proportional Representation in a bid by the British government to prevent the level of victory that Sinn Féin had in the 1918 general election. As the first local elections held in six years, there were many first-time voters amongst the electorate and many new candidates running for the first time. Candidates were divided between the traditional nationalists or Home Rule party and the more modern nationalists who ranged from republican nationalists, Sinn Féin, Labour, Volunteer groups and those unwilling to accept the form of Home Rule on offer.

Polling took place in a range of public buildings across each county including national schools, libraries, town halls, courthouses and workhouses. In relation to the urban elections in Galway, the Connacht Tribune in an article dated 24 January 1920 refers to the ballot papers being taken 'to the Judge's room in the Courthouse, the door of the room being locked and sealed. It was guarded by two policemen and two representatives of the Sinn Fein party, as well as by a representative of the Returning Officer, all night'.

The counting of votes took place usually in the courthouse and union offices. It was described as the 'dullest election...ever experienced' in Dublin by The Irish Independent (16 January 1920) and 'the most spiritless election' ever having been held in Galway by the Connacht Tribune (5 February 1920). However, it was not without its moments, such as when Frederick J. Allen, Dublin Corporation employee and chairman of the Sinn Féin election committee in Kingstown was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for having revolutionary literature in his possession⁹.

Municipal Elections, 1920.

RATEPAYERS' SELECTION.

Your Vote is solicited in favour of the Candidates whose Names appear in heavy type. These Candidates have been unanimously selected to represent the Ratepayers of the Borough of Wexford. Votes for them are Votes for Efficiency and Economy.

St. Mary's Ward. Form of Ballot Paper		St. Iberius Ward. Form of Ballot Paper.		St. Seleskar Ward. Form of Ballot Paper.	
Mark Order of preference in Space.	Names of Candidates.	Mark Order of preference in Space.	Names of Candidates.	Mark Order of preference in Space.	Names of Candidates.
	BILLINGTON, JAMES		BYRNE, NICHOLAS (Outgoing)		BOYSE, JOSEPH
	CLANCY, PATRICK		COWMAN, PHILIP (Outgoing)		BROWNE, JAMES (Outgoing)
	COFFEY, ROBERT A. (Outgoing)		HAYES, THOMAS		BROWNE, MICHAEL
	CORRIG, RICHARD		KIRKOE, JOHN		CARTY, FRANCIS
	CROSHIE, JAMES		KIRWAN, JOHN (Outgoing)		CONNOLLY, NICHOLAS
	CUMMINS, LAURENCE		LARKIN, JAMES		DEMPSEY, HENRY
	FENNEL, ALICE MARY		LYMBERY, MATTHEW (Outgoing)		DOYLE, JOSEPH (Outgoing)
	MARTIN, MICHAEL		McGUIRE, WM. H. (Outgoing)		GIBSON, RICHARD (Outgoing)
	MOHRIS, PATRICK		O'CONNOR, MATTHEW		HADDEN, GEORGE (Outgoing)
	MURPHY, JAMES (Outgoing)		DANFORTH, THOMAS		McMAHON, JAMES
	O'BRIEN, THOMAS		SINNOTT, JAMES (Outgoing)		O'CONNOR, MARY ANNE
	O'CONNOR, PATRICK		THOMPSON, HERBERT		O'CONNOR, MARTIN
	O'REILL, DAVID		WALSH, THOMAS		SINNOTT, JOHN
	STAFFORD, LAURENCE		WHITE, PATRICK		
	ROWE, CHARLES J.				
	SINNOTT, JAMES				
	WALSH, JOHN				

The method of Voting is very simple. Put **1** in square in front of Candidate you like best: **2** before your second choice; **3** before your third choice, and so on until you have Voted for the **6** Ratepayers' Candidates, after which vote for the other Candidates of your choice.

Do **not** put a **X**. It will spoil your paper.

NOTE—Should you by mistake Spoil your paper the Returning Officer will give you another one.

(CW2501.1)

Mock-up of the ballot paper for candidates representing the Ratepayers in the municipal elections in Wexford, with the slogan that voting for the names marked in bold print would be 'votes for efficiency and economy'

The People, 14 January 1920

Image courtesy of Wexford County Archive

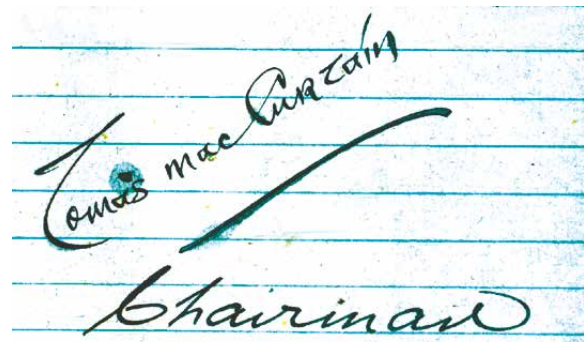
Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

While the outcome of the municipal elections proved Sinn Féin's dominance, the effect of the Proportional Representation system meant that minorities won new representations. Labour made remarkable gains and Sinn Féin took control of seats in what were previously considered unionist strongholds in Ulster, while unionists did the same in nationalist areas in the south. The local elections provided people with an opportunity to address local issues, and in Sligo Corporation, for example, the Ratepayers' Association topped the poll.



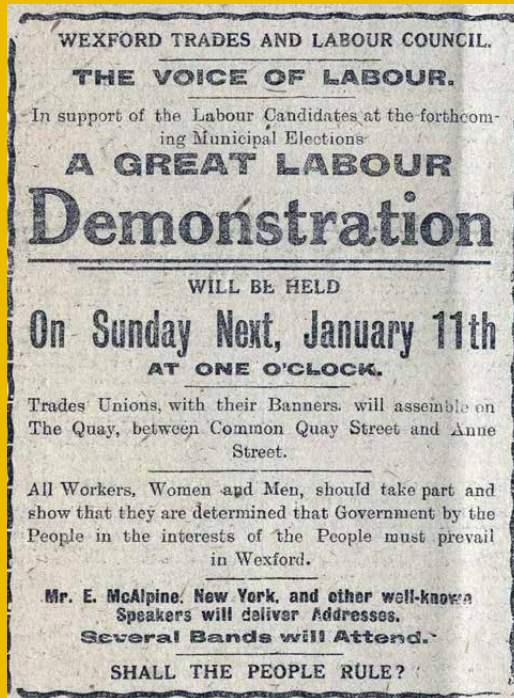
Photograph of Tomás MacCurtain, the first republican Lord Mayor for Cork, 1920

Image courtesy of Cork City and County Archives



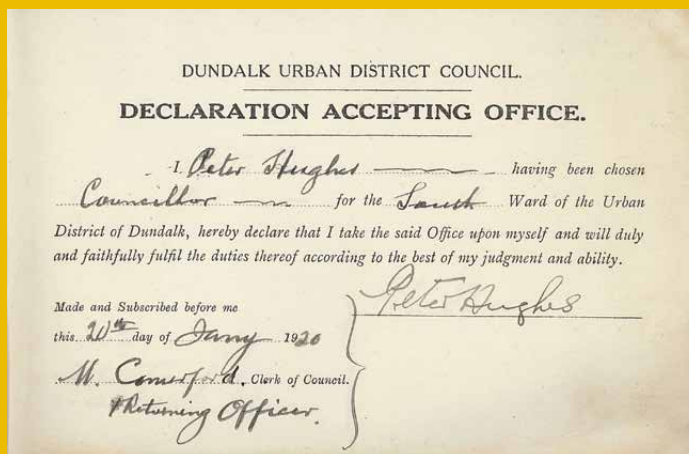
Signature of Tomás MacCurtain at the end of the minutes of his first meeting as Chairman of Cork City Council, 30 January 1920

Image courtesy of Cork City and County Archives



Printed notice of a demonstration organised by Wexford Trades and Labour Council in support of the Labour candidates in the municipal elections in Wexford, 1920

Image courtesy of Wexford County Archive



Declaration of Peter Hughes on accepting office as councillor for the south ward of Dundalk UDC, 20 January 1920

Image courtesy of Louth County Archives Service

In other respects this Election was novel. It was the first contested election since the passing of the Representation of the People Act of 1918, which made important changes in the franchise, and gave the right of voting to married women living with their husbands, a condition which therefore deprived them of the right to vote no matter how great their qualifications might be. By that Act the number of municipal voters was increased, to about 63%. The Act also provided a new qualification for membership of the Council, namely:- ownership of property situate in the Borough.

The following are some of the particulars of the Elections:-

There were six Members to be elected for each of the four Borough Areas

St. Mary's North.

The following were validly nominated:-

Doham Francis, 66, Inishtoura, Clonmel. Coach Painter

Mackay Dominick 33, Gladstone Street, Upper Clonmel. Cycle Fitter

Mackay William 21, Mary Street, Clonmel. Operative Baker

Power Joseph 50, Basil Street, Clonmel. Tailor

White Joseph 3, Wolfe Tone Street, Clonmel. Tailor

Hilliment Walter William, 4, Wolfe Tone Street, Clonmel. Fitter

Besides the foregoing nomination papers were delivered for:-

Gayle William Thomas 23, Queen Street. Gentleman

Henry Denis 4, Upper Gladstone Street. Merchant

but these two latter nominations were invalid, and there being accordingly no contest the six validly nominated candidates were on the 16th instant, declared duly elected for the Borough.

Extract from minutes of Clonmel Corporation, noting that the right of married women to vote had increased the number of voters by 63% and showing candidates elected for the borough area of St. Mary's North, Clonmel, 1920

Image courtesy of Tipperary County Archives

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30th January, 1920.

A Statutable Meeting of the Council was held this day at the Town Hall at noon.

This was the first meeting held under the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1919, an Enactment which prescribed for the first time for Municipal Elections to be held under the Proportional Representation system of election.

The Elections for the new Council took place on the 15th Instant, when the following 24 persons were elected, namely.

As Aldermen:- James Sinnott, James Larkin, Richard Corish, Patrick Clancy, George Hadden, Nicholas Connolly.

As Councillors:- Nicholas Byrne, Thomas Rossiter, Thomas Hayes, Philip Cowman, Herbert Thompson, James Crosbie, John Walsh, Michael Martin, Laurence Cummins, Thomas O'Brien, James Billington, David O'Neill, James Sinnott, Alice Mary Kennell, Francis Carty, Joseph Boyse, Richard Gibson, Mary Anne O'Connor.

It so happened that all the above Members were in attendance.

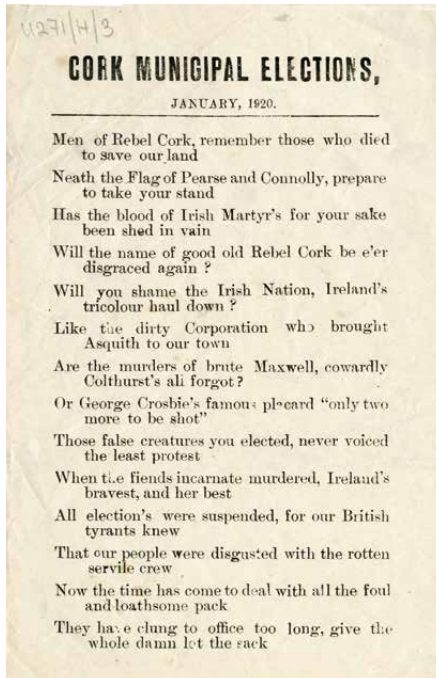
Extract from the minutes of Wexford Corporation, following the January election, on 30 January 1920, listing the newly elected council

Image courtesy of Wexford County Archive

Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

With a high turnout and some violent clashes occurring such as in Cork, the results saw Sinn Féin win 560 seats, Labour 394, Unionists 355, Home Rulers 238, Independents 161 and municipal reformers 108. Republicans took control in Dublin, Cork and Limerick, while Waterford and Derry had no single party in overall charge (10). A total of 10 out of 12 urban councils in Ulster including Strabane, Derry, Omagh and Armagh were now under joint nationalist/Sinn Féin control. Belfast was the only urban council where unionists gained control with 35 seats. It consisted of 60 members, five of whom were Sinn Féin, five nationalists and 13 Labour¹¹.

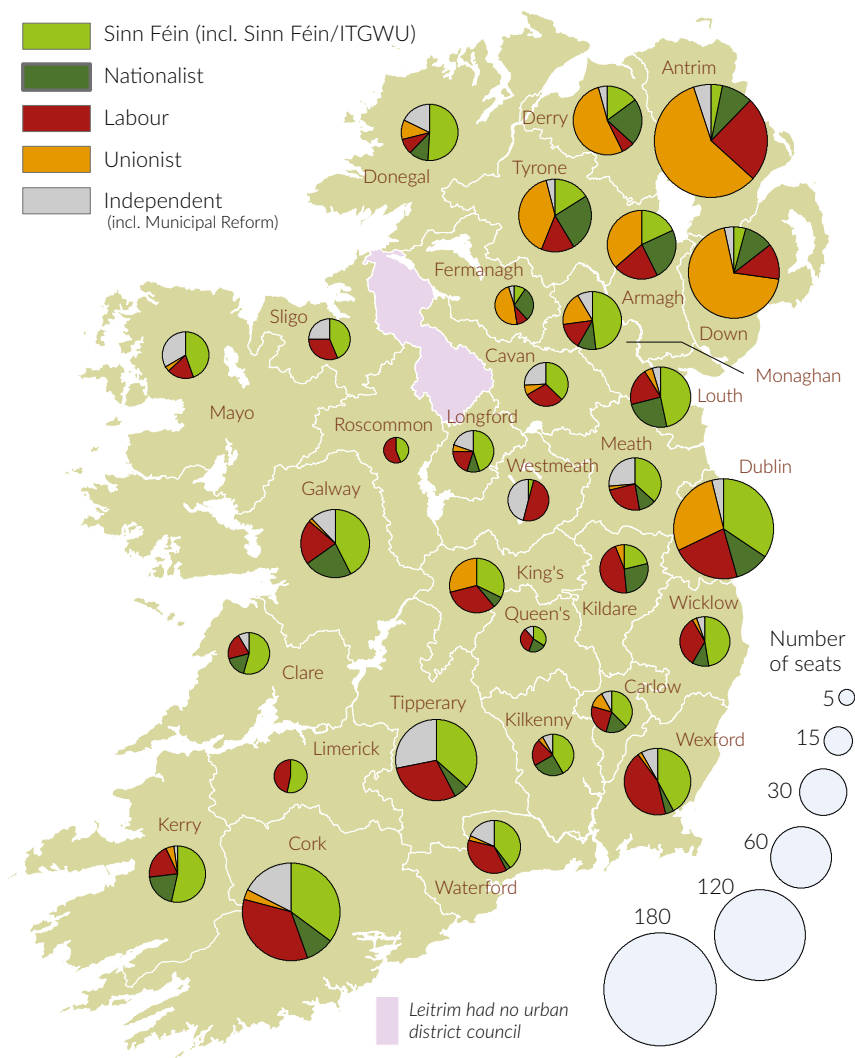
However, while Sinn Féin was victorious and progress was being made by the new Dáil Éireann, in reality, local councils were still very dependent on British assistance, therefore they remained in communication with the British Local Government Board. This was contrary to the instructions of the Dáil and despite many councils having passed a resolution soon after the elections acknowledging the authority of Dáil Éireann over that of the Local Government Board¹².



Election flyer from the Liam de Róiste (TD and Councillor) archive

Image courtesy of Cork City and County Archives

Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland



Map showing the share of seats won by parties in each county in the January elections, 1920
Image courtesy of Atlas of the Irish Revolution (UCC)

COUNTY OF DONEGAL.

Election of County Councillors in the Year 1920.

INSTRUCTIONS TO PRESIDING OFFICER.

Posting Notices.

1. You are to be at your Polling Station at about 7 a.m. If you find it insufficiently furnished you will endeavour to procure a table and as many chairs as may be required. Before the Poll opens you are to see that one Copy of Instructions to Voters is posted inside and one outside compartment for Voting—one copy on outside of door of station and two at outside entrance to station. See also that the Pencils supplied are placed in the compartment for voting. You are to open the Poll in your Polling Station at EIGHT o'clock in the forenoon and keep it continually open until the hour of EIGHT o'clock in the afternoon, when you are finally to close it.

Hours of Poll.

Attendance.

2. You are not to absent yourself from your Polling Station during any part of the time that the Poll remains open.

Sealing Ballot Box.

3. You shall, before the commencement of the Poll, show the Ballot Box, empty, to such persons, if any, as may legally be present in your Polling Station, so that they may see it is empty, and shall then lock it up, and put your seal upon it, so as to prevent its being opened without breaking such seal, and shall keep it in your view for the receipt of Ballot Papers, and keep it so locked and sealed.

Persons admitted to be present.

4. You are to regulate the number of Electors to be admitted at a time to your Station. The only persons you are to permit to be present in your Station are the Electors recording their Votes, your Clerk, **ONE AGENT** duly appointed for each Candidate, and the Constables on duty. You are not to allow any Candidate except for the purpose of recording his Vote or any other person whomsoever to be present in your Station. An Agent for a Candidate must, on being admitted to the Station, hand to you his Appointment and Declaration of Secrecy, duly made, and you are to retain these, and deliver them to the Returning Officer or the Deputy Returning Officer.

Electors entitled to Vote.

5. Every person whose name is on the Register of Electors supplied to you is entitled to receive a Ballot Paper and to Vote at the Polling Station allotted to him or her: Provided the Elector shall not have voted in another County Electoral Area of the County.

How the Registers are to be marked.

6. Should the Unit on the Register be comprised in different Polling Districts with different Electors having the same number you will put the distinguishing mark, such as A, B, or C, together with the number of Elector on the Register, on the Counterfoil of the Ballot Paper, such as 10A, 10B, or 10C, as the case may be.

Procedure in giving out Ballot Papers, checking Register, and marking Counterfoils of Ballot Papers.

7. When an Elector applies to you for a Ballot Paper, ask him or her his or her name and place of abode. When he or she replies, look to the Register and see if his or her name is on it, and then call out the number, name, and description of the Elector as they appear on the Register. You then enter on the Counterfoil of the Ballot Paper the number of the Elector on the Register (and if necessary the distinguishing mark, such as 10A, 10B, 10C, as the case may be, as directed by Instruction No. 6), separate the Ballot Paper from the Counterfoil and stamp it on both sides with the official mark, and put a check on the proper Register to denote that the Elector has received a Ballot Paper, then hand Ballot Paper to Elector.

Marking of Ballot Paper by Elector

8. The Elector, on receiving the Ballot Paper, is forthwith to proceed into one of the compartments in the Polling Station and there secretly record his or her Vote on the Paper, and fold it up so as to conceal his or her Vote, but so as to leave the official mark on the back visible; he or she is then (keeping the Ballot Paper still folded) to show you the official mark on the back of the Ballot Paper; and having done so, place the Ballot Paper, still folded, in the Ballot Box in your presence. He or she is to Vote without undue delay, and quit the Station as soon as he or she has put the Ballot Paper into the Ballot Box.

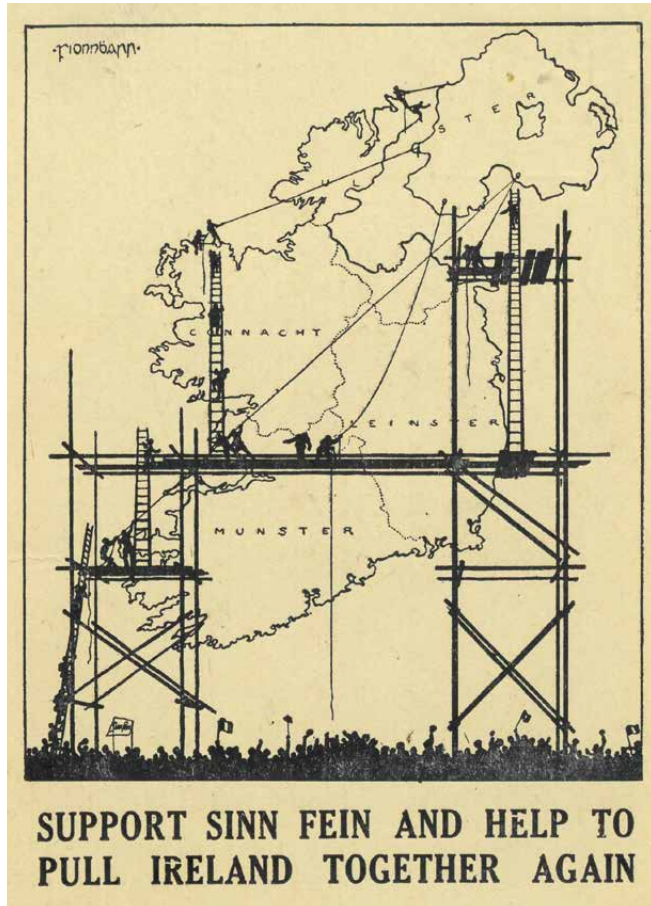
Spoilt Ballot Papers.

9. If an Elector has inadvertently dealt with his or her Ballot Paper in such a manner so that it cannot be conveniently used as a Ballot Paper—on proving to your satisfaction the inadvertence, and delivering it up to you—you may give him or her another Ballot Paper in its place. You will immediately cancel the spoiled Ballot Paper by writing on it the words "Spoilt, Cancelled," and put such spoiled Ballot Paper in Envelope No. 2, provided for unused and spoilt Ballot Papers.

Instructions to Presiding Officer in the election of county councillors in
County Donegal in 1920

Image courtesy of Donegal County Archives

May and June 1920 election – county and rural district councils

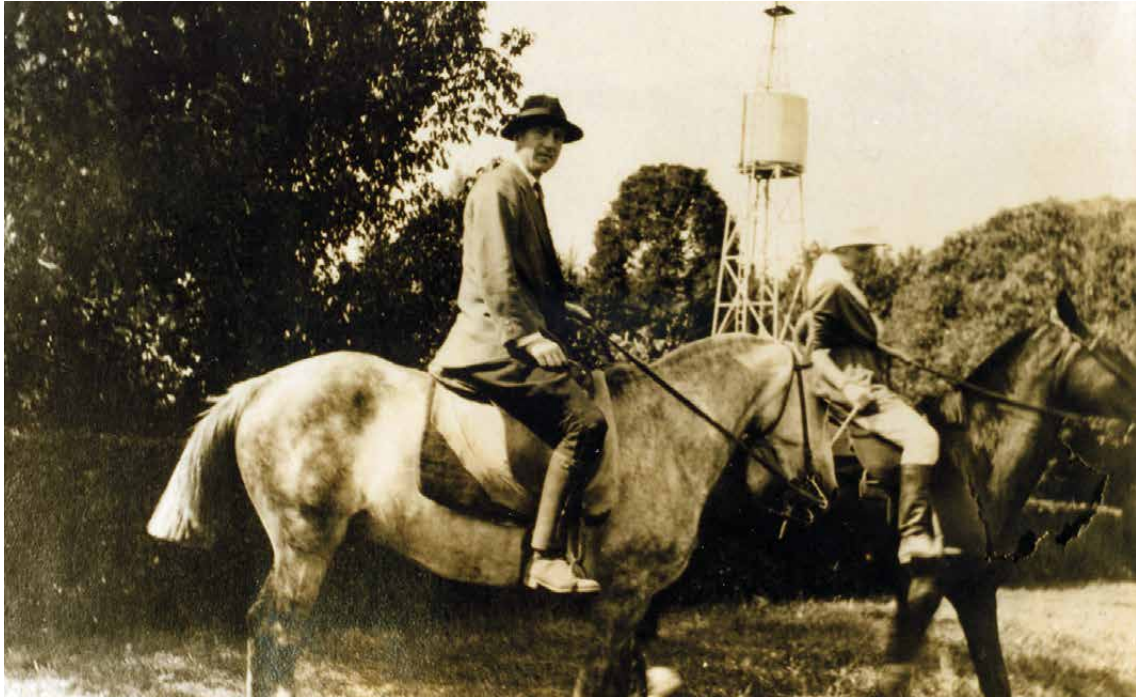


Rural District Council leaflet for Carlingford, Co. Louth in respect of Sinn Féin candidates, June 1920

Image courtesy of Louth County Archives Service

After its impressive performance in January, Sinn Féin expected to do well in the elections to county councils and rural district councils in the summer. The party promised to build more public housing and improve health and other local services, which were issues likely to win it support, apart from its separatist agenda.

Elections were held around the country on dates in late May and early June with local authorities having the option of fixing the polling day within this period. The introduction of Proportional Representation meant there was a need to educate people in how it worked. The Freeman's Journal reported on 9 June that the Proportional Representation Society, which had run a publicity campaign prior to the January elections, was restricted in its work in the later campaign because of lack of funds. Generally speaking, 'the electors had to depend upon National teachers and local organisers for instruction in the system', according to the Freeman.



Éamonn Bulfin on horse in Argentina. He was elected as chair of Offaly County Council in June 1920 in absentia having been deported in 1919 to Buenos Aires, his place of birth following internment in Frongoch for his role in the 1916 Rising. He was notable for raising the 'Irish Republic' flag over the GPO in the Rising

Image courtesy of the Bulfin Family

The War of Independence had gathered pace since January and the summer ballots took place in the context of greater militarisation. The Irish Republican Army was more prominent in electioneering throughout the country, including in the guarding of polling stations which drew the charge of intimidation from unionists.

Referring to the elections in Dublin, the Irish Times (8 June) noted that Sinn Féin was the only party to organise transport for its candidates and voters and 'from an early hour motor cars and other vehicles flying the tricolour brought in voters'.

HONORARY OFFICERS.

T. M. Russell proposed, Patrick Grogan seconded, and it was resolved :—" That Mr. Éamonn Bulfin be appointed Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year."

C. J. O'Riordan proposed, and T. M. Russell seconded, that Mr. John Kelly be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Year, and that during the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman should discharge all the business appertaining to the office of Chairman of the Council."

Mr. Kelly then took the Chair.

THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND.

The following Resolution was passed unanimously, on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by T. M. Russell :—

" THAT THIS COUNCIL OF THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF OFFALY, AT A DULY CONVENED MEETING, HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGES THE AUTHORITY OF DAIL ÉIREANN AS THE DULY ELECTED GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH PEOPLE, AND UNDERTAKES TO GIVE EFFECT TO ALL DECERES DULY PROMULGATED BY THE SAID DAIL ÉIREANN, IN SO FAR AS SAME EFFECTS THIS COUNCIL. THAT COPIES OF THIS RESOLUTION BE FORWARDED TO THE REPUBLICAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FOR TRANSMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF EUROPE AND TO THE PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

Extract from minutes of Offaly County Council held on 19 June 1920 regarding the appointment of Éamonn Bulfin as chairman in absentia. It also records that it acknowledges the authority of Dáil Éireann as the duly elected government of the Irish people.

Image courtesy of Offaly Archives

Sinn Féin's victory was comprehensive. The party took control of 27 out of 33 county councils, and in Fermanagh and Tyrone, it combined with nationalists to form majorities. The Freeman's Journal declared: 'The defeat of Carsonism in Tyrone is one of the most important incidents of the elections.' Of 206 rural district councils, Sinn Féin took 172 and therefore also controlled most boards of poor law guardians. Their success extended even to Ulster, with the party winning control of 36 of Ulster's 55 rural districts. Many of the newly-elected councillors had no previous experience of local government, and some were serving Volunteers.

P. R. ELECTION.

TRANSFER of Kelly's SURPLUS

Total Surplus 55

Number of Transferable Papers 248

Proportion of papers to be transferred = $\frac{\text{Surplus}}{\text{Number of Transferable Papers}} = \frac{55}{248}$

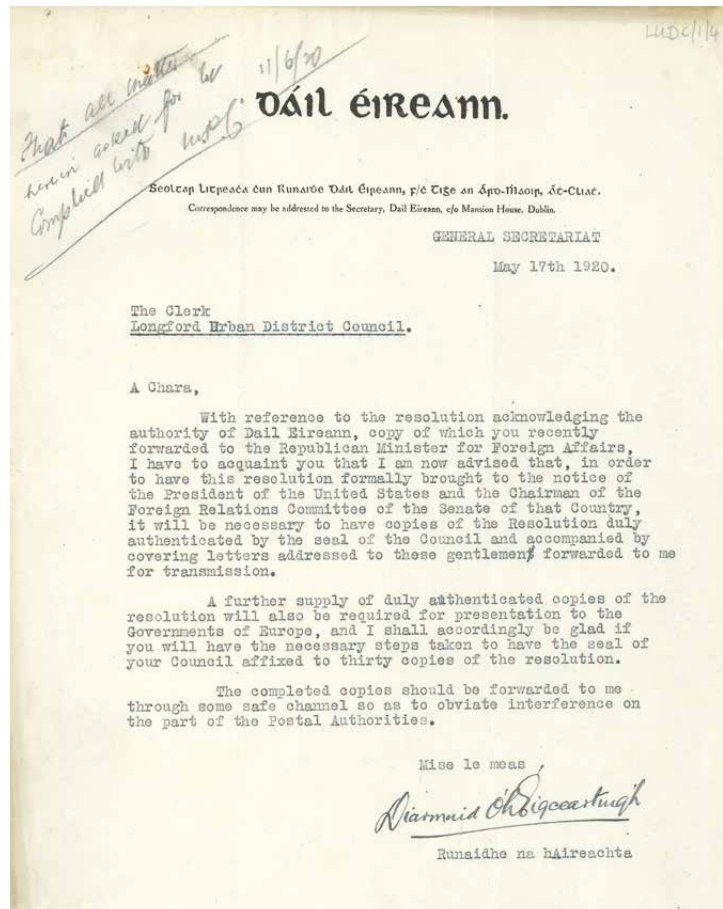
Names of Candidates marked as the next available preference	Number of Papers for each next available preference	Number of papers transferred			No. of Papers retained for <u>Kelly</u> 's Quota
		Whole Numbers	Fractional parts (Numerators only need be shown)	Actual Number transferred (Largest fractions being treated as whole numbers)	
Donaghe	190	4 1/2	34	42	148
Granaghan	5	1	27	1	4
Loughlin	2	1	110		2
McGowan	5	1	27	1	4
McGrath	17	2	177		
McHulley	17	3	191 @	4	13
Mulhern	3		165 @	1	2
O'Brien	25	5	135 @	6	19
Wilson	1		55		1
Total number of transferable papers ...	248	52	3	55	193
Number of non-transferable papers ...	18				18
TOTALS ...	266				211

Calculator's Signature Denis FlanaganChecked by Mr. McGowan

Record of transfer of Edward Kelly's surplus votes in the
 Ballyshannon Rural District Council election, June 1920
 Image courtesy of Donegal County Archives

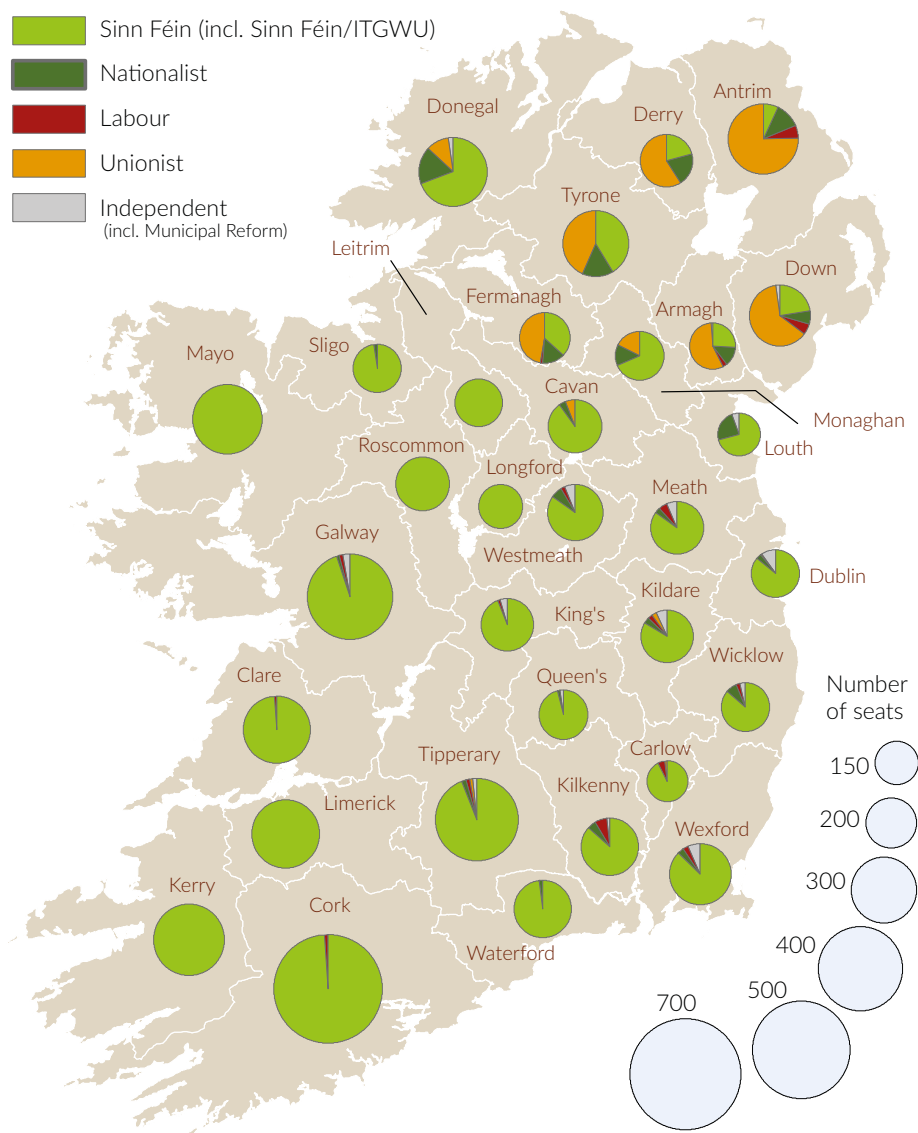
Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

The overall outcome of the elections gave the Department of Local Government much greater clout in the Dáil administration. The Department immediately instructed councils to carefully select chairmen, vice-chairmen and representatives to the General Council of County Councils with 'due regard being paid to National principle, ability and knowledge of local administration'. In practice, this was taken to mean that members of Sinn Féin should be preferred for those positions.



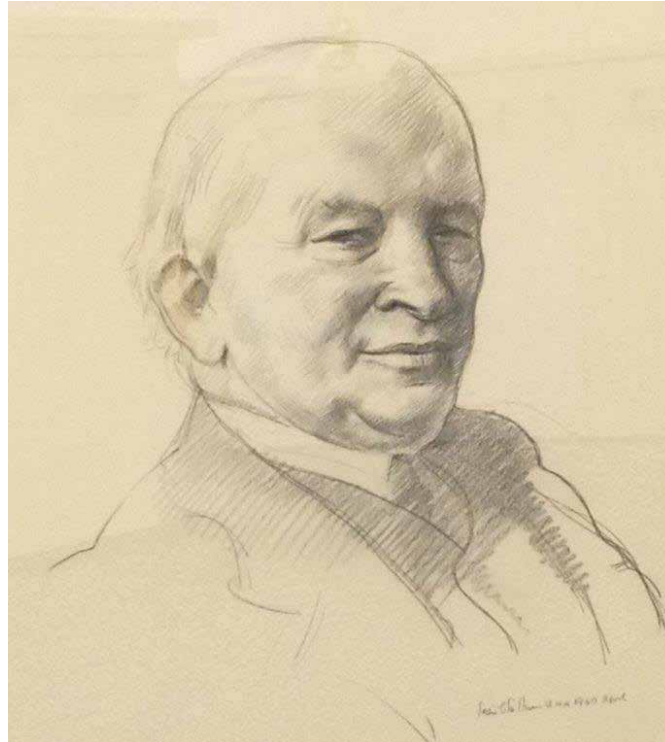
Letter from the general secretariat of Dáil Éireann to the clerk of Longford Urban District Council with regard to the resolution acknowledging the authority of Dáil Éireann, 17 May 1920
Image courtesy of Longford County Library and Archives

Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland



Map showing the share of seats won by parties in each county in the May/June elections, 1920

Image courtesy of Atlas of the Irish Revolution (UCC)



Pencil sketch of P.J. O'Byrne, Cathaoirleach of North Tipperary County Council, 1920-31

Image courtesy of Tipperary County Archives

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, 1920.

NOTICE TO ELECTORS.

We, the undermentioned, having been unanimously selected by a **LARGE AND REPRESENTATIVE MEETING OF THE RATEPAYERS OF WEXFORD**, have allowed our names to go forward as Candidates at the forthcoming **MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**.

If elected **WE PLEDGE OURSELVES** to transact the business of the Corporation in a **THOROUGHLY EFFICIENT** and **CAPABLE** manner, using our best endeavours to **SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF THE RATEPAYERS** in every way.

In the interests of **EFFICIENCY** and **ECONOMY**, and the **WELFARE** of the **BOROUGH OF WEXFORD**, we therefore respectfully solicit your votes.

St. Selskar Ward.

GEORGE HADDEN
(Outgoing).
JAMES BROWNE
(Outgoing).
JOSEPH DOYLE
(Outgoing).
RICHARD GIBSON
(Outgoing).
MINNIE O'CONNOR
HENRY DEMPSEY

St. Iberius Ward.

JAMES SINNOTT
(Outgoing).
PHILIP COWMAN
(Outgoing).
NICHOLAS BYRNE
(Outgoing).
MATTHEW LYMBERY
(Outgoing).
JOHN KIRWAN
(Outgoing).
WM. H. McGUIRE
(Outgoing).
HERBERT THOMPSON

St. Mary's Ward.

CHARLES ROWE
JAMES MURPHY
(Outgoing).
ROBERT COFFEY
(Outgoing).
JAMES BILLINGTON
ALICE FENNEL
PATRICK O'CONNOR

(11908-1)

Printed notice of candidates for the Ratepayers in the 1920 municipal election in Wexford. Alice Fennell was elected for St. Mary's Ward. From The People newspaper, 10 January 1920

Image courtesy of Wexford County Archive



Sinn Féin campaign poster, local elections 1920 Wicklow, urging women to vote for Robert Barton

Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

Women and the 1920 local election

By the time of the 1920 local elections, a degree of progress had already been achieved in terms of female representation at local government level in Ireland. Since 1896, women with certain property qualifications had been eligible for election as poor law guardians. Under the 1898 Local Government Act, they could stand for all the new councils except borough and county councils.

Education played an important part in helping women realise that they had a role to play in the future of their country. Many were actively involved in a number of movements, among them Sinn Féin, Cumann na mBan, the Irish Countrywomen's Association and in the various suffrage and labour campaigns. The Irish Women's Franchise League, in particular, canvassed and encouraged women to put their names forward as candidates in the local elections in 1920. Articles were published in the League's paper, *The Irish Citizen* explaining the process involved and encouraging the female electorate to support their own.

'Let no woman help any group that has not
at least one woman on its ticket'

The Irish Citizen, 5 January 1920

A total of 42 women were elected to local councils in 1920, signalling the way for greater participation of women in the electoral process at local level. Some of those elected were prominent members of Cumann na mBan; some were passionate campaigners for social and healthcare reform.

In the borough and urban elections on 15 January, Mrs Emily Crowe was the first-ever woman elected as part of a Sinn Féin majority on Limerick Corporation. Of 30 female candidates in Dublin and its townships, 14 were elected including Kathleen Clarke and Nell Humphreys. In Carlow, three women were elected in a ward with nine seats¹³.



**The Honourable Albinia Broderick,
first female member, elected to
Kerry County Council in 1920**

Image courtesy of The Kerryman
photographic archive, Kerry County Archives

Three unionist women were returned in the north-east, two were elected in Derry. While the majority of female candidates were Sinn Féin supporters, a number stood for Independent Labour. Other women reinforced local issues including Alice Fennell, who was elected to Wexford Corporation for the Ratepayers' Association.

There was further success for female candidates in the summer elections for county councils, rural districts and poor law guardians. As in January, some of those selected by Sinn Féin were relatives of the men of 1916 including Lillie Connolly and Margaret Pearse. Lady Albinia Broderick, an Irish republican, was the first female elected to Kerry County Council. Lady Margaret Dockrell, a unionist and former member of the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association, was elected to the Monkstown constituency of Dublin County Council. Women also acted as chair or vice-chair in Listowel, Rathdrum, Clifden and Strokestown district councils. Alice Cashel, elected as vice-chair of Galway County Council in 1920 had played a crucial role in the process of reforming local government and bringing it under the authority of Dáil Éireann.



Alice Cashel (elected vice-chair of Galway County Council in June 1920)

Image courtesy of Dr Humphrys

<http://humphrysfamilytree.com/Cashel/al.html>

DÁIL ÉIREANN.

Áiríocht Rialaithe Áiteamha

Department of Local Government

Cir. No. 21.

19th. November 1920.

To the Clerk of each
Borough Council, County Council and
Board of Guardians.
(to be read at the next meeting
of your Board or Council)

Read 27 Nov

A chaze,

A Circular has recently been issued by the English Local Government Board calling on rate-collectors to refuse to obey the instructions of their Councils. Having failed to smash Local Administration in Ireland by withholding the usual grants the enemy government is now attempting to do so by obstructing the collection of the rates and the measures that were devised to safeguard the public monies from seizure.

This Department wishes now to outline the attitude it will adopt towards officials of public bodies who fail to carry out instructions of their local authority. If an official, for any reason, is unwilling to carry out instructions the substance of which either emanated in the first instance from this Department or received its sanction, it is open to such official to resign his position and if he is a pensionable officer, consideration will be given to any equitable claim for pension he may submit. If on the other hand an official disagreeing with orders issued to him by his local authority with sanction of this Department clings to his position and endeavours to use his position to thwart the wishes of his employing Council and the wishes of the people represented by that body, this Department will order the immediate dismissal of such official and will give no consideration to any claim he may subsequently make for pension. Officials are reminded that their pensions are paid from the rates, not by the English Government, and no pension from public money can be granted to any official who is dismissed for endeavouring to thwart the will of the people of Ireland.

Mise le meas,

W. T. Cosgrave

Minister for Local Government.

Letter from W.T. Cosgrave, Minister for Local Government regarding collection of rates in local authorities and the repercussions for officials who fail to carry out the duties of their local authority (19 November 1920)
Image courtesy of Waterford City and County Archive IE/WCC/GNA/131

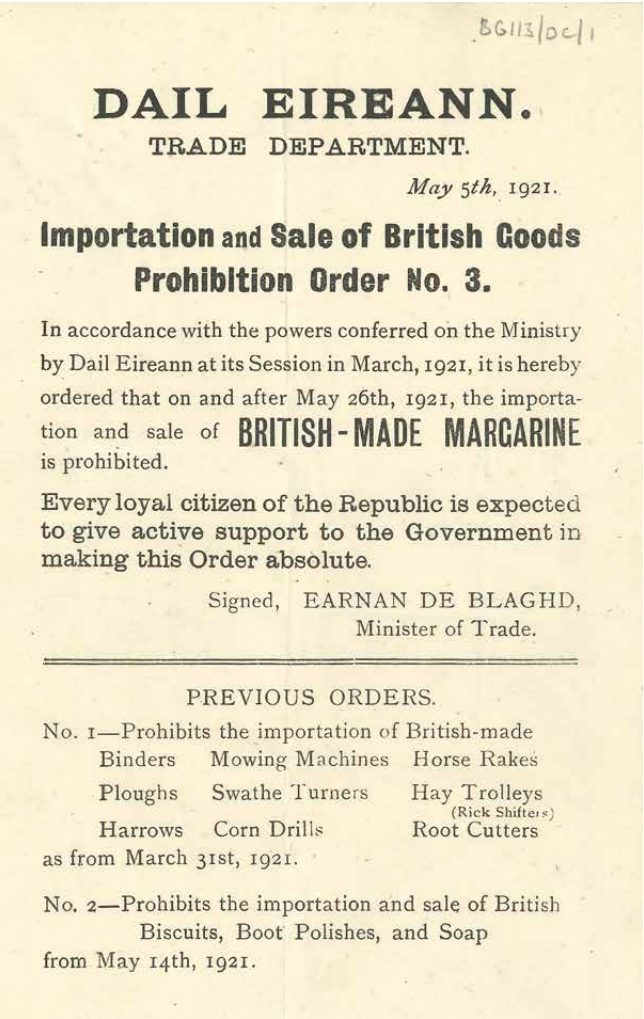
1920-1925 Local government during an unstable period

Following the elections in 1920, the newly-elected councils passed resolutions recognising Dáil Éireann and rejecting the British Local Government Board. This support from local authorities was an important political step in the recognition of the legitimacy of Dáil Éireann and one that had serious consequences for them.

By their refusal to continue to report to the Local Government Board, those local authorities who did so lost the grant assistance paid to them by the Board. Their refusal to hand over rates collected locally also led to legal cases against them. Local authorities were raided by crown forces in an attempt to forcibly access the records. Hiding the books from local government auditors and refusing cooperation resulted in the arrest and jailing of many local authority officials, including town clerks and accountants.

Many of the elected members and staff were also serving in the IRA. In March 1920, the Lord Mayor of Cork, Tomás MacCurtain was assassinated by the RIC and his successor Terence MacSwiney was arrested and went on hunger strike, dying in Brixton prison in October 1920. In 1921 the Mayor of Limerick, George Clancy and former Limerick Mayor, Michael O'Callaghan were also murdered.

Local authorities continued as best they could to function and received instruction from W. T. Cosgrave as Minister for Local Government. The communiqués from Dáil Éireann focused on trying to raise revenue, the difficult task of maintaining rate collection and keeping it from the Local Government Board and on cutting costs to cope with the loss of grants. The signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921 established the Free State government in the 26 counties. The resulting Civil War left local authorities continuing to struggle to function and rebuild infrastructure and collect the necessary revenue to fund services.

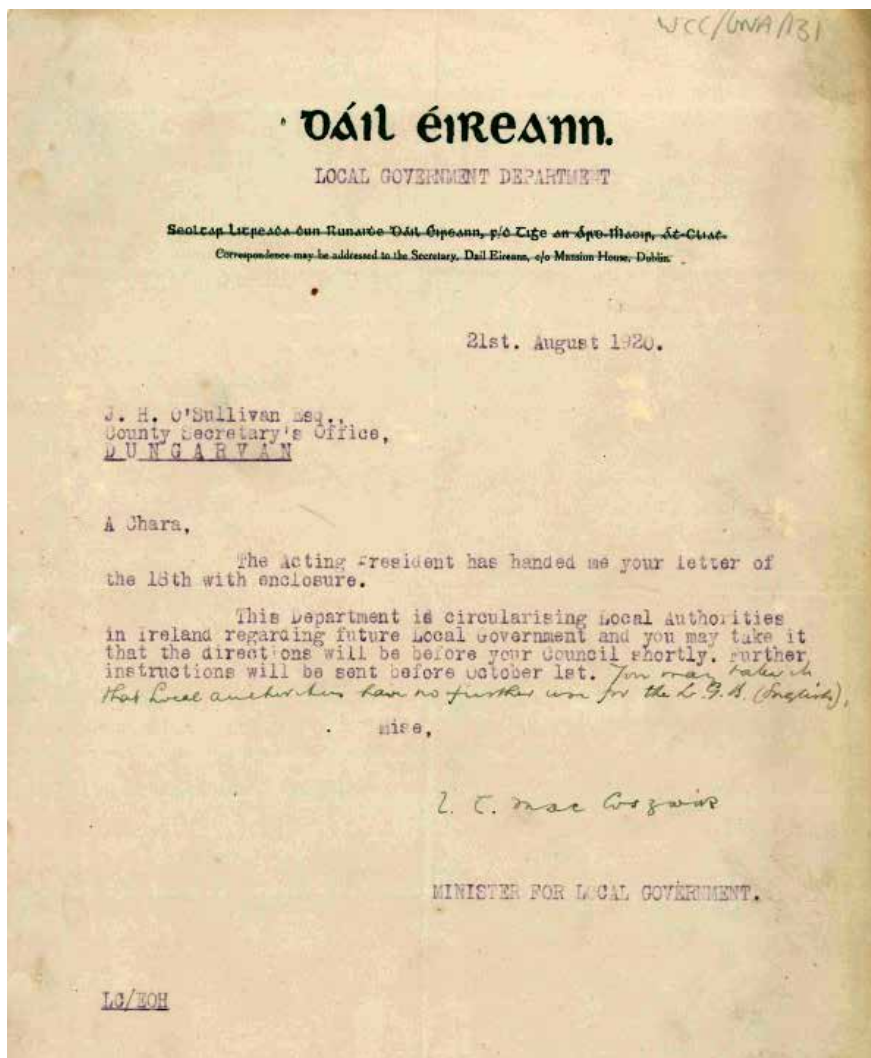


Notice from Ernest Blythe, Minister for Trade, Dáil Éireann regarding prohibition of the importation and sale of British-made margarine, 5 May 1921. From the Longford Board of Guardians collection.

Image courtesy of Longford County Library and Archives

Times remained turbulent for local authorities and some republican-dominated and financially-strapped councils (Dublin City, Cork City, Kerry, Leitrim and Offaly) were replaced by the new Free State Government with centrally-appointed commissioners for a time. The need for local government reform was, however, broadly supported by the general public and the Free State Government turned its attention to the matter and introduced the Local Government Bill, 1924.

The main focus of this reform was the abolition of the rural district councils and boards of guardians and consolidation of their road and health functions into county councils, urban councils and corporations. Boards of health were established with responsibility for sanitary and health services – these were established at county level or, in the case of larger counties, two boards were established. County Medical Officers were appointed to each county with responsibility for health and sanitation. The Bill was withdrawn by the Minister to allow further discussion and amendment, and the Local Government Act, 1925 was enacted in March 1925.



Letter from W. T. Cosgrave advising local authorities that they should have 'no further use of the Local Government Board (English)'

Image courtesy of Waterford City and County Archive IE/WCC/GNA/131

WCC/GNA/88

DÁIL ÉIREANN

Cir. No. 24.

Local Government Dept.
13th, December 1920.

In the struggle between the Irish nation and the English government the Local Authorities are playing an important part. Through them the Irish Government has been enabled to take over control of the internal administration of the Country, showing to the world the truth of President de Valera's claim that Dail Eireann is the DE FACTO as well as the DE JURE government of Ireland - harassed it is true by the presence of an English army of occupation but nevertheless fulfilling the ordinary functions of government and receiving the actual and habitual allegiance of the great majority of the citizens. To meet and beat this claim the enemy government has left no stone unturned. The so called "grants" in reality a miserable portion (about a fortieth) of the money wrung from the Country in taxation have been ruthlessly cut off, carrying the war into the hospitals and the unions, smiting the aged poor and the destitute orphan. It is hoped by these methods to bring the Public Bodies of Ireland to their knees, it is hoped that those who would shrink from no sacrifice for themselves will be weakened by the possibility of hardship for the aged and the helpless. The idea of attempting to buy a people with a miserable fraction of their own money is peculiarly English in its cynicism. But the people must not be caught back into slavery. The responsibility is on each Public Body to so husband its finances that the hopes of the enemy of inducing surrender by economic pressure will prove as vain as their hopes to stampede and demoralise the people by murder and arson....Even with the utmost economy there will be a deficit in many cases. This deficit must be met by loan from the banks. This Department believes that where the position is properly and reasonably explained to a bank there will be no disposition shown to embarrass local authorities by a refusal. The banks must not be allowed to make their reappointment as Treasurers a condition precedent to a loan - to do so shows a misconception of the situation. The Banks were deprived of the treasurership not with any view to injuring them but with a view to protecting public monies from inequitable seizure. To have their accounts in debit would have been no protection, as a Bank as Treasurer would have been ordered to pay on foot of Decrees "out of the first monies of the Council coming into your control" and could not set up its own private debt as against such decrees. Further a Bank as Treasurer would be compelled to make the fullest disclosures as to the funds of any Public Body while under present arrangements though the Bank will no doubt have the handling of the funds of local authorities as heretofore, it will have no knowledge on the subject. The Banks must not be allowed to attach obnoxious conditions to loans to local authorities: neither must they be allowed to offered reasonable security to embarrass local authorities by refusing loans. They exist and flourish by the good-will of the people - they cannot be allowed to come into the ring against the people's representatives.

This page and following page:

Local Government Department, Dáil Éireann. Circular of 13 December 1920, showing how the results of the local elections has enabled the Irish Government to take over control of the internal administration of the country. Image courtesy of Waterford City and County Archive IE/WCA/WCC/GNA/88

enemy in this struggle. Councils should if necessary wield the great power they undoubtedly possess to prove to any bank that refuses facilities, that to do so - always provided fair terms and security is offered - amounts to an will be issued a set of war against the Irish people On this question of security circumstances will vary considerably in different places. It is put as a suggestion that if necessary each member of a Council should set himself to secure the lodging of say £50 by a dozen or twenty people, the sums so lodged to be deemed collateral security against an overdraft to the Council's representatives while each individual acting in this way as security would have as his security against loss the rates of the County. . . The enemy are basing all their hopes on a financial breakdown on the part of Public Bodies necessitating a return to the Custom House fold. It would be impossible to overestimate the need for local effort to defeat these hopes. The enemy is watching every move of the Local Bodies. Lately when a Council in the mistaken idea that to be in overdraft would render its funds immune from seizure re-appointed the Bank its Treasurer the matter got a blazing headline in the English Press "COUNTY COUNCIL REPUDIATES BANK DEBT". The line must be held. With only four months of the financial year to run there must be no collapse of Local Government. The Public Bodies must not let down the Nation.

C. O'G. Ughy

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Some notable figures of the 1920 local elections



Robert Childers Barton

Image courtesy of Houses of the Oireachtas www.dail100.ie

Robert Barton (1881-1975). An extensive landowner and former British army officer, Robert joined the republican movement after witnessing the ill-treatment of the 1916 leaders in Dublin. As TD for West Wicklow, he was elected Minister for Agriculture at the first Dáil sitting in 1919. Arrested in February 1919 for making seditious speeches, he was elected as chairman of Wicklow County Council in June 1920 during his detention. Re-elected to the Dáil in 1922, he was imprisoned later that year for his activities in the Civil War. He lost his seat in the general election of 1923 and was released from prison in December 1923. He did not seek election again, but held a number of public appointments thereafter.



Thomas D. Sinnott

Image from the T.D. Sinnott collection at Wexford County Archive

Thomas D. Sinnott (1893-1965). Poet, linguist, secondary school teacher, historian and public administrator. T.D. took a prominent part in the 1916 Easter Rising in Enniscorthy and was arrested for his involvement with periods of detention in Stafford Jail and Frongoch until his release in December 1916. He was elected to Enniscorthy Urban District Council in 1920 and served as chairman of Enniscorthy Board of Guardians in June that year. Re-arrested for his activities during the War of Independence, he was appointed secretary to the Wexford County Board of Health in 1922. He was appointed first County Manager of Wexford County Council in 1942, a post he held until his retirement in 1953.



Terence MacSwiney

Image from the Liam de Róiste collection at Cork City and County Archives

Terence MacSwiney (1879-1920). A poet and playwright who was involved in nationalist causes from an early period, Terence was one of the chief organisers and commanders of the Irish Volunteers in Cork from 1914. He was elected to the First Dáil in 1918 as Sinn Féin TD for Mid Cork and served as councillor with Cork City Council on his election in January 1920. He was elected as Lord Mayor of Cork and Commanding Officer of Cork No.1 Brigade Irish Volunteers following the assassination of Tomás MacCurtain in March 1920. He died on hunger strike at Brixton Prison, London on 25 October 1920.



George Nicholls

Image courtesy of Galway County Council

George Nicholls (ca. 1886-1942) was a Dublin-born solicitor with strong links to Arthur Griffith. A prominent member of the Irish Volunteers Galway City Corps, he was arrested and interned during Easter Week 1916. He was elected to Galway County Council in 1920 and served as chairman, 1920-25. He voted in favour of the ratification of the Treaty. Serving as TD from 1921-27, he held the post of Assistant Minister for Home Affairs for a period in 1922 and as parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Defence, 1925-27.

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**Hanna and Francis
Sheehy-Skeffington**

Image courtesy of Dublin City
Library & Archive

Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington (1877-1946). Elected member of Dublin City Council, 1920-1924. Well-remembered as one of Ireland's early feminists but it is little-known that in the local elections of January 1920, she was elected to Dublin City Council as a Sinn Féin representative. Her interests were mainly social development through education, as she served on a number of committees, including Public Libraries – which she chaired – Old Age Pensions, School Attendance Board, Technical Education and Scholarships. She continued to serve on the elected Dublin City Council until it was abolished by the Free State Government in May 1924.



Cllr. Kate Breen

Image courtesy of The
Kerryman

Catherine (Kate) Breen (1869-1937). Daughter of a Killarney Urban District Council official, Kate served in Cumann na mBan during the 1916 Rising and was subsequently arrested and interned. She was later arrested for her part in promoting Sinn Féin politics during the 1918 General Election campaign. Elected to Killarney Urban District Council in January 1920, one of her first acts was to propose a suite of street name changes to reflect a republican Killarney. She was elected to Kerry County Council in 1926 and 1928 and also served as Chair of the County Board of Health and Public Assistance and as Vice-Chair of the General Council of County Councils.

ROBERT MOORE
CLERK OF COUNCIL.

Inishowen Rural District Council.

→***←
WORKHOUSE.

Carndonagh, 25th May.....1920

Dear Charlie,

I don't know what put it
in my head that Thursday was the day
of our election but I have the impression
I told you the counting would be
on Friday and Saturday (week). Wed. &
Thursday 2nd & 3rd pm are the
days and I hope they will suit
Your convenience equally well.
Mr. Moore's official appointment for
You herewith and also the names
of the candidates in the two areas
to be counted.

Hoping You are all quite well
I remain.

Yours Sincerely

Edward O'Donnell

Letter from Edward O'Donnell, Inishowen Rural District
Council, to Charlie [O'Callaghan, Returning Officer] regarding
the dates of counting of votes in the local elections,
25 May 1920

Image courtesy of Donegal County Archives

Endnotes

Local Government reform

- 1 Dowell, R.B., 'Administration and the public services 1870-1921' in A new history of Ireland VI: Ireland under the Union II 1870-1921, ed. W.E. Vaughan (Oxford University Press, 1996), p593
- 2 Lyons, F.S.L., 'The aftermath of Parnell, 1891-1903' in A new history of Ireland VI: Ireland under the Union II 1870-1921, ed. W.E. Vaughan (Oxford University Press, 1996), p594
- 3 Creedon, William P., Exemplar Hiberniae, 100 Years of local government in Ireland, p16
- 4 Ferriter, Diarmaid, Lovers of liberty? Local government in 20th century Ireland (National Archives of Ireland, Dublin, 2001), p9
- 5 Dáil100, Houses of the Oireachtas, <https://www.dail100.ie/en/long-reads/local-government-elections>
- 6 Gallagher, Frank, The four glorious years 1918-1921 (Blackwater Press, 1953), p44
- 7 Ibid, p72

January 1920 elections – borough and urban councils

- 8 Kee, Robert, Ireland: a history (London, 2003), p180
- 9 Dundee Courier, 24 January 1920
- 10 <https://www.dail100.ie/en/long-reads/local-government-elections>
- 11 <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/municipal-elections-sinn-fein-and-labour-perform-strongly-as-unionists-falt>
- 12 <https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/revolutionary-government-in-ireland-dail-eireann-1919-1922-arthur-mitchell-gill-and-macmillan/>

Women and the 1920 local elections

- 13 <https://www.thejournal.ie/1920-women-vote-4969283-Jan2020>

Recommended reading

Web links to articles

<https://www.dail100.ie/en/long-reads/local-government-elections/>

<https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/pr-the-sligo-borough-election-of-1919/>

http://proinsias.net/publications/pr_in_ireland/2006/08/why-ireland-chose-pr.html

<https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/elections-to-be-held-under-proportional-representation-for-the-first-time>

<https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/municipal-elections-sinn-fein-and-labour-perform-strongly-as-unionists-falt>

<https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/britain-the-proportional-representation-question-a-lesson-from-ireland-1920>

Carmel Quinlan, Standing up for women in politics <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/century/century-women-and-the-vote/standing-up-for-women-in-politics-1.553520>

Mary Cullen, A history of her story <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/century/century-women-and-the-vote/a-history-of-her-story-1.553415>

Margaret Ward
www.thejournal.ie/readme/1920-women-vote-4969283-Jan2020

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Newspapers

The Sligo Champion, 1920
The Freeman's Journal, 1920
The People, 1920
Connacht Tribune, 1920

Publications

Ferriter, Diarmaid, 'Lovers of Liberty'? Local Government in 20th century Ireland (Dublin, 2001)

Hall, Donal, The Irish Revolution, 1912-23 (Dublin, 2019)

Kee, Robert, Ireland: A History (London, 2003)

Lee, J.J., Ireland 1912-1985 Politics and Society (Cambridge, 2004)

O'Sullivan, Harold, A History of Local Government in the County of Louth, from earliest times to the Present (Dublin, 2000)

Macardle, Dorothy, The Irish republic (London, 1968)

Appendix 1 Results of the county council elections in June 1920 as transcribed from the *Freeman's Journal*, 12 June 1920

Counties highlighted in **bold** below represent amended details of seat numbers and party affiliations than what was published in the Freeman's Journal

LEINSTER	Total Seats	Seats by Party
Dublin	19	SF 12; Lab and SF 2; Ind. 2; Unionist 3
Meath	21	SF 20; Farmers' Union 1
Kildare	21	SF 15; Lab 5; Ind. N. 1
King's Co. (Offaly)	21	SF 19; Lab 2
Queen's Co. (Laois)	22	SF 18; Lab. Repub. 3; Unionist 1
Louth	28	SF 17; Trade & Lab. 2; Ind. 3; HR Party 6
Westmeath	23	SF 15; Lab. 5; Nat. 3
Longford	20	SF 20
Wicklow	20	SF 14; SF Lab. 3; Farmers' Assoc. 2; Nat. 1
Wexford	19	SF 12; Lab. 7
Kilkenny	19	SF 16; Lab. 2; Nat. 1
Carlow	20	SF 13; Lab. 7

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MUNSTER	Total Seats	Seats by Party
Tipperary (North)	20	SF 19; Lab. 1
Tipperary (South)	23	SF 23
Cork	32	SF 32
Limerick	20	SF 20
Kerry	20	SF 20
Waterford	20	SF 17; Lab. Repub. 3
Clare	20	SF 20

CONNAUGHT	Total Seats	Seats by Party
Galway	20	SF 20
Mayo	24	SF 24
Roscommon	20	SF 20
Sligo	20	SF 19; Lab. Repub. 1
Leitrim	19	SF 19

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ULSTER	Total Seats	Seats by Party
Donegal	20	SF 15; Nat. 3; U. 2
Derry	19	SF 4; Nat. 4; Unionist 11
Antrim	21	Unionist 17; Ind. U. 1; Nat. 2; SF 1
Armagh	23	SF 5; Nat. 3; Unionist 14; Ind. 1
Down	20	Unionist 13; SF 4; Lab. 2; Nat. 1
Tyrone	26	SF 8; Nat. 7; Unionist 11
Fermanagh	20	SF 6; Nat. 5; Unionist 9
Monaghan	20	SF 16; Unionist 4
Cavan	21	SF 20; Nat. 1

Appendix 2 List of local authority archives services in Ireland

Carlow County Council		Clare County Council	
Carlow County Archive, County Library, Tullow Street, Carlow		Clare County Archives, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare	
Tel: 059 9129705		Tel: 065 6846271	
Email: lkennedy@carlowcoco.ie		Email: archives@clarecoco.ie	
Web: www.carlowlibraries.ie/explore/local-studies		Web: www.clarelibrary.ie	
Cork City & County Council		Donegal County Council	
Cork City and County Archives, Cork City Council, Seamus Murphy Building, 32 Great William O'Brien Street, Cork City		Donegal County Archives, Donegal County Council, Three Rivers Centre, Lifford, Co. Donegal	
Tel: 021 4505886		Tel: 074 9172490	
Email: brian_mcgee@corkcity.ie		Email: archivist@donegalcoco.ie	
Web: www.corkarchives.ie		Web: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives/	
Dublin City Council		Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	
Dublin City Archives, c/o Dublin City Libraries & Archive, 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin 2		dlr Libraries, dlr Lexicon, Haigh Terrace, Moran Park, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin	
Tel: 01 6744996		Tel: 01 2362722	
Email: cityarchives@dublincity.ie		Email: dgunning@dlrcoco.ie	
Web: www.dublincity.ie		Web: www.libraries.dlrcoco.ie	

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Fingal County Council		Galway County Council	
Fingal Local Studies & Archives, 46 North Street, Swords, Co. Dublin		Galway County Council Archives. c/o Galway County Library, Island House, Cathedral Square, Galway Co. Galway	
Tel: 01 8704496		Tel: 091 509388	
Email: karen.delacey@fngal.ie		Email: archivist@galwaycoco.ie	
Web: www.fngal.ie		Web: www.galway.ie/archives	
Kerry County Council		Limerick City & County Council	
Kerry County Archive, c/o Kerry County Library HQ, Moyderwell, Tralee, Co. Kerry		Limerick City and County Archives, 58 O'Connell Street. Limerick Co. Limerick	
Tel: 066 7121200		Tel: 061 496526	
Email: archivist@kerrycoco.ie		Email: jacqui.hayes@limerick.ie	
Web: www.kerrylibrary.ie		Web: www.limerickcoco.ie www.limerickcorp.ie	
Longford County Council		Louth County Council	
Longford County Library & Archives, Town Centre, Longford Co. Longford		Louth County Archives Service, Old Gaol, Ardee Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth	
Tel: 043 3341124		Tel: 042 9324358	
Email: mmorris@longfordcoco.ie		Email: archive@louthcoco.ie	
Web: www.longfordlibrary.ie		Web: www.louthcoco.ie	

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Offaly County Council		Tipperary County Council	
Offaly Archives, Unit 1F Axis Business Park, Clara Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly		Tipperary County Archives, Tipperary Local Authority Complex, Carrigeen Business Park, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary	
Tel: 057 9321421 / 057 9339968		Tel: 0761 065319 / 0761 065000	
Email: info@offalyhistory.com		Email: rachel.granville@tipperarycoco.ie	
Web: www.offalyarchives.com		Web: www.tipperarycoco.ie	
Waterford City & County Council		Wexford County Council	
Waterford City and County Archive, High Street / Dungarvan Library, Waterford / Davitt's Quay, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford		Wexford County Archive, 6A Ardavan Business Park, Ardavan, Co. Wexford	
Tel: 076 1102144 / 058 21144		Tel: 053 9196572	
Email: archivist@waterfordcouncil.ie		Email: archivist@wexfordcoco.ie	
Web: www.waterfordcouncil.ie		Web: www.wexfordcountyarchive.com	
Wicklow County Council			
Wicklow County Archives, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Whitegates, Wicklow Town			
Tel: 0404 20126			
Email: cwright@wicklowcoco.ie			
Web: www.wicklow.ie			