



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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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. Election poster 1920 local elections.

ISBN: ISBN: 978-0-95084-702-7

Table of Contents

Foreword	1
Introduction	3
The value of local archives	5
Acknowledgements	6
Background	8
Local government reform	13
Proportional Representation	18
Introduction of Proportional Representation to Ireland	19
January 1920 election – borough and urban councils	27
May and June 1920 election – county and rural district councils	36
Women and the 1920 local election	45
1920-1925 Local government during an unstable period	49
Some notable figures of the 1920 local elections	54
Endnotes	58
Recommended reading	59
Web links to articles	59
Newspapers	60
Publications	60
Appendix 1	Results of the county council elections in June 1920 as transcribed from the Freeman’s Journal, 12 June 1920
	61
Appendix 2	List of local authority archives services in Ireland
	64



First meeting of Cork City Council following the 1920 local election. Cllr. Tomás MacCurtain elected as Lord Mayor.

Image courtesy of Cork City and County Archives

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.

Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

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.

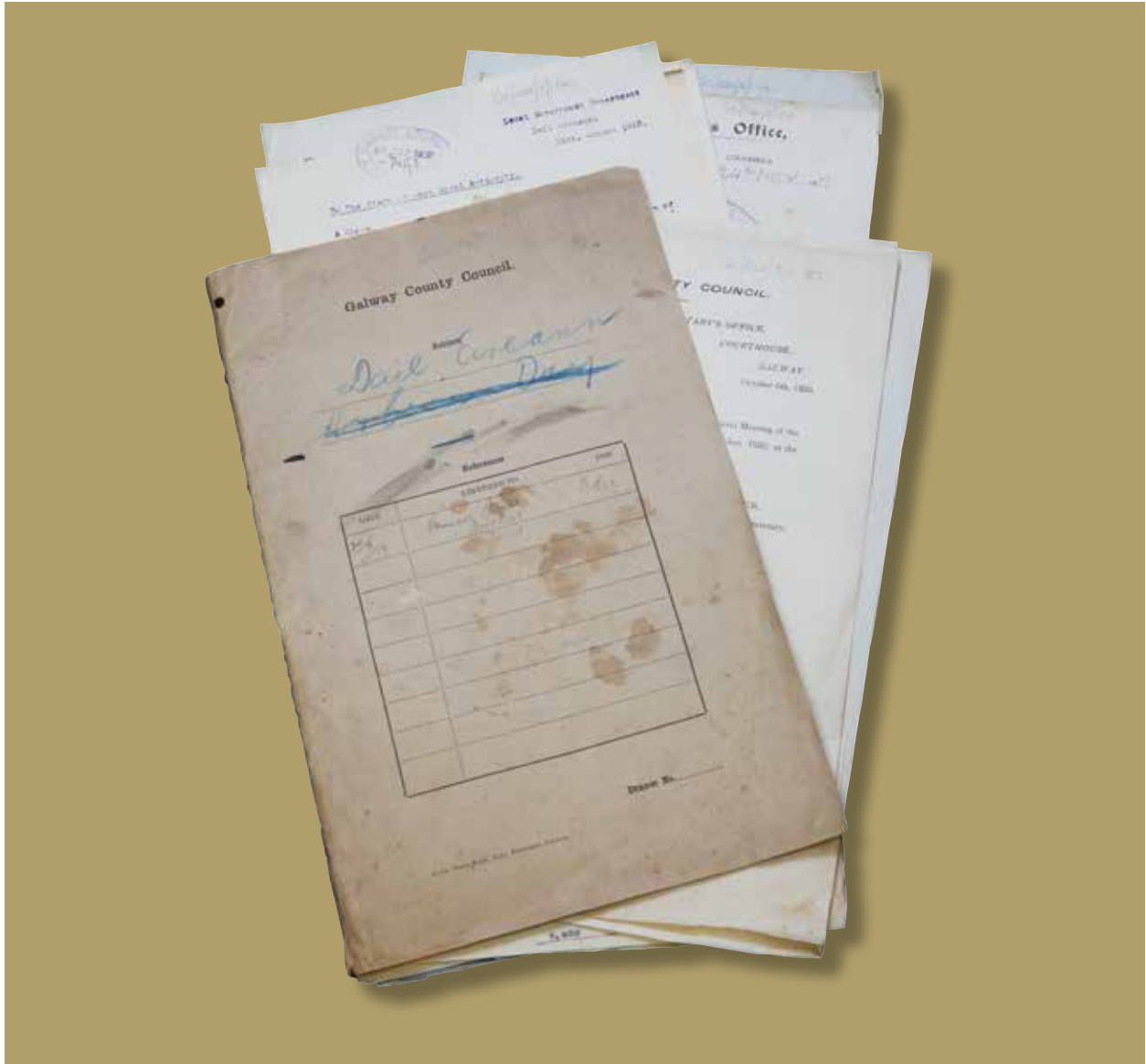
Background

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.

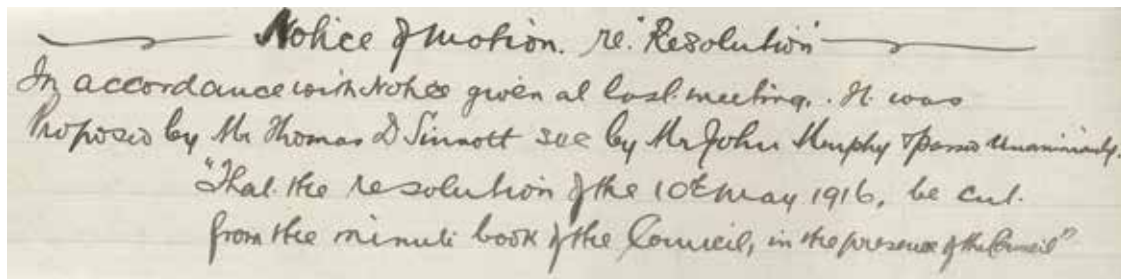


Folder of correspondence from Dáil Éireann, 1919-20

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

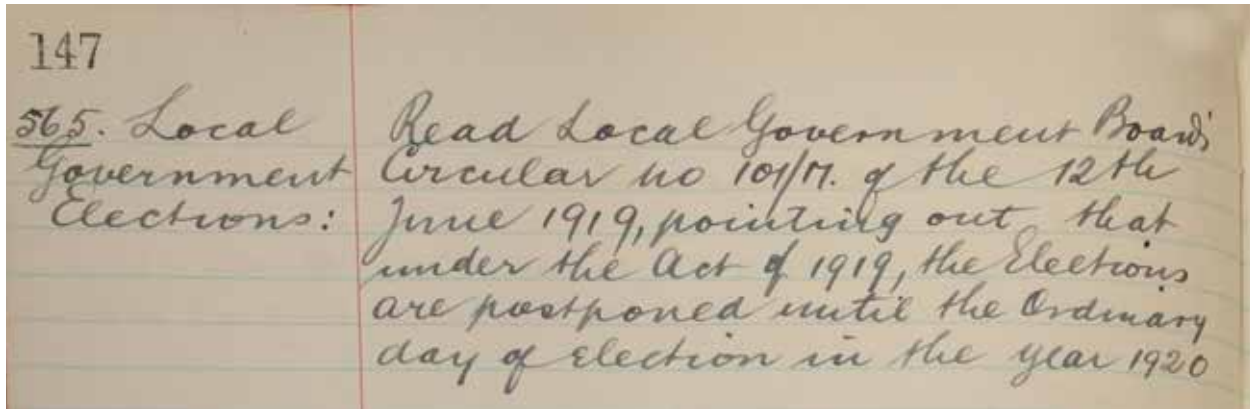
The passing into law of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898 streamlined local government. It abolished the governing, though not the legal, functions of the grand juries and established county, urban and rural district councils.

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

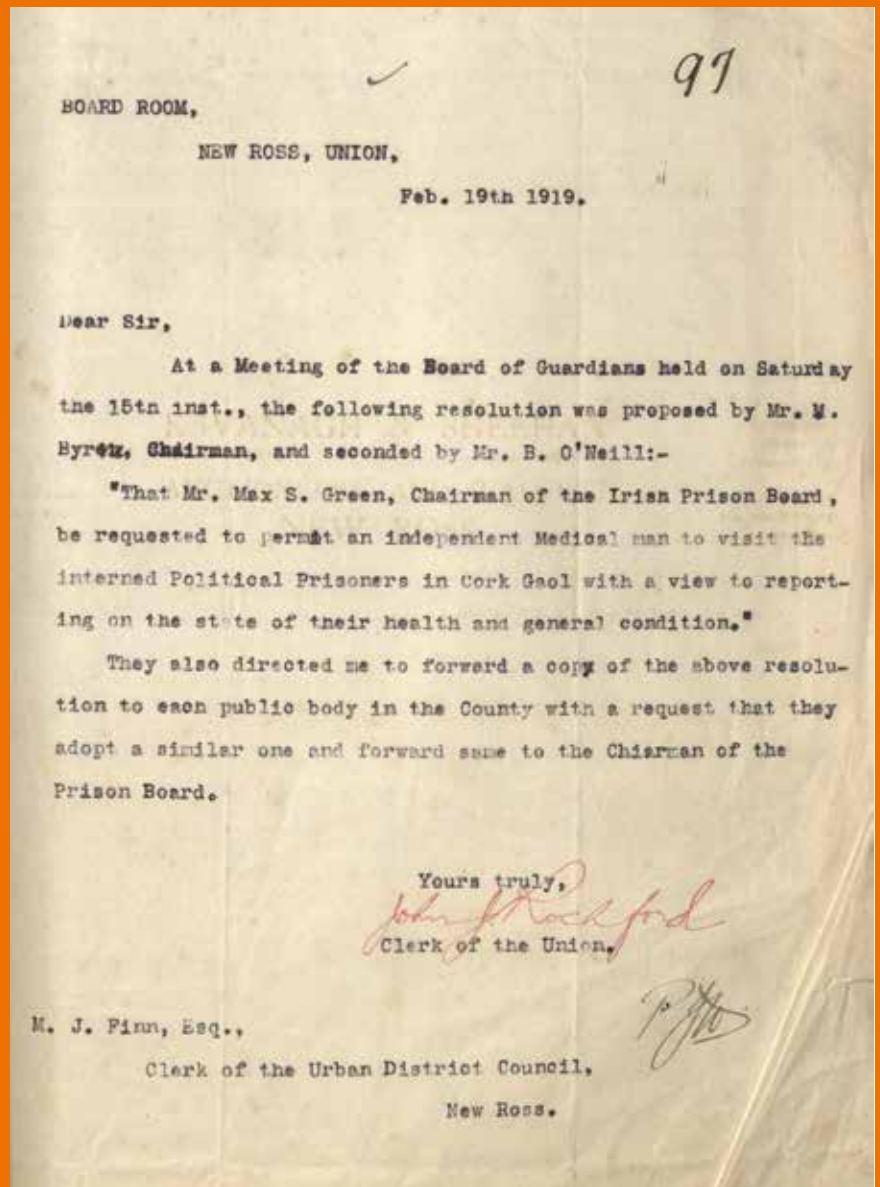
The main powers of the county councils included the construction and repair of roads and bridges; construction and maintenance of courthouses; support of mental asylums, county infirmaries and fever hospitals; appointment of coroners; levying and collecting of the poor rate; and duties under the Diseases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

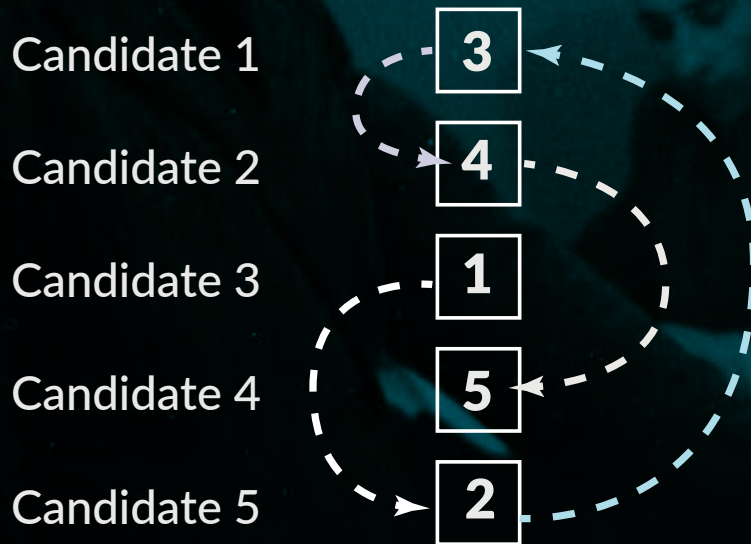
The first shots of the War of Independence were fired on the same day at Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary and District Republican Courts were introduced in April 1920 in almost every constituency in Ireland⁷. So, when the borough and urban district council elections were held in January, and those for the 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.

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)
No.	Names in full. Surname first.	Residence or Property occupied and abode of non-resident occupier.	Nature of Qualification.	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	Brown, John	40	0
3235	Cuniffe, Catherine	152	0	GUNPOWDER LANE.			
3236	Murphy, Margaret	159	0	3261	Mahony, 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.				MALACHI'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	39	0	3269	Coleman, Ellen	31	0
3244	Seannell, 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 Emille	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	Bedford, 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	Croinin, 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.

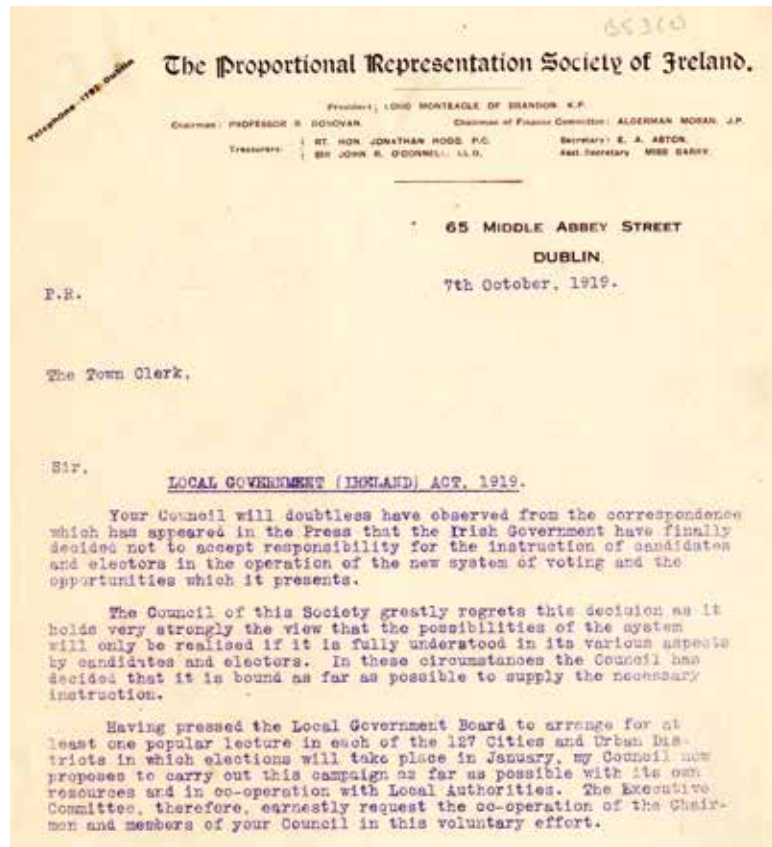
Democracy and Change | The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland

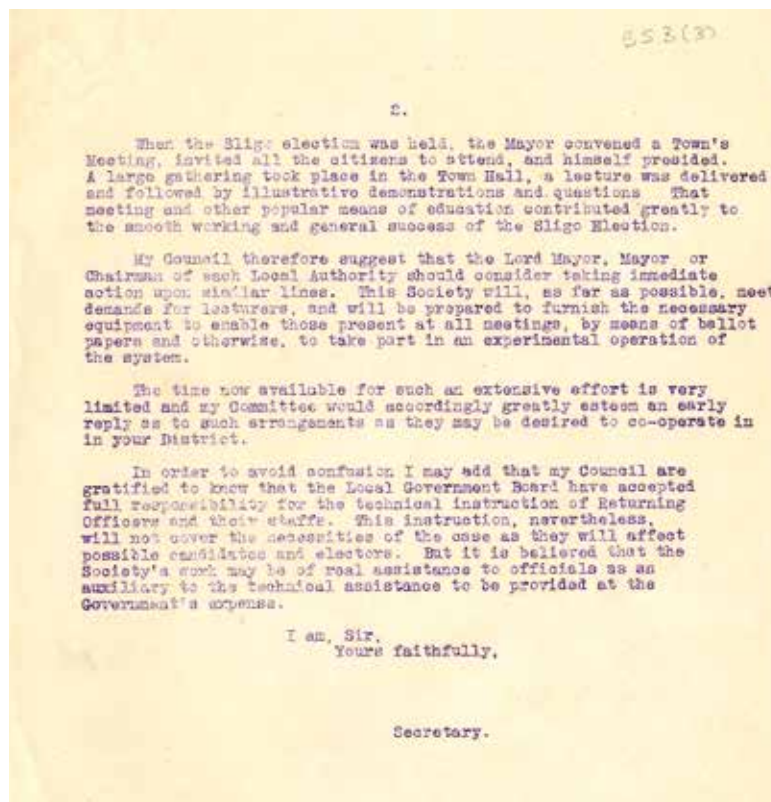


Thomas Scanlan MP

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.





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

How Sligo paved the way for Ireland's

SLIGO "P. R." MUNICIPAL ELECTION. January, 1919.

Table showing particulars of West Ward Results and details of transfers.

No. of Votes, 940. No. of Seats, 8. ^(b.) Quota — $\frac{940}{8} + 1 = 105$.

[illegible]

ON January 15, 1919, the people of Sligo went to the polls and created history by becoming the first electorate in Ireland to vote under the proportional representation system, later to be adopted throughout the country. For many years, the P.R. Society had been conducting a vigorous campaign to get the system introduced but it continued to be regarded largely as an academic exercise — the hobby of a group of political theorists. Then came Sligo.

In one day, the theory of the few became the objective of electoral reformers everywhere and the P.R. Society was flooded with requests for information and literature. Immediately announcing a major campaign throughout the country to get P.R. adopted by every local authority, the Society confidently added: "Sligo asked for P.R. — and got it! The same local initiative will produce similar results elsewhere!"

CRISIS

The reason why Sligo was selected for this far-reaching electoral experiment is rooted in a borough financial crisis which became so serious that the furniture of the Town Hall was put up for sale in 1917.

Sligo was constituted a Borough by Royal Charter in 1612, and was administered by a Grand Jury until 1898 when the Corporation took over after the Local Government Act. While restrictions on the Corporation's power to levy rates for municipal purposes remained, it became liable for a new and practically unlimited liability for a number of extra charges.

Many people, by then, had either stopped taking an active interest in the Corporation's affairs, or, in the case of ratepayers, failed to get enough representation to make their influence effective. Meanwhile, the Corporation's financial problems deteriorated to such an extent that no cleaning, lighting and other essential services were provided.

Demanding drastic reform, a number of citizens, mostly business people, formed a Ratepayers' Association. At the same time, following the seizure of Town Hall furniture to help pay municipal debts, a Local Government Inquiry into the Corporation's financial affairs was held "at which such irregularities and limitations were disclosed that the necessity for legislative action became evident."

The Ratepayers' Association didn't want any new legislation which would increase the spending powers of representatives under whose control the crisis had developed. Deadlock ensued between the Corporation and the Association. Proposals and counter-proposals were made, only to be abandoned as unworkable. Then, proportional representation was suggested. The idea was accepted by both sides and an agreed Bill, approved by the Irish Local Government Board, was submitted to Parliament and passed into law in the Autumn of 1918. Detailed rules were framed by the Local Government Board under which the election was carried out in January, 1919.

HUGE DEBTS

During the 1968 P.R. Referendum campaign, the late Deputy Eugene Gilbride claimed that when the Corporation took over the town's affairs, they became liable for a massive debt, incurred by the Grand Jury for building the Town Hall and for other purposes. He dismissed suggestions that the Corporation had mismanaged its affairs or misappropriated funds and added:

"Faced with all these difficulties, the Council decided to strike a higher rate in an effort to get enough money to maintain essential services. Immediately they took this decision, a ratepayers association was formed — by the very people who had earlier incurred the debt and passed it on. They objected strenuously to the striking of a higher rate, and even went so far as to apply to the High Court for an injunction to stop the Corporation striking the higher rate."

But the fact remains that the subsequent sworn enquiry into the Corporation's affairs found several irregularities and examples of mismanagement which had nothing to do with the days of the Grand Jury.

Commenting on the rates collection system, the Inspector said in his official report: "This ill-advised procedure combined

with neglect of proper administration has caused such financial embarrassment that...the financial affairs of the Corporation are at the present time in a condition of insolvency. The evidence given at the enquiry, not alone by the officials but by the members of the Corporation, disclosed a lack of prudent, business-like management such as has not before come prominently under notice in the case of any other local authority.²

One of his more startling findings revealed that the wages sheets included a number of persons who, though listed as working for specified days each week, did not work at all — in fact they were pensioners.

The enquiry also discovered that one wages list contained at least five names recorded as working on specified days each week who either didn't work at all or were not proper workmen. One was a blind man who had stopped working two years previously. Another was in France and a third was simply described as being 'absent'.

In the end, after much public debate, a resolution agreeing to P.R. was passed at a public meeting in the Town Hall.

Deputy Gilbride, in 1968, claimed that the decision was not accepted without much objection from prominent Corporation members and from many townspeople.

"In the end, the Corporation and the people accepted P.R. because there was no alternative open to them. The decision was understandable when one remembers that the Corporation at this time was bankrupt, the town was going without the normal services including street lighting and cleaning, an injunction was hanging over their heads in the High Court, the British Press was making a laughing stock of the Borough Council and the only way out of the extraordinary mess was a blunt refusal from the British Government to allow an increase in the rate unless P.R. was adopted," he said.

In any event, preparations got under way for the new-style election. The Corporation got the assistance and advice of Mr. J.H. Humphreys from the Proportional Representation Society, London, who arrived in Sligo some days before the election.



The count in progress during Sligo's first parliamentary election under P.R. held in May 1921.

The report said the Corporation should take immediate steps to "exclude from the wages sheets all persons who do not perform or are incapable of rendering efficient service."

It concluded: "Unless the members of the Council rise to the occasion and devote their energies in future to the transaction of municipal business on proper business lines, the ratepayers of the Borough will suffer pecuniarily to an extent considerably in excess of the rates hitherto, or now to be, imposed on them."

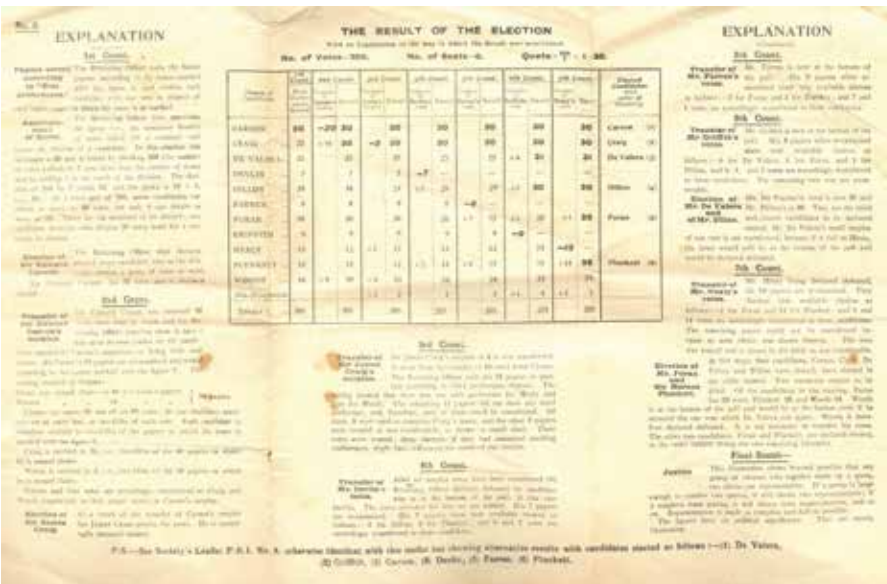
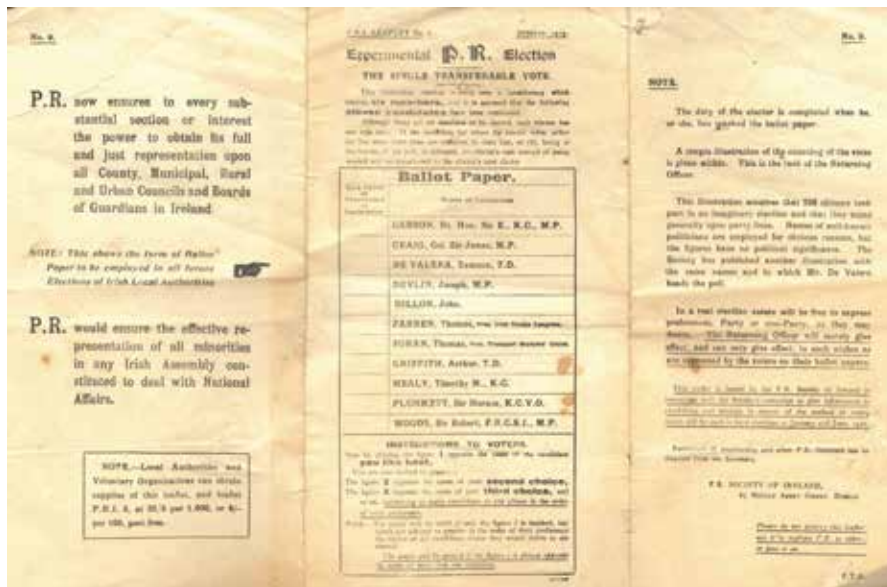
MESS

No matter who was to blame, several things were clear at this stage — all normal services had ceased to exist in the town, the Corporation was in an appalling financial mess, and angry ratepayers were demanding P.R. because they claimed they couldn't get representation on the Corporation under the old system.

Sligo was divided into three wards — North, East and West — each returning eight members. In all, forty-eight candidates were nominated, sixteen in each ward comprising Ratepayers, Sinn Féinn, Labour and Independent.

Mr. J.R. McCarthy who acted as Returning Officer, reported afterwards that the voters had no difficulty in grasping what they had to do. Illiterate voters quite easily expressed their preferences despite the number of candidates in each ward. In some instances, up to twelve preferences were expressed.

The spoiled votes in one of the wards amounted to less than one per cent of the total polled, and the number of papers spoiled because voters didn't understand the new system was about half the total spoiled votes. In fact, the ward with the highest number of illiterates had the lowest number of spoiled votes — and the ward with the lowest percentage of illiterates had the highest number of spoiled votes.



Leaflet outlining the Proportional Representation election process, October 1919 Image courtesy of Louth County Archives Service

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
Connelley	Parry
White Dr	Mohr
Cullen	Larkin
Quinlan P.	Walsh (John)
Kearney	Jones
Brady	Whitely
Lawson	Cutler
Brazier	Heaney (R)
Councillor Cunningham (W.)	Twiss
Dunne	Whittle
Power	Conry
Walsh (John)	Moore (John)
Murray	Whitely

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.L.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, Dimer).
4	LYNCH (JANE ELLEN LYNCH, of 12 Main Street, Greener).
2	O'BRIEN (JOHN O'BRIEN, of 22 Wolfstone Place, Accountant).
5	O'CONNOR (CHARLES O'CONNOR, of 7 Green Street, Gentleman).
1	THOMPSON (WILLIAM BENNY 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, Dimer).
3	LYNCH (JANE ELLEN LYNCH, of 12 Main Street, Greener).
	O'BRIEN (JOHN O'BRIEN, of 22 Wolfstone Place, Accountant).
1	O'CONNOR (CHARLES O'CONNOR, of 7 Green Street, Gentleman).
	THOMPSON (WILLIAM BENNY THOMPSON, of 14 Queen St., Silversmith).
2	WILSON (ROBERT WILSON, of 22 Ranelagh Square, Chemist).

DOLLARD, PRINTINGHOUSE, DUBLIN L.L.L.

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. Selskar 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.
	BULLINGTON, JAMES		BYRNE, NICHOLAS (Outgoing)		BYRNE, NICHOLAS
	CLANCY, PATRICK		COWMAN, PHILIP (Outgoing)		BROWNE, JAMES (Outgoing)
	COFFEY, ROBERT A. (Outgoing)		DAVIS, THOMAS		BROWNE, MICHAEL
	CORRIGAN, RICHARD		KEENE, JOHN		DAVEY, FRANCIS
	CRONIN, JAMES		KIRWAN, JOHN (Outgoing)		DOUGHERTY, MICHAEL
	CUMMINGS, LAWRENCE		LARSEN, EDDIE		DEMPSEY, HENRY
	FENNELL, ALICE MARY		LYMBERY, MATTHEW (Outgoing)		DOYLE, JOSEPH (Outgoing)
	HARTY, MICHAEL		MCCOY, WM. H. (Outgoing)		GIBSON, RICHARD (Outgoing)
	HARRIS, PATRICK		O'DONNELL, MATTHEW		HADDEN, GEORGE (Outgoing)
	MURPHY, JAMES (Outgoing)		ROBERTS, THOMAS		HEALING, JAMES
	GREEN, THOMAS		SINNOTT, JAMES (Outgoing)		O'CONNOR, MARY ANNE
	O'CONNOR, PATRICK		THOMPSON, HERBERT		O'CONNOR, MARTIN
	PARKE, DAVID		WALSH, THOMAS		MCCOY, JOHN
	PARSONS, LAWRENCE		WHITE, PATRICK		
	ROWE, CHARLES J.				
	SHANNON, 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 **L**. It will spoil your paper.
NOTE—Should you by mistake Spoil your paper the Returning Officer will give you another one.

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

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.



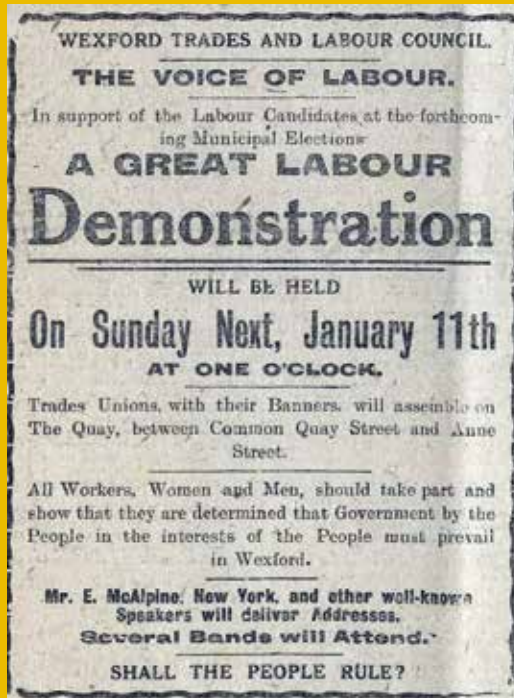
Photograph of Tomás MacCurtain, the first republican Lord Mayor for Cork, 1920

Image courtesy of Cork City and County Archives

A handwritten signature in blue ink on lined paper. The signature reads "Tomás MacCurtain" in a cursive script, followed by "Chairman" in a larger, more stylized cursive script.

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 49 Members to be elected for each of the four Borough Areas

St. Mary's North

The following were validly nominated:-

Doherty Francis, 66, Inishtown, Clonmel.	Coach Painter.
Macarty Dominick 33, Gladstone Street, Upper Clonmel.	Cycle Fitter
Macarty William 21, Mary Street Clonmel.	Operative Baker
Powers Joseph 50, Cashel Street, Clonmel.	Tailor
White Joseph 3, Wolfe Tone Street, Clonmel.	Tailor
Willmott Walter William, 4, Wolfe Tone Street, Clonmel.	Fitter

Besides the foregoing nomination papers were delivered for:-

Gayle William Thomas 23, Queen Street	Gentleman
Leary Denis 4, Upper Gladstone Street	Merchant

but these two latter nominations were invalid, and there being accordingly no contest the 49 validly nominated candidates were on the 16th instant, declared duly elected for the Area.

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

103

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 Glancy, George Hadden, Nicholas Connolly.

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

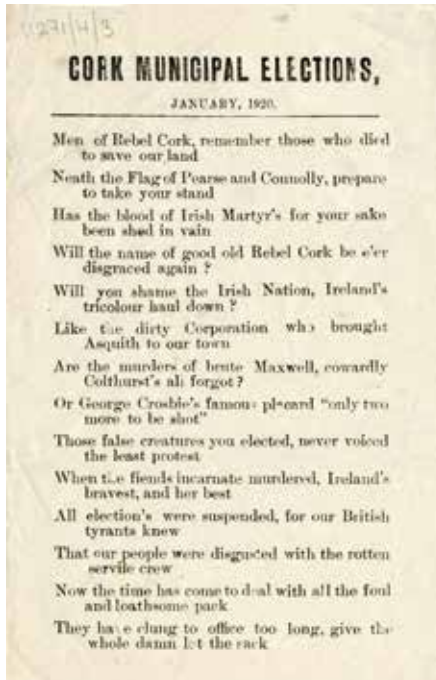
It so happened that all the above Members were in attendance.

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

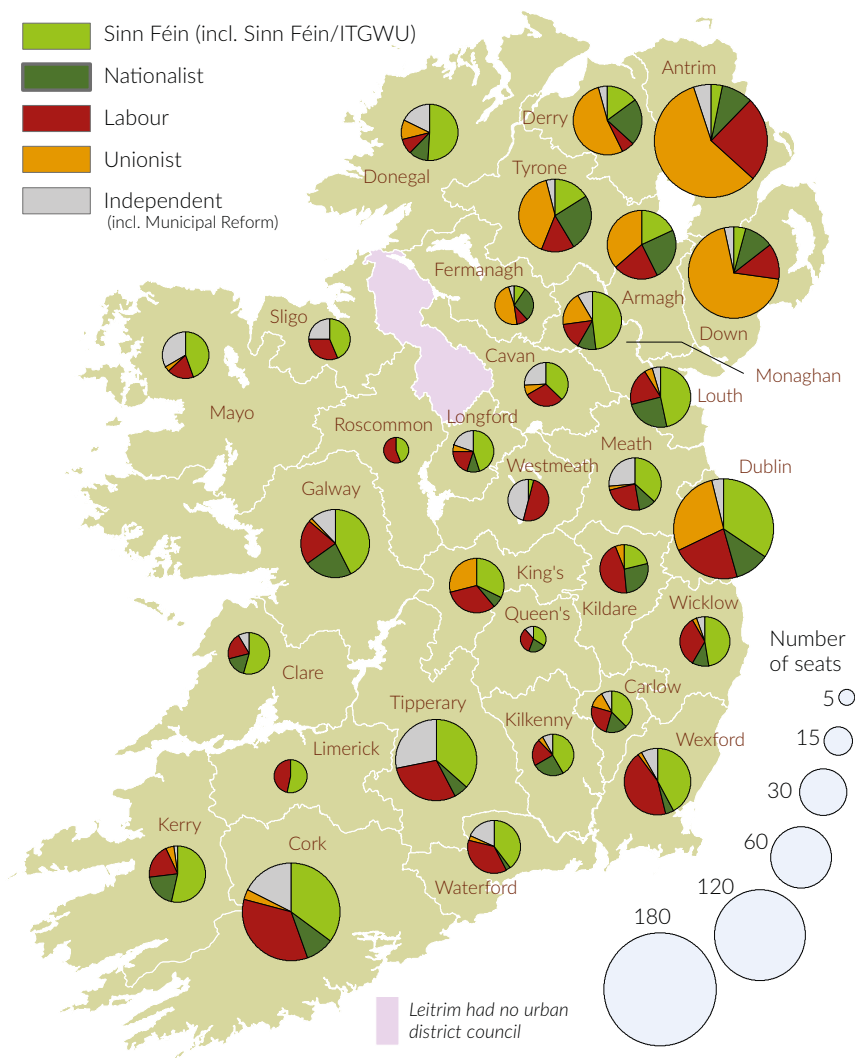
With a high turnout and some violent clashes occurring such as in Cork, the results saw Sinn Féin win 560 seats, Labour 394, Unionists 355, Home Rulers 238, Independents 161 and municipal reformers 108. Republicans took control in Dublin, Cork and Limerick, while Waterford and Derry had no single party 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



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.

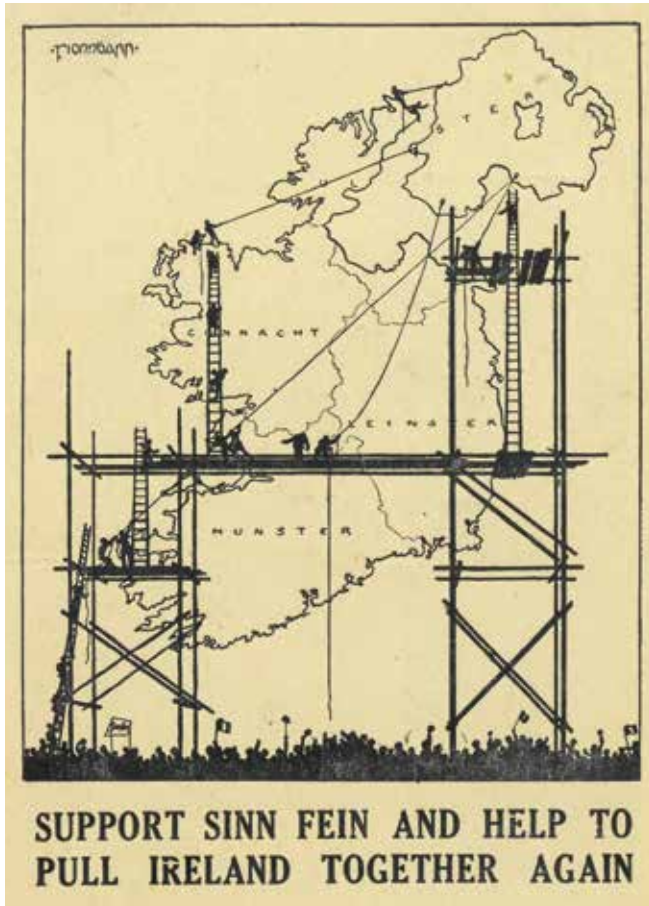
Spoilt Ballot Papers.

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

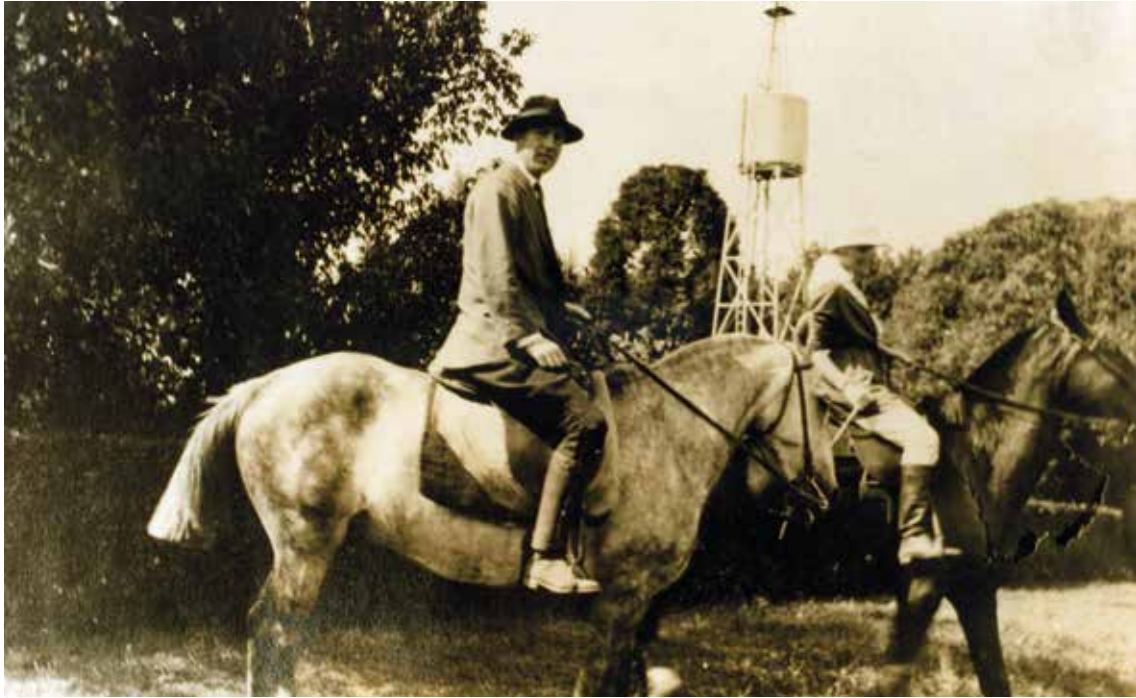


Rural District Council leaflet for Carlingford, Co. Louth in respect of Sinn Féin candidates, June 1920

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.

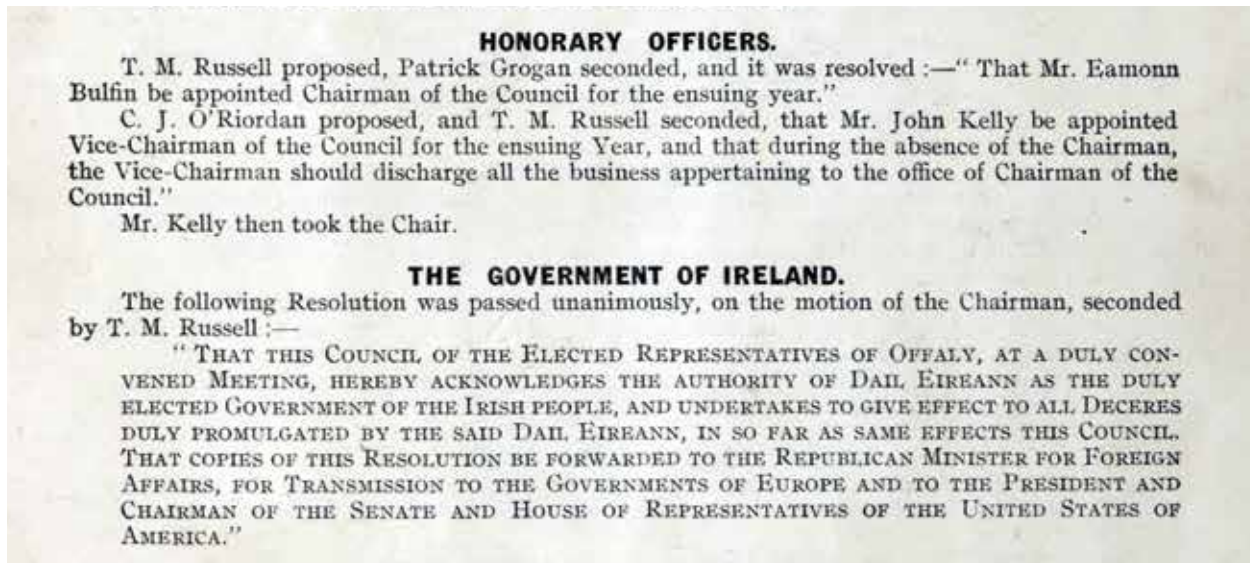


Éamonn Bulfin on horse in Argentina. He was elected as chair of Offaly County Council in June 1920 in absentia having been deported in 1919 to Buenos Aires, his place of birth following internment in Frongoch for his role in the 1916 Rising. He was notable for raising the 'Irish Republic' flag over the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



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

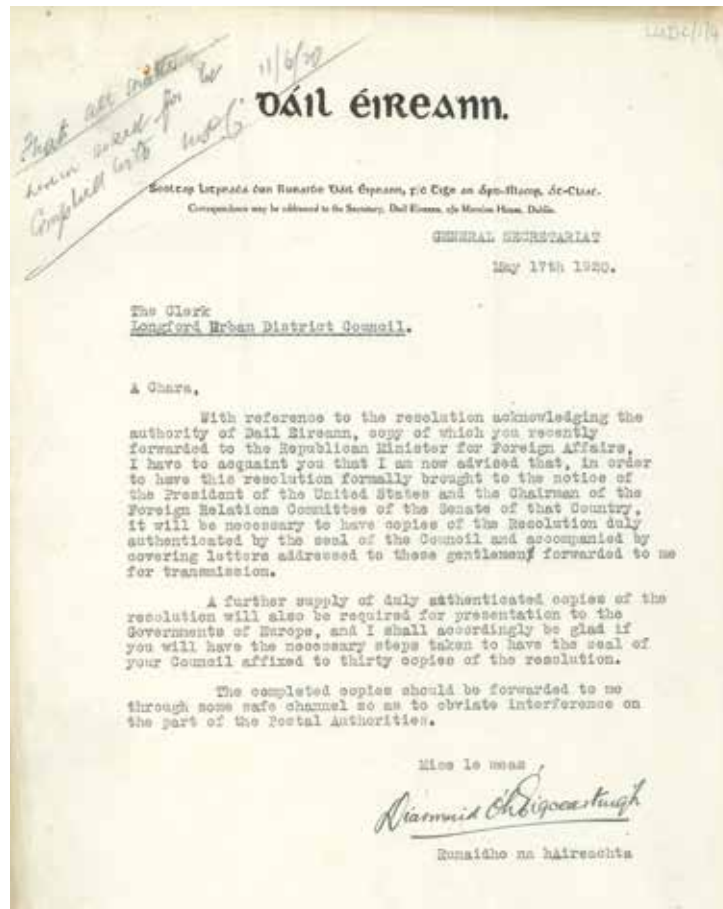
Names of Candidates marked as the next available preference	Number of Papers for each next available preference	Number of papers transferred			No. of Papers retained for Kelly's Quota
		Whole Numbers	Fractional parts (Numerators only need be shown)	Actual Number transferred (Largest fractions being treated as whole numbers)	
Donaghy	190	42	34	42	148
Donaghy	5	1	27	1	4
Loughlin	2	1	116		2
McGowan	5	1	27	1	4
McGowan	17	1	177		
McGowan	17	3	191	4	13
Mulhern	3		165	1	2
O'Brien	25	5	134	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 Senio ThayerChecked by Ch. L. L. L.

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

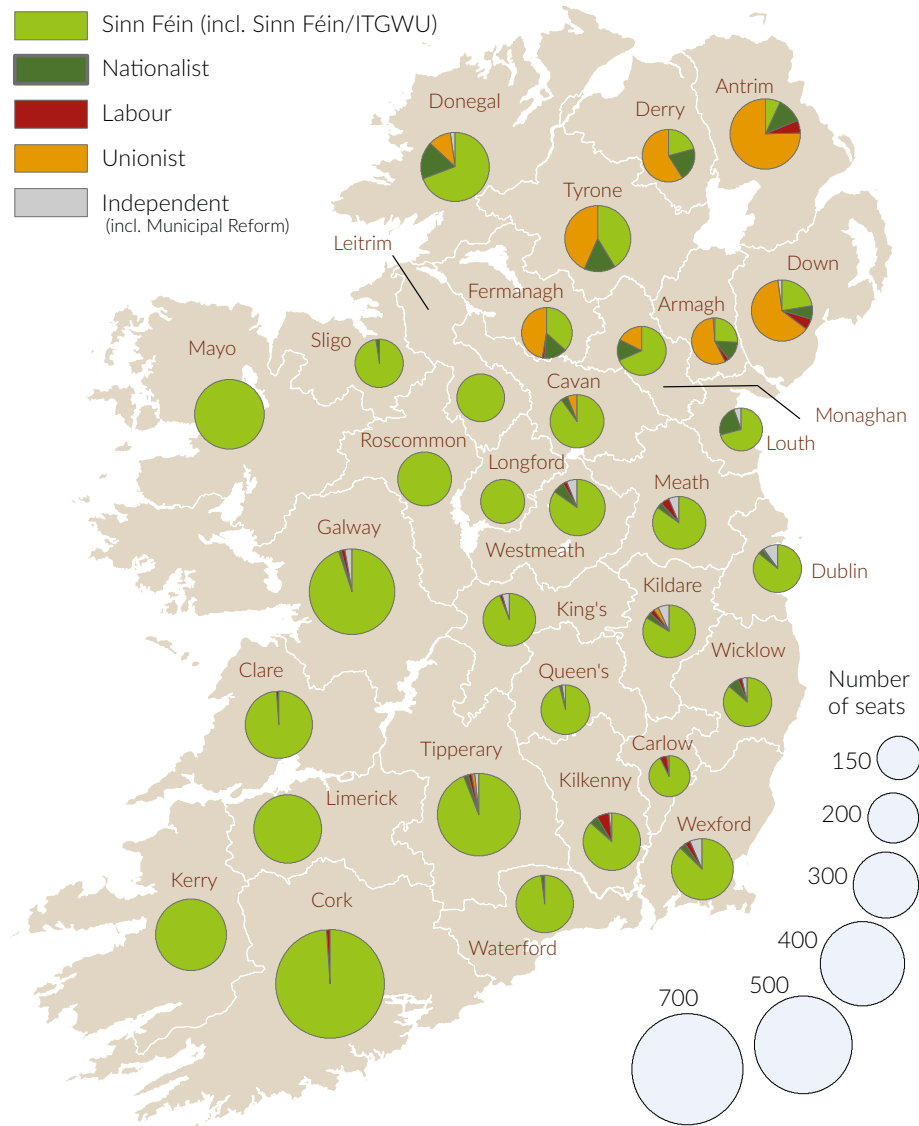
The overall outcome of the elections gave the Department of Local Government much greater clout in the Dáil administration. The Department immediately instructed councils to carefully select chairmen, vice-chairmen and representatives to the General Council of County Councils with 'due regard being paid 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

(11906-1)

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.

Airgeacht Rialaitheir Áiteamla

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)

A chaire,

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.

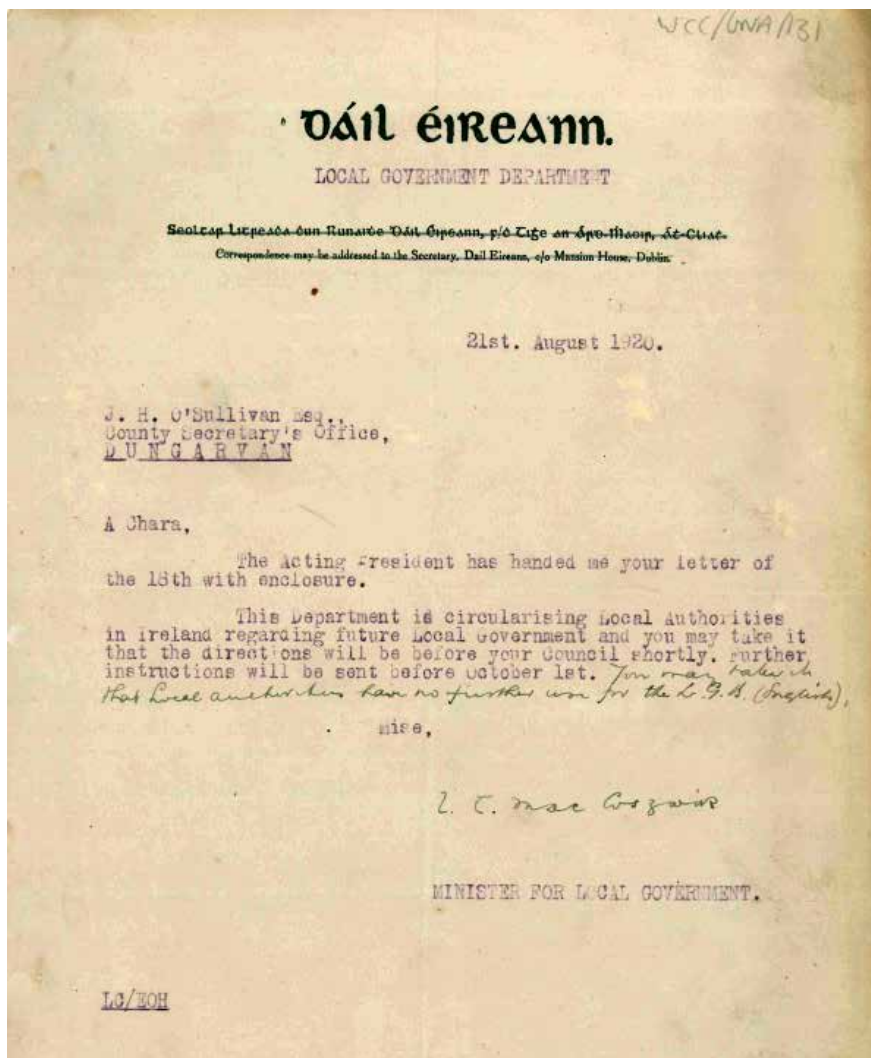


Notice from Ernest Blythe, Minister for Trade, Dáil Éireann regarding prohibition of the importation and sale of British-made margarine, 5 May 1921. From the Longford Board of Guardians collection.

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 Decree "out of the first monies of the Council coming into your control" and could not set up its own private debt as against such decree. 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 if 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 every bank that refuses facilities, that to do so - always provided fair terms and security is offered - amounts to an open declaration 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 representative while each individual acting in this way as security would have 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 Exchequer 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 PERJURATES BANK SECURITY". 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. Ugly

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.



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

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

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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

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

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	

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	

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			