



COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Info and Frequently Asked Questions

Information for Community Councillors

This information document has been developed to support Community Councillors in their day-to-day role. Please refer to the document governing Community Councils, Amended Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Dumfries and Galloway for all Community Council related issues.

[View the new Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils \[PDF - 473KB\]](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

How is a Community Council governed?

Community Councils are governed by the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Dumfries and Galloway (the 'Scheme'). The Scheme sets out how Community Councils should operate including elections, membership rules and meeting arrangements. The Scheme was originally adopted in 1997 and various amendments have been agreed by Dumfries and Galloway Council since then.

It is the responsibility of the Community Council to follow the scheme, which details the role, responsibilities and procedures for a Community Council. Every Community Council member completes a nomination form to confirm they will abide by this request. This document is also the Community Council constitution. Any amendments to the document follow a Scottish Government consultation procedure and any amendments are formally approved by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Are Community Councils part of DGC?

No. Although Community Councils follow an election process administered by Dumfries and Galloway Council, they do not have the status of local authorities nor are they part of local authorities. Community Councils are a separate legal entity with their own rights and responsibilities, as detailed in the governing document.

How do I get involved?

There are different ways to get involved in your local Community Council: attend your Community Council's regular public meetings

- email your local Community Council main contact or visit their website/Facebook page if they have one
- become a Community Council member
- Contact details for your Community Council can be found [here](#)
- or send your enquiry to the DGC dedicated Community Council mailbox Community.Councils@dumgal.gov.uk

 [CC Tips on becoming a CCIr Oct 2019 \[PDF - 114KB\]](#)

What If My Area Doesn't Have a Current Community Council?

Where a Community Council does NOT exist and where there is interest by members of the community to be involved in establishing a Community Council for that area, a By-Election can take place.

To establish a Community Council you are required to submit a written application of at least 20 electors who are:

- 16 years of age or over
- reside within the Community Council area
- are on the current Register of Electors for that Community Council area

Applications can be submitted by email or post

email community.councils@dumgal.gov.uk

Militia House Communities Directorate D&G Council English Street Dumfries DG1 2HR

Meetings - Are there lots of meetings and who can attend?

Community Councils are required to host a minimum of 6 meetings within each financial year. This will include 1 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and 5 ordinary meetings. The financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March inclusive. The AGM is held within 3 calendar months of the end of the financial year. Attendance at meetings include Community Council Members, Associate members, Ex-Officio members which can be elected members of DGC, the Scottish Government or the UK Government, Police Scotland, guest speakers and members of the public. All Community Council meetings, whether held in person or virtually are open to the public.

Can Community Councils host online meetings?

Yes. We are aware that a number of Community Councils have taken the decision to meet remotely and are using various ways to ensure that the public are being given access to these remote meetings through the use of virtual platforms. Please find a guide on various methods of hosting virtual meetings that you may find useful whilst appreciating that Community Councils may wish to use other remote means that may not already be listed.

 [Meetings Methods of Remote Platforms \[PDF - 136KB\]](#)

[Scottish Tech Army Training Materials](#)

 [Teams User Guide \[PDF - 3MB\]](#)

 [Zoom User Guide \[PDF - 1MB\]](#)

Who is responsible for meetings?

The chairperson convenes and presides over meetings. Once a Community Council is established each Community Council must appoint a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. The office bearers are responsible for the efficient and effective operation of the Community Council including any assets the Community Council may have. This doesn't mean that they must do all the work and other members of the Community Council can agree to cover important roles including Planning and Licencing, Communication and Consultation.

What are the different types of membership of a Community Council?

Elected Community Councillor

This refers to members who have been elected at an ordinary election, by-election or casual vacancy election and contribute to the quorum of any Community Council meetings.

Co-opted Community Councillor

Procedure for Co-option

Co-opted members can fill any vacancies out-with a formalised election but they do not contribute toward the quorum. There is a set procedure to follow for co-option and the Scheme Section 5 Procedure for Co-option of Membership provides clarity on this. Before the co-option process can be completed, the matter of filling a vacancy through co-option is discussed at a prior Community Council meeting and recorded in the minutes.

 [Nomination Form for Co-option \[DOCX - 44KB\]](#)

Section 5.3.1 Qualification of Community Council Member

The proposed co-opted member completes a nomination form as they are required to be 16 years or over, reside within the Community Council boundary, be registered to vote and their proposer must be included in the electoral role. This is the same process that must be applied when individuals are applying to become elected members of a community council during the Ordinary Elections or indeed as part of the Casual Vacancy Election process. The nomination form is the basis upon which the qualification criteria is verified.

On receipt of the nomination form, DGC will confirm all candidates meet the necessary requirements for membership and the process can proceed.

Section 5.5 Process of Appointment

Publicising the agenda and minutes with the appropriate, required information (scheme 5.5.2), members of the community can also be aware of any vacancies on the Community Council and can apply for co-option membership if they wish to do so.

At the next scheduled Community Council meeting, the co-option process can be finalised as an agenda item.

Co-opted members can undertake office bearer duties as a secretary or treasurer but not the chairperson, as stated at section 6.2 of the scheme. They also have full voting rights but do not form part of the quorum.

Associate member and Ex-officio member

Associate and Ex-officio members are not Community Councillors. These individuals have no entitlement to vote, propose or second motions or amendments, count towards the quorum, hold office or be a representative or delegate on the Community Council's behalf. Associate members can be appointed to support the Community Council where there is a need for individuals with particular skills or knowledge. Ex-officio members are made up of the elected members of Dumfries and Galloway Council, the Scottish Government and the UK Government whose area of representation includes any part of the Community Council boundary.

What other support does DGC provide?

DGC provide a wide range of support both online and in person. This includes:

Boundary Maps

Every Community Council has a boundary map and this information is located on their individual webpage at www.dumgal.gov.uk/communitycouncils and the link

'Find your local Community Council'

Communications


DGC website	www.dumgal.gov.uk/communitycouncils
Community Council Mailbox	Community.Councils@dumgal.gov.uk
Community Council Enquiry Service	CCESmailbox@dumgal.gov.uk
Community Council Newsletter	www.dumgal.gov.uk/communitycouncils
Community Council Bulletins	Community.Councils@dumgal.gov.uk
Ward Officers	www.dumgal.gov.uk/wardworking
Telephone	030 33 33 3000


How to make a Community Council business enquiry

The CCES provides a direct route for dealing with the vast and wide-ranging number of enquiries made by Community Councils.

The benefits of the CCES include:

enquiries are directed through a fair and transparent route to the most appropriate person for response agreed timescales for a response are in place measures are in place to monitor and continuously improve the quality of responses the process ensures tighter control of the Council expenditure associated with enquiry handling Community Councils should email their enquiry to CCESmailbox@dumgal.gov.uk.

 [Read more on a guide to making a Community Council business enquiry \[PDF - 32KB\]](#)

 [CCES Helpful Tips - Getting the Most out of the enquiry systems \[PDF - 137KB\]](#)

Consultation - How do we find out the views of our local communities?

The Scottish Government is committed to people in Scotland having a greater say in how local services are planned and delivered. It's only by listening to the experiences and ideas of the people who live in these communities that we can find solutions which will make a lasting difference.

Local Community Councils are encouraged to use the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) as a good practice tool which provides a common set of ground rules that should be applied to both sides of the engagement process. One of the standards relates to overcoming any barriers to involvement and, for example, a community council may use its discretionary grant to pay for community councillors to attend appropriate meetings on its behalf.

Data Protection Registration

A Community Council handles personal data therefore each Community Council is required to follow all relevant legislation and to register with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

There is a cost of £40 a year for data protection registration and each Community Council is responsible for registering with the ICO for data protection. The annual fee should be paid using the Community Council's discretionary grant.

[Visit the Information Commissioner's Office for more information](#)

Elections

DGC work in partnership with Community Councils to arrange elections. Community Council Ordinary elections are held during the month of October at the same frequency as the Local Government Elections. Community Council Elections, for the return of all Community Councils across Dumfries and Galloway were last held on 3 October 2019. The next Community Council elections will take place in October 2024.

Vacancies on Community Councils may arise between Ordinary elections and where the vacancy does not result in the number of Elected Community Councillors falling below the minimum number of permitted Elected Members, then this vacancy can be filled by holding a Casual Vacancy Election or Co-option subject to conditions.

Further information can be obtained via email at Community.Councils@dumgal.gov.uk

Funding

Community Council Discretionary Grants

Each community council is eligible to receive from Dumfries and Galloway Council an annual discretionary grant which will take account of the population included in the community council's boundary.

To ensure eligibility, each community council must adhere to the terms of Section 11.6 of the [Scheme](#).

The discretionary grant can be used at the discretion of the community council to further their statutory purposes, role and responsibilities only and for no other purpose.


The level of grant funding remains the same as for the previous financial year and payment of the allowance will be made in accordance with a procedure determined by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Claims will be considered on receipt of the following:

- Evidence of a minimum of 6 meetings having been held throughout the previous financial year, including an AGM, for the avoidance of doubt an EGM would be in addition to this.
- Satisfactory accounts for the previous financial year which have been certified by an Independent Examiner of Accounts and countersigned by the Chair and Treasurer.
- Annual Monitoring Form (this can be found below).
- BACS Form, if applicable (this can be found below).

Subject to eligibility and criteria having been met, the discretionary grant payment will be made by BACS transfer directly into the Community Council's bank account as soon as possible upon receipt of all the necessary paperwork.

Forms:

 [Community Council Discretionary Grant 2023-2024 - Enclosure 1 - Monitoring and Application Form \[DOC - 112KB\]](#)

 [Community Council Discretionary Grant 2023-2024 - Enclosure 2 - New Bank Details Form \[DOC - 117KB\]](#)

The email address for submitting minutes is community.councils@dumgal.gov.uk.

Please submit your claim to community.councils@dumgal.gov.uk by no later than 31 December 2023.

Governance

[View the new Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils \[PDF - 473KB\]](#)


Insurance

Public Liability Insurance for Community Councils

Dumfries and Galloway Council provides a 'blanket' public liability insurance scheme for all established community councils in Dumfries and Galloway. The current public liability insurance scheme started on 1 May 2023 and the premium has been paid for 2023/2024.

Insurance papers have been issued by our insurance brokers (Keegan & Pennykid) and a copy can be found below.

 [Download a copy of the Policy for 2023/2024 \[PDF - 88KB\]](#)

 [Download a copy of the Employer's Liability Certificate for 2023/2024 \[PDF - 339KB\]](#)

Your cover includes public liability, libel and slander, professional indemnity, personal accident, employer's liability and trustee indemnity. In July 2013, the cover was extended to include community resilience activities.

Volunteering and Resilience activities - under the terms of our current policy Community Councillors and Volunteers acting under the direction and supervision of the Community Council are covered for any activities being undertaken by a Community Council to assist those in need of a helping hand and would be viewed as coming under the umbrella of resilience activities;

Use of Private Vehicles - if individuals are using their own vehicles to undertake such activities, the current policy does NOT cover this activity.

It is for individual community councils to assure themselves over the level of cover that they have, and they must ensure they take out extra insurance cover for other activities not covered by the "blanket" policy such as gala days, switching on Christmas lights and grass-cutting.

The advice to community councils is that if they have any doubt as to the appropriateness of their insurance cover, they may decide to withdraw from the 'blanket' scheme and make arrangements for their own insurance. In this case the community council must contact us at community.councils@dumgal.gov.uk.

Community councils may approach the current public liability insurance provider, or any other insurance provider, with regard to their other insurance requirements. Contact details for the current insurance provider are:

Hazel Strachan, Commercial Insurance, Keegan & Pennykid (Insurance Brokers) Ltd
Tel: 0131 225 6005 E-mail: hs@keegan-pennykid.com

Quality Assurance - Community Council Survey 2020/2021

As a Council we are always looking for ways to improve the service that we deliver, so we carry out an Annual Survey to ask about the different aspects of our support to you. The results of this survey focus on the work of the Community Planning and Engagement Service and show an increased response rate of 21% to that of the previous survey. This is an excellent performance given the additional demands on Community Councils and on Council staff over the past 18 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

 [Community Council Survey Results 2021 \[PDF - 75KB\]](#)

Resilience in the Community

Community Resilience Groups, including Community Councils are providing valuable lifeline services within our communities. Support to establish a Community Council resilience plan is available by contacting

your local [Ward Officer](#)

[Community resilience - SupportDG - Dumfries and Galloway Council \(dumgal.gov.uk\)](#)

Scottish Government Community Councils Website

This national website was created to support and promote Scottish community councils through advice and resources, and real success stories of the impact that community councils can have on their community. It provides information for anyone interested in community councils as well as both new and experienced community councillors. It provides up to date information on news, events, guidance, and grants that are related to community councils as well as advice on how to be a community councillor.

[View the Scottish Community Councils Website](#)

[Community councils: good practice guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Training

DGC provide training sessions for all Community Councillors with the governance document, The Amended Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Dumfries and Galloway being the chief focus of the training. Contact the Community Council Mailbox for further support Community.Councils@dumgal.gov.uk

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