

Community Councils

in Dundee

Frequently Asked Questions

What are Community Councils?

Community Councils are voluntary organisations, established by legislation and made up of people who have an interest in the wellbeing of their community.

Community Councillors are volunteers, although democratically elected, and the main purpose of a Community Council is to represent the views of the community it represents and to take action in the interests of that community. They have a statutory right to be consulted on applications for planning permission.

Apart from representing the views of the community, what else do Community Councils do?

Community Councils may carry out a number of activities which are in the general interest of the communities they represent. This includes safeguarding and improving the amenities and environment in their area. Community Councils can also act as a campaigning body in raising awareness of specific local issues.

Examples of activities which Community Councils may become involved with include:

- Holding public meetings or carrying out surveys to find out the view of the community in relation to specific issues;
- Producing a newsletter or developing a website advising of activities going on in the area; and
- Arranging community events such as gala days, environmental clean-ups and improving facilities for young people in the community.

Do I have to be on the Community Council to attend their meetings?

No. Community Council meetings are generally open to all members of the public, although the public may only participate and speak at meetings if invited to do so.



Frequently Asked Questions

We don't have a Community Council in our area, can we have one established?

Elections to Community Councils take place every 4 years. However, in between elections, if 20 electors from within an identified Community Council area submit a written application to have a Community Council established, Dundee City Council will make the necessary arrangements to hold an interim election for that area. The form to petition for a Community Council can be accessed here:

<http://bit.ly/4ocEpDP>

Dundee City Council has produced a list of Community Council areas and maps that define their boundaries. Maps can be found at

<https://bit.ly/3Hb9MxT>

Who can stand for election onto a Community Council?

In order to stand for election you must:

- be at least 16 years of age,
- be resident and included on the electoral register within the Community Council area.

The same applies to voters in a Community Council election.

How many members are there on a Community Council?

In Dundee, the population data for 2023 is used to calculate the Community Councillor quota for each Community Council area.

In Dundee the formula is:

- 10 Community Councillors per 1st 5,000 Registered Electors
- 1 additional Community Councillor for each additional 1000 Registered Electors
- Community Councils with Registered Electors of less than 5000 are entitled to a quota of 10 Community Councillors

Details of the specific membership of each Community Council area can be viewed at

<https://bit.ly/3Hb9MxT>

What is the process to become a Community Councillor?

Following approval and adoption of the current scheme in September 2024, Dundee City Council will determine the date of the first election. Elections happen on a 4 yearly cycle thereafter with dates determined by the Community Council in agreement with Dundee City Council. The election cycle must not fall in the years of Scottish, local government or parliamentary elections. Dundee City Council will administer all elections.



Frequently Asked Questions

Individuals seeking election to a Community Council require to be nominated by a proposer and a seconder, both of whom must be in the electoral register for the Community Council area. Maps of Community Council areas, the nomination form and associated guidance notes can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/4IQWFRF>

A period of 8 weeks from **Monday 4th August** is given to allow nominations to come forward.

On the expiry of the period for lodging nominations:

- If the number of candidates validly nominated is equal to or exceeds HALF, but be less than or equal to the total maximum permitted membership as specified for the Community Council area, the candidates will be declared to be elected and no ballot will be held.
- If the number of candidates validly nominated exceeds the total maximum permitted membership as specified for the Community Council area, arrangements for a Poll will be implemented. At the Poll, each voter will be entitled to vote for candidates up to the number of vacancies on the Community Council.
- If the number of candidates elected is below half of the total maximum permitted membership, as specified for the Community Council area, no Community Council will be established at that time. Dundee City Council can issue a second call for nominations for a Community Council area which fails to meet the minimum membership requirement within 6 months of the closing date for the registration of the first call for nominations.

How long should Office Bearers be appointed for?

All office bearers are elected for one year, but are eligible for re-election, without limitation of time.

It is not necessary, although often preferred by Community Councils, that office bearers are re-elected each year at the Annual General Meeting.

We have casual vacancies, how should these be filled and what rights do the new members have?

Should a casual vacancy or vacancies arise on a Community Council between elections, it is a requirement that the Community Council undertake appropriate election arrangements, in consultation with Dundee City Council. Filling a vacancy can be undertaken either through the process of an interim election or by co-option.



Frequently Asked Questions

Can co-opted members vote?

Co-opted members must be eligible for membership of the Community Council as detailed in **Who can stand for election onto a Community Council** above. They must be elected onto the Community Council by a two-thirds majority of the elected Community Councilors present and voting. Co-opted members have full voting rights and will serve until the next round of elections.

What is the role of Dundee City Councillors on the Community Council and can they vote?

Elected Members of Dundee City Council are entitled to be ex officio members of Community Councils within their Ward. This means they are entitled to participate fully in the meeting but have no voting rights. They provide an important link between Community Councils and Dundee City Council and can help the Community Council develop projects and resolve local issues.

How do Community Councils arrange their business?

Each Community Council is required to adopt a Constitution, based upon a Model Constitution, together with Model Standing Orders. This encourages and maintains consistency for all Community Councils and ensures that their proceedings are being properly structured and regulated, to ensure that items of business relevant to the community are properly debated and decisions reached in a democratic manner.

The Model Constitution can be viewed at: <https://shorturl.at/zpX15>

The Model Standing Orders can be viewed at: <https://shorturl.at/bpPRG>

How should we promote and run our meetings?

The frequency of meetings will be determined by each Community Council, subject to a minimum of one Annual General Meeting and 6 ordinary meetings being held each year. With a few exceptions, meetings of the Community Council will be open to the public. Provision must be made for this both in terms of the meeting room space and layout and public notification being given for arrangements for Community Council meetings. This may be done by, for example:

- an advertisement in the local paper
- notices on community notice boards and in local buildings/premises
- the Community Council's own website/social media platform
- by inclusion in a newsletter or leaflet drop



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Most Community Councils hold their meetings on a regular day of the month (e.g. first Monday of each month) and agendas are made available in accordance with the model Standing Orders provided by Dundee City Council.

It should be remembered that although the meeting is open to the public, it is not a public meeting. It will be for the chairperson to decide at which points it is appropriate for members of the public to contribute. The Community Council may, as part of their Standing Orders, determine how they would wish the public to participate. This could be by

- including an item on the agenda for public input
- holding an informal open discussion prior to commencing the formal meeting, or
- allowing the public to participate prior to the final decision being taken on each item on the agenda.

When do I need to declare an interest and under what circumstances should I withdraw from the meeting?

If you have a financial interest in a matter which will be under discussion at the Community Council meeting, you should declare an interest in this matter at the start of the meeting and withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is being discussed.

If you have an interest which is not financial, you should nonetheless declare this as soon as you become aware of the interest. You should ask yourself if an ordinary member of the public who knew all the facts would think that your interest was likely to influence your decision. If you think the public would believe your interest would influence you, you should leave the meeting. If the interest is fairly marginal, and you do not believe the public would think you would be influenced by it, you may remain and participate in the debate and decision.

Declarations of interest, whether or not they require a Community Councillor to leave the meeting, should be recorded in the minutes.

What if another Community Councillor should have declared an interest and has not?

It is for each individual Community Councillor to determine whether or not he/she has an interest in a particular item which should be declared. If it has been suggested that a particular member should have declared an interest, it would be appropriate for the Chair to enquire as to whether or not the member intended to declare an interest.

Given that it is still possible to participate in the debate, despite having declared an interest under certain circumstances, it is considered preferable to declare an interest than to suppress it. This will remove any doubt.



Frequently Asked Questions

How do I complain about the actions of a Community Council?

It is the responsibility of the Community Council to deal with any complaints about the Community Council as a whole or with individual Community Councillors. Each Community Council will adopt a complaints procedure, model complaints procedure can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/3H7Zq1G>

What do we do if we get a complaint?

Dundee City Council will not receive complaints about Community Councils or Community Councillors. Community Councils are independent bodies established by statute and therefore Dundee City Council have no powers of compulsion or sanction over Community Councils. In exceptional circumstances, where it has been demonstrated that all other avenues have been exhausted, Dundee City Council may agree to mediate between a Community Council and a complainer.

The Community Council complaints procedure can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/3H7Zq1G>. It is designed to address complaints and issues as quickly and effectively as possible using a fair, consistent and timely approach. From time-to-time Community Councils will receive complaints. Complaints can often highlight important information and feedback which can in turn be used as a learning tool to improve service delivery and potentially prevent similar problems that led to the complaint from reoccurring. This procedure will help Community Councils to work more effectively, promote accountability, improve relationships and develop trust and respect within their local community. All complaints will be treated confidentially. This document sets out the procedure, time scale and roles and responsibilities to enable Community Councils to handle a complaint.

How do we go about changing the boundary of our Community Council?

Any requests to amend boundaries of existing Community Councils, including merging adjoining Community Councils or subdividing existing Community Council areas, should be submitted in writing to the Community Learning and Development Manager.

The request should demonstrate local support for the proposal, such as confirmation that the matter has been discussed at a Community Council meeting held in public at which support was expressed or the inclusion of a petition with local signatures, for example. Any Community Councils adjoining or otherwise affected by the proposal must also be in agreement.



Frequently Asked Questions

How are Community Councils funded?

Dundee City Council may provide an administrative grant to Community Councils to assist with their operating costs. Each Community Council shall also be eligible to apply for grants for suitable projects and all other purposes consistent with its functions through Dundee City Council's grants system. Other, non-Local Government, funding streams may also be accessed.

The grant provided by Dundee City Council is designed to cover the general running costs of the Community Council. It comprises 4 elements: insurance cover, an administrative grant, a per capita allowance for each member of the population within the area, and reimbursement of any fee associated with the requirement to notify in terms of data protection.

If the Community Council disbands, what happens to their funds?

After all debts have been paid, the remaining funds and any assets transfer back to Dundee City Council. The council will hold these for the benefit of a future Community Council, if established.

