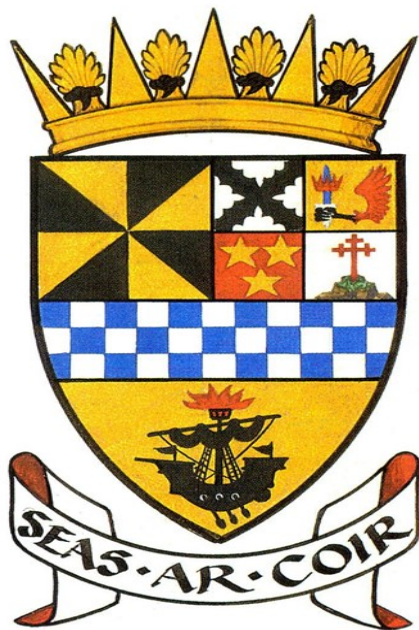


# **Becoming a Councillor**



**Your guide to standing for  
election in Argyll and Bute**



## Arms of Argyll and Bute Council

The Corporate Arms of Argyll and Bute Council reflect much of the history of the area which is administered by today's council. Fifty years ago local government was in the hands of three county and nine town councils, until reorganisation in 1975 which saw the creation of Strathclyde Regional Council and two District Councils (Argyll and Bute and Dumbarton). In 1996, the current Unitary Authority, Argyll and Bute Council, came into being following national reorganisation.

This local government history is reflected in the Arms, shown above. Broadly the design follows that of the Arms of the former County Council of Argyll. The symbols used in the Arms have a long history of usage dating back well beyond local government use, with links to local families such as the Campbells, Colquhouns and Stewarts. The Gaelic motto of Argyll County Council also remains as a feature—Seas Ar Coir (Maintain Our Right).

Argyll and Bute consists of four administrative areas, each with their own unique characteristics and a mix of rural, remote, urban and island communities. These are:

- Bute and Cowal
- Helensburgh and Lomond
- Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands
- Oban, Lorn and the Isles



Argyll and Bute Council's headquarters is located at Kilmory Castle in Lochgilphead, Mid Argyll.

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# Argyll and Bute—a great place to live, work and visit



## Foreword

**Pippa Milne**

**Chief Executive and Returning Officer,  
Argyll and Bute Council**

**January 2021**

Argyll and Bute is a great place to live, work, learn, invest, do business and visit—and, of course, it is also a fantastic area to represent as a councillor.

If you are interested in standing for election to Argyll and Bute Council and becoming a councillor, this guide will help you take the first steps on that journey.

As well as an overview of our area and its council, you can find information about the role of a councillor, how the election process works and much more. It provides a local perspective on the national guidance which is available to anyone interested in representing their community in local government in Scotland.

People from all walks of life are encouraged to stand for election so that the wide range of communities across Argyll and Bute are fully reflected and represented.

Like all Scottish local authorities, Argyll and Bute Council has challenges to overcome, but it is also an area full of opportunities. Representing your community as a councillor is equally challenging— but incredibly rewarding. Our council is ambitious, forward-thinking and highly adaptive to any challenges that arise, evidenced by our fast-paced and innovative response to the Covid-19 pandemic which has required every person, every organisation to carry out business in new and different ways.

If you are interested in becoming a councillor in Argyll and Bute, we hope that this guide will be a useful starting point for you.

Thank you for your interest and best wishes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pippa Milne'.

**Pippa Milne**  
**Chief Executive and Returning Officer**

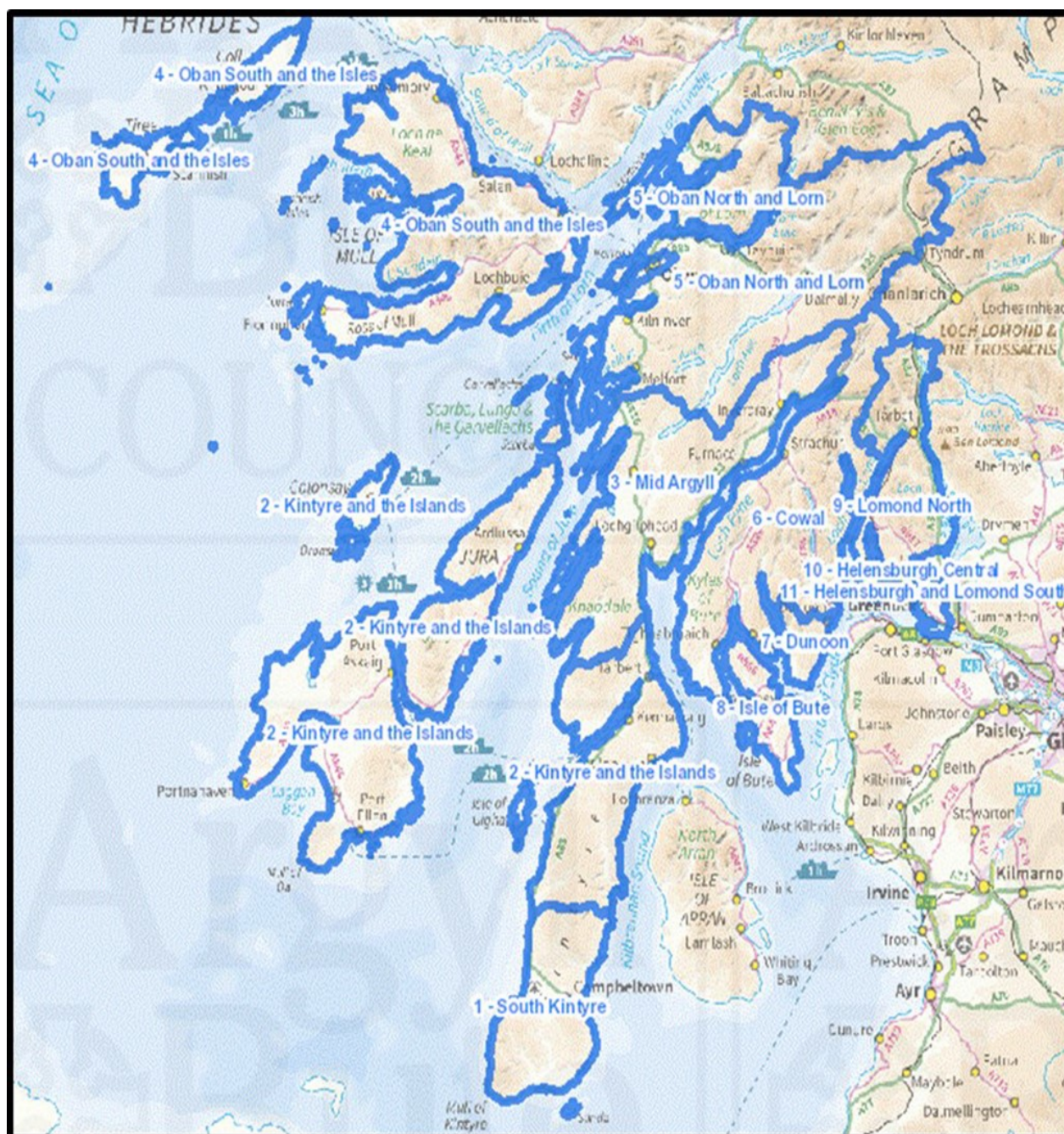


## Local government in Argyll and Bute—an introduction



Argyll and Bute is one of Scotland's 32 local authorities. Later in this guide, you can find out more about Argyll and Bute's unique characteristics, its opportunities and challenges. First, it may be helpful to introduce its local government arrangements.

Argyll and Bute has a population of 86,260 ( as at the Census 2018), including around 68,700 electors—people who are eligible to vote in elections. As is the case across Scotland, the local authority area is organised into multi-member wards—there are eleven of these in Argyll and Bute. There are three or, in some cases, four councillors elected to represent each local ward and at the time of publication, January 2021, there are 36 councillors in total across Argyll and Bute.



## Local Government Multi-member Wards in Argyll and Bute, January 2021

Working with others in a multi-member ward in your local area is a key feature of being a councillor.

A simple principle applies to all councillors in a multi-member ward:

**If a councillor's right to be there and to represent the community is based on the election, then the other councillors within the multi-member ward were also elected in exactly the same ballot and have exactly the same rights.**

### Council ward details for Argyll and Bute local authority area:

Ward No.	Ward Name	No. of Councillors	Areas Covered Include:
1	South Kintyre	3	Campbeltown, East Kintyre, The Laggan, Southend
2	Kintyre and the Islands	3	Colonsay, East Kintyre, Gigha, Islay, Jura, South Knapdale, Tarbert and Skipness, West Kintyre
3	Mid Argyll	3	Ardrishaig, Craignish, Dunadd, Furnace, Inveraray, Lochgilphead, North Knapdale, South Knapdale, West Lochfyne
4	Oban South and the Isles	4	Coll, Iona, Mull, Oban, Tiree
5	Oban North and Lorn	4	Appin, Ardchattan, Avich and Kilchrenan, Connel, Dunbeg, Glenorchy and Innishail, Oban, Taynuilt, Kilmore, Kilninver and Kilmelford, Seil and Easdale, Luing, Lismore
6	Cowal	3	Ardentinny, Cairndow, Colintrave and Glendaruel, Kilfinan, Kilmun, Lochgoil, Strachur, Hunter's Quay, Sandbank
7	Dunoon	3	Dunoon, South Cowal
8	Isle of Bute	3	Bute
9	Lomond North	3	Arrochar and Tarbet, Rhu and Shandon, Garelochhead, Cove and Kilcreggan, Luss and Arden, Rosneath and Clynder
10	Helensburgh Central	4	Helensburgh
11	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3	Cardross, Helensburgh

*Please note Argyll and Bute Council electoral arrangements, including ward boundaries, are currently under review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, with the intention of making recommendations to Scottish Ministers in time for implementation for the next Local Government Elections in May 2022.*



## **About Argyll and Bute**

### **Geography**

Argyll and Bute is bordered by the urban areas of Helensburgh and Dunoon along the Clyde, with Loch Lomond to the East, the Mull of Kintyre to the south, Atlantic Islands to the west, and the Sound of Mull and Appin to the north.

The area's population of 86,260 (2018) is spread across the second largest local authority area in Scotland covering a land area of 690,946 hectares. It has the fifth sparsest population density of the 32 Scottish local authorities, with an average population density of just 0.12 persons per hectare. This compares to a Scottish average of 0.70 persons per hectare. Population growth is a priority for the council and for its community planning partners.

17% of Argyll and Bute's population live on islands. 52.7% live in settlements of 3,000 or more people; conversely, 47.2% of the population live in settlements smaller than 3,000 people, or outwith settlements altogether. 80% live within one kilometre of the coast.

Argyll and Bute has 23 inhabited islands, including Bute, Islay, Jura, Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree, more than any other local authority in Scotland. The area is also home to several long sea lochs, which bisect the landscape. The physical geography of the area does impact development of the road network and leads to high levels of reliance on ferries for travel.

The importance of the natural environment is indicated by the 121 Sites of Special Scientific Interest that have been designated within the area. Combined, these cover almost 10% of Argyll and Bute's land area. Additionally, almost 30% of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park area falls within the local authority's boundaries.

### **Argyll and Bute's People in Numbers**

The changing demographic profile of the area presents one of the area's greatest challenges. From 2016 to 2026, the population is projected to decrease from 87,130 to 84,170. This is a decrease of 3.4% which compares to a project population increase of 3.2% for Scotland as a whole.

The proportion of 0-15 year olds is projected to fall by 6.4%, working age population by 36.3%, and the proportion of the population of pensionable age to increase by 31.8% (National Records of Scotland 2016-based Population Projections).

The average gross weekly pay for full-time workers living in Argyll and Bute is £565.60, which is lower than the Scotland average of £657.80.

33.3% of employee jobs in Argyll and Bute were in 'public administration, education and health'. This compared to 30.2% for Scotland and 26.4% for Great Britain.



## Economy and Employment



Argyll and Bute's economy is predominantly service-based. Over 87% of employee jobs in the area are provided within the service sector (Office Business Register and Employment Survey 2016).

Argyll and Bute has relatively high levels of employment in agriculture and fishing, and low levels of employment in manufacturing and finance.

Unemployment rates in Argyll and Bute are below the national average although, because of the high levels of seasonal employment in the area, rates vary according to time of year.

GVA (Gross Value Added) provides a measure of the overall economic well-being of an area. GVA figures show that Argyll and Bute's economy is performing less strongly than the Scottish average.

Because of the rural nature of the area, the pattern of employment in Argyll and Bute is different to the Scottish average. Economies with a high dependence on seasonal industries, such as tourism, agriculture, forestry and fishing, face many challenges. Workers may be presented with only a small window of time to make their income for the entire year. As a result, some people will take multiple jobs during the summer period to maximize their income. Alternatively, workers look for other jobs when the "season" is over. Many opt to commute to other areas to seek employment and reap the benefits of higher earnings. These types of economies are unstable as the impact of the weather plays

## Education

Educational attainment in Argyll and Bute is above the national average in a number of measures and currently, on average 95% per cent of school leavers in Argyll and Bute achieve a positive and sustained destination. The council has the aspiration to ensure that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for our children to grow up and has set out an Education Vision and Strategy, [Our Children, Their Future](#), to ensure it responds effectively to the changing national and local policy contexts. In doing so, it will ensure the future delivery of education services which support children, young people and communities across Argyll and Bute to achieve the best possible outcomes. This vision will be delivered through the following six key objectives:

- ***Raise educational attainment and achievement for all***
- ***Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people***
- ***Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed***
- ***Equip young people to achieve positive destinations and success in life***
- ***Strengthen partnership working and community engagement***
- ***Strengthen leadership***





## Health

In common with all areas of Scotland, there are various health issues which affect people in our communities. Argyll and Bute Council, as a community planning partner (find out more about this on page 10) works with other agencies to tackle and target specific health matters affecting local communities.



Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership is responsible for the planning and delivery of all community based health and social care services for adults and children in Argyll and Bute. This includes services which are purchased from external providers including NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

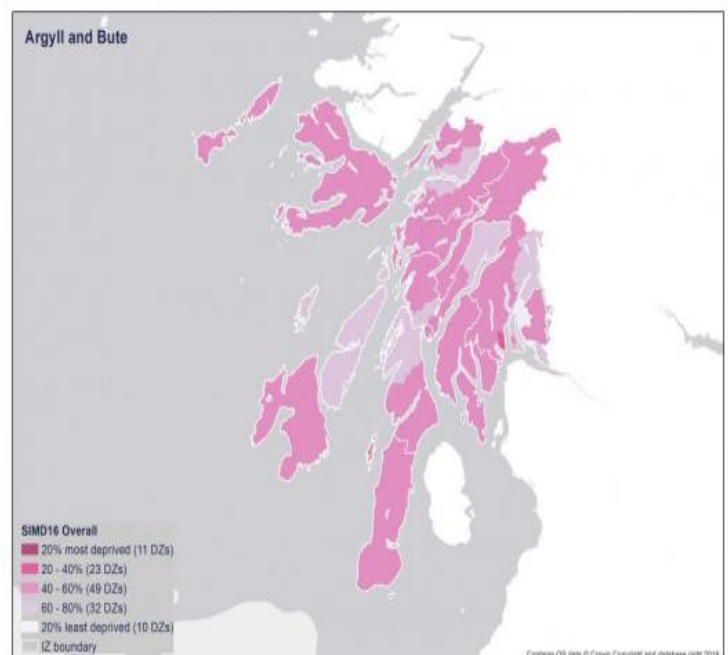
The Partnership has been established as a separate legal entity from both the Council and the Health Board, with a new board of governance the (Integration Joint Board (IJB)) which has responsibility for the planning, resourcing and overseeing the operational delivery of integrated services, as identified in its Strategic Plan. This includes the services, staff, and resources (budget of circa £266.9m). IJB membership comprises elected councillors, NHS Highland non- executive Board members and a number of other members from a range of sectors and stakeholder groups including the Third Sector, Independent Sector, patients/service users, trade unions, staff and carers.

The overarching vision of the Partnership, which underpins its activities, is:

***“People in Argyll and Bute will live longer, healthier, independent lives”***

**Deprivation**—The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) published on 31 August 2016 was the first SIMD to use updated Data Zone geography from 2011 Census data to account for population changes and developments across Scotland. It allows effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle area concentrations of multiple deprivation, within domains such as income, employment, health, education, skills and training, geographic access to services, housing and crime. It has been used to identify pockets of overall deprivation within Argyll and Bute (see map ). Patterns of deprivation vary by domain:

- *a lower proportion of people identified as being income deprived than is the case across Scotland (10% compared to 12% nationally).*
- *Argyll and Bute has 7 of Scotland’s 15% most health deprived data zones. The Health domain identifies areas that, given the age-sex profile of the population, have a higher than expected level of ill health or mortality.*
- *48 (38%) of Argyll and Bute’s data zones are within the 15% most geographic access to services deprived data zones in Scotland.*





# Argyll and Bute—a great place to live, work and visit

## Working together—planning for success

Securing a vibrant future for all people and communities in Argyll and Bute is very much a collective effort. Argyll and Bute Council is a key part of the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership (CPP) - a collective of public agencies and third sector organisations working together to achieve an overall strategic objective:



### ***Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population***

This is at the core of the [Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan](#) for the period up to 2023 and to which all community planning partners have committed. It informs the Single Outcome Agreement's six key outcomes to achieve this overall objective:

#### **In Argyll and Bute:-**

- 1. The economy is diverse and thriving**
- 2. We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth**
- 3. Education, skills and training maximise opportunities for all**
- 4. Children and young people have the best possible start**
- 5. People live active, healthier and independent lives**
- 6. People will live in safer and stronger communities**

These outcomes are in line with national priorities and will also see Argyll and Bute contributing to the national outcomes for Scotland.

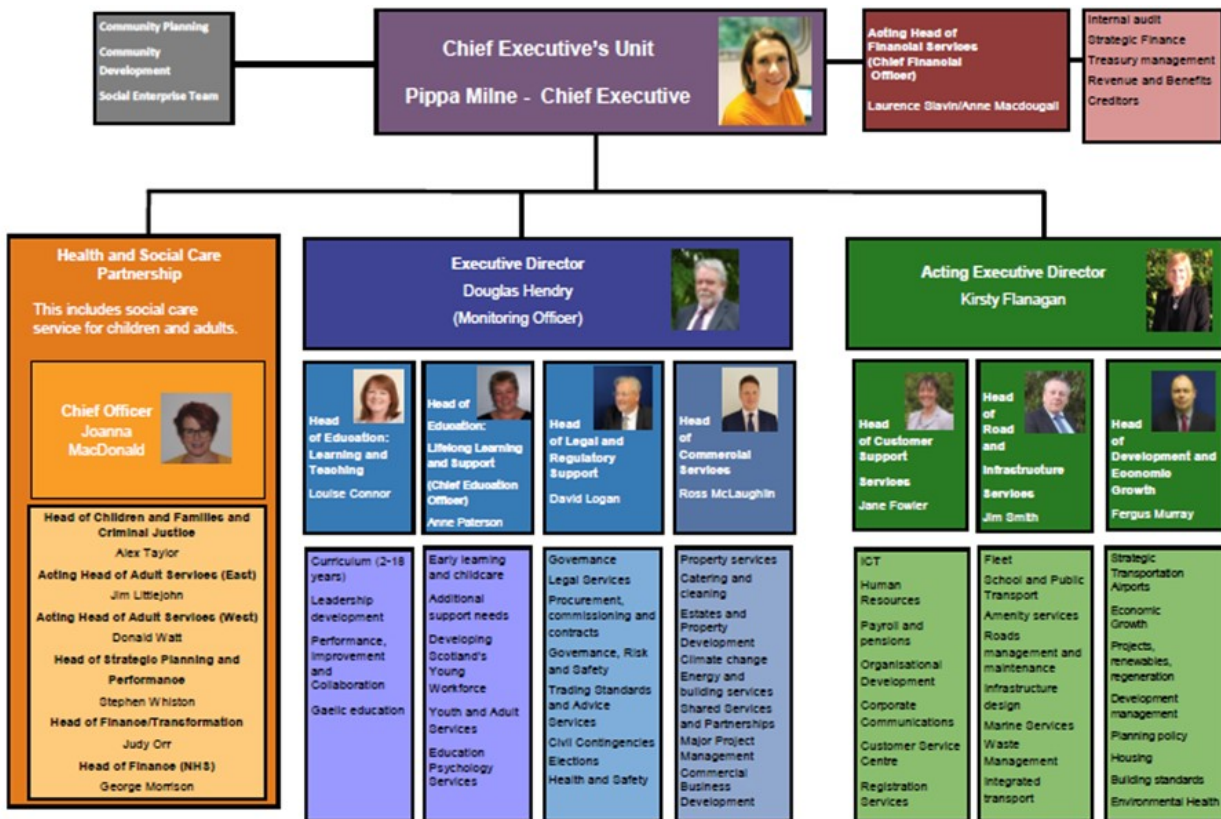
Agreeing these six long term outcomes requires significant commitment and effort from all community planning partners and indeed the whole of Argyll and Bute. The council, along with its partners, provides a wide range of services to people and communities in order to progress these outcomes.

In its own right the council is also a major employer and service provider with over 4,000 staff delivering services across the area and its islands. The council also has a number of statutory and regulatory responsibilities—for example services like environmental health, trading standards and licensing.



## People at Argyll and Bute Council

Argyll and Bute Council is a major employer in the area and has over 4,000 staff delivering services across our rural, urban, remote and island communities. The organisation chart below shows our service structure and some of the people who lead our teams in service delivery.



For further information on the Health and Social Care Partnership please see page 14

Note: At time of publication, January 2021, Anne Paterson, Head of Education, has just retired and we will be recruiting to fill her post in due course. We are also recruiting for some Head of Service-level posts within the Health and Social Care Partnership—meaning that there is a wide range of significant career opportunities for people with the right skills and who want to live and work in Argyll and Bute.

When recruitment concludes with appointments, expected late Spring 2021, a new Organisational Chart can be completed.

Kirsty Flanagan has now secured a permanent appointment as Executive Director following a period in an acting-up role.

## Our Vision and Values

Argyll and Bute Council is forward-looking and ambitious, continuously improving our relationships with partners, customers and employees to ensure that we deliver the right services, by the best people, in the best way. We have a clear focus on transformation and change even in times of significant budgetary challenges. Our **vision** is that Argyll and Bute’s economic success is built on a growing population. Our **values**, which are informed by our partners, customers and employees, underpin what we do and how we do it. They are:

<p><b>Creative:</b> we are responsive to our citizens and our environment and we embrace change to ensure we continually deliver the best results for our area.</p>	<p><b>Caring:</b> we care about our citizens, partners and each other. We treat everyone with dignity and respect and are accountable for what we do. We listen to our communities. When things go wrong we take action to put it right.</p>
<p><b>Collaborative:</b> we know that when we work together we can achieve the best for our area. We are open, honest and transparent in our communication. We involve and work with communities, each other and our partners where possible to share knowledge, resources and assets.</p>	<p><b>Committed:</b> ours is a council that is committed to putting values at the heart of our efforts to make a positive difference every day to people’s lives. We take pride in our responsibility to provide a safe working environment and to make available appropriate opportunities for professional development and growth for all employees.</p>

The council has agreed a range of equality outcomes which aim to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. They are:

### **Workforce**

- We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups
- We promote diversity across occupational groups

### **Engagement**

- We have improved engagement with protected groups

### **Services**

- People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services
- We take the views of people from protected groups into account when we change our services

### **Education**

- We do not tolerate bullying and harassment of people from protected groups
- The gap in educational attainment between people with &without protected characteristics is reduced.

**Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.**

## How the council works

At the heart of every one of Scotland's 32 councils, there are councillors working on behalf of their communities. In Argyll and Bute, 36 councillors are elected to serve for a council term of four or five years.

Argyll and Bute Council consists of elected members from different political parties as well as independent councillors who then form an administration to lead the council. Two members are appointed as the Leader and Depute Leader to head the council and the elected members appointed to the role of Provost and Depute Provost take on the ceremonial and civic leadership functions.

Argyll and Bute Council has a Constitution which sets out how the council operates and how decisions are made. Councillors are responsible for the major policy decisions taken by the council including budget setting, approving key policies and ensuring that services are delivered in line with the priorities of the council and government direction, in order to improve the quality of life within the area and provide essential services.

The council works in partnership with other public agencies across Argyll and Bute, including NHS Highland, Police Scotland, Fire and Rescue Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and many more. They come together as the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership. There is an important focus on consultation, engagement, scrutiny, measurement of performance and continuous improvement.

As highlighted on page 9 of this booklet, Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland in Argyll and Bute have brought together all health services and all adult and children/families social work services, as the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). This has an Integrated Joint Board which is responsible for the planning, resourcing and oversight of the delivery of integrated services. Membership of the Board is made up of elected councillors, NHS Highland Board members and representatives from the independent and third sectors, patient/service users, staff and carers. More information on this can be found at [Health and Social Care Partnership \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](http://argyll-bute.gov.uk/Health-and-Social-Care-Partnership)



Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean



argyll and bute  
communityplanningpartnership



## Committees, Meetings and Decision-Making

The full council meeting is a public meeting of all 36 councillors, where major strategies and policies of the council are debated and key decisions are made including scrutiny and oversight of other committees and the budget arrangements for the council.

There are also a number of principal committees of which a selection of the councillors will sit on. These political management arrangements are usually determined by each new council and currently they include:



- Policy and Resources Committee
- Community Services Committee
- Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee
- Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee
- Argyll and Bute Licensing Board
- Audit and Scrutiny Committee
- Local Negotiating Committee (Education)
- Employee Joint Consultative Committee
- Area Committees/Business Days (and Area Community Planning Groups)

Beneath these committees there are also sub-committees to deal with specific issues such as the Statutory Harbour Board.

At the time of publication, January 2021, all council and committee business is being carried out on a virtual basis, using Skype for Business video and teleconference technology, in order that councillors and officers can comply with national restrictions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. Work is ongoing on looking at making the most of this and other technology as we move forward from restrictions and into recovery.

More information about this and the current structure, membership and remit of each of these committees can be found at

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/membership-committees>



## The Role of a Councillor

Becoming a councillor is a rewarding form of public service.

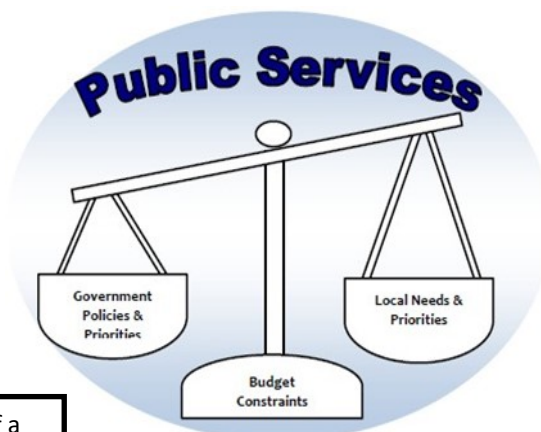
It requires a lot of commitment and hard work. Every day you will have to balance the needs and interests of voters, the broader community, your political party (if you are a member of one), interest groups and the council. This will make demands of your time on top of your own personal responsibilities to family, workplace and friends.

**However, the rewards can make it all worthwhile. As a councillor, you will:**

- **Provide political/strategic leadership**
- **Represent your ward and the people who live in it**
- **Make decisions on major local and national priority issues**
- **Scrutinise and monitor service performance**
- **Play a regulatory role in issues such as planning, licensing, trading standards and environmental health**
- **Provide community leadership through representing the views of the community and bringing them into the decision making process**
- **Collectively act as ultimate policy makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate functions**
- **Work in partnership with outside bodies such as community planning partners, NHS Highland, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Highland and Island Enterprise and the voluntary sector to provide better services**
- **Deal with individual casework on behalf of constituents**
- **Work under the council's Constitution which sets out the basic rules governing the manner in which the council conducts its business**
- **Ensure statutory duties of the council are carried out**
- **Be open, honest and transparent**

Most of the council's income comes from central government, so the council must work within fairly tight limits when setting budgets. As a result, during regular committee meetings, decisions are made which may take a great deal of time and attention.

Councillors also spend a great deal of time with their constituents and attend local bodies such as community councils, other local organisations and Community Planning Partnership meetings.



Find more information and background about the role and responsibilities of a councillor and local government in Scotland at [Local government: Councillors' roles, conduct and pay - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)



## **Becoming a councillor**

### **Why become a councillor?**

Elected councillors make important decisions which directly affect the welfare and quality of life of everyone in Argyll and Bute.

Being a councillor is life-changing and rewarding because you make a difference in your community by helping to develop and shape Argyll and Bute for the better.

Many councillors identify their interest in the community as a major reason for standing as a candidate. However, the reasons for standing vary with each person's individual view.

Reasons for becoming a councillor include:

- Having a sense of duty or wanting to 'give something back'
- Becoming actively engaged in local politics and making a difference
- Putting skills and experience to better use
- Assisting the community by raising the profile of Argyll and Bute at Scottish and UK government level

### **Who can become a councillor?**

In order to become a councillor you must stand as a candidate in a local government election or by-election.

### **Do I need any qualifications to become a councillor?**

No formal qualifications are needed. However, it is essential to have dedication, a genuine interest and awareness in political, financial and social issues in Argyll and Bute and the country as a whole.

Councillors are also vetted under the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 (see end note also).

In addition to information available from the Electoral Commission National Guidance on becoming a Councillor can be accessed at

<http://www.localcouncillor.scot/>



## What are the requirements to become a candidate?

Most people can stand for election to become a councillor, as long as you are:

- at least 18 years old on the day of your nomination, and
- either a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, or a qualifying foreign national, and
- meet at least one of the following four qualifications:
  - a. You are registered as a local government elector for the local authority area in which you wish to stand on the day of your nomination.
  - b. You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination.
  - c. Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination has been in the local authority area.
  - d. You have lived in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination.

However, some people can't be a councillor if at the time of their nomination they:

- hold a politically restricted post.
- their estate has been sequestrated by a court in Scotland and have not been discharged, have been adjudged bankrupt by a court elsewhere, or are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order under either the Bankruptcy (Scotland) Act 1985 or the Insolvency Act 1986.
- have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence), without the option of a fine, during the five years before polling day.
- have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations). The disqualification for an illegal practice begins from the date a person has been reported guilty by an election court or convicted and lasts for three years. The disqualification for a corrupt practice begins from the date a person has been reported guilty by an election court or convicted and lasts for five years.

A person may also be disqualified from election if they have been disqualified from standing for election to a local authority following a decision of the Standards Commission for Scotland or the Accounts Commission for Scotland.

A council employee, unless they hold a politically restricted post, can stand for election in the council area they work in and if elected, would need to resign from their post on the next working day after being elected. This type of resignation is effective immediately, regardless of any notice period stated in the employee's contract.

You can find more information about whether or not you would be qualified to become a councillor on the Electoral Commission's website at:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/council-elections-scotland>

## What skills will I need?

There are certain skills that Councillors should have, or pursue, in order to become effective representatives and decision-makers for the local community:

- Communication and presentation skills to express needs of local residents during meetings and become a voice for the council
- Interpersonal skills when managing surgeries and conversing with the community
- Commitment towards representation of the electorate
- Decisive, quick thinker
- Maintain an objective, analytical and critical mind; be a strategic thinker with a variety of issues
- Able to process large amounts of complex information, such as financial budgets
- Negotiation abilities to resolve disagreements and conflict
- Knowledge of Information and Computerised Technology, such as email and Microsoft Word
- Leadership ability to chair meetings
- Effective reader



## **Standing for Election**

Elections in Argyll and Bute are administered by the Returning Officer for Argyll and Bute, Pippa Milne (Chief Executive of Argyll and Bute Council) and Deputy Returning Officer, David Logan (Head of Legal and Regulatory Support Services) and the Election Team, based within the council.

### **The nomination process**

Nearer to the time of an election, five to six weeks before the date of an election (or by-election), the council will place adverts in local newspapers, the council website and outside council office buildings advising of the election, the vacancies available, and notifying interested parties/persons where and when they can obtain a nomination pack.

Anyone interested in becoming a candidate can be either nominated by their registered political party or can apply independently if not a member of a registered political party

The nomination pack contains a Nomination Form which will require to be completed by each individual wishing to stand for election and will also explain the process which candidates will be required to follow.

You will be required to submit an official Nomination Form to the Returning Officer by the deadline noted on the election adverts.

For the nomination to be valid the nominee must state that he/she agrees to be nominated. The candidate must also state that he/she is not disqualified from standing.

It should contain a description of the candidate e.g. 'Independent' or 'Party Name' which will appear on the ballot paper.

Candidates must ensure that all completed nomination papers are delivered within the date specified in the election timetable which will be provided.

### **Access to Elected Office Fund Scotland**

Many disabled people are put off from seeking elected office because of the additional costs they face. To help level the playing field and help pay for reasonable adjustments, the Scottish Government has established an access fund for the Scottish Parliament elections in 2021, and Local Authority by – elections. Disabled people seeking selection and election as a candidate will be able to apply for financial assistance. For further information on this and also details on the Democratic participation fund for disabled people which has been established to ensure more people from under-represented groups have the opportunity to be represented in politics and elected offices at all levels please contact Inclusion Scotland as follows:

Phone: 0131 370 6700

Web: <http://inclusionScotland.org>

E-mail: [accesspolitics@inclusionScotland.org](mailto:accesspolitics@inclusionScotland.org)

## **Election agents, campaigning and expenses**

The candidate must appoint an election agent which will be done at the time of nomination, although the nominee can appoint him/herself for this position.

The election agent handles correspondence from the Returning Officer about the forthcoming election as well as handling the candidate's campaign expenses.

Election agents are entitled to attend the opening of postal votes, polling stations, the verification and the counting of votes and will be provided with information about this closer to the time.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be guidance provided for everyone who will be using a polling station or attending a count—this will be provided online and with packs where possible. Candidates may also wish to check with their political party HQ, if applicable, for any guidance in relation to campaigning and canvassing.

All candidates' campaign material must be in adherence to electoral, civil and criminal legislation concerning published material. Please consult the Elections Office for more information.

Following the election, each candidate is required by law to complete a statement of expenses to show how much money was spent towards their campaign. This must be completed and returned within 28 days of the declaration of the result.

Election expenses are also open to public inspection.

*(N.B. Election campaign expenses are not reclaimable from the council.)*



## Method of Voting – Single Transferable Vote (STV)

Since 2007 Scottish local government elections have used the Single Transferable Vote or STV as the method of voting. This type of voting is also known as proportional representation.

This is a preferential method of voting and instead of marking an 'X' on the ballot paper the voter marks their order of preference for the candidates on the ballot paper using 1, 2, 3 etc.

The reason for the introduction of this method of voting is that it doesn't require the winning candidate to have a majority of the votes (unlike the First Past the Post method used in other elections). The candidate is only required to have achieved a quota or a certain 'share of the votes'.

As a result the counting of the votes and calculation of the final election result is more complicated than a First Past the Post election.

### For more information and further explanation on STV please visit

[Single transferable vote explained - YouTube](#)

(Note: this clip was prepared for the 2017 Local Government Elections in Scotland but the same system applies at time of publication in January 2021)

## Postal Votes

Candidates and their agent or another appointed person are entitled to attend the opening of returned postal votes. Additionally, agents may be appointed to attend openings on their behalf.

## The count

Candidates and their election agents are entitled to observe the count. Additionally, you can invite one other person to attend the count. You and your election agent may also appoint agents to attend the count on your behalf. The count normally takes approximately five to eight hours depending on voter turnout.

There will be guidance on keeping yourself and others safe for attendance at counts in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic—this will be provided through our website and social media and at venues.



## How long do councillors serve?

In the 2017 Scottish local government elections councillors were elected for a five year term of office.

If you are elected at a by-election you will serve until the next full local government election which, at time of printing, is scheduled for May 2022.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Do councillors get training?**

Yes. Training will be provided because all councillors are expected to learn and understand a great deal of information about local and national policy including issues in Argyll and Bute and other necessary functions.

They therefore have a responsibility to themselves and the local community to gain an understanding of the duties as quickly as possible so as to produce effective and well-informed decisions for Argyll and Bute.

As a result, induction training sessions will be provided for all councillors covering a wide range of matters to support them in understanding their roles, responsibilities and restrictions.

Induction training has previously been carried out over 15 days (including rest days) within Argyll and Bute Council where there are opportunities to meet the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Heads of Service and their teams.

These sessions will include subjects and topics such as the first few weeks in office, corporate governance, the councillor role, standards and ethics and the policy context.

There is also a Continuous Professional Development Programme which provides focused and structured development support and opportunities aimed at equipping councillors with the skills necessary for advancing the effectiveness of the council as a whole and ultimately the progress of Argyll and Bute.

Specific training is necessary to sit as a member of some quasi-judicial committees such as the Licensing Committee.

More information about induction training and ongoing professional development opportunities are available on request.



## **What support is there for councillors?**

Dedicated support for elected members is provided by the Governance team through Committee Support (who administer all council and committee meetings) and Member Services (who provide administrative support for councillors). Officers across all council services, though, are available to provide advice and support in relation to their particular service area.

Council officers and managers are able to provide expert advice on legislation, policy and technical knowledge.

Written guidelines on the Code of Conduct and the Constitution are provided.

Facilities include:

- Members Room and offices within the council HQ
- Members Meeting Room within the council HQ
- Learning, development and training opportunities
- IT Equipment and Telephones
- Case Management technology system to support constituency work
- Committee and Elected Member support

## **Will working as a councillor take up a lot of time?**

As a councillor the majority of your time will be spent in meetings within Argyll and Bute Council buildings or elsewhere with outside bodies (please note though that at time of writing, January 2021, all business is conducted on a virtual basis due to the Covid –19 pandemic). Council meetings usually take place during normal working hours.

For most of the meetings you attend there will be reports which you will need to read beforehand in preparation. The council is increasingly moving towards paperless systems therefore much of the information you require will be provided in electronic format.

The councillor's role requires making strong links with the community. This usually involves direct contact through regular surgeries, telephone calls, written correspondence and e-mail. Many councillors also represent the council on one or more outside bodies.

Whilst time spent working as a councillor is continuous and busy, some find it possible to combine the role with other employment where there is flexibility of working time.

The people you represent will look to you for help in dealing with their problems, whether or not these fall strictly within the council's remit. You are likely to receive a lot of contact and many telephone calls and emails.



## **Do councillors get paid?**

Currently elected councillors in Argyll and Bute receive basic remuneration of £17,854 per year (as at 1st April 2020); this is normally reviewed by the Scottish Parliament each year. A number of members such as the Council Leader, Provost or other senior councillors who have “significant additional responsibilities” such as Policy Leads or Area Committee Chairperson will earn proportionately more.

Councillors will also be reimbursed on receipt of travel and subsistence expenses necessarily incurred during approved council duties.

Details of all councillors’ remuneration and expenses are published annually.

## **How much travel is involved?**

The amount of travel will depend on the level of responsibility held; for example the Leader and Policy Leads require to travel to COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities), and the Scottish Government in Edinburgh.

Policy Leads/Chairs of Committees are encouraged to attend relevant meetings outside Argyll and Bute.

Since Argyll and Bute covers 691,000 hectares, councillors in Helensburgh for example, will often have to travel to meetings that are held in the Council HQ in Kilmory and vice versa for other ward members.

## **What happens if I am no longer able to remain as a councillor?**

Councillors can resign before their term in office officially ends. A by-election will then be held within three months from the resignation date to fill the vacancy.

The current term of office for elected councillors is five years, and if elected at a by-election you will be expected to serve until the date of the next full election. This timeframe is set by legislation to ensure the Scottish Parliamentary election is separate from the local government elections.

**May 2017 to 2022—current five year term**



## Are there rules on standards and ethics for councillors?

The Councillors National Code of Conduct sets out the expected standards of behaviour for Elected Members. A copy of the National Code of Conduct is provided to all councillors when they are elected.

It is also available at [www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk](http://www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk)

The key principles of the National Code of Conduct are:

- Duty
- Integrity
- Accountability and stewardship
- Honesty
- Respect
- Selflessness
- Objectivity
- Openness
- Leadership

There is also the Council's Constitution which sets out how the council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. This includes local supplementary standards and protocols on conduct and working relationships.

Adherence to both the Code of Conduct and the Constitution is subject to scrutiny.

You can find Argyll and Bute Council's Constitution online [here](#).



## End Note

The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced the 'Disqualification from Working with Children List' and it is an offence for an individual who is on that list to apply for a childcare position. It is also an offence for an organisation to offer work, whether paid or unpaid, in a childcare position to an individual who is on the list. The definition of 'childcare position' is broad and includes 'an Elected Member of a Committee, including Joint Committee of a local authority (or any sub-committee thereof) which is concerned with the provision of education, social services or health care services to children' and therefore there will be the requirement for Elected Members to be vetted.

## Useful links

Argyll and Bute Council	<a href="http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/home">www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/home</a>
Improvement Service—information for elected members	<a href="http://www.improvementservice.org.uk">www.improvementservice.org.uk</a>
Local Councillor.scot—national guidance on becoming a local councillor	<a href="http://www.localcouncillor.scot/">http://www.localcouncillor.scot/</a>
Electoral Commission	<a href="http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk">www.electoralcommission.org.uk</a>
Electoral Reform Society—what is STV?	<a href="http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk">www.electoral-reform.org.uk</a>
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities—COSLA	<a href="http://www.cosla.gov.uk">www.cosla.gov.uk</a>
The Scottish Government	<a href="http://www.gov.scot">www.gov.scot</a>



## Contacts

If you would like to find out more about becoming a councillor and the election process, please contact:

Elections Office  
Argyll and Bute Council  
Kilmory  
Lochgilphead  
Argyll  
PA31 8RT



Speak to the Elections Team—  
01546 603264

Email:

[Elections@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:Elections@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

Web:

[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/elections](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/elections)

**If you require this document in another language, large print or audio format please do not hesitate to contact us.**

**BSL users may wish to consider the following service:**

contactSCOTLAND-BSL is a Scottish Government service that connects deaf BSL users throughout Scotland through an online BSL interpreting video relay service (VRS) with all of Scotland's public authorities and voluntary organisations (Third Sector) and now beyond.

<https://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

