

P-04-478 A simple info pack for all the people of Wales explaining how they can stand as candidates and P-04-482 Public noticeboards across Wales notifying the public of who all their political representatives are – Correspondence from the petitioner to the Minister for Local Government and Government Business, 06.07.2013

Dear Lesley,

Thank you for your response to the Sovereign Wales petition for public notice board signs informing people of their representatives and the petition for citizens to be informed of how they can stand as candidates.

In regard to notice boards. I accept that responsibility lies with local authorities but I believe it's a real duty for them to clearly show who the local councillors, AM's and MP's are and how they can be contacted. I believe there should be at least pressure and strong guidance from the Welsh Government for them to do this effectively and consistently. I don't believe the internet should be solely relied on to give this information: many people just don't have time or the inclination to trawl through countless websites and links and I agree with you that there is a lack of clarity and consistency in this area on local authority websites. It's impossible on some of these local authority websites to even find out who local councillors are. I'm therefore very glad to hear of the Bill you mentioned that was passed on June 18th. However I still believe that this doesn't discount the need for actual physical signs/posters as well. If placing/building new larger signs is going to be too challenging at this point, may I suggest that a well designed and branded template of posters (weather/waterproof if necessary) is rolled out to all Welsh local authorities to be placed on/in existing public notice boards and community centres, so that people can recognise the branded posters (e.g. a red and green outline or similar branded design) which would use the same consistent branded designs in all local authorities. Perhaps costs/work could be shared between the Welsh Government and local authorities. I believe this would be very worthwhile to do as it would improve the engagement and connectiveness of the Welsh public with the democratic process in Wales.

Regarding the second petition for a simple information leaflet issued to all eligible Welsh citizens explaining how they could stand as candidates, the electoral commission does provide this information on their website but it is difficult and cumbersome to understand and people are instantly bamboozled by an over bombardment of links and pdf's. Many people don't even know who or what the Electoral Commission is in the first place. I'm glad to hear a leaflet was produced but I haven't seen any mention of this pamphlet anywhere and I believe most people wouldn't know who or what the WLGA is either, not to mention thinking of contacting them for a leaflet. I believe this information needs to be given/advertised to people directly as well as in public places. I'm sure also that a very simple paragraph outlining the basics of what needs to be done to stand, as well as a direct link to the electoral commission site could be added to literature that's already been sent out by the Welsh Government directly or through existing advertising and publicity.

This basic information of how to stand as electoral candidates could also be inter-linked/merged with the public notices idea contained in the other petition, where all this information could be put on the main branded local authority/community centres public notices together with the

information on existing representatives as suggested in the other petition.

I very much hope this will be of constructive and positive use and I thank you for your time and diligence. I would of course be more than happy to further contribute to any developments,

Kind regards,

Gruffydd Meredith