

A guide to the annual Parish Election process

Key dates for Parish Elections 2020

Friday 9th October
List of positions up for election published in the Gazette Officielle

Monday 26th October
Deadline to return nomination form to parish office (4pm)

Wednesday 4th November
Elections held at parish meeting



[Wednesday 18th November
Date reserved for deferred election]



Women in
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Step 1 – check you are eligible

To be a Douzenier or Constable you must:

- Live in the parish
- Be on the electoral roll
- Be 18 or over
- Have lived in Guernsey for the previous two years or five years in total
- Have not been sentenced to more than six months in prison

Eligibility for Deputies and parish officials is the same, so for a more detailed version of these rules go to:
<https://election2020.gg/standing/become-a-deputy/>.

Step 2 - do your research

Call or visit your Douzaine Room or Constables Office. Contact details and website addresses for all parishes are here: www.gov.gg/parishes.

Ask the parish clerk how many posts are up for election on November 4th and how many existing parish officials are re-standing for those posts.

Ask for a nomination form. Some parishes have the forms on their website.

Ask how your parish organises its elections. At the parish meeting will your name just be read out or do you need to make a short speech? Does your proposer need to say a few words about you? What happens if you are the only candidate for a position? (The details of the election process vary from parish to parish).

Ask if you can have a chat with one of the existing Constables or Douzeniers about the role and the projects the Douzaine is currently engaged in.

You could even ask if you could volunteer to help with a current project, just to get a feel for how things work.

For a full list of all the parish officials across the Island, and the date that their terms expire, go to www.gov.gg/DouzaineLiaisonGroup.

Step 3 – find a proposer and seconder

Find two people to propose and second you. They must live in the parish and be on the electoral roll. They don't need to be VIPs – just ask two friends or neighbours who believe in you and will support you.

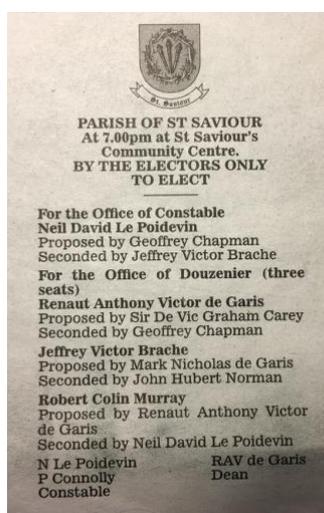
The main responsibility of your proposer and seconder is to sign your nomination form.

But it would also be helpful if one or both of them could come to the November parish meeting to support you – and bring other supporters **from the parish** with them if it's a contested election.

Your proposer may be asked to briefly explain why you would make a great Douzenier or Constable – the format varies in different parishes.

Step 4 – check the Gazette Officielle

By law, parishes must announce their elections in the Gazette Officielle and also announce the list of nominations so parishioners know who is standing.



The Gazette Officielle is published in the back pages of the Guernsey Press. If you don't take the Press you can view the Gazette online here:

<http://gazette.guernseypress.com/>

Here are the Gazette notice dates:

October 9th/16th: Elections announced

October 29th/30th/31st: Nominations announced

Douzeniers serve for a four-year term. The end dates of those terms are staggered so that three terms finish each year (or four in the Vale or five in St Peter Port as their Douzaines are larger).

The Elections notice will make clear whether Douzeniers are retiring completely or are standing for another term. Or your parish office can tell you. Inevitably, it is easier to win an empty seat than one where you are competing against an existing Douzenier but don't let that put you off standing. It's important for our Island's democracy and the evolution of the Douzaine that existing officials should have to prove their worth to their electorate at the end of their term.

There may be more than three Douzenier posts available because of people retiring before their term is up. However, if you take one of these additional seats, you will only serve for the remainder of the previous person's term of office - which could be as short as a year. At that point you can re-stand for a full four-year term.

Constables are elected for a three-year term but the convention in many parishes is to only serve for two years – one as Junior Constable and one as Senior Constable. Your parish may not call for nominations for Constable in a particular year because neither Constable is coming to the end of their term.

Step 5 – get your nomination form in

You must return your completed nomination form by **4pm on Monday 26th October 2020** at the latest. The order in which the nomination forms are received becomes the order in which successful candidates are allocated seats. In an uncontested election, seats with full four-year terms of office are allocated first and then the seats with shorter terms (where someone has stood down early).

Step 6 – go to the parish meeting

There are two parish meetings each year, usually in April and November. These are different to the monthly meetings of the Douzaine itself because parishioners are invited. Elections take place at the November parish meeting which is held on the first Wednesday of the month. This year the date is **Wednesday 4th November 2020**.

The time and location will be stated in the election notice published in the Gazette Officielle on October 29th/30th/31st or you can check with your parish clerk. By way of example, in 2019 St Peter Port met at 7.30pm at Les Cotils and Torteval met at 7pm in the parish church hall.

Uncontested election: If there are fewer candidates than the number of seats, there will not be an election. Your name will be read out and you will be appointed automatically. Some parishes may still ask you or your proposer to say a few words so that parishioners can get to know you.

Contested election: If there are more candidates than the number of seats available, the meeting will be asked to decide if the election should be held that evening or should be deferred until a later date. If a minimum of seven electors vote by show of hands for the election to be deferred, it must be deferred.

If the election is held that same evening the parishioners in the room decide who should be elected. That includes any friends, neighbours or family that you bring with you, so long as they live in the parish and are on the electoral roll in the parish.

The election is held by secret ballot. Each parishioner present is given a voting slip and the slips are collected and counted. The results are announced at the end of the count.

If the vote does not take place at the parish meeting, a 'deferred election' is called. A notice is published in the Gazette Officielle advertising the date, the candidates and where the polling stations will be. Everyone in the parish who is on the electoral roll is entitled to vote if they wish.

Deferred elections are held on the third Wednesday of November which will be **Wednesday 18th November** this year.

Step 7 – go campaigning [deferred election only]

In a deferred election, candidates are competing for votes from the entire parish.

Candidates may put up posters, go canvassing door to door, advertise in the Press, post on social media etc, just like a general election.

However, unlike a general election, there is no grant for election materials so all costs have to be met by the candidate.

Step 8 – go to the declaration [deferred election only]

The results of the vote are announced on the evening of election day, usually at the Douzaine Room or Constables Office.

Step 9 – go to your first Douzaine meeting!

If you are elected, your term of office will not start until 1st January but you may be asked to sit in on Douzaine meetings prior to that to learn the ropes.

If you are not successful, you are free to stand again at a future parish election.

This information sheet has been researched and prepared by [Women in Public Life](http://womeninpubliclife.gg) volunteers. If you have a question or wish to make a correction, contact hello@womeninpubliclife.gg.