

Why This Matters

The 2026 Senedd Cymru election will look and feel very different from anything Wales has experienced before. The changes are significant: more Members, larger constituencies, and an entirely new voting system. As churches and faith communities, we have a responsibility to understand these changes and to help our congregations engage confidently with the democratic process.

This briefing sets out what is changing, what it means in practice, and how you and your community can prepare.

Key Changes at a Glance

96 Members instead of 60
16 new constituencies replacing the old mix of constituencies and a regional list
6 Members per constituency for broader representation
One vote for a party or independent
Proportional representation via D'Hondt method

More Members, Larger Constituencies

From the 2026 election, the Senedd will expand from 60 to 96 Members. The old system – a combination of 40 constituency seats and regional list seats – is being replaced. Wales will instead be divided into 16 new, larger constituencies, each electing six Members. This means your area will have more voices representing it in the Senedd, and communities will benefit from broader, more diverse representation.

A New Voting System

In previous Senedd elections, voters cast two ballots – one for a constituency candidate and one for a regional party list. That changes in 2026. You will now cast **one single vote** for either a political party or an independent candidate.

Seats will be allocated proportionally using a mathematical formula called the D'Hondt method. In simple terms, the number of seats a party wins in each constituency will more closely reflect the share of votes it receives. The aim is to make the Senedd more reflective of the political views of people across Wales.

What to Expect When You Vote

- You will receive a **single ballot paper** (not two, as previously).
- The ballot will list political parties (alongside their candidate lists) and any independent candidates.
- Mark your choice with a **single X**.
- Seats are allocated proportionally using the D'Hondt method.

How to Prepare

1. **Check your registration.** Make sure you are registered to vote at gov.uk/register-to-vote or contact your local authority.
2. **Find your new constituency.** The 16 new constituencies have different boundaries – check which one you are in on the Senedd Cymru website.
3. **Bring identification.** Ensure you have any required ID when you go to the polling station.
4. **Consider your vote.** Look at party manifestos and local candidate information.

Why These Changes Matter

These reforms aim to make Welsh democracy fairer and more effective. With more Members and a proportional system, the Senedd will be better equipped to scrutinise laws, hold the government to account, and represent the rich diversity of Wales. For churches and faith communities, engaged and informed participation in democracy is part of our wider calling to serve the common good.

What Churches and Faith Communities Can Do?

As trusted community organisations, churches are well placed to support democratic engagement:

- **Share this information** with your congregation and wider community networks.
- **Host or support hustings events** to give candidates the opportunity to address local concerns.
- **Encourage voter registration**, particularly among those less familiar with the process or who have recently moved.
- **Pray for the election**, for those standing as candidates, and for wisdom in the choices voters will make.
- **Engage with candidates** on issues that matter to your community – housing, health, education, poverty, and the environment.

Further Information

For a more detailed explanation of the new system, visit the [Senedd Cymru website](https://www.senedd.cymru).

For a useful list of declared candidates, visit [Who Can I Vote For?](https://whocanivote.co.uk) at whocanivote.co.uk. Please note that Cytûn cannot be responsible for the accuracy of external information.

For further guidance from Cytûn on faith and democratic engagement, please contact us through our website.