



**Un Llais Cymru
One Voice Wales**

**Community & Town Councils
Digital Guidance
Domain Naming**

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Guidance on Domain Naming for Community and Town Councils in Wales

Introduction

This document provides guidance on Domain Naming for websites, email, and related services for Community and Town Councils in Wales. This is a fundamental aspect of how the internet and digital services work, and it's crucial for establishing the credibility of your Council's online presence.

It covers the concept of domain names and URLs, the history of specific top-level and second-level domains, the benefits of using these domains, and guidance on how to obtain them.

The document also contains a high-level explanation of internet naming and addressing and some links for those interested in obtaining a more technical understanding of the topic.

As mentioned below the most important contact point for Councils in considering their Domain Name is their website provider.

Domain Names Background

Each device connected to the Internet has a unique numerical label assigned to it. This is known as an IP Address as the Internet uses a set of rules known as the Internet Protocol (IP) to enable the exchange of data between devices. This is broadly like the use of telephone numbers to place phone calls though there are some key differences in approach. Further explanation and details are given in Appendix A.

However, IP addresses, which are strings of numbers like '192.168.1.1', aren't easy to remember. That's where "Domain Names" come in. A domain name is a human-friendly name that points to an IP address. For example, 'councilname.gov.wales' could be a domain name and familiar names used by brands and organizations such as "amazon.com" and "bbc.co.uk" have become fully established. The Internet uses its "Domain Name Service" (DNS) for computers, services and other resources to translate a domain name into its IP address. DNS is like a set of telephone directories that contain all the public domains and their corresponding IP addresses. Further explanation and details are given in Appendix B.

Domain Names for Community and Town Councils

You may need to choose a domain name for your Council. This may be to establish a website or email address setup. Or it may be to update and improve your existing

registration to improve credibility and security.

When you're ready you'll need to choose and register a domain name. Here's a simplified version of the process:

It is important to note that your first place of discussion for your domain name should be with your website provider. In most cases they will be able to register your Domain Name for you and in all cases they will need to understand what you have decided and are intending to use.

1. Choose a Domain Name:

This should include the name of your Council but be something that represents your Council well. When choosing a Domain Name for the Council's website and emails, many local Council websites are appropriately making use of a “.gov.wales/.llyw.cymru” (or “.gov.uk”) domain. As examples

Fishguard Town Council

www.fishguardgoodwick-tc.gov.wales with email addresses being linked to that domain as well i.e. clerk@fishguardgoodwick-tc.gov.wales.

Bedlinog and Trelewis Community Council

<http://www.bedlinogtrelewis-cc.gov.wales/> and clerk@bedlinogtrelewis-cc.gov.wales

Caernarfon Town Council

<https://www.cyngortrefcaernarfon.llyw.cymru/> and clercydref@cyngortrefcaernarfon.llyw.cymru

Why Use These Domains?

There are several important reasons why local Councils of all sizes should ideally obtain an appropriate .gov.wales/.llyw.cymru domain name for their Council, (and equally importantly, a secure and well-managed email system to sit behind it.)

First and foremost, obtaining a “.gov.wales/.llyw.cymru” domain for your Council website and email accounts demonstrates the Council's official local government status. Members of the public are increasingly cyber security-aware, so a .gov.wales/.llyw.cymru domain can also help to build trust, credibility and visibly demonstrate authenticity. Most people will now reasonably expect a local Council to have a .gov domain name.

Councils can use a “.gov.wales” domain or a “.llyw.cymru” domain according to their own language preference. Councils who have versions of their website in Welsh and English could use both and use them for the appropriate language. This may also be a good solution for Councils which have different names in the two languages

“.gov.uk” domains are also available for Councils in Wales. Councils who already have a “.gov.uk” domain are under no obligation to change this for a “.gov.wales” or

a “.llyw.cymru” domain.

2. Register Your Domains

Details of the policy for registering and running .llyw.cymru and .gov.wales domains are managed by the Welsh Government and can be found here

<https://www.gov.wales/policy-registering-and-running-llywcymru-and-govwales-domains-html>

However, in summary, to obtain a .gov.wales or .llyw.cymru domain, an application must be made to the Welsh Naming and Approvals Committee (WNAC). This must be done on the Council’s behalf by an approved domain name registrar. There is a long list of approved registrars which can be reviewed here

<https://community.jisc.ac.uk/library/janet-services-documentation/registrar-membership>

Your existing website provider may well be an approved registrar. Your registrar will help you to check the correct format for your domain and check it does not clash with any other Community or Town Council in Wales

Once you have selected your Domain Name then the registrar will be able to submit the application for approval to the WNAC. There is typically a fee for the application then a yearly fee to manage the registration.

3. Link Your Domain Name to Your Website and emails

Once you've registered your domain name, you'll need to link it to your website and your email. This is usually done through your web hosting provider, but you may be able to do it yourself if you are managing your own account with a registration service.

Remember, your domain name is an important part of your Council's online identity. It's worth taking the time to choose a name that is not only available, but also representative of your Council's mission and services.

Appendix A: Short Overview of IP Addressing

“IP Addressing” is a fundamental concept that underpins the Internet. IP stands for “Internet Protocol”, and an IP address is a unique identifier assigned to each device connected to a network, including the Internet. It can be thought of as analogous to a telephone number or in some cases a post code which allows devices on the Internet to contact and transfer data to each other.

IP addresses are used on the Internet in two primary ways:

1. **Routing**: IP addresses are used by routers to direct data packets to their destination. When you send data over the Internet, it is broken down into packets, each of which contains the IP address of the destination device. Routers use these addresses to guide the packets through the network to their final destination.
2. **Host or Network Interface Identification**: Every device connected to the Internet needs a unique IP address. This allows the device to communicate with other devices on the network. When a device sends data over the network, it includes its IP address so that the recipient knows where to send the response.

There are two types of IP addresses: **IPv4** and **IPv6**.

- **IPv4** addresses are written as four sets of numbers separated by periods. Each set can range from 0 to 255. For example, `192.168.1.1`.

- **IPv6** addresses were introduced to deal with the exhaustion of IPv4 addresses. They are written as eight groups of four hexadecimal digits, separated by colons. For example, `2001:0db8:85a3:0000:0000:8a2e:0370:7334`.

Appendix B: Overview of Domain Name Service on the Internet

A domain name is a text-based address used to identify the location of a website or other resource on the Internet. For instance, in “google.com”, “google” is the domain name. A Uniform Resource Locator (URL), on the other hand, is a full web address specifying web page locations. It includes the protocol (e.g., ‘https’), the domain name, and the path to a specific page on the website.

Domain names are organized in subordinate levels of the “Domain Name System (DNS)”. The first-level set of domain names are the “Top-Level Domains (TLDs)”. These can be generic to show the nature of the website, such as “.com” or “.org” or can include a country code such as “.uk” or “.wales”.

Domain Name Services (DNS)

The Domain Name System (DNS) is often compared to a phonebook of the Internet. People access information online through domain names, like “google.com”. Computers and their Web browsers, however, interact through Internet Protocol (IP)

addresses. DNS translates domain names to IP addresses so browsers can load internet resources.

Appendix C: History of .wales and .cymru Top-Level Domains

The “.wales” and “.cymru” top-level domains (TLDs) were proposed by in 2012 and received final approval in June 2014. They were launched on 1 March 2015. These TLDs provide a unique identity for Wales on the Internet.

“.gov.wales” and “.llyw.cymru” Second Level Domains

The “.gov.wales” and “.llyw.cymru” second-level domains (SLDs) were created by the Welsh Government within the “.wales” and “.cymru TLD”. These SLDs are reserved for use by the public sector in Wales.

Version History

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