



Unjumbling the Jargon: January 2025

We all talk in jargon at times, don't we? Do we always know what we mean though?

Perhaps these explanations will help you understand some of the phrases you will come across.

The first set of acronyms are arranged within groups to sometimes show how different bodies relate to one another.

The "jargon" section is in alphabetical order.

This information is owned by One Voice Wales under copyright. It is intended for members of One Voice Wales only. Please contact One Voice Wales if you propose circulating this information outside of your Council.

Lyn Cadwallader BA(Hons), PGDipHsg, DBA, PGDipLOPS, Chartered MCIH
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive

www.onevoicewales.org.uk

Acronyms			
Acronym	Stands for...	What's that?	Website
OVW	One Voice Wales	<p>The representative body for Community and Town Councils in Wales. The majority of Councils are members of OVW.</p> <p>A Community or Town Council is like a Parish Council in England. Sometimes they are also referred to as Local Councils.</p>	One Voice Wales
The Clerk	Clerk to the Council	<p>The Clerk is the principal officer of a Community or Town Council. The formal title of the Clerk is Proper Officer.</p> <p>The Clerk is like a Company Secretary. Councillors ("Members") are like the Board of Directors.</p>	
RFO	Responsible Financial Officer	The Council must appoint a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to manage the council's financial affairs; the RFO is often also the Clerk, especially in smaller councils.	
Chair	The person who chairs the Council.	<p>The Council must elect someone to undertake this role (elect, not appoint.)</p> <p>They are the civic head of the Council, but they also have some specific responsibilities relating to governance.</p>	

WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association	The WLGA represents all 22 principal local authorities in Wales, i.e. "County Councils" (e.g. Cardiff, Newport, Wrexham), the 3 fire and rescue authorities and the 3 national park authorities.	WLGA
WG	Welsh Government	This is the political, executive arm of the Senedd, or Welsh Parliament. It's the Cabinet for Wales.	Welsh Government
Senedd	Senedd	This is the Welsh Parliament. It is different from the Welsh Government in the way that Parliament and the Cabinet are different from one another at Westminster. Its role includes questioning and challenging the Welsh Government. It used to be called the National Assembly for Wales.	Senedd
MS	Member of the Senedd	All members of the Senedd are known as MS. Even the Welsh Government Ministers in the Cabinet . Just like the Prime Minister is also an MP for example.	Find a member of the Senedd.
NALC	National Association of Local Councils	NALC is the national body that represents the interests of 10,000 local (parish and town) councils in England.	NALC
PSOW	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales	Sometimes known simply as "the Ombudsman," the role of the PSOW is to investigate complaints that something has gone wrong with Welsh public services, due to maladministration. This includes Community and Town Councils. The PSOW also looks	PSOW

		into complaints that Welsh councillors (inc. Community and Town Councils) have breached their Code of Conduct.	
Standards Committee	Standards and Ethics Committee	<p>This is an important committee of the principal (County Borough) Council. The committee's role includes hearing and determining complaints of misconduct by Members or a report of the Monitoring Officer, whether on reference from the Ombudsman or otherwise. This can include complaints about Community and Town Councillors.</p> <p>Community and Town Councils are usually represented on the committee.</p>	An example of a Standards Committee .
MO	Monitoring Officer	A Monitoring Officer is the statutory officer responsible for the legal governance of a local authority in much the same way that a section 151 officer is responsible for a council's finances. They have a legal duty to ensure councils fulfil statutory obligations and apply their codes of conduct. This includes investigating and reporting on anything the authority does that has the potential to be an illegal action or any action that might count as maladministration.	The majority of the role is set out under section 5 of the 1989 Local Government and Housing Act .
IRPW	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales	The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales is responsible for determining the level of payments to elected members of councils, (including Community and Town Councils) national park authorities and fire and rescue authorities in Wales. Details are set out each year in an annual report . 2025 – 26 is the final draft report before the Panel's functions transfer over to the	IRPW

Commented [PE1]: Its title will change from April 2025 - check out online

		Democracy Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) from 1 April 2025.	
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action	WCVA is the national membership body for voluntary organisations in Wales.	WCVA
SLCC	Society of Local Council Clerks	The professional body for local council clerks and senior council employees.	SLCC

Can you think of any to add to this list?

Jargon	
What we say	What we mean ...
“The Sector”	We mean “the Community and Town Council sector.” That is, all Community and Town Councils in Wales, not just those who are members of One Voice Wales.
Members	We mean Councillors. Legislation and other official documentation uses the term “Members.” Sometimes you might see the abbreviation Cllr. or (in Welsh) Cyng. for Councillor.

Precept	The amount which a Council raises to deliver its services. It is added to Council Tax bills for the area covered by the Community or Town Councils.
Audit Wales	An independent, external body which audits Community and Town Councils in Wales. They check our accounts and our governance arrangements. Councils also appoint their own internal auditor, who is independent of the Council.
Muti-location meetings or hybrid meetings.	Some meetings take place in person. Some are held remotely. Some use both. This is what we mean by Community and Town Councils in Wales. If a Council meets formally for a Council meeting or committee/sub-committee meeting, it can so in person, but there must also be provision for people to participate by remote means, such as Zoom or Teams or through telephone conferencing.
Statutory Duty	Something which has to be done by law. Councils must fulfil these requirements, which may be set down in an act of parliament, Act or Measure of the Senedd or regulations.
Standing Orders and Financial Regulations	Rules which govern how a Council operates. Standing Orders relate largely to conduct of meetings etc. Financial Regulations relate to financial matters.

Finally, what's the difference between a Community and a Town Council? In truth, very little. Town Councils tend to be found in the larger, self-contained centres of population. They tend to have a Mayor rather than a Chair. Beyond that there is very little difference. The Mayor or Chair fulfil the same role.

Some Councils also have a Leader, who is the political head of the Council.

A comprehensive glossary of terms appears at the end of [this document](#).