
THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

Could you help us shape the future of reform in Britain?

Who are we?

The Electoral Reform Society is the UK's leading voice for democratic rights. We work with everyone – from political parties, civil society groups and academics to our own members and supporters and the wider public – to campaign for a better democracy in the UK.

Who can stand?

This year, we especially want to encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds, with a wide variety of experience to stand for election to our board (Council).

In previous years, many fewer women than men have nominated themselves to stand, and we have only received a small number of nominations from young people, disabled people and people from ethnic minority backgrounds. We have also had many fewer nominations from people living in Wales and Scotland than in England.

Greater diversity among candidates standing for election would allow our members to elect a Council that is more representative of the diversity of lived experiences and political contexts across the UK.

This would put our Council in a better position to scrutinise the implementation of the Society's strategy from a range of different perspectives.

So this year, we are launching an additional campaign to encourage nominations from specific groups within the community, particularly young people and students, BAME and LGBTQ+ citizens and citizens with a disability.

If you know someone around you who might be interested in standing for election to our Council, please share this information with them so they can join us!

No prior experience of sitting on a board is necessary, and the Society covers all expenses incurred and is flexible with regard to meeting dates and times and with attending meetings in person or remotely – so people with caring responsibilities or who live outside London need not be put off.

You need to be an ERS member to stand, and you can join straight away by signing up via our website.

What do Council members do?

The Council is the Society's governing body and Council Members are the legal Directors of the company, with collective responsibility for ensuring that the organisation is legally compliant. The Council sets the Society's strategic direction, in conjunction with senior staff, ensures accountability for the Society's performance and that the Society is managed with probity and integrity.

The Council is made up of 15 members (12 elected and 3 co-opted) who serve for a two-year term. All fully paid-up members are allowed to stand for election and to vote (provided they are not disqualified from acting as a Company Director and are not employed, or been recently employed, by the Society at the close of nominations).

What is the nature of the commitment?

There are 4 Council meetings each year held either online via Zoom or in central London, plus the AGM.

What about out-of-pocket expenses?

The ERS is committed to making the role of Council members as open to as many people as possible. We don't want cost to be a barrier to anyone thinking of standing. We offer full reimbursement of all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses involved in serving as a Council member for the duration of the term. These include the cost of travel, subsistence, childcare costs, overnight accommodation in London if required and any other reasonable costs that arise as a result of serving on the board.

How do Council members get elected?

Our Council is elected by a ballot of all members held under the Single Transferable Vote (STV). The result of the ballot is reported to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and newly elected Council members take office at the close of the AGM. If you have any questions feel free to contact us at ers@electoral-reform.org.uk.

How do I stand this year?

Nominations open this year on 4th August, and we will be contacting all our members with details of how to nominate themselves. If you're not a member, and are interested in the Society and in nominating yourself to stand for election to our Council, please consider signing up as a member via our website and we will be in touch with everything you'll need to stand. The deadline to submit a nomination is 10th September.

If you have any questions about standing for election to the Council contact us at ers@electoral-reform.org.uk