

In most local elections the principle of "one man one vote" functions. In the following cases, however, plural voting is allowed. In counties and road districts ratepayers are entitled to one vote where the property has a rateable value of less than £1,000; to two votes when the rateable value is between £1,000 and £2,000; and to three votes where property is over £2,000. In rabbit districts which rate on acreage or rateable value the provisions of plurality of votes as in counties apply. Where rating is on basis of number of stock carried, the following provisions apply: where number of stock is less than 5,000, one vote; where between 5,000 and 10,000, two votes; where between 10,000 and 20,000, three votes; where between 20,000 and 30,000, four votes; where over 30,000, five votes.

In drainage districts each ratepayer has the same number of votes as he exercises in elections for members of a County Council⁽¹⁾.

River districts may, and at times do, include parts or all of boroughs and town districts. In river districts all ratepayers, whether in boroughs, town districts, or counties, have similar plural voting rights to county ratepayers⁽²⁾.

F. MEETINGS

By the nature of the case all local authorities have powers to hold meetings. The Municipal Corporations Act, 1933, contains no specific, but rather an implied, authority to hold ordinary meetings. The other local authorities are specifically empowered to hold ordinary meetings for the conduct of their business⁽³⁾.

Several Acts specifically state that meetings shall be open to the public, unless the Council or Board decides to exclude strangers or goes into committee⁽⁴⁾.

Other local authorities have implicit or explicit powers to regulate the conduct of their meetings. Generally, ordinary meetings of local authorities are open to the press and the public.

Several of the statutes provide that minutes must be kept, and that such minutes are admissible as evidence of the proceedings of the Council⁽⁵⁾.

Most of the statutes lay down provisions as to a quorum at meetings. In Borough Councils, County Councils, Road Boards and Town Boards, Hospitals Boards, Electric-power Boards, River Boards a quorum is one-half of the members where there is even number in Council or a majority where an odd number⁽⁶⁾.

In some cases the Council or Board itself may fix a quorum⁽⁷⁾.

Special meetings may be called by the Chairman or by a small number of Councillors. There is some diversity as to notice which must be given. In Borough Councils, two days; in County Councils, Town Boards, Drainage Boards, Catchment Boards, and Electric-power Boards, seven days; in Road Boards, River Boards, Hospital Boards, Harbour Boards, four days.

Meetings are also required by Borough Councils, County Councils, Road Boards, and Town Boards for the confirmation of special orders. Such meetings must be held in the case of Borough Councils and Town Boards not more than twenty-eight days after the first meeting; in County Councils seventy days, and Road Boards fifty-six days.

G. HONORARIUM OF MAYOR OR CHAIRMAN

Most statutes provide for an honorarium for the Mayor or Chairman, but there is a wide difference in the provisions.

Boroughs.—An annual allowance not exceeding £500 is authorized for Mayors of Boroughs, except in the case of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, where the maximum is £750. No alteration can be made during the Mayor's tenure of office⁽⁸⁾. This has led to inequities in some cases Mayors may also be paid travelling-expenses when travelling on the business of the Council.

Counties.—County Chairmen are entitled to receive travelling-expenses up to £100 per annum, or £100 in lieu of travelling-expenses⁽⁹⁾. A County Chairman receiving a lump sum is not entitled to any travelling-expenses. This provision is definitely unfair when compared with the provisions regarding honoraria of Chairmen of other local authorities.

Road Boards.—There is no provision as to honoraria of Chairmen of Road Boards.

Chairmen of Harbour Boards may be paid an honorarium not exceeding £200 per annum⁽¹⁰⁾.

Chairmen of Hospital Boards may be paid an honorarium at the following rates⁽¹¹⁾: Where one-fifth of 1 per cent. of the Board's maintenance expenditure in any year does not exceed £100, the sum of £100; where one-fifth of 1 per cent. of the maintenance expenditure in the previous year exceeds £100, then an amount equal to such percentage of the maintenance expenditure, but not exceeding £250.

⁽¹⁾ Land Drainage Act, 1908, section 9.

⁽²⁾ River Boards Act, 1908, section 31.

⁽³⁾ Counties Act, 1920, sections 88 and 89; Road Boards Act, 1908, sections 66 and 67; Town Boards Act, 1908, section 31; Electric-power Boards Act, 1925, sections 33, 35–37; Hospital and Charitable Institutions Act, 1926, section 30; Harbours Act, 1923, section 45; Land Drainage Act, 1908, section 12; River Boards Act, 1908, sections 51 and 56; Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act, 1941, section 65.

⁽⁴⁾ The Acts where this provision appears are: Counties Act, 1920, section 89; Road Boards Act, 1908, section 68; Town Boards Act, 1908, section 31 (*h*); Electric-power Boards Act, 1925, section 37.

⁽⁵⁾ Municipal Corporations Act, 1933, section 60; Counties Act, 1920, section 98; Road Boards Act, 1908, sections 81–83; River Boards Act, 1908, sections 63–65; Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act, 1941, section 75.

⁽⁶⁾ Municipal Corporations Act, 1933, section 57; Counties Act, 1920, section 81; Road Boards Act, 1908, section 64; Town Boards Act, 1908, section 31; Hospital and Charitable Institutions Act, 1926, section 34; Electric-power Boards Act, 1925, section 28; River Boards Act, 1908, section 53.

⁽⁷⁾ Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act, 1941, section 72; Harbours Act, 1923, section 45.

⁽⁸⁾ Municipal Corporations Act, 1933, section 28, and Municipal Corporations Amendment Act, 1938, section 3.

⁽⁹⁾ Counties Act, 1920, section 84.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Harbours Act, 1923, section 42. The honorarium may not be changed during the term of office of any Chairman.

⁽¹¹⁾ Hospital and Charitable Institutions Act, 1926, section 32.