



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2021/44/152
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

N.I. Local Elections - Main Points

1. Turn-out was well down on 1985 with approximately half the electorate voting. There were, however, significant local variations; in some rural areas such as Fermanagh polling was as high as 85%, but this was counterbalanced by a poor turn-out in urban areas.
2. With the exception of Bangor West (postponed because of the death of a candidate), the division of Council seats amongst the parties is as follows (1985 result in brackets);

<u>OUP</u>	<u>DUP</u>	<u>SDLP</u>	<u>SF</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>Others</u>
187	114	121	43	37	4	53
(190)	(142)	(101)	(59)	(34)	(4)	(36)

3. The improvement in the SDLP's performance was dramatic; with a rise in their vote by 3.4% (and in some areas by as much as 10%) giving them over 21% of the vote for the first time, they have increased their representation from 101 to 121 seats. They have gained overall control of Down Council (where the SDLP vote jumped by 10%) and Newry-Mourne Council and have increased their representation in 14 Councils.
4. The DUP share of the vote has decreased substantially - down by 6.5%. Their representation is down in 19 Councils and they have lost 28 Councillors; their vote was down even in the DUP stronghold of Ballymena, by as much as 10%, though they have managed to maintain overall control there. Despite the Party's overall decline, Peter Robinson's personal vote improved substantially.
5. The OUP vote has risen from 29.5% in 1985 to over 31.4%, largely at the expense of the DUP, though this did not translate into extra seats. The steady performance of the OUP in contrast to that of the DUP has given rise to criticism within the DUP about the OUP/DUP pact.

6. While Sinn Fein's vote slipped only marginally, they lost 17 of the 59 seats they had won in 1985 largely because of a failure to gain transfers. Their urban vote held, and increased in Belfast by 3%, but their rural vote slipped, resulting in a significant loss in Fermanagh where they retained only 4 of their 8 seats.
7. The Alliance Party vote has held despite the fact that they were running fewer candidates; they have gained an extra 3 seats. In his first electoral test, Alliance leader Dr. John Alderdice topped the poll in East Belfast. They won a seat for the first time in Strabane, ending nationalist control there and giving Alliance the deciding vote on who runs the Council. Alliance's performance appears to arrest the decline in the Party's vote over the last decade.
8. In their first campaign, the Model Conservatives have taken 4 seats in North Down at the expense of the OUP/DUP and Alliance. Dr. Laurance Kennedy, the leader of the Model Conservatives, has made the confident prediction that his party will be accepted by the Tory Party before the end of 1989.
9. In a surprise result, Fr. Pat Buckley, standing as a community candidate, won a seat in Larne on the first count.

Anglo-Irish Section
23 May 1989

DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS 1985/1989

	OUP		DUP		SDLP		SF		ALL		WP		INDN		INDU	
YEAR	85	89	85	89	85	89	85	89	85	89	85	89	85	89	85	89
ANTRIM	9	10	5	4	3	4	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
ARDS	6	8	8	7	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	-	-	1	1	-
ARMAGH	11	11	3	2	7	8	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BALLYMENA	6	7	15	12	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
BALLYMONEY	6	6	6	6	2	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
BANBRIDGE	8	9	3	2	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
BELFAST	14	14	11	8	6	8	7	8	8	6	1	1	-	-	4	6
CARRICKFERGUS	7	4	3	3	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	-	1	-	1	4
CASTLEREAGH	8	5	10	10	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	-	1	-	-	4
COLERAINE	10	10	6	5	2	2	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
COOKSTOWN	3	3	5	5	3	5	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
CRAIGAVON	11	12	6	4	5	6	2	1	-	2	2	1	-	-	-	-
DERRY	5	3	5	4	14	15	5	5	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
DOWN	7	8	3	2	10	12	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
DUNGANNON	8	7	3	4	5	5	4	3	-	-	-	1	2	2	-	-
FERMANAGH	8	10	2	2	4	5	8	4	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
LARNE	6	6	6	5	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	1	2	-	-
LIMAVADY	7	7	2	1	4	6	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LISBURN	13	14	8	6	2	3	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
MAGHERAFELT	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
MOYLE	2	1	3	4	4	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	2	3	2	2
NEWRY-MOURNE	7	6	2	-	14	17	5	4	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	1
NEWTOWNABBEY	10	11	9	6	-	1	-	-	2	4	-	-	-	-	2	3
NORTH DOWN	8	3	6	3	-	-	-	-	7	3	-	-	-	-	3	8*
OMAGH	4	5	4	3	5	6	6	6	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-
STRABANE	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	-	1	-	-	2	2	-	1