



National Assembly for **Wales**
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol **Cymru**

Blaenau Gwent By-Election

This paper presents the results of the Parliamentary and National Assembly for Wales by-elections held in Blaenau Gwent on 29 June 2006 and provides further information on previous elections within the constituency.

June 2006



Blaenau Gwent By-Election

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Summary

- Independent candidate Patricia Law won the National Assembly for Wales seat collecting 13,785 votes (50.3%)
- Independent candidate David Davies won the Parliamentary seat collecting 12,543 votes (46.2%)
- The winning majority in the Assembly election was 4,464 votes and the winning majority in the Parliamentary election was 2,484 votes, both over Labour Party candidates
- The share of the vote in each election by political party is shown below:

Political Party	Assembly Election		Parliamentary Election	
	Votes	Share (%)	Votes	Share (%)
Conservative	816	3.0	1,013	3.7
Green	302	1.1	-	-
Independent	13,785	50.3	12,543	46.2
Labour	9,321	34.0	10,059	37.0
Liberal Democrats	2,054	7.5	1,477	5.4
Monster Raving Loony Party	-	-	318	1.2
Plaid Cymru	1,109	4.0	1,755	6.5

- Labour received 34.0% of the vote in the Assembly by-election and 37.0% in the parliamentary by-election. In the 2005 parliamentary General Election, it received 32.3% and in the Assembly election of 2003, 70.2%.
- The winning independent candidate in the Assembly by-election received 50.3% of the vote and 46.2% in the parliamentary by-election. In the 2005 parliamentary General Election, Peter Law, standing as an Independent, received 58.2% of the vote.
- The turnout for the Assembly election was 52.1% while the turnout for the Parliamentary election was 51.7%

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Blaenau Gwent By-Election

1 Introduction

1.1 *Background*

Two by-elections were held for the constituency of Blaenau Gwent on 29 June 2006 following the death of Member of Parliament (MP) and Assembly Member (AM) Peter Law on 25 April 2006.

Mr Law was first elected as the Labour AM for Blaenau Gwent in 1999 and then re-elected in 2003. In the 2005 General Election, Mr Law stood as an independent Parliamentary candidate. He collected more than 58% of the vote and overturned a 19,000 Labour majority in Blaenau Gwent.

1.2 *Structure of this paper*

This paper is split into two sections covering the results of the National Assembly for Wales by-election and the results of the Parliamentary by-election.

1.3 *Sources for further information*

Results of the by-elections held on 29 June were provided by the Returning Officer for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. The website of the local authority includes pages of election news and results which can be reached through the link below:
<http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/>

The BBC News website has published a series of articles related to the by-elections in Blaenau Gwent:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/5084678.stm

The politics website ePolitix.com also provides a range of information related to the Assembly election in Blaenau Gwent:
[Blaenau Gwent by-election stories](#)

Information on previous election results, electorate and turnout is available on the Electoral Commission website:
<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/>

2 Results of the National Assembly for Wales By-Election

Independent candidate Patricia Law won the seat with a majority of 4,464 over Labour Party candidate John Hopkins.

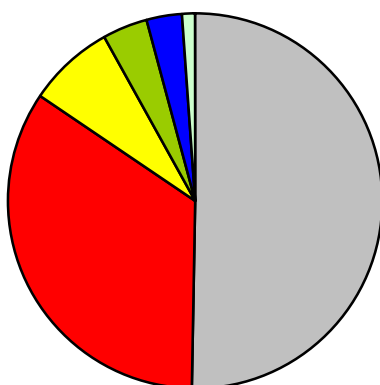
2.1 2006 By-Election Results

Six candidates were nominated for election as an Assembly Member in the by-election for the Blaenau Gwent constituency. Representatives of the Blaenau Gwent Labour Party, the Blaenau Gwent Liberal Democrats, the Green Party (Plaid Werdd), Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales and the Welsh Conservative Party (Plaid Geidwadol Cymru) all stood for election along with one independent candidate.

Table 1. Results of the National Assembly for Wales 2006 By-Election in Blaenau Gwent

Candidate	Party	Votes	Share of Vote (%)	Change since 2003
Patricia Law	IND	13,785	50.3	+50.3
John Hopkins	LAB	9,321	34.0	-36.2
Richard Bard	LD	2,054	7.5	-3.4
Norman Price	PC	1,109	4.0	-5.6
Jonathan Burns	CON	816	3.0	-2.7
John Matthews	Green	302	1.1	+1.1

Figure 1. Percentage Share of Vote by Political Party



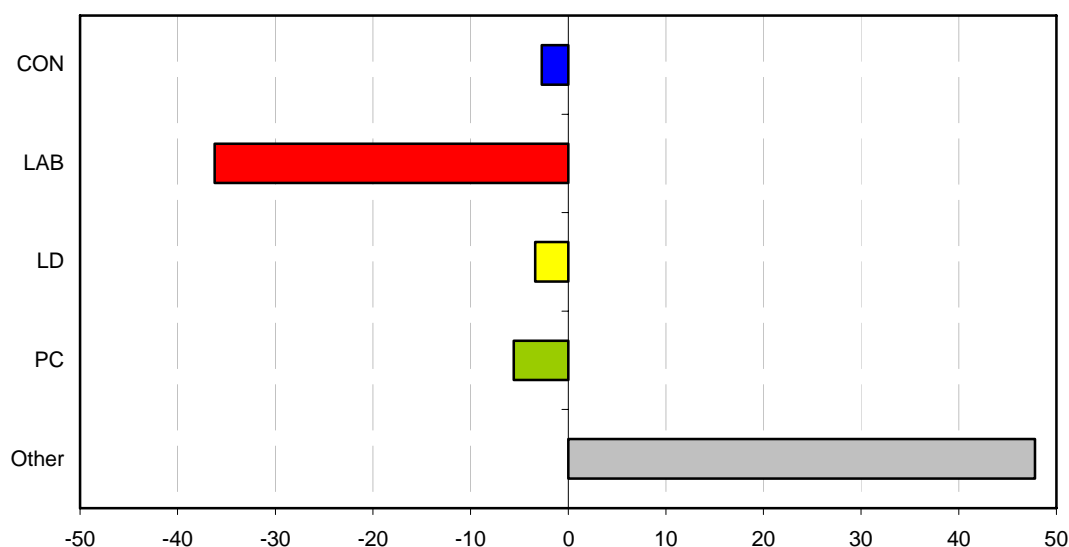
2.2 Changes in Percentage Share of the Vote

All four major parties in Wales suffered losses in their percentage share of the vote in Blaenau Gwent compared with the 2003 National Assembly for Wales election. Having won over 70% of the vote in the 2003 Assembly election, Labour won 34% of the vote in the 2006 by-election, a loss of 36.2 percentage points. Other candidates (outside the 4 major Welsh parties) accounted for 51.4% of the vote at the 2006 by-election an increase of 47.8 percentage points on their share of the vote at the 2003 election.

Changes in the percentage share of votes between the Assembly 2003 election and this by-election are much larger than those observed in the comparison with the Parliamentary election in 2005 and the by-election, as Peter Law had contested the seat as a Labour

party candidate in 2003, whereas he stood as an independent candidate at the 2005 General Election.

Figure 2. Changes in the Percentage Share of the Vote since the 2003 Assembly Election by Political Party



Previous Assembly elections in Blaenau Gwent were both won by Labour. In the 1999 election, the party polled over 60% of the vote and subsequently increased their share to over 70% of the vote in the 2003 election.

Table 2. Percentage share of the vote at Assembly Elections by Political Party

Party	% Share of the vote			Change in % share in 2006 since:	
	1999	2003	2006	1999	2003
CON	5.6	5.7	3.0	-2.6	-2.7
LAB	61.8	70.2	34.0	-27.8	-36.2
LD	11.5	10.9	7.5	-4.0	-3.4
PC	21.2	9.6	4.0	-17.2	-5.6
Other	-	3.6	51.4	+51.4	+47.8

2.3 Electorate and Turnout

Turnout in the Assembly by-election was 52.1%, up 14.7 percentage points on the 2003 election. This was the highest turnout for an Assembly election in Blaenau Gwent to date, exceeding the previous highest turnout of 48.2% recorded in the 1999 election.



Table 3. Electorate and Turnout at Assembly Elections in Blaenau Gwent since 1999

Blaenau Gwent	1999	2003	2006
Total electorate	53,919	52,927	52,586
Percentage turnout	48.2	37.4	52.1

3 Results of the Parliamentary By-Election

Independent candidate David Davies won the seat with a majority of 2,484 over Labour Party candidate Owen Smith.

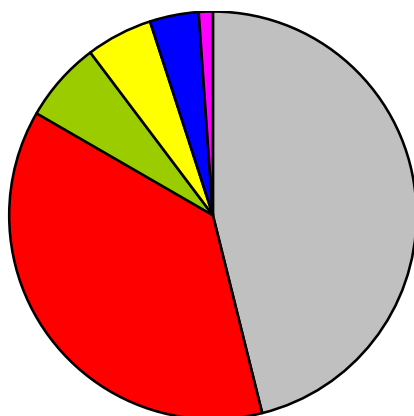
3.1 2006 By-Election Results

Six candidates were nominated for election as a Member of Parliament in the by-election for the Blaenau Gwent constituency. Representatives of the Blaenau Gwent Labour Party, the Blaenau Gwent Liberal Democrats, the Official Monster Raving Loony Party, Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales and the Welsh Conservative Party (Plaid Geidwadol Cymru) all stood for election along with one independent candidate.

Table 4. Results of the Parliamentary By-Election in Blaenau Gwent

Candidate	Party	Votes	Share of Vote (%)	Change since 2005
David Davies	IND	12,543	46.2	-12.0
Owen Smith	LAB	10,059	37.0	+4.7
Steffan Lewis	PC	1,755	6.5	+4.1
Amy Kitcher	LD	1,477	5.4	+1.2
Margrit Williams	CON	1,013	3.7	+1.4
Alan Hope	MRLP	318	1.2	+1.2

Figure 3. Percentage Share of Vote by Political Party

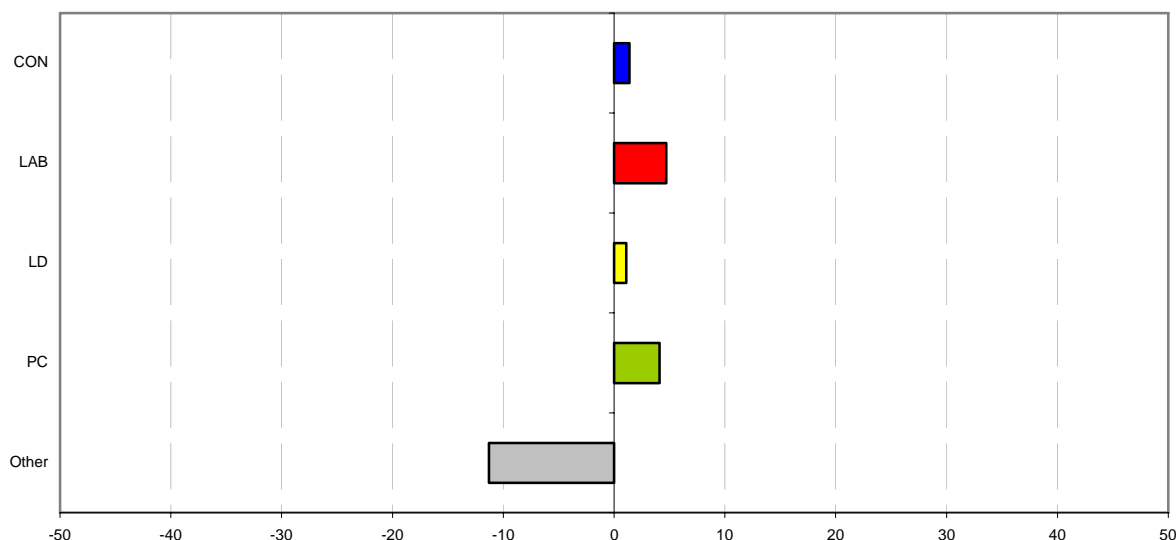


3.2 Changes in Percentage Share of the Vote

All four major parties in Wales made small gains in the percentage share of the vote since the 2005 general election. There was an 11.3 percentage point decrease in the share of the vote won by 'other' parties. Changes in the percentage share of votes were much smaller than those observed in the Assembly by-election, as Peter Law had contested the seat as an independent candidate at the 2005 General Election.



Figure 4. Changes in the Percentage Share of the Vote since the 2005 Parliamentary Election by Political Party



Labour won the 1997 and 2001 General elections in Blaenau Gwent, collecting over 70% of the total vote on both occasions. Peter Law, standing as an independent candidate, overturned Labour's majority in the 2005 General election, winning 58% of the vote.

Table 5. Percentage share of the vote at Parliamentary Elections by Political Party

Party	% Share of the vote				Change in % share in 2006 since:		
	1997	2001	2005	2006	1997	2001	2005
CON	6.6	7.5	2.3	3.7	-2.9	-3.8	+1.4
LAB	79.5	72.0	32.3	37.0	-42.5	-35.0	+4.7
LD	8.7	9.3	4.3	5.4	-3.3	-3.9	+1.2
PC	5.2	11.2	2.4	6.5	+1.3	-4.7	+4.1
Other	-	-	58.7	47.4	+47.4	+47.4	-11.3

3.3 Electorate and Turnout

Turnout in the Parliamentary by-election was 51.7%, down 14.4 percentage points on the 2005 election. The highest turnout in Blaenau Gwent in recent years (72.3%) was recorded in the 1997 General election.

Table 6. Electorate and Turnout at Parliamentary Elections in Blaenau Gwent since 1997

Blaenau Gwent	1997	2001	2005	2006
Total electorate	54,815	53,776	53,301	52,512
Percentage turnout	72.3	59.0	66.1	51.7

Annex A Sources and Abbreviations

Sources of data

The results of the National Assembly for Wales and the Parliamentary by-election were provided by the Electoral Returning Officer of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Results of elections held in the UK since 2001 are available online on the website of the Electoral Commission: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/election-data/>








Historical data are official election results, as published in previous papers by the Members' Research Service.

Electorate

Electorate figures are different for the Assembly and Parliamentary by-elections. This is because citizens of EU Countries other than the UK or Irish Republic (and Cyprus or Malta, which are Commonwealth countries as well as EU countries) cannot vote in Westminster Parliamentary elections, although they can register to vote at local government, devolved legislature and European Parliament elections.

Party codes and colours

Each registered party has a designated short code and colour detailed in the table below. In some of the historical aggregations, parties other than Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Plaid Cymru are combined in grey and classed as other.

Code		Party
CON		Conservative
Green		Green
IND		Independent
LAB		Labour
LD		Liberal Democrat
MRLP		Monster Raving Loony Party
PC		Plaid Cymru

Turnout

Turnouts are calculated as valid votes cast as a percentage of the electorate. Spoilt ballots are not included in the calculations.