Our field experiment was conducted over the period Oct 2014 - May 2015 with parish and town councils from five Counties in the South, South East and Midlands area of England (Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, Northamptonshire, and Leicestershire and Rutland). We worked in collaboration with the chief executives of the five County Associations of Local Councils in these areas who provided us with lists and contact details for their councils as well as advice on the overall design of the experiment. The main experiment included 977 councils that held elections on May 7th 2015, the same day as the UK general election. Parish and town council clerks from these councils were randomly allocated to either a treatment or a control condition and the experiment was implemented in October 2014. We then compared a variety of outcome measures relating to practices for recruiting parish councillors, the diversity and number of candidates recruited, and the number of contested elections for our treatment and control conditions. The outcome data were collected in May-October 2015 following the elections. Our unit of randomisation was parish and town council clerks. These are the paid bureaucrats who are responsible for the administration of their council. The rows in our dataset represent parish councils (some clerks work across more than one parish).

Outcome data were obtained from a variety of sources. The electoral data (i.e. numbers of candidates, seats and the number of contested elections held) were obtained from official published sources (*Notices of Elections*, *Statements of Persons Nominated,* and official election results which were obtained from the relevant District or Borough Councils). Data related to recruitment practices of parish councils were obtained via a survey sent to parish council clerks. Data on the content of parish council meetings were obtained via a search of parish councils’ minutes held online.