

Carmarthenshire County Council Councillor's Annual Report 2015-2016

This annual report outlines the activities of the Councillor named below for the period May 2015 to May 2016 (the Council's Municipal Year). It is provided for the information of constituents, and for no other purpose. The views expressed in the report are those of the Councillor and do not necessarily reflect the views of Carmarthenshire County Council.

Councillor: Pam Palmer	Electoral Division: Abergwili
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Section 1: Role & Responsibilities		
Council Committees	Attendance Record	
	Number	Attended
County Council	14	14
Executive Board	15	14
Appointments Committee A – Directors (Vice-Chair)	2	2
Appointments Committee B – Heads of Service (Chair)	5	3
Cross-Party Constitutional Review Working Group	2	2
Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee		3*
Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee		3*
*Attended as observer		

Section 2: Constituency Activities
<p>The purpose of this report is to keep you informed of some of the issues I have dealt with on your behalf during 2015/16. A high percentage of my work involves helping residents to sort out their personal problems and concerns and as such will not form part of this report. I have pursued local issues, consulted with residents involved and sought satisfactory outcomes.</p> <p>I have had the privilege of representing the Abergwili Ward for the past 29 years. Formerly as your district councillor and for the past 20 years as your County Councillor. During this time I have worked diligently to sort out problems in the area and improve services and facilities in the ward. I will respond to problems in my "patch" at a moment's notice should an urgent problem arise, and I am on call 24/7 to give advice or to help with residents' concerns. When I was first elected I tried holding regular publicised surgeries but no one attended. People obviously preferred to contact me personally, usually by phone and latterly by email. As a result of this, I realised the way to deal with problems was to visit residents in their own homes to see the problem and deal with it. The internet is also beginning to play an ever increasing part in getting information back to my residents in a more timely manner. I will continue to visit residents to see their problems at first hand should they so wish. This way of dealing with residents' concern has worked well for the past 29 years and although some members hold successful surgeries I am convinced that the more personal approach is appreciated by the residents of my ward. I am also on</p>

hand to help (with the Local Member's consent) with any problems affecting any Carmarthenshire resident.

I have continued with my campaign of helping residents to claim their full entitlement of welfare benefits. Over the past few years I have run a personal campaign in my ward to ensure residents claim benefits - especially Attendance Allowance. It is surprising how many people are unaware of benefits for which they may be eligible and they are only too willing to apply for these when I explain they may well be successful. I am pleased to report that in the majority of cases they have been successful and the extra money they receive has been a welcome addition to their weekly income. This has improved the well being, not only of the individuals, but also the local businesses. With a little more money, residents spend their cash locally thereby increasing the viability of local businesses.

I can assure you of my continued commitment to represent the Abergwili ward and its residents to the best of my ability hopefully for the benefit of all.

Planning:

Planning continues to be an issue within the area. I have liaised with both residents and Community Councils and Councillors on planning applications in their respective areas and have supported their views throughout the year.

During this year there were many concerns about the cumulative visual impact of small wind turbine developments within the area. Many residents were very unhappy about the proliferation of these wind turbines, and I supported the local community with their objections. I arranged a public meeting and residents were given the opportunity of voicing their opinions to this development.

I have been heavily involved with the issue of the connectivity route from the Wind Farm in Llanllwni down to the substation in Llandyfeilog. I represented the area at many meetings with Western Power regarding this route which was determined after many issues were taken into account. Following the publication of the preferred route they then held a public exhibition. Their preference is to loosely follow the route of the A485, circumnavigating the village of Peniel. I ensured that affected residents were given the information regarding the consultation so that they could give their own views to inform the consultation process. I took issue with Western Power that, whilst the area of Peniel was arguably the most affected, the meeting and exhibition did not take place in Peniel. As a result of my concerns, the last consultation meeting was held at the Community Hall in Peniel and had a very large attendance. The meeting was due to conclude at 8.00pm but as so many people attended, it did not finish until well past 9.00pm. There is unanimous public support for all cabling to be underground. I have strongly campaigned for all cables to be underground for the whole length of the connectivity line through area and especially so in sensitive areas such as Abergwili and Pontarsais since the start of the planning process. The decision announced many months ago was that the area around Abergwili would be undergrounded but that, other than that area, all connectivity lines would be overhead. The rationale for undergrounding around Abergwili was the proximity of the helicopter landing field and the obvious safety issues. I continue to support undergrounding of cables throughout the area and have taken every opportunity to campaign for all underground cabling.

I responded to the consultation on the traffic issues involved with the transport of large turbine parts on very large slow moving lorries and the impact this will have on the traffic flows on the A485. I am anticipating that cognizance will be taken of my comments to help ensure as little traffic delays as possible on a main road artery up to North Wales.

Street Scene:

One of the real issues of concern to all residents is speeding and general road safety issues of traffic travelling through the area. There are very real concerns both in Abergwili High Street, Abergwili by pass and the A485. I am in regular dialogue with both Dyfed Powys Police and the County's Highway Department regarding this issue. The active speed signs in Peniel have helped reduce the vehicle speed going through the village but recently there has been increase in the number of drivers speeding through the village. I have asked for the Police to visit the area to enforce the speed restrictions.

There have been many complaints about the condition of the roads in the locality and whilst some have been patched, others have been resurfaced. Some issues are outside the control of the County Council, instead being the responsibility of the Trunk Road Agency. I ensure that all issues relating to trunk roads are raised immediately with the responsible agency and follow up complaints to ensure they are not forgotten.

There have been several instances of unsafe road surfaces due to slurry on roads whilst farmers' are muck spreading. All instances where I have been involved have resulted in roads being swept and washed down. Slippery roads due to muck is not only annoying to residents who have to drive through and get their cars plastered with muck but is also a road traffic hazard and needs to be reported as soon as possible.

The non-collection of rubbish, which has been a problem in the past, has decreased significantly, and I hope problems will not reoccur when collection days change in October. All residents will be notified of the change of dates of their rubbish collection, and I am confident that the change-over will occur without too many problems. If however there is a problem please contact me.

I have arranged for bunkers to be put in collection places used by groups of rural properties. These are used by residents and help stop the birds and foxes ripping open bags and strewing rubbish all over the area.

There have been many complaints about dog fouling in the area. This has been reported and the relevant location given but unfortunately despite quick action by our enforcement team to date no-one has been fined for not cleaning up after their dog in my ward. However, enforcement teams continue to be very proactive and should more problems arise, please inform me immediately.

Transportation:

I have tried to ensure that the cut in transport funding has had a minimum effect on the bus service on the A485. This is an important commuter route and it is imperative that despite the cut in public transport grant, this route is maintained.

The new bus shelter and bus pull-in at Peniel have been a great success, but although there is plenty of room it is not unusual to see most of the schoolchildren standing outside in the pouring rain without their coats on!!!

Speed activated signs are now in place and are having an effect on traffic, however, there is still excessive speed on the A485 and this route is being regularly monitored by the Speed Camera Partnership and Police.

Education & Children:

I have always supported the events and activities of both Abergwili and Peniel Schools and have helped them on a financial level. I am always prepared to donate raffle prizes etc. At present I am working with a group applying for Heritage Lottery Funding to restore the Abergwili Museum garden and surrounding woodland. This is a very important destination for visitors and locals alike. The Museum is also an important educational facility for local schools and especially for Abergwili School. The School's use of the facility will play a vital part in the grant bid process. I am available and at the end of the telephone when either of the schools in my area need help, advice or support.

Environmental Health & Public Protection:

Fly tipping is an increasing problem and it is important to get it sorted and moved as soon as possible before it becomes recognised as an easy place to dump rubbish. I ensure that Enforcement Officers are aware of the problem immediately and most of the time they will visit within 24 hours to get it sorted out.

I am speaking to Officers regarding designating "No Cold Calling Areas" throughout the ward and hope that some areas will get this designation during the year.

Housing:

Renovation of Council houses is proceeding as per the published schedule in consultation with the plan approved by the Tenants Association, as part of the Carmarthenshire Home Standard Scheme. All the tenants I have spoken with are very pleased with the renovation works carried out.

Executive Boars Activities:

As well as my responsibilities as a local county member, I am also a member of the Council's Executive Board. I am Leader of the Independent Group and also one of two Deputy Leaders of Council. I have specific responsibility for the following:

Council Business Manager; Community Champion; Police Liaison; Community Safety; Community Planning; Anti-Poverty Champion; Sustainability; Bio-diversity and Youth Ambassador. I am also the lead member for the re-settlement of the Syrian refugees that the Council has unanimously agreed to welcome to our County.

Whilst my Executive Board responsibilities keep me busy I can assure you that issues within my "patch" always take priority and are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

Section 3: School Governing Bodies

<i>List of School Governing Bodies</i>	<i>Attendance Record</i>
Richmond Park CP School	I attend meetings when possible but I am always on call, at short notice, to visit and deal with any problems when needed

Section 4: Outside Body Representation	
<i>List of outside bodies</i>	<i>Attendance Record</i>
Chair Person of the Community Safety Partnership	04.06.15; 30.09.15; 04.03.15
Welsh Local Government Association – Council	28.11.15, 27.02.16
WLGA Rural Forum	06.06.15; Apology tendered for meeting on 20.03.16

Section 5: Other Activities and Issues
<p>Local Councillor Surgeries I do not hold surgeries preferring instead to visit residents in their own homes to discuss their personal issues.</p> <p>Llanllawddog Community Council I regularly attend meetings of the Llanllawddog Community Council, of which I am a member and also attend meetings of Abergwili Community Council. I present reports to both councils on matters relating to the County Council.</p> <p>I visit both the Abergwili Youth Club and the Recreation Club when they need my help or support.</p> <p>I am chairperson of the Peniel Community Association and support them in all their activities.</p> <p>I advise voluntary groups and businesses on the availability of grant aid and help in applications for same.</p>

Signed by Councillor: Pam Palmer	Date: 16/08/16
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