

# ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

## COUNCILLOR PAM PALMER

### ABERGWILI WARD

*Dear Resident*

*The purpose of this report is to keep you informed of some of the issues I have dealt with on your behalf during 2014/15. 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 and sought satisfactory outcomes.*



## Local Member Activities

I have had the privilege of representing the Abergwili Ward for the past 28 years, formerly as your district councillor and for the past 19 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. 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. This has worked well for the past 28 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 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.

<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Main Issues</b>
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. As a result of ensuring affected residents were aware of the Alternative Sites Proposals for the area, the consultation responses were one of the highest in the county. The information I distributed meant that everyone had an opportunity to make their comments directly to the Welsh Government's Appointed Planning Inspector. As a result, Abergwili residents returned one of the highest responses. I attended a meeting with the Planning Inspector earlier in 2014 and was given the opportunity to voice the area's concerns regarding Alternative Sites. I am pleased to report that the Independent Planning Inspector took note of the objections contained within the responses and in most cases determined accordingly, by not approving those alternative sites, much to the relief of residents.

	<p>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 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. The decision was announced a few months ago, that 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.</p>
Street Scene	<p>One of the real issues of concern to all residents is speeding and general road safety issues of traffic travelling through the area. I am pleased to report that the active speed signs in Peniel are working well and the speed through the village has decreased. I am now trying to get more of these signs along the A485, especially through Rhydargaeau. I liaise with Dyfed Powys Police and our own County Council Road Safety Team on a very regular basis. A number of issues have been referred to the Speed Limit Working Group and both the County and Police are looking at the most efficient method to reduce traffic speeds thereby increasing road safety.</p> <p>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.</p>

	<p>Non collection of rubbish has been an issue in the past but at present I am not aware of any new non collections and all rubbish should now be collected on the due day. 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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Transportation	<p>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.</p> <p>The new bus shelter and bus pull at Peniel have been a great success and have helped improve road safety issues around the school buses during term time. 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.</p>
Education & Children	<p>I have always supported the events and activities of both Abergwili and Peniel Schools and donate financial contributions as well as supporting them wherever and whenever I can. 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.</p>

Environmental Health and Public Protection	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Housing	<p>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.</p>

### ***Executive Board 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.

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.

### ***Membership of School Governing Bodies***

<b><i>School Governing Body</i></b>	<b><i>Meetings attended</i></b>
<i>Peniel Community School</i>	<i>19.04.14 and 11.04.14</i>
<i>Richmond Park CP School</i>	<i>I attend meetings when possible but I am always on call, at short notice, to visit and deal with any problems when needed</i>

### **Membership of Outside Bodies 2014/15 (representing the Council)**

<b>Outside Body</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>
<i>Carmarthenshire Citizens Advice Bureau – Management Board</i>	<i>No longer a member on this body</i>
<i>Chair Person of the Community Safety Partnership</i>	<i>04.06.14, 30.09, 04.03.15</i>
<i>Welsh Local Government Association – Council</i>	<i>19.04.14, 20.04.14, 28.11.14, 27.02.15</i>
<i>WLGA Rural Forum</i>	<i>06.06.14 – Apology tendered for meeting on 20.03.15</i>
<i>Catch Up Llanelli</i>	

### **Other activities in connection with my duties as a County Councillor**

#### **Local Councillor Surgeries**

I do not hold surgeries preferring instead to visit residents in their own homes to discuss their personal issues.

#### **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.

I visit both the Abergwili Youth Club and the Recreation Club when they need my help or support.

I am chairperson of the Peniel Community Association and support them in all their activities.

I advise voluntary groups and businesses on the availability of grant aid and help in applications for same.

***If there are any issues that are causing you concern then please do not hesitate to contact me:***

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<i>Telephone</i>	01267 253429
<i>E.Mail</i>	<a href="mailto:PAPalmer@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">PAPalmer@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>

**RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AT FORMAL MEETINGS OF CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND ITS COMMITTEES 2014/15**

Meetings	Council	Executive Board	EBM Communities	Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee	Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee	Appointments Committee A Directors	Appointments Committee B Heads of Services	Planning Committee	Total number of meetings	
Actual No held	13	12	2	1	1	3	4	1	37	
COUNCILLOR	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	NUMBER OF MEETINGS ATTENDED	PERCENTAGE ATTENDANCE
Palmer PA	13	11	2	1	1	3	4	1	36	97%

**ATTENDED AS AN OBSERVER**

**ATTENDED AS A LOCAL MEMBER**