

COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANNUAL REPORTING TEMPLATE

NAME: David W. H. Jones

WARD: Crucorney

ELECTORATE:

REPORTING YEAR : CURRENT YEAR OF ADMINISTRATION 2013/14

1) Appointment to Outside Bodies

I have again been a member of the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education for the year. The committee has dealt with several issues including the Estyn reports received for some of the Monmouthshire Junior Schools.

I am a member of the Monmouthshire Farm School Trust and at the first meeting for the year I was again elected as Chairman. The trust meets to promote agriculturally based courses at colleges and universities and with its modest funds supports Monmouthshire students, financially, to pursue their studies. It is a particularly pleasant experience to allocate money to Monmouthshire students to help them with their studies.

2) Appointments as a School Governor

I serve as a governor at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and at Llanfihangel Crucorney Primary School. As a Welsh speaker I feel that I can help support Welsh medium education in the area (a few pupils from the Crucorney Ward attend the school). As a governor at the Llanfihangel Crucorney School I am passionate about supporting the only school within the ward that I represent.

The role of a governor at both schools has involved supporting the head teacher, staff and, with their help, the pupils to achieve their full potential. Much time has inevitably been spent working on the budget and the achievement of pupils. The academic success of pupils is very important and a pleasure to be aware of. It is also very rewarding to see pupils show their talent during services or concerts as it helps them gain confidence and prepare for the future.

3) Select Committee

I am a member of two Select Committees:-
Strong Communities and Children and Young People

As a member of both committees there has been a duty to scrutinise Cabinet decisions and the budget at the end of each quarter of the year. The purpose of Select Committees is to challenge and scrutinise the decisions of the Cabinet so that the Council may be as sure as possible that the best decisions are being taken and that the public is being well-represented.

As a member of the Strong Communities Select Committee the work program has included The Pollinator Policy which is a modified scheme where some

mowing of hedgerows and roadside verges is delayed in order to encourage plants to flower and pollinator animals to acquire food. This in turn should help both the plant and animal. Views differ depending on position but the issue of health and safety has been the source of most concern.

Amongst other issues to be scrutinised by the Strong Communities Select Committee was the budget and the need to reduce spending so every service area had been asked to put forward ideas to save money by spending less. This resulted in much discussion about virtually every service offered by Monmouthshire County Council.

As a member of the Children and Young People Select Committee the work load has involved the monitoring of the Recovery Plan following the Estyn inspection that took place during the previous year. The County is on its way to securing the improvement that all desire but the timescale does not match the expectation due to the rigour of the demands of the inspectorate. As part of this process the CYP Select Committee carried out an activity for the first time when the head teachers of the four comprehensive schools were invited to explain how the individual schools are responding to the demands of Estyn.

Constituency Matters

The year in the Crucorney Ward has been an interesting one and as elsewhere the weather has proved to be a factor that has influenced many issues.

The roads in the area have suffered during the floods and much time and effort has been spent in receiving details, reporting to the County's Highways Department and visiting the area where the concern exists. This matter has proved frustrating to all concerned as it inevitably takes much time to get repairs and schemes completed. It is also fair to report that the finances must be in place for projects to be undertaken. However it should be stressed that every effort will be made to ensure that the Crucorney ward will receive the attention that it deserves and the expenditure needed to maintain the Council facilities in the area. (Patience in this domain seems to be a prerequisite in maintaining an even keel to mental health). Strangely enough this paragraph equally applies to the year as last year but at least some of the issues have been rectified but new ones have arisen with the closure of the B4347 causing the most concern.

There have also been a number of issues relating to planning.

The application for a Solar Farm caused much debate with many residents presenting their views. From the representations received there were about twice as many people against this application than in favour. The current situation is that the applicants are appealing against the decision of the Planning Committee to refuse the application.

I have been consulted and obtained information re Affordable Housing for members of the Crucorney Ward. Some local applicants have been allocated homes locally.

4) Membership of other committees

I am a member of the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee and the Traffic sub-committee. The Area Committee is concerned with issues relating to the area in

and around Abergavenny and met every other month to address local issues. The decision to meet quarterly was taken, by the Council, during the year. One of the main concerns has been to coordinate the development of the "Whole Plan" to ensure that the town of Abergavenny is developed in a way that responds to need and develops the facilities that will make the town a vibrant place for locals to live, work and to spend their leisure time (including shopping). It is also during this year that the Abergavenny Livestock Market closed in the town and relocated to Bryngwyn.

Amongst the issues in Rural areas have been highways and the issue of speeding vehicles along them.

5) Training and Development

As a new member in May 2012 I attended as many training sessions as I could in order to prepare me for the roll and to better represent the Crucorney Ward.

During this year there were few courses to attend but I have attended some seminars to discuss issues and to improve my understanding

I have attended several School Governor training sessions including:-

School Budgeting

Performance Management

Being a Chair of the Governing Body

Safeguarding Pupils

6) Additional Comments

The year started with the opening of the new County Hall at Usk. This has certainly proved a benefit as most meetings are held there and many officers are based there too. This is especially helpful when issues need to be discussed it can happen face to face rather than communication by email!

It would be very easy to say that I have developed a lot during the year but this is for somebody else to assess but I do feel that I have learnt a lot in terms of the role, and in terms of how to address an issue and who to contact in order to achieve a solution to a problem.

I look forward with a great deal of optimism and greater confidence to serve as a County Councillor to serve the residents of the Crucorney ward during the coming year and hope to achieve results that will improve the quality of life for the residents that I am so privileged to represent.