

# Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012 / 2013



Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council operates under executive arrangements. Responsibility for the authority's functions is overseen by a Leader and Cabinet made up of Councillors from the party or group with the most members. The allocation of Chair and Vice Chair posts is also based by law on the number of seats each party or group has, and this number again will have influence on the appointment of Councillors to outside bodies.

Opinions, advice, conclusions and other information in this report shall be understood as neither given nor endorsed by the authority or on its behalf. It is a report by the Councillor referred to below regarding their key activities over the period from the day they signed their Declaration of Office in 2012 up to and including 14<sup>th</sup> May 2013. It is provided for the information of constituents and for no other purpose.

<b>Councillor:</b>	<b>GARETH LEWIS</b>
<b>Political Party:</b>	<b>LABOUR</b>
<b>Electoral Division:</b>	<b>PLYMOUTH</b>

## Committee Membership, Roles and Attendance

*This section relates to membership as an elected member, not in a personal capacity. Democratic Services has provided information on committee membership and attendance for Council Committees. However, where Councillors are a member of any other committees, they have provided details from their own records.*

### **Council Committees: 83% Attendance**

- Full Council
- Appeals Committee
- Audit Committee
- Democratic Services Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Planning, Regulatory and Licensing Committee
- Planning and Regulatory Fact Finding Visits
- Rights of Way
- Scrutiny: Schools

### **External Committees and Outside Bodies:**

- Central South Consortium Joint Education Service
- Corporate Parenting Forum
- Ffos-Y-Fran Site Liaison Committee
- Welsh Purchasing Consortium

### **Champion:**

- Children and Young Persons Champion

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## My Work as a Local Councillor

*Under this heading, Councillors have identified the work undertaken on behalf of local constituents. Reference has also been made to any major initiatives or special projects they have been associated with on behalf of MTCBC, which have a direct impact on local constituents.*

- I have held, and continue to hold, constituency advice surgeries at various times and locations within the Plymouth Ward.
  - Attended local PACT meetings and regularly addressed any complaints or queries in a timely manner.
  - Used 'Street Surgery's' to canvass opinion and concerns of local residents.
  - I have supported individuals who have contacted me on a wide range of issues. These can include concerns about litter, dog fouling, un-gritted roads and pot holes to anti-social behaviour, road traffic problems, planning issues and school placements.
  - I received a number of telephone calls and emails from residents seeking advice and assistance on a range of personal issues, always being prepared to listen to their concerns and offer appropriate support.
  - Made a number of home visits to constituents in supporting their concerns and offering guidance.
  - Made representations to our Welsh Assembly member on behalf of constituents.
  - I have used social media, such as Twitter and Facebook to contact constituents. I have also used social media to regularly keep constituents up to date on local issues/events and to encourage topical debate.
  - Attended a variety of public meetings on issues ranging from planning concerns to environmental health.
  - Attended meetings of local community groups. These include Friends of Saron, Troedyrhiw Willows Centre, Hills Plymouth Cricket Club and Abercanaid Football Club.
  - Secured funding for a number of local community groups.
  - Promoted and supported local businesses.
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## Learning and Development

*In the Learning and Development section, Councillors have demonstrated instances where they have taken the opportunity for personal development by taking part in initiatives and events aimed at improving their understanding and awareness.*

As well as numerous pre-Council Presentations I have also attended scrutiny training and School Governor training. Development and training has also been received on planning matters.

I have also attended a Local Government Association leadership course, held over three weekends.

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## Other Activities and Issues

*Under this heading, Councillors have provided information on themselves to demonstrate the 'personal' aspect of their role as a local Councillor which they believe would be of interest to constituents.*

I am immensely proud to be one of the three Councillors to represent the three villages of Troedyrhiw, Pentrebach and Abercanaid, elected since May 2012. Having been brought-up and educated within the ward, I am passionate about the best interests of the Plymouth Electoral Division and take an active daily interest in the up keep of the ward and the welfare of its residents.

Plymouth Ward Councillor's - Councillor Harvey Jones, Councillor Brent Carter and myself work as a team, whilst we pick up our own casework, and may lead on separate issues, the majority of the work done in the ward is driven by the three of us.

I regularly deal with a variety of different problems and issues from local residents. The most recurring problem raised by residents is traffic related. Many streets within the ward date back to Victorian times and were therefore not built to accommodate motor vehicles. I regularly consult and liaise with constituents on this issue, while also working with the local Police Community Support Officer in managing the problem.

*Cont'd...*

### ***Other Activities and Issues Cont'd...***

With regard to other traffic related issues, I have received several complaints about speeding along the road adjacent to Brynhyfred Villas in Troedyrhiw and into the entrance of Abercanaid. I have requested that Council Officers monitor this situation and report back to me on a regular basis.

Some of the other major issues within the ward include fly-tipping, which has been a severe and on-going problem in some areas of the ward. I am working with Council officers, the Police and enforcement officers as well as the community to increase enforcement against offenders and to improve the situation.

I have also worked in partnership with external organisations such as Welsh Government, South Wales Trunk Road Agency, Communities First, Welsh Water and Merthyr Valley Homes when assisting constituents. Such issues can range from planning concerns and road safety to the maintenance of social housing.

The most humbling experience of the last twelve months was visiting a homeless shelter at High Street Chapel in Merthyr. The dedication of the volunteers together with the dignity and appreciation of the homeless was an inspiration. Helping the vulnerable and the less fortunate is the foundation of my political philosophy and my experience of the shelter further instilled my opinion that more needs to be done to support the less well-off.

Several community events have taken place in Plymouth Ward over the last twelve months. Some of my favourites include a volunteer day, to clean up Saron Graveyard in Troedyrhiw. The day was a huge success, a cold but bright Saturday in October, saw an excellent contribution from several volunteers, improving the condition of the graveyard with a huge community spirit. Other community highlights include the Carnival Day to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, where many children were entertained with a host of activities and amusements and the annual Christmas dinner for the older residents of Pentrebach, Abercanaid and Troedyrhiw, which was supported by a Biffa community grant.

I have been successful in obtaining funding for many community groups over the last twelve months. Organisations that have benefitted include Abercanaid Football Club, Hills Plymouth Cricket Club and Troedyrhiw Bowls Club.

I believe community events are integral to the promotion of the Plymouth ward and its residents, as a local Councillor I am always looking to promote community events and support community groups.

I thank all the people of Plymouth Ward in providing me with the opportunity to represent them over the last twelve months. It is a privilege and I look forward to continue standing up for my constituents and their local community in the coming years.

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**Councillor Gareth Lewis**  
**Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013**