

ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 2015 - MAY 2016



Councillor Keith Reynolds

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ELECTORAL WARD: Aberbargoed

PARTY: Labour

PROFILE:

Leader of Council

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Council

Cabinet

Appointments Committee (Chief Officer Related Posts/Heads of Service)

SUBCOMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES/PANELS

Bargoed Town Centre Management Group

Joint Consultative Committee

NNDR Committee

OUTSIDE BODIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Welsh Local Government Association

Consortium of Local Authorities Wales (CLAW)

Local Government Association

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

Member of the Governing Body of Aberbargoed Primary School

ATTENDANCE

From May 2015 to May 2016 my attendance at Council meetings was as follows:

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>No. Attended</u>	<u>No. Held</u>
Bargoed Town Centre Management Group	2	3
Cabinet	19	21
Council	12	12
Joint Consultative Committee	4	4

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

I undertook the following training and development seminars and courses: -

Public Speaking and Presenting to and Audience/Webcasting
New Thinking in Performance Management
Medium Term Financial Plan (Seminar x 3)
Gypsy and Travellers and the Housing Act
Effective Communication and the Changing Digital Landscape
Health and Wellbeing Act (Seminar)

LEADER OF COUNCIL

Over the last 12 months Caerphilly has faced a tough financial challenge having to make further savings. Protecting services was the number one priority we set when we signed up to our budget strategy and 90% of the savings we had to make came from efficiencies in administration with less than 10% from proposals that affected front line services.

Despite continued austerity measures, customer satisfaction remained high, 78% of Caerphilly Residents in response to our biennial Household Survey stated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the services we provided.

This was a special year in our 21st Century School buildings programme. November 2015 saw the official opening of the £20M development a Y Gwindy, which was a unique combination of refurbishment and new build for a modernised Welsh Medium Primary and Secondary School. We also started work on the new Islwyn High School at Oakdale which will provide a much improved replacement for Oakdale and Pontllanfraith Comprehension Schools. Tendering for works for a new primary school in Rhymney to replace the Pontlottyn and Abertysswg Primary Schools also commenced.

In March 2016 the Council agreed to invest more than £4M over the next 3 years on school improvements across a large number of our schools as part of the authority's Education Capital Programme.

Pupil Attainment levels continued to improve in schools across the area with a GCSE pass rate at grades A* to G of 98.6% and an A Levels pass rate of 97.1%.

The investment in our Housing Stock to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2020 continued in 2015/16 with £25M spent on the programme and over 1500 homes benefitting.

A New Anti Poverty Strategy was launched last year which provided the focus for our anti-poverty initiatives. Housing Services have visit over 2000 tenants and have helped to secure an additional £494,000 in benefits. A special project at Lansbury Park also commenced dedicated to employment, health, education, family support, housing and environmental projects in the area.

Job creation and regenerations was another priority last year and I worked closely with the Leaders of nine other Councils to secure the £1.2 billion City Deal for this area.

Over the past year we continued to support local business and assisted 25 new business start-ups and provided grant aid to support the creation of 81 new jobs and safeguarded 334 existing jobs. Local Town Centres continued to receive investment with works completed in Newbridge and Bargoed. Improvements were completed at Llancaiach Fawr which hosted a very successful Urdd Eisteddfod last year.

March 2016 saw the delivery of 4 new mini buses for the transportation of vulnerable clients on behalf of Social Services. Caerphilly was designated as a 'dementia friendly community' and the Winding House Museum became Wales' first 'dementia friendly museum'.

£1.2M of funding was secured for a series of transport and road projects across Caerphilly County Borough which provided safer routed in the community, road safety initiatives, traffic calming schemes and public transport improvements.

Leisure Services welcomed 1.4 million customer visits, Library Services welcomed 218,000 visitors and loaned over 134,000 items and 35,260 visitors took advantage of free computer session.

In addition the new Centre for Sporting Excellence in Ystrad Myach has hosted 20 international and 28 representative matches during the first year of its operation. We have secured partnerships with the Gwent Dragons and the Welsh Football Association. The Welsh Ladies Senior Team and Cardiff City Ladies Team are now using the centre and we are working closely with Coleg-y-Cymoedd, and the Welsh Football Association supporting the Women's youth Team in scholarships with the College.

Caerphilly was also one of the first Welsh authorities to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis, taking in two young families who were fleeing the Syrian war zone.

CONSTITUENCY ACTIVITY

I do not hold surgeries my constituents prefer to contact me by telephone and email.

I attended quarterly meetings with the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

The Skate Park for the young people of the area opened in June 2015 having worked to secure funding for the project I was very proud to see it being well used and running well.

I continued to provide advice and support to residents and tenants on the Welfare Reform Act and Welsh Housing Quality Standards refurbishment programme.

I made referrals on behalf of residents to highways and environment services, including traffic calming measure such as introducing road marking to slow traffic entering the village.