

ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 2016 - MAY 2017



Councillor James Pritchard

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ELECTORAL WARD: Morgan Jones

PARTY: Labour

PROFILE: Equalities Champion

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Council

Education for Life Scrutiny Committee (Vice Chair)

SUBCOMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES/PANELS

Community Council Liaison Sub-Committee

Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group

Scrutiny Leadership Group

OUTSIDE BODIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Young Persons Forum

GAVO

Equalities Champion

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

Plasyfelin Primary

ATTENDANCE

From May 2016 to May 2017 my attendance at Council meetings was as follows:

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>No. Attended</u>	<u>No. Held</u>
Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group	1	2
Community Council Liaison Sub Committee	0	2
Council	10	10
Education for Life Scrutiny Committee	6	8
Scrutiny Leadership Group	1	4

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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

Education for Life (Annual)

CONSTITUENCY ACTIVITY

Membership of Caerphilly Town Council

I was pleased to have been re – elected to Caerphilly Town Council in May 2017 and sit as the ward member for Brynccenydd, a community within the Morgan Jones Ward. As a member of Caerphilly Town Council I regularly attended meetings in 2016 / 17. I regularly raised issues affecting the community and raised concerns of local residents to positively tackle known problems. Working with colleagues on the Town Council we reviewed and approved numerous applications to assist various local schemes, clubs and organisations in the area. Most recently I've been making the case for Councillors and residents to work together to tackle local speeding problems. Setting up a local speed watch could be one way of tackling the issue and it's something I'm giving consideration on. Over the last year I've valued my membership of the Town Council immensely and would encourage anybody who's interested in local decision making to come along to the meetings so see local democracy in action.

Improving the Local Environment

I continue to work closely with Keep Wales Tidy to help improve the local environment. Most recently myself and ward colleagues have been engaged with residents to tackle the problem of dumped trolleys around the Asda superstore. Asda have now positively made changes by introducing a locking system around the perimeter of their store to contain the problem. I continue to work closely with Keep Wales Tidy, Groundwork Caerphilly and the Environmental Health Department.

Regular Surgeries

In 2012 I was elected on a pledge to hold regular surgeries in the ward. Since becoming a Councillor I've held many surgeries and will continue to do so as long as I'm Councillor. I reconvened ward surgeries in July 2017 following my re – election to the Council. Between May 2016 and May 2017 I held 11 monthly surgeries (excluding April 2017 for pre – election purposes) seeing an average of 1.5 people per surgery. Constituents have raised a number of important personal issues with me which I've addressed. If any resident would like to attend my surgery then I hold one on the first Saturday of every month between 10am – 11am at The Old Library, Nantgarw Road, Caerphilly.

Door Knocking and Leaflet / Letters

It's my policy to knock doors as often as practical. Usually I'm able to join ward colleagues, but on occasions I go around on my own. The majority of my casework is generated by speaking to people on their doorstep who would otherwise not raise the issues. On average I knock on about 200 doors per month and this enables me to knock every door in the ward in a year. In my experience, residents will usually prefer face to face contact rather than communicating via e mail or telephone. Every enquiry I take up on behalf of a resident I send them a letter for their records. Through door – knocking alone I made hundreds of enquiries on behalf of residents primarily to the Council but also to a range of agencies including the Welsh Assembly Government, Arriva Trains Wales, Natural Resources Wales and Gwent Police.

Community Organisations

I try to engage with as many community organisations I can. With the boom of social media I'm able to stay in touch with local campaigns by keeping an eye on what people are suggesting online. Between 2016 / 17 I attended several meetings of 'More shops for Caerphilly'. The group has formed to consider what practical steps can be made to improve the town centre. A number of early recommendations have been put forward by local residents and the group will be working together to try to enact positive change in the town.

Efforts to Improve Caerphilly Basin

In June 2017 I attended a Caerphilly Basin Strategy meeting with fellow Town / Community and County Councillors. My intention over the next twelve months is to work closely with the public and other elected members to improve Caerphilly with the development of a strategy we can all sign up to.

PACT Meetings / Your Voice

PACT meetings no longer exist in the Morgan Jones Ward, instead they've been replaced with 'Your Voice'. I attended some of the local meetings where local priorities were put forward. In January 2017 I also attended a meeting of local residents who were considering setting up a local community group. That meeting was also attended by the Police.

Campaigning for a Police Station

I've been actively campaigning for a Police Station in Caerphilly Town Centre for some time. At the time of writing, a new station will be open imminently. Residents on the doorstep place a high priority on seeing officers in the community and over the next twelve months I will be representing this view to the force.

Keeping in Touch with Residents

I try and keep myself as accessible as possible to the public. This year I've held public meetings to discuss local issues with residents and haven't shied away from opening myself up to answer difficult questions. In January 2017 I joined colleagues to host a meeting in opposition to a pre – application for housing on Virginia Park Golf Club. One hundred residents turned up to voice their views. There always seems to be a local issue to tackle and getting the word out is vitally important. I always keep constituents up to date with my activities by offering a weekly e – mail update to all those residents who want one. I've maintained a Facebook and twitter account providing regular updates about things going on locally. Over the next year I'd like to be using both accounts more regularly to reach more people.

Membership of Plas – y – Felin School

I enjoy being a governor of Plasyfelin School. In early 2017 I was elected vice chair of governors. The governing body are very friendly and work well together. I've been working closely with the Head Teacher and fellow governors over the last year to try and improve the school.