

ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 2018 - MAY 2019



Councillor Bob Owen

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ELECTORAL WARD: Risca West

PARTY: Independent

PROFILE: Ward Member for Risca West

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Council

Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

SUBCOMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES/PANELS

Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group

Risca Town Centre Management Group

OUTSIDE BODIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

ATTENDANCE

From May 2018 to May 2019 my attendance at Council meetings was as follows:

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>No. Attended</u>	<u>No. Held</u>
Council	6	11
Health Social Care and Wellbeing	7	8
Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal - Crumlin Arm Working Group	2	3
Risca Town Centre Management Group	1	2

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

I have undertaken the following training and development: -

Medium Term Financial Plan (Seminar)

Corporate Safeguarding Briefing (Seminar)

Holding Effective Pre-Meetings (Requested)

The Importance of Questioning Skills (Requested)

Treasury Management (Seminar)

CONSTITUENCY ACTIVITY

Now into my second year I am continuing to push Risca's cause at every opportunity.

Before I brief on the local issues, firstly I would like to put on record my sincere thanks to those officers that I have had the pleasure of dealing with in the undertaking of my duties and in handling my enquiries. And this is not to forget those officers in the background, or indeed those out in our communities delivering the services. We are still entrenched in austere times and this is impacting what we do on a daily basis. I for one realise the pressures hence this thank you.

On to my constituents, I can assure you that no stone will be left unturned in my push to better our lot in our area of the borough. With respect to the macro environment I am hopeful that my drive and ideals will benefit the borough as a whole, after all we should be as one.

Projects Update

In terms of Risca specific I am active in a number of areas, regeneration in particular but firstly, to update on what I term as our 'local identity' projects.

Unfortunately (and it is not for the want of trying) our Cuckoo still resides in down-town Pontymister. This is something that pains me as I believe it could be resolved very easily and quickly if there was a collective drive.

With respect to the community garden, last year I brought you the news of the very sad passing of a very well thought of local businessman. Terry Howell and his family were very pleased to donate the land, and I am delighted to report that this project is now live. Initially with 'free labour' from Laing O'Rourke and Highways England we have cleared the majority of the site of brush, the next stage is to level it in readiness for the building of a wall to the back. The levelling phase should happen in the not too distant, involving the Howell family, and soon after (I hope) the community.

Onto Crescent road, the replacement trees in memory of the miners are in place, furthermore, to ensure our mining heritage is never forgotten I have procured a NCB coal dram which will also eventually grace Crescent Road. This is another community supported project that I am delighted to head up. I am hopeful that we can get this in place before the end of the year (subject to council permissions).

In (eventually) bringing the Cuckoo home Pontymister must not go unrecognised and I am currently working on another further street art project, early days on that one.

Announcement

I am extremely pleased to announce the arrival of a new business into our area, William Hare Ltd, an international fabrication company of pedigree with an excellent reputation. They have clearly recognised our excellent strategic road links to the M4 corridor. Having met with the management I was shown around the (Cashmoors) site and was fully appraised of their plans, in particular their vision and clear intention to employ locally (if possible), excellent news particularly from a socio-economic viewpoint. If things go as expected (and I don't see why they shouldn't) this company will be with us for a long time to come.

Regeneration

The real nub in Risca is regeneration, why it is so slow in happening, or not happening at all?

The Mill Street development is nearing completion (and named by the community, Gardd Y Meddyg (Doctor's garden) - very apt). Suflex is ready to go (planning wise) but still vacant, something I am following up

I have some concerns with respect to regeneration which centre's around our other undeveloped sites (Ty-Darran, Bird's (private) site opposite the current Mill Street development, the Rolling Mill car park and Brooklands). This is where myself (as the local strategist) and CCBC are not aligned, and for many reasons but I will continue to try to work with officers to put forward our local views and push for our needs. I have ideas and plans around social well-being, with options for respite beds (to aid the chronic situation at the Royal Gwent hospital) and for high dependency beds which will benefit the whole borough and the wider Gwent county. Having held detailed talks with a prospective developer willing to finance, design and build this proposed project, in the unknowing of CCBC's strategy this stands still.

There is also the issue of sheltered housing and WQHS issues around both St Mary's and Britannia complex's. I have put forward a proposal on this but CCBC have not yet responded.

One further thank you - for the invaluable efforts of Moriah chapel pastors Marc and Tim for their continued drive and efforts with respect to the re-opening of the Risca Park Toilets.

Onwards and upwards