

COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANNUAL REPORTING TEMPLATE

NAME: David W. H. Jones

WARD: Crucorney

ELECTORATE:

REPORTING YEAR : CURRENT YEAR OF ADMINISTRATION 2012/13

1) Appointment to Outside Bodies

I have been a member of the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education for the year. The committee has dealt with several issues including the e 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 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.

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 Prosiect Gwyrdd (a project that has evolved during the year and will become a green way of disposing of non-recyclable waste which will have a benefit of generating electricity as a bonus. The disposal of waste has been a

focus of the committee in scrutinising the development of the Council's new waste disposal policy.

I have joined the Public Toilet Working Group and despite its flashy title the group is concerned with scrutinising the decision to dispose of some of the facilities in the County and to decide if this will prove beneficial in terms of a service and in financial terms.

Amongst other issues to be scrutinised by the Strong Communities Select Committee were:-

Charging for green waste disposal

Charging for Pest Control

Monitoring the budget after each quarter of the year

As a member of the Children and Young People Select Committee the work load has involved receiving Estyn reports on some institutions within the County including the Pupil Referral Unit and in November the County itself was inspected. The publication of the report prompted much debate and involved the committee in discussing the report itself as well as the Action Plan in response.

Other issues to be scrutinised during the year included:-

The Safeguarding Children Policy

Paying foster parents

Appointing a Chief Education Officer (whole Council)

Youth provision throughout the County

4) 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).

The campaign to improve Broadband provision in Monmouthshire and in particular the Crucorney Ward has been pursued during the year.

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

I have been consulted and obtained information re Affordable Housing for members of the Crucorney Ward

5) 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 meets every other month to address local issues.

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

6) 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. The sessions that I attended included:-

- MCC Values –the people strategy
- Member induction
- Regeneration and Culture Directorate
- The Constitution and Decision making in Monmouthshire
- The Equality Act 2010
- Planning
- Scrutiny
- Children and Young People
- Prosiect Gwyrdd
- Finance
- Licencing
- Scrutiny - Questioning Skills
- Estyn inspections
- The Monmouthshire Integrated Plan
- The WLGA Regional Induction for new County Councillors
- The Council Budget - several meetings and seminars
- Welfare Reform
- 21st Century Schools

I have attended several School Governor training sessions including:-

- Becoming a school governor
- School Budgeting
- Performance Management
- Being a Chair of the Governing Body
- Safeguarding Pupils

7) Additional Comments

As I have mentioned above this was my first year as a County Councillor in Monmouthshire. As is generally agreed it was a difficult year as the County's departments were accommodated in various locations around the County. Meetings were held in Monmouth, Abergavenny, Usk, Magor, Caldicot, Chepstow and Raglan. Officers were similarly located in various offices within these towns and as a new member knowing where to find the person needed to advance an issue was difficult. (I prefer the face to face contact to discuss an issue rather than a telephone conversation or an exchange of emails). Whilst not wishing to be

negative or in any way to criticise the provision it is already proving beneficial to have the new County Hall open with officers based in this new facility.

The year has been a unique occurrence in that the Olympic Flame started its journey through Wales by first of all visiting Monmouth where dignitaries were hosted to a reception at the Shire Hall. 2012 was also the year to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee and I was privileged to attend a commemorative service at St Nicholas' Church in Grosmont

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.