

Elected Member Annual Report - 2012/13

Councillor Hugh James

Electoral Division: Briton Ferry West

Roles and Responsibilities:

Since I was elected as a Councillor for Briton Ferry West and as you will see in my report, I am very much hands on as a Member and very involved in my community including:

Chair of Governors Llansawel Primary School
Vice Chair of Governors Cwrt Sart Community School
Member of Briton Ferry Town Council and former town Mayor
A Board Member of Neath Port Authority
Founding member of the Brunel Dock Regeneration Group

I am a member of the parish of Llansawel/Briton Ferry, Licensed by the Bishop to administer communion both in the church and the sick in the community. I am Chairman of the Llewellyn Alms Houses Trustees.

Community Activity:

During the past year I have supported my local constituents in what has been a very difficult year for many of them.

I am very involved in the Campaign to save Cwrt Sart and have seen the completion of two major projects in my ward to prevent flooding with Welsh Water and the cleaning up of a large area of contaminated land which was once the location of Briton Ferry Gas Works.

With the use of Communities First funding I oversaw the regeneration of Victoria Park and the cleaning up of James Field working with young members of the community. I was also able to receive funding to oversee the completion of the coastal path in Briton Ferry.

I am continuing to work on the regeneration of much of the docks area and to support families in my ward which is a Communities First Area with the highest deprivation of child poverty in Wales. I hold a regular surgery on a Saturday Morning and carry out street surgeries most days.

I also attend Community P.A.C.T Meetings.

Initiatives and Special Activities:

During the year as a County Borough Councillor I have been involved in these challenging times with the Spending Review of Neath and Port Talbot CBC and as Vice-Chair of Social Care, Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee I have been involved with the restructuring of residential and care homes.

I have also been involved as a Member of that committee on the preparation of the changes to the benefits system which affect many of my constituents.

During the past year I have also been a member of the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee, Planning and Licensing Committees.

Learning and Devolvement:

In the previous Civic Year I have attended a large number of seminars and training sessions on a wide cross-section of important topics including Corporate Parenting, Council Budget and changes to the benefits system.

Very recently I have used my previous media and public relation experience to assist fellow Councillors on how to write and present their Annual Reports.

Other Activities and Interests:

I am passionate about Briton Ferry and its history and hold regular talks both in the community and further afield on the subject.

I have always done what I can to help local charities and through the church I am currently supporting the work of the food bank in Neath.

I am a keen artist and regularly produce water colours which are auctioned for charities as well as being a rail and marine history enthusiast and supporter of mainline steam, especially to this area.

July 2013