

Elected Member Annual Report – 2014/15

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 this report, I am very much hands on as a Member and very involved in my community in Briton Ferry, 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/now Deputy Mayor
A Board Member of Neath Port Authority
Founding member of the Brunel Dock Regeneration Group – to restore the river and dock entrance.

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

Community Activity:

During the past year, despite being very busy as the County Borough Mayor (NPT), I have supported my local constituents in what has been a very difficult year for them, and local issues.

I am very involved in the Campaign to have a safe route and transport to the new school – Ysgol Bae Baglan, and the cleaning up of a large area of contaminated land which was once the location of Briton Ferry Gas Works, at Victoria and Regent Street.

Working with young members of the community, I was also able to receive funding to oversee the completion of parts of the coastal path in Briton Ferry and the ongoing regeneration work.

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. Although not a trustee, I support the work of the whole library and keeping sporting facilities at Hen Gwrt Barn.

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 Mayor of the Council.

Learning and Devolvment:

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.

I have used my previous media and public relation experience to assist fellow Councillors on how to write and present their Annual Reports. This was also a great asset when I was the Senior Citizen of the County Borough 2014/15.

Other Activities and Interests:

As always, and even before becoming a Member in 2004, I am passionate about Briton Ferry and its history and hold regular talks both in the community and further afield on the subject.

I will continue to help local charities and through the church I am currently supporting the work of the food bank in Neath and as Mayor I opened the very busy Port Talbot food bank.

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 2015