

CONTACT



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

Newspaper for the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil

Issue 50

July 2017



Council and housing
give reassurances
on **Page 2**
following Grenfell



merthyrtydfilCBC



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Welcome to this issue of your Contact community newspaper.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who voted for me in May's Local Elections.

I am fortunate in the sense that despite my background as a senior manager for many years, my social and personal networks are embedded in local sport and with local communities.

I am able in my day to day life, to access the views and opinions of those at the operational level and it is vitally important that in my position, I never lose touch with those hardworking individuals who deliver our much needed front-line services.

As a new administration, we recognise the support provided to us by those working within the local Council and my goal is for us to continue for the greater good of Merthyr Tydfil.

This was recently evident when the tragic circumstances in Grenfell required closer scrutiny of our own high rise and cladded buildings.

As the events unfolded, both Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council employees, Merthyr Valley Homes and elected Councillors worked together to reassure the public as to the safety of these buildings, but also to support and give further information as the days progressed.

My Independent team have been elected by thousands of people in Merthyr Tydfil and we serve those people not just at election time, but throughout the five year period.

It is my goal that every one of those Councillors, irrespective of responsibility or commitments outside of Council work are accessible 24-7, professional in their approach with their dealings with the public and ultimately, reliable and consistent of their need to update the public regularly on matters referred to them. I want my Councillors to become community advocates, listening to, responding to and acting upon the desire of the community.

We are well supported by an experienced and talented group of senior officers, led by Gareth Chapman and I relish the challenge ahead for us all together to deliver the best possible services to the people of Merthyr Tydfil.

Kevin O'Neill
Leader

Council and housing provider give reassurances following Grenfell

Tenants of Merthyr Tydfil's high-rise block have been reassured by Merthyr Valleys Homes that every step had already been taken to ensure their safety prior to the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, London.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and the housing association have nevertheless been working in partnership to allay the concerns of residents of St Tydfil's Court in Caedraw about a possible similar incident there.

Local councillors, MTCBC officers, representatives of Merthyr Valleys Homes (MVH) and the Fire and Rescue Service have been to St Tydfil's Court to engage with members of the public.

Mike Owen, Chief Executive of MVH - which owns and manages St Tydfil's Court - said: "The report that was issued following the Lakanal House fire in 2009 led us to review fire safety, and we have since carried out a lot of fire safety improvements in St Tydfil's Court.

"We have worked very closely with the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the residents and have installed a range of fire

safety measures. We have used a very different type of insulation to that used in Grenfell Tower.

"On the morning after the tragic event at Grenfell Tower, we met with colleagues from MTCBC and the Fire and Rescue Service. A team of staff from MVH, along with Watch Commander Tim Davies from South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, went to St Tydfil's Court by 10am that morning to answer questions and provide information to residents."

The day after the event, BBC Radio Wales visited St Tydfil's Court, along with an independent fire safety expert, to carry out an interview. They examined what fire safety checks and measures were in place and provided independent assurance that the measures already in the block are good practice.

St Tydfil's Court has in place:

- a sprinkler system installed in flats and communal areas
- a fire detection and alarm system which is linked to the Fire and Rescue Service
- fire doors which include intumescent seals, even on the letterboxes, to control the

spread of smoke.

- compartmentalisation of floors, which is designed to protect the escape staircase, subdivide the lobbies and further protect each individual flat
- external wall insulation cladding which has fire resisting construction
- a clear corridor policy designed to limit potential fuel sources, and the corridors painted with a specialist paint that does not burn
- a 'dry riser' for use by the fire service in addition to their hydraulic platform which can reach to the top of the block

As well as to these measures, all statutory inspections - including gas and electrics - are up to date. One of the main issues in Grenfell Tower has been the cladding on the block and the installation methods used, however, St Tydfil's Court has a very different product called Rockwool that meets a very high Euroclass safety categorisation, does not burn and only melts at 1000 degrees. The insulation at St Tydfil's Court has been bolted to the concrete and is rendered

directly over.

The fire station at Merthyr Tydfil is also a 24/7 fire station that has specialist equipment that can reach to the top floor of St Tydfil's Court.

MTCBC Leader Cllr Kevin O'Neill said: "I'm pleased that Merthyr Valleys Homes takes the health and safety of all its tenants very seriously. As well as being one of the few social housing providers to install sprinklers in its tower block, it also works very closely with the Council and our colleagues at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to make things as safe as possible.

"The Council has had an emergency planning meeting with MVH and together its officers have drawn up detailed information on the materials used on energy efficiency measures relating to other homes across the borough that have received external wall insulation under a number of recent schemes, including Arbed, Arbed 2, Warm Homes or MVH only schemes."

The detailed information sheet can be found on the MTCBC website, at link.

Prestigious national award for Gareth



MTCBC's Chief Executive has picked up a national award celebrating the achievements of inspiring leaders.

Gareth Chapman, who was instrumental in developing the

governance structure which helped secure the £1.2bn City Deal for the Cardiff City Region (CCR), was named Public Sector Director of the Year at a prestigious Cardiff ceremony.

More than 35 nominees were shortlisted in 10 different categories at the Institute of Directors (IoD) Wales Director of the Year Awards 2017, held at the SSE Swalec Stadium. Mr

Chapman will now go forward for the IoD National Awards in London in the autumn.

Qualified solicitor and Chartered Manager Gareth has held senior management posts with a number of local authorities before being appointed Merthyr Tydfil Chief Executive in 2010.

He played a significant role in securing the City Deal, the largest of its kind in the UK. Using his substantial legal experience and expertise in local authority governance, he advised 10 South East Wales county borough council leaders and nine chief executives of a proposed governance structure to be adopted to deliver the CCR Deal.

In his spare time, Gareth holds senior positions with the Gwent Police Special Constabulary and St John Ambulance.



New Councillors for 2017 - 2022

Further detailed information on each Councillor is available on the website www.merthyr.gov.uk/council

We would like to welcome your new Councillors who will be representing the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil. Please see below the Councillors representing your Electoral Division.

DOWLAIS



Councillor David Hughes
Party: Independent
☎: 07511 629290
✉: David.hughes3@merthyr.gov.uk

For many years I have been interested in becoming a Councillor. I felt that now was the right time for me to do this and for me to provide the commitment that was needed to be able to deal with local issues which would have a positive impact on the community. I want to ensure that I also achieve the aims that I set out in my manifesto. Councillor Hughes was born in Merthyr Tydfil and is married with three children.



Councillor Declan Sammon
Party: Independent
☎: 07508 604948
✉: declan.sammon@merthyr.gov.uk



Councillor Julian Amos
Party: Independent
☎: 07875 381940
✉: julian.amos@merthyr.gov.uk

I became a Councillor mainly for the satisfaction of being able to solve problems of those within my community. I also want to play a part in changing the perception of Merthyr Tydfil held by those who live outside the boundaries of the County Borough. Councillor Amos has four children and three granddaughters.



Councillor Tony Rogers
Party: Independent
☎: 01685 722588
✉: tony.rogers@merthyr.gov.uk

I wanted to become a Councillor to help others and play a part in making Merthyr Tydfil a great place to live. One of my key aims is to protect the community as much as possible from the budget cuts made by Welsh Government. Councillor Tony Rogers is married with one son.

GURNOS



Councillor Bill Smith
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 01685 373863
✉: bill.smith@merthyr.gov.uk

I have been a Gurnos Ward Councillor since 1987. I have been instrumental in negotiating many developments within the ward. In my former capacity as a Cabinet Member for Leisure Services, I played a part in the planning and delivery of the multi-million pound leisure and commercial development at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village; and as Cabinet Member for Housing, I played a fundamental part in the transfer of council housing to Merthyr Valley Homes, under the Stock Transfer Act. Cllr Smith is a widower with two children and four grandchildren.



Councillor Clive Tovey
Party: Independent
☎: 01685 722729
✉: clive.tovey@merthyr.gov.uk

I became a Councillor as having lived in Australia for 8 years and working around the UK, I wanted to settle in one place. After moving to Cefn Coed, I took an interest in local activities and so decided to stand as a Councillor. Cllr Tovey was born in Pontypool.



Councillor Lee Davies
Party: Independent
☎: 07855 533016
✉: lee.davies@merthyr.gov.uk

I became a Councillor as I really believe I can be a good advocate for Gurnos residents and will support them in any way I can. Cllr Davies was born in Aberdare and is married with three daughters



Councillor Rhonda Braithwaite
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 01685 375593
✉: rhonda.braithwaite@merthyr.gov.uk

I became a Councillor as I want to make a difference to the people and where they live. Cllr Braithwaite was born in Devon and is married with six children and seventeen grandchildren

TOWN



Councillor Andrew Barry
Party: Independent
☎: 07976644007
✉: andrew.barry@merthyr.gov.uk

I wanted to stand for Council again because I see a town that has the potential to boom and I wanted to be part of the process that would ensure that happens. Cllr Barry has lived in Merthyr Tydfil all his life and is married with two sons and one grandson.



Councillor David Jones (Chick)
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 07877 136 510
✉: david.jones@merthyr.gov.uk

The reason I became a Councillor was to improve the Services provided by the Council. This has proved challenging because of massive cuts made to our budget from the Westminster Government. Cllr Jones was born and raised in Mountain Hare, Merthyr Tydfil.



Councillor John Thomas
Party: Independent
☎: 07840 221210
✉: john.thomas@merthyr.gov.uk

I have lived in Merthyr Tydfil since birth Married have 4 children and 7 grandchildren. I wanted to stand for Council as the initial trigger was the fact that I could see our local Park going downhill fast due to the cut backs etc. Another focus for me is our Town Centre; such as anti-social behaviour and drinking around the Bus Station.



Councillor Kevin O'Neill
Party: Independent
☎: 01685 389528
✉: kevin.o'neill@merthyr.gov.uk

I stood for Council as I wanted to make a difference to my community and believe I have the skills and experience where I can make positive changes. I want to do something constructive to energise and support those other likeminded people in the community. Cllr O'Neill was born in Merthyr Tydfil and is married with two children.

PENYDARREN



Councillor Chris Davies
Party: Independent
☎: 07855 332992
✉: chris.davies@merthyr.gov.uk

I am privileged to be one of the Independent councillors representing the Penydarren Ward. I am proud to say I am a Penydarren boy and look forward to being the voice for local people on the Council.



Councillor David Isaac
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 07538 830 903
✉: david.isaac@merthyr.gov.uk

I have represented the Penydarren Electoral Division since 2012. Cllr Isaac was born in Merthyr Tydfil and is married with 2 daughters, 1 son and 2 stepsons.

passionate about my ward and helping people. I want to help provide a safer, cleaner community for our future generations to flourish. Cllr Gibbs was born in Merthyr Tydfil and is married, with two children from a previous marriage and two stepchildren.



Councillor Kevin Gibbs
Party: Independent
☎: 07920 180907
✉: kevin.gibbs@merthyr.gov.uk

I stood for Councillor as I am

PLYMOUTH



Councillor Brent Carter
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 07983 615 504
✉: brent.carter@merthyr.gov.uk

In May 2008, elected as a local councillor for the Plymouth Ward. Cllr Carter was born in Twynrobyn, Merthyr Tydfil and is married to Tania and has 3 children.



Councillor Harvey Jones
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 01685 389092
✉: harvey.jones@merthyr.gov.uk

I was first elected in 1979 to the former Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council. In 1981, I was elected to the former Mid Glamorgan County Council following local



Councillor Gareth Lewis
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 07903 249 670
✉: gareth.lewis@merthyr.gov.uk

I wanted to stand for Council to publicly serve the community where I was born, brought up and live in. Cllr Gareth Lewis was born in Merthyr Tydfil

government reorganisation in 1996. I served on the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, becoming the new Council Leader in September 2002, a position I held until May 2008. I was re-elected to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in May 2012. Cllr Jones was born in Merthyr Tydfil and has three daughters, seven grand-children and two great grand-children.



PARK



Councillor Chris Barry
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 01685 370078
✉: chris.barry@merthyr.gov.uk

I stood for Councillor as I felt I had skills, enthusiasm and commitment to offer. I Wanted to contribute rather than be one of those criticising from the side-lines. Cllr Barry was born in Port Talbot and is married with one daughter, two step daughters, one stepson and two grandchildren.



Councillor Clive Jones
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 01685 371538
✉: clive.jones@merthyr.gov.uk

I stood for Councillor to be able to serve the public in the County Borough that I grew up in. Cllr Jones is married with one daughter, son-in-law and a granddaughter.



Councillor Tanya Skinner
Party: Independent
☎: 07961 784822
✉: tanya.skinner@merthyr.gov.uk
Born in Cardiff

I stood as a local Councillor to become more involved with my community. I also feel there is a lack of young female representation in the council and I hope my success will inspire more women to get involved in local politics in the future. Cllr Skinner was born in Cardiff.

VAYNOR



Councillor Howard Barrett
Party: Independent
☎: 01685 721697
✉: howard.barrett@merthyr.gov.uk
Born in Trefechan

I have one son and three grandchildren. I stand as a Councillor to deal with local issues



Councillor Lisa Mytton
Party: Independent
☎: 01685 387099
✉: lisa.mytton@merthyr.gov.uk
Born in Aberdare

One son and one daughter. I stand as a local Councillor to help people have a voice, support residents and local groups, improve the area we live in.

TREHARRIS



Councillor Ernie Galsworthy
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 01443 412961
✉: ernie.galsworthy@merthyr.gov.uk
Born in Merthyr Tydfil

Married have two children and one grandson. I stood as a Councillor as I became involved in a local campaign to save a swimming pool from closure.



Councillor Gareth Richards
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 07932 384 877
✉: gareth.richards1@merthyr.gov.uk
Born in Quakers Yard.

Single and am a carer for my 89 year mother. I stood for Councillor as I have always been interested in politics from a young age and joined the Labour Party some 38 years ago at University. I want to give something back to my community which made me the person that I am.



Councillor Ian Thomas
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 01443 410861
✉: Ian.thomas@merthyr.gov.uk
Born in Giltfach Goch

Married with one daughter. Stood as a local Councillor to help improve local services.

MERTHYR VALE



Councillor Darren Roberts
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 01443 690769
✉: darren.roberts@merthyr.gov.uk

I became a Councillor to help local people who need advice or assistance and make Aberfan, Merthyr Vale and Mount Pleasant an even better place to live. Cllr Roberts was born in Aberfan and is married with two children.



Councillor Scott Thomas
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 07557 353628
✉: scott.thomas1@merthyr.gov.uk
Born in Merthyr Tydfil

I wanted to stand for Council mainly to remove the stigma that only older people run for council, and to help the younger generation of voters to understand that voting is an important part of them having their say.



Councillor Malcolm Colbran
Party: Independent
☎: 01443 710253
✉: malcolm.colbran@merthyr.gov.uk

I wanted to become a Councillor as I've made my home here and been welcomed into the local community. I can't imagine ever living anywhere else and I'm honoured to have been given the opportunity to represent Bedlinog and Trelewis on the Council. Is a fantastic place to live, I intend to use my time in office to promote the many positive aspects of our modern, vibrant communities. Cllr Colbran was born in Eastbourne, East Sussex



Councillor Sherelle Jago
Party: Independent
☎: 07985 468799
✉: sherelle.jago@merthyr.gov.uk
Born in Merthyr Tydfil

I worked in Local Government for over 15 years. I started off working in Bedlinog and Trelewis, later in the South of the County Borough managing the Communities First Programme. In 2012, I transferred over to a neighbouring Local Authority. I wanted to become a Councillor to serve and encourage communities to work together more and to ensure there is a strong representation of the people of Bedlinog and Trelewis. Provided with equitable services and provision, in order to continue with community development and progression for everyone who lives there to be proud of it. Married with three children

CYFARTHFA



Councillor David Chaplin
Party: Welsh Labour
☎: 01685 387476
✉: david.chaplin@merthyr.gov.uk

I wanted to become a Councillor as I want to ensure children get the best out of their education, as I did. Merthyr Tydfil's people, its history, the amazing countryside, transport links and different retail and leisure opportunities make it the Queen of the Valleys towns. Cllr Chaplin was born in Barry in The Vale.



Councillor Geraint Thomas
Party: Independent
☎: 01685 558 288
✉: geraint.thomas@merthyr.gov.uk

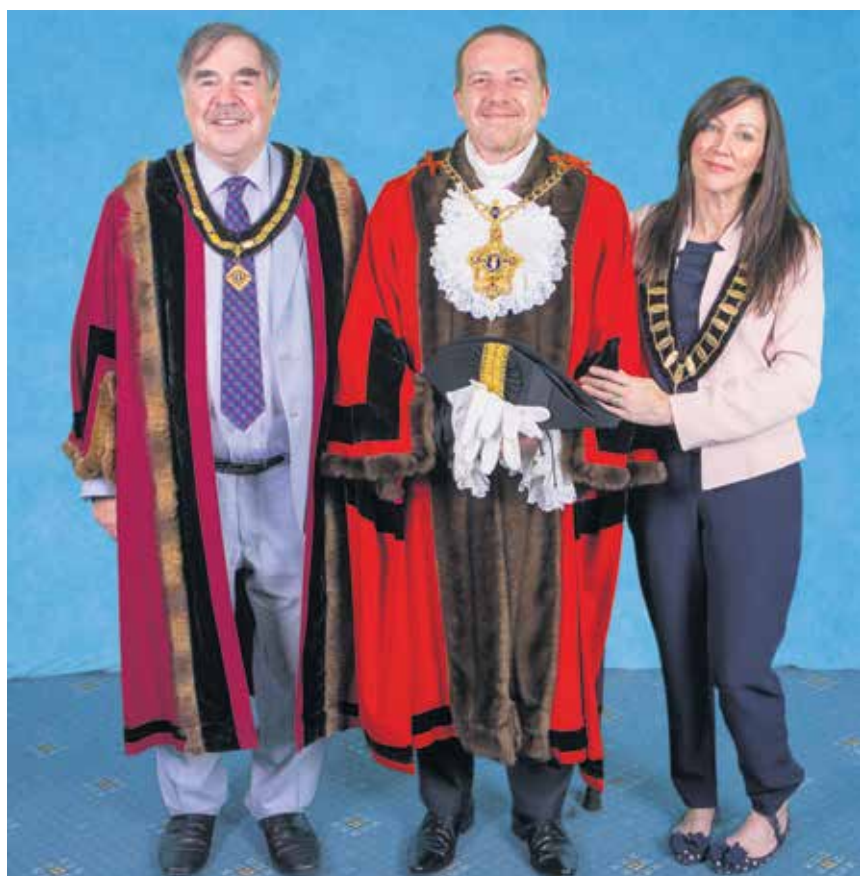
I decided to stand for Council as I love my Town and have noticed the decline to front line services through these times of austerity/cuts and wanted to see if I could do something about it. Councillor Thomas is widowed with four sons.



Councillor Paul Brown
Party: Merthyr Independent
☎: 01685 371752
✉: paul.brown@merthyr.gov.uk

I first became a Councillor in

2004 and have represented the residents of Cyfarthfa Ward for the last 13 years. After being re-elected I will continue to represent the residents in my electoral division on the key issues that affect them. Councillor Brown is married with three children and one granddaughter.



Merthyr Tydfil's new Mayor, Councillor Kevin Gibbs and the Mayoress, Kerry Gibbs. Pictured on the left is Deputy Mayor, Cllr Clive Tovey.



PARENTS AND CARERS GO BACK TO SCHOOL – WITH AWARD-WINNING RESULTS!



Abercanaid Community School



Trelewis Primary School



St Mary's RC Primary School



Teaching Awards Cymru



Luke Evans School Visit

Schools across Merthyr Tydfil value involving parents and carers in supporting their children in school. Families are invited to join in with school life, both formally and informally. This has a big impact on both learning and wellbeing.

A number of schools run 'reading cafés', where parents read alongside the pupils, while others help them cook meals and make jewellery. Two schools have picked up awards for their efforts.

Here, Contact looks at some of the activities taking place throughout the County Borough.

Pen y Dre High School's work in engaging parents has received national recognition at the inaugural Professional Teaching Awards Cymru.

The school was presented with the Griffith Jones Award for winning the 'Whole School Award for Promoting Relationships with Parents and the Community' category at a prestigious ceremony at Cardiff City Hall.

The judging panel said the

school had strong leadership and was at the heart of its community. Its collaboration with numerous organisations and community groups offered additional enrichment activities outside of the classroom, positively impacting on learner confidence and helping improve standards.

"Many parents praise the transition arrangements and the level of involvement with the primary feeder schools, which provides both parents and children with confidence and high expectations as they plan their move to the high school," said Headteacher Keith Maher.

"Parents reflect on the work that goes on at Pen y Dre and comment enthusiastically about how well the staff know their children and go above and beyond to ensure their individual needs are met."

Troedryhiw Community Primary School's parental engagement has helped it achieve the Investors in Families Award. The work of the various

dedicated parent groups (PTA, parent governors, fruit shops, IEPs, FASTWORKS) to support the work of the school was an impressive element of the evidence base.

"All staff members have forged strong and effective links with parents and extended family members to benefit pupils, both with their learning and their well-being," said headteacher Jacqui Roome.

"Teachers make very good use of topic work to include parents. Open afternoons and Come and Play days take place throughout the year to enable parents to gather insight into teaching and learning."

Parents recently went into school to support Year 5 pupils studying Italy, making Italian dishes and serving them at the class's Italian restaurant. Year 3 pupils' topic for the term was 'Global Gourmet', and to celebrate the end of the topic, the pupils opened a restaurant for their parents. This involved printing menus, calculating prices and making and serving

food. Some parents helped in the restaurant while others supported and attended as customers.

Each year, all classes invite parents and extended family members to attend the awards ceremony and Nursery/Year 6 graduations. These are very well attended and successfully help promote and celebrate the children's achievements.

Welsh Hollywood star Luke Evans visited Troedryhiw Primary to celebrate the work it has been doing as part of the FAST (Families and Schools Together) programme in association with Save The Children.

"As a school we recognise and value the benefits of working with parents and continue to provide regular opportunities for this – working together to provide the best for our pupils," Ms Roome added.

Abercanaid Community School has this year opened its doors to parents to 'come and experience life' for their children and teachers

"Parents and carers have enjoyed the opportunities to see first-hand how their children are taught, said Headteacher Jude Richards. "All classes opened their doors for an afternoon so that parents could interact with their child and engage them in their learning."

"Activities have ranged from maths and outdoor fitness sessions to an Easter bonnet parade in the community and singing," she added. "The motto of the sessions is 'anything my child tries, I try!'"

To celebrate Mother's Day, the Nursery pupils invited their mothers to join them for a morning or afternoon of fun learning. Together they made jewellery, had afternoon tea and played in the outside learning area, finding out about repeated patterns.

Parents also jumped aboard the pirate ship in Class 2 and joined in an afternoon of fun making pirate kebabs.

"Parents said they enjoyed seeing first hand that their children were happy and



Parents and carers go back to school – with award-winning results! Continued from page 5

contented in school and how imaginative the teaching was,” said Mrs Richards. “Engaging and working with parents is at the forefront of everything we do. We have many plans for more fun interaction sessions.”

Greenfield School, Pentrebach has set up a series of parent workshops, planning them closely around the needs and wishes of parents to ensure they are provided with the support they need.

GRWP (Greenfield’s Response to Workshops) holds weekly events including coffee mornings, behaviour workshops, toilet training advice, Person Centred Practice, language and play and Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

sessions.

“We also use these sessions for outside agencies to make links/share information,” said Assistant Head, Outreach Worker Vicky Jefferson. “For example, Tesco’s recently joined us and have involved us in their plans for their new business project of making their store more ASD-friendly.

“The sessions are having huge impacts on the relationships that we have with our parents, the relationships that they have formed with each other, the skills that they are developing and obviously the benefits this is having on our pupils both at home and in school.

“Our parents don’t have the opportunities to meet at the gate, as parents in mainstream

schools would, as the majority of our pupils are transported: GRWP is able to provide this experience.”

Trelewis Primary School, Treharris has placed a key focus on improving parental engagement within their school. Regular coffee mornings have been established to welcome parents into the school, as well as reading café at the parents’ request to give them an opportunity to spend time in school reading with their child.

The school has also established ‘Learn with Me’ sessions where parents are welcomed into school for a session to work alongside their child on a range of different tasks. This has allowed parents to understand

what their child does in school on a day to day basis, as well as helping parents to better support their child’s learning at home.

“Parental engagement is having a big impact on pupils’ wellbeing, with more opportunities for parents to get involved being organised for the summer term,” said Acting Head Teacher Ryan Morgan.

St Mary’s RC Primary School organises and runs a reading café for nursery and reception children and parents. This involves a six-week programme which is run by an experienced bilingual LSA which supports parents in reading with their children.

“It also supports language

development and each week focuses on a different book with fun and exciting practical activities and tasks,” said St Mary’s Head Teacher & St Illtyd’s Acting Executive Headteacher Karen Wathan.

MTCBC Chief Learning Officer Dorothy Haines said: “Families and schools all have very important roles to play in helping children do well at school. When schools and parents and carers work in partnership, this helps children and young people be successful. I am delighted that we have been able to share all the good practice in schools, which is because of the hard work and commitment of parents and carers and school staff.”

Get Involved in Scrutiny at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Scrutiny committees are a key part of the Council’s political structure and they play a vital role in improving the services that the people of the County Borough use. They mainly look at services provided by the Council but can also look at wider issues involving other organisations. They also play an important part in helping to develop council policies for the benefit of local people.

We want members of the public to get more involved in the scrutiny process and there are different ways that they can participate:-

WHY NOT SUGGEST ITEMS FOR THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES.

The Council has six Scrutiny Committees which are made up of non-Executive Councillors and Co-opted Members. They hold the Councils Executive (Cabinet) to account by challenging spending and other decisions, by ensuring council services are delivered effectively and efficiently, and in the best interests of residents.

All the Scrutiny Committees are currently developing their work programmes for the next twelve months and residents are encouraged to highlight issues of public interest which they think should be scrutinised

or reviewed by the scrutiny committees. Between them the Scrutiny Committees look at all aspects of the Council’s work and activities. The six Committees are:-

- Governance, Performance, Business Change and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee
- Learning and LAESCYP (Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People) Scrutiny Committee
- Neighbourhood Services, Planning and Countryside Scrutiny Committee
- Regeneration and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee
- Social Services Scrutiny Committee
- Joint Scrutiny Committee

Other than the Joint Scrutiny Committee which meets twice or three times a year, each of the other scrutiny committee meets approximately every six weeks.

If you would like to suggest a topic for a scrutiny committee to look at as part of its programme of work over the next 12 months, please send us the following information:

- Your topic suggestion
- Why you think Scrutiny should consider this topic
- Your contact details (optional but if you provide your contact details, you will be given feedback on

whether your suggestion has been included in the work programme and, if so, when it is expected to be considered)

- Any background information you have about the topic.

Email details to scrutiny@merthyr.gov.uk or complete the online form which can be found at:-

<http://www.merthyr.gov.uk/council/councillors-and-committees/scrutiny-committees/>.

Please note that Scrutiny Committees do not deal with individual queries, concerns or complaints about Council services - these are dealt with by the appropriate Council department or by way of the Council’s complaint procedures.

WHY NOT ATTEND A SCRUTINY MEETING.

The Council encourages the active participation of its citizens and an opportunity exists for members of the public to speak at Scrutiny Committee meetings in respect of an item on an agenda; or alternatively you may wish to attend a meeting to listen to the discussion and debate that takes place. We welcome your attendance.

Any member of the public who wishes to speak on an agenda item for the meeting can do so by making a request

in writing no later than 12.00 noon two working days before the meeting.

Committee members receive written reports on all issues being discussed and these reports are available to the public on the Council’s website at least three working days before the day of the meeting. Meeting dates can be found here:-

<http://democracy.merthyr.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?&LLL=0>

WHY NOT BECOME A SCRUTINY CO-OPTED MEMBER?

We currently have a number of Public Co-opted Member vacancies on our scrutiny committees - Neighbourhood Services, Planning and Countryside Scrutiny Committee (x1); Regeneration and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee (x2); Learning and LAESCYP Scrutiny Committee (x1); Governance, Performance, Business Change, and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee (x1), and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (x2)

Scrutiny Co-opted members bring their knowledge and expertise from different environments, and an outside perspective, to enrich the scrutiny process. Their presence on Scrutiny Committees also

makes the process more open and transparent for members of the public.

Co-opted members are like any other scrutiny member; the only difference is that the Public Co-opted Members do not vote, although virtually all Scrutiny Committee business is conducted without the need to vote.

If you are interested please contact the Scrutiny Section for an application form. There is no salary for the role; however reasonable travelling expenses will be reimbursed. The closing date for applications is Friday 11th August 2017.

ENQUIRIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION.

Scrutiny Section, Legal and Governance Services, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Castle Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8AN. Tel: (01685) 725464. Email scrutiny@merthyr.gov.uk

If you are unable to follow the web links in this article you can go on the Council website and type in “Scrutiny Committees” in the search bar for further details. The Scrutiny page provides further details and you can also access the online forms. Alternatively please phone the above number for assistance.



Safeguarding our most vulnerable and older population in the Community

Are you vulnerable, live in isolation and feel lonely?

Do you feel you are being exploited in any way from any type of abuse?

If you are lonely and living in isolation, you could be a victim or experience some form of abuse without realising it. Your situation leaves you more vulnerable and often you need to depend on relatives, neighbours, friends or carers to help you manage your day to day life. Without realising it you could be exploited to abuse, for example, people could take advantage of your situation and may take control of your



finances or charge you large amounts of money for doing things around your home.

If you feel you are in a similar situation that you need to rely or depend on people to support you and you feel that you are at

risk of being exploited by them due to your vulnerability, then contact the Local Authority on 725000 and speak to someone in confidence about your situation.

Could you be on our Audit Committee?

The Council is looking to appoint a Lay Member to its Audit Committee in accordance with the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2011.

The role of the Audit Committee is to review and scrutinise the Council's financial affairs, including risk management, internal controls, audit arrangements and corporate governance and to make reports and recommendations as required.

Lay Members are required to attend Audit Committee meetings as scheduled, and additional meetings as required.

The Council is inviting applications from anyone who

would be interested in serving as a Lay Member on its Audit Committee. Knowledge and understanding of the audit function and local government functions would be advantageous. Lay members must be independent of the Council and cannot:

- Be a serving Member or officer (or the spouse or partner of a Councillor or officer) of the Council.
- Have any business connection with the Council.

Lay Members will be required to sign an undertaking to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct.

A fee as prescribed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales will be paid for attendance at Audit Committee meetings. The current daily allowance rate is £198 (£99 for ½ day).

For further information, please contact the Audit Manager by e-mailing gary.evans@merthyr.gov.uk, or telephoning (01685) 725066.

The closing date for receipt of applications is **28th July, 2017**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Junior Road Safety Officer at St Illtyd's RC Primary School



The Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) at St Illtyd's RC Primary School in Dowlais have been doing an excellent job educating drivers where they can park safely. They have successfully cleared the road outside the school of double parked cars which

were causing a big problem when drivers were trying to access the amenity site and their own cars which were parked in the parking bays. The traffic can now move freely and it is a safer place for pupils when coming to and from school. Well done!

Congratulations to Greenfield Special School for achieving two excellent judgements in a recent Estyn Inspection.

Wayne Murphy, Headteacher at Greenfield School, said: "We are delighted at Greenfield School to achieve two Excellent judgements overall. This is a wonderful achievement for the school and is recognition of the hard work of pupils, learning support staff, administration support staff, teachers, the leadership team, governors, parents and carers and all stakeholders. I am very proud to lead a dynamic and innovative group of staff that meet the challenges of the diverse needs of our pupils."



Gofal Maeth Merthyr Foster Care Merthyr

0800 678 3798

www.merthyr.gov.uk





Planning expert praises council's work on Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre

A visiting planning expert has praised the council for their regeneration of Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre.

Stephen Wilkinson, President of the Royal Town Planning Institute - the body representing 24,000 town planners in the UK, visited key sites in the town centre including the College Plaza and the Old Town Hall – The Redhouse in Penderyn Square which have recently been regenerated, part of a wider regeneration-led plan for Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre.

He was impressed with the high quality refurbishment of key historic buildings in the town centre square, within improvements to their settings and to the connections across the river to the College and the wider

economic impact the rejuvenation of the city centre was having.

Mr Wilkinson said: "The council has been working hard to improve Merthyr's image and the regeneration of the town centre to give a positive future to this Valley's town."

"The council's planners have been at the heart of this transformation, ensuring the community have been involved every step of the way. The work here serves as an exemplar for the rest of the UK of how good planning can revive public areas and the important role of town centres to local communities."

In 2016, Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre was voted one of Wales' 10 best places in the Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru's Wales'

Best Places competition.

In 2015, the River Taff Central Link and Penderyn Square regeneration won in the category for Excellence in Planning for the Public Realm at the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence

Merthyr Tydfil was the second stop on the President's two-day visit to Wales, which also includes the Wales Planning Conference in Cardiff and the Brecon Beacons.



Public asked to help decide location of Ysgol Y Graig's '21st Century' school

We are currently consulting on the relocation of Ysgol Y Graig Primary School, Cefn Coed and are asking you what site you think would be best for the school.

After working with the community as part of the pre-consultation process, it was approved by Council that the two locations that would be put forward for public consultation would be the former Vaynor and Penderyn High School and

Godre'r Coed Playing Field.

The consultation period started on Monday, 12th June and will end on Monday, 4th September.

The consultation response form can be completed online at www.cwmatafhub.com or you can request for a hard copy to be sent to you by e-mailing corporate.communications@merthyr.gov.uk or phone (01685) 725052

Register Office closed on Mondays

Merthyr Tydfil Register Office is now closed one day a week following a review of demand for the registration service undertaken by the Council.

The decision to close on a Monday was taken because it is historically the quietest day of the week and the majority of staff were employed for four days or less on a shift basis.

Staff affected by the changes were consulted, along with the Unions, and a voluntary agreement to implement the changes was secured.

The registration of births, deaths, still-births and notices of marriage and civil partnership are currently by appointment, although the service always tries to accommodate 'drop-in' registrations.

Opening times at the office, which is based at Ty Penderyn, 26, High Street, Merthyr Tydfil remain the same: 8.30-12.30pm and 1-4pm Tuesday to Thursday, and 8.30-12.30pm, 1-3.30pm on Friday.

Services provided on the weekend by appointment for

weddings/civil partnerships at approved premises will remain the same. Current approved premises in Merthyr Tydfil are the Fountain Room at the Register Office, Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Redhouse Old Town Hall – Hen Neuadd Y Dref, The Guest Club and churches and chapels.

If you have any queries, please contact the Registration Service on 01685 727333, email: registrars@merthyr.gov.uk



NEWS IN BRIEF

Stride and Ride 2017

Merthyr Tydfil's first-ever 'Stride and Ride' festival took place at the end of June, seeing more than 20 different sessions over a three-day period taking place throughout the County Borough, including activities ranging from orienteering and Nordic walking to buggy running and

'Geocaching.'

Thank you to everyone who took part and helped to make it such a fun weekend. If you would like further information on any of the activities that took place, please e-mail rightsofway@merthyr.gov.uk or telephone (01685) 727089



Local driver wins £250 with Pass Plus Cymru

A young driver who took part in a council-run Pass Plus Cymru course has been congratulated after winning £250.

Elise Hughes, from Merthyr Tydfil, was randomly selected from drivers across Wales who had recently taken part in Pass Plus Cymru, to win the course's

quarterly draw.

The course is available to drivers aged 17 to 25 who live in Wales, and is designed to help young drivers become safer on the roads.

It's a short, expert-led higher driving course designed for young people to widen experience and develop driving techniques such as driving at night, on the

motorway, through country lanes or busy towns.

The Pass Plus Cymru course costs £20 and is delivered in Merthyr Tydfil by a local experienced Approved Driving Instructor (ADI), and is subsidised by the local authority road safety team with Welsh Government funding. www.dragondriver.com

We want your views for the Local Development Plan

To guide development up until 2031, Merthyr Tydfil's replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) is being prepared and is targeted for completion by the end of 2019.

The Council is currently preparing a draft 'Preferred Strategy' for the LDP and intends to seek the views of the people of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough

on it later in the summer.

Options for how much population growth and where it should be directed are key elements of the 'Preferred Strategy'.

The consultation will also provide the opportunity to find out which sites have been nominated for consideration for inclusion in the plan (Candidate

Sites) and to comment on them.

Details of the consultation will be advertised widely, however if you would like to be informed directly, please contact the LDP team on 01685 726279 or alternatively at devplanning@merthyr.gov.uk and ask for your details to be added to the Local Development Plan mailing list.