

## ANNUAL REPORT OF COUNCILLOR CAROLYN THOMAS from May 2014 to April 2015

### Membership of Internal Committees

- Chairman of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee from July 2014 to February 2015
- Planning Committee member until February 2015 and then named Substitute
- Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to February 2015
- Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee up to February 2015
- Rural Regeneration Partnership
- Biodiversity Champion

### Membership of External Bodies

- Treuddyn Community Council
- Llanfynydd Community Council, Pontybodkin Ward
- Chairman of Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty interim partnership
- Director of Cadwyn Clwyd
- School Governor at Ysgol Parc y Llan up to March 2015
- School Governor at Ysgol Maes Garmon from January 2015
- Secretary of Treuddyn Community Association
- Trustee Treuddyn village hall & voluntary interim caretaker
- Vice-Chairman of Hafan Deg Association
- President of Treuddyn bowling club
- Member of St Mary's Church PCC
- Bionet member (North East Wales Biodiversity Network)
- North East Wales Heritage Forum – new
- Produce 9 newsletters per year on behalf of Treuddyn and Llanfynydd Community Councils
- Joined The Labour Party on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2015

### Constituency Activity

When not at meetings or engagements, I work from home using my computer and phone to do emails and correspond with constituents and Flintshire County Council officers; this may then be followed up by meetings at County Hall. The flexibility means I can work early in the morning or late in the evening and adapt to family needs. I work full time as a Councillor and volunteer.

- I attend as many charity fundraisers and events in my constituency as possible, helping out or just supporting, this also means that issues can be raised informally with me and I always have pen and notebook to hand. I help many residents with issues.
- Following requests from residents, I continued to lobby regarding poor heating at the sheltered accommodation bungalows and bringing gas to Treuddyn; and was pleased to hear that Flintshire County Council's Housing department have pursued it with Wales & West Utilities for FCC's Housing stock to be converted to gas as part of the initiative to bring them up to Wales Housing Quality Standard. This means that we will have the numbers of homes wanting to convert to gas to make it viable.
- I regularly report potholes, faulty street lighting and blocked drains and ditches to Streetscene. I pick up problems when walking or travelling round the area.
- I campaigned regarding fibre optic broadband to Treuddyn with some success as some people now have good connection. However, it is ongoing to ensure that everyone that wants to have it will benefit. I regularly report updates in the newsletter, lobby BT and keep a look out for any work going on in the area..
- Lobbied and met with officers from NRW (Natural Resources Wales) and FCC regarding issues with the Nant. The fencing has now been repaired to a good standard but I still monitor the trees for slippage and the water flow in heavy rainfall.
- I successfully lobbied to get Church Walk in the conservation area repaired and open again following subsidence. Thanks to FCC Rights of Way dept for investing in the area with a significant portion of their funding.
- I represented the Treuddyn Community at a public inquiry regarding Footpath 62.
- I spoke at planning committee regarding the Station Yard development and protection of right of way for walkers, cyclists and horse riders through the site along the route of the railway line or suitable alternative.
- I liaised regarding the reinstatement of the Poultry Farm to make sure that the impact was as harmless as possible regarding pollution, traffic, noise and other disturbance, and updated local residents via email, telephone and newsletter.
- I supported and made representation on behalf of local businesses regarding issues.
- I was able to obtain some extra trees from the FCC Biodiversity officer to plant in the cemetery extension area so hopefully they will grow and act as screening between the cemetery and new housing development.
- I lobbied regarding drainage issues and resolved many. Raised an issue with Streetworks when BT subcontractors cut branches and left them blocking ditches.
- Ongoing issues to resolve still are the condition of the Public Open Space, gate ways and fencing between Bro Brwynog and cemetery. Hoping to get a pathway across the Public Open Space soon.
- Made representations on behalf of residents regarding the bus service and health provision.

- Put Flintshire Neighbourhood Watch Owl alerts in Community newsletters and forwarded emails concerning areas to residents.
- Made representations regarding accidents at the Sunspot, Corwen Road and also speeding traffic.

### **Initiatives and Special Activities**

- I helped with community consultation, planning, funding and project management of the Coed Talon play area which has been fully renovated and upgraded with a £60,000 scheme including drainage, landscaping and new equipment.
- Organised & helped with planting of bulbs and plants in Treuddyn and Coed Talon. Painted gate & fencing Coed Talon
- I sowed wildflower seeds in Pontybodkin and painted the coal truck and noticeboard with my husband.
- I took over as interim caretaker of Treuddyn Village Hall, opening up for events and taking bookings.
- I worked with a local volunteer who kindly did some repair work to the village hall and noticeboards.
- I produce nine community newsletters each year on behalf of Llanfynydd Community Council and Treuddyn Community Council to inform residents in two widespread rural wards about all that is going on in their areas and neighbouring villages within the Community Wards. I took over the Treuddyn one when the committee that had been running for 25 years retired.
- I organised the Treuddyn Fun Day which took place in July along with Treuddyn Community Association Colleagues.
- I organised a Fashion Show with Simmi Womenswear of Mold along with stalls to raise money for Treuddyn Village hall and the Urdd Eisteddfod '16 Appeal.
- I organised a Christmas Fair with the Castell Alun jazz band, Father Christmas, Woodlands Centre and stalls to raise money for Treuddyn Village hall and the Urdd Eisteddfod '16 Appeal.
- I started a Pilates class at Treuddyn Village Hall at the request of residents.
- Following successful campaigning to keep the Minor injuries and X-ray dept at Mold Community hospital I visited the new X-ray machine in Mold that I helped raise £5,000 towards as Chair of FCC and continued to lobby regarding extending hours.
- Lobbied regarding movement of payment facilities from Post offices when going through the budget process.
- Lobbied regarding Children's services such as play facilities, playschemes, playgroup funding, education, school buildings & music service
- Fundraised for various charities, new one is the Urdd Eisteddfod 2016 appeal which takes place in Flint next year.

### **Other Activities**

- My year as Chairman of Flintshire County Council came to an end at the May 2014 AGM but I did one more activity as part of my year of fundraising, doing the Zip Wire challenge travelling at 90 mph with my husband, Martin in Blaenau Ffestiniog.
- I gave talks on my year as Chairman of FCC to community groups.
- I have volunteered and supported events in my hub town of Mold such as local festivals, helping to clear trees and undergrowth at Bailey Hill and planted wildflowers and bulbs with Judith Wright of Keep Wales Tidy, Claire from Tesco's and other volunteers. I also try to support as many other events in Flintshire as possible such as the opening of the new Citizens Advice Flintshire building, Halkyn Heritage week.
- With consent of the local member, I spoke against development of 'The Gorse' at Northop Hall at a public inquiry.
- As Chair of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty I've met with different groups and neighbouring Authorities regarding the set up of the new Joint Committee and Partnership. I've also helped promote the area and attended various launches of initiatives and schemes that the AONB officers have worked hard to establish.
- As a Director of Cadwyn Clwyd, I've attended many meetings looking at various grant applications and also looked ahead to the next possible funding programme. I've also helped promote the work of Cadwyn Clwyd, the RDP, through the Welsh Government and the benefit to Communities of the grant funding within the area..
- Promoted Treuddyn, Coed Talon and Pontybodkin activities and achievements in the press and via social media.
- Promoted Flintshire's wonderful countryside and events via social media.

### **Learning and Development**

- Started using Twitter and Facebook to update residents in between newsletters and set up a Facebook account to promote Treuddyn Village Hall
- Started using an iPad for committees and helped colleagues to use theirs.
- Attended numerous briefings and workshops on various aspects of Council work and updated residents via email and newsletters.
- As Chairman of Corporate Resources and a group leader over the past year, I gained more knowledge about the core running and funding of Council services as political debate and setting of policies.
- Following some soul searching and lots of thought and discussion with my family I joined the Labour Party in February 2015. It meant I had to stand down as group leader of the Independent group I belonged to and also as Chairman of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I stood as an Independent County Councillor in 2008 wanting to improve the area but not knowing much about politics. However, I have gradually learned in the past 7 years that my views align more with Labour Councillor colleagues and the core principals of the Labour party, and after hearing the political debate coming up to the general elections I decided it was time to make a move, help with the Campaign and to have more of a say over national policies as well as local issues.