

# BCBC Councillor's Annual Report

**Councillor Heidi Bennett**

**Ward: Pen-y-fai**

## **Party: Welsh Labour and Cooperative**

This report identifies my key activities during the year ending May 2023. It is provided for the information of all constituents and for no other purpose. The views expressed in this report are those of the Councillor and do not necessarily reflect the views of Bridgend County Borough Council.

### **Role & Responsibilities**

Since being elected as the representative by Pen-y-fai and Court Colman residents in May 2022, I was appointed to 8 committees at BCBC, one of which I Chair.

I am a member of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, Development Control, Licensing Committee, Licensing Act 2003 committee, Licensing sub-committee B, Town and Community Council Forum, and serve as Chair of the Appeals Panel. This is in addition to monthly full council.

From May 2022 up until May 2023 I actively engaged in 43 committee meetings and I had a 100% attendance rate. My committee activity serves the strategic, scrutiny and regulatory functions of Council. However, equally, if not more importantly, is the activity I have undertaken in my ward for constituents which is outlined below.

To enable me to fulfil my role and being a member of 5 regulatory committees, I have completed mandatory online training and have also participated in several member development sessions which have helped ensure that my understanding, knowledge and skills are refreshed and remain up to date and relevant.

Further information can be found by using this link:

[Councillor details - Councillor Heidi Bennett - Bridgend County Borough Council](#)

### **Constituency Activity**

I held some local face-to-face surgery sessions to actively engage and listen to resident's views and concerns and I am pleased that one of these was a joint surgery held with the local Senedd member Sarah Murphy MS.

I submitted 113 formal case work/referrals. Not all responses to casework resulted in positive outcomes, and some referrals remain open several months later. However, I assisted with a wide range of issues during this period from tenants' rights, speed issues, refugee support, animal welfare through to more visible issues such as parks maintenance, grass cutting, burning of rubbish, blocked culverts and of course, potholes (to name but a few). Not all issues fell within the powers or remit of Bridgend County Borough Council, but regardless of this I responded to help resolve issues wherever possible.

Additionally, I raised issues in relation to the protection of greenspaces and fly-tipping with Natural Resources Wales; pest nuisance and fly tipping enforcement action with Shared regulatory services; protection, maintenance and re-opening of Public Rights of Way (such as Colman Vale), and I also escalated residents concerns with the Senedd Member in relation to health care services such as access to dentists.

In relation to anti-social behaviour, I connected to PCSOs and linked them to residents where personal circumstances necessitated PCSO intervention.

I was pleased the yellow zig zags were extended on Heol Eglwys by the school in response to residents concerns for pupil safety and that this year the trial scheme was permanently adopted.

I also connected with V2C on safety concerns in relation to some old garages at Protheroe and these were subsequently removed.

On a further 26 occasions, I assisted residents directly and/or signposted quickly to other sources of support without need of the formal BCBC referral process, for example supporting residents to access information, advice and practical support such as directing to food banks/pantries, Citizens Advice, care and repair, V2C and other local expert agencies.

### **Initiatives and Special Activities**

I remain involved in Community Asset Transfer project in relation to the Pheasant Field.

### **Other Activities/Issues**

I am an active volunteer in the community and I am a Trustee of Pen-y-fai Village Community Association (PVCA) and Newcastle Higher Community Council (NHCC). I worked collaboratively with residents and community councillors to progress initiatives such as monthly volunteer litter picks, 'Jubitea' celebrations and most recently, the 'Warm Welcome' hub in Pen-y-fai.

I also had additional responsibilities as Chair of Newcastle Higher Community Council (NHCC) which during the first year of the new term saw a majority of new Councillors being elected to office for the first time. I led on work to update and improve processes and systems (such as policies, procedures, procurement, accounting, reporting), introducing formal committees to support good governance and decision-making, setting NHCC in a good position to ensure best practice and legal compliance into the future.

I was accessible to residents via 1-2-1 surgeries, phone, text, post, email, FB direct messaging and whatsapp. I also maintained a social media presence which sought to keep the community up to date on local, regional and national policy and news.

**Councillor:** Heidi Bennett

**Date:** 22/06/2023