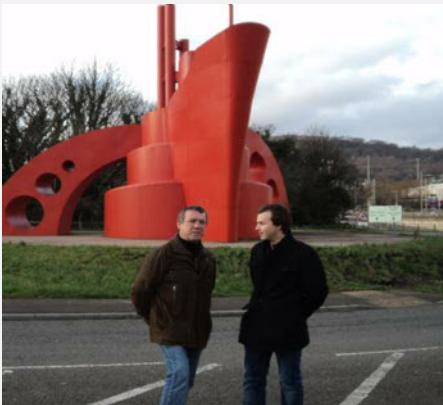




Welsh Lib Dem James Hackett believes we deserve more for our money



RCT Council spent over £130,000 on this 'public work of art.'

Labour set to raise Council Tax by 2.5% But are we getting value for money?

Yet again RCT residents will see a higher council tax rise than those in neighbouring Welsh Liberal Democrat led Cardiff.

Labour's Council leader says it is essential to protect front line jobs and services but is that really the case?

Welsh Liberal Democrat candidate for Cilfynydd James Hackett says;

"We could accept this reasoning if we knew that our money was being well spent - but this isn't evident.

Money would be better spent on community art classes instead of 'public works of art'. Money would be better spent actually repairing pavements and potholes than on hiring a poet to carve words in paving slabs.

If RCT council spent less money on self publicity then they could keep the council tax down.

The amount of money that the Council spends on its strategy and public relations department is quite

simply staggering. Can they not see the irony in spending so much of our Council Tax money telling us how well they're supposedly spending said money?"

The department spends around £85,000 a year on newspaper adverts as well as over £60,000 on their Outlook magazine. They employ a raft of staff including a Corporate Policy & Consultation Manager, Publications & Corporate Branding Advisor and a Media Manager in charge of four press people. The salary bill alone is well over a million pounds a year.

James Hackett says; "RCT Labour party is using this department as its own publicity machine, just see the photos taken by the council photographer on the RCT Labour website for proof of that.

Council tax has risen every year since they've run the council. If they trimmed the excesses of the budget then maybe this wouldn't need to happen."

Pontypridd regeneration provides more hope than expectation as Council admits that it will do 'nothing whatsoever' about its failing townscape scheme

RCT Welsh Liberal Democrats have long advocated the regeneration of Pontypridd town centre but will the Labour council's recent flurry of activity bring the promised new business and jobs that are important not just for the town itself but for the whole area? Welsh Liberal Democrat Council group leader Cllr Mike Powell is viewing it with more hope than expectation;

"So far I am sorry to say the signs are not good. The Townscape Enhancement Programme was supposed to revamp the look of the town centre and bring in new businesses. However, between Jan 2011 and Jan 2012 only three businesses had applied and two given grants.

One of those was Cohen opticians who moved across the street leaving behind an empty building in poor condition. The other houses the Plaid Assembly Member. So where are the new jobs?

At the Council meeting on 25th January I asked the Cabinet Member responsible what he planned to do to increase take up. His answer was simple "I propose to do nothing whatsoever."

So there you have it. Cabinet Members on over £36K a year doing nothing."



Trallwn Cllr Mike Powell and Cilfynydd candidate James Hackett have concerns over Pontypridd regeneration progress



£5.30 A WEEK PENSIONS INCREASE - THANKS TO LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

From April most benefits will increase by 5.2%. The State pension will go up by £5.30 a week. This compares with the paltry 75p a week that pensioners were last given under the Labour Government. It is yet more proof that, despite what our opponents would like you to think, the Liberal Democrats are delivering on our promises to you



£630 INCREASE IN THE 2012 PERSONAL TAX ALLOWANCE... THAT'LL DO NICELY

The amount you can earn before paying income tax rose to £7475 in April 2011 and will rise to £8105 in April 2012. The Liberal Democrats fought to get this into the coalition agreement. We want to go further and raise the amount to £10,000 so to relieve the growing pressure on household budgets and bring the lowest earners out of the tax system altogether.

Join us: www.libdems.org.uk/join_us.aspx
 Find out more www.pontylibdems.org.uk
 Or ring: Mike 07779 337839 /
 Karen 07990 573591.
Contact James at
James.hackett@rctlibdems.org.uk

Is anyone sticking up for Cilfynydd?



Some of the roads and pavements are in a terrible state – such as this stretch in Heol Mynydd.

There are few facilities for children and young people. Look at the disgusting excuse for a playground to the rear of Brynderwen. Why not put a couple of goal posts on the grassed area there so at least youngsters have a kick about area?



Just what is the current Labour Councillor doing?

Our Schools need backing not banding

Labour's Education Minister and Rhondda AM Leighton Andrews recently announced a 'banding' system for schools in Wales.

Secondary schools have been placed in bands from 1 and 5. Pontypridd High School is in band 5 despite an excellent Estyn Inspection report.

The system has been criticised by teachers, governors, unions, in fact just about everyone except the Labour party.

RCT Welsh Liberal Democrat candidate for Cilfynydd James Hackett has slammed the idea;

"These bandings are very misleading and serve no apparent purpose other than to demoralise teaching staff. They say little about the standard of education that schools offer.



Cilfynydd Candidate James Hackett outside Pontypridd High School

What these bandings quantify exactly is unclear. I question their usefulness.

The band that the school is placed in is determined not only by results but very heavily by the number of pupils in receipt of free school meals and on pupil attendance levels. This gives a very misleading

impression of performance which reflects unfairly on a school's teaching staff.

The Education Minister seems unwilling to listen to feedback. He plans to push on with the system despite widespread objection.

These bands are worthless. We need to give our schools and pupils support not hamper them with meaningless labels"

Cllr Mike Powell questioned the Cabinet Member for Education about banding at the January Council meeting.

She could not say how they would be used by RCT education department to help raise standards. What then is the point of them? It seems only Leighton knows.