

On Cilfynydd

Looking ahead to next May's Council elections the Welsh Liberal Democrats have chosen James Hackett as their candidate here in Cilfynydd.

James, who was raised in Abercynon is looking forward to the challenge:

"Having spent some time at University in Liverpool I had hoped that there would have been some improvements in the area when I returned. The Labour Council in RCT brag about the excellent reports they receive from the Audit Office but that's just a box ticking exercise. On the ground residents see little improvement."

Cllr Mike Powell, leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrat Council group says James will make an excellent Councillor. Mike, who was himself born in Cilfynydd and is well known to local residents, says

"It is always good to welcome fresh faces, especially when they have the enthusiasm that James has to try and make a difference. There is a strong Welsh Lib Dem heritage in Cilfynydd – people know our reputation for working hard and taking no nonsense. James would make an excellent representative here."

Whilst there has been a welcome injection of money into highways which has seen selected roads through the County resurfaced there is still a lot of work which needs doing.

seen the council spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on 'art works' across the county.

This is on top of the £190,000 that was spent on three bridges over the new Church Village by pass - for Dormice!! The Council argued that this had to be done as European regulations say so. But in Newport they provided them for a mere £25K.

James Hackett says;

"Considering the council has been so quick to cut the wages of its frontline staff, to spend public money in this way is in my opinion completely wrong"



Cllr Mike Powell at the 'Unity' sculpture in Pontypridd which cost more than £130,000

Left – one of three dormice bridges built over the Church Village by pass that cost the taxpayer £190,000.

*Value for money?
We don't think so*



Poetic Justice?



The panel which sets the levels of Councillors' salaries is proposing to cut the maximum basic salary paid to Councillors by between 5 and 10%

The Labour party in RCT previously set them at the maximum allowed - making leader Russell Roberts the highest paid Councillor in Wales. If these proposals go ahead he will face a pay cut of around £5000 a year. Many employees who have had their terms and conditions reviewed by his Council may feel this is poetic justice.

There may be another blow for Russell who also gets £23K+ as Chair of the South Wales Police Authority and £13K for his role as a member of Cwm Taf Health Board. The report makes it clear that the salary levels of the leader and the Cabinet are based on their roles being full time and they should not be taking up additional positions.

This is a point that the Welsh Lib Dems have been making for some time. Welsh Liberal Democrat Council leaders in Cardiff and Swansea voted in favour of lower salaries and do not take on any other paid roles.

The Labour Council Whip was quick to defend Russell's salary recently in the Pontypridd Observer saying his three jobs made him uniquely placed to serve RCT. Well he is certainly unique.

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Find out more about us at:

www.pontylibdems.org.uk

YOUR OPINIONS MATTER

We recently carried out a survey in parts of the Cilfynydd ward to see what residents thought of services. 89 residents took part and the results largely reflected the opinions that we have been expressing for some time.



On Facilities For Young People - An overwhelming 71 out of 89 said that they do not think enough are provided in the area.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats agree with the many respondents who want to see the council improve local parks. You also want to see the provision of more sports facilities and youth clubs that would offer constructive activities for young people to take part in out of school.

There are often complaints about youngsters hanging around the streets, but most of the time they are not out to cause any harm they simply do not have anywhere else to gather and meet their friends.

Regarding Welsh Medium Education - a number of people said that they didn't know enough about it and so didn't respond.

42 people thought there should be more Welsh Medium places to meet the growing demand, whereas 19 said no.

Welsh Liberal Democrats in RCT have championed the idea that parents should have the right to choose the language via which their children are educated.

Welsh medium schools throughout Rhondda Cynon Taff are struggling to cope with the numbers of pupils wanting to attend, and this situation is not new.

We welcome the recent news that a new Primary school is to be opened at Llanhari. After ignoring the issue for years a new report from the education department has at last acknowledged there is a problem. We hope this is the first step towards finding a long term solution.

On Sixth Form Education



64 said that the Labour party are wrong to want to close sixth forms. Only 8 agreed with the idea, the rest didn't express an opinion.

In Dec 09 the Labour Cabinet announced plans to close all 6th forms in RCT. The plans floundered when the Assembly refused to give them the money needed.

They are now looking to force Secondary schools to work more closely together with each other and

Coleg Morgannwg. James Hackett says;

"Sixth forms play an important part of our schools. There were some excellent A level results in RCT this year.

I am glad the plans have been halted for now at least. Nobody thought it was a good idea except the Labour party and the Director of Education.

However, the only reason for their change of heart is lack of money – they haven't listened to the people of RCT."

Your money telling you how good THEY are!



Only 19 people out of 89 said that they think the 'Outlook' magazine the Council spends more than £60K on is worth the money.

49 people said it is an un-necessary expense in the current economic climate whilst the rest said it is a complete waste of money.

This comes on top of around £85,000 a year the Council spend on advertising in the local press.

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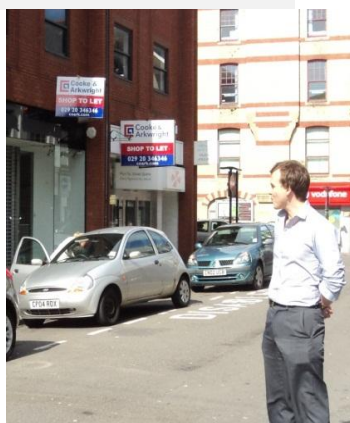
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A substantial amount of work is being carried out in Pontypridd town centre which most people would agree has been in need of regeneration for many years.

The question is whether this alone will be enough to attract new business into the town. Or is it just a costly cosmetic exercise?

The newly laid paving in Mill St has already had to be ripped up and re-laid because the Council and contractors failed to ensure it met standards for disabled access.

Questions also remain over whether the much talked about precinct replacement will attract the high quality new shops it was supposed to.



Too many 'to let' and 'for sale' signs in Taff St.

Following the election in May there is now a Welsh Liberal Democrat Assembly Member for the area.

Welsh Liberal Democrat Eluned Parrott is one of four Assembly Members for South Wales Central which includes RCT.

She can be contacted by phone on 02920 898343 or via email at eluned.parrott@wales.gov.uk