

City & County of Swansea - Councillor's Annual Report 2014-2015

This Councillor's Annual Report outlines their activities over the year ending **18 May 2015**. 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 the City and County of Swansea.

Councillor:	Paul Meara	Electoral Division:	Sketty
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Section 1: Constituency activities

The Sketty Liberal Democrats ran regular fortnightly surgeries in Sketty Park Community Centre and Sketty Library. We also have a regular presence at the Sketty Farmers' Market on the first Saturday of each month, and the bi-monthly PACT meeting. We supported the redevelopment of the Tennis Courts on De La Beche Road and the refurbishment of Parry's Field with donations from the Councillors' Environmental Allowance.

The main issues I have encountered this year have concerned the bed-room tax, trees that are deemed dangerous, dog nuisance, Anti-Social Behaviour, irresponsible parking and the possibility of redeveloping the former Total garage site on Eversley Road. The Council's job re-grading scheme also raised some significant issues.

Section 2: Councillor attendance at selected Council body meetings

Attendance at Council body meetings is only one of the important elements of a Councillor's duties. Councillors are also active by holding surgeries, attending meetings and dealing with general electoral division enquiries.

Attendance % based on Committee membership shown below:

Area 1 Development Control Committee	6	/	7	86	%
Audit Committee	8	/	10	80	%
Corporate Parenting Forum	2	/	3	67	%
Council	16	/	17	94	%
Democratic Services Committee	3	/	4	75	%
Development Management & Control Committee	5	/	7	71	%
Rights of Way and Commons Sub Committee	2	/	5	40	%
Scrutiny Programme Committee	19	/	22	86	%
Student Liaison Forum	3	/	3	100	%
OVERALL	64	/	78	82	%
Scrutiny Meetings					
Local Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Working Group	1	/	1	100	%
Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel	11	/	12	92	%
OVERALL	12	/	13	92	%

Section 3: Councillors role and responsibilities

My main work this year has been acting as Vice-Chair of the Friends and Family Foster Panel. (12 full day meetings a year, plus emergency meetings and training: attendance 95%. I consider this work to be the most significant thing I do as a Councillor. Also took over the role as Chair of Democratic Services Committee. Other roles: Champion for Language Issues (including Welsh). There have been no significant language issues this year. However the new Welsh Language Standards are expected to be released shortly. I am continuing to work on the development of some Welsh Language Proficiency Tests, which might be used to assess the Welsh Language skills of Council Staff.

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I am also working with Steve Morris at Swansea University to develop a set of Welsh Language standards for second language speakers.

Section 4: Initiatives and Special activities

Member of the Gypsy/Traveller Site Scrutiny sub committee.
Chair Working Group on Historic Buildings.
Member of the Corporate Parenting Forum
Member of the Student Liaison Forum
Vice Chair of Sketty Park Community Centre Management Committee.

Section 5: Learning and Development

I attended the following training sessions:

05/03/2015 - Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking

29/01/2015 - Making Scrutiny More Effective

19/11/2014 - Elected Members Role in Supporting & Promoting Gypsies, Roma & Travellers

15/10/2014 - Treasury Management in Local Government

13/10/2014 - Safeguarding

05/08/2014 - Public Engagement

23/07/2014 - Data Protection (including role as Data Controller)

03/07/2014 - Freedom of Information Training

In my previous job, I was Professor of Linguistics at Swansea University. Language is important in many areas of the Council's work, and I try to keep abreast with current issues in this area. I run a small scheme that provides funds for interesting language projects in Swansea. During 2014-2015 I funded a deaf sign language project at Swansea University, and the Latin in the Park project.

I continue to be worried about the way the Council relies on data provided to and analysed by the Fischer Family Trust to make projections about children's attainment levels in school. I'm particularly worried by the fact that this very extensive data set has been taken over by a company called Capita. The analysis – described in one journal article as "voodoo statistics" - seems to be particularly bad at dealing with bilingual children, children with severe learning difficulties, and children from immigrant families. We have a lot of these children in Swansea. Watch this space for further developments.

Section 6: Other activities and issues

I was Chair of Governors at Sketty Primary School during 2014, and a member of the Governing Body of Pen-y-Bryn School throughout 2014-2015.
Member of the Swansea Bay Port Health Authority.

Section 7: Councillors Remuneration

Basic Salary: £13,300

Councillors travel and subsistence claim forms can be viewed here:

<http://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13266&path=0&LLL=0>

Councillors annual expenses and allowances can be viewed here:

<http://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13284&path=0&LLL=0>

Date: 05.06.15

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