

Department of Place and Infrastructure

Autumn 2023 Newsletter

Hi all, here we are at the end of the summer and the school holidays.

I hope you have been able to take the opportunity to enjoy some time off work and recharge the batteries. Whilst the weather has not been particularly great, I am sure you will have nonetheless valued the time away.

This newsletter is quite packed with information from across the department with some significant items and updates included.

I have been out visiting various locations over the past month or so in order to become better acquainted with you and your teams. In doing so, what always strikes me is the enthusiasm and professionalism we have within our services and of course the vast spectrum of services we provide as a department.

So on to the core of this newsletter, which sets out items relating to retirements, appointments, service realignment, achievements, initiatives, and opportunities.



Ainsley

A huge thank you to Stephen Pilliner before his retirement

September brings the end of the meteorological summer as a milestone in the annual calendar.

This September brings another milestone for us as a Department, with the retirement of Steve Pilliner, Head of Transportation and Highways. Steve will retire at the end of September after over 44 years in Local Government.

Steve joined Carmarthenshire County Council in 2000 as Transport Manager and progressed to his current role of Head of Transportation & Highways.

Steve and the team have delivered many significant capital highway and transportation related projects over the years that include new highway schemes, bridge structures, active travel infrastructure, community transport initiatives and kickstarted our electric charging infrastructure, providing a sound footing and legacy for more sustainable future to meet our transportation needs. One of the most recent notable successes was the procurement of electric buses and the commissioning and construction of the accompanying new bus terminal and electric charging station at Nant y Ci Carmarthen. This has enabled Transport for Wales on behalf of Welsh Government to run an electric bus service between Carmarthen and Aberystwyth.



Another significant and notable achievement that was outside Steve's normal scope of service delivery was to head up a team during the Covid pandemic that delivered the construction of several field hospitals across Carmarthenshire. This was quite a sizeable and impressive achievement in a short time frame with the various teams pulling out all the stops under Steve's leadership, applying his trademark meticulous attention to detail to ensure that delivery was on time and within budget.

Steve is of course a respected member of the senior team, not just here in Carmarthenshire, but across the professional spectrum and various fora relating to transport and infrastructure across Wales.

Steve has been a stalwart for the Department when uncontrolled events occur – usually weather related emergencies. His style and methodical application in chairing various internal emergency response groups over the years have been exemplar. Maybe Steve will not miss the emergencies, but it is fair to say that we as a collective have learnt a great deal from his experience in this respect.

I would therefore like offer Steve best wishes in his retirement on behalf of the whole Department, his colleagues across the Council and in particular from myself as Director for all the dedication and commitment shown during his career with Carmarthenshire and the legacy that he will leave. Enjoy a well-deserved and productive retirement Steve.

Our next newsletter will be in December, if you have any stories you would like to feature please get in touch with SHRees@carmarthenshire.gov.uk You can also keep up to date on news on our dedicated intranet page: <http://intranet/our-people/place-infrastructure/>

Dan John is our new Head of Environmental Infrastructure

This period will also mark another milestone in the transition from two divisions of Transportation/Highways and Waste/Environmental services into the new combined single Division of Environmental infrastructure.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally offer our collective congratulations to Dan John on recently being appointed as the Head of Environmental Infrastructure.



Dan joined Carmarthenshire in January 2017 as Environmental Services Manager, having previously worked for Pembrokeshire County Council. Dan will head up the new division that combines the former Waste/Environmental Services and Transportation/Highways portfolios. As you will all be aware, the span of services under the new division are wide ranging and serve as major enablers for our communities as well as being key frontline visible services that our public rely upon daily. The services that you within the new division provide are therefore of significant corporate importance.

I look forward to working with Dan in making the new division a success and I know you will all give your support to Dan to ensure that this is the case.

Dan has already begun to engage with you as members of the new division to discuss ideas and thoughts and his vision and aspirations for the new division. This is an exciting time for us all to shape the future of the department.

Welcome to the new job Dan

Wishing Cliff a Happy Retirement

Cliff Cleaton who headed up our Street Works and Highways Adoptions Unit recently retired following a long career with the former Carmarthen District Council and then Carmarthenshire County Council.

I would like to thank Cliff for his valuable input and dedicated service over the years and on behalf of us all, wish Cliff a happy retirement.

Thanks

Waste Operations Team take on Pretty Muddy Race!

A huge well done to Carly, Yana, Mark & Declan who completed a 5k Pretty Muddy Obstacles Course and raised an amazing £534 for Cancer Research. If you plan to take part in a charity event and you'd like to spread the word, please email Shrees@carmarthenshire.gov.uk to be featured in the Newsletter.



Here's the team before and after their pretty muddy race!

An Introduction from Dan John

I am proud and thrilled to have been appointed to this new position of Head of Environmental Infrastructure and look forward to working with you all in the delivery of our services that we provide so well to the residents of and visitors to Carmarthenshire.

As many of you will be aware with the retirement of Steve Pilliner, this new role comprises the combination of the Waste and Environmental Services and the Highways and Transportation portfolios. I have a lot to thank Steve for in his support whilst working along side me in my role as Environmental Services Manager over the last six years and more recently over the last few weeks in the transition to this new role. I wish you all the best for the future Steve, and hope you have a long and happy retirement.

Personally, I am passionate about creating a greener and healthier environment for our community, while also ensuring the responsible and efficient management of our services and infrastructure development projects.

I firmly believe in collaboration and teamwork. I am eager to meet all the teams to understand their role and contribution within the Environmental Infrastructure Division. I am open to suggestions and ideas from each team member, as your expertise and insights are invaluable in effectively carrying out our responsibilities. Together, we can work towards achieving our shared vision of a sustainable and resilient Carmarthenshire.

I'm truly excited about the opportunities ahead and the positive impact we can make together. I am confident that with our collective dedication, expertise, and commitment to our local environment, we can address the challenges that lie ahead and deliver our services that will benefit Carmarthenshire and its residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Dan

Property Portfolio Re-alignment:

I would like to update you on the outcome of a recent review of property management arrangements across the Council following the previous disaggregation of the housing maintenance function.

This latest review was predominantly focussed on the wider property management and maintenance functions that form part of two Council Departments – Place & Infrastructure and Chief Executive's.

Property maintenance and design functions have been the subject of several reviews over a number of years that have resulted in various outcomes, including the disaggregation of property and housing maintenance functions.

The most recent review focuses on synergies between the strategic management of our properties (within the Chief Executive's department) and how our maintenance

programmes and associated works (within the Place & Infrastructure Department) align with the wider property strategy and corporate priorities.

Currently responsibility for all property related functions sit in three different departments across the Council; Communities (housing), Chief Executive (strategic property asset management) and Place & Infrastructure (maintenance, compliance and design).

The most recent review identifies that our current arrangement of having responsibility for our property portfolio spread across departments as set out does not provide the best approach for a joined-up and coordinated approach to managing our property portfolio.

Having given these aspects much thought, it was clear that there needs to be a more cohesive approach

to managing our property portfolio.

Therefore, it has been concluded that the property maintenance and design aspects of the service within Place and Infrastructure will transfer to the Chief Executive Department, reporting to Jason Jones, Head of Regeneration, Policy and Digital. It is anticipated that this transfer will take place towards the end of September or early October.

This move will not affect the current arrangements pertaining to the maintenance of the Council's housing stock. This aspect will remain within the Communities department.

I would like to reassure you as teams within the property maintenance and design units that the driver for this review and the outcomes therefrom are to provide a more cohesive and strategic property management service across

the Council. Therefore, please be assured that the reasons for the proposals as set out is to provide more surety and integration from a corporate perspective. This is not a cost cutting exercise.

From my perspective as Director, yes, it is always a wrench when staff are transferred out of the Department, but I am confident that the proposals set out are right from a Council wide perspective and will provide stability for the future.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank you all in the various property related teams for your hard work and dedication in delivering professional design, construction and maintenance functions for the Council as part of this department. I am confident that you will of course continue to do so from within the Chief Executive's department in your usual professional and dedicated manner.

A special message from Stephen Pilliner before his retirement.

Forty-four years and two months since starting my career in Local Government, the time has arrived for me to say goodbye and thank you, as I retire at the end of this month.

Having spent the first seventeen years with Mid Glamorgan County Council, then five with Bridgend following Local Government reorganisation in 1996 I joined Carmarthenshire in 2000. Local Government has provided me with opportunities for learning and education. I will always be extremely grateful.

It has been an interesting, if at times challenging but also a progressive career.

I have had the privilege to work with many dedicated, hardworking, creative people, no more so than here in Carmarthenshire.

I cannot let this moment pass without saying a special thank you to all the Highways and Transportation team who have always been ready to respond to our next challenge, our next project, the next phone call, Teams call or e mail at whatever time of day.

I will take time to reflect on the many positive things we have created for communities across Carmarthenshire. Many have been recognised by

peers across the professions nationally over the years, as evidenced by the number of national awards received.

In this ever- changing world we constantly must take two steps forward in case we have to take one back. This is as important today, as it has always been, as society continues to recover from a worldwide pandemic and we enter a new era that will be driven by technology in all its forms whether that be IT, energy, vehicles or infrastructure.

I know, like those challenging calls and e mails (from me!) no matter how difficult the task, you will all embrace the

opportunities or challenges ahead and deliver what is required, as you always have done, by working as a team.

I will always cherish the relationships and friendships built though the many hours of arduous work put in by you all.

I wish you, Dan as your new Head of Service, Ainsley as Director and indeed everyone across the Department and the Authority every success in the future.

Carmarthenshire is a special place that I shall carry with me forever.

Thank you

Steve

A warm **welcome** to our Graduates

We extend a warm and enthusiastic welcome to the latest graduates joining Place & Infrastructure.

Your journey with us marks an exciting step as you bring your fresh perspectives, energy, and knowledge to our team. Your presence is a valuable addition to our workforce, and we are excited to support your professional growth.

Here's are messages from Vincent Sheldrake and Lucy Jouault who are both Graduates within Place & Infrastructure.

Here's a message from Vincent Sheldrake who has recently joined the Service Improvement & Transformation Team:



"Shwmae, I went to Aberystwyth University for a degree in History and Literature and am now a Graduate Trainee in Service Development and Improvement.

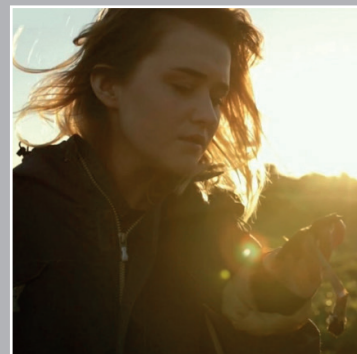
I applied to the authority for the opportunity to continue to learn and serve the community in Carmarthenshire.

I have received a very warm welcome here and in supporting workforce planning, have come to appreciate the crucial and wide-ranging service provided by this department."

Vincent

Here's a message from Lucy who has recently joined the Waste Strategy Team:

"Hi I'm Lucy and in 2018 I went to Oxford Brookes University to study Animal Biology and Conservation. Earlier this year I went to the Master of Science Exeter University to study Island Biodiversity and Conservation where I achieved a first class (in between working as a litigation paralegal in Jersey C.I.



I am now a Graduate Trainee in Circular Economy, Waste Strategy & Policy.

I applied as I've always had a desire to have a career dedicated to environmental stewardship.

My first fortnight in post involved site visits to our household waste and recycling centres and depots to understand how our waste services operate and are distributed throughout the county as well as meeting with key members within waste and environmental services to understand the overall structure of the service and the responsibilities of and interaction between factions that comprise the service.

Within my first two months I have created a survey (undertaken by our waste and recycling wardens) to ascertain how, why and when residents use services at the HWRCs. I have analysed this survey data and written a report on it which I will soon supplement with additional data from gravimetric testing.

I have received web training and have updated the council website when waste disruptions transpire.

I have assisted in a review of components of our communal waste provision, managing the action log and will soon be engaging in a scoring exercise to identify which sites are to be retained, altered, or removed. I have consolidated all available, current data on circular economy activities within the Ten Towns (regarding current activities and future goals) from consultancy reports and my own research in addition to engaging with a variety of teams within the council (regeneration, education, food development) as well as external organisations to ascertain the nature, locality and scale of current support and funding provision for the Ten Towns communities.

Supplementary to this work is the report I have started writing on the carbon benefits associated with different categories of circular economy activities. There is currently no framework (statutory or otherwise) pertaining to the carbon benefits of circular economy activities, especially outside the sequestration context.

I am hoping to obtain Carmarthenshire-based carbon statistics which could help form the basis of a local carbon quantification framework across different categories of circular economy activities. Most recently I have been coordinating actions and strategy for a waste transformation project as part of our preparation for the workplace separated waste collection regulations coming into force in April 2024."

Lucy

Re launch of Work Experience Opportunities

Following a successful Insight Day where 10 secondary schools across Carmarthenshire gave their views on the Council's budget proposals, Wendy Walters offered the opportunity for pupils to show their interest in Placement Opportunities. After a huge interest, in April 2023 we re-launched Placement Opportunities for the first time since the Covid-19 Pandemic.

We have successfully accommodated five placements across Place &

Infrastructure. These placement's took part in Highways Design, Development Management, Property Maintenance, Management Information & Planning Hwb.

It is essential to attract younger candidates to the authority as this will help future workforce planning. We'd like to thank all managers that have successfully been able to accommodate these requests.

Applications are now closed; however, we will look to reopen in October.

Prior to the re-opening of applications, we would like to offer as many placements as possible. We will be adding additional information to our Placements Opportunities page to showcase all services across Place & Infrastructure. If you have an exciting opportunity that you can offer, please email Shrees@carmarthenshire.gov.uk. Shannen is the Department Lead for Place & Infrastructure Work Experience requests.

Congratulations!

to Elliott and Tomos on their Graduation!

Jason Jones, Property Maintenance Manager Congratulates Elliott Lewis and Tomos Williams for achieving their HND and Level 5 in Construction Management.

Jason shared with the team:

"I am thrilled to take a moment to celebrate the remarkable achievements of two exceptional members of our team - Elliott Lewis and Tomos Williams.

With great dedication and hard work, Elliott and Tomos have reached significant milestones in their professional journeys. They have recently achieved their HND and NVQ Level 5 in Construction Management, and we couldn't be prouder of their accomplishments.

Both Elliott and Tomos joined our Property Maintenance team as part of a higher apprenticeship program in 2020. Throughout their time with us, they had the opportunity to immerse themselves in various aspects of the team, gaining invaluable insights into the different facets of our operations as part of their training.

Since day one, their dedication for their work have been evident to all. It is no surprise that they have thrived and excelled in their roles. Elliott



has secured a well-deserved full-time position as a Projects Delivery Assistant within our Property Design Team, showcasing his exceptional skills and commitment. On the other hand, Tomos has impressed us all with his expertise and has been selected for the role of Building Inspector within our Property Maintenance team.

Please join me in congratulating Elliott and Tomos on their well-deserved success! Their achievements reflect positively not only on their own efforts but also on the strength and supportive nature of our team as a whole.

Well done, Elliott and Tomos! Here's to a bright and prosperous future ahead."

to our Level 2&3 ILM Students

A huge congratulations to the many that completely their ILM Certificate Principles of Leadership and Management Level 2/3. Hard work and determination have paid off, well done to:

Zoe Baxter
Completed ILM Level 2

Matthew Fosbrooke
Completed ILM Level 2

Gary Glenister
Completed ILM Level 2

Paul Roberts
Completed ILM Level 2

Martin Owen
Completed ILM Level 3

Neal Thomas
Completed ILM Level 3

Eilian Jones
Completed ILM Level 3

Emma Jones
Completed ILM Level 3

We will feature ILM Level 4 and upwards in our Christmas newsletter.

If you would like further information or would like to register, please email TSTraining@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

The Tywi Centre 'Up in Lights'

The Tywi Centre, which is part of the Built Heritage Service in our Place & Sustainability Division, recently played a star role in an BBC TV and online article.

The Tywi Centre, which delivers advice and training on the care and repair of traditional buildings across Wales, highlighted the shortage of builders with the skills and understanding on how to look after our old buildings.

When we have half a million buildings in Wales over 100 years old, including traditional terraces and old farmhouses, we need to keep them in good working order. The environmental and economic cost of their replacement is enormous. Nell Hellier, Senior Built Heritage Officer, says 'It is simple: maintain your building – give it an annual MOT as you would your car, clear out gutters, paint windows, remove vegetation, but also use breathable materials like lime renders to keep your building dry and warm.'



The online article highlighting the fact that our historic buildings are being threatened by skills shortages can be seen at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-66479191>

And as second online article, in Welsh, showcases the work of the Tywi Centre and the experiences of one of our plastering students - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cymrufyw/66477144>

The Tywi Centre has its own website - <https://www.tywicentre.org.uk/> - where if you are interested in any of our courses you can register. Courses range from 'Energy Efficiency in your old home' or 'Listed Building Consent: making an application'.

Launch of our new departmental 'Digital Systems Team'



Kim Butler, Alex Williams, Chris Hope, Aaron Davies, Phil Bowen

A welcome to our new departmental Digital Systems Team who will be responsible for delivering an efficient system support and development service for the key systems used within the Place and Infrastructure department.

This includes maintaining and upgrading systems, along with implementing enhancements and new digital technologies that produces efficiencies and improves service delivery.

We are currently building the team to be able to assist with the delivery of the departments digital and IT priorities which include a number of new job and asset management systems within Waste, Highways, and Fleet.

We are shortly due to recruit two new Senior Systems Support Officer posts, of which each will be responsible for leading on the delivery of the new system implementation projects we have coming up.

For Further information please contact Alex Williams,
Digital Systems Transformation Manager on
ASWilliams@camarthenshire.gov.uk

Develop your Digital Skills Online

Take a look at Online Learning Course Directory (virtualcollege.ac.uk)

You will see a whole host of Microsoft based training courses including:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Powerpoint
- Microsoft SharePoint
- Microsoft PowerBI
- Microsoft Access
- Microsoft Outlook
- Cyber Security and Network
- And many more

Browse the full list of courses available and discuss with your line manager. Once approved, fill in the expression of interest form, most courses are fully funded. The Learning & Development team will be in contact after your submission.

If you identify any training needs please contact our departmental training team by emailing: TSTraining@camarthenshire.gov.uk