**County Councillor Vince James, Maesycwmmer Ward - Webpage Link**

Welcome

I would like to thank Maesycwmmer Community Council for hosting this webpage.

On this page I will be providing updates on local matters that will be of interest to local residents and provide details of how to contact me if there are any specific community issues or difficulties you may be having with a Council related issue.

My Background

I was elected as Maesycwmmer Ward County Councillor in 2017 following the retirement of Cllr Robin Woodyatt after his many decades of incredible hard work and commitment successfully representing the interests of residents of Maesycwmmer and the wider community of Caerphilly on Caerphilly Council.

I have lived here in Maesycwmmer for over 20 years having moved from Cardiff with my family. My wife also was brought up in Blackwood and so I have had many connections with the local area for most of my adult life.

In addition to my responsibilities as a Councillor I also work full time as a social work manager for community care, a profession I can say I am very proud to work in, despite its many challenges.

My Contact Details:

Throughout my time as County Councillor I have assisted many residents with matters that concern them and their family. The issues have been very varied. From the environmental and community issues that impact upon all of us such as fly-tipping, pot holes, and planning matters, to often very personal matters such as issues concerning housing, social services and education.

My mobile number is 07860537123. As I work full-time I may not be able to take your call immediately, but please leave a message with your contact details and I will call you back as soon as possible. Email is also a useful way to get in touch and my email address is jamesv@caerphilly.gov.uk

You can report community/environmental issues and gain assistance from the council on a lot of different matters at the following Caerphilly Council website link.

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Report-an-issue>

My Council Committee Responsibilities and Council Attendance Record

You can view these details at the following link.

<https://democracy.caerphilly.gov.uk/mgUserInfo.aspx?UID=667&LLL=0>

**Latest Update - April 2021:**

Speed Reduction Measures at Tabor Road and Jenkins Street

Residents will have seen the introduction of speed control measures at Tabor Road and Jenkins Street around the school area requiring motorists to drive at 20mph. I am pleased that this Welsh Government funded project has been delivered but on consultation I had requested that the speed reduction project was extended along the length of Tabor Road into Pandy Lane. This was because I had seen for myself the potential dangers posed by some less responsible drivers through the village and it is something that residents regularly report their concerns on. Unfortunately, the project funding was limited and could not be extended at this time. Along with my colleagues who sit as Councillors on the Maesycwmmer Community Council I will continue to work for greater road safety in Maesycwmmer for pedestrians and motorists alike.

Tabor Chapel

Seeing the deterioration of Tabor Chapel is I’m sure a great sadness to many people living in Maesycwmmer. It’s prominence in the community is upsetting to see and particularly difficult for residents nearby. I speak regularly with many local residents who ask what is being done about it. Unfortunately the building and the grounds have been in private ownership for many years and until recently the Council powers to intervene have been very limited. I have been working with Senior Council Officers and a number of active community members to bring about a change in the powers that the Council can exercise in relation to abandoned buildings (the problem of abandoned buildings is an issue across Caerphilly and many other counties in Wales). Earlier this year the Council Cabinet approved a compulsory sale policy that will help to increase the influence that the Council has over the future of buildings such as Tabor Chapel and I will keep you updated on this page as to what will be happening specifically with Tabor Chapel as the policy is implemented.

Recently following a number of incidents of the boarding of doors and windows being removed and the Chapel being accessed, I recently arranged for more secure shutters to be fitted in the interests of safety.

Attendance at Maesycwmmer Community Council Meetings

I am in regular attendance at meetings of the Maesycwmmer Community Council which due to the pandemic are currently being held on-line. Hopefully as social distancing restrictions are gradually lifted we will be able to meet again in person. A wide range of local issues and projects around community development and concerns are discussed and agreed at these meetings. I am very pleased and proud to work with members of the Community Council and the great work undertaken by Community Councillors and their secretarial support.

Maesycwmmer Community Centre

During the pandemic it has been necessary for the community centre to be closed but as circumstances improve it is very likely that we will shortly be able to reopen our doors. I know that the community centre is really important to many of us in the village and all the activities and sessions that are organised there have been sorely missed. I would like to thank all the members of the centre’s management committee for all their continuing hard work and commitment in developing a good future for the centre. I particularly would want to thank Mrs Wendy Howls for her continuing incredible hard work as Secretary and the 101 other things she has done to keep things running well at for the centre over the past years. The next meeting and AGM of the management committee is likely to be held in-person at the centre in May. If you are interested in joining the community centre management committee please contact me or the community centre at maesycwmmercommunitycentre@outlook.com

Toucan Crossing on A472

Following consultation and the completion of the on-the-ground work the project to install a Toucan Crossing on the A472 at the east side of the village, it will shortly become operational. I know that there have been concerns raised by some local residents during the consultation process regarding the potential impact on traffic flow along the A472 and potential difficulties the crossing could cause to resident drivers living off the roads from and estates from Gellideg Lane. Many residents have also expressed their support for the potential improved safety that the crossing will potentially offer to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. I have agreed with the Council Officers overseeing the project that the light change activation time and the overall scheme success will be monitored. I will be doing the same. I would also welcome feedback from residents if you have any or concerns on how the Toucan Crossing is working in practice over the coming months.

Defibrillator Locations in Maesycwmmer

It is fantastic to see the work of the Maesycwmmer Community Council in purchasing and installing a defibrillator at the Pensioners Hall at The Crescent. It’s a great investment in helping to protect the welfare and health of local people. I hope as much as I am sure you do, that it will rarely need to be used.

Many people will be aware of the incredible work of Carrie Smith in fundraising to purchase 2 additional defibrillators to give wider coverage of this important emergency medical equipment. We are organising to have these units installed and connected to an appropriate electrical supply source at both ends of the village. More news on this will follow once the locations are confirmed.