

Watford Borough Council

Member Self- Assessment 2018/19

Woodside Ward

Self-Assessment of: Councillor Karen Collett

1. Year elected:

2016

2. Reasons for becoming a councillor:

It was important for me to represent the local people in my ward to ensure that they have a voice, so that they feel integrated within their own community. Working for the local people is something I see as vitality important. I believe I can make a difference to their lives by working hard, listening to their concerns, views and look for a solution. In addition, I wanted to ensure that Watford remains a town that we are proud of and a place which offers opportunities for all.

3. Roles in the Council:

I am a member of the Mayor's Cabinet – I hold the position of Portfolio Holder for Community.
Deputy Mayor.
Group Leader.
Development Management Committee.
Member Development Group.
Planning Policy Advisory Group.
Attend Overview and Scrutiny.

4. Membership of outside bodies:

Trustee of Watford Palace Ltd.
Council representative on West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee.

5. Training & Development undertaken (Councillor's training record is listed):

- GDPR
- Development Management Committee
- Scrutiny
- Licensing
- Safeguarding/human trafficking and slavery
- BID briefing
- Cycle hire study briefing
- Disability awareness
- Combating gangs, violence and weapon crime conference
- Watford 2020 briefing

6. Attendance Record:

96%

Your work with Constituents and in the Community.**Please tell us about the work in your ward and for the council:**

I continue to support my local residents in my ward, dealing with housing enquiries, benefits and a range of issues. We are fortunate to have 3 residents groups which I try to attend as often as possible. In addition, I support those residents who have planning or development issues. Being an attendee on Housing Policy Advisory Group and Planning Policy Advisory Group this enables me to pass on new guidance to residents and assist them with their concerns. As half of my ward residents have Watford Community Housing as a provider I meet with them on a regular basis and attend their yearly Councillor Visit to hear about their long term plans. This year I have been made aware of other housing providers who I have challenged on behalf of those affected.

I organise poppy displays in our ward leading to the Memorial in our High Road and plan the civic service which is open to all our residents. I also attend the Town Hall Remembrance Service on the same day.

I also am a Friend of Alban Wood and so help clean up litter once a month with some additional planting during the year. I and my colleagues are also involved in the future plans for the Woodside Hub/Sports strategy.

Meet regularly with our County Councillor to discuss our local Highways Budget- looking at priorities for Woodside.

Using our locality budget we have supported the local scouts, boxing club, local schools and a trip for mothers and their young families.

I use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, e-mails and letters to communicate with my local residents on local issues, town events and news. I have had regular meetings with young people at the college to support them in their coursework and dissertations.

I meet with my local residents in their home as I feel it is important to see and hear the issues face to face. I seek answers from officers and I know residents do appreciate you coming straight back to them. Helped with mediation with neighbour disputes.

I do attend all local events, children's Christmas Parties, Halloween night, carol singing, Fruit and Vegetable summer events and last but not least local quizzes which are organised by my local community group.

I attended the Watford BID Service Excellence Awards at the Watford Colosseum which pays tribute to all sectors of our town who help with our economic growth. Attended Mount Vernon Radio's 50th Birthday celebration. I also attended and supported a show on Watford Hospital Radio. Many of our residents benefit from these wonderful services.

Imagine Watford, Palace Theatre, Colosseum, Watford Museum and The Pump House- supporting culture, heritage and the arts is vitality important to a town. I feel that we are fortunate to have many first class venues to visit and these will always be important to our cultural development.

The volunteer sector in Watford is something to be proud of, especially in the sports area. So many people give up their free time to help all generations. I fully support the Woodside Boxcleve, their work with young people is inspirational. I was honoured to hand out the medals to the children at The Big Hit. Watford Town Cricket Club who again are unsung heroes- volunteers who aim to transform young people's lives by giving them the opportunity to master the sport. Both clubs also promote young girls joining which have supported several young ladies in their success.

The Big Sports which is now in its third year has grown and takes place at the top of the town encourages people to get fit and active- which promotes health and well-being. Pleased to also work with our partners SLM Woodside and Central Leisure Centres to further promote free swims and gym sessions for young people.

Support New Hope and visit plus attended the Herts Homeless Forum which is held at WBC.

Visited Random Café and Café in the Library to celebrate their Birthdays. Both provide a unique role in our community - bringing people together, sharing and caring.

Working closely with W3RT and meeting on a regular basis. Spoke at Citizen's Advice Centre's AGM and thanked them for their support and commitment to helping Watford residents.

Attended A Bloodwise Charity Event which raises an incredible amount of money which funds research to change the lives of people living with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma and other blood cancers.

Equality is important and so I make it a priority to support groups and charities to promote them such as Herts Inclusive Theatre, Electric Umbrella, Watford Deaf Club, Playskill, Age UK, Women's Centre, Drum, Shopmobilty and more. As I said before there are many volunteer organisations and charities out there and I have been fortunate to visit many, something that has a special place in my heart. I also arranged a briefing for Councillors in relation to disability Watford training provider so that we could experience visual impairment and understand how important it is to get things right. Met officers at County to discuss a more user friendly approach and encouraged them to keep a regular dialogue with Disability Watford.

Watford Celebration, One Vision, Caring and Sharing Club, Kerala Community Foundation, Portuguese Association and the Filipino Community Association- attending EID and an open day to the local Mosque was a chance to celebrate a diverse town. Watford is rich in culture and it is heart-warming to see us all stand together in unity and share our traditions and learn about other beliefs.

Pleased to attend last year's Chairman's Charity dinner to raise money for his two chosen charities- so pleased to see a large amount raised.

I have attended several Police Attestation Ceremonies at Welwyn Garden City Police Headquarters to witness our special constable's take their oath. These amazing volunteers who have full police powers will work amongst the regular force. I was delighted to attend to offer our congratulations and support.

For those councillors in a leadership role, how have you met these further objectives?

7. Providing vision

Set up a meeting to discuss LGBTQ+ with members of the community and officers to highlight areas we could improve on, so that our residents feel they are included. Council Website now signposts to advice groups. Arranged for the Rainbow flag to be raised outside the Town Hall. This will continue.

Set up the Pensioners Forum with W3RT to support, offer advice by inviting outside bodies and organisations to share their knowledge. This is also a social occasion for people to come together and meet new people. Visitors have included a local GP, Herts Help, and Neighbourhood Watch, Looking after your Sight, Trading Standards and Pension Advice.

To continue offering free children's Easter and Summer play which has grown in numbers and is a success.

Free Cultural events in the year- The Big Screen, Big Beach, Sports and other events at Cassiobury Park.

Supporting Diversity and Equality throughout the town- visiting faith groups, the voluntary sector and organisations to demonstrate how fortunate we are in Watford to have such a wide range of sustainable groups.

Chairing the Health and Wellbeing Forum to look at areas listed by Public Health that we could help improve. Understanding the health issues is important so we can look at preventative outcomes and enlist outside help if necessary.
Supporting the Mayor for a Dementia Friendly Town.

Attending monthly Portfolio Holders meetings with the Leadership team of the council to steer and ensure we are providing value for money but above all good services.

It is important that we show we are a trusted brand and are able to secure our financial future by taking brave steps to meet the difficult challenges ahead which are imposed on us by Central Governments cuts to services. One of those ways is proving we are progressive and open to commercialism. Our Environmental Health and Licensing Consultancy service can help businesses seek advice to new legislation and how to manage risk. We provide a number of services under my Portfolio which are Training, Food Hygiene, Health and Safety and Licensing, Pre-application services and Pest control.

8. Managing Performance

I attend regular meetings with the Head of Service and quarterly reviews to monitor performance. To challenge policy where necessary and create a dialogue in order to shape our town. To make sure our services are sustainable and fit for purpose and can we improve on them. To make sure that our plans and decisions are informed by the views of Watford residents and the local community.

Objective(s) for 2019/20

Objectives have been met for 2018/2019

To ensure that the community is engaged and on board with our plans.

To make sure our town is a place where people want to live and work.

To make sure that we continue to be proud of such a diverse town.

To become a school Governor for Alban Wood Junior School.

.....