

202 - Becoming a Clerk, and Representing Wales on the SLCC: A Conversation with Emma Smith

Hello, this episode will be in Welsh. If your Welsh isn't up to following along, then we are completely fine with you skipping to the next one.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Hello, and welcome to the exchange, a podcast produced by Audit Wales. I'm Siôn Owen, and I work for the Good Practice Exchange.

This episode is part of a series looking at the Community and Town Council sector.

We went to the offices of Carmarthen Town Council to have a chat with Emma Smith, Clerk to Carmarthen Town Council.

We learned about the experience of being a clerk, as well as some of the qualities that make an effective clerk. Emma is also the Wales Adviser to the Society for Local Council Clerks, the SLCC, and also acts as a policy liaison officer for Wales.

There is also a second part of the conversation, discussing two projects in which the Town Council is collaborating with other organisations: A conference on climate change for children and young people and a study on how Carmarthen town centre buildings can reduce their carbon emissions.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

So here we are in the Carmarthen town council meeting room and we have Emma Smith, the town clerk. Would you like to introduce yourself?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

I'm Emma Smith, I'm a clerk to Carmarthen town council and I'm also a consultant and policy liaison officer for the Society for Local Council Clerks, the SLCC.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Okay, so, let's start with the experience of being a clerk. What is a clerk, a community council or a town clerk?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

In effect, a clerk is the chief executive of a council or chief officer, and a chief councillor, who is the council's adviser, and a senior officer responsible for ensuring that the council acts legally and professionally.

They lead in governance looking at compliance with legislation, ensuring that the standing rules are followed etc, and managing funds etc through the financial

regulations. They give professional advice and guidance so that councillors can make decisions, and they also supervise meetings and ensure that an agenda of minutes and things like that are provided.

Very often they act as the responsible financial officer as well, but not always, and have to manage budgets etc and take the responsibility for or payments and so on.

And they are also behind with the public in terms of communication, dealing with queries and also connecting with the community, holding events etc. They are also looking at projects, looking after local services and council assets such as parks, cemeteries and any other projects.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

So there's a lot of stuff under the duties, in the job here.

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Yes, it's often a skill and yes it's like spinning plates basically, keeping everything going.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Then, according to Carmarthen Town Council, how big a council is that?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

We are eighteen members. We have sixteen staff with us as well, a lot of us in the outside team. Five of us are in the office and three are with us in a tea shop.

The precept is over nine hundred thousand now and our budgets is over a million including everything.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

So quite a few plates.

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Yes, quite a few plates.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Okay, then, what do you think makes an effective clerk then?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

You have to have a great deal of knowledge, experience and skills, you have to specialise somewhat in law, you have to be able to manage a project without actually having the qualification very often to do this, but the knowledge and the ability to do it and the confidence to do it.

And you have to be careful how you deal with people and be quite diplomatic and very often have to solve problems. I remember when I started as a clerk and hadn't done it before, I had to think a bit for myself and find the answers to what

to ask, so it was a challenge and I learned a lot pretty quickly at that stage and you have to have a good knowledge of local government governance: Things like auditing, procurement, risk, you have to be neutral of course and treat all members the same, some of them are obviously going to belong to a political party, a lot of them are independent as well, and you have to have good communication skills as well so that you can communicate with the public or with members and send out clear accurate information, and being able to juggle a large lot of things including field dates, paper delivery dates. Making sure you're complying with everything and reporting on everything that needs to be reported, while keeping an eye on what's going on in the community, etc.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

The Plates?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Yes, we can carry on. So financial stuff is also very often with clerks except that there is a separate responsible financial officer and you just have to deal with some conflict sometimes in the community and between members. Or between some members, but that's acceptable to some extent but sometimes too much of that happens in the sector unfortunately.

And at the same time, to be looking at the future and looking at what's coming up, what we're trying to get on the shelf ready for a grant application and thinking ahead as well, and then getting an understanding of the community what they need to be able to shape that, and that all comes down to the council's strategy as well, which is something you are responsible for preparing also in conjunction with the councillors.

Yes, so a very large amount of juggling.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

But is there support available to you as clerks in this regard?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Yes, organisations such as One Voice Wales and the association are going to work as an adviser for clerks in Wales etc and they are great at providing responses to queries. They can also give legal advice etc which reassures and calms the mind, so that's great.

But sometimes you just need someone in the room to be able to talk to as well. He can be quite lonely as a clerk, I'm lucky here because there are a lot of staff here and we can share experience. Some of them have been around for a long time, so there's a lot of information with them and that's a comfort. But I remember the time of being alone and it's challenging.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Yes because there are community councils, they are very small in terms of resources and staff time.

So, there's a lot of room for keeping balance, being able to do a lot of different roles. Are there other challenges?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

I'm touching on the heavy workload, especially in a small council where there is one clerk, maybe not a lot of hours, and time is one thing because expectations increase all the time with new legislation.

Yes, the Local Government Act and the 2021 elections had asked for a lot more things like annual reports, training schemes etc, but certainly there are a lot of councils that haven't increased the hours of the clerk etc, or maybe the clerk's salary, but there's a lot more work, a lot more responsibility attached to that then.

So, maybe work and lack of time were some of the challenges to understand the changes, because there have been changes in legislation and there is a lot to understand but there are guidelines from the Welsh Government etc.

It's hard to keep up with everything, just thinking about things like members' allowances, that can be quite complicated. I get constant enquiries in that area, because the areas change quite often, and there are detailed questions and so on attached to them, and it's not, it's not an easy thing, and with them it changes fairly often, and sometimes the guidelines aren't one hundred percent clear. It can be quite difficult to understand that.

There is also a misconception, I think, in terms of the role of the clerk, the title is misleading, because it implies an administrative role, where you do the management work. The title of Town Clerk may sound a little more lofty, yet I think that the older generation understands what that is, but maybe not the younger generation so much.

Some clerks now choose the title of Chief Executive or Chief Officer. That is becoming more common, but there is also a lot of history to the term clerk, and there is something special about that. So, it's hard to get the balance. So, some take two titles and use them together.

The only thing that the behaviour of members would sometimes cause political tensions between them, unfortunately, when I give advice to clerks I hear a lot that they are not being heard.

Some are being bullied by council members, and a lot of that is happening at the moment, and that's one of the main challenges of the sector, and there's not a lot of ability to deal with it at the moment. The sanctions are very limited.

One of the things that is happening at the moment is, the Senedd has done an inquiry into the sector in 2024,2025 and one of the recommendations of that inquiry is to bring in training on the code of conduct and try to make that

mandatory, to try to improve standards of conduct. So, that's one of the main challenges.

A lot of reason for that too is that a lot of members can get into councils without going through an election etc. It's fairly easy to get a seat, but it's pretty hard to get rid of someone too [if their conduct is poor]. So, people are suffering because of this type of behaviour.

Members earn the same as clerks.

And resources are also an issue, a budget may not be sufficient to do all the work that is wanted; limited staff is one factor, and high expectations also from the sector and legislation, but also from the members themselves may keep loads of work without considering where the time comes from being able to do this, and also time may then extend to the weekend or at night.

Evening meetings, you come into the job expecting that because of the nature of the sector, but sometimes there are things on the weekend too and it can increase quite suddenly if you don't keep control of it.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Yes, because I could think that our sector is full of people who are passionate about making a difference to their community and that we just need to manage that so that it happens in a sustainable way for the clerk so right?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

yes, yes it's a trick because somebody comes in with an idea, and it's a great idea, but your workload, your schedule is already full, so where are the resources for this, oh well we can get a grant, well who's going to apply for a grant yes and all the work that's involved.

It's simple when you say it like we can't just get a grant application, that's a lot of work in itself. That sort of thing, especially when there's no other staff or someone to support, in the small council typically, the members do more work.

They overwhelm, if there are incidents for example, they have to be there erecting a tent or something. They're mindful of being a part of that.

But in the larger councils that covers the staff and there are the resources to do it. But even then, they reach capacity fairly quickly and the ideas can keep coming.

So, it's not unclear what the challenges are, but overall, we're dealing with them. And that's a testament to the strength of clerks.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Yes, and the community and town councils, they're close to the community, as you've already said, there are great opportunities to make a difference isn't there?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Yes. Small councils in particular are very close to their communities, they know very well who lives there, who needs help for example, who can be vulnerable if something goes wrong, and they understand their community very well.

For that, it changes somewhat as the body gets bigger for example, yet they are still certainly closer to the community in order to understand needs than the large local authorities at county council level, for example.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

In it, but that's an advantage of being based around a town or community and ballu isn't it?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Being able to focus on one place instead of having to look at an entire county, being able to consult with one place, for example. The members listen to the people and understand what their concerns are, and what they would like to see for example, and collaborate with other community council officers who also speak to the community.

So, that collaboration is important, and we're doing a lot of partnership work here to do more, but also to enable others to do more. And help new community groups by nurturing them, and then we, when they're ready, they're off to do the work after us, and we don't have a hand anymore.

And that improves the community afterwards, without us having to keep putting resources or time into something.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

And then is that partnership working easy?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Yes, yes, it works really well. There have been many examples of that here where we help people to get started. And after that they carry on and can make the difference themselves afterwards.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Do you have anything else to add on the way Community and Town Councils can make a difference, have you mentioned working together?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Yes, they're in terms of what the Town and Community Council is doing, we're doing a lot of it now in terms of improving local services, we're looking at parks here for example, and we've got great parks with us and the community appreciates being able to have that space to go relax or for events, There's a fireworks event there for example every year. People meet there on the weekend to do a park run etc, or they just meet up with friends and be able to relax on an example.

So it's that kind of thing, looking after the children's play areas, looking after the cemetery that's also with us that's important to the community, and holding events. Every year we do several important events in the town such as the Christmas event, the Mayor's race, Remembrance Sunday. That kind of thing that becomes annual events, people expect to see, but it's always a success and it brings in thousands of people to the town who in turn then support the business sector, because more people come in and spend money in those businesses.

Also we can look after local people and councillors talk to local people can communicate the needs at school, then to the county council if it's not something we deal with directly, or the Welsh Government etc.

We are able to give grant money to local groups so that they can carry on with their own events etc.

We improved the public spaces and looked after the town a bit; we always do a little spring clean every March, before we do the St David's Day Parade to brighten up the place, and although that's not part of our remit, we do it voluntarily sort of a year just to donate to the cause of the county council that actually does that work.

We were also able to support things like tourism and we just developed a new website called caru.Caerfyrddin.com which shows what there is to do in Carmarthen for people who live here, but also tourists.

So, that's an exciting new development here, and I think we have more of a role in the future, but there's support and financial support here in terms of emergency aid.

I made a presentation of this at the Association of Clerks conference back in October on the topic of community resilience and what the role of town and community councils is when it comes to community emergencies; If there is, I know, a fire or a flood or something like that, what are we able to do?

And it can be as simple as offering information about the community to the emergency service, or it can be a village hall where we can open up to give people a place to go and so on, and that kind of thing. So, there's more of a role with us here, but at the moment we're not included in this arrangement, because we're not being considered what they call a responder, but we feel like they're missing something here in terms of including us, because like you, we're close to the communities. We understand, and also there are resources within the councils, especially in small villages where there is no leisure centre or something like that, but there is a village hall to be had.

There's a great opportunity, but at the same time, there's already a lot of work we're doing with Clerks and so on, but a lot of support then through money or

time from local government or the Welsh Government would enable more to happen.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Yes, cause we come back to the old song about pennies and in the end it buys time and capacity, doesn't it?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Exactly, and I don't know what the answer to this is because we don't have the time with them, we don't have the money with them, and potentially we could buy more time if the money is with us.

So it goes round in circles.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

From the Clerk's point of view then, and to the extent that we have touched on this in the answers to the other questions, what would be your vision for the future of community and town councils?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

I think the future means that we can take more forward, especially the larger councils, but there are a lot of community reviews going on at the moment, where councils are being merged.

So, I'm not in favour of merging too many councils, because I think being close to the communities is important. But if that outcome means that councils can then do more for communities, that's a positive thing to do. So, I think the future is looking at getting the government, the upper echelons of government, to trust us to do more, and that's what they keep saying.

But they included us in the conversation, instead of suddenly just dropping something on us.

We're going to be part of the discussion, and at the moment, I feel that we, as an individual councillor, are part of the discussion at county level, for example. So we want to be part of the future and be able to contribute and make a difference like that.

'It's not clear what that is at the moment. And a lot of recommendations have been made by the Senedd, and the Welsh Government is going to be considering them now. Of course we had a change of Government, and there was no time before the election to take any of these recommendations forward. But they look, as you know, at the audit system. They're looking at code of conduct training. There are a lot of things that relate to council behaviour here including greater use of the Local Resolution Protocol and being able to access monitoring officers in the county council etc. So it all belongs to the same issue in terms of behavior.

So, if these things can be realised, I think the future is quite bright because one of the main challenges in the sector at the moment is that behaviour, than when people leave.

So, it's up to us to keep the people who are with us and also attract more, because they're struggling to recruit at the moment. So, focus on getting those things right first before we can move on so that we can develop to do more things.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Yes, then that's the day-to-day experience, the butterbread job as a clerk. But are you also a Welsh officer with the Society of the Quarry, the SLCC?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Yes, I give advice to clerks, but also liaise on policy in Wales to discuss with organisations such as you, the Wales Audit, and with the Welsh Government, and some discussion with the Commission which looks at members' allowances and the communal-community reviews and so on.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Okay, then can you elaborate a little more on what that role is?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Firstly, I just started out as an adviser to clerks, so I would deal with enquiries, either by email or on the phone, and give advice on a simple little thing sometimes, a simple little enquiry of new clerks for example, to a little more difficult thing in terms of employment and problems that clerks were having with members etc. So it's able to vary what the queries are, and I learn new things myself, while doing.

It's been fantastic in terms of my development if anything, because sometimes I get a query I'm thinking, hmm, I'm sure, so I have to find a mass, and then I learn. So it's great in that regard.

But on the other side, I've seen that more recently, a year after I started here, I also became a policy officer, because the policy officer was retired and I got this additional role, and that's somewhat related to work I've done before, because I worked in Central Government before that, to the Welsh Language Board and the Senedd before that, and the Welsh Government, so I did a lot of policy work before that, and engaged with Central Government Bodies including those in London, and it was a real suit to be able to enter those discussions in order to influence the sector and represent clerks in Wales in the discussions with the Welsh Government and the Audit Office etc.

I'm lucky because I'll listen, I'll take part in meetings, and I know that they don't have the same success in England.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Yes cause I'm aware the conversation has discussed a lot on the problems and issues, but I'm all sorry isn't it?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

No way. You talk to a lot of clerks, and they all enjoy their jobs.

No jobs are the problem, there are other things around them that can sometimes be difficult.

But in terms of the day-to-day work, there's a lot of variety, there's a lot of relatable people who can be nice. You are part of the community, you participate in events etc. There's a lot of fun to have, and I'd recommend the role, and there's a shortage of clerks, so there's plenty of opportunities to get work too.

So I'd encourage people to try, and anyone is welcome to contact me anytime if they're having a conversation about what the role requirements are, and what my experience is. I've worked for a small council, a medium council and a big council now, so I have quite a bit of experience of the different ones and what the differences are. And there are a lot of differences between the small advice and the big advice, but I enjoy each one and it brings different experiences to our life, so I'm very grateful for it.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Then, let's talk specifically and generally about what it's like to be a community and town council clerk, and part of what you do as organisations is that you run projects every now and then, don't you?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

One of the things Carmarthen Town Council is doing, well, you have to say yes you do to hold a Children's Climate Conference and you have a community energy project.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Then, can you describe the Children's Climate Conference?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Yes, the idea came up with a lawsuit under the National Well-being Future Act, it's our duty. To consider the future, sustainability etc, and to look like future generations, and as a council we want to engage with young people in the community too.

So, the idea came about five years ago to do a children's climate conference, and we started doing that in 2023 right, but it was the 2024 one for example and we won an award with one Llais Cymru for that one. What happened, we brought together nine local schools, 7 primary schools and 2 secondary schools, sent between five and ten pupils each to come to the conference.

The University had agreed and collaborated with us, the University of Wales and Trinity Saint David, who held the event at the Halliwell Centre. And it was there that the children came to learn about environmental things including the life cycle of Butterfly, from them doing a bit of modelling with tea junk and using recycling, and they considered what their carbon footprint was and counted that.

Over the lunch break too, there was a local environmental group working with them on looking at worms and the food process of composting etc. One of the challenges of the day was that they brought a sustainable food box and with a reward for the same.

It was a good experience for the children because they got to see the university, and that creates a link after us and that they remember that after us when they are later on and create a link now in the schools and the town as well and with the Town Council.

The lecturers were attached to him, the students were attached to him, so he was a project for them. And we also brought in the Botanic Garden to help us, so it was a partnership project; working collaboratively, pulling institutions like the University in that are very well established but local to us, same thing with the Botanic Garden, because that's just down the ice, to put these activities on so that they learn by doing basically, and they had a great deal of fun. It was a fantastic experience that everyone enjoyed, lecturers praised, the students enjoyed, the children certainly enjoyed, and they learned a lot at the same time.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

So a very practical day then?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Yes, yes, there was nothing down to get. We welcomed them at first. It was like a real conference because there was one main room and then there were areas like a breakout to go to in order to do an activity.

And then I went round and did a circle of Welsh groups and English groups with us, so it was a completely bilingual event, everyone gathered together to have lunch etc, the intention was to do mass activities outside, but the weather was not very promising on the day.

But we hope to do that again sometime in the future, because that's something that continues. It was nice to see that the older ones were also able to enjoy, because the children of years seven and eight, you weren't sure if they were going to undertake the same thing in the same spirit, and the little children, but he worked it across the ages, until he kept them in the age groups, and then sorted them by language as well.

So, the day worked really well, and it was a good example of working in partnership, where we were leading in terms of putting everything together and

pulling everyone together. But the University has been a big help in terms of the resources and giving us the building. I'd done it in a hall here with the council the year before, but there's a lot more space with them that worked better.

Was it a good experience for the students, but also having the Botanic Garden tied in with the local environmental group, just a small amount of everyone locally contributing so, a nice experience for everyone.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

What did you do to accomplish the project was that consolidation role?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

The combination and facilitation of what I am talking to at the beginning of the example and at the end, it will still work those helping to move the children of the bite and give them instructions and support etc.

So, it was a joint project and we took pictures, we made a report. And what we do every year is gather their views so that we can put it into the council's strategy as well. So we don't just do it on the day and leave it there.

We take their feedback, and either put them in the strategy, or we look at it for the year ahead, and work on what they've come up with if it's within our remit. If it doesn't, we pass it on to another organisation, and then we report it back to them the year after us, we say, right, you ask about this, or what we did during the last year, so that they can see that their words have an effect.

So that's a very important part of it for him as well, and maybe it's going to be a big success in terms of the report and being able to share things on social media as well, because it's obviously been a beneficial experience.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Yes, so did you get something very useful and practical out of holding the conference for the purpose of gathering information then?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

He was as much to us as he was to them. It was a great event for the children and for everyone else involved, but it enabled us to engage with the community, and especially the children and young people, because it's very difficult to do that without you going to school etc, and they sit down in the hall. It's not the same experience.

When you have them in the room with you doing activities, they talk more freely, you get a more honest opinion, and it's a little bit of a focus group like that on a specific topic, you can take these steps forward, and try to improve things for the future for them. Sometimes they go off on all sorts of tangents, but that's fine, that's fine, and we just include those as well, but in terms of the sustainability and so on in the focus in then us, and what are our objectives we're going to be based on their view and the sustainability for the future, and being able to draw

in some of the other things they care about, but then pursue another one to look at those.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

And then you'll touch on this a bit but do you have any further plans with that project or a similar project?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

It keeps going every year. The one that happened in two thousand and twenty-five has happened in conjunction with the County Council, because they are also holding a climate conference of their own. It was a bit more spacious in terms of location, and we held an afternoon session. From them we did a morning session, and we did more of the junk models here. And we're looking to develop that now this year, that will be around November I think.

So it's something we're going to do annually and it evolves and develops every year to be something different. And it's always something enjoyable to do just to see the children participate and hear their voices and their opinions because it offers something new, something fresh.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

In it is, yes. Then another project that you're talking about, do you have a community energy project? You'd like, that is, what's that project?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

I've always been interested in these community energy projects. If you see the successes in places like Dyffryn Ogwen etc, I was interested, and the members were certainly interested, looking at what Carmarthen's potential is for community energy.

It's a river with us, but not to the same extent as what's on the shore there in terms of power potential, although it's tidal and what I'm discussing with our organisational local sustainability and environmental group, I should say is a group, and I ask for their views and their advice. Then grant funding came in through the SPF, the British Government's SPF funding, and one of the things I was interested in that funding was sustainability and community energy stuff and so on, so I got in touch with a trial to do a project here. Their view was that the feasibility study was the starting point which makes sense to find out what has potential in Carmarthen.

So, that's where it started, and very soon we found out that solar potential is the greatest there is in Wales. So, it was a matter of contacting business organizations in the middle of town where it was possible to purchase the services of some company that was able to do some rooftop study in order to find the best locations for that as well.

That was important. Someone phoned one hundred and eighteen businesses to get their opinion on it too, and that was then replaced down to ten locations to a cat energy efficiency study, so to go in look at the insulation, look at the electricity, look at the bulb and the radiators and stuff like that and improve things like that, But also looking at the potential of the building to stand there by costing through the solar potential and identifying pretty good potential in several of those that were using a lot of electricity, for example.

So, if that report has found enough potential to do that in the town, there are some complications in terms of what they call a conservation area in the town centre, so there are limitations, but the next step then will be to take the study that has been finished, published and so on. To be able to turn that into reality for the businesses and so on, and sell some of the electricity that is generated back to the community at Tsie levels, Chinese costs.

And that's what the council was interested in. Was it cheaper to be able to sell energy back into the community and also help community organizations, because what we're looking at institutions and community organization buildings as well, than is just businesses so that we can give back into the community, keep people's costs down like that as well.

So, it was quite interesting in terms of the results, limited in the end in terms of how much they ended up doing, about ten of them, but there was certainly potential then and they helped those businesses stand on their bills and so on.

So, and that was the main motivation of the businesses, was to reduce costs which are main incentive for any business right now, because it's them at the moment.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

In it, so there was, have there been solar panels installed from the project and the studies were the project?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

This was a study, but there are more grant opportunities coming up now, so I was still in touch with Ynni Sir Gâr and Ynni Teg, who were doing the study on our behalf and going out to do the visits etc. I'm still in touch with them in terms of finding that opportunity to get grant money to do the work.

Because one of the things we discussed right at the beginning is, we don't want this to be another report that sits on a shelf doing nothing, and I still feel that. Time goes on, but the motivation is still to do something about it, but it's just waiting for the right opportunity in terms of finances to be able to move it forward.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

And is there where the project ends now, in terms of waiting for a budget in order to fix things that are there or other things going on in the community energy world?

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

There's a lot going on with them in terms of different projects. Nothing directly with us at the moment, but we're waiting for the opportunity to be able to root this out. We have been discussing the electric car scheme with them as well. Several of those have popped up around Wales, and that's still on the horizon too, and I'd like to do that.

Getting enough people involved is the trick here, because it's a lot of things like somewhere to park and charge the car etc. So having enough people involved in the project to be able to offer that, and people to be able to take the bookings and so on. It's quite complicated, but something that's certainly still a target, but sometimes I just consider that these things can take more time than you think and yet it's still not like something I'd like to do.

Siôn Owen (Audit Wales)

Yes then on to that, thank you very much for sharing about projects at Carmarthen Town Council, and the projects you are involved in, some of them and also thank you very much Emma for your time and for sharing your knowledge and experience.

Emma Smith (Carmarthen Town Council)

Welcome, thank you very much for inviting us to be part of the podcast.

Rhian Jones (Audit Wales)

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For more information, check out the chapter notes, all the details and contact details are there.

You can also head over to our Audit Wales website if you have any questions or comments, we'd love to hear from you.

Heading 4

- 1 Numbered text¹
 - Bullet
 - Sub-bullet
- 2 To insert a table, click **insert > quick parts**. Select a table from the dropdown menu.

¹ Footnote text

Start each appendix on a new blank page – click **insert > page break**.

If you want to insert a landscape page, use the **branded_document_landscape_template**.

Appendix 1 – title (heading 2)

Heading 3

Heading 4

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