

Dan Y Coed  
4 Churchwood  
Penygarn  
Pontypool  
Torfaen  
NP4 8DD

13<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Dear Citizen,

Re: 'Seeking your support to restore democracy to Torfaen'

I am contacting you for your support to help my campaign restore democracy to Torfaen. Over the past few weeks, I have been busy researching the legal position of a petition-based demand for a county-based referendum. I am taking this action because the Labour Party regained control of the Borough council by the actions of five Councillors that were elected to stand against the Labour regime. They have become the aptly named 'Famous Five'.

The information that I have received from Eversheds Solicitors in Cardiff is that a referendum can take place, but not for a period of four years, so realistically this is not a viable course of action. What I have decided is a serious alternative for means of securing democracy for the residents of Torfaen and restoring the people's faith in the electoral system by organising a private countywide petition.

The petition will hold no legal power but will be presented to the full council by a named petitioner, and the Councillors will then be asked to take a vote in chambers on the aims of the petition. The vote will be recorded and will take place in front of local and national press.

At this time, the basic aims of the petition are as follows:

- Proportional representation from the leadership down through all member committees;
- The leader and deputy leader will not be allowed from the same party;
- The current leadership will have to step down and a new election take place;
- The mayor will lose the double vote right;
- The title of Leader and Deputy Leader will be amended to Chair and Vice Chair to reflect a non-party basis.

The purpose of the petition is to force Councillors to publicly vote on the introduction of a democratic system that will ensure the electorate of Torfaen have a voice and can influence the politics of the region. The public nature of the voting will create a moral dilemma for some Councillors - will they support the Labour leadership or will they support the needs of their constituents?

If you were a Councillor how would you vote?

Now that I have told you the details, I return to the reason for this letter. I am asking you personally if you would be interested in supporting my campaign for democracy in Torfaen. There is a lot to do and every available pair of hands will be required. If you would like to help in any way your assistance would be very much appreciated.

The following is a press release that was sent to the South Wales Argus and the Pontypool Freepress on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2008:

### **Press Release**

As an independent councillor, I am free of any party whip and cannot be controlled by the restrictions of party policy. When I stood for the council my mandate was that I would work to secure better financial accountability, improved environmental management and where dubious or immoral decisions had been made I would root it out.

Well I tell the residents of Torfaen I stand by this pledge, over the past few weeks since the betrayal of the electorate by the 3 Plaid Cymru and 2 Independent Councillors, I have been working hard to establish the legal position and identify any realistic actions to take that would secure democracy for the residents of Torfaen.

I am not a career Councillor, it does not matter to me if I upset the status quo or people don't like me.....What I have learnt over the past few weeks is that rhetoric is cheap, there is so much hot air spoken by Councillors it's a wasted natural resource..... This is not my way, I consider, think, talk through then act..... What does matter to me is that the people who voted for me as a fighter and campaigner, see that their vote was not wasted.

To this end, at the end of June and in the first week of July I will be launching a Torfaen wide petition. It will commence with a rally from County Hall to the Civic Centre. I am currently working with supporters of my campaign to establish a network of petitioners, and campaign helpers. If you or group would like to support my actions to force Councillors to make a public decision on democracy, I ask you to contact me. All support is welcome, assistance is coming from the most unexpected of quarters. I personally thank all members of the coalition that support my action and Ian Williams of the Peoples Voice for his advice and counsel.

My message to the labour leadership is democracy is coming and you will have to work hard to hold it back..... And, when I have restored people faith in the electoral system, I will be moving on exposing any dubious practices that have occurred in the past.

Join the campaign, let's fight back and root out the charlatans.....

**End of Press Release**

I hope that you will find the campaign of interest and be willing to offer your support in any way.

I would suggest that gathering signatures from neighbours and friends would be a vital contribution, as would physically supporting the campaign at any public events and rallies.

The launch of the petition is to take place at the Civic Centre in the first week of July and your participation in the event would be a substantial boost to the whole process.

I look forward to hearing from you, feel free to call me on 01495 753111 or email [fred.wildgust@virgin.net](mailto:fred.wildgust@virgin.net)

Kind regards

Cllr Fred Wildgust (Fred)