

# Jo Watkins

Re-energising Liberalism in South Wales East



- ✓ Lib Dem County Council Group Leader
- ✓ Delivering on increased school and nursery provision
- ✓ The leading liberal voice on climate change in South Wales East
- ✓ Unleashing the potential of activists across the region

## I am focused on a brighter future:

*For our children, the environment and the economy. And for the growth of our local parties*

Since joining the Liberal Democrats I have campaigned in constituencies across the South Wales East Region, and worked in four constituencies in the 2019 General Election. In 2017 I was elected as County Councillor in Monmouthshire (MCC) at my first attempt. I lead the MCC Lib Dem Councillor group and Chair two Council Committees.

I stood for Parliament in Islwyn in 2019.

I'm mum to two school-age children and have a background in financial services. I run my own business alongside my council duties. My husband is a second-generation steelworker

I am certain that with the right leadership the Liberal Democrats in South Wales East can be engaged, upskilled and re-energised to deliver a compelling radical liberal vision to the electorate.

### Education

I'm passionate about education & am a keen advocate of Kirsty Williams' new curriculum. My work with Head Teachers shows me they embrace this change. I will build on this Welsh Lib Dem success story. As a Councillor I've delivered increased nursery provision & wrap around care, to support working families.

### Environment

I deliver results, even when in an opposition role. I won unanimous cross-party support for a Climate Emergency motion in Monmouthshire County Council despite challenges from the Tory leadership whose MP is a vocal climate change sceptic.

### Economy

I believe in a joined up, regional approach to the housing crisis. My focus is on us building high quality sustainable homes and communities, not just sheer numbers. We can spearhead a green transport revolution & grasp this moment to unlock our local economic potential.



## Rebuilding our party

*I campaigned across four constituencies in the 2019 General Election. Something that became really clear to me is that there is a great well of skills, passion, energy and enthusiasm amongst our members and supporters that for any number of historical reasons remains largely untapped.*

*It's time to engage with our Membership - all of them - and unleash that potential through the Assembly Election and onward into the Local Elections that follow.*

*I will continue to take a cooperative and inclusive approach, training, mentoring and organising everyone who wants to volunteer. Together we then we have the chance to rekindle the liberal values in the hearts of the electorate across the whole South Wales East region and present viable, electable candidates in this election and beyond.*

## Listening to the communities we serve is the bedrock of liberal politics

People often over complicate politics, but at its heart it is about listening closely to the needs of the communities you serve, and finding a way to help them. Being able to talk well helps, but you learn nothing by talking - only by listening - and by acting on what you hear.

I am Chair of the cross-party working group on Period Poverty, and work with staff and pupils at all four Monmouthshire secondary schools to ensure support for every girl in the county. At the Youth Democracy conference in Monmouth, I spoke on getting 16 and 17 year olds the vote. It was gratifying that my work in the community was

recognised by local sixth form students. My work on youth engagement also includes being guest speaker at Cross Keys College on their Politics course.

At the start of the COVID outbreak I was asked to take over running Caldicot Food Bank. Many original staff had to shelter for health reasons, so I recruited a new team of volunteers, made our processes COVID-secure, whilst handling a near-trebling of demand. In the process we got coverage on the BBC, Argus and Freepress.

I am an advocate for Newport City Dogs home, through which we rescued our family champion campaign dog Nyima.

## Winning: Media and Social Media

I run an online business, and have a broadsheet-journalist brother, so I am acutely aware of the importance of both print and electronic media. Distorted and divisive though it was, the EU Referendum campaign proved that social media is the key battleground of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And it's a battleground on which we win.

My media experience includes being interviewed by the BBC and Sky TV on election night last year.

Local journalists consider me the 'go-to' councilor for issues in Severnside, and for climate change issues across the county.

I am highly active on both Facebook and Twitter. Over 26,000 people saw a single tweet from me during my work in Jane Dodd's victorious by-election campaign.

During the Assembly campaign I intend to support our Lib Dem candidates in learning how to win in the digital age.

Vote for Jo Watkins as #1 on the regional list