

Councillor Information

Name: Josie Pearson

Work Background:

Up until the age of 17 I was a keen competitive horse rider studying for my A levels with dreams of becoming the next Mary King (one of the most successful three day event riders in the world). All that was changed in an instant when I was involved in RTA in which I broke my neck which left me permanently paralysed from the top of my chest downwards. My competitive equestrian career was over but while attending Cardiff University, to study neuroscience, I was introduced to wheelchair rugby. I fell in love with the sport and quickly realised that competitive sport was where my heart lay so I left my studies to pursue a career in Paralympic sport. That then led to me becoming the first GB female to represent wheelchair rugby at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic games, where we came fourth. After the highs and lows of my time with wheelchair rugby I decided to focus my efforts on individual sport again and made the switch to athletics. I finally found my niche and on home turf, at the London 2012 Paralympic games, I became Paralympic champion and world record holder in discus. My efforts were recognised in the New Years honours list where I was awarded an MBE for my services to sport. The year after I defended my title at the World Championships with world record throws but unfortunately, after the European Championships the year after, I sustained an injury which resulted in me retiring from competitive sport.

Interests both within/outside Council:

I enjoy working within the community, communicating with and helping bring a sense of community spirit to the town. Hay is a tourist honey pot with its title of 'Town of Books', where there are many types of businesses, I would like to assist in whatever way I can, so this continues and grows. Exploring the countryside with my dogs is one of my past times so living within the Brecon Beacons National Park there is plenty to see although being a wheelchair user this can have its limitations. I hope to help open up the countryside to those less able by removing barriers such as stiles and very uneven terrain.

Reason for joining the Council:

After my career in Paralympic sport was cut short I didn't really have a 'Plan B' and, after chatting with Cllr Trudy Stedman who introduced me to the thought of becoming a councillor, I decided that I would give it a go. The community has given me so much over the years that I thought it very fitting that I give something back.