Welsh Headlines — 16 Oct 2026

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Compiled 09:45 BST, Friday 16 October 2026 • Sources: BBC Wales / Cymru Fyw / Sport, Nation.Cymru, GOV.WALES, YouGov — method note at the foot.

? Top Story: Labour calls for the M4 relief road — seven years after axing it

Welsh Labour leader Ken Skates has called on the Plaid Cymru government to start work on an M4 relief road around Newport — the very project his own party scrapped in 2019.

Skates told BBC Wales there was "no other option on the table" to solve congestion in Newport, and said he backed a version of the original plan with changes. Labour will table a Senedd vote on Wednesday calling for an "appropriate relief road" to be built. A report published earlier this month said the road could now cost around £3bn; the Welsh government declined to comment.

The move will be seen by some as an attempt to distance Welsh Labour from part of the legacy of former First Minister Mark Drakeford, who axed the proposals in 2019 on grounds of cost and environmental impact. It also means all three opposition groups — Reform, Labour and the Conservatives — now back a relief road, weeks after the government set out options for tackling congestion including closing junction 27 at High Cross and eastbound slip roads at junctions 25 and 26. The Welsh government has commissioned an 18-month project to assess possible "roads-based" solutions, although it has ruled out the black route.

(BBC Wales and BBC Cymru Fyw, 15 October. Earlier roundups covered Sophie Howe's defence of the scrapping (3 October) and the junction-closure backlash (7 October) — the Labour U-turn is the new development.)

?? Politics & the Senedd

?? Former chief justice: "no arguments of substance" against devolving policing

Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, a former Lord Chief Justice, has challenged Welsh Secretary Stephen Kinnock's opposition to devolving justice and policing to Wales.

Speaking to S4C's *Y Byd yn ei Le*, produced by ITV Cymru Wales, Lord Thomas — who chaired the Commission on Justice in Wales between 2017 and 2019 — said resistance stems from a reluctance to diminish the role of MPs in London. He rejected Kinnock's warning that devolution could "jeopardise" cooperation on serious crime such as county lines: "It is an argument that is without any real substance… The fact that you have separate systems does not in any way impede cooperation." The comments come as First Minister Rhun ap Iorwerth seeks a "new deal" for Wales including powers over policing and justice, with Prime Minister Andy Burnham saying he is "open" to devolution.

(Nation.Cymru, 15 October — Mark Mansfield. The FM's 2 October "new deal" letter was covered at the time.)

?? Local party wins Flintshire by-election with 91% of the vote

Flintshire People's Voice has taken the Higher Kinnerton by-election, its candidate winning 566 votes (91.3%) — 27 times Reform UK's tally.

Josh Swash, who lives in the village, won the party's seventh seat on Flintshire County Council. The Conservatives and Reform UK finished joint second on 21 votes (3.4%) each, with the Heritage Party on 10 and an independent on two; turnout was 42.79%. Higher Kinnerton is a relatively prosperous village about six miles west of Chester and a five-minute drive from the Airbus factory at Broughton. Swash succeeds an independent councillor who was re-elected unopposed in 2022, and will serve until next May's county council elections.

(Nation.Cymru, 16 October — Martin Shipton.)

?? Reform MS rebuked for a "Reform Cymru" rebrand

A Reform UK Member of the Senedd has been sharply rebuked after he began referring to his party as "Reform Cymru".

Caerdydd Ffynnon Taf MS Cai Parry-Jones used the name while opening a debate on council tax referendums on Wednesday (14 October), and later referred to a "Reform Cymru councillor" on Anglesey who voted against spending £1.1m on swapping household black bins for smaller ones. Reform's Welsh branch is officially Reform UK Wales — sometimes "Reform Wales" — and translates its name as "Diwygio DU Cymru"; "Cymru" is closely associated with Plaid Cymru, the party Reform deliberately positions itself against.

(Nation.Cymru, 15 October — Emily Price.)

? YouGov: Burnham popular in Wales, ap Iorwerth divides opinion

New YouGov polling puts Andy Burnham on a net favourability rating of +14 in Wales, while First Minister Rhun ap Iorwerth splits the country at +1.

49% of Welsh people see the Prime Minister favourably against 35% unfavourably. Ap Iorwerth is viewed positively by 33% and negatively by 32%, with 35% unsure. Nigel Farage is the least popular major politician, on -43 (66% unfavourable, 23% favourable). At least 68% of Welsh people have no opinion of the other Senedd party leaders. 78% see Plaid Cymru as a "main party" in Wales, against 67% for Labour and 31% for the Conservatives; health (48%), the economy (44%) and immigration (33%) are judged the most important issues. Half of Welsh people (50%) disapprove of the Welsh government's record so far, against 22% who approve.

(YouGov, 15 October — "Wales political snapshot, October 2026".)

Also in politics: Chancellor John Healey has written to Llanelli's Royal British Legion branch praising its growth — membership up from 33 to 91 and more than £21,000 raised for the 2025 Poppy Appeal — after local MP Dame Nia Griffith raised its work with him *(Nation.Cymru, 16 October)*.

?? Aberfan — 60 years on

? King confirms he will visit Aberfan next week

King Charles III has told MSs he will visit Aberfan next week with the Queen and the Prince of Wales to mark the 60th anniversary of the disaster.

He said he was "immensely privileged and proud" to have maintained a "special connection with Wales", as he and Queen Camilla officially opened the Seventh Senedd in Cardiff Bay. A 21-round royal gun salute marked their arrival; the couple were met by First Minister Rhun ap Iorwerth and the Llywydd, Huw Irranca-Davies, with pupils from Llwynypia Primary in Tonypandy and Albany

Primary in Cardiff greeting them outside. Chants of "not my King" were heard alongside cheers.

(Nation.Cymru, 16 October — Ella Groves, ICNN Senedd reporter. Yesterday's roundup carried the ceremonial opening and the row over the National Poet's rejected poem.)

? "If it hadn't been for Nansi Williams, it would have been 121 children"

An Aberfan survivor saved by a dinner lady has spoken publicly for the first time about his hero, ahead of a purple plaque honouring her.

Paul Harries, who was six, was one of five children found alive under the body of Nansi Williams. He had been giving her his dinner money when the coal tip above the village collapsed on 21 October 1966, engulfing Pantglas Junior School and nearby homes: 144 people died, including 116 children. "If it hadn't been for Nansi Williams, then instead of 116 children dying that morning it would have been 121," he said. "It would have been us. One hundred percent." Now 66 and never previously interviewed, he said he was speaking because "Nansi's story needs to be told and recognised". The purple plaque will be unveiled in the village later this month.

(BBC Wales, 15 October, updated today.)

? Education

?? Gowerton School set for a £47m rebuild

Swansea council's cabinet has approved replacing all three blocks at Gowerton School with a single new building, in a scheme that could cost nearly £50m.

The original plan was to rebuild two blocks and refurbish the 1930s Block A, a former grammar school, but the cabinet report said its "condition, risks and potential redevelopment requirements… are materially greater than previously understood". Cllr Robert Smith, the council's cabinet member for education and learning, said the school was built in the late 1930s "when people said there was no economic future for south west Wales" — "an act of defiance and confidence". Accessibility issues were also a factor.

(Nation.Cymru, 16 October — Richard Youle, Local Democracy Reporter.)

? U-turn over Ysgol Cilgerran's church status

Pembrokeshire councillors have reversed a decision to strip Ysgol Gynradd Cilgerran of its church school status, after the Church in Wales threatened legal action.

In May the council voted to remove the school's Voluntary Controlled status and turn it into a 3–11 community school, prompting warnings of "religious discrimination" against faith schools in the county. At Thursday's meeting in Haverfordwest, cabinet member Paul Miller said the "technical challenges outweighed" the benefits of the change.

(BBC Cymru Fyw, 15 Hydref — Sara Dafydd. The original proposal was covered on 17 August.)

? Health & Public Services

? Dentists warn the NHS contract is becoming unsustainable

Dental leaders have warned that NHS practices in Wales cannot stay financially viable if rising costs and extra responsibilities go unmatched by funding.

Ahead of negotiations with the Welsh Government over the 2026–27 dental contract uplift, the Welsh General Dental Practice Committee is calling for pay awards to be fully funded alongside support for growing practice expenses. Vice-chairs Dan Cook and Katie Davis cited employment costs, regulatory requirements, inflation and workforce shortages, warning that headline funding increases do not necessarily translate into better pay because the money can be absorbed by running costs. "We are calling for a clear approach that recognises both workforce pay and the realities of running a dental practice," they said.

(Nation.Cymru, 16 October — Mark Mansfield.)

? Strong backing for "healthy by default" in Wales

Public Health Wales polling shows 77% of people in Wales support making advertising, special offers and price promotions on healthier food and drink the default approach — 16% are indifferent and 6% oppose.

Support remains at 72% even if it means fewer promotions and adverts for unhealthy food and drink (18% indifferent, 8% oppose), and 81% back making healthier food and drink the default option overall. "Healthy by default" means making healthier choices easier to find, buy and choose in everyday settings such as schools, hospitals, cafés, leisure centres and transport hubs — more options lower in calories, fat, sugar and salt, healthier portion sizes, and non-sugary drinks as

standard.

(Nation.Cymru, 16 October.)

? Environment, Rural & Business

? Puffins face a steep decline by 2050, research warns

New research predicts Puffins in Britain and Ireland will decline significantly by 2050 as climate change reduces food availability and drives extreme weather.

Puffins are one of ten seabird species expected to suffer long-term population effects, with Arctic Terns and Fulmars also at significant risk. British Trust for Ornithology scientists are especially concerned by the decline in sandeels — a key food source for adults and chicks — driven by over-fishing and climate change, particularly in the North Sea. The warning follows a record 52,019 Puffins counted on Skomer Island earlier this year.

(Nation.Cymru, 16 October. The Middleholm seabird reserve lease was covered on 3 August.)

? Powys farmer: hosting 4G masts has cost me thousands

A farmer who has hosted mobile masts on his land for more than 20 years says his rent has been halved and the dispute has cost him £5,000 in fees — warning other landowners not to "touch it with a barge pole".

Alan Watson, 68, of Llanbadarn Fynydd, claims farmers are being "bullied" into accepting worse terms because of changes made to the Electronic Communications Code in 2017, which governs agreements between telecoms operators and landowners. The Farmers' Union of Wales said it feared rent cuts would put people off hosting masts, harming connectivity in rural Wales. Defra said its reforms ensured landowners were "treated fairly when negotiating with mobile operators". Nearly a quarter of Wales lacks 4G coverage from every mobile network operator, according to Ofcom.

(BBC Wales, 15 October, updated today.)

Also in business: Bluestone, the five-star Pembrokeshire resort, has appointed Rebecca Rigby as Managing Director from 12 October, heading a new Executive Group, with William McNamara moving to the Chairman role *(Nation.Cymru, 15 October)*. Christmas at Bute Park has unveiled the

food trader line-up for this year's *Spirit of Christmas* trail *(Nation.Cymru, 15 October)*.

?? People & Justice

? Gang fired at the "wrong house" in Pyle, court hears

Bullets were found lodged in a wall and a microwave after a gang targeting a young child fired shots at the wrong home in Pyle, Bridgend, while a woman and her son slept inside.

Cardiff Crown Court was shown footage of two men firing a 9mm pistol at the house in the early hours of 22 September 2025 before fleeing on an electric motorbike. Neither occupant was injured. The jury heard the shooting was retaliation against alleged drug dealer Daniel O'Callaghan, after the gang believed he had taken drugs worth thousands of pounds from a hiding place in Guernsey. Kian Darkes and Daniel Clarke, both 21 and from the Bridgend area, have admitted possessing a firearm and ammunition in a public place but deny possessing a firearm with intent to endanger life; Callum Pearson and Kyle Long are also on trial. A photograph of a child and messages discussing targeting the youngster were found on a phone.

(BBC Wales, 15 October.)

? Baby found on the Menai Strait shoreline named Ceri

North Wales Police has named the baby girl whose body was found on the Menai Strait shoreline near Siliwen Road, Bangor, on 27 September — she is now known as Ceri.

A post-mortem examination suggested the newborn may have been in the water for up to a few weeks. Officers are still trying to trace her mother, appealing to anyone who regularly walked the Ashley Fields area of Bangor since 30 August, and asking for photos or videos taken around the shoreline between 30 August and 27 September to be uploaded to a major incident portal. Supt Llinos Davies said the force was "determined to get answers"; Betsi Cadwaladr's director of midwifery, Fiona Giraud, appealed directly to the mother to come forward.

(BBC Wales, 15 October; BBC Cymru Fyw. The discovery itself was reported in late September.)

? Drug dealer from Gwynedd ordered to hand back £80,000

A 75-year-old drug dealer has been ordered to hand over £80,401 in cash and assets after a Proceeds of Crime Act hearing at Caernarfon Crown Court.

Arthur Hughes, of Maes Bleddyn, Rachub, near Bethesda, is serving three years and two months after being sentenced in June 2026 for possessing heroin with intent to supply and possessing criminal property. The court heard his benefit from criminal activity was estimated at more than £151,730, and police recovered £80,401 — with an order to transfer the sum and another for the drugs and equipment found at his home to be destroyed.

(BBC Cymru Fyw, 15 Hydref — Nia Tudur.)

Also: A Cardiff mother who lost her baby daughter Luna shortly after bringing her home has written the children's book *Skye & Luna* and set up Luna's Light CIC to help families talk about baby loss and grief *(Nation.Cymru, 15 October)*.

? Culture

? Michael Sheen's patience with a neurodivergent interviewer goes viral

A clip of Michael Sheen waiting quietly while a neurodivergent interviewer gathers his thoughts has been widely praised online.

The resurfaced moment, from the BBC programme *The Assembly*, shows interviewer Leo taking his time before asking Sheen whether he relates to Dylan Thomas's work because both are Welsh. Sheen called it "a fantastic question", noting that Thomas came from Swansea and he is from Port Talbot, and admitted much of the poetry is hard to follow: "It sort of makes you feel something and it conjures up images in your head."

(Nation.Cymru, 16 October — Amelia Jones.)

? Manic Street Preachers lyrics unveiled on Womanby Street

The first in a series of lyric artworks has gone up in Cardiff's independent music quarter, featuring a line from the Manics' *Deleted Scenes*.

"I prefer the mirror to the screen, helps me understand the way I feel" now covers a building on Womanby Street, created during Cardiff Music City Festival by the Welsh artist Sean Edwards — who grew up in Llanedeyrn, represented Wales at the 2019 Venice Biennale and received a Turner

Prize Bursary in 2020. Cardiff Council says more installations celebrating Welsh music and creativity will follow across the city. *(Nation.Cymru, 15 October.)*

? Welsh voice actors dominate the VOX Awards

Four Welsh performers took home six awards at the VOX Awards, with Ystalyfera-based Phil Rowe leading the way on three.

Rowe won Male Voiceover Performance of the Year, Best Human Performance in a Corporate Presentation and the Judges' Choice Award. Three Welsh voice actors alone collected five of the fourteen awards presented; two of Rowe's recognised a collaboration with Cardiff-based CREO Marketing. *(Nation.Cymru, 15 October.)*

? Sir Anthony Hopkins tops the classical chart

Sir Anthony Hopkins has celebrated his first UK number one album, filmed dancing a jig with the trophy on Instagram.

The Port Talbot-born actor, 88, topped the Official Classical Artist Albums Chart with *Life is a Dream* , his first album for Decca Classics — a 12-track collection of music written over more than six decades, much of it drawing on his south Wales upbringing and family. *(Nation.Cymru, 15 October.)*

? A Cardiff accent joins the Marvel universe

Cardiff-born actor Lauren Morais will play the villain Lisa Molinari in *VisionQuest*, the Disney+ spin-off from *WandaVision*, using her own accent.

Morais told BBC Radio Wales she first auditioned with an Essex accent, then tried northern and American, before asking in a later reading: "can she be from Cardiff?" — and being told "of course". She said it was important to hear different accents on screen. *(BBC Wales, 15 October.)*

? Charlotte Church to "pause" her wellness retreat

Charlotte Church is to "pause" The Dreaming, her wellness retreat at Rhydoldog House near Rhayader, from December, to "germinate new dreams for the future".

The retreat, in the former home of the fashion designer Laura Ashley, which Church bought in 2021, has hosted more than 3,000 guests over five years. In a statement, the team said the world was "different" now and the project needed to "reassess, with candour and courage, what it is we should be offering", adding that it could not say when it would return. *(BBC Wales, 15 October. Earlier coverage was of the Awen Project forest school and her End of Times Pop Dungeon shows.)*

Also in culture: Swansea University historians have published *Contested Histories*, ten essays on how communities around the world respond to disputed monuments, growing out of a 2021 conference held after Bristol's Edward Colston statue was toppled *(Nation.Cymru, 16 October)*. A Welsh teenage art prodigy features on *Portrait Artist of the Year (Nation.Cymru, 15 October)*.

? Sport

? GB take two golds at the Track World Championships

Great Britain won the women's team pursuit and the men's scratch race on day two of the World Track Cycling Championships in Shanghai — with Welsh rider Anna Morris in the gold-winning quartet.

Erin Boothman, Anna Morris, Josie Knight and Millie Couzens overturned an early deficit to beat world champions Italy by more than five seconds. Matthew Bostock attacked at halfway to win the scratch race and take his first world title, adding a bronze for riding in the earlier rounds of the team pursuit. GB's men — Henry Hobbs, Noah Hobbs, Ethan Vernon and Ollie Wood — took bronze against France, while Denmark beat Italy for their fourth consecutive title in the men's pursuit.

(BBC Sport, 15 October. Morris, from Cardiff, is a five-time world champion and a 2026 Commonwealth Games gold medallist.)

? Wales women make their Rugby League World Cup debut

Wales play their first ever Rugby League World Cup match against England in Perth on Saturday, with head coach Tom Brindle saying his side want to show a "small nation punching above their weight".

Brindle has named a 21-player squad with three new caps in the starting line-up and two more who could debut from the bench. Hannah Bluck will represent Wales in a fourth sport, Canterbury Bulldogs captain Tayla Preston starts at scrum-half, and Ffion Lewis becomes the first Welsh woman to play a World Cup in both codes. Samoa and co-hosts Australia follow in Sydney.

(BBC Sport, today.)

? Swans top the Championship as Newport's mood lifts

Jay Fulton says Swansea City's squad depth is the best it has been since relegation in 2018, with Vitor Matos's side top of the Championship on 23 points from 10 games — their best start since leaving the Premier League.

Fulton praised a squad with "almost two players in every position", noting Matos is one of only two managers in the division to have used all 50 substitution slots available to him. Elsewhere, Newport County are seven games unbeaten and two points off the League Two play-offs under Hayden Mullins, who has reinvigorated a club that spent last season fighting relegation.

(BBC Sport, today.)

? Elfyn Evans gets a hero's welcome in Dolgellau

Hundreds of supporters turned out in Dolgellau to welcome home Wales's first world rally champion, Elfyn Evans, who drove his Toyota from Dinas Mawddwy to a stage in the town centre.

After more than half an hour of autographs and photographs, Evans took First Minister Rhun ap Iorwerth for a spin around the Marian car park, the engine roaring. He thanked the family and fans who had backed him since his teens, said the reception from schoolchildren was "a bit surreal", and hoped his success would build awareness of the sport.

(BBC Wales and BBC Cymru Fyw, 15 October. Yesterday's roundup carried the story of his rally gloves being sold to a fan in Japan.)

?? Weather

No weather warnings are in force for the UK. South-east Wales has a largely dry and sunny morning, with patchy cloud and a few scattered showers developing from the north-west this afternoon — a cooler day with gentle to moderate winds. Showers die out tonight, leaving extensively clear skies and a chillier night with easing winds, then Saturday is dry and fine with plenty of sunny spells. BBC Weather's Cardiff day-by-day: today 15°/5°, Saturday 14°/4°, Sunday 14°/7° sunny intervals, Monday 14°/9° light rain, Tuesday 15°/10° light rain, Wednesday 15°/8° light rain, Thursday 15°/9° showers. *(BBC Weather, updated 08:57 today.)*

? Quick Summary

Story	Key detail

M4 relief road	Ken Skates calls for a relief road seven years after Drakeford axed it; £3bn; Senedd vote Wednesday
Devolving policing	Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd says there are "no arguments of substance", challenging Stephen Kinnock
Flintshire by-election	Flintshire People's Voice takes Higher Kinnerton with 91.3%, 27 times Reform UK's vote
YouGov	Burnham +14 in Wales; ap Iorwerth +1; Farage -43; health and the economy the top issues
Aberfan 60	King to visit next week with the Queen and Prince William; purple plaque for Nansi Williams
Dentists	Committee warns NHS dentistry is unsustainable without fully funded pay awards
Healthy by default	77% back healthier food and drink as the default option
Puffins	Research predicts a significant decline by 2050 as sandeel numbers fall
4G masts	Powys farmer says his rent halved and the dispute cost him £5,000; FUW fears for rural coverage
Justice	Pyle shooting trial hears the gang fired at the wrong house; baby Ceri named by police
Culture	Sheen clip goes viral; Manics lyrics on Womanby Street; Welsh voice actors take six VOX awards
Sport	Welsh cyclist Anna Morris in GB's gold quartet; Wales women's RL World Cup debut on Saturday; Swansea top

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Method note: compiled in cron mode at ~09:45 BST. SearXNG (:8086) returned the usual index-and-aggregator mix with no individual article leads, so the sweep ran through the Playwright fetch service (192.168.178.100:8090, MarkItDown): 13 index/feed pages and 56 article pages, all successful. Nitter, Phice, Flaresolverr and Reddit were skipped as instructed; ITV article pages (HTTP 500 through the service), senedd.wales (consent shell) and the WalesOnline live blog (Reach consent wall) were not used. De-duplicated against yesterday's 15 October Welsh file, this morning's UK file and folder-wide keyword greps: dropped as already covered or stale were the Senedd ceremonial opening and the National Poet's rejected poem (yesterday's top story), the FM's 2 October "new deal" letter to Burnham, the £60m ALN budget deal, the WRU chair appointment and Glamorgan's coach leaving for England (13 October), Rees-Zammit's artificial-pitch demand (14 October), the Millwall/Swansea racism investigation (14-15 October), the education-crisis analysis published 15 October (carried yesterday), the Gavin and Stacey festive adaptation and the north Wales national park decision (13 October), youth-training funding (11 October), the Aberfan documentary (10 October) and the Charlotte Church Awen Project saga (August). BBC article pages carry explicit publish stamps — most items above are 15 October or this morning; Nation.Cymru dates its pieces under the headline and Cymru Fyw uses the Welsh dateline (15 Hydref 2026). Weather: BBC Weather Cardiff (updated 08:57) and the warnings page ("No weather warnings are in force for the UK").

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