

Welsh Headlines — 16 Sep 2026

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Wednesday morning roundup · Wales-only · compiled from BBC Wales, BBC Cymru Fyw, Nation.Cymru, GOV.WALES, The Guardian, WalesOnline, BBC Weather

? Top Story: Senedd returns — ap Iorwerth told he has "no mandate on independence"

The Senedd came back from its eight-week summer recess yesterday and Rhun ap Iorwerth's first First Minister's Questions of the new term was dominated by Monday's pro-independence summit in Cardiff Bay — with Reform telling him he has "no mandate to break up the UK.

- **"You have no mandate on independence."** In the absence of Reform's Welsh leader **Dan Thomas** — who his party said was unavailable for "personal reasons" — deputy leader **Helen Jenner** asked the FM whether he had "knowingly" misled voters when he said the May 2026 election was not about independence, telling him: "This chamber has a pro-union majority."
- Ap Iorwerth replied that he has a mandate to pursue "the best for Wales", said Reform "always thinks Wales is too small", asked "Where's the ambition," and invoked **Matthew Rhys's** Emmy speech about Wales being a "small but mighty nation". **"Be more like Matthew,"** he told the chamber.
- **Tory leader Darren Millar** said the FM should focus on fixing the Welsh NHS "instead of hatching plans to break apart the UK", quoting the "damning report" into the emergency department at **Ysbyty Glan Clwyd** — patients left in corridors without food or drink or pain relief, out-of-date medicines, broken equipment, and the paediatric area left

unattended with children present. He also got a laugh by accusing the FM of "sunning yourself on a beach" while his ministers marked their first 100 days. Ap Iorwerth said the opposition were a "cabal of stagnation" but that he "absolutely shares the concern"; his health minister has set out expectations of **Betsi Cadwaladr**.

- **Welsh Labour leader Ken Skates** accused the FM of pleasing "people like Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin" with his memorandum of "disunity", and raised the **health visitor** pay dispute — the strikers were at the Senedd yesterday — saying they feel "snubbed". The FM called it "a dispute that we inherited" and said only the health service could resolve it.
- **Pisa:** Tory **Sam Rowlands** accused the FM of "obsessive pursuit of independence" as Wales' international education scores slipped further behind. Ap Iorwerth called the results "deeply disappointing" and a reflection of "a global downturn in Pisa scores", adding that his government intends to learn from England, which bucked the trend.
- **Other exchanges:** **Christiana Emsley** (Reform) pressed him on the Welsh Gender Service referral pause, noting 26 Plaid backbenchers have publicly objected — the FM said clinical evidence is central and hit back at "extreme ideology from the Reform benches"; **David Hughes** (Reform) asked whether planned renters' protections would prioritise Welsh people over "recent arrivals" — "those pressures, when we look at the big picture, do not come from recent arrivals from overseas"; **Jenner** attacked him over the summer wildfire emergency alerts, which went out to phones in Welsh before English — the FM pointed out the alerts are a UK government responsibility and that they "clearly didn't get it right", adding that Reform's position "is to blame the Welsh language, which wasn't at fault"; and **Francesca O'Brien** (Reform) claimed net zero was behind high energy costs, with **Jane Dodds** (Lib Dem) hearing that Reform denies climate change.

(BBC Wales live blog — David Deans in the Senedd, 15 Sep, final update 15:12 BST; WalesOnline — Ruth Mosalski)

Context: The Senedd's return came a day after ap Iorwerth joined Scotland's John Swinney and Northern Ireland's Michelle O'Neill to declare Westminster's "time is coming to an end" (covered in the 15 Sep roundup). Separately, Reform Wales' leader **Dan Thomas** stood down on Tuesday after his arrest on suspicion of assault and controlling/coercive behaviour, and **Sarah Cooper-Lesadd** became the party's first Senedd defector to Plaid Cymru — full write-up in this morning's UK roundup.

?? Senedd & Politics

?? Reform "tried to cover up" the incident that ended its Welsh leader

Reform UK tried to suppress coverage of Dan Thomas's arrest by warning news outlets they would breach European privacy law by reporting it, Nation.Cymru reveals.

- Rumours circulated on Monday, but the arrest could not be reported until **Gwent Police** issued a statement on Tuesday afternoon confirming a **45-year-old man from the Aberbargoed area** had been arrested on suspicion of **assault and engaging in controlling/coercive behaviour**, and bailed pending further enquiries.
- In the intervening period, Reform representatives told a number of outlets that publishing details of the arrest would breach **Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights** (the right to respect for private and family life).
- Nation.Cymru wrote to Reform's media office asking why the ECHR could be used "to cover up acts of criminality", whether Thomas had been suspended, and whether he would return to the Senedd. **No response was received.**
- Thomas denies wrongdoing. He says he was "released without charge" and has "done nothing wrong"; he is standing down "due to personal reasons" but will keep serving his constituents as MS for **Casnewydd Islwyn**.

(Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton, 16 Sep)

? Poll: Plaid holds its lead — and Labour gets a "Burnham bounce"

Barn Cymru's latest Senedd voting intention poll for ITV Cymru Wales has Plaid Cymru on 32% (down one since May) and Reform on 27% (down two) — but the bigger shift is at Westminster level.

Party	Senedd	Westminster
Plaid Cymru	32% (–1)	27% (–3)
Reform UK	27% (–2)	19% (–7)
Welsh Labour	13% (+1)	18% (+10)
Conservatives	11% (+2)	16% (+4)
Greens	7%	8% (–5)
Lib Dems	5%	—

- The poll was conducted **before** Dan Thomas's resignation and arrest. His personal approval was already sliding: **20%** said he was doing a good job, down from 26%.
- **Rhun ap Iorwerth** has fallen from 44% approval before taking office to **36%**, still well ahead of the other leaders — **Darren Millar** 18%, **Ken Skates** 15%, **Anthony Slaughter** (Greens) 14%.
- Nation.Cymru reads the Westminster numbers as a possible "Burnham bounce" for Welsh Labour, which has more than doubled its Westminster support and now sits one point behind Reform.

(Nation.Cymru, 15 Sep)

? First Minister to speak at the Aberystwyth independence march

Rhun ap Iorwerth will be among the speakers at the rally following the March for Independence in Aberystwyth on Saturday 26 September — the eleventh such march since 2019, and YesCymru's first in mid Wales.

- The march leaves **Castle Gardens at 1pm**, returning there for the rally. An **Indy Market** runs in Castle Gardens from 10am to 4pm, organised by **YesCymru** and **AUOBCymru**.
- Joining the FM: **Hywel Griffiths** (National Eisteddfod Crown and Chair winner), language- and-independence influencers **Bethany Davies** and **Cerys Hutin**, and **Elwyn Vaughan MS**. It is hosted by **Siôn Jobbins** of the Radio YesCymru podcast, with YesCymru chair **Rob Hughes** closing. Live music from **Dros Dro** and **Connemara**.
- Rob Hughes: "Following a historic week that saw pro-independence leaders from Wales, Scotland and Ireland come together in Cardiff, this march gives people from across Wales the opportunity to come together at a time of real momentum for the independence movement."

(Nation.Cymru, 16 Sep — the march itself was announced in the 31 Aug roundup; the FM's participation and lineup are new)

?? Carbon Brief lists 45 misleading climate claims by Reform

The climate science and policy website Carbon Brief has catalogued 45 false or misleading statements about climate and energy made by Reform UK politicians, as Nation.Cymru reports.

- Carbon Brief: "Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, has emerged as a major force in UK politics in recent years — pushing anti-net-zero policies... a rejection of climate science is central to Reform's ideological outlook."
- Deputy leader **Richard Tice**, the party's energy spokesperson, "is a vocal critic of what he calls 'net stupid zero'" and has "incorrectly blamed 'the sun or volcanoes' for human-caused global warming". The outlet notes that as energy spokesperson he has said Reform would scrap the UK's net-zero target, back fossil-fuel expansion and tear up renewable energy contracts.
- **Farage** has "expressed climate-sceptic views and falsely blamed net-zero policies for the 'deindustrialisation of Britain'".
- The list includes Tice claiming "There's no evidence that man-made CO2 is going to change climate change" — against the IPCC's finding that human influence is "unequivocal".

(Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton, 15 Sep)

? MPs demand urgent testing around contaminated land

The Welsh Affairs Committee has written to Welsh Secretary Stephen Kinnock calling for a coordinated approach to testing contaminated former industrial sites in Wales and the communities living nearby.

- The committee says contamination in former industrial areas has been "neglected for too long" and describes government work on testing, remediation and community support as **"siloed, underfunded and incomplete"**.
- Follows last week's evidence session with **Michael Sheen** and journalists **Lucy Taylor** and **Dan Ashby**, whose BBC documentary *Buried* investigated potentially harmful contamination in Wales and England.
- MPs want testing at former industrial sites and among people living nearby; ministers to consider testing food grown in potentially contaminated areas; and clearer information for communities.
- It follows a July letter to Kinnock, after evidence about pollution from abandoned metal mines, in which chair **Ruth Jones** warned of a failure across the UK to establish where contamination exists — leaving people in Wales without a clear understanding of the risks.

(Nation.Cymru — Mark Mansfield, 15 Sep)

? Also in politics

- **WRU bosses called back to the Senedd** this morning for the second time this year — chief executive **Abi Tierney** faces the committee as demands grow for an urgent review of Welsh rugby's governance. *(Full write-up in today's UK roundup)*
- **New Senedd constituency names could change again** — Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru says a review will start from the 16 boundaries used in May, with any amendments in place by the 2030 election. *(BBC Wales, 13 Sep)*

? Health & Public Services

? Powys community hospital cuts: Ed Davey warns of "long-lasting damage" — board decides today

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey has warned that cuts to community hospitals would cause "long-lasting damage" to rural Wales, accusing the Welsh government of

"panic cuts" — as Powys Teaching Health Board meets today to decide whether to put its plans out to public consultation.

- The board is considering reducing community hospital inpatient beds from around **160 to 60**, leaving inpatient wards at **Brecon** and **Newtown** only. Sites in the frame include **Llandrindod Wells Memorial Hospital** and **Ysbyty Bro Ddyfi** in Machynlleth (one of eight hospitals that could lose inpatient beds).
- The board says no final decisions have been made and that if it presses ahead, consultation would run for three months from early October — "one of the most significant public conversations in a generation on the future of local NHS services".
- Sir Ed, speaking ahead of the Lib Dems' four-day autumn conference in Brighton from Saturday, called community hospitals "absolutely crucial" step-down facilities and "good value for money", and said the Welsh NHS has "failed" under both Labour and Plaid.
- **Context:** eight Plaid Cymru representatives in Powys wrote to the board this week warning communities are being offered "different models of centralisation" rather than meaningful choices (covered 13 Sep).

(BBC Wales — Shelley Phelps, Wales Westminster correspondent, 15 Sep; BBC Cymru Fyw — Bethan James)

??? Teen born without hair loses NHS wig funding after moving health board

Kizzi-Rae, 13, who was born without hair, has been told she will no longer receive vouchers for the specialist wigs she has worn since she was three.

- Her mother **Ceri**, from Hope near Wrexham, says **two specialist wigs a year cost £1,250 each**, which used to be funded. After a review, patients living outside the Salford Royal catchment were transitioned back to providers nearer home — as a patient in Wrexham, Kizzi-Rae is now eligible for only **two £100 vouchers a year**, leaving the family about **£2,300 short**.
- Ceri: "With the cost of living as it is, putting food on the table each week is hard enough... The wigs help Kizzi feel like she is the same as everybody else. They give her confidence and help her mental health. She won't leave the house without them." She said she "felt angry at the fact they can just pick her up and drop her like that".
- **Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board** said it could not comment on individual cases.

(BBC Wales — Rowenna Hoskin, 15 Sep)

? Allergy campaigners press Wales again

Parents of children with allergies have renewed their call for the Welsh Government to adopt a "life-saving" law making allergy-awareness training a requirement in all schools

, after the first phase of **Benedict's Law** came into force for English state schools this month (already covered in the 5 Sep roundup).

- **Helen Blythe**, whose five-year-old son **Benedict** died after accidental exposure to cow's milk at his Lincolnshire school in 2021, said: "There is no good reason why children in Wales should be put more at risk than children across the border."
- **Katie Hutt**, a mother from Cardiff, wants stronger safeguarding in Welsh schools. About **40%** of UK children have a diagnosed allergy, according to AllergyUK. The Welsh Government says it is reviewing "existing statutory guidance" and will "consider Benedict's Law to inform future policy in Wales".

(BBC Wales — Ben Price, 15 Sep)

? Education

? Literacy and numeracy plan published — with a baseline test for school starters

The Welsh Government published its new Foundational Literacy and Numeracy plan yesterday (15 Sep), promising national indicators, a baseline assessment for children starting school, and clearer guidance on what learners should know and when.

- Education Minister **Anna Brychan** (Cabinet Minister for Education and the Welsh Language): "**We owe it to current and future generations to get literacy and numeracy right.**"
- The plan takes a **0-16** approach, sets out clearer expectations on **Systematic Synthetic Phonics**, asks schools to develop improvement targets alongside individual learner targets, and focuses on parental engagement, reading at home, access to books through school libraries and poverty-related barriers to learning (partly supported by the extended childcare offer).
- It is billed as the first step in the new government's drive to raise standards and a response to concerns from teachers and the wider education workforce; the Curriculum for Wales remains in place.
- **Setting up the structures:** the plan includes new national indicators for literacy and numeracy and was trailed after Wales fell further behind other UK nations in **Pisa** (see FMQs above).

(GOV.WALES press release, 15 Sep 15:56)

? Chair named for the independent review of higher education

Professor Patrick Prendergast — former Provost and President of Trinity College Dublin and current chair of South East Technological University in Ireland — will chair the independent review of higher education in Wales.

- The review will examine **how higher education in Wales is funded and organised**, including student support, institutional funding, research and the sustainability of the sector. He will be supported by a small panel of experts in higher education policy, finance and governance, to be confirmed shortly.
- Prendergast: "This review presents an excellent opportunity to establish what kind of higher education system Wales needs for the coming decades... I'm confident that we can recommend a way forward which will ensure a sustainable and successful higher education system in Wales."
- **Cefin Campbell**, Deputy Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education: "Our universities are among Wales's most valuable institutions, shaping generations of learners, driving [our economy]..."

(GOV.WALES press release, 15 Sep 16:45)

? Transport & Infrastructure

? Eight months of disruption as Cardiff Crossrail work steps up

Motorists face around eight months of disruption as the next phase of the £100m Cardiff Crossrail project begins — with new temporary traffic arrangements around Callaghan Square, Bute Street and West Canal Wharf from 20 September.

- Construction of the next stage starts **17 September**. The works allow major utilities beneath the carriageway to be diverted, including a **high-pressure gas main**, telecoms infrastructure and water mains.
- Bute Street stays open to northbound traffic at its junction with Callaghan Square, but drivers heading for Herbert Street and Tyndall Street must turn left; there will be **no southbound access** to Bute Street from Callaghan Square, and streets south of the square off Bute Street will only be reachable from the south. Diversions run via **Lloyd George Avenue and Dumballs Road**.
- Cardiff Crossrail is a joint **Cardiff Council / Transport for Wales** project backed by **£100m** from the Welsh Government and the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund. Its first

phase creates a tram-train route between **Cardiff Central and Cardiff Bay**, with a twin-track tramway through Callaghan Square, a new station at **Loudoun Square** already under construction, new tram platforms at Cardiff Central and an extra platform at Cardiff Bay. Longer term, the ambition is a wider network linking **Cardiff Parkway**.

(Nation.Cymru — Mark Mansfield, 16 Sep)

?? Business & Environment

? Wrexham bakery rises from the ashes — £27m and 1,200 staff

The Jones Village Bakery is baking again at its rebuilt Wrexham site, seven years after the 2019 fire destroyed its flagship bakery — in a £27m project described as the most modern bakery in Europe.

- Chief executive **Simon Thorpe** and site manager **Jac Griffiths** showed councillor **Nigel Williams**, Wrexham's lead member for economy, business and tourism, around the plant on Wrexham Industrial Estate. Starting the ovens again was an "emotional milestone".
- Since the fire the company has **trebled turnover** and grown from **500 to more than 1,200 staff**, with the investment creating **75 jobs** including 30 at the new bakery. At the time of the blaze the company pledged no redundancies.
- Cllr Williams: "The phoenix rising from the ashes is a bit of a cliché but that's what it is... Lesser companies would have folded. There is still a family feel to the company even though there are 1,200 working here now."

(Nation.Cymru, 16 Sep)

? Former WWII factory site could become a retail park with 181 jobs

Plans have been submitted for the Parc Afon Ewenni retail development on part of the former Royal Ordnance Works site at Ewenny Industrial Estate, on the outskirts of Bridgend — including an M&S Simply Food, an Aldi and a drive-through Costa.

- The scheme, from **CPG Development Projects** with agents **Mango Planning and Development**, would create **181 jobs** plus **335 parking spaces**, with new vehicle, cycle and pedestrian access, landscaping and green infrastructure.
- The land off the A473 Waterton Road is currently used by **Compact Cars** and **Comva Car Auctions** and was historically part of the WWII-era Royal Ordnance factory.

- The applicant says M&S needs a Simply Food store for the Vale, Porthcawl and Bridgend catchments, and that Aldi's town centre store must close to make way for the new **Bridgend College** — so it needs a south Bridgend store to complement its **Brackla** site.

(Nation.Cymru — Lewis Smith, Local Democracy Reporter, 16 Sep)

? Port Talbot is Wales' fastest-rising commuter hotspot

New Rightmove analysis of commuter areas around six of Britain's biggest cities puts Port Talbot top in Wales, with average asking prices up 7.70% to £176,787 — ideal for commutes to both Cardiff and Swansea.

- Price growth is strongest around Glasgow and Manchester, home to 10 of the 15 fastest-rising hotspots; **Falkirk** in Stirlingshire tops the list at **+13.5%** (£183,596).
- Two other Welsh locations feature in the wider list, with average asking prices rising in the Vale of Glamorgan corridor and around the capital.

(Nation.Cymru, 16 Sep)

? And: Cardiff among the worst UK cities for youth job opportunities

An IPPR "local youth opportunity index" published today finds a sixfold gap between the best and worst areas of Britain for young people seeking work — and Cardiff ranks near the bottom.

- **Rotherham** has just **46 online vacancies per 1,000 young people**, against **288** in the Cotswold district council area. Nine of the 10 best areas are in southern England. Cardiff, Sheffield and Coventry are among the cities ranked near the bottom.
- The analysis lands as ministers await recommendations from **Alan Milburn's** review into Britain's youth work crisis; the national average is 109 vacancies per 1,000 young people.

(The Guardian — Richard Partington, 16 Sep 06:00)

? Au Vodka sale completes

US drinks giant Sazerac has completed its takeover of Swansea-based Au Vodka, reported to value the Welsh brand at around £300m — with founders Charlie Morgan and Jackson Quinn reportedly making about £100m each. Sazerac chief executive **Jake Wenz** said the brand, founded in 2015 and built on gold packaging and viral social campaigns, had enjoyed a "phenomenal growth trajectory" and that the company has "big plans" for it. Au Vodka

employs more than 80 people in south Wales. (BBC Wales — Huw Thomas, 15 Sep; the sale plan was covered on 25–27 Aug)

? Culture & Media

?? Owain Glyndŵr Day — and the first look at Michael Sheen as Glyndŵr

Wales marks Owain Glyndŵr Day today, 626 years after Glyndŵr proclaimed himself Prince of Wales on 16 September 1400 and launched a 15-year revolt against Henry IV.

- Marking the day, a **new teaser trailer for *Owain & Henry*** was released, giving a first look at **Michael Sheen** in the title role ahead of the play's world premiere at the **Wales Millennium Centre in November**.
- The trailer features a Priest heralding Glyndŵr: "Acclaimed by blood, Acclaimed by allies... And chosen to lead us by God Himself. Arise, Owain, Prince of all the Cymry."
- Written by **Gary Owen** and co-directed by **Sheen** and **Steffan Donnelly**, the Wales Millennium Centre / Welsh National Theatre co-production also stars **Linus Roache** (*Law & Order, Vikings*) as Henry IV, with **Rakie Ayola** as Mared Ferch Dafydd and **Emily Burnett**.
- (*The play was covered in the 3 and 6 Sep roundups; the trailer and Sheen's first footage in the role are new. Cadw's free-entry day for under-17s was on 13 September.*)

(Nation.Cymru, 16 Sep)

? £17m Nordic baths and sauna complex planned for Cardiff Bay's dry docks

Finnish waterfront developer Nordic Urban will submit a planning application in October for Allas Pool Cardiff — a £17m year-round outdoor bathing and sauna complex in the Grade II listed Mount Stuart Graving Docks.

- Built around a **25-metre heated outdoor pool**, the 2,000 sq m scheme would add hot and cold pools, **four saunas**, changing and relaxation facilities, a restaurant and café, and outdoor terraces overlooking the water.
- It would be open to the public all year rather than run as a members' club, with the terraces and the waterside walk remaining free to use. The first Allas Pool opened in Helsinki in 2017; this would be the first of at least five planned for the UK and Ireland.
- A pre-application consultation opened this week, and feedback will be considered as part of the application to Cardiff Council. The docks have been disused for decades.

? Also in culture

- **Are children losing the ability to recognise nature by sound?** A survey of 1,000 UK parents finds children can identify 94% of wildlife they can see, but only 65% recognise a crow's call, 57% a fox and 50% a tawny owl — with fewer than half (41%) knowing a wood pigeon's coo. Children spend an average of **3.35 hours a day** on screens. (Nation.Cymru, 14 Sep)
 - **Elan Valley in Europe's stargazing top 10** — Avanti Travel Insurance ranked 30 leading European dark-sky destinations on light pollution, sunshine hours, altitude and infrastructure. The **Elan Valley placed sixth**, beating sites in Switzerland, Norway and the Netherlands; **Eryri International Dark Sky Reserve** was 23rd and **Bannau Brycheiniog** 26th. (Nation.Cymru, 13 Sep)
 - **Elliw Jones: getting to know the folk musician** — the Conwy Valley singer, winner of this summer's **Tlws Sbardun** and a member of the group **Tant**, talks to Cymru Fyw about singing *Titw Tomos Las* with a pink guitar from Siôn Corn, her grandfather's Friday nights at the Tŷ Gwyn in Rowen, and her day job with **Menter Iaith Conwy**. (BBC Cymru Fyw, today)
 - **Ysgol Glanaethwy is moving site.** The Bangor drama school and choir, founded by **Cefin and Rhian Roberts** in 1990 and based at Parc Menai since 1995, says it will sell the building in the new year and "slow down a little", with "some reduction in the number of pupils and their ages" — insisting it does not "remotely mean the two of them are giving up". Glanaethwy won Choir of the World at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in 2024. (BBC Cymru Fyw, 15 Sep)
 - **A 1661 Welsh englyn survives in a Shropshire church.** A gravestone bearing what is thought to be one of the oldest known examples of strict englyn form was saved during Victorian restoration work at St Oswald's, Oswestry, and put on a wall for safekeeping. The inscription translates: "If any man should ask, I give certain knowledge where Salbri's heir was buried." (Nation.Cymru, 15 Sep)
 - **Matthew Rhys's old school pays tribute** — the Guardian reports his alma mater (Ysgol Glan Clwyd) remembering a "loyal pupil" and Welsh language devotee after his record-breaking double Emmy win. (The Guardian, 15 Sep 15:53)
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? Sport

? Bellamy: "this is the place" — and a Nations League gauntlet ahead

Craig Bellamy has insisted his commitment to Wales should never be questioned after explaining why he turned down Burnley, as Wales prepare for a Nations League A

campaign that starts against Portugal and Denmark.

- The Wales boss held talks with Turf Moor — where he was Vincent Kompany's assistant from 2022-24 — after the FAW gave permission, but chose to stay. "It was flattering... but for me, my partner, my kids, this is the place and we didn't see anything else being able to move that."
- On the criticism that he had spoken to Burnley at all: "I think my body of work over the years, I don't think I need to say too much about that. My commitment has always been there... I had to go and get solicitors' letters from independent people because the club were trying to tell me not to play, can't play, we're going to sue you if you do play."
- **BBC Sport Wales's Chris Wathan** asks whether Bellamy now needs to win back supporters who were already smarting from missing the World Cup; the head coach says he has unfinished business and wants to lead Wales at a home **Euro 2028**.

(BBC Sport — Chris Wathan, 15 Sep; Nation.Cymru/PA — Phil Blanche; both published 15 Sep)

??????? Squad named: Ashford's first call-up, Rodon out

Craig Bellamy has named a 28-man squad for Wales' return to Nations League A — with a first call-up for Cardiff City forward Cian Ashford and no Joe Rodon.

- **Rodon** (hamstring, injured in Leeds' third game of the season) and defensive partner **Dylan Lawlor** (knee) are both missing — Wales' first-choice centre-back pairing — as is Cardiff defender **Ronan Kpakio**.
- **Cian Ashford, 21**, has been rewarded after scoring twice in a strong start to the Championship season, while **Jayden Lienou, 18**, is included again after his late call-up in June. **Harry Wilson, Jordan James** and **Ben Cabango** return from injury, **Wes Burns** (now Leicester) is recalled for the first time since 2024, and captain **Ben Davies** is in line for his first cap since October 2025.
- Wales travel to **Portugal on 24 September**, then face **Denmark** away, **Norway** at home and **Denmark** again at home in early October — against Ronaldo and Haaland.

(BBC Sport — Chris Wathan, 15 Sep; Nation.Cymru/PA — Phil Blanche)

? Wales lose Kayleigh Powell for the whole WXV campaign

Harlequins full-back Kayleigh Powell has been ruled out of Wales' entire WXV Global Series after a hamstring injury in training.

- The 27-year-old sevens Olympian starred at full-back in the Six Nations and impressed at fly-half when Wales ended a nine-match losing streak against the Barbarians in June. She

said she was "absolutely gutted" but has "every faith that this team will do great things".

- Head coach **Sean Lynn**: "Kayleigh was outstanding against the Barbarians, she brought another dimension to our attack. It's a big loss, but it's a big opportunity for individuals..." **Lleucu George** could return at 10, with scrum-half **Keira Bevan** another option after training there in pre-season. Wales had already lost **Rose** to injury.
- **Wales play South Africa at Cardiff Arms Park on Friday (19:15 BST)**, host the USA there eight days later, then travel to Japan for Tests on 23 and 31 October.

(BBC Sport — Ceri Coleman-Phillips, 15 Sep)

?? Cardiff to host the 2029 Women's Champions League final

UEFA has confirmed the Women's Champions League final will be played at the Principality Stadium in 2029, after a successful FAW bid — with the stadium referred to as the National Stadium of Wales for the occasion because of UEFA sponsorship rules.

- Cardiff hosted the 2017 final at Cardiff City Stadium; that same year the Principality Stadium staged the men's final between Real Madrid and Juventus.
- FAW chief executive **Noel Mooney**: "This is more than one night in 2029. Our hope and vision is that the Women's Champions League final is a catalyst for the transformation of women's and girls' football in Wales." WRU chief executive **Abi Tierney** called it "a significant moment for women's sport in Wales and across Europe".

(BBC Cymru Fyw, 15 Sep)

? Cardiff to host the UK Athletics 5K Road Race Championships

Bute Park hosts the 2026 UK Athletics 5K Road Race Championships on Sunday 27 September, with teams from England, Ireland and Wales racing at Coopers Field in the SportsShoes Podium Home Nations event. Last year **Jack Rowe** won in Cardiff in a course-record 13:32, with **Calli Thackery's** 15:29 from 2023 the women's mark. *(Nation.Cymru, 15 Sep)*

? Cymru Premier midweek results

Y Barri 2-2 Rhydaman · Cei Connah 3-0 Airbus · Treffynnon 0-5 Bae Colwyn · Llandudno 1-1 Caernarfon · Penybont 3-2 Llansawel · Y Seintiau Newydd 5-0 Y Fflint · Trefelin 0-4 Cambrian United. *(BBC Cymru Fyw, 15 Sep)*

?? Weather

Cardiff — Wednesday 16 September: sunny intervals and a gentle breeze, high **19°C**, low **13°C** (westerly, 12 mph). *(BBC Weather, last updated 08:59)*

Day	Forecast	High / Low
Thu 17 Sep	Sunny intervals, moderate breeze	19° / 9°
Fri 18 Sep	Light rain, moderate breeze	19° / 15°
Sat 19 Sep	Light rain, moderate breeze	20° / 13°
Sun 20 Sep	Sunny intervals, gentle breeze	21° / 12°
Mon 21 Sep	Sunny intervals, light winds	22° / 13°
Tue 22 Sep	Sunny intervals, light winds	22° / 13°
Wed 23 Sep	Sunny intervals, light winds	23° / 12°

- **No Met Office weather warnings currently issued for Wales.**
- A gentle westerly today, but rain arrives from the west on Friday and lingers into Saturday. The weekend improves markedly: from Sunday high pressure settles in, winds fall light and temperatures climb to **23°C by midweek** — a late-September warm spell.

? Quick Summary

#	Story	Where	Why it matters
1	Senedd returns: "You have no mandate on independence"	Cardiff Bay	Reform's Helen Jenner attacks the FM over Monday's summit; ap Iorwerth: "Be more like Matthew"
2	Reform "tried to cover up" Thomas arrest	Wales	Outlets allegedly warned they would breach ECHR Article 8 by reporting it
3	Poll: Plaid 32%, Reform 27% — Labour up 10 at Westminster	Wales	Barn Cymru/ITV poll taken before Dan Thomas's resignation
4	FM to speak at Aberystwyth independence march	Aberystwyth	26 September, 1pm from Castle Gardens; eleventh March for Independence
5	Carbon Brief lists 45 misleading Reform climate claims	UK	Tice blamed "the sun or volcanoes" for warming

#	Story	Where	Why it matters
6	MPs demand testing near contaminated land	Wales	Welsh Affairs Committee says work is "siloe, underfunded and incomplete"
7	Powys community hospital cuts — board decides today	Powys	Beds could fall from ~160 to 60; Ed Davey warns of "long-lasting damage"
8	Teen loses NHS wig funding after health board move	Wrexham	Kizzi-Rae, 13, now gets £200 a year instead of £2,500
9	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy plan published	Wales	Baseline assessment for school starters; national indicators
10	Professor Patrick Prendergast to chair HE review	Wales	Ex-Trinity College Dublin provost; funding, student support, sustainability
11	Eight months of Cardiff Crossrail disruption	Cardiff	£100m tram-train project; new traffic layout from 20 September
12	Wrexham bakery rebuilt after 2019 fire	Wrexham	£27m; turnover trebled, staff from 500 to 1,200
13	Bridgend retail park plan: 181 jobs	Bridgend	M&S Simply Food, Aldi and Costa on former WWII ordnance site
14	Port Talbot Wales' fastest-rising commuter hotspot	Neath Port Talbot	Asking prices up 7.70% to £176,787
15	Owain Glyndŵr Day and the Owain & Henry trailer	Wales	First footage of Michael Sheen as Glyndŵr; play opens in November
16	£17m Allas Pool planned for Cardiff Bay dry docks	Cardiff	25m outdoor pool, four saunas; application due in October
17	Bellamy: "this is the place"	Wales football	Explains turning down Burnley; Portugal and Denmark up first
18	Wales squad: Ashford in, Rodon out	Wales football	Nations League A; 28-man squad
19	Kayleigh Powell out of the whole WXV campaign	Wales rugby	Hamstring injury in training; South Africa at Cardiff Arms Park Friday
20	Cardiff to host 2029 Women's Champions League final	Cardiff	Principality Stadium; FAW calls it a catalyst for the women's game

Compiled Wednesday 16 September 2026, ~09:20 BST by Emrys ☐ (Hermes cron) · Sources: BBC Wales, BBC Wales Politics, BBC Sport Wales, BBC Cymru Fyw, BBC Weather, Nation.Cymru, GOV.WALES (media.service.gov.wales), The Guardian, WalesOnline.

Method note: the Hermes browser remains unavailable on this host (its Chromium shim points at a removed Google Chrome.app), so the whole sweep ran through the Playwright fetch service (192.168.178.100:8090, MarkItDown) — 49 article and index pages fetched in one batch with a 100% success rate, including the BBC FMQs live blog, GOV.WALES releases, Nation.Cymru news/sport/culture and Cymru Fyw. GOV.WALES has two releases newer than the last roundup (the literacy plan at 15:56 and the HE review chair at 16:45 on 15 Sep). WalesOnline article pages are cookie-walled and its daily live blog is now geo-blocked ("temporarily unavailable in your location"), so it was used only to confirm the FMQ framing. SearXNG (:8086) was again in mixed mode — the usable leads (WalesOnline's live summary, the Senedd news index) were cherry-picked and the rest (old election explainers, Wikipedia, a ZDF fake-news programme) ignored. Skipped as already covered: the Cardiff Agreement and the nationalist leaders' declaration (15-09); the 30% business rates cut (15-09, plus this morning's UK file); the health visitors' open letter (15-09 — only the FMQ exchange is new here); the Reform leader's resignation and MS defection (today's UK file — cross-referenced in the top story); the Wrexham football museum opening (14-09); the Powys Plaid representatives' letter (13-09 — the Ed Davey reaction and today's board decision are the new angle); the Benedict's Law campaign launch (05-09 — carried here only as a recap with the new BBC quotes); the Pisa results (08-09); Owain & Henry casting (03-09/06-09 — the trailer is new); and the Ironman Wales and Mark Williams English Open stories (both 13-09). Reddit, Nitter, Phice and FlareSolvrr steps remain down and were skipped.

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