Welsh Headlines — 20 Oct 2026

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Compiled 09:25 BST, Tuesday 20 October 2026 • BBC Wales / Cymru Fyw / Sport, Nation.Cymru, GOV.WALES, Guardian — method note at the foot.

? Top Story: Council tax — the decision on Wales' first revaluation in 23 years is due today

The Welsh Government will say today whether it is going ahead with a revaluation of every home in Wales, with Finance Minister Elin Jones expected to update the Senedd — and the answer decides whether 800,000 households get a cut and 470,000 see bills rise.

Welsh homes have not been revalued for 23 years, so council tax bands still rest on property values from more than two decades ago. The reforms postponed in 2024 were estimated to cut bills for around 800,000 homes and increase them for 470,000 of the most expensive properties.

The political trap is obvious: Plaid Cymru campaigned on making council tax "fairer" and called the current system "long overdue for reform", but has repeatedly declined to commit to a revaluation since taking power in May. The previous Labour government delayed the plans in 2024 — one of the reasons Plaid gave for pulling out of that year's co-operation deal — yet still legislated for a revaluation in 2028. Delaying that would need a Senedd vote, and the Plaid government has the numbers to win one if the Conservatives back it.

The Welsh Conservatives want the revaluation scrapped, saying it could push up bills for struggling families; Welsh Labour says not going ahead would call "Plaid's progressive values" into question. First Minister Rhun ap Iorwerth has said the decision is not a "yes or no" question — "we need to make sure that we are making the right decision that does not have unintended consequences" — and that his own preference would be to scrap council tax in its current form in favour of

"something of a mix of income and wealth and property", though "doing that is very, very complicated".

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has said the existing plans "would ensure not only is council tax brought up to date, but it remains so", and that it is not true a revaluation "would lead to big bill increases across the board" — the last government aimed for reform to be revenue-neutral, redistributing bills rather than raising more overall. Joe Rossiter of the Institute of Welsh Affairs said staying true to the manifesto pledge means revaluation is the test. *(BBC Wales, David Deans, published this morning.)*

?? Aberfan, 60 Years

? The PM laid a wreath — and said Aberfan was "not treated properly by the authorities"

Andy Burnham visited Aberfan yesterday ahead of tomorrow's 60th anniversary, laying a wreath at the memorial garden with survivor Jeff Edwards and Welsh Secretary Stephen Kinnock, then telling the village the authorities had not dealt with it fairly.

"It's been 60 years since one of the most horrifying tragedies this country has ever seen. All of those children lost," the prime minister said. He added: "I don't think Aberfan was treated properly by the authorities and that also needs to be recognised... at a moment like this, I think all of those things need to be said." On 21 October 1966 a colliery spoil tip collapsed onto Pantglas Primary School and surrounding houses, killing 116 children and 28 adults.

Burnham spent about 15 minutes in the memorial garden before speaking to people outside and visiting the community centre. Survivor Irene Hollett said talking about it still matters: "A lot of stuff comes back to you. You feel grateful that you are still around 60 years on, but then you miss your friends and family that we lost at the time. You can feel a bit of guilt that you are still here."

?? Eleven coal tips moved into the highest-risk categories since 2022

Burnham used the visit to address coal tip safety, saying it is "of critical importance" that all remaining tips in Wales — and across the UK — are made safe, with around £140m going from the UK government to the Welsh Government and an organisation being set up to manage the long-term risk.

Welsh Government data shows 11 tips have been moved into categories C and D — the most serious — since November 2022. "I represent a former mining community myself, so I understand

the seriousness and importance of the matter," Burnham said, adding that the money "is there". Pupils from Caegarw Primary in Mountain Ash also visited the graveside; Ellis, 10, whose grandfather helped pull children from the school, said the experience was "emotional". *(BBC Wales, 19 October; BBC Cymru Fyw, Ifan Ywain.)*

?? Politics & the Senedd

?? FM opens the door to rewriting how councils work — green paper by 2030

Rhun ap Iorwerth has announced a review of the powers councils hold and how authorities work together regionally, which could lead to legislation after the 2030 election.

In a speech at Cardiff University, the first minister said: "Where power can sit as closely to the people it affects, it should... I am convinced that, over time, Wales should move towards a more coherent and more streamlined system of local and regional governance. But that vision cannot be imposed." He promised a green paper by the end of the term, followed by the "option" of new legislation.

He denied offering Andy Burnham a quid pro quo ahead of meeting the prime minister later this month, saying: "As somebody who wants power close to the people in Wales, I like the fact that the UK's new prime minister is talking that kind of language, but it means different things in Wales and England. The devolution programme that we're hearing from Andy Burnham is largely an England programme." He questioned whether Downing Street's agenda came to a "shuddering halt at Offa's Dyke", and called Welsh economic development a "confused" and "increasingly fragmented system" layered with UK programmes. *(BBC Wales, David Deans, 19 October; BBC Cymru Fyw.)*

?? The M4 relief road argument returns to the Senedd floor tomorrow

Transport campaigners have attacked Welsh Labour's renewed backing for an M4 relief road before tomorrow's Senedd debate, arguing the cost and environmental case that killed the scheme in 2019 has not changed.

Transport Action Network Cymru's Gwynfor Edwards said "a new motorway is the wrong answer for Newport" and that the South East Wales Transport Commission's rail-and-bus alternatives should come first — while backing Labour's call to rule out closing junctions 25, 26 and 27. Labour's motion asks ministers to start work on a new road; the current Plaid government has ruled out reviving the black route but has an 18-month study of other road options, with a relief road now

estimated at around £3bn. Deputy Transport Minister Mark Hooper said ministers were also acting to cut peak-hour traffic "by up to around one in ten vehicles". *(Nation.Cymru, Mark Mansfield, 19 October. The U-turn itself was covered on 16 October; this is the pre-vote positioning.)*

? Reform's Flint/Wrexham branch in open warfare with its own "head of Wales"

The chair of Reform UK's Fflint Wrecsam branch has resigned after a row with the party's head of Wales, Torfaen councillor David Thomas, with members describing the party as "being destroyed from within".

Don Sturgeon told his team he had been "forced to resign" over "'misinformation' about a recent campaign": "I'm aware of shenanigans going on behind the scenes, but it is politics." Another member resigned in protest at Thomas's treatment of him; Chris Whitby noted Reform took the highest vote share of any party in the constituency at the Senedd election. A party source said there is "a huge rift between the local branch and David Thomas". *(Nation.Cymru, Martin Shipton, 19 October.)*

?? "The state would have murdered me": Cardiff Newsagent Three man takes on Reform's death penalty call

Michael O'Brien, wrongly convicted of murdering newsagent Phillip Saunders in 1988 and jailed for 11 years and 43 days, has condemned Reform UK MS Cristiana Emsley after she called for a "sober national debate on the death penalty".

Emsley posted a Sun headline about a man who tried to rape a dying homeless woman with the comment: "What kind of barbarian... It's time for a sober national debate on the death penalty." O'Brien replied that "the death penalty has no place in a so-called civilised society... I and many others would have been executed had the death penalty been in place in 1988". He listed the Birmingham Six, the Carl Bridgewater Four, the Cardiff Three and the Darvell brothers, and pointed to Mahmood Mattan, hanged in Cardiff in 1952 and cleared in 1998, and Timothy Evans of Merthyr Tydfil. *(Nation.Cymru, Martin Shipton, today.)*

? Health & Care

? A National Care Service programme — six foundations, no new money attached yet

The Welsh Government has published the National Care Service Programme, setting out six "foundations" for social care reform to be delivered during this Senedd term.

They are clear national leadership and accountability; fair funding and reliable care; supporting care workers to build lasting careers; better data and digital services; early intervention and strong safeguarding; and seamless social care and support. Deputy Minister for Social Care Delyth Jewell said social care "helps children and families through difficult times, enables disabled people to live independently... Too often social care is seen as a hidden service. I'm determined that will change." The programme names no additional funding or detailed deadlines. *(GOV.WALES, 23:00 Monday 19 October; Nation.Cymru, today.)*

? Ten of Wales' 11 A&E leads "very or extremely concerned" about this winter

Every emergency department clinical lead in Wales surveyed by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine described pressure as high or very high, and 10 of the 11 said they were very or extremely concerned about the months ahead.

About three-quarters said pressure was much higher than at the same point last year. Dr Rob Perry, the college's Wales vice-president, said: "We had one of the toughest summers on record, leaving us little room to breathe... when winter hits, we will have no spare capacity to stretch." He warned patients face "more long waits, more corridor care and, I fear, more people coming to harm", and called for more beds and faster discharge. In the UK-wide survey of 163 clinical leads, 91% were very or extremely concerned, 3% said their department was well prepared and two-thirds described it as unsafe. RCEM president Dr Ian Higginson called it "a disgraceful state of affairs". *(Nation.Cymru, today.)*

? Ketamine rehab referrals jumped from 2 to 112 in five years

A drugs charity in Wales says referrals to its detox and rehabilitation unit for ketamine have risen from two in 2021 to 112 so far this year, most of them people aged 18 to 24.

Megan Harmes, 24, from Flint, started at 14 and after a decade of use needs incontinence pads: "For a 22-year-old wearing pads or nappies, it takes away all dignity... Back then I really didn't care whether I lived or died — now I don't want to die." Jo Moore, who runs Kaleidoscope's Birchwood facility, said half their clients are now being supported for ketamine use because the drug is "very, very cheap and very accessible". The University of South Wales is researching the group's specific needs, saying harm from "chronic, escalating use" of ketamine comes far faster than with alcohol

or Class A drugs — and services built for older adults are having to adapt. *(BBC Wales, Jenny Rees, published 19 October, updated this morning; Welsh version on Cymru Fyw.)*

? Energy, Money & Rural

? £8.27m for 24 community energy projects, from a Pembrokeshire laundry to festival batteries

Ynni Cymru is giving £8.27m to 24 organisations across Wales to generate and use more of their own clean energy, with ministers saying the savings go back into communities.

Renewable Power Pembrokeshire gets £997,566, with one local laundry, Snow White, expected to save £40,000–£60,000 a year. The community-owned Llanidloes District Energy Local Club receives £941,280 for solar, battery storage and EV charging, with households forecast to save around £368 a year and about £14,000 a year generated for community projects. Cardiff's Afanti Media gets £668,558 to replace diesel generators with battery power at festivals and broadcasts, having already powered Eisteddfod yr Urdd, Cân i Gymru and S4C's Super Rygbi Cymru coverage. Energy Minister Adam Price said the projects "show how renewable energy can deliver practical benefits for people and communities across Wales". *(GOV.WALES, 23:00 Monday 19 October; Nation.Cymru.)*

? Dairy farmers still "running at a loss" despite the milk price rise

Welsh dairy farmers say they are still losing money even after recent increases in the price paid for their milk, with unions calling for a long-term strategy for the sector.

Dyfrig Griffiths, vice-president of the Welsh Dairy Show, who farms at Llangoedmor near Cardigan, got 30p a litre for most of the year against production costs nearer 38p. An extra 3p in September and 6p in October have taken him to 39p. "Every penny is about £4,000 to us on this farm," he said, adding that the losses ran through the summer. Farming unions want certainty and a long-term strategy "to realise the significant potential of the Welsh dairy sector"; the Welsh Government says it offers "a range of support" to improve farms' financial and environmental performance. *(BBC Cymru Fyw, today.)*

?? Justice

? Holyhead man charged with murdering his father

Martin Joseph Ward, 33, of Holyhead, has appeared at Llandudno Magistrates' Court charged with murdering his 53-year-old father, Michael Anthony Ward, whose body was found in a flat in the town in the early hours of Saturday.

Police were called to Llys Watling on London Road at about 02:40 on 17 October. Ward, in a grey jumper, spoke only to confirm his name, date of birth and that he understood the case was being sent to the crown court. District Judge Gwyn Jones remanded him in custody to appear at Caernarfon Crown Court today. *(BBC Wales, Chris Dearden, 19 October; BBC Cymru Fyw. Yesterday's roundup carried the murder inquiry; the charge is new.)*

? Culture & Community

?? Museum staff facing "appalling" abuse — and the National Museum repair bill has hit £66m

The chief executive of Amgueddfa Cymru has told Senedd members that staff at every one of its museums deal with aggressive behaviour from angry visitors, often directed at young women from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Jane Richardson said the problem has worsened since the pandemic, and that some visitors arrive wearing cameras deliberately to provoke incidents with staff. She also told the culture committee's annual scrutiny session that the cost of repairs to the National Museum is now estimated at about £66m, up from £40m — and that it would not be possible to "keep the museum open permanently" without the work being done. *(BBC Cymru Fyw, 19 October — Mark Palmer and Gwydion ap Llyr Edwards.)*

? A butcher's shop closes after 108 years on Anglesey

E.T. Jones — known to everyone in Bodorgan as Lamia — closes on Saturday 31 October after 108 years, with fourth-generation owner Ifan Jones calling time after 51 years behind the counter.

The business was founded by Evan Jones on the site of the old Lamia Bach pub, and the village never took to any new name. "It's been a family business throughout. The boys are in the business... The two sons had said they'd stay with me to the end, but it's too much of a burden to carry on," Ifan told BBC Radio Cymru. "It's not a decision made lightly, but it's time for me to retire and concentrate on my health and wellbeing." *(BBC Cymru Fyw, 19 October — Gethin Morris Williams and Llio Rhys.)*

? Kraftwerk to play Cardiff Castle — one of only two UK dates

Kraftwerk will bring their audio-visual show to Cardiff Castle on Wednesday 23 June 2027, in what DEPOT Live says is one of just two UK dates.

Pre-sale opens at 10am on Thursday 22 October, general sale at 10am on Friday 23 October. The Cardiff Castle 2027 series also includes Sonny Fodera (4 June), Jack Savoretti and James Morrison (24 June), Slash featuring Myles Kennedy (30 June), Ronan Keating with Blue (9 July) and Bananarama with Tony Hadley (10 July). *(Nation.Cymru, 19 October.)*

? Siôn Trefor lands two Ivor Novello nominations

The Cardiff-born composer is nominated for Best Original Film Score for the Welsh drama *Effi o Blaenau*, with Ioana Șelaru, and Best Original Television Score for the Netflix thriller *Legends*.

Effi o Blaenau is adapted from Gary Owen's play *Iphigenia in Splott*; the score mixes acoustic instruments, synthesisers and vocals, and is up against Daniel Pemberton (*Project Hail Mary*) and Oliver Coates (*The History of Sound*). Winners are announced at Grosvenor House on 17 November. *(Nation.Cymru, today.)*

? Callum Scott Howells' *The State of Us* gets a UK cinema release

The Welsh actor's coming-of-age comedy has been picked up by Vertigo Releasing for UK cinemas in 2027, after premiering in competition at Edinburgh International Film Festival.

Shot in Yorkshire, it follows 19-year-old Frankie breaking his dying best friend out of a hospice for one last fireworks night. It marks the directorial debut of Jake Harvey and Ollie Gardner, with a

score by Blossoms' Tom Ogden. *(Nation.Cymru, today.)*

? Sport

? Wales make four changes for Samoa — their best shot at a first World Cup win

Head coach Tom Brindle has changed four for Friday's second Rugby League World Cup group game against Samoa at CommBank Stadium in Sydney (07:45 BST), after a 70-6 opening defeat by England in Perth.

Wing Sian Williams makes her debut, Jade Mullen comes in for her first appearance of the tournament, Amberley Ruck replaces Ffion Lewis at stand-off and Huddersfield prop Gracie Hobbs joins the seventeen. Samoa lost their opener 40-0 to Australia; Wales face the world champions Australia on Sunday. *(BBC Sport, published this morning.)*

? Tandy names his Nations Championship squad today — with scrum-half cover the question

Steve Tandy picks his squad today with Tomos Williams close to undroppable and no clear understudy, after Kieran Hardy suffered a knee injury playing for Dragons this month.

Williams, now at Saracens, has started every Test he has been available for under Tandy and played 378 minutes in the 2026 Six Nations — more than Dupont, Gibson-Park or Ben White. Wales have 12 or 13 fixtures before their 2027 World Cup opener against Zimbabwe in Adelaide on 2 October. *(BBC Sport, Chris Kirwan, 19 October.)*

? Ronaldo free to face Wales next month despite a 30-day ban

Cristiano Ronaldo has been given a 30-day suspension and a €255 (£215) fine by the Portuguese federation for walking out of the national camp last month — but the ban, backdated to 1 October, expires before Portugal come to Wales on 17 November.

Ronaldo left after being an unused substitute against Norway and learning he would not start against Denmark, accusing coach Jorge Jesus of twice breaking his word. The disciplinary

committee cited his remorse and his "contributions to soccer", and he submitted his CV in mitigation. *(BBC Sport, 19 October.)*

?? Weather

A wet one: heavy, persistent rain through the morning and early afternoon in Cardiff, easing later but staying dull and cloudy with the odd light shower — 12°C and a low of 8°C. Tonight starts dry with clear spells before cloud builds and rain moves in from the west.

Wednesday brings light rain and a fresh breeze (11°C/8°C); Thursday light rain, milder at 15°C; Friday gusty winds and rain (12°C/7°C); Saturday heavy rain (14°C/11°C); Sunday and Monday light rain, 14–15°C. Traffic this morning: the A494 northbound is held near Queensferry after an accident, the A55 westbound is partly blocked between St Asaph and Bodelwyddan by a broken-down vehicle, and there is queueing on the Britannia Bridge eastbound, the A465 westbound at M4 J43 and the A470 southbound from Pontypridd. *(BBC Weather, Cardiff; WalesOnline live blog, 09:01.)*

? Quick Summary

- **Council tax** — Elin Jones to update the Senedd today on the first revaluation in 23 years; 800,000 homes could see cuts, 470,000 rises; Tories want it scrapped, Labour says dropping it would betray "progressive values"
- **Aberfan** — PM laid a wreath and said the village was "not treated properly by the authorities"; £140m UK funding for coal tips; 11 tips moved to categories C and D since 2022; anniversary tomorrow
- **Council powers** — FM announces review and a green paper by 2030, possible legislation after the next election; denies a quid pro quo with Burnham
- **M4** — campaigners attack Labour's relief road motion ahead of tomorrow's Senedd debate; £3bn estimate
- **Reform** — Fflint Wrecsam chair resigns after row with "head of Wales" David Thomas; members warn of "self-destruct mode"
- **Death penalty** — Cardiff Newsagent Three's Michael O'Brien: "the state would have murdered me"
- **Social care** — National Care Service Programme published with six foundations, no new funding or deadlines
- **A&E** — 10 of 11 Welsh clinical leads very or extremely concerned about winter; two-thirds UK-wide call their departments unsafe
- **Ketamine** — Kaleidoscope rehab referrals up from 2 (2021) to 112 this year, mostly 18-24 year-olds

- **Energy** — £8.27m from Ynni Cymru for 24 projects; Pembrokeshire laundry to save up to £60,000 a year
- **Dairy** — farmers still at a loss at 39p a litre against ~38p costs
- **Holyhead** — Martin Joseph Ward, 33, charged with murdering his father Michael, 53; Caernarfon Crown Court today
- **Museums** — staff facing abuse; National Museum repair bill up from £40m to £66m
- **Culture** — Lamia butcher's in Bodorgan closes after 108 years; Kraftwerk at Cardiff Castle in 2027; Siôn Trefor's two Ivors nods
- **Sport** — four changes for Wales v Samoa on Friday; Tandy names his squad today; Ronaldo free to face Wales on 17 November
- **Weather** — heavy rain easing this afternoon, 12°C; wet and windy into the weekend

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Method note: compiled in cron mode at ~09:25 BST. SearXNG (:8086) returned another index-and-aggregator mix — BBC schedules, WalesOnline section pages, NewsNow, senedd.wales, a German Wikipedia page and Chinese reposts — with one usable lead, today's WalesOnline live blog, so the sweep ran through the Playwright fetch service at 192.168.178.100:8090 (MarkItDown): 10 index/feed pages and 40 article pages, all successful. An 8090 date sweep on every fetched page then killed the stale cards: the BBC's education-crisis feature (15 October), the M4 relief road article itself (15 October, covered on 16 October), Elfyn Evans's Dolgellau homecoming (15 October), the World Cup play-off piece (13 October), the Llangyndeyrn school story (18 October) and the 18 October Taff fuel-leak report (already fully covered yesterday) were dropped, and the newspaper-digest and Taff spill were left out. De-duplicated against yesterday's 19 October Welsh file, this morning's UK file and folder-wide keyword greps: revaluation, National Care Service, Ynni Cymru, ketamine, Nelson and Llancaiach, capital punishment, Kraftwerk, Ivor Novello, Holyhead and M4 relief were each checked against the archive, and Owen Filer (covered 17 October) was dropped as a repeat. Guardian Wales RSS carried nothing newer than 19 October and nothing Wales-specific. Nitter, Phice, Flaresolverr and Reddit skipped as instructed; senedd.wales still returns only a consent shell and WalesOnline article bodies remain unusable, though its live blog is readable. BBC pages carry explicit publish stamps; Nation.Cymru dates under the headline; Cymru Fyw uses relative timestamps ("2 awr yn ôl") and Welsh datelines. Weather from BBC Weather Cardiff; traffic from the WalesOnline live blog.

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