Welsh Headlines — 22 Aug 2026

??????? Welsh News Roundup — 22 August 2026

? Top Story: Welsh Government commissions review of council funding formula

The Welsh Government has commissioned the **Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP)** to review the formula used to divide billions of pounds between Wales's 22 councils, delivering a First 100 Days commitment. The review will look at rurality, sparsity, deprivation and demographic change — including new travel-time data to measure the costs faced by rural and remote areas — and examine how funding is distributed elsewhere in the UK and internationally. Ministers warn that, given the scale and complexity, **any changes could not take effect before the 2028-29 local government settlement**. Work is already under way updating the evidence base, initially on education and personal social services, which together account for nearly three-quarters of the funding distribution. Local Government Minister **Siân Gwenllian** said it was "right that the way we fund them is based on evidence and keeps pace with how our communities are changing". The review was discussed with council leaders via the Finance Sub-Group on 8 July.

The review lands alongside fresh data on the scale of council financial pressure: analysis by the BBC Shared Data Unit projects **Cardiff Council faces a £43.8m budget gap for 2027/28 — the largest of any local authority in Wales**, ahead of Carmarthenshire (£34m) and Flintshire (£26.6m). Cardiff plans the largest total savings in 2026/27 (£14.78m) but the lowest savings per person (£38.50); Powys has the highest per-person savings at £88.82. Cardiff says it has set a balanced budget for 2026/27, closing a gap through savings, income, a council tax rise and reserves.

□□ *GOV.WALES; Nation.Cymru (Mark Mansfield) — 21 Aug; Nation.Cymru/LDR (Kieran Molloy, BBC Shared Data Unit) — 21 Aug*

?? Politics & Senedd

Plaid Cymru Chair race widens as former chief executive Karl Davies joins A former chief executive of Plaid Cymru has joined the race to be the party's national Chair, days after Cllr **Elin Hywel** admitted joining a union "about two weeks" ago ahead of her nomination. **Karl Davies** headed Plaid's administrative arm from 1993 to 2002, after working as a BBC Wales political journalist and adviser to Plaid MPs Dafydd Elis-Thomas and Dafydd Wigley; he later ran the BBC Trust in Wales for 14 years, taught English in China, and is now head of Welsh language education in the Vale of Glamorgan. He told Nation.Cymru the party must "strengthen the roots of the party and its base" after this year's electoral successes: "We've seen in other parties what happens when the elected members take control… there is a slippery slope that leads to disaster." The winner is announced at Plaid's conference in Llandudno in October.

□□ *Nation.Cymru (Martin Shipton) — 22 Aug*

National Energy Strategy to set new vision for energy in Wales The Welsh Government says it is finalising a **National Energy Strategy**, to be published later this year, setting out a "vision for a low carbon energy system that retains value in Welsh communities". Key shifts: renewable energy targets will be **replaced by emissions reductions**, and planning changes will weigh scale, location and community support for projects while protecting productive agricultural land. Enterprise Minister **Adam Price** — who visited the Port of Mostyn and Port of Milford Haven this week to discuss offshore wind — said the transition to net zero is "a major, transformative economic opportunity", promising a **Wales Wealth Fund**, a **Welsh Public Energy Company** and development of **Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru** as "a single national energy company to grow community and local ownership of renewables".

□□ *GOV.WALES — 21 Aug*

Deputy Transport Minister meets Lord Burns on M4 congestion and rail Wales's deputy transport minister met the author of the Burns Review this week to push progress on its 58 measures to cut M4 congestion around Newport — six new railway stations, 23 miles of rapid bus lanes and 20 miles of cycle lanes among them. **Mark Hooper** and **Lord Burns** agreed negotiations with the UK Government "need to be accelerated", citing the **Railways Bill** as a real opportunity on the Wales and Borders network. Hooper warned Welsh passengers' interests must not be "overlooked by an overly centralised Great British Railways"; Burns said congestion around Newport "is an issue close to my heart".

□□ *GOV.WALES — 22 Aug 00:01; Nation.Cymru (Mark Mansfield) — 22 Aug*

Senedd Member's anti-social behaviour video gatecrashed by 'intoxicated thugs' Casnewydd Islwyn MS **Natasha Asghar** was filming in Newport city centre about a rise in anti-social behaviour when her video was interrupted several times by an intoxicated group carrying vodka and swearing at the camera. One clip shows Xclusive Jewellers owner **Annette Farmer** — whose windows have been smashed twice in the past month, with thieves spending 20 minutes breaking in on one occasion — saying "no police came", and urging Newport to get police "in place

permanently. Not for six weeks." Asghar said she was "deeply concerned" about the mental-health impact on business owners.

□□ *Nation.Cymru (Emily Price) — 22 Aug*

Two Reform MSs' offices vandalised in one week Blaenau Gwent Caerffili Rhymni MS **Catherine Cullen** arrived at work on Tuesday (18 Aug) to find "scum" spray-painted across the front of her constituency office, freshly painted in Reform UK's teal colours; Afan Ogwr Rhondda MS **Benjamin Hodge Mckenna** also had damage caused to his office, with one forced to delay its opening. Gwent Police are investigating; no arrests reported.

□□ *Nation.Cymru (Emily Price) — 21 Aug*

- **Blaenavon by-election: Reform UK the only party standing:** five candidates are contesting two Blaenavon Town Council seats (West ward) after the resignations of Annalisa Beavan and Ian Parfitt — Reform has put up two candidates, the other three are independents. Polling day 17 September; Torfaen is one of Reform's top targets for next year's principal council elections. *(Nation.Cymru/LDR, Twm Owen — 21 Aug)*

? Crime & Justice

Six men deny historical child abuse and rape charges in Operation Oak case Six men have pleaded not guilty to historical offences allegedly committed as part of a grooming gang, at Cardiff Crown Court on Friday. The charges stem from Gwent Police's **Operation Oak** investigation into women's reports of being sexually abused as children in the 1980s and 1990s; nine men aged 54 to 76 were arrested in July. Those entering pleas include **Shafaq Mohammed, 58** (six counts of rape, aiding and abetting rape, and causing prostitution), **Syed Mohammad Ashan Taqvi, 65**, of Newport (four counts of rape), **Mohammed Sheikh Abdul Hannan, 54**, of Edinburgh, **Kevin Lawrence, 54**, **Aminur Rahman Choudhury, 58**, of Tottenham, and **Murad Ali, 57**, of Swansea. **Sheikh Mohammed Tahir Ullah, 73**, and **Mohammed Ramzan, 76**, both of Newport, did not enter pleas. All were released on conditional bail; Judge Tracey Lloyd-Clarke set a trial for **January 2028**, expected to last up to 20 weeks.

□□ *BBC Wales (Owain Evans) — 21 Aug*

? Local & Community

Rhossili cliff horses removed after more than 100 years in grazing row Horses that have grazed the cliffs of Rhossili Common in Swansea for more than a century have been removed after months of disagreement, after concerns were raised about visitor safety and the number of horses on the National Trust-owned common. Farmers **Rob Morgan** (Rhossili Sunflowers / Gower Fresh Christmas Trees) and **Nicky Beynon** said they faced increasing "pressure" from National Trust Cymru — which said the decision to remove all the horses was "entirely his" and "at no stage" had

it asked for them to be taken off the land.

□□ *BBC Wales (David Grundy) — 21 Aug*

Residents remove Greenpeace Burnham mural from wildfire-scorched mountain Two walkers used rakes to remove a Greenpeace mural painted on a blackened mountainside above Capelulo, Conwy, dubbing it an "intrusion into grief". The 1,120-sq-m anti-oil image showed PM **Andy Burnham** holding an oil drum with the words "Our house is on fire Andy". About 200 acres of land were scorched in wildfires in the area in July. Greenpeace said the work was not meant to upset people but to "draw attention to the escalating climate crisis".

□□ *BBC Wales (James McCarthy) — 21 Aug*

Anglesey estate: houses can only be sold as holiday homes An almost-empty new-build estate at Parc Delfryn, Brynteg — two miles from the Anglesey coast, an area with the second-highest rate of holiday-home usage in Wales — has 14 of 16 houses unsold since 2023, because planning restrictions imposed before construction mean the homes **cannot be sold to people who want to live there**. A challenge to the rules has failed. At least 37 families have enquired about buying the properties as homes; one would-be buyer said her grandparents would be "turning in their graves".

□□ *BBC Wales (Danielle Herbert) — 21 Aug*

- **Flintshire: final obstacle cleared for Shire Hall demolition:** permission has been granted to separate the power and heating systems of Mold Law Courts and Grade II-listed Llwynegrin Hall from the former county council headquarters on Raikes Lane, which is mostly vacated and due to be demolished at an estimated £4.9m before the site is sold. *(Nation.Cymru/LDR, Alec Doyle — 22 Aug)*
- **Mold: bins "never collected" from new homes:** residents of Princes Row, a seven-home terrace created from the former Savoy Restaurant, say Flintshire Council has never emptied their bins since they moved in in February — resident Michael Horder said the council "could find us to send reminder letters about registering for council tax… but our bins have never been collected". *(Nation.Cymru/LDR, Alec Doyle — 21 Aug)*

? Culture & Entertainment

Sir Anthony Hopkins 'returns' to Wales on Google Maps The Port Talbot-born Oscar-winner, 88, says he returns home "in his mind" almost every day — often walking his old streets via Google Maps from Los Angeles: "I go to streets and move up the street, the photographs of my streets in Wales… I'm always going back there." Speaking after the release of his first album, inspired by childhood memories, Hopkins said he was now "a bit too old" to walk the streets of Margam himself.

□□ *BBC Wales (Paul Pigott) — 21 Aug*

- **Green Man hearing warning:** as the sold-out festival continues at Bannau Brycheiniog until Sunday, audiologists warn festivalgoers not to ignore ringing or muffled hearing — Tinnitus UK data says 92% of gig-goers get ringing in their ears afterwards, with main-stage volumes above 100dB risking permanent damage after 15 minutes unprotected. *(Nation.Cymru — 22 Aug)*

? Sport

FAW accused of 'sanctioning doping' with new trans-player rule A gender-critical women's rights group has accused the Football Association of Wales of "sanctioning doping" over a new policy allowing female-born players to play in men's competitions if "gender-related treatment has increased circulating testosterone to within the normal adult male physiological range (7.7-29.4 nmol/L)". The **Women's Rights Network** says testosterone is an anabolic-androgenic steroid that "in any other sporting context... would result in an immediate multi-year ban", and questions the policy's threshold (2.7 nmol/L) for returning to the female category. WRN acknowledged the FAW is "moving in the right direction towards protecting the female category by restricting it to biological females — 16 months after English and Scottish FAs took action".

□□ *Nation.Cymru (Martin Shipton) — 21 Aug*

- **Paralympic swimmer wants to thank the driver who hit him 44 years ago: Mark Williams**, who lost his leg after being struck by a car while cycling home in June 1982 aged 10, went on to become a world champion swimmer and silver medallist at the 1988 Seoul Paralympics. He says the crash was "probably the best day of my life" and wants the unknown driver, now likely in his 80s, to know "amazing things" happened as a result. *(BBC Wales — 20/21 Aug)*

? Feel-Good

Croatian refugee tracks down Mold siblings who sent him a Christmas present 33 years ago Dalibor Sentic, 44, forced to flee war in Croatia for Sweden as a 10-year-old, has used social media to find and thank the Flintshire siblings — eight-year-old Claire and six-year-old Peter, from Mold — who sent him a Christmas present in the early 1990s. Dalibor only had limited details, but decades later tracked the pair down to say the gesture had stayed with him.

□□ *BBC Wales (Danielle Herbert) — 21 Aug*

'Superhero' boy, 9, completes Three Peaks Challenge in under 24 hours Albie-Junior Thomas, from Holywell, Flintshire, who had his foot amputated at 15 months after being born without a fibula, finished the Three Peaks Challenge in **22 hours 30 minutes** alongside his dad — powered by ham and cheese sandwiches, sour sweets and four months of training. He hopes to be the youngest amputee to complete the tallest peaks in Wales, Scotland and England inside 24 hours; at four he was already the youngest amputee to scale Snowdon.

□□ *BBC Wales (Danielle Herbert) — 21 Aug*

? Quick Summary

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Compiled 22 Aug 2026 · Sources: BBC Wales, Nation.Cymru (incl. LDR), GOV.WALES · SearXNG in mixed/garbage mode (GOV.WALES Energy Strategy hit cherry-picked); articles fetched via the Playwright-fetch server (Hermes browser unavailable in cron).

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