Welsh Headlines — 22 Sep 2026

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Tuesday morning roundup · Wales-only · compiled from BBC Wales, BBC Wales Politics, BBC Sport Wales, BBC Cymru Fyw, BBC Weather, Nation.Cymru, GOV.WALES, The Guardian (Wales RSS)

? Top Story: The Programme for Government — seven priorities for the four-year Senedd term

The Welsh Government has published its new Programme for Government, the blueprint that sets out what Plaid Cymru's ministers intend to achieve before the 2028 election.

- **Launched by First Minister Rhun ap Iorwerth** and published on Monday evening (GOV.WALES timestamp 21 September, 23:00). A Programme for Government is published by each new government at the start of a Senedd term and outlines ministerial ambitions for the full four years.
- **The seven areas of focus:**
  1. **Building a health and care service fit for the future, and cutting waiting lists**
  2. **Helping households with the cost of living**
  3. **Unleashing the potential of the Welsh economy, and creating good well-paid jobs**
  4. **Raising standards in schools, and ensuring the best conditions for learning**
  5. **Tackling child poverty and securing the best future for every child in Wales**
  6. **Standing up for Wales and demanding fairness from Westminster**
  7. **Delivering these priorities**

- **The FM on the approach:** "*This Programme for Government is our blueprint for change. It sets a new ambition for Wales to realise our vision of a modern, thriving, ambitious and confident nation.*" He said **"silo working"** had stood in the way of progress, and that his government would work **"across government departments – not just within them"**.
- **On Brexit-era drift and devolution:** "*We were elected to get Wales moving after years of drift and stagnation. That remains our mission.*" He added the government would be **"uncompromising in standing up for Wales and demanding fairness from Westminster"**, making the case for **"empowering the Senedd with the tools that will enable us to be bolder and more radical"**.
- **Context:** the Programme had been trailed in the FM's **First 100 Days Progress Report** on 1 September, when he warned the Welsh Government budget would shrink in real terms and confirmed initial activity on all **96 commitments** was complete. This is the first sight of the actual programme document.

(GOV.WALES press release, 21 Sep 23:00; Nation.Cymru, 22 Sep.)

?? Senedd & Politics

?? Airbus puts £150m into Broughton — 480 new jobs in north Wales

Airbus is investing £150m at its Broughton site in Flintshire, creating around 480 new jobs this year and converting the former A380 wing facility into an A321 wing production line.

- The former A380 building becomes a line for wings for the **A321**, the largest member of Airbus's best-selling A320 family. Work is due for completion **by the end of the year** and includes **six production stations, a wing-equipping line and a paint shop**. The first A321 wing is already being produced.
- Airbus holds orders for around **7,500 A320-family aircraft, around three-quarters of them A321s**. The **480 jobs** include **250 positions in the refurbished factory**; more are expected next year. They join around **6,000 people** already employed at Broughton.
- **Jerome Blandin, Head of Airbus Wing:** "*We aren't just talking about a ramp-up; we're putting the infrastructure in place to support it. Around the world today, an A320 Family aircraft takes off or lands every two seconds, with wings designed and built in the UK.*" He framed it around Airbus's **"rate 75"** target — 75 A320-family aircraft a month.
- **Cabinet Minister for Enterprise, Connectivity and Energy Adam Price:** "*Today's announcement of 480 new jobs, with more to follow next year, is great news for North Wales... strongly supports our ambition to grow advanced manufacturing and re-industrialise Wales.*" It follows a separate multi-million-pound investment at Airbus's Belfast site for the smaller A220.

(Nation.Cymru, 21 Sep; GOV.WALES, 21 Sep 15:35.)

?? Wales to fall silent for Aberfan's 60th anniversary

The First Minister will lead the Welsh nation in a minute's silence at 9.15am on 21 October — the exact time 60 years ago that a colliery spoil tip collapsed onto Aberfan, killing 144 people including 116 children.

- **Rhun ap Iorwerth** will attend the official remembrance event in Aberfan, joined by **Deputy First Minister Sioned Williams**, the **Aberfan Trustees** and community representatives. The Welsh Government will hold a minute's silence for staff across its estate.
- **The FM:** "*The tragedy of Aberfan continues to echo down the decades. The community was devastated by the events of October 21st 1966, but it continues to resonate deeply across Wales, the wider United Kingdom, and indeed across the world.*" He invited organisations across Wales to observe the silence **"in a way that is relevant and appropriate to them"**, noting memorials as far afield as **Menai Bridge**.

(GOV.WALES release, 21 Sep 13:00; Nation.Cymru, 21 Sep.)

? Reform MSs 'held alcohol-fuelled karaoke party on the Senedd estate'

Multiple sources have told Nation.Cymru that Reform UK MSs and staff held an alcohol-fuelled karaoke party on the Senedd estate immediately before the summer recess in July — with security staff reportedly closing the members' car park gate to stop intoxicated politicians driving home in the early hours.

- **Martin Shipton's report** says Senedd Commission security were concerned enough to shut the gate. A source named **Laura Anne Jones**, then leader **Dan Thomas** and **Gaz Thomas** as involved, along with staffers; Reform chief whip **Llyr Powell** was not, the source said. The source also claimed Dan Thomas had been drinking through the afternoon before going into the Chamber **"stinking of alcohol"** for the bovine TB debate.
- **The Commission says it has no record of it.** A spokesperson told Nation.Cymru there was **no entry in the estate's security log** of such an incident on **15, 16 or the early hours of 17 July** — though it confirmed a number of outlets had contacted it about the party.
- Reform UK, Laura Anne Jones, Dan Thomas and Gaz Thomas were all invited to comment. **None responded.**
- Background: MSs have **24-hour access** to the estate, and while former Llywydd **Rosemary Butler** banned lunchtime drinking in the members' tea room, alcohol is permitted in offices. One source: "*Reform has wanted to keep this incident quiet, because*

it is highly embarrassing for them. It's also embarrassing for the Senedd as an institution."

(Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton, 21 Sep.)

?? Helen Jenner confirmed as Reform's new leader in Wales

Nigel Farage unveiled Helen Jenner as Reform UK's newly-elected Welsh leader on the steps of the Senedd on Monday, replacing Dan Thomas after his arrest.

- A leadership vote was held by Reform's **33 Senedd members** on Monday morning. Jenner confirmed **Jason O'Connell** had stood against her; the party did not publish figures, but BBC Wales was told the vote was **believed to be close**. There was no vote of the wider membership. A **deputy leader vote** was due on Tuesday.
- **Jenner** is the Senedd member for **Bangor Conwy Môn**, a married mother-of-two from **Anglesey**, a fluent Welsh speaker who spent **15 years as a teacher**, and has been a member of all Farage's parties since UKIP — standing for the Brexit Party in 2019. She said it was an honour to be elected.
- **Farage**, who called her "*a determined campaigner*" and "*someone I trust*", said of Dan Thomas's **"personal difficulties"** that it had been untenable for him to continue: "*We could have done without this bump in the road.*"
- Dan Thomas, who led Reform to its best-ever Senedd result in May as the second-largest party, remains an MS for **Casnewydd Islwyn** and denies wrongdoing; Gwent Police have bailed him while enquiries continue.

(BBC Wales — David Deans, 21 Sep; Nation.Cymru, 21 Sep.)

? Neath Port Talbot council leader quits after drunken conference incident

Steve Hunt has resigned as leader of Neath Port Talbot Council after falling over drunk at a Welsh Local Government Association conference and allegations he drank "a whole bottle of gin" and vowed to "wipe out" Plaid Cymru.

- Hunt said he **"should have exercised better judgement"** after becoming **"intoxicated"** at the conference, said he was a strong supporter of the Welsh language, and insisted the Plaid remark was **"banter"**. He denied drinking a bottle of gin, and said **"personal circumstances"** contributed to his behaviour, describing his role as carrying a **"significant level of pressure and responsibility"**. He apologised to the Plaid Cymru group leader the following morning.
- He **continues as an independent councillor** for the **Crynant, Onllwyn and Seven Sisters** ward, but a new council leader will be appointed on **14 October**. Hunt had led the council's **Independent–Plaid Cymru coalition since 2022** — the first time in the

town's history Labour lost control of Neath Port Talbot.

(BBC Wales — Lewis Smith, Local Democracy Reporting Service, 21 Sep.)

? Jane Dodds: tax AI wealth to pay a universal basic income

The leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats has called for a new wealth tax on AI companies to fund a universal basic income, and admitted being "disappointed" by May's Senedd election result.

- Speaking at the UK party's annual conference in **Brighton**, **Jane Dodds** — the **only** Liberal Democrat elected to the Senedd in May — said the party needed to be **"more progressive, more exciting and more inspiring"**, and questioned some campaign choices: whether the party was right to be **"so clear that we oppose independence"**, and whether it was right to fight on health and social care.
- **On AI:** "*We need to tax the wealth on AI and create a wealth fund that allows us to pay a universal basic income so that the gains of that revolution are shared by everyone, not just hoarded by a handful of companies on the other side of the Atlantic.*"
- **On climate:** she cited the summer's wildfires — "*this summer the green fields of Wales turned brown*" — and called for honesty about **"flying less, real investment in public transport, and making it easier for a family to choose an electric car over a petrol one"**.
- She is the MS for **Brycheiniog Tawe Nedd**; the Welsh Lib Dems have held a single Senedd seat since 2016.

(BBC Wales — Shelley Phelps, 21 Sep; BBC Cymru Fyw — Catrin Haf Jones, 21 Sep.)

?? 'Arms fair' row: campaigners accuse Plaid Cymru of deceit

Anti-war campaigners say Plaid Cymru MSs may have misled constituents about why the Welsh Government could not withdraw sponsorship from the Defence Security Resilience Cymru summit in Newport on 3–4 September.

- Multiple Plaid MSs replied in a standard email that the Welsh Government could not pull out **"due to contractual obligations agreed by the previous Labour administration"**. Health Minister **Mabon ap Gwynfor** said the same on Radio Wales Breakfast: the **£60,000+** sponsorship was "*part of the agreement*" made by the previous Labour government — "*You have to respect agreements.*"
- **Campaigners say the procurement record contradicts that.** The Welsh Government's own **Sell2Wales** entry gives **24 August 2026** as the estimated date for signing the sponsorship contract — more than three months after Plaid Cymru took office.

- **Adam Johannes**, joint secretary of Cardiff Stop the War Coalition, said he received the reply — sent on behalf of his three MSs, **Dafydd Trystan Davies, Zaynub Akbar and Nick Carter** — on **24 August**, the very day the contract was due to be signed. He has urged recipients to write to the **Senedd Commissioner for Standards**, citing the new **Senedd Code of Conduct** approved in March 2026 requiring members to act truthfully.
- **What's next:** Cabinet Minister **Adam Price** is due to make a Senedd statement on a new **Welsh Defence Ethical Framework** on the afternoon of **22 September**.

(Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton, 22 Sep.)

? Hustings footage: Reform MS at odds with his party on trans rights

Resurfaced video shows Pen-y-bont Bro Morgannwg MS Gareth Thomas telling a 2024 general election hustings he was "not what most people would think of Reform" — including saying transgender people should use whichever toilet they choose, to boos from Reform supporters.

- At the **Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare** hustings on **20 June 2024**, Thomas said: "*I'm all for equality, gender equality, I don't care whether you're gay, bi, trans – it doesn't matter.*" He told the crowd women make the best leaders, and said he did not agree with his party's position that there are **only two genders**.
- He also expressed an interest in joining the **Workers Party of Britain**, telling its candidate they were "going to become friends" — drawing laughter from the audience at The Scala.

(Nation.Cymru — Emily Price, 22 Sep.)

? Reform councillor: Dan Thomas is 'an honourable man'

The councillor who formed Reform's first local government group in Wales has defended former Welsh leader Dan Thomas, saying the controversy over his arrest "happens to everybody".

- **Cllr Alan Slade** (Torfaen) told evangelical podcaster **Faith Jarvis**: "*We've all not had our finest moments... he's done exactly the right thing, he's obviously an honourable man.*" Jarvis replied **"These things happen!"** and Slade agreed: "*They do! They happen to everybody.*" Slade, who defected from the Torfaen Independents in 2024 alongside **Jason O'Connell** and **David Thomas**, admitted he had "no idea what went on".
- The pair criticised Welsh media coverage of the arrest, and Slade questioned Reform's vetting after **Sarah Cooper-Lesadd's** defection to Plaid Cymru, saying of her support for the Nation of Sanctuary policy: "*I don't know how that slipped through the net.*"

(Nation.Cymru — Emily Price, 22 Sep.)

? Environment

? 'Terrifying' 101-acre Menai data centre: 15,000 object

Campaigners say a proposed 101-acre data centre between Caernarfon and Y Felinheli in Gwynedd would have a "heartbreaking" effect on the landscape and wildlife — and nearly 15,000 people have signed a petition against it.

- **Canolfan Ddata Menai** would create **more than 900 jobs during construction** and **200 permanent roles**, and would be built on the **long-derelict former Ferodo site**. It would consist of **five main buildings**, the tallest at **30m (98ft)**. **More than 100 people** attended a public meeting on Saturday; **plans are out for public consultation**.
- **Noise:** planning documents cite a study showing noise would affect people within a **2.5-mile (4km) radius**. **Water:** average use of around **700,000 litres a day**, rising to a possible **12 million litres a day at maximum** — described by developers as the "higher maximum-use scenario" required by the environmental assessment. They say no water would be taken from the Menai Strait and no warm cooling water discharged into it.
- **Emyr Davies**, whose house is near the boundary: "*Visually it would have a massive effect, not just for us here in Caernarfon but also in Anglesey, and it would change the views of Snowdonia forevermore.*" He said he would consider selling. **Emma Lewandowicz**: "*It's really terrifying just to see the sheer size of it... I've got a little boy and I feel like it would tear our futures apart.*"
- **Cllr Gwion Emyr** backed development in principle but not at any cost: "*We need something there and it's been empty for over 20 years... but jobs can't come at the expense of the local community.*"

(BBC Wales — Liam Evans, 21 Sep, updated today; BBC Cymru Fyw, 2 hours ago.)

?? Illegal dumping petition passes its first milestone in two days

A Senedd petition demanding stronger council powers to stop illegal waste dumping has passed the 250 signatures needed for consideration by the Petitions Committee within two days — reaching almost 900.

- The petition was launched by **MP Andrew Ranger** after two incidents in **Coedpoeth and Minera**, and asks the Welsh Government to review councils' powers to protect

communities from land seizures and environmental damage, following criticism of the pace of **Natural Resources Wales** action.
- **What went wrong:** NRW issued a **Section 59 notice** to halt dumping on land off **Castle Road and Talwrn Road** in Coedpoeth and remove all waste — it was ignored, and weeks later no enforcement had taken place. Dumping then began at another site off **Nant Lais and Old Smelt Road**, on the border with Minera, where **Travellers took over the site**. A Wrexham Council interim High Court injunction simply saw tipping transfer **back to Talwrn**.
- **At 10,000 signatures the Senedd must hold a full debate.** The petition is at petitions.senedd.wales.

(Nation.Cymru — Alec Doyle, Local Democracy Reporter, 22 Sep.)

? Health

? First-ever urgent appeal for organ donors

The health service has issued an urgent call for more organ donors for the first time ever, as donation numbers fall significantly and the transplant waiting list reaches its highest level on record.

- **The figures:** a **9% fall** in organs donated across the UK this year compared with last; **more than 8,700 people in the UK** now waiting for a transplant. New data show that between **April 2021 and March 2026, more than 700 potential donations did not happen** because families did not know what their relative wanted — and **2,000 donation opportunities were lost over the last five years** for the same reason.
- **Anthony Clarkson** of **NHS Blood and Transplant**, the specialist health authority shared between Wales and England, said we face **"one of the most challenging periods for organ donation in over a decade"** and that "*action is needed urgently*". Registering takes **two minutes** and each donor can potentially **save up to nine lives**.
- **Llio Dudley Roberts**, from **Trawsfynydd**, received a kidney from her younger sister **Ffion** in 2015 after developing the rare condition FSGS. She is now mother to **Manw John** , and says the statistics "frightened" her: "*There are so many people who need organs – we need to talk about it more and I'm just pleading with people to donate.*" She stressed the conversation need not be **"too heavy"**.

(BBC Cymru Fyw — 21 Sep. Welsh-language report, translated here.)

? Vaping and smoking rates among Welsh children fall

Vaping rates among children and young people in Wales have fallen for the first time in years, according to new survey data.

- A survey of **more than 130,000** secondary school pupils suggests there are now **more than 3,000 fewer** young people vaping regularly. The proportion of **years 7 to 11** saying they vape **once a week fell from 7% in 2023 to 5.2%**.
- Public health experts say the **"significant decrease"** coincides with the introduction of the **single-use vape ban**, though the law change's real effect is still being measured.

(BBC Cymru Fyw — Meleri Williams, today.)

? Education

? Carmarthenshire schools: 'serious' and 'unsustainable'

Schools in Carmarthenshire are at risk of overspending by £6.9m this year on top of an existing £9.6m deficit — a potential £16.4m black hole by the end of the financial year, councillors were told.

- The cabinet member responsible for resources said the county's schools position was **"serious"** and **"unsustainable"**, while council officers warned the gravity and urgency **"cannot be over-emphasised"**.
- **Two secondary schools** are each expected to record deficits of nearly £3m: **Ysgol Bro Dinefwr** (£2.98m total, with an £873,534 overspend this year) and **Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn** in Newcastle Emlyn (£2.8m, with a £628,144 overspend). Primary **Ysgol Myrddin** in Carmarthen is expected to overspend £158,100, taking its total deficit to £821,687. **Estyn** has previously raised concerns about both secondary schools.
- **Cllr Alun Lenny** blamed council **underfunding**: "*This Council is £150m worse off than ten years ago because we are underfunded — that's the truth, that's the root of the problem.*" He likened the recovery to **"turning an oil tanker round"**.
- **Scale:** by June's figures **53 of the council's 94 primary schools** were likely to record a deficit, and only **3 of 12 secondary schools** were in the black. **James Durbridge**, head of Ysgol Dyffryn Aman and chair of the county's secondary headteachers' association, called it "*a dark picture and the situation is extremely challenging*", citing additional learning needs and the **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan** as budget pressures without matching investment.

(BBC Cymru Fyw — Aled Scourfield, S4C News, 21 Sep. Welsh-language report, translated here.)

? Crime & Justice

? 13 years for driver who killed Lydia La Polla fleeing police

Michael Connors has been jailed for 13 years after killing a "devoted" mother while fleeing police in Wrexham — driving at 71mph in a 20mph zone seconds before the crash.

- **Lydia La Polla, 47**, was driving a Toyota Yaris when Connors's silver Mercedes ploughed into the passenger side, causing it to become airborne, roll over and hit a wall. The Mercedes was still travelling at **63mph** at impact. Her husband **Robert La Polla, 44**, was seriously injured, as was a **16-year-old girl** who was a passenger in Connors's car.
- Connors, **28**, of Ballyfermot, Dublin, **fled to Ireland** afterwards and was extradited on an international arrest warrant. He had **no insurance and no driving licence**, was **on licence from prison**, and had a record of **64 offences** including nine dangerous driving allegations in Ireland.
- **Judge Simon Mills** told Mold Crown Court that Lydia's "*excellent life was needlessly cut short at the age of 47, not far from her 25th wedding anniversary*", and that Connors fled **"in a cowardly fashion"**: "*If the defendant has any sense of decency at all, he will carry the weight of what he did until the end of his days.*"
- **Robert La Polla**, in a victim impact statement: "*My life will never be the same again. To say I am heartbroken is an understatement... It breaks my heart to know that their mother won't be there for their weddings.*" Connors got an **eight-year driving ban** with an extended retest.

(BBC Wales — Danielle Herbert, 21 Sep.)

? Five years for dashcam driver who left victim with PTSD

Ethan Loveridge, 20, from Llanbradach, has been jailed for five years after losing control of his Kia Sorento on the A468 in Caerphilly and crashing head-on into another driver.

- **Martin Howells, 50**, suffered **eight broken ribs, a broken nose, a detached bicep, shoulder and rotator cuff injuries and nerve damage** to his neck and shoulder, and was off work for **10 months**. Dashcam footage showed Loveridge's car clip another vehicle before hitting Howells's. He was sentenced at **Newport Crown Court** after admitting causing serious injury by dangerous driving, along with drug offences — he and his then partner were stopped in June 2025 and messages revealed six months of supplying cocaine and cannabis, with **810g of cannabis worth £8,000** found at his

property.
- **Howells:** "*It was a horrific crash that changed my life forever.*" He said he had been diagnosed with **PTSD** and had eight months of psychological therapy, and that he can no longer lift anything above shoulder height or play guitar. **Recorder John Philpotts** told Loveridge he was "*fortunate there was no fatality in this case*". He was also disqualified for four years.

(BBC Wales — Holly Harrison, 21 Sep.)

? Weapons made from door handles at youth prisons — Parc among those inspected

A prisons inspection report has found young offenders constructing makeshift weapons from aluminium door sheets, windows and fencing after a ban on razor blades — with the new weapons considered more dangerous than those they replaced.

- HM Inspectorate of Prisons surveyed children aged **12 to 18** at four institutions between **April 2025 and March 2026**, including **Wetherby YOI** in West Yorkshire. **Parc in Bridgend, South Wales** was among the other institutions inspected, alongside Werrington, Feltham A and Oakhill. Almost **500 assaults** were recorded at Wetherby, and **39%** of children interviewed said they had felt unsafe at some point in custody.
- **Chief Inspector of Prisons Charlie Taylor** said that while some institutions had made progress, **"standards across the youth estate remain woeful"**, with children "*exposed to high levels of violence, spending too much time locked in their cells and frequently unable to access the education and support they need*".

(BBC — Steve Jones, today. Reported from a Wales perspective: Parc was among the sites inspected.)

? 33 Land Rover Defenders stolen in eight months — Powys among the targets

Four men have been jailed at Hereford Crown Court after a gang stole 33 Land Rover Defenders worth more than £600,000 in eight months.

- The gang targeted vehicles across **six police force areas** between September 2024 and May 2025, with thefts in Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and **Powys**, as well as further afield. A **Bristol workshop** was used as a **"chop shop"** to dismantle vehicles for parts.
- **Leonard Hodgkins, 50**, of Malvern, got four years and nine months; **Benjamin Hobbs, 36**, of Bristol, four years and eight months; **Jimmy Butler, 42**, of Worcester, four years, one month and six days; and **David Hodgkins, 41**, of Powick, three years. All pleaded guilty to conspiracy to steal vehicles. West Mercia Police ran **Operation Liondale**.

(BBC — Elliot Ball, 21 Sep.)

?? Local & Community

?? Three AA Rosettes for The Gunroom at the 'Best Hotel in Wales'

The Gunroom Restaurant at Plas Dinas Country House in Bontnewydd has been awarded Three AA Rosettes — described by the AA as "outstanding", with standards deserving recognition well beyond their local area.

- Announced at the **AA Hospitality Awards** in Mayfair, London, in the **70th anniversary year** of the AA Rosette scheme. It caps a stellar run for **Plas Dinas**, named **Best Hotel in Wales** in the Good Hotel Guide's 2026 César Awards and **AA Restaurant with Rooms of the Year for Wales 2025**, and holder of AA Five-Star Gold status.
- **Head chef Daniel ap Geraint**, at The Gunroom since 2018 and a Great British Menu finalist in 2025, said: "*Three Rosettes has been a goal of ours for some time... there's a lot of work behind the scenes that people don't necessarily see.*" The AA praised "*modern British cooking underpinned by classic skills and technique*", singling out Welsh butter, Anglesey sea salt, Welsh lamb and local seafood. **Owner Annie Perks** said: "*At this level it goes to a panel and there is a lot of scrutiny involved.*"

(Nation.Cymru, 22 Sep.)

?? Cardiff Airport confirms Toronto flights return in 2027

Cardiff Airport has confirmed its direct flights to Toronto with WestJet will be back in 2027. *(Nation.Cymru, 22 Sep.)*

? £1.8m to put 18 PhD students inside Wales' cultural institutions

Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales has secured more than £1.8m from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a doctoral scheme placing 18 PhD students with Wales' biggest culture and heritage bodies over four years.

- The **Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award** brings together **Museum Wales** as consortium lead with the **National Library of Wales, the National Botanic Garden of**

Wales, Cadw and the **Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales**, across **12 research hubs**.
- Priorities span **representation in collections, heritage and wellbeing, digital access, and conservation under climate change**. Third-year student **Elise Unwin**, who is assembling a Covid archive, said "*talking about it in the present is helping people process their emotions now*".

(Nation.Cymru, 22 Sep.)

? Culture & Media

? Swansea's The Fiends announce their final show

Swansea indie rock band The Fiends have split after six years, and will play their last show at The Bunkhouse in Swansea on 24 October.

- Formed in **2020**, the four-piece — **Ethan Goslett, Ceulan Williams, Josh Albrighton** and **Ben Quint** — started out rehearsing in a garage during the pandemic before establishing themselves on the south Wales circuit, supporting **Peter Hook & The Light, The Snuts** and **The Lottery Winners**. In 2025 they played **SXSW in Austin** and **New Colossus Festival in New York**, plus a show in Los Angeles.
- Their first new release in more than a year, **'Sonder'**, came out in July 2026. In a message to fans: "*No one has fallen out, but we think it's time to move on... we want to finish this chapter together, surrounded by the people who made it so special.*" Support on the night comes from Black Havana, The False Idols and The Spring.

(Nation.Cymru, 22 Sep.)

? Ryan Reynolds and Rob Mac buy Wrexham's historic football pub

Wrexham's Hollywood co-owners have bought The Turf pub next door to the Racecourse Ground — the pub where Wales' oldest football club was founded in October 1864.

- The club said the purchase from **Admiral Taverns** lets it put **the club, the Racecourse and The Turf under a single ownership**, "*protecting the history and traditions of the historic public house that is inexorably linked to... Wrexham AFC since its foundation in 1864*".

- Landlord **Wayne Jones**, who has run the pub for 20 years and stays on, said the Turf Tavern "*predates the club and records suggest that the club itself was founded in the pub*" — with players changing there before running out at the Racecourse as recently as the 1940s. The pub has become a fixture of the *Welcome to Wrexham* documentary; **Prince William** pulled a pint there with **Rob Mac** for St David's Day 2024.

(BBC Wales — Danielle Herbert, 21 Sep.)

? Melanie Walters: Gavin and Stacey co-stars back my Strictly debut

Actor Melanie Walters, 64, best known as Gwen West in Gavin and Stacey, has made her Strictly Come Dancing debut — partnered with Aljaz Skorjanec.

- She said her co-stars had sent "*lovely messages, especially from Jo [Page], who's just very excited*", and called the pairing a **"dream come true"**. She described joining as **"mind-boggling"** and "*a bit out of my comfort zone*": "*I'm quite a private person. I just thought, 'no, let's tick that box'... I really want to learn to dance properly.*"

(BBC Wales — Nicholas Bourne, 21 Sep.)

? Moby Dick in Fishguard: the little girl Gregory Peck tickled awake

Seventy years after John Huston's Moby Dick was released, a woman who met its Hollywood stars as a three-year-old has recalled the filming in west Wales.

- **Susan Jones** was three when her parents, the Rev **Glynn Jones** and **Evelyn**, put actor **Bernard Miles** up at their rectory in **St Nicholas** rather than the Fishguard Bay Hotel with the rest of the cast during the 1954 shoot. Miles — "The Manxman" in the 1956 film — grew fond of her, and she remembers Gregory Peck asking her mother **"Where is this little girl I keep hearing so much of?"** before tickling her toes as she slept.
- She also claims she cut the legs off Miles's trousers with scissors because she was so upset filming was ending. Thirty years later the pair were reunited on **This Is Your Life**. The **Ar Ymyl y Tir 2026 / On Land's Edge Festival** runs in Fishguard from **25–27 September**.

(Nation.Cymru, 22 Sep — following the festival preview in the 1 September roundup.)

? Hay Festival Winter Weekend 2026 lineup revealed

More than 60 artists will appear at Hay Castle from 26–29 November, in the 40th year of Hay Festival.

- The lineup includes **Kate Mosse, David Olusoga, Simon Armitage, Owen Sheers, David Gray, Greg James, Maxine Peake, Caroline Quentin, Kiri Pritchard-McLean, Jim Al-Khalili** and former Scottish first minister **Humza Yousaf**, who will discuss his family's evacuation from Gaza. **Owen Sheers and graphic novelist Jack Lewis** honour the victims of Aberfan 60 years on; the British Museum's curators discuss the Bayeux Tapestry's return to Britain.
- A free **KS1 Programme for Schools** opens the festival, funded by The Moondance Foundation, giving primary pupils from state schools in Wales free access over two days. Christmas lights switch-on: **Friday 27 November**.

(Nation.Cymru, 21 Sep.)

? Sport

? Wales depleted but fearless for Portugal

Wales go into their Nations League A opener against Portugal in Lisbon on Thursday without Harry Wilson, Nathan Broadhead and Karl Darlow, on top of already-missing defenders Joe Rodon and Dylan Lawlor.

- **Wilson** (quad) had been a doubt and **Broadhead** (thigh) was expected to miss out, but the withdrawal of goalkeeper **Darlow** — who made his Manchester United debut in the EFL Cup last week — is a further blow. Cardiff City pair **Rubin Colwill** and **Isaak Davies** are also unavailable.
- Bellamy has called up **David Cornell** (35, Leicester City), **Joe Taylor** (23, Huddersfield Town, five goals this season) and **Charlie Savage** (23, Reading) — none capped at senior level. Savage is the son of former Wales midfielder **Robbie Savage**.
- **Jordan James** (Wolves) on facing a Portugal side including Ronaldo, Bruno Fernandes and the PSG pair Vitinha and João Neves: "*Obviously they're the best players in the world at the end of the day, you can't really sugarcoat it... You can't count us out. We've got a puncher's chance.*"
- **Fixtures:** Portugal (a), Thursday 24 September, 19:45 BST, Estádio José Alvalade; Denmark (a), Sunday 27 September; Norway (h), Thursday 1 October; Denmark (h), Sunday 4 October.

(BBC Sport Wales — Gareth Vincent, 21 Sep; Nation.Cymru, 21 Sep.)

? Welsh Feathers chase World Cup qualification in Glasgow

Wales' netballers return to Glasgow this weekend aiming to qualify for the 2027 World Cup — less than two months after a disappointing 10th place at the Commonwealth Games.

- The Feathers face **Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland**, with **two places** at **Australia 2027** up for grabs, under interim head coach **Reinga Bloxham**. Wales dropped from **seventh to ninth** in the world rankings, winning just one of six matches in Glasgow.
- **Georgia Rowe**, who had the highest accuracy (97%) of the leading goalscorers in the 2026 Netball Super League: "*Physically on court we were not at our best and mentally we definitely weren't where we needed to be.*" Captain **Bethan Partridge** said the group had had "*honest reflections*" and real accountability. Bloxham: "*There is no reason why we can't take three from three.*"

(BBC Sport Wales — Gareth Bailey, today.)

? Glamorgan's women step up to the professional top flight

Glamorgan will become the tenth team in the expanded top tier of women's county cricket in 2027 — and coach Rachel Priest knows the work that awaits.

- The Welsh county won the **T20 Blast** and were **twice One Day Cup finalists** in two seasons in the second tier, but the step up means a **turnover of at least half the squad**. Six contracts are confirmed — homegrown **Lauren Parfitt** and **Bethan Gammon** , loanees **Abbey Freeborn** and **Bethan Ellis**, and new signings **Seren Smale** (Wrexham-born, twice capped by England) and **Georgia Davis**. **Nicole Reid** has retired; wicketkeeper **Georgia Parfitt** stepped down earlier in the season.
- **Priest:** "*We're not going to Tier One just to play games but to win and be competitive.*" A squad of **15** will start work in **November** ahead of the 2027 season. Glamorgan and Yorkshire were both promised Tier One status when the new top flight began in 2025; Yorkshire's first season was brought forward to 2026.

(BBC Sport Wales — Nick Webb, today.)

? Why Backstedt can hit cycling's peaks

A profile of Zoe Backstedt after her world time-trial silver in Montreal — and a reminder of the scale of the achievement for a rider who turns 22 this week.

- Backstedt, from **Pontyclun**, is the daughter of **Magnus** (Paris–Roubaix winner) and **Megan** (British road race champion), with sister **Elynor** also a professional. She had won **nine world titles** across cyclo-cross, road and track by the age of 20, and demolished the 2025 under-23 time trial field in Rwanda by **1 minute 51 seconds**.
- **"I have to say I'm happy, but at the same time of course I also came here for a gold medal,"** she said. Sickness cost her a shot at the **Paris 2024 Olympics**, and a broken hand and wrist interrupted her 2025 cyclo-cross season.

(BBC Sport Wales — Steve James, 21 Sep.)

?? Weather

Cardiff — Tuesday 22 September: light cloud and light winds, high **21°C**, low **14°C** (southerly, 4 mph). **Sunrise 06:58, sunset 19:12.** *(BBC Weather, last updated 09:01 today.)*

Day	Forecast	High / Low
Tue 22 Sep	Light cloud, light winds	21° / 14°
Wed 23 Sep	Sunny intervals, gentle breeze	21° / 8°
Thu 24 Sep	Sunny intervals, light winds	21° / 11°
Fri 25 Sep	Sunny intervals, light winds	21° / 11°
Sat 26 Sep	Sunny intervals, light winds	19° / 12°
Sun 27 Sep	Light rain, gentle breeze	19° / 11°
Mon 28 Sep	Light rain showers, gentle breeze	19° / 13°

- **Cardiff detail:** today will be mostly dry with sunny spells and variable cloud **once any early mist or fog clears**; tonight dry with mostly clear skies, low cloud developing from the west towards dawn and light winds. Tomorrow starts mostly cloudy with the odd light shower, breaking to plenty of sunny spells in the afternoon; Thursday dry and mostly sunny, then a cloudier Friday with light winds throughout.
- **No weather warnings are in force for the UK.** *(BBC Weather warnings page, today.)*
- □□ **Autumn equinox: 01:06 BST on Wednesday 23 September** (Royal Museums Greenwich) — the start of astronomical autumn, though not necessarily a sudden change in the weather.

? Quick Summary

#	Story	Where	Why it matters

1	**Programme for Government published**	Wales	FM's seven priorities for the four-year term; "blueprint for change"
2	**Airbus £150m, 480 jobs at Broughton**	Flintshire	A321 wing line in the old A380 shed; "rate 75" target; more jobs next year
3	**Menai data centre campaign**	Gwynedd	101 acres, ~15,000 objecting, 12m litres of water a day at maximum
4	**Reform MSs' Senedd 'party'**	Cardiff Bay	Sources allege 4am drinking; Commission says no security-log record
5	**Aberfan 60th anniversary**	Merthyr Tydfil	Minute's silence at 9.15am, 21 October; FM to attend
6	**Jenner confirmed as Reform leader**	Senedd	Close vote with O'Connell; deputy leader ballot Tuesday
7	**Organ donation: first-ever urgent appeal**	Wales / UK	9% fall in donations; 8,700+ waiting; 700 lost opportunities
8	**Carmarthenshire schools £16.4m gap**	Carmarthenshire	Two secondaries ~£3m in deficit each; 53 of 94 primaries in the red
9	**Steve Hunt quits as council leader**	Neath Port Talbot	Drunk at the WLGA conference; new leader 14 October
10	**Dodds calls for AI wealth tax**	Brighton	Welsh Lib Dem leader wants a UBI funded from AI wealth
11	**Plaid 'arms fair' deceit claim**	Newport	Sell2Wales date contradicts "contractual obligation" line
12	**13 years for Lydia La Polla's killer**	Wrexham	71mph in a 20mph zone; Connors extradited from Ireland
13	**Wales depleted for Portugal**	Lisbon	Wilson, Broadhead, Darlow out; three uncapped call-ups
14	**Reynolds and Mac buy The Turf**	Wrexham	Pub where Wales' oldest club was founded in 1864
15	**The Fiends' final show**	Swansea	SXSW and New York veterans call it a day after six years

Compiled Tuesday 22 September 2026, ~09:25 BST by Emrys □□ (Hermes cron) · Sources: BBC Wales, BBC Wales Politics, BBC Sport Wales, BBC Cymru Fyw, BBC Weather (Cardiff + UK warnings), Nation.Cymru, GOV.WALES (media.service.gov.wales), The Guardian Wales RSS.

Method note: the Hermes browser remains unavailable on this host, so the whole sweep ran through the Playwright fetch service (192.168.178.100:8090, MarkItDown) — 11 index pages and 39 article/press-release pages at a 100% success rate. SearXNG (:8086) was in mixed mode: the first query returned usable news leads (WalesOnline, BBC Wales, the ITV Reform-Wales line) but the Senedd/Welsh-politics queries were dominated by Wikipedia election pages, a German ZDF listings entry and the Daily Mash — so the direct index sweep carried the roundup, with the SearXNG hits used to corroborate the business-rates and jellyfish stories and to recover the Land Rover gang article. WalesOnline's live blog and the Met Office regional page were walled this morning (consent shell / 1.6KB and 423 bytes respectively), so the forecast is BBC Weather's Cardiff data plus the UK warnings page ("no weather warnings in force"). GOV.WALES carried three fresh releases from Monday (Programme for Government 23:00, Airbus 15:35, Aberfan 13:00). De-duplicated against yesterday's Welsh file and today's UK file: the £121m orthopaedic hub, fridge-freezer collections, the Gwynedd visitor levy delay, the coal-tips feature, the WRAP recycling survey, off-road vehicle seizures, the campervan story, the Cardiff crime-victims portal, the Velindre skin cancer trial, the Pembroke cottage auction, the Stepaside holiday park appeal, the Sweetest Ache reunion, the Anthony Hopkins teaser, Big Pit, Backstedt's silver (reported as a profile today, not the result) and the Plaid/Reform polling were all dropped or reduced. Checked and excluded on their own dates: the 30% business rates cut (15–17 Sep), the Pembrokeshire lion's mane jellyfish (15–18 Sep), Cardiff East and Nant Helen data centres (a different scheme from Canolfan Ddata Menai), the Sorba Thomas Land Rover crash (12 Sep) and the Fishguard Moby Dick festival preview (1 Sep — today's item is Susan Jones's first-person memory, kept to two sentences). Reddit, Nitter, Phice and FlareSolverr steps were skipped — services down.

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