Welsh Headlines — 24 Oct 2026

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Compiled 09:20 BST, 24 Oct 2026. Sources: BBC Wales/Cymru Fyw/Sport, Nation.Cymru, GOV.WALES, Guardian, BBC Weather.

? Top Story: Storm Austen clean-up — and Storm Boelo's warning already covers Wales

Thousands of homes lost power as Storm Austen crossed Wales on Friday, with a gust of 74mph recorded at Aberporth, Ceredigion, at 08:00 BST. National Grid reported more than 3,000 properties off supply between Milford Haven and Usk — over 500 around Clunderwen, 244 at Llanrhidian, 234 in Pembroke, 174 in Carmarthen and 166 at Mynyddygarreg — while SP Energy Networks dealt with outages at Beddgelert, Glyn Ceiriog, Gwespyr, Flint and Cilcain. Hundreds were reconnected through the afternoon.

The Eryri Marathon, due to be run today, has been cancelled after course managers judged the route unsafe because of wind, fallen trees and flooding: "the weather forecasts for tomorrow have deteriorated significantly," organisers said, with every runner's place carried over to next year. Ynys Môn council paused refurbishment of the old Marine Terminal building at Amlwch after the storm damaged a new roof beam and told residents to avoid the site; in Llangrannog, the Tafell a Tân restaurant shut after wind blew so much sand off the beach that the front of the building was buried. Stena Line has cancelled some Holyhead–Dublin sailings, Transport for Wales has amended timetables on several routes into the weekend, and Natural Resources Wales has flood alerts out.

Storm Boelo keeps a Met Office yellow wind warning over Wales from 12:00 today until 21:00 on Sunday — the amber warnings cover Northern Ireland and much of Scotland and northern England, but not Wales. BBC Weather for Cardiff: heavy rain and strong winds easing later today, then a windy start to Sunday with sunny spells.

? Pylons: consultation on burying new power lines

The Welsh Government has launched a consultation on an **"undergrounding-first" planning policy for new 11-132kV electricity lines**, delivering Plaid Cymru's manifesto pledge to end the use of large steel lattice pylons on devolved lines. Overhead alternatives would be allowed only where set planning tests are met, and then via low wooden poles or "equivalent, less intrusive infrastructure". Ministers argue burying cables cuts visual impact, protects landscapes, makes lines less vulnerable to severe weather and reduces harm to birds; the consultation document concedes undergrounding is "generally considered more expensive to install and maintain" and brings construction impacts. The policy follows the fierce row over **Green Gen Cymru's** planned pylon network in the **Towy Valley**; the company said it welcomed the consultation and backed "the right infrastructure in the right place".

?? Politics: Plaid three points clear of Reform in new Senedd poll

A **Beaufort Research poll for Nation.Cymru** puts **Plaid Cymru on 33%**, down 2.4 points on May's Senedd election, with **Reform UK on 30%** (up 0.7), **Labour 15%** (up 3.9), the **Conservatives 11%**, the **Greens 6%** and the **Lib Dems 4%**. Fieldwork was carried out before ITV's undercover documentary on racist and misogynistic comments by Reform figures — and the result shows neither a Labour surge nor a Reform slump. Plaid leads in North and Mid Wales (31% to Reform's 24%) and in South West Wales and the Valleys (36% to 33%); Reform leads Cardiff and South East Wales (30% to 28%). Among women Plaid is 10 points ahead (35% to 25%); among 16-34s it takes 53%.

Reform has selected Darren Crandon — a social media troll and self-described **Tommy Robinson** "admirer" — for the **Risca East by-election on 19 November**, called after the death of Labour councillor **Nigel George**, who held the ward for 15 years. Nation.Cymru unearthed posts calling Robinson "a breath of fresh air" and "in touch with the public", plus 2018 attacks on Stewart McDonald and Piers Morgan. Crandon said he was standing not because he had "all the answers" but because he was "prepared to listen".

Bridgend council has passed a motion calling on the Welsh Government to create a statutory recall mechanism for councillors who breach public trust through serious misconduct or criminal convictions. Deputy leader **Cllr Jane Gebbie** raised hundreds of complaints about **Restore Britain's Cllr Owain Clatworthy** — including questions over his seat on the council's Corporate Parenting Committee, which oversees looked-after children including those from asylum-seeking backgrounds — and a petition for his removal that has passed **2,000 signatures**. She stressed the petition was not a finding of misconduct. Clatworthy backed recall in

principle but said it must be "tightly defined" and limited to serious convictions or proven sanctions; only Cllr Jonathan Pratt voted against.

? Flintshire: call to bring safeguarding review forward after school lockdown

Flintshire councillors have been assured that emergency procedures "worked successfully" after the new **Argoed High School** at Bryn-y-Baal, near Mold, was locked down and a **15-year-old boy arrested** over what North Wales Police called a public order incident. **Cllr Carolyn Preece** asked the council's education scrutiny committee to bring the annual safeguarding review forward from July 2027: "We need to know what is actually going on and what actions have been taken." Chief officer for education and youth **Claire Homard** refused, saying the report is presented annually to the joint education and health committee and that bringing it forward "would not in itself improve anything".

?? Justice

Clifford Foster, 61, appeared at **Newport Magistrates' Court** on Friday charged with the murder of **Eleanor Barnfield**, 47, speaking only to confirm his name, age and address, wearing a grey tracksuit and using a crutch. Barnfield died after her car hit a wall on Coity Road, Bridgend, on Monday with "puncture wounds unrelated to the collision"; Foster was arrested at the Ger-y-Nant retirement complex at 01:00 on Tuesday after a 12-hour stand-off involving firearm officers.

Anthony Badham, 61, of Newbridge, has been jailed for **25 years** at Cardiff Crown Court for raping and sexually assaulting four boys in the 1990s. Gwent Police began investigating in 2022 when two victims came forward, with two more reporting him in 2025; he was well known in Pontymister and spent time with local children through his car and motorbike hobby. DS **Laura Redwood** urged anyone else affected to come forward.

An inquest at **Caernarfon Coroner's Court** concluded that **Kieran Hughes**, 25, from Nant Gwynant, died by accident when he fell from a balcony while on holiday in Malta with three friends in July 2025; coroner **Elizabeth Dudley-Jones** heard there was no evidence of third-party involvement, and his father Alan spoke of "heartache all day, every day".

A Swansea Valley plumber who conspired with a contact known only as **"The Baron"** to ship cocaine and ketamine to New Zealand hidden inside hollowed-out rope has been jailed for **six years and nine months**. **Gavin Smith**, 44, of Pontlliw, was caught when South Wales Police went to his caravan over unrelated matters and found a kilo of cannabis plus quantities of ketamine, cocaine and psilocybin.

? Jamie Miller gives Wales its first UK number one in 15 years

Jamie Miller, 29, from Pontprennau in Cardiff, has topped the UK singles chart with **Babydoll**, beating Tate McRae's Housewife to number one. He is the first Welsh artist at the top since **Sian Evans** featured on DJ Fresh's *Louder* in 2011, and the first solo male Welsh artist since **Shakin' Stevens'** *Merry Christmas Everyone* in 1985. The track, released on 7 August months after Miller considered quitting music, took off after **Jennifer Love Hewitt** posted videos featuring it, spawning a TikTok dance trend and a US Billboard Hot 100 entry. "This is the biggest thing that's ever happened to me in my life," he said.

? Sport

WRU bosses are under pressure to resign after the union posted an **£18m loss** for the year to June 2026 and warned of a similar loss next year. Swansea council leader **Rob Stewart** told Radio Wales Breakfast that chief executive **Abi Tierney** and the board "need to go": "They've completely mismanaged the game in Wales... we've got half-empty stadiums at the national stadium, fans voting with their feet." Former Wales international **Alex Cuthbert** criticised a "lack of leadership", and businesswoman **Hayley Parsons** also joined the criticism; the WRU says the figures prove four regions are unsustainable as it moves to three from 2028.

Taulupe Faletau faces surgery on a finger injury picked up on his Cardiff comeback against Northampton on 18 October and will miss the URC derby at Ospreys — head coach **Corniel van Zyl** hopes he is back after the November break. Faletau, 35, has played only 31 times for Cardiff since 2022.

Wales' women face Japan in Tokyo at 10:30 BST today in the WXV Global Series, with the loser dropping to 13th in the world rankings; head coach **Sean Lynn** says the target is the top six by the 2029 World Cup. **Jess Fishlock** and **Chris Coleman** were inducted into the Welsh Sports Hall of Fame on Thursday alongside Mickey Thomas, Alan Curtis and Brian Flynn; Fishlock, Wales' most-capped player (165) and record scorer (48), retires at the end of the season and joins Rhiannon Wilkinson's coaching staff.

? Transport: TaithCymru coaches start tomorrow

The **TaithCymru** coach service between **Bangor and Carmarthen** begins on **Sunday 25 October**, with 10 daily services calling at Caernarfon, Porthmadog, Dolgellau, Machynlleth,

Aberystwyth and Aberaeron, cutting journey times by more than an hour, plus a late-night extension linking Bangor with Holyhead's rail station and ferry port. A typical adult fare is **£10** Bangor–Carmarthen and **£4.50** Aberystwyth–Carmarthen; the coaches have wi-fi, reclining seats, air conditioning, toilets and bookable cycle spaces. Deputy transport minister **Mark Hooper** called it "a significant step forward in connecting communities".

?? Zip World estate up for sale

A **1,900-acre estate** in Eryri including the **Zip World** adventure park at Llechwedd, a hotel, historic quarries, **two hydroelectric power stations** and a specialist cheese storage operation is on the market through Christie & Co, which is not disclosing a guide price. The freehold covers the Ffestiniog and Llechwedd quarries at Blaenau Ffestiniog, part of the UNESCO Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales, and dates from 1836. "From an investment perspective, opportunities of this nature are exceptionally rare," said director **Jonathan Watson**.

? Welsh Water: ex-minister attacks PFI-style funding

Former economy minister **Andrew Davies** has criticised **Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water's** use of a Direct Procurement for Customers (DPC) model to fund its **£660m Cwm Taf scheme**, comparing it to the discredited Private Finance Initiative. Under DPC a third-party "competitively appointed provider" designs, builds, finances, operates and maintains the asset, keeping the debt off the company's balance sheet while customers pay through bills. "Far from Welsh Water being very different from the privatised water companies in England, it is, in most respects — other than not paying dividends — very similar," Davies said, arguing the company is "overly burdened by debt".

? Culture & community

Wintering Well boxes for people with seasonal affective disorder are being rolled out to libraries across Wales this winter — therapeutic light lamps, a guidebook of indoor and outdoor activities and access to a free online course, developed by Glasgow and Edinburgh university researchers. Eleven Welsh library services are taking part: Cardiff, Swansea, Wrexham, Neath Port Talbot, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Powys, Conwy, Newport, Vale of Glamorgan and Caerphilly, out of 600 boxes shared across the four nations.

GTFM, the Valleys community station that began broadcasting in 2002 as Wales' first licensed community radio service, is shortlisted for **Station of the Year** at the Community Radio Awards, decided in Birmingham today — its second nomination in four years.

Russell T Davies says he is called a "groomer" and a "paedophile" every day by online trolls over his support for trans rights, and now has agents monitoring the abuse. The *Doctor Who* writer said the anger behind it is "stepping out of the online world into the real world", and that it feeds his new series *TipToe*.

60 years after Aberfan, the Guardian carries a reflection by **John Humphrys** on watching fathers dig for their missing children, and on the lessons society should have learned.

?? Weather

Storm Austen's yellow warnings ended on Friday evening; **Storm Boelo** brings a yellow wind warning for Wales from **12:00 Saturday to 21:00 Sunday** (amber for Northern Ireland and much of Scotland and northern England). Cardiff: heavy rain and strong winds today, high 16C; Sunday gusty at first then sunny spells, 13C; Monday cloud and heavy rain, 17C, clearing later; Tuesday blustery showers; Wednesday brighter.

? Quick Summary

- Storm Austen left thousands without power (74mph at Aberporth); the Eryri Marathon is cancelled and its places roll to 2027.
- Storm Boelo's yellow wind warning covers Wales from noon today until 21:00 Sunday; the amber warnings do not.
- Welsh Government consults on an undergrounding-first policy to end large steel pylons on devolved lines up to 132kV.
- Beaufort poll for Nation.Cymru: Plaid 33%, Reform 30%, Labour 15%, Conservatives 11%.
- Reform picks Tommy Robinson "admirer" Darren Crandon for the Risca East by-election on 19 November.
- Bridgend backs a statutory recall mechanism for councillors after 2,000+ sign a petition over Cllr Owain Clatworthy.
- Flintshire defends school lockdown procedures after a 15-year-old was arrested at Argoed High School.
- WRU faces calls for its chief executive and board to resign over an £18m loss.
- Jamie Miller becomes the first Welsh artist to top the UK singles chart since 2011.
- TaithCymru's Bangor–Carmarthen coach service starts tomorrow, £10 single.

? Method note

Compiled in cron mode at ~09:20 BST. SearXNG returned a usable index-heavy mix (BBC Wales and Wales Politics, Nation.Cymru, WalesOnline, senedd.wales) with no individual article leads, so the sweep ran through the Playwright fetch service: eight index/feed pages (BBC Wales, BBC Wales Politics, BBC Cymru Fyw, Nation.Cymru home and news, GOV.WALES main index, Guardian Wales RSS, BBC Weather and warnings) and 34 article pages, all successful. A per-file date sweep

dropped stale cards: the Reform face-coverings debate and the Covid review (both 21/23 Oct and already covered on 22 and 23 Oct), the Welsh language fall and Caldey Island (23 Oct), Jane Dodds' resignation, the council tax revaluation pause, the BBC Wales cuts live blog and the education-crisis feature (15-20 Oct), and the Elfyn Evans homecoming (15 Oct). De-duplicated against yesterday's Welsh file, this morning's UK file and folder-wide greps: the pylon policy, the Beaufort poll, Crandon, Badham, Clatworthy's recall motion, TaithCymru (covered as contract award on 25 Sep and ticket launch on 7 Oct — carried here only as "starts tomorrow") and Faletau's earlier squad omission were each checked. Nitter, Phice, Flaresolverr and Reddit skipped as instructed; senedd.wales and WalesOnline bodies remain unusable through the fetcher.

Revision #2
Created 2026-10-24 08:06:07 UTC by Admin
Updated 2026-10-24 08:06:08 UTC by Admin