Welsh Headlines — 27 Sep 2026

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? Top Story: Wrexham council to vote on overhauling contaminated-land checks — and the £1 lagoon deal behind it

Wrexham Council will be asked on Wednesday to transform the way it deals with contaminated land, in the fallout from the BBC's *Buried* documentary on historical toxic dumping. The Independent Group — led by council leader Cllr Mark Pritchard — has tabled a notice of motion signed by all 23 of its elected members, which says the documentary "and the subsequent issues it brought into the public domain has highlighted concerns relating to the legacy of contaminated and historically used sites and the experiences of communities living alongside them", adding: "There is a need for greater transparency, investigation and accountability."

Several industrial waste sites in the county are owned or managed by the council itself, including **Llwyneinion Acid Tar Lagoon**, which Monsanto and others used to dispose of chemical waste. Conveyancing records show the lagoon was bought by the then **Clwyd County Council for just £1** from the Llwyneinion Shale Brick Company in May 1980 — and that the same documents see the council "indemnify" the vendor "from and against any past, present or future cost claims, demands or liabilities arising directly or indirectly in respect of the escape or nuisance of noxious wastes". Just three months after the purchase the lagoon was engulfed by an **18-hour inferno**

that took more than 60 firefighters from across the region to bring under control.

The motion accepts that identifying who is responsible is complicated, with some sites in private or other public ownership, and proposes opening dialogue with public bodies and landowners; lobbying the Welsh Government and agencies for funding for environmental investigations and risk assessments; and building a co-operative agreement between the council, the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales to identify, investigate, monitor and remediate contaminated land across Wrexham. "No community should feel that concerns about potentially contaminated sites are being ignored or passed from one organisation to another without clear responsibility or action," it says, adding that remediation costs "may be beyond the resources available to individual councils". (Nation.Cymru — LDR, Alec Doyle)

?? Senedd & Politics

?? Ken Skates: rebuilding Welsh Labour is "a marathon not a sprint" — first conference speech today

Welsh Labour leader **Ken Skates** gives his first party conference speech, in Liverpool, this afternoon, saying beforehand that rebuilding the party will be "a marathon not a sprint" and that there are reasons to be "optimistic" before next May's local elections, when all 22 Welsh councils go to the polls. Labour governed Wales from devolution in 1999 until May, when it came third with nine seats in the enlarged 96-seat Senedd, having previously held 30 of 60; Eluned Morgan resigned as leader after losing her own seat. In 2022, Welsh Labour won 43% of all seats available and took overall control of eight councils — a baseline Skates accepted might not be repeated: "On this occasion that might not be the case. No, I don't accept [that going backwards is] inevitable." Privately, senior figures at the party's Cardiff headquarters accept it could take "years" to win back lost support. (BBC Wales — Cemlyn Davies / BBC Cymru Fyw)

? Senedd presiding officer reprimands Reform MS over "butchers" and "liars" remarks

Joe Martin, Reform's MS for Caerdydd Penarth, has been found in breach of the Senedd's standing orders for making "disorderly or offensive" language in a debate on the crisis-hit Welsh Gender Service — the first time the presiding officer has directly reprimanded him. Martin said the service "should be closed forever" and that doctors in the UK who performed surgery on children "should be imprisoned", adding that if Reform form a UK government in 2029 he would make representations "that justice be served to the liars and the butchers". The WGS treats adults aged 18 and over; surgical referrals are paused pending a review. Huw Irranca-Davies's spokesperson said Martin had been asked not to use "language of this type in future"; Reform Wales said it

believed the remarks should be protected as free speech but accepted the ruling. Martin has previously been accused of racism over a speech claiming attacks by Sudanese asylum seekers were "inevitable", and prompted a walk-out the following day with a joke about Welsh students being unable to read. (BBC Wales — David Deans)

?? Gender specialists appointed to review paused surgery cases

Experienced gender clinicians have been appointed to the Independent Clinical Review of NHS patients affected by the suspension of gender-affirming surgery in Wales, with patients whose surgery was due between **August and December 2026** considered first. **Around 60 patients** were due to have surgery between the pause starting in August and the end of December. The NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee, which ordered the pause, says reviews will run in order of planned surgery date, and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board says surgery will be reinstated "as soon as an individual's review has been completed" rather than after the whole process finishes. The NWJCC has also sought confirmation from NHS England providers that cleared patients will be prioritised. (Nation.Cymru)

? Health

? Rhondda Cynon Taf leaders demand action over missed health visitor contacts

RCT Council has written to **Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board** and the Welsh Government calling for a "fair and sustainable" resolution to the health visitor strike, now in its eighth month, and seeking assurances about how families who may have missed scheduled contacts are being identified and supported. The letter from council leader **Cllr Ann Crimmings** is signed by the leaders of every political group on the authority and states that **6,140** Healthy Child Wales contacts were completed in March–May 2025, against **909** recorded as completed by Band 6 health visitors in the same three months of 2026 — out of **23,592** identified as due. The council stresses other factors could contribute and that it is not attributing the gap to industrial action without full evidence. Around 100 Unite health visitors have been striking since February over job grading — paid at Band 6 despite an internal evaluation grading their roles at Band 7, a difference of up to £9,000. The health board's chair and chief executive are to be invited to a future full council meeting. (Nation.Cymru — LDR, Anthony Lewis)

? Councils & Local Government

? Cardiff Council's external borrowing passes £1.1bn as interest hits £50m a year

Wales' largest council had **£1.178bn** in external borrowing as of 7 September, with interest on its loans forecast at **£50m** for 2026-27 and **£59m** estimated for 2027-28 — an estimate the council calls "extremely difficult to forecast". Answers to written questions from Cllr Neil McEvoy at a recent full council meeting also show a debt payment of £60.1m in the last financial year, with a £60.4m debt repayment provision forecast for this year. Council leader **Cllr Chris Weaver** defended the position: "We do not borrow to deliver our day-to-day services, unlike the UK Government, which runs up a national debt because it's running a deficit. We don't run deficits — we have a balanced budget every year. The borrowing we do is to invest in our capital programme. If you don't invest in a city you can end up costing yourself more." Cardiff carries the most debt of any Welsh council, though it is also Wales' largest by population. (Nation.Cymru — LDR, Kieran Molloy)

? Caerphilly pushes ahead with Trethomas bungalows despite 149 objections

Caerphilly County Borough Council's cabinet has agreed to dispose of land north of James Street in Trethomas so its property arm, Caerphilly Homes, can build **eight accessible bungalows** — over the objections of 149 residents who argued the site is cherished public open space and that the scheme would hit biodiversity and pose a flood risk. One young resident wrote that the land was a haven where "our parents know it is safe from busy roads", adding: "Please do not dispose of this land — it is one of the only places in Trethomas [where] children can play freely with friends." Housing director Nick Taylor-Williams said demand was "significant", with 92 households waiting for one-bedroom homes in Trethomas and 102 in neighbouring Bedwas, more than 300 people on the register for two-bedroom bungalows and 6,620 "active applicants" borough-wide. Cllr Shayne Cook said the benefits "outweigh" the objections. (Nation.Cymru — LDR, Nicholas Thomas)

? Housing

? 150 faults in a brand-new home — the Swansea snagging firm finding what buyers miss

A couple who saved for three years to buy their first home discovered **150 defects** when it was inspected days after they picked up the keys, including incorrectly installed fire barriers, signs of a previous leak, roof problems, low water pressure and "exceptionally poor" workmanship on the gas

meter cabinet and pipe. Georgina and Charles Barnes paid **£299,995** for the house in south Leicestershire, and had it checked by Swansea-based **New Home Quality Control**, set up by **John Cooper**, 50, who left site management after a site manager asked him to "hide something" from a customer moving in the next day. Cooper told BBC Cymru Fyw, "I've never surveyed a new house and found nothing wrong with it". Written evidence from the New Homes Ombudsman Service cites the Home Builders Federation's March 2025 survey showing **93.7%** of new-build buyers reported defects or snags after moving in, with just over a quarter finding more than 15 problems. The Barnes' issues were fixed under warranty; Georgina's advice to other buyers is blunt: "100%, without a doubt, I'd tell them to get a snagger." (BBC Wales — Rowenna Hoskin / BBC Cymru Fyw)

? Science & Environment

?? Cardiff astronomers to help build a $1.2bn NASA space telescope

Cardiff University's Astronomy Instrumentation Group is part of the UK team working on **PRIMA** — the PRobe far-Infrared Mission for Astrophysics — a **$1.2bn** NASA observatory selected to move to its next stage of development. PRIMA will use a 1.8-metre telescope to observe the universe in far-infrared light, filling a gap between the James Webb Space Telescope and radio observatories as the first of NASA's new "Probe Explorers" class; launch is targeted for **2033** with a planned five-year mission. Cardiff will supply specialist far-infrared filters and internal calibration sources, building on technology used for the SPIRE instrument, working with the University of Sussex, Imperial College London, RAL Space and **Celtic Terahertz Technology Ltd**, with UK backing from the UK Space Agency. "The unique technologies, skills and expertise developed over many years by the Cardiff AIG and its industry partner are key to the successful implementation of PRIMA," said Professor Pete Hargrave, who heads the group. (Nation.Cymru)

? Heritage, Culture & Media

? Fossil found on a Welsh beach solves a 200-year-old mystery

Fossil hunter **Jonathan Bow** was searching the shoreline at **Lavernock Beach** near Penarth when he spotted part of a rare fossil jaw containing developing teeth. For almost 200 years, fossil teeth found in rocks around the Bristol Channel had been hard to identify, and their unusual shape led some early scientists to think they belonged to giant amphibians rather than fish. Research by the University of Bristol, Amgueddfa Cymru and the State Museum of Natural History Stuttgart showed that fossils previously grouped under one name actually belong to **two different species of**

Saurichthys from the Late Triassic. "These rocks were formed during storms more than 200 million years ago, so it is remarkable that such a delicate fossil survived," said lead researcher **Jacob Quinn**. "Although British Triassic fossils have been studied for over 200 years, this is the first bone from Saurichthys ever found in these rocks." Amgueddfa Cymru curator **Cindy Howells** said the misunderstanding had "continued well into the 20th century". The findings are published in the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*. (Nation.Cymru)

? Cardiff man on a mission to revive bando, Wales' near-forgotten stick sport

George Hooper, a Cardiff native who spent most of his childhood in France, is campaigning to bring back **bando**, an ancient sport likened to Irish hurling and Scottish shinty, which was popular across Wales — especially Glamorgan — until the end of the 19th century before football and rugby took over. Amgueddfa Cymru describes bando as an early form of hockey, its name coming from *bande*, the French for a curved stick; the aim was to strike a ball between two marks at either end of the field, with few fixed rules beyond whatever the two parishes agreed beforehand. Hooper began his campaign after volunteering with **Campau Celtaidd Cymru**, a new governing body for Welsh sports he likens to the GAA in Ireland, and hopes to establish teams across Cardiff and the surrounding area. "It's a Welsh sport. I love sport and I'm proud to be Welsh. I want to see people playing bando and being proud of that," he told Cymru Fyw. (BBC Cymru Fyw — Welsh-language)

?? Oasis by Candlelight returns to Llandaff Cathedral

After Oasis sold out two nights at the Principality Stadium at the start of their reunion tour in 2025 — and with no Cardiff dates on the band's 2027 tour — the candlelit tribute show *The Music of Oasis By Candlelight* is returning to **Llandaff Cathedral** on **Friday 22 January 2027**, with two sittings at 18:45 and 20:45, after selling out the same venue last April. (Nation.Cymru)

? Tributes to Huw Antur, "one of the giants" of Llanuwchllyn, who has died at 63

Tributes have been paid to **Huw Antur** of Llanuwchllyn, a former director of the **Glan-llyn** Urdd camp between 2007 and his retirement in 2023, who died suddenly on Saturday morning aged 63. He was known for his work promoting the Welsh language across the five parishes of Penllyn and for developing economic and social projects in the area, and was a member of several choirs and singing groups including *Tri Gog a Hwntw*. Former MP **Elfyn Llwyd** said "the village and the whole area is in mourning and shock. The gap he leaves is incredible. A very dear person — a lovely dry sense of humour. A good neighbour and a friend to the village and the whole area. I cannot praise him enough. One of the giants of the area." Huw Antur was married to Bethan and father to the

poet Gruffudd Antur and the musician Marged Gwenllian. A minute's silence was held before Llanuwchllyn's football match against Caersws on Saturday afternoon. (BBC Cymru Fyw)

? Community

?? Wales rugby star backs Maggie's £30k in 30 days appeal

Teddy Williams is urging communities across Wales to back **Maggie's** "£30k in 30 days" campaign, running throughout November in aid of the charity's centre in **Whitchurch, Cardiff**, and marking 30 years since the first Maggie's opened in 1996. "Maggie's is a special place that provides much needed support to people with cancer and their families," said the Wales lock, encouraging people to donate or organise their own fundraising events with sports teams, schools, community groups or businesses. (Nation.Cymru)

? Sport

? Cardiff win the first Welsh derby of the season, 21-15 at Scarlets

Tries from flanker **Dan Thomas**, player-of-the-match **Taine Basham** and replacement hooker **Evan Lloyd** — all three finished from driving line-outs — gave Cardiff victory in Llanelli, with Scarlets scoring through centre **Joe Roberts** and full-back **Blair Murray** but managing only a Joe Hawkins penalty after the break. Cardiff, sixth last season and the only Welsh side to reach the play-offs, handed debuts to summer signings Scott Sio and Le Roux Malan and were without the injured Josh Adams. Scarlets' vice-captain **Ryan Elias** led the side out with his wife and two children for his **200th appearance**. The match drew a crowd of 7,073 after a Saturday evening kick-off at 19:45. (BBC Sport Wales — Gareth Griffiths / Nation.Cymru)

? Ospreys beaten 41-24 in Durban but claim a four-try bonus

Mark Jones' side were overpowered by the Sharks at Kings Park for the second successive opening weekend in South Africa, conceding tries to Nick Hatton, Manu Tshituka, a double from livewire full-back Luan Giliomee and Lili Bester as the hosts led 28-14 at the break. Ospreys stayed in it through Luke Morgan and captain **Sam Parry**, debutant **Liam Wright** — the former Australia captain — punched through a gaping hole, and Iestyn Hopkins added a fourth at the death for the bonus

point. (BBC Sport Wales — Chris Kirwan / Nation.Cymru)

? Wales women lose 26-24 to the USA in the WXV at Cardiff Arms Park

A **Freda Tafuna hat-trick** consigned Wales to a narrow defeat in front of the Arms Park crowd, days after their eight-try mauling of South Africa. Wales fought back from 21-7 down in an encouraging first half, but a string of individual errors let the Eagles, ranked sixth in the world, edge it. "Before, when we were 21-7 down, I would have seen heads drop, but we're in a good place and came back," said head coach **Sean Lynn**. "Now it's about us learning how to see games off." Wales now have a week off before a double-header against Japan next month. (BBC Sport Wales — Ceri Coleman-Phillips / BBC Cymru Fyw / Nation.Cymru)

? Newport County 2-1 Grimsby Town — first league win since opening day

Second-half strikes from **Christian Doidge** and **Shaquille Gwengwe** handed the Exiles a first League Two victory since the opening day and ended previously unbeaten Grimsby's run. An own goal from Newport goalkeeper **Jordan Wright** — who fumbled a Justin Amaluzor shot in the 83rd minute — set up a nervy finish, but Grimsby could not force an equaliser. "It's a big win against tough opponents," said manager **Hayden Mullins**. "We're four games unbeaten now and there's loads to build on… where we want to go this season is entirely down to us." Grimsby had started the day third and could have gone top. (Nation.Cymru / BBC Sport — PA)

? Fury-Joshua doubt as Dana White says "I don't know"

Two days after the fight British boxing had waited a decade for was announced for **Cardiff's Principality Stadium on 11 December**, live on Netflix, UFC president and Zuffa Boxing chief **Dana White** cast fresh doubt on it. Asked at London's Copper Box whether the fight would happen, and whether Wednesday's scheduled news conference would take place, he said: "I don't know" and "I have no idea". A dispute over who is entitled to promote the event has produced claims of contractual breaches, talk of replacement fights and cryptic social-media posts. **Eddie Hearn**, who has promoted Joshua throughout his career, says Joshua's contract specifically prevents White and TKO having a promotional role, and claims Netflix was not made aware of that provision; there was no mention of Hearn or Frank Warren in Thursday's announcement. (BBC Sport — Kal Sajad)

?? Wales head to Copenhagen to face Denmark today (17:00 BST)

Craig Bellamy returns to the Parken Stadium, where he scored an 87th-minute winner as a 19-year-old in a 2-1 Euro 2000 qualifying victory in October 1998 — his first competitive international goal, which ended a seven-game winless run and, he says, earned him "loads of stick" from teammates afterwards. Both sides are looking for their first points of the Nations League campaign after Wales lost 1-0 to Portugal in Lisbon and Denmark went down 3-2 to Norway; neither qualified for this year's World Cup and both have long waits for a win. Denmark visit Cardiff for the return fixture on 4 October, and the two meetings could decide who avoids finishing bottom of League A Group 4 and relegation to League B. (Nation.Cymru / BBC Sport Wales)

?? Weather

No weather warnings are in force for the UK. Cardiff (BBC Weather, this morning): today will see **light rain showers** and a moderate south-easterly breeze — high around **20°C**, low **8°C**, winds 16mph. Tonight will be dry and settled with plenty of clear spells and just a few patches of cloud, and light winds may lead to local mist and fog. **Monday** stays dry and fine with prolonged sunny spells, high 19°C. **Tuesday** turns very breezy and partly cloudy with outbreaks of rain developing through the evening and overnight, some heavy and locally thundery; **Wednesday** remains windy with rain clearing to blustery showers and sunny spells, and any lingering showers gradually dissipate through **Thursday** morning, leaving it dry with sunshine later as winds ease.

? Quick Summary

- **Contaminated land** — Wrexham's Independent Group tables a motion for Wednesday's full council to overhaul monitoring of historic waste sites after the *Buried* documentary, and to seek Welsh Government funding for investigations; the council bought the Llwyneinion acid tar lagoon for £1 in 1980 with an indemnity against "noxious wastes".
- **Senedd** — presiding officer Huw Irranca-Davies finds Reform's Joe Martin in breach of standing orders for saying Welsh Gender Service doctors should be jailed; gender specialists are appointed to review the cases of about 60 patients whose surgery was paused, with August–December 2026 dates first.
- **Welsh Labour** — Ken Skates gives his first conference speech as leader today, calling the rebuild "a marathon not a sprint" before next May's all-22 council elections.
- **Health** — RCT Council's cross-party leadership writes to Cwm Taf Morgannwg health board and the Welsh Government over the health visitor strike, with recorded contacts down to 909 against 23,592 due.
- **Councils** — Cardiff's external borrowing passes £1.178bn with £50m of interest forecast this year; Caerphilly approves eight bungalows in Trethomas over 149 objections.
- **Housing** — a new-build couple find 150 defects via Swansea snagging firm New Home Quality Control.
- **Science** — Cardiff University will supply far-infrared filters and calibration kit for PRIMA, NASA's $1.2bn Probe Explorer telescope, launching in 2033.

- **Sport** — Cardiff beat Scarlets 21-15 in the first Welsh derby; Ospreys lose 41-24 in Durban but claim a bonus; Wales women lose 26-24 to the USA in the WXV; Newport County beat previously unbeaten Grimsby 2-1; Dana White casts doubt on the 11 December Fury-Joshua fight at the Principality; Wales play Denmark in Copenhagen today at 17:00.

Method note: compiled in cron mode. SearXNG (:8086) was in mixed mode — WalesOnline's Sunday live blog URL, the BBC Wales programmes pages and the senedd.wales index sat alongside German and Chinese-language noise, but it did surface usable leads (the Plaid programme-of-government homepage card, the WalesOnline live-blog URL) which were cherry-picked. All content came from the Playwright fetch service (192.168.178.100:8090, MarkItDown): 11 index pages plus 35 article pages in two batches at a 100% success rate. GOV.WALES had nothing newer than 24 September (the road safety VR release, already reported) and the FM-tagged index remains stale; the Guardian's Wales RSS feed's newest item was 25 September and senedd.wales returned only its cookie shell, so neither was usable. WalesOnline article pages and its live blog remain cookie-walled. The Hermes browser remains unavailable on this host (no Chromium-family binary). De-duplicated against yesterday's Welsh file and this morning's UK file: the Aberystwyth independence rally (the UK file carries the full writeup, plus the FM's Matthew Rhys quote and Joe Martin's "disappointing" reaction), Katherine Jenkins's "no apologies" interview, the £10,000-a-month lottery win, Owain Wyn Evans' Children in Need ride, the Wrexham pub purchase, the 101-acre Menai data centre, Ryan Reynolds' Wrexham pub and the BBC Wales 58-job package were all dropped or left as one-liners. Checked and excluded on their own publication dates: the PCB blood-testing campaign (24 Sep), the migraine feature (23 Sep), the OED's six new Welsh words including twpsyn and bwbach (23 Sep), the Aberdare chapel auction and the Rhyddings pub restaurant plan (both 26 Sep) and the Dragons' 19-19 draw at Benetton (26 Sep).

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