Welsh Headlines — 29 Sep 2026

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Compiled 09:35 BST, Tuesday 29 September 2026 • Sources: BBC Wales and BBC Wales Politics indexes, BBC News, BBC Sport, BBC Cymru Fyw, Nation.Cymru (news / feature / culture / sport), GOV.WALES, The Guardian, BBC Weather (Playwright fetch service). Nitter, Phice, Flaresolverr and Reddit skipped — services down.

? Top Story: Passports now required to board ferries between Wales and Ireland

Ferry passengers travelling between Britain and the Republic of Ireland now need a valid passport before boarding — the change came in on Monday. Stena Line and Irish Ferries said they were making the change to comply with UK government rules on passenger lists; previously a passport was not always required and other forms of photo ID were sometimes accepted. The operators say the policy affects about **2.5 million passengers**, including car and lorry drivers sailing from **Holyhead, Fishguard and Pembroke Dock**. The UK and Ireland are both in the Common Travel Area, which allows citizens to travel between them without a passport as a legal requirement — the new rule means a passport is needed to *board* the ferry, rather than to enter the country being travelled to. One tour operator told BBC Wales he had already received cancellations because of the new policy, while the ferry companies warned that passengers who do not have a passport — or who have forgotten it — will not be allowed on board. (BBC Wales — Chris Dearden, reporting from Holyhead)

?? Senedd & Politics

?? Drakeford: Labour made mistakes over Plaid's mini-budget

Former First Minister **Mark Drakeford** says his Labour colleagues made mistakes in how they handled negotiations over Plaid Cymru's summer **£300m supplementary budget**. Plaid failed in the summer to get Labour or any other opposition party to back its spending plans. Speaking at Labour's conference in Liverpool, Drakeford said his party "did well" to secure more cash for children with additional learning needs and suggested there was a case to be made for taking the money. Welsh Labour leader **Ken Skates** defended his handling, saying he had been offered a "terrible deal". Plaid said it had offered **£120m over three years**, but Labour wanted **£100m** spent in the current financial year. Drakeford — first minister from 2019 to 2024, who stood down from the Senedd last May — also criticised the new Plaid government for "not being sufficiently aware of the fact... they're still quite a few votes short of being able to govern on their own, yet they set off to do that". (BBC Wales — David Deans)

? Flying Start name to be dropped for two-year-old childcare

The Welsh Government has asked councils to rebrand the childcare they provide for two-year-olds, **dropping the Flying Start name** in favour of "Welsh government-funded childcare". Flying Start's other services — including health visiting — keep the name. The guidance, first reported by the *Senedd Sources* podcast, follows a row after a Welsh government minister failed to rule out cutting or changing the programme. Labour has said cutting Flying Start would be a **red line** in budget negotiations, and the minority Plaid government needs at least one opposition party's help to pass its budget by next March. Ken Skates said there was a "huge amount of confusion" and demanded "answers" from ministers. Flying Start began in 2007 as an early-years programme targeting disadvantaged parts of Wales. (BBC Wales — David Deans)

? Tory MS asks governor if Welsh-medium pupils "100% certain" to learn English

Janet Finch-Saunders MS has been criticised after questioning a school governor whether he was certain pupils at Welsh-medium schools learn English, and issuing an urgent call on Facebook and her website for parents affected by **Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy's** move to Welsh-medium-only provision to contact her office — including families who have withdrawn children and are struggling with transport to **Ysgol Aberconwy**. She said it was "deeply concerning that families are struggling to secure suitable transport", adding she would meet the headteacher to look at paid transport options and call on Conwy County Borough Council for more support. (Nation.Cymru)

?? Petition on MS defections passes 3,000 signatures

A Senedd petition calling for Members who switch parties to **give up their seats** has passed **3,000 signatures**. Christopher Blackwood launched it on 15 September — the same day **Sarah Cooper-Lesadd** announced she was leaving Reform UK for Plaid Cymru, accusing the party of using its Senedd group as a "staging post" to get Nigel Farage into Downing Street. Under the new closed-list system voters chose the party rather than the candidate, but MSs who defect are legally entitled to keep their seats: there is no requirement to resign and face a by-election. (Nation.Cymru — Emily Price)

? Reform MS promises "greener Wales" in AI-generated Facebook post

Steve Bayliss MS (Afan Ogwr Rhondda) has published an AI-generated "week in review" graphic to his Facebook page promising a "fairer brighter greener Wales" — despite having previously posted that "man-made climate change is not science". He plans to publish "Senedd record highlights" weekly. A source who contacted Nation.Cymru branded the post "slop" and pointed to Reform UK's official policy of scrapping "net stupid zero" policies and expanding fossil fuel extraction. (Nation.Cymru — Emily Price)

?? Peace activists oppose Valleys arms expansion

Campaigners have criticised **Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare MP Gerald Jones** and **Pontypridd Cynon Merthyr MS Vikki Howells** for backing increased arms manufacturing in the south Wales Valleys, as **Marshall Land Systems** plans a new arms initiative in Merthyr, where General Dynamics Land Systems already produces Ajax armoured vehicles. **Cymru'n Codi – Wales Rising** , a cross-party ecosocialist and republican group, said the Valleys need jobs but public investment should go to industries meeting local needs — NHS, housing, schools and local services — arguing the politicians' "totally uncritical support of the military investment" is "dragging us into a very dangerous world". (Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton)

? Health

? Scabies outbreak closes two wards at Llanelli hospital

Hywel Dda University Health Board has closed two wards at **Prince Philip Hospital in Llanelli** and restricted visitors "due to infection" after an outbreak of **scabies**, with the restrictions introduced on Sunday. A number of cases are being managed in healthcare and community settings across Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, but the board says the risk to the wider public remains low. Scabies is a highly contagious skin infestation caused by microscopic mites spread through prolonged skin-to-skin contact or shared bedding and clothing; it is not caused by poor hygiene and is usually treated with an over-the-counter cream or lotion. (BBC Wales — Angharad Thomas)

? Brothers who both had meningitis urge symptom awareness

Saul and Drew Darlington, from Wrexham, contracted meningitis within a year of each other as teenagers and have spoken out about how close they came to dying. "The day I had it, if I had gone to sleep that night, I'd have probably died," said Saul, 29, who was 17 and on a school trip when he felt cold and sensitive to light before a purple rash developed and the family went to A&E. They later learned they have a **rare condition** that made them susceptible to the illness. Nearly **20,000 young people** have now been vaccinated in Wales through catch-up clinics following a deadly meningitis B outbreak in Kent earlier this year. (BBC Wales — Nelli Bird / BBC Cymru Fyw)

? Transport & Infrastructure

? North Wales coast railway to shut for four weeks in January

Network Rail has confirmed the north Wales coast railway will close for **four weeks** — from Saturday **9 January to Saturday 6 February 2027** — to complete work "boosting reliability and capacity". The closure is part of the **£2.1bn** north Wales rail revamp announced by then-transport secretary Ken Skates in May 2025, including **£25m** of network investment. For the first three weeks the line closes between **Chester and Holyhead**, including the Conwy Valley line and Llandudno Junction to the town; in the fourth week only the section between Llandudno Junction and Holyhead shuts. Buses will replace trains, and Network Rail said January was chosen because it is generally a quieter period for passengers. (BBC Cymru Fyw — Welsh-language)

? Cardiff's A4161 has the longest traffic delays of any A-road in Wales

The **A4161** through the centre of Cardiff records the greatest A-road delays in Wales: almost **two minutes of extra journey time per mile**, or **118.8 seconds per vehicle per mile** against free-flow conditions in 2025. An analysis by Marshall Motor Group of 266 high-traffic local A-roads found the route — running along Newport Road, Dumfries Place, Stuttgarter Strasse, Boulevard de Nantes, North Road, Castle Street, Cowbridge Road East and on to Ely Bridge — was also the second-slowest in Wales at **12.5mph**, with only Cardiff's A469 slower at 12.2mph. Across the Welsh roads in the dataset the median speed was **29.7mph** and the median delay 26.8 seconds per vehicle per mile. (Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton)

? Money, Councils & Business

? Wrexham's four-day office rule has cost almost £300,000

Wrexham Council has spent **£289,492** adapting office space to fit more staff on site under its requirement for employees to be in the office four days a week — a policy introduced in September 2025 despite opposition from more than 90% of the workforce. A review of hybrid working found staff still struggle to find private rooms for confidential calls and online meetings, and there is extra pressure on city-centre parking. The review, which contains **no data showing improved service delivery**, goes to the council's Customers, Performance, Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee on Thursday; it says the recruitment impact is hard to judge because a new online recruitment system launched a month after the policy took effect. Some prospective recruits have turned down job offers because of it. (Nation.Cymru — Alec Doyle, Local Democracy Reporter)

?? Tax authority liquidates another David Lewis company, raising Ffos-y-fran fears

HMRC has secured a High Court winding-up order against **Jackson Properties Ltd**, whose sole director is **David Lewis** — the businessman behind **Ffos-y-fran**, Wales' biggest opencast coal mine, who is legally responsible through Merthyr (South Wales) Ltd for restoring the site. Jackson Properties' last accounts (to July 2024) showed debts of **£344,987** against net assets of £29,656, but the winding-up order suggests the accounts were over-optimistic. A 2024 Senedd committee report described the "epic mismanagement" of Ffos-y-fran; its extraction licence expired in September 2022, residents reported the mine kept operating illegally for months, and the site closed in November 2023. (Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton)

? Trefil Common quarry extension refused

Planning inspector **Ian Stevens** has refused separate common land consent for **Gryphonn Quarries Ltd** to extend **Trefil Quarry** across more than **22.2 hectares** of registered common

land about four kilometres north-west of Tredegar. The company already had planning permission — Blaenau Gwent councillors backed it unanimously in November 2024 despite an objection from Natural Resources Wales — but the development needed consent because it affects common land and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The inspector found it would "significantly interfere" with commoners' grazing rights (he saw horses and sheep grazing on a site visit, and the Llangynidr and Llangattock Commoners Association confirmed the rights were being exercised) and would harm nature conservation and the landscape. The three-phase extension could have run to 2051 with restoration by 2053. (Nation.Cymru — Mark Mansfield)

? Former Ebbw Vale nightclub reopens after £150,000 investment

The former **Plaza nightclub** in Ebbw Vale — closed since serious flooding in 2024 — has reopened as the **New Tavern** after local businessman **Pratik Patel** acquired a long lease using a **£150,000** loan from the Development Bank of Wales' Wales Flexible Investment Fund. Patel, who already owned the ground floor and also runs the Continental Bar in the town, is planning a sports bar in the former indoor market upstairs. "This building has been part of Ebbw Vale's social scene for years and I felt it was important to bring it back into use for the community," he said. (Nation.Cymru)

?? Ystradgynlais Miners' Welfare secures £40,000 for redevelopment plans

The Welfare Ystradgynlais — opened on 7 July 1934 and now welcoming **45,000 visitors** a year — has been awarded **£40,000** from the Arts Council of Wales' Arts Capital Investment Fund, its first funding boost in **35 years**, to develop plans for a major refurbishment of the 90-year-old hall. Built for £9,000 (almost £1m today) with "pennies" contributed by local miners, it was opened by Jim Griffiths of the South Wales Miners' Federation and later hosted refugee artist **Josef Herman**; his widow Nini donated a collection of his work, now held by the Josef Herman Art Foundation Cymru. (Nation.Cymru)

? Black Mountains College celebrates first graduates

Black Mountains College in Talgarth has celebrated the first cohort to graduate from its "**Sustainable Futures: Arts, Ecology and Systems Change**" degree, franchised and awarded by Cardiff Metropolitan University and inspired by Wales' Well-being of Future Generations Act. Students learn outdoors, combining ecology, politics, economics and art; many graduates have stayed in the area, including Charlie James, who secured a lease on a smallholding through the Sarn project with Powys County Council while studying. (Nation.Cymru)

? Environment, Rural & Island Life

? Badger cruelty case highlighted in wildlife crime report

A brutal attack on badgers in **Caerphilly**, filmed in October 2025, features in an annual report by **Wildlife and Countryside Link** (WCL) warning that thousands of suspected wildlife crimes go unpunished. The Caerphilly case — investigated by RSPCA Cymru and Gwent Police — led to a man being jailed for **16 weeks** and banned from keeping animals for life. The report records **2,149 reports of suspected wildlife crime in 2025 but only 41 convictions**, a rate of under **2%**; there were **625 suspected badger incidents with just 15 convictions**, 11 of them involving dogs being deliberately encouraged to harm badgers. "When people can persecute wildlife with so little prospect of punishment, the law is failing the animals it is supposed to protect," said WCL chief executive **Richard Benwell**. (Nation.Cymru)

? Cardiff couple to become Ynys Enlli's new farmers — and double the island's population

Journalists **Georgina Rannard** and **Gwyndaf Hughes** are leaving Cardiff in October to take over the farm on **Ynys Enlli (Bardsey Island)**, doubling the remote island's population. They will care for its sheep and cattle, with conservation grazing protecting internationally important seabird populations and rare habitats, taking over from **Gareth and Meriel Roberts**, who have farmed there for 20 years. Enlli is an off-grid, Welsh-speaking National Nature Reserve and Europe's first **Dark Sky Sanctuary**, off the Llŷn Peninsula. Gwyndaf grew up on Llŷn and helped on his grandparents' farm, later working as a BBC climate and science camera operator; Georgina was born in Liverpool, has lived in Wales since 2021 and is learning Welsh. "I'm really excited about the chance to come back home to Pen Llŷn," said Gwyndaf. (Nation.Cymru / BBC Cymru Fyw — Harri Evans, Welsh-language)

? Culture, Heritage & Science

? Royal Mint unveils Cluedo 50p with concealed microtext

The **Royal Mint** has revealed a new collectible **50p** celebrating the board game **Cluedo**, featuring all six characters and hidden microtext revealing their names, locations and weapons — readable only with a magnifying glass. The design was unveiled by Cluedo stage-play actress **Ellie Leach** as Miss Scarlett alongside **Marcia Lewis**, daughter of the game's creators Anthony and Elva Pratt.

"Cluedo has captivated millions of players for decades," said the Mint's **Tim Mulhall**. The Mint is also running an online competition — a new clue each week — with a solid gold Cluedo 50p worth over **£2,000** as the prize. (BBC Wales — Antonia Matthews)

? Fossil find ends 200 years of "confusion" over ancient fish teeth

An amateur fossil hunter's discovery of a **200-million-year-old fish jawbone** on the Welsh side of the Bristol Channel has helped solve two centuries of confusion over the origins of fossils found across Europe. Fossilised teeth from the area had been grouped together as one large ancient fish, **Severnichthys**; the jawbone found by **Jonathan Bow** turned out to be the first example there of a different type. Bow said he was happy to have "contributed to science". (BBC Wales — Paul Pigott and Adam Hale)

? Jac Northfield: from playing Jesus in Dim Byd to his own series

BBC Cymru Fyw profiles comedian **Jac Northfield**, who grew up in Caernarfon and whose first role was playing the child Jesus in the cult comedy **Dim Byd** — for which he won a Bafta Cymru — and who now has his own series, **Gwagle**, the first he has written. He traces his humour back to watching *You've Been Framed* with his parents, then Harry Hill's *TV Burp*, Peter Kay, Lee Evans, *Blackadder* and Rik Mayall: "slapstick comedy has always made me laugh — seeing someone fall, but fall for a long time." (BBC Cymru Fyw — Bryn Jones, Welsh-language)

?? Dai Owen, artist and peace campaigner, dies aged 82

The Guardian published an obituary of **Dai Owen**, an artist, illustrator and peace campaigner who died aged 82. Born in **Pwllheli** and educated at Friars grammar school in Bangor and Cardiff University, he settled in Chester in the 1970s, where his line drawings became part of the city's cultural life — including information panels in the Grosvenor Museum's Roman Stones gallery. From 1989 he illustrated a **series of 20 Welsh-language children's books** by Gwyn Morgan, and he designed a map of the Alderley Edge landscape with novelist Alan Garner; in his 60s he took a master's in children's illustration at Glyndŵr (now Wrexham) University. He was active in CND Cymru, designing artwork for its magazine *Heddwch*, and in the Society of Friends and the Stop the War campaign. (The Guardian — Jill Moss)

?? Rooneys climb Yr Wyddfa on a "rare free weekend"

Wayne and Coleen Rooney posted pictures on Instagram of their walk up **Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon)** during what they called a "very rare free weekend" — conditions looked wet and windy at the summit. The post came after their new reality series *The Real Rooneys* launched on Disney+ last week, following the family at their Cheshire home. (BBC Wales)

? Sport

? Wales name Rugby League World Cup squad as Ffion Lewis makes dual-code history

Wales have named a **23-player squad** for the Rugby League World Cup in Australia in October, where they face **England, Samoa and the hosts** in the pool stage. **Ffion Lewis**, 28, becomes the first Welsh woman to be a dual-code World Cup player, having played union at the 2022 tournament; she has since come back from a serious knee injury after the WRU did not offer her a new contract. **Hannah Bluck** earns a place and will win Wales honours in a fourth sport; six players are uncapped, nine come from **Cardiff Demons**, **Bethan Dainton** (Wigan) captains and **Paige Travis** (St Helens) could win a first Wales cap after playing for England. (BBC Sport / Nation.Cymru)

? Bellamy: Wales have "earned the right" to face Haaland's Norway

Craig Bellamy insists Wales deserve their place in the Nations League's top tier despite a losing start. Wales are **without a point or a goal** in Group A4 after a 2-0 defeat in Denmark, following a 1-0 loss to Portugal, and are winless in six matches in 2026 — with no win in any of their eight League A games across 2022 and 2026. **Erling Haaland's Norway** are next in Cardiff on Thursday, with the Denmark return three days later. "For us, this Norway game is another one — the intensity, top players, real speed... we've earned the right to be here," Bellamy said. **Chris Mepham** added that the winless run is not playing on the players' minds: "The manager has made it clear that we deserve to be in this group." (BBC Sport — Ian Mitchelmore / Nation.Cymru — Phil Blanche, PA)

? Littler stunned in Leicester as Price and Clayton progress

Defending champion **Luke Littler** was knocked out of the **World Grand Prix** in the first round, beaten 2-1 by **Luke Woodhouse** in the double-in, double-out format in Leicester, averaging just 82.41. Six-time winner **Michael van Gerwen** also went out, losing 2-1 to Ryan Joyce. BBC Sport reported Welsh interest **Gerwyn Price** and **Jonny Clayton** both came through their first-round

matches. (BBC Sport)

? Wales fans call for an end to "cringe" team line-up photos

Wales' deliberately unconventional team line-up photographs — a tradition that began by accident around Euro 2016 and was kept as a good-luck ritual, Joe Ledley having explained the players were just bad at organising themselves — have worn thin after a decade, fans say, with one memorable example featuring three players in the back row and eight crouching in front. The debate follows the defeats to Portugal and Denmark that left Wales bottom of their Nations League group. (Nation.Cymru)

?? Weather

No weather warnings are in force for the UK. BBC Weather for Cardiff, last updated at **09:02** this morning: today brings **light rain showers and a moderate breeze**, with a south-easterly wind around 14mph, a high of **23°C** and a low of **16°C**. **Wednesday** stays showery and breezy, 21°C, low 11°C; **Thursday 1 October** turns drier with sunny intervals and a gentle westerly breeze, high 19°C; **Friday** brings light showers again, 19°C. (BBC Weather)

? Quick Summary

- **Top story — ferries** — Passports are now required to board ferries from Holyhead, Fishguard and Pembroke Dock to the Republic of Ireland, affecting about 2.5 million passengers; one tour operator has already had cancellations.
- **Senedd** — Mark Drakeford says Labour made mistakes in the failed mini-budget talks; the Welsh Government drops the Flying Start name for two-year-old childcare, prompting Ken Skates to demand "answers"; a petition on MS defections passes 3,000 signatures.
- **Health** — Two wards closed and visitors restricted at Prince Philip Hospital, Llanelli, after a scabies outbreak; two Wrexham brothers urge meningitis symptom awareness as nearly 20,000 young people are vaccinated in Wales.
- **Transport** — Network Rail confirms the north Wales coast line shuts for four weeks from 9 January 2027; Cardiff's A4161 has the worst A-road delays in Wales at 118.8 seconds per vehicle per mile.
- **Money & councils** — Wrexham Council's four-day office rule has cost £289,492; HMRC liquidates another David Lewis company, raising fresh fears over Ffos-y-fran restoration; Trefil Common quarry extension refused; Ebbw Vale's former Plaza reopens as the New Tavern.
- **Community** — Ystradgynlais Miners' Welfare wins £40,000; Black Mountains College graduates its first degree cohort; a Cardiff couple will double Ynys Enlli's population as its new farmers.

- **Environment** — A Wildlife and Countryside Link report records 625 suspected badger incidents in 2025 with just 15 convictions.
- **Culture** — The Royal Mint reveals a Cluedo 50p; a fossil jawbone found on a Welsh beach ends 200 years of confusion over ancient fish; artist and peace campaigner Dai Owen dies at 82.
- **Sport** — Wales name their Rugby League World Cup squad with Ffion Lewis a dual-code first; Bellamy's Wales face Haaland's Norway on Thursday; Littler and Van Gerwen crash out of the World Grand Prix.
- **Weather** — No UK warnings; Cardiff showery and warm at 23°C today, drier on Thursday.

Method note: compiled in cron mode. SearXNG (:8086) was in index-page mode — WalesOnline, BBC, ITV and Nation.Cymru section pages plus unrelated academic and personal-site noise, with no individual article leads — so the sweep ran through the Playwright fetch service (192.168.178.100:8090, MarkItDown): 10 index pages and 43 article pages in one batch at a 100% success rate. GOV.WALES' main index carried nothing newer than Sunday 27 September (the rail and farming releases already covered), and its FM-tagged index remains stale; the Guardian's Wales RSS feed has produced no Wales-specific story since 25 September (only the Dai Owen obituary and a Porthcawl Elvis festival picture gallery are recent). BBC Cymru Fyw carried the north Wales rail closure as a Welsh-language-only story with no English counterpart at compile time, so it is written up in English here. WalesOnline remaining cookie-walled through the service, and senedd.wales returning only its cookie shell. De-duplicated against the 28 September Welsh file and this morning's UK file: the Aberystwyth independence rally, Stephen Kinnock's "stalling" row, the £1bn rail call, Ken Skates' conference speech, Nick Servini's analysis, Neath Port Talbot's £4m housing buy, the £17,000 Llanberis ruin, the Hywel Dda rural health report, the A40 Crickhowell speed review, the Heart of Wales line closure, the tourism tax row, the 20mph feature, the FAWL farming paperwork change, the National Slate Museum delay, the Fishguard Moby Dick mural and festival, the Grace Williams festival, the Sen-Den caravans, the Caerleon shop row, the Cardigan Bay centre anniversary, "Own the Night", the Denmark defeat, Adam Jones' Cardiff Half, Glamorgan, Charlotte Henrich and the Newport fridge-freezer mountain were all dropped or condensed. The "Now in a minute"/OED Welsh-words story was dropped as a re-run of the 23 September roundup, and the Fishguard Hollywood mural was already covered on 25 September. Note for the archive: the BookStack September chapter is missing a "Welsh Headlines — 28 Sep 2026" page (the last three weeks are otherwise complete), and older files in ~/Desktop/Politics/Headlines now block on read from this host — yesterday's file was recovered from the Syncthing mirror on the Pi.

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