Welsh Headlines — 30 Oct 2026

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? Top Story: Ap Iorwerth tells Burnham not to treat Wales "as a region of England"

First Minister Rhun ap Iorwerth meets Prime Minister Andy Burnham in Glasgow today — and has arrived with a warning that "respect" has to work both ways. The pair hold a bilateral meeting after the National Economic Council, their first substantive head-to-head since Burnham entered No 10. "This is the Prime Minister's opportunity to prove his commitment to a respect agenda that works both ways," ap Iorwerth said beforehand. "That means pledging not to bypass the Senedd, and not to treat Wales effectively as a region of England." He is pressing for a new Wales Bill giving Wales parity of powers with Scotland, a fairer funding settlement, devolution of justice and policing, and a new Growth Partnership between the two governments.

Burnham says he will make "an offer" to each of the devolved administrations at the meeting. Ap Iorwerth told BBC Wales on the journey north that he could "barely remember" a Budget with "so little mention of Wales": "I can only assume that the prime minister is holding something back and I'm looking forward to hearing what he has to say." Wednesday's Budget handed Wales an extra £450m over three years — which the Welsh Government calls a real-terms cut — and just £30m towards a promised £14bn rail programme, 3% of the £1bn Cardiff Bay wanted this year. Welsh ministers had also asked for borrowing rules to be relaxed and for assurances that Plaid's child poverty payments would not be taxed or counted against benefits; neither was addressed, though Welsh Secretary Stephen Kinnock says talks on the payments remain "positive".

? Rail: "an insult to the people of Wales"

The Welsh Government has accused Westminster of kicking its rail promises "further down the tracks". Deputy Transport Minister **Mark Hooper** said the £30m confirmed in the Budget — against the £1bn Wales asked for this year out of a £14bn UK commitment — "is an insult to the people of Wales". He added: "It means more people in Wales struggling to get to hospital appointments, taking longer to get to work or see their family." Hooper rejected suggestions the schemes are not ready, saying Transport for Wales has agreed with Network Rail to deliver the stations and "are ready to start work". He also pointed out that Wales makes up 10% of the Great Britain rail network but receives just 1% of Network Rail spending, and renewed the call for full rail devolution.

? Health: the 83-year-old who drove 140 miles for a heart test

A recovering cancer patient who has had two heart attacks drove himself on a four-hour round trip for hospital tests after being refused non-emergency transport because he owns a car. Charles Swift, 83, lives in Borth, Ceredigion, and was referred to Withybush Hospital in Haverfordwest — 70 miles away — for heart checks in August. A Welsh Ambulance Service call handler turned him down after asking whether he could walk, climb stairs and owned a car: "You'll have to use that then." Swift, treated for three types of cancer, said: "What's the difference if you've got a car or not? I'm 83. It's not a good journey to do. It was tiring." He fell asleep in a chair as soon as he got home. **North Ceredigion county councillors are now demanding a transport summit and a better hospital transport system for rural areas**, saying too many trips are cancelled at the last minute. WAST said demand for transport is rising and changes are under way to improve the service; Hywel Dda health board's guidance is that patients are normally expected to arrange their own travel.

? Water: a million litres down a hospital drain

A broken tap was left running in Ysbyty Glan Clwyd's emergency department for almost three months — wasting more than a million litres of water. A sticker by the tap shows the fault was reported on **7 August**; Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board says it was fixed on **26 October**, 81 days later. At the 10 litres a minute cited by the Let's Save Water campaign, that is up to **1,166,400 litres** — around £1,853 at Welsh Water's non-household rate. The board said

removing the facility from use had to be balanced against patient care. Waterwise chief executive **Nicci Russell** called it "an absolutely horrific waste of water… parts of Wales are still in drought". **Separately, Welsh Water has been slated by regulators for one of the worst serious-pollution records in England and Wales.** Natural Resources Wales' annual assessment records **eight Category 2 incidents and one Category 1** in 2025 and says the company "continues to hold red status for serious pollution incidents" for a fourth year — "its poorest performance on record". Four of the nine incidents traced to a series of bursts along a single rising main in south Wales. A joint Ofwat/EA/NRW report also flags leakage of **156.4 litres per property per day**, above the industry average.

?? Food: Ynyshir's chef insists "I run a spotless kitchen"

Gareth Ward, chef at Wales' only two-Michelin-star restaurant, has defended his kitchen after Ynyshir was given a one-star hygiene rating in February. Speaking in Apple TV's *Knife Edge: Chasing Michelin Stars*, Ward said: "It's obviously massive in the media, which anyone instantly jumps on and thinks it's about cleanliness. I run a spotless kitchen." Inspectors rated food-safety management and the cleanliness and condition of facilities as needing major improvement, and identified a dirty floor, inadequate hand-washing in places and broken equipment posing a contamination risk; the restaurant was previously ordered to stop serving raw lobster. Ynyshir — a 16-seat room near Machynlleth serving a nearly £500-a-head, 30-course raw-focused menu — said the issues were "minor" and typical of a busy rural kitchen, and that biological testing had confirmed its techniques are safe. Ceredigion council says a reinspection found all matters addressed.

??? Education: allergy care by postcode, and teaching assistants on the picket line

Parents of children with severe food allergies say protection in Welsh schools depends on which school their child attends, and want England's Benedict's Law extended to Wales. Ffion Jacobs sits in a café opposite her seven-year-old son's school between 12pm and 1pm every day in case he has a reaction: "I don't leave the town we live in until I know he's got through lunch time." Her son has no individual healthcare plan. **Becky Wilson**, whose four-year-old Theo is allergic to hazelnuts, pecans and walnuts, is happy with her school's nut-free policy and healthcare plan but worries about supply teachers. Benedict's Law, introduced in England in September, requires school allergy policies, staff training, individual healthcare plans and legal stocking of spare adrenaline auto-injectors; in Wales schools may stock spare AAIs but are not

required to. **Dozens of teaching assistants protested in Caerphilly on Thursday morning demanding higher pay and "more recognition", as a Unison Cymru petition neared 16,000 signatures.** Support staff are paid for 39 weeks a year rather than 52 despite working through holidays, and say pressure to "work more" has risen without extra pay. Wales had **29,070 school support staff** in November 2025, including 14,370 teaching assistants; nearly 90% of them are women. The Welsh Government says it is considering "legislative or possible non-statutory changes".

?? Politics: a councillor defends Robinson after conviction

A Bridgend councillor has said "the system" treated Tommy Robinson "unfairly again" after he was convicted of harassing two journalists. Owain Clatworthy, a Restore Britain councillor, wrote on Facebook on Wednesday that "we live in dark times" and that "the state and the media have spent years trying to destroy the one man who told the truth about the rape gangs" — echoing a near-identical post from his party leader **Rupert Lowe**. Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, was found guilty at Southwark Crown Court of harassing freelance reporter **Andrew Young** and Daily Mail editor **Jacob Dirnhuber**, who left their homes or took on extra security, and could face up to 10 years in prison.

? Childline at 40: future and body image top Welsh teens' worries

One in three teenagers in Wales say the future and their body image are their biggest concerns, according to NSPCC polling by Savanta of 259 Welsh teenagers released for Childline's 40th anniversary. One in five are troubled by the state of the world and 26% cite mental health; only 12% name social media. In a parallel poll of 275 Welsh adults who were teenagers when Childline launched, 63% said social media and being online make life harder for teenagers now, 52% said body image and 47% mental health. Childline opened its lines on **Thursday 30 October 1986** and took 50,000 attempted calls; it has since delivered more than six million counselling sessions. The anniversary falls weeks after the death of founder **Dame Esther Rantzen**.

? Culture: Tom Jones postpones another US show

Sir Tom Jones has pushed back a third concert on his US tour after being laid low by flu. A statement said he needed "another day of rest" and that tomorrow night's show at Yaamava Resort & Casino in Highland, California moves to **Friday 6 November**. He had already rescheduled Los Angeles (now the Greek Theatre, 4 November) and San Diego (Rady Shell, 3 November) after completing 20 shows across the USA. All original tickets remain valid, with refunds available from the point of purchase.

? Economy: "bleak prospects" for Welsh public services

Cardiff University's Wales Fiscal Analysis team says the Budget has left Welsh public services facing a bleak outlook. In a briefing paper, the Wales Governance Centre economists note that Chancellor **John Healey** prioritised cost-of-living interventions — the £100 council-tax-band A–D energy payment, abolition of gas standing charges by the end of 2027, an extended VAT cut on electricity, the fuel duty freeze to July 2027 and a higher tax-free allowance for pension-only retirees — rather than stabilising the public finances. Since the OBR's March forecasts, higher interest rates and inflation have added an average **£11bn a year** to borrowing costs and cut the margin against the fiscal rules from **£24bn to £15bn**.

? Farming: bluetongue nears 500 farms

Bluetongue virus serotype 3 has now been confirmed on nearly 500 farms in Wales. Chief Veterinary Officer **Dr Richard Irvine** urged keepers to plan for the 2027 season: "Vaccination is the only viable long-term measure to protect livestock against bluetongue… Bluetongue will persist over the winter." He warned that demand for vaccine can outstrip supply once disease pressure builds, as happened in south-west England this summer, and that acting early is the best way to secure doses. The Rural Resilience portfolio is held by **Llyr Gruffydd**.

?? Weather

No Met Office warnings are in force for Wales today. A yellow fog warning covering the East and West Midlands, East of England and London and the South East runs until **10:00 GMT**, so cross-border travel may be slow this morning. Cardiff: sunny intervals and light winds, **15°C**, low 6°C. Saturday and Sunday turn misty with highs of 13°C (lows 4°C and 6°C); Monday brings sunny intervals and a moderate breeze, 12°C. *(BBC Weather, Cardiff, updated 09:03.)*

? Quick Summary

- **FM meets PM:** ap Iorwerth demands a Wales Bill, funding parity and rail cash from Burnham in Glasgow today.
- **Rail row:** £30m of the £1bn ask — "an insult to the people of Wales", says transport deputy minister Mark Hooper.
- **Health transport:** an 83-year-old heart patient drove 140 miles after being refused hospital transport; councillors want a rural summit.
- **Water:** a tap ran for 81 days at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd (1.17m litres), and Welsh Water keeps red status on pollution for a fourth year.
- **Education:** parents push for Benedict's Law in Wales; teaching assistants protest in Caerphilly over 39-week pay.
- **Also:** Ynyshir's chef defends his kitchen, Childline turns 40, Sir Tom Jones postpones another US date, and bluetongue reaches nearly 500 Welsh farms.

? Method note

Indexes and article bodies were fetched through the Playwright service on MacBach (.100:8090) — BBC Wales, BBC Wales Politics, BBC Cymru Fyw, BBC Weather, Nation.Cymru (news, home, sport, culture), GOV.WALES main news index and the Guardian Wales RSS feed. WalesOnline, Nitter, Phice, Flaresolverr and Reddit were skipped (walled or down). Dates were read from each article's own dateline; items already carried in the 29 October roundup (the £450m Budget settlement, the £100 payment, Cynnal, Sophie Price's hospital food case, AI and visible differences, the WRU's England talks) were dropped or reduced to a line. Stories published after that roundup's 09:20 compile are treated as new.

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