Welsh Headlines — 5 Nov 2026

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? Top Story: £200m tram-trains still barely used, three years after first arrived

Fewer than half of the 36 publicly funded tram-trains bought for the South Wales Metro have passed the testing needed to carry passengers — three years after the first arrived. BBC Wales FOI figures show **16 of the 36 Class 398 Citylink units** have cleared statutory testing, with **20 still** to satisfy the rail regulator; six are in passenger testing across the valleys network. Ordered from Swiss manufacturer Stadler in 2018 at about **£8m each**, the first reached Wales in March 2023.

Transport for Wales chief executive James Price now expects full service by the end of 2027 — five years later than the original 2022 pledge. He blamed software controlling the fleet and wants trains that work "100% well, 100% of the time" before running them in numbers; valleys reliability is 95%. Price met Stadler's chief executive in Germany to push the rollout; the manufacturer cited "normal refinements". TfW also blames electrification finished only in March.

Rail engineer Gareth Dennis said the design may simply be too complicated, combining tram, train and battery power: "that isn't necessarily a very good idea". TfW says skipping full overhead wires saved about **£400m**. Reform transport spokesperson **Jason O'Connell** said taxpayers "deserve to know what has gone wrong, how delays have turned into years and the costs are spiralling out of control".

The Welsh Government said TfW had delivered "transformative improvements" and that the rollout remained on target for the end of next year, when four trains an hour are due between Cardiff and Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil and Treherbert. *(BBC Wales, 4 Nov, updated today; Cymru Fyw)*

?? Politics: Covid families say Plaid "lied" over inquiry promise

A private message from culture minister Heledd Fychan to a bereaved campaigner, sent in March while Plaid was in opposition, has intensified the row over the Welsh Government's Covid review. Fychan told **Sam Smith-Higgins**, co-chair of Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru, that she had "communicated badly" in an interview and that there was "no rolling back on that commitment"; health minister **Mabon ap Gwynfor** separately told her on X that he "wouldn't" "do the dirty" on the families. Both were then pressing for a probe with full public inquiry powers. Today the review is non-statutory and cannot compel witnesses.

Smith-Higgins, whose father died with hospital-acquired Covid in January 2021 aged 73, said: "They have lied to us consistently from after the election, before the election... I feel personally responsible for misleading them as well, and that's a lot to carry for one person — I'm angry." Co-lead **Catherine Griffiths** told Radio Wales Breakfast that Fychan had "privately reassured us that it was a matter of semantics... she'd just used the wrong word".

Rhun ap Iorwerth told BBC Walescast there had been "no attempt to mislead people", that the manifesto had set out a review, and that the UK inquiry had already gathered evidence that now needed a Welsh lens — while accepting the families "are not going to get the model that they were looking for". The Welsh Government declined to comment on the messages. *(BBC Wales — David Deans, 4 Nov 17:25; Cymru Fyw)*

The Senedd's handling of the Global Centre of Rail Excellence came under fresh attack, with Welsh Conservative leader **Darren Millar** asking what taxpayers have had for the **£70m** of public money sunk into the Nant Helen/Onllwyn site — £50m from the last Welsh Government, £20m from the UK Government. No private investment has been secured, completion has slipped to **2030**, and Millar said the chief executive's package has risen **11% in two years to more than £267,000** including almost £39,000 in pension contributions. Trefnydd Fychan said she would raise the concerns with the responsible minister. *(Nation.Cymru — Emily Price, 4 Nov; file of 26 Oct)*

? Childcare: 19 of 22 councils — but Welsh-medium gap flagged

Funded childcare for every two-year-old now reaches 86% of Wales, the Welsh Government announced on Wednesday night, up from three local authorities in May. Nineteen of 22 councils will offer **12.5 hours a week** by the end of November, with all 22 on track by the end of March — funded by **£55m** this year. Deputy First Minister **Sioned Williams** called it "a major milestone", visiting a bilingual nursery in Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd; the offer is meant to rise to 20 hours a week over 48 weeks and extend to children aged nine months to four by 2030, which ministers say would be the most generous offer in the UK.

But **Mudiad Meithrin** chief executive **Dr Catrin Edwards** said there are "no clear targets and no plan in place" for expanding Welsh-medium provision, warning families will default to English-language care if a Welsh setting is not convenient. Between April and August, **19%** of two-year-olds in funded care attended a Welsh-medium setting — ranging from **100% in Ynys Môn, 94% in Gwynedd and 90% in Ceredigion** to **0% in Monmouthshire, 3% in Flintshire and 4% in Swansea**. The government says Welsh-medium expansion is "an integral part" of its plans. *(GOV.WALES, 4 Nov 23:00; Nation.Cymru, 05 Nov; BBC Cymru Fyw — Elliw Gwawr, today)*

?? Justice: Murder charge after Llandudno death

A 36-year-old man has been charged with murder after the death of Eleanor O'Dell, 33, at a property on St Seiriol's Road in Llandudno. Police were called shortly after 20:00 GMT on Saturday 31 October following reports of a disturbance. **Christopher Thomas Ellis**, of no fixed address, remains in custody. Her family said she was "gentle by nature and a ray of sunshine to all… our worlds have been crushed". Det Insp **Rob Mahoney** appealed for anyone out trick-or-treating or celebrating Halloween in the area between 19:00 and 20:30 to come forward with footage. *(BBC Wales — Charlie Buckland, 4 Nov)*

A Bridgend beauty salon has become the first in Wales prosecuted for providing laser hair removal and tattoo removal unlawfully. Fake It — Beauty and Aesthetics was not registered with Healthcare Inspectorate Wales; owner **Lady Helen Mary Morgan-Wooldridge** was fined and ordered to pay costs totalling **£8,950**. HIW told her to stop in March 2025, then found two laser devices and records of **19 treatments** since at an unannounced visit that June — with an old, invalid registration certificate still on display. HIW issued 10 cautions in four years and renewed calls to review aesthetic-service regulation, warning of "severe burns and some sight loss". *(BBC Wales — Jenny Rees, 4 Nov)*

? Education: Conwy school accused over racist bullying

A family say their son was racially bullied "every day" at Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy in Llanrwst and that the school and Conwy council failed to deal with it. The boy told S4C News that teachers "choose to ignore it… they act as if it's OK", and said he now stays indoors for fear of attack after an alleged racist assault. S4C has seen racist online messages the family says other pupils sent him, which they have withheld from the school. North Wales Police confirmed it dealt with reports of racist messages and an alleged racist assault. The school said it tolerates "no racism or bullying" and is a safe environment; the council said the school is suitable for the boy and arrangements are in place for him to continue his education. *(BBC Cymru Fyw / Newyddion S4C — Dafydd Evans, 4 Nov)*

Cardiff Metropolitan University has won more than £400,000 to expand GoFaL, its Welsh-medium literacy assessment tool, from Years 7–11 to Years 3–6 and sixth form, plus a new reading-comprehension test and a digital platform on Hwb — announced two months after international tests showed Welsh 15-year-olds slipping further in reading. *(Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton, 05 Nov)*

? Environment: £200m carbon capture plant approved

Flintshire councillors have approved a £200m carbon capture extension at enfinium's Parc Adfer waste-to-energy plant in Connah's Quay — set to be Wales' largest carbon removals project, capturing about **241,000 tonnes of CO2 a year** (up to 95% of what it handles) for storage under Liverpool Bay. The decision had been deferred in October because communities over the border in Cheshire — Burton, Shotwick and Puddington — had not been consulted. Parc Adfer processes up to 232,000 tonnes of unrecyclable waste from five north Wales counties; the scheme is shortlisted for the HyNet North West network. *(Nation.Cymru, 05 Nov; previously reported 03 Oct)*

? Housing: A third of sub-£100k enquiries are second homes or buy-to-let

More than a third of purchase enquiries for Welsh homes priced under £100,000 came from second-home or buy-to-let buyers, according to conveyancing comparison service Compare My Move — **137 of 401 enquiries (34.2%)**, against 25.6% across the UK. The share reached **43.8% in the SA postcode area** around Swansea. Across all prices the Welsh figure was 14.2%, almost identical to the UK's 14.1%, so the skew is concentrated at the cheapest end. The data records buying intentions among the firm's users, not completed sales, and cannot separate landlords from second-home buyers. *(Nation.Cymru, 05 Nov)*

Swansea Council leader Rob Stewart has denied misleading the public over a 2022 pre-election press release saying the authority was "planning a new green-powered ferry service over the Bristol Channel to Devon and Cornwall". A scrutiny report says the council's role was limited to supporting exploration and helping a company, Ocean Prime Industries, apply for a grant of just under £25,000 — it is "not the project promoter, developer or proposed operator". No ports, routes, vessel design or fuel type have been settled. *(Nation.Cymru — Richard Youle, LDR, 05 Nov)*

?? Remembrance: White poppy row in the Senedd

Reform MS Iain McIntosh has criticised Plaid Cymru members for wearing white poppies in the Senedd this week, saying the red poppy "is not a celebration of war" and that Plaid was "turning our backs on a symbol that has united generations". He shared an image of Pen-y-bont Bro Morgannwg MS **Sarah Rees** wearing one during Tuesday's plenary; several other Plaid MSs wore white poppies or a mix, as did the Greens' **Paul Rock**. The white poppy dates from 1933, when the Co-operative Women's Guild — largely war widows — sought to keep the "Never Again" spirit at the centre of remembrance; the Royal British Legion urged supporters not to abuse white-poppy wearers in 2018. *(Nation.Cymru — Emily Price, 4 Nov)*

Veterans gathered at the Field of Remembrance in Cardiff ahead of Remembrance Sunday. One told BBC Wales: "It will live with me for the rest of my life." *(BBC Wales, 4 Nov)*

? Culture: Tarantino, Kylie and RZA in Porthcawl

Porthcawl filmmaker Jamie Adams has described sharing a pint with Quentin Tarantino in his father's old pub as "an out of body experience", after bringing Tarantino, Kylie Minogue and Wu-Tang Clan's RZA to the seaside town for his new film *Tangled Up in Blue*. Tarantino plays a talent manager who has spent 40 years managing legends and finds himself stranded at a hotel bar; Adams shot in his usual improvised style, and used the Ship and Castle — the pub his dad ran, whose bar is a boat brought from Weymouth. *(BBC Wales — Oscar Edwards, 4 Nov, updated today)*

? Sport: Wilson back as Bellamy names squad

Harry Wilson returns to the Wales squad for the Nations League games against Norway and Portugal, having not featured since March through injury, with Leeds team-mate **Joe Rodon** also back and **Rubin Colwill** recalled. The only new face is **Joe Duncan**, 20, on loan at Southend from Bristol City, who replaces Tom King as **Craig Bellamy** confronts an ageing goalkeeping pool — Karl Darlow is 36 and Danny Ward 33. Jordan James is out injured. Wales, third in Group A4, play in Oslo on **Saturday 14 November** and host Portugal the following Tuesday. *(BBC Sport Wales — Dafydd Pritchard, 4 Nov)*

Wrexham beat Championship leaders Middlesbrough 2–0 at the Racecourse with second-half goals from **George Thomason (70')** and substitute **Ollie Rathbone (84')** in front of 10,532 — a first clean sheet in nine matches that lifted Phil Parkinson's side to 16th and ended Boro's 11-game unbeaten run. *(BBC Sport Wales — Ian Mitchelmore, 4 Nov)*

Wales name their team to face Japan at the Principality Stadium on Saturday (16:40 GMT) on Friday, with Steve Tandy expected to reshape the midfield around Max Llewellyn and Eddie James. Jac Morgan says he wants to show a new attacking threat after captaining the side in Tandy's first game. *(WalesOnline; BBC Sport Wales, 4 Nov)*

?? Weather

No weather warnings are in force for the UK, according to BBC Weather. Cardiff: a mainly cloudy, breezy day with a few bright spells and the odd spot of light rain, high **11°C** (low 6°C); tonight overcast with drizzle, patchy rain arriving from the south. Friday dull and damp at first, then drier with bright intervals; Saturday variable cloud and isolated showers; Sunday misty and murky before sunny spells. *(BBC Weather)*

Method: SearXNG returned a usable index-heavy mix (BBC Wales/Wales Politics, Nation.Cymru, GOV.WALES, Guardian RSS, WalesOnline), so the sweep ran through the Playwright fetch service: 11 index/feed pages and 28 article pages, each dated against the 04 Nov Welsh roundup and today's UK roundup before inclusion. Nitter, Phice, Flaresolverr and Reddit routes remain unavailable — skipped.

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