Welsh Headlines — 6 Nov 2026

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? Top Story: Energy drinks could be banned for under-16s in Wales

The Welsh Government is consulting on banning sales of high-caffeine energy drinks to under-16s, following England's decision to outlaw them from April. The rules would cover drinks other than tea and coffee that contain more than **150mg of caffeine per litre** — hitting **Red Bull, Monster, Relentless and Prime** while leaving lower-caffeine soft drinks such as Diet Coke untouched.

Deputy Minister for Public Health and Prevention Nerys Evans said the evidence points to real harm. Research suggests the drinks can lead to "headaches, tiredness, stomach pains and sleep problems, as well as increasing the risk of stress, anxiety and depression", she said. Young people may be more sensitive to caffeine because their bodies are smaller and their brains are still developing.

A previous Welsh Government consultation found broad support for restricting sales to under-16s, and ministers now intend to press ahead "subject to the outcome of the consultation". The new exercise will focus on how restrictions would be introduced and enforced — online age verification, compliance monitoring, possible penalties and a timetable. In England the ban will apply in shops, restaurants, cafés, vending machines and online from April. *(BBC Cymru Fyw — Mark Palmer and Gwen Aeron, this morning)*

?? Politics: Free school meals extended to Years 7 and 8

Free school meals are being rolled out to Year 7 and 8 pupils across Wales from households receiving Universal Credit, regardless of household income. The Welsh Government announced the move at 22:00 last night: all 22 local authorities will be serving meals to eligible learners by **January 2027**, with more than half already doing so under the expanded scheme. Previously secondary pupils qualified only where family earnings were below **£7,400** (excluding benefits); parents must now register with their council.

Cabinet Minister for Education and the Welsh Language **Anna Brychan** called it "the first step in our commitment to extend free school meals to more secondary pupils", saying access to nutritious food "improves concentration, attainment and overall health". Deputy First Minister **Sioned Williams** linked it to child poverty work, including the Cynnal child payment pilot, which awaits assurances from the UK Government that recipients will not be penalised. The expansion was a Programme for Government commitment, agreed in June 2026. *(GOV.WALES, 5 Nov 22:00)*

A Reform MS has been criticised for praising a Polish MEP described as an "unhinged extremist". Cristiana Emsley (Fflint Wrecsam) posted on X that **Dominik Tarczyński** was "fiercely patriotic" and asked why "defending your country, borders and culture makes you unacceptable in Labour's Britain"; Tarczyński was barred from the UK by Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood and has called for the prosecution of Holocaust historian Barbara Engelking, addressed a Tommy Robinson rally in London and praised US immigration agents after the killing of Renée Good. Poland's foreign minister, Radosław Sikorski, called the post confirmation that Tarczyński is "an unhinged extremist". *(Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton, 5 Nov)*

The Children's Commissioner has urged the First Minister to make children's rights legally enforceable, calling for a Children's Rights Bill that fully incorporates the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Welsh law. **Rocío Cifuentes'** annual report draws on evidence from more than **36,000** children over three years and makes **35 recommendations**, led by seven calls including a dedicated minister for babies, children and young people, a review of the Learner Travel Measure and scoping free public transport for the young. *(Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton, today)*

A Bridgend councillor who was elected for Reform UK and later defected to Restore Britain has claimed Russell Brand is a victim of "two-tier justice". Owain Clatworthy wrote on Facebook that the comedian — convicted of rape and sexual assault this week — was targeted after "he questioned the elites, rejected the Covid narrative, and publicly found Jesus", describing the case as a "show trial". He was branded a "racist misogynist" by the council's deputy leader, Labour's Jane Gebbie, in September. *(Nation.Cymru — Martin Shipton, 5 Nov)*

?? Senedd: Smart glasses approved as teleprompters

Smart glasses may be used to deliver speeches in the Senedd chamber, the Llywydd has confirmed, provided members give advance notice. Huw Irranca-Davies said his ruling was

"made on the basis that the glasses are used solely to assist the delivery of speeches", with existing filming and recording restrictions unchanged and committee chairs deciding whether to allow the devices in their own hearings.

The confirmation follows scrutiny of **Jason O'Connell** (Pontypridd Cynon Merthyr), whose use of glasses displaying a digital script was first reported by Nation.Cymru in early October. He says the technology boosted his confidence "massively" and that his glasses have no camera; he welcomed the ruling and said other MSs who want a pair should "go buy a pair". Welsh Liberal Democrat **Jane Dodds** had called for a temporary ban until rules were set and access was equal. *(Nation.Cymru, 5 Nov; BBC Wales)*

? Children & tech: AI teddy's killing remark prompts regulation calls

An AI teddy marketed as "perfect" for children as young as three told a BBC reporter "I can't help with killing you" — unprompted, after mishearing a question. The **Doubao** plush said it while being asked what "sexual" meant, in a BBC Wales investigation into AI toys that also tested **Grem** (Curio, about $99, voiced by Grimes) and **My Baby Bunny** (£75).

Industry figures and the Children's Commissioner want tighter rules. Play Tech AI founder **Paul Clarke**, whose own toys use ChatGPT 4.1 Nano with a two-second reply delay, said the sector is "crying out" for regulation and that unregulated products are "completely unsafe"; Commissioner **Rocío Cifuentes** said manufacturers need "the strictest rules and regulations" and warned about children's conversations being recorded without parents' knowledge. Professor **Berry Billingsley** of Swansea University said children should never be left alone with AI toys.

MPs and peers have written to ministers and retailers urging them to withdraw AI toys until they are proven safe — ahead of Black Friday and Christmas. A government call for evidence on toy safety rules closed on 6 October. A Newport family who hosted two of the toys for a week found them disappointing rather than harmful; the BBC could not establish who makes Doubao, raising the question of how any register could be enforced. The global AI plush market is worth about **$165m** and expected to grow fast. *(BBC Wales — Nicola Bryan, 5 Nov, updated today)*

?? Courts: Aberfan explosives charge; Cân i Gymru winner's dog fraud; A40 inquest

A 38-year-old man has appeared in court charged with making an explosive substance found near the Aberfan Memorial Garden days before the Royal visit marking the

disaster's 60th anniversary. Stefan Dale is accused of making an explosive substance with intent to endanger life or injure property; suspected explosives were found on the **Taff Trail**, between the cemetery and the memorial garden, on **17 October**. King Charles, Queen Camilla and the Prince of Wales laid wreaths there on 21 October. The Attorney General granted consent to prosecute, as required under the Explosive Substances Act 1883. District Judge Thomas said the case had caused "distress in Aberfan", noting "the prime minister and His Majesty the King" visited days later; Dale, who the court heard had received threats on social media, was remanded in custody to Cardiff Crown Court on **4 December**. *(BBC Wales, 5 Nov; charged 1 Nov)*

A former winner of S4C's Cân i Gymru has admitted illegal dog breeding and fraud. Sara Pritchard Davies, 29, pleaded guilty at Swansea Crown Court to involvement in a fraudulent business between March 2015 and November 2023 and to acquiring **£33,629** from criminal conduct, answering "Euog" to each charge. The case was brought by Ceredigion council's trading standards team; the business was said to be worth about **£1m**. Her ex-partner Thomas John Jones, 28, admitted the same offence in December 2025. Davies, a part-time teacher from Old Colwyn, will be sentenced on **14 December**. *(BBC Wales, 5 Nov)*

A drink-driver who hit a roadside sign and flipped his car killed himself and his best friend, an inquest has heard. Aled Coleman, 23, of Fishguard, was driving home on the A40 between Haverfordwest and Fishguard at about 03:15 on 14 September 2025 after a night out; **Aled Bowen**, 18, of Trecwn, was in the passenger seat and neither wore a seatbelt. A forensic investigator said alcohol was above the legal limit and inappropriate speed a causation factor; an empty Jack Daniels bottle was at the scene. Senior Coroner Gareth Lewis recorded traumatic head injury and multiple traumatic injuries. *(BBC Wales / Cymru Fyw — Sara Dafydd, 5 Nov)*

? Communities: Tywi Valley AONB call; New Quay pier restoration

A public meeting has backed calls for the Tywi Valley to be given Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty status to protect it from wind farms and pylon chains. **Our Tywi Valley** met at the White Hart on 31 October; chair **Daljit Singh** said there was "overwhelming support" and that residents have already "derailed the developers' plans". Bute Energy's **70-mile** pylon chain to Nant Mithil continues, planning is under way for the **34-acre Llandyfaelog substation** — potentially among the largest in western Europe — and a third of Carmarthenshire's countryside is allocated for wind development in Future Wales 2040. *(Nation.Cymru — Stephen Price, today)*

Plans to restore the fire-damaged Grade II-listed Pier Building in New Quay are recommended for approval. Ceredigion's development management committee considers listed building consent on **11 November**; proposals repair the former harbour warehouse like-for-like, add fire protection between floors and reinstate timber floorboards. The building, now home to New Quay Yacht Club, was damaged in January but an inspection found it structurally intact. *(Nation.Cymru — Bruce Sinclair, LDR, today)*

? Economy: More closures than start-ups; sharpest footfall fall

More businesses closed than opened in Wales in the first quarter of the financial year. There were **2,535** start-ups between April and June against **2,780** closures — a net loss of **245** — according to the latest Economic Intelligence Wales report, which cites weak confidence, rising costs and uncertainty over investment. Its author, Professor **Max Munday** of Cardiff Business School, noted the picture is mixed: an ONS survey in July found **36.8%** of Welsh businesses expected performance to improve over the next year, above the UK's 31.9%. *(Nation.Cymru, today)*

Shopper footfall in Wales fell 6.3% in October year-on-year — the steepest decline of any UK nation. England fell 4.6%, Scotland 4.3% and Northern Ireland 3.1%, against a UK average of 4.7%, according to the British Retail Consortium and Sensormatic. High streets saw the biggest drop at 5.2%. BRC chief executive **Helen Dickinson** blamed low consumer confidence, rising inflation and high energy costs. *(Nation.Cymru, today)*

A north Wales brewery has become the first in Wales to win CAMRA's Champion Bottled Beer of Britain. Geipel Brewing, on the edge of Eryri National Park, took gold for its **5.2% Hefeweizen** at Norwich Beer Festival, beating Fuller's Vintage Ale (silver) and Durham Brewery's Temptation (bronze). Founder **Eric Geipel**, who began brewing at home after losing his job in the 2008 crash, said he "never imagined that a non-native style would be a contender". *(Nation.Cymru, 5 Nov)*

? Poverty & health: Parents skipping meals for Christmas; flu arrives early

More than two-thirds of parents in Wales surveyed by Barnardo's say they have skipped meals or cut how much they eat to afford Christmas for their children. 64% expect to go into debt, **65%** will delay paying a household bill, **71%** think Christmas will be harder to afford than last year and **19%** would sacrifice heating to buy gifts. The UK-wide survey of 2,763 parents was carried out by Censuswide between 6 and 16 October; Barnardo's Cymru's **Laura Tomsa** said "no parent should have to choose between keeping up with household costs and creating special memories". *(Nation.Cymru, today)*

Flu is circulating in Wales earlier than usual, Public Health Wales has said, with activity still low but cases expected to rise. The season normally begins in late November or early December. PHW is urging everyone aged 65 and over, and people with long-term health conditions, to be vaccinated. *(Nation.Cymru, today)*

? Culture: Sir Tom's scare, Dolly's books, Bonnie's mural

Sir Tom Jones has told fans he feared his life was "over" after being admitted to hospital in the US with flu. The 86-year-old from Pontypridd spent a week at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles and cancelled or rescheduled shows, before returning to the stage at the Greek Theatre on Wednesday. "I thought, oh well, this is it, you've had a wonderful life, Tommy, but it's over," he said, adding that he told staff: "I've got to get back on the stage. This is where I belong." *(BBC Wales, 5 Nov)*

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library — which posts a free book every month until a child's fifth birthday — has relaunched in parts of Wales. Three Swansea school communities (Clwyd, Brynmill and Llanrhidian primaries), Pencoed Primary in Bridgend and a community in Risca near Newport are taking part. Parton, who died aged 80 in August, set up the scheme in 1995 inspired by her father, who could not read or write; it has previously struggled in Wales and there are calls for it to be "properly funded" nationwide. The Welsh Government said it was committed to library spaces in primary schools. *(BBC Wales — Meleri Williams, 5 Nov, updated today)*

A mural of Bonnie Tyler has been unveiled in her hometown. Artist **Steve Jenkins** painted the piece at Skewen Memorial Park in Neath Port Talbot, featuring the singer's face plus references to the local rugby club and *Total Eclipse of the Heart*. Tyler — real name **Gaynor Hopkins** — died in Portugal in July aged 75; hundreds lined the streets of Skewen for her funeral. *(BBC Wales, 5 Nov)*

Michael Sheen leads *Owain & Henry*, which opened at the Wales Millennium Centre this week and runs to 28 November. The production traces the story of Owain Glyndŵr; Gruffudd Glyn, who plays farmer Bryn, told BBC Radio Cymru the staging on one of Europe's largest stages is "epic… shocking, and it leaves people on the edge of their seats". *(BBC Cymru Fyw — Rhys Ffrancon, 4 Nov)*

A composer from Tonyrefail has released his debut album with the choir he sang in as a teenager. Nathan James Dearden's *i breathe* (Signum Classics) features the National Youth Choir of Wales, the Choir of Royal Holloway and Kantos Chamber Choir across 15 tracks drawing on Welsh hymn and choral traditions. *(Nation.Cymru, today)*

Professor Medwin Hughes has been appointed chair of Bangor University's council, succeeding Marian Wyn Jones, who steps down at the end of November. *(BBC Cymru Fyw — Gwydion Edwards, 5 Nov)*

? Sport: Tandy backs his England-based XV; Ronaldo bows out before

Wales rematch

Steve Tandy has defended picking 12 players from English clubs for Wales' match against Japan in Cardiff on Saturday (16:40 GMT), nine of them in the starting XV — understood to be a record for a 23-man Wales squad. "It's never about where they play, it's more about who are playing the best rugby," the head coach said. Gloucester's Dewi Lake, Jac Morgan and Max Llewellyn start alongside Louis Rees-Zammit, Tomos Williams, Nicky Smith, Archie Griffin, Dafydd Jenkins and Aaron Wainwright, with Tomas Francis, Rhys Carre and Louis Hennessey on the bench. *(BBC Sport Wales — Gareth Griffiths, 5 Nov)*

Cristiano Ronaldo has retired from international football, three weeks before Portugal visit Cardiff. The 41-year-old leaves with **146 goals** and **234 caps**, both world records, having walked out of the Portugal camp in September after being told he would not start against Denmark — earning a £215 fine and a 30-day suspension. Wales host Portugal in their final Nations League group game on **17 November**. *(BBC Sport, 5 Nov)*

?? Weather

No weather warnings are in force for the UK, according to BBC Weather. Cardiff: a largely cloudy day with light winds, high **11°C** (low 6°C); Saturday similar at 11°C/5°C; Sunday misty, 10°C/4°C; Monday light cloud, 10°C/6°C; Tuesday cloudier with light rain and a gentle breeze, 11°C/8°C. *(BBC Weather)*

Method: SearXNG returned a usable mix this morning (WalesOnline live blog, ITV Wales, BBC indexes), so the sweep ran through the Playwright fetch service on MacBach (.100:8090) — 12 index/feed pages and 47 article pages, each dated against the 05 Nov Welsh roundup and today's UK roundup before inclusion; stale category cards from 11–13 October were dropped. Nitter, Phice, Flaresolverr and Reddit routes remain unavailable — skipped.

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