



HELEDD FYCHAN MS

Plaid Cymru - South Wales Central



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This newsletter is an opportunity to update you on my work and some of the issues I have been working on over the summer.

Following the news that energy prices will increase further in October, I know many individuals, families and businesses will be greatly concerned and worried how they will be able to afford to pay their bills. Tackling the cost of living remains a key priority for myself and my team. In July, I invited organisations working across the region to a second cost of living summit in Pontyclun to discuss ways to support constituents over the coming months. A further summit will take place in October.

As the new Senedd term starts next week, I continue to raise the issues that are important to you. These include support for communities at risk of flooding, NHS waiting times and dental services and much much more. If there is something you'd like me to raise, please get in touch with me.

Heledd Fychan MS

Annual Report 2021-22

It has been such an honour to meet so many of you over that past year and working on the issues that matter and make a real difference to our communities over the past year.

My first annual report is now available on my website. This report will provide a summary of my work in the Senedd and across the region since I was elected as a regional Member of the Senedd for South Wales Central in May 2021.

You can read the digital version of the annual report [here](#).



Tribute to Tony Burnell

In July, we lost a dear friend - Plaid Cymru Councillor Tony Burnell.

Tony was a huge character and very active in his much-loved community of Ynysybwl, serving as a county councillor and community councillor.

He truly was one in a million, always working tirelessly for the residents of Ynysybwl. He had a huge heart and an infectious smile. It is a tremendous loss for his family and friends, his community and for Plaid Cymru. He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by all that knew him.

Rest in Peace Tony.

Cost of Living event

On Tuesday 19 July, myself and Luke Fletcher, Member of the Senedd for South Wales West, held a Cost-of-living event in Pontyclun. This built on an event I previously held in Treforest in February and brought together organisations from across the region of South Wales Central who are working to support people impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

As we all know, increasing costs of food, fuel and energy are putting individuals and families under huge strain. Each organisation is seeing how increasing costs are impacting more and more people, with greater support required to ensure people can afford the basics such as food, fuel and energy. In-work poverty is increasingly becoming an issue and requires every tier of Government to work together to ensure more is done to help people.

The organisations that attended the events are all working hard to support people, and it was very useful to come together to discuss what needs to change and how we can all work closely together to provide support. This will be an on-going priority for my office, and I would urge anyone that is suffering to please seek advice and support.



Read the report by clicking the link [here](#). Please also complete the cost-of-living survey if you have not already done so by following this link [here](#).



Out in the community

Myself and my team have continued to be out and about, meeting with community groups and organisations across the region. Some key highlights over the summer includes meeting with Lee and Nina and the rest of the team at the Bryncynon Strategy. I also had the pleasure of meeting Becky Lewis before her first commonwealth competition in Birmingham. I continue to support young people with their campaigns across the region meeting with Ruben Kelman, Welsh Youth Parliament Member for Cardiff North to discuss free transport for young people as well as meeting with Coco, Alys and Mai who have been using their voice to bring attention to the climate and nature emergency on the steps of the Senedd.

If you'd like me to visit a group or organisation in your area, or if you'd like to get advice, please get in touch with my office.

You can learn more about my visits across the region [here](#).

Pontypridd Green Week

Pontypridd Green Week returns once again this year.

Dates: 24 September – 1 October 2022

What's happening? Loads! There will be litter picks, workshops about trees and seed collection, a repair cafe, a science workshop, a ceremony for the trees and much, much more!

You can find more information about Pontypridd green week [here](#) and other green week events across the region.

I am sure you will also be aware that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has recently agreed plans for the development of the Pontypridd area which is closest to the train station. During Pontypridd Green Week last year, I asked the opinion of residents about what they would like to see in Pontypridd that would help the environment and so many great ideas were shared with me. I presented these to the Council. Friends of the Earth Pontypridd also developed alternative ideas, but unfortunately, the Cabinet was not willing to listen to the opinions of residents.



Eisteddfod

After three long years, it was wonderful to be back at the National Eisteddfod which took place in Tregaron. It was my first as a Senedd Member, so much of my time was spent discussing with organisations and individuals about matters relating to my work though I also had an opportunity to enjoy the wealth of activities on offer.

In two year's time, we will be welcoming the Eisteddfod to RCT. It will be a brilliant opportunity for everyone - whether they speak Welsh or not - to enjoy Europe's largest cultural festival. I will continue to make the case for greater support for the Eisteddfod, and hope that when the Eisteddfod comes to RCT, more free tickets can be made available to local residents.



Public Meeting in Hirwaun

On 8 August, I attended a public meeting in Hirwaun organised by Cllr Karen Morgan and Cllr Adam Owain Rogers. The focus was on the impact the dualling works are having on local residents and the concerns were varied and multiple. I have written to the Welsh Government in relation to these concerns, and will continue to work closely with local Councillors and the community to ensure they receive greater support.

Amongst the issues raised were concerns about speeding. Residents are reminded to report all instances of dangerous driving. Information on how to do so can be found [here](#)



Supporting BT workers strike action

On 29 July, I joined CWU strikers at the picket line in Pontypridd to show my solidarity with BT and Openreach workers who were striking because of an inadequate pay settlement. They have played, and continue to play, a key role in ensuring vital infrastructure is in place to enable so many of us to stay connected.

I have also been supporting other workers who are striking and will continue to do so over the coming months. It is vitally important that companies recognise the value of their workers, and treat them with respect. Profit should never come before people.



Visit to Royal Glamorgan Hospital

In August, I visited Royal Glamorgan Hospital in Llantrisant. It was an opportunity to thank frontline staff for all their hard work during the pandemic and hear about the ongoing challenges. Over the summer I also launched my regional health survey. Since my election I have been contacted by countless constituents about the challenges they have faced accessing NHS services across the region.

- Late prescriptions
- Appointment issues
- Unable to register with an NHS dentist
- Ambulance waiting times
- Waiting times for tests and operations



To better understand how we as an office can support you and resolve these issues, I would really appreciate hearing about your experiences using NHS services in your area. This will inform my work in the Senedd and allow me to ask the most relevant questions to the local health board and minister, and support NHS front line staff.

You can complete the short survey via the link [here](#)



Flooding Update

Over the summer my team and I have been out delivering flood booklets. Since receiving the flood booklet Residents of Abercwmboi have been in touch with me. Residents are still worried sick about the systems that are meant to protect them from future flooding events like Storm Dennis, which impacted them in 2020.

The Council has done a lot of work on the culverts which blocked then, and other agencies have worked to clear years of neglected silt which had built up in the underground pipes.

There is still one very important issue that has been ignored by all, and that is the lake to the rear of the houses on the old furnacite plant. The build up of silt in the lake over the years means that the capacity of the lake is reduced, and the level of water that it could take before it would break its banks is also very much reduced. The lake needs to be dredged to increase the capacity. The culvert on the far side of the lake is full of rubbish and the grills placed there are old and damaged beyond repair. There is a job of work that still needs to be done before the residents can truly feel safe in their homes when it rains. I will be ensuring that the experiences and views of residents feed into the flood review, and also to push for action on the lake.

Supporting new 20mph speed limit measures

Over the past year I have worked with residents across the region who are concerned about speeding in their area.

Since the 20mph speed limit in residential areas was announced last month, I've been contacted by many constituents who are still concerned about the change.

So, what does this change mean?

- 20mph speed limit will be introduced on residential roads and busy pedestrian streets with streetlighting only.
- The chances of someone surviving being hit by a car at 20mph is seven times higher than 30mph
- This change will mean fewer accidents and casualties on our roads.
- Lower speeds will also mean that more people will feel comfortable to walk and cycle
- And streets will be safer for children to walk to school



Equal access to Welsh Education in South Wales

Before the Summer break, the Welsh Government updated Senedd Members about the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. While the plans has many positive actions such as further investments in 'Cylchoedd Meithrin' across the region it was disappointing to hear that only 15 local authorities have committed to creating new Welsh medium schools over the next decade.

If we want to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050, equal access to Welsh Medium education is vital.

With only 23 new Welsh medium primary schools planned to be opened across Wales over the next 10 years, I am concerned that the Welsh Government isn't being ambitious enough.

Too many Council across Wales are repeatedly missing their Welsh language targets.

In Pontypridd, the decision to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and merge will Heol y Celyn means that families in Ynysybwl and Cilfynydd will have to travel further if they wish for their children to receive a Welsh medium education. This contradicts the government's commitment to ensure equal access.

If the Welsh Government is serious about improving access to Welsh medium education, it must hold local authorities to account. I will continue to raise this issue in the Senedd over the next term.



Meet the team

Danny Grehan - Community Engagement Officer

Amanda Ellis - Community Engagement Officer

Brooke Webb - Communications Officer

Eleri Griffiths - Caseworker

Wendy Allsop - Administrative Officer

Ken Moon - Sustainable Futures Coordinator

How we can help

I am holding regular telephone and in person advice surgeries offering help and support to local people.

Myself and my team are able to help with a range of issues including Health, Housing, Transport, Education and Local Government.

If there's anything we can do to help you please contact us to book an appointment via the details below.

We have also teamed up with citizens advice to hold advice surgeries in the office. A list of upcoming dates and how to book are listed on the my website.



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