

Beth Winter MP



November 2021 Newsletter

This year marked a return to normality for many of our **Remembrance** Services following a very different Remembrance Sunday in 2020. There was a remarkable turn out at services across Cynon Valley as people came out to pay their respects. I tried to attend as many services as possible across our communities. This year I was in Mountain Ash, Abercynon, Ynysybwl and Penrhiwceiber, as well as attending the minute's silence at the Aberdare cenotaph on Thursday 11th and the incredibly moving remembrance concert at St Elvans. A huge thank you to all the RCT Councillors who attended services alongside me or laid wreaths on my behalf at the services I was unable to attend.

The **research** I commissioned into the Cynon Valley economy was published this month. The brilliant Welsh think tank the Bevan Foundation have delivered independent research into our local economy. You can read the research on the Bevan Foundation website [here](#).

I love the Cynon Valley and I believe passionately that the fundamental changes we need can only come about if the people of the Cynon Valley work together. I've said it before and I'll say it again that the talent, passion and expertise in our communities is incredible. We must harness that and bring people together to drive change.

With that in mind I organised a **conference** about the research, bringing together key stakeholders from the public sector, private sector and third sector to speak about the research and its recommendations.

It already seems a long time ago but this month the eyes of the world were on the UK for the **COP26 Climate conference**. While there were some positive outcomes, and we do not turn our nose up at them, nothing agreed at COP26 came close to acknowledging the severity and immediacy of the climate crisis.

Where world leaders have run out of ideas, the people of the Cynon Valley are full them, as set out in the '[Cynon Valley Climate Manifesto](#)' I compiled recently. More on COP26 later in the newsletter.

Finally, as we enter the festive season, I can announce that the winner of 2021 **Christmas Card competition** came from Hummingbird & Robin classes at Pengeulan Primary in Penrhiwceiber. Rather than submit individual cards, Hummingbird class and Robin class came together and pooled their ideas to create a bright and brilliant design. A win for teamwork. We could all learn something from them! There were winners and runners up in different age categories. Head to [my website](#) to see them!

In Cynon

The research I commissioned into the **Cynon Valley Economy** has now been published and you can read it on the [Bevan Foundation website](#). My **economy advisory group** CVCV have been studying the research and will lead on some of the next steps. If you are interested in the Cynon Valley economy, please get involved, I would be interested to hear what you think! Email tom.bateman@parliament.uk to find out more or if you would like to join the economy group.

I felt the **conference** I organised about the research was extremely positive, bringing together key stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors to speak about the research. Huge thanks to everyone who came along and shared their ideas. The discussions were inspiring and fill me with hope that we will turn the priorities into lasting change.

Barclays this month announced that they would become the latest bank to leave Cynon Valley with their Aberdare branch set to close in March 2022. The banking offer is becoming extremely thin on the ground in our town centres. Many people rely on physical banking services and are increasingly being left high and dry. In July I joined with the other RCT MPs to [write](#) to banks in RCT about the future of banking in our communities. I didn't get a response from Barclays. They have now been in touch following my [latest letter](#) to them. I will continue to push this conversation. If you have any points [you would like me to raise with Barclays](#), please get in touch.

This month I hosted a fascinating [event](#) with Ellie Harwood from the Wales anti-poverty alliance about the **impact of poverty on women and children** in Wales and how they are disproportionately impacted by austerity, benefit cuts & food insecurity. Huge thanks Ellie for coming to speak to us!

We are proud people in the valleys and I often find that those who most need support are those least able or willing to ask for it. I am a firm believer that as the MP, I must make myself as accessible as possible to enable people to get the support they need. This month I held **surgeries** in [Cilfynydd](#), [Ynysybwl and Glyncoch](#) and in [Aberdare Tesco](#). My casework team are also now holding advice sessions on Wednesday mornings to make it as easy as possible to get support.

I was delighted to be invited this month to the official opening of **Hirwaun Primary School**. The school was formally opened by the Minister for Education Jeremy Miles. The facilities are absolutely amazing. Thanks to Mrs Hill, Rachael's playhouse and everyone at Hirwaun primary for having us!

I was also pleased to be asked to say a few words at a meeting of the newly formed [RCT Trades Council](#). Our trade unions are the beating heart of the Labour movement and we will need them more than ever in the months & years ahead.

As usual, my office has acted as a collection point for donations to Merthyr Cynon Foodbank over this period, organised by the Cynon Labour Women's Branch. Email Mary Winter on marywinter2@btinternet.com or Julia Silezin on womenseccynon@gmail.com if you would like to donate.



With Cllr Morgan & Cllr Treeby at the Mountain Ash remembrance service



With the Leader of the Council and Dr Winckler from the Bevan Foundation



At Hirwaun Primary School with other elected representatives, Headteacher Mrs Hill, Head Girl and Head Boy.

In The Bubble

On the day that **COP26** opened, I spoke in the chamber about how areas like Cynon Valley had been left behind by the transition away from coal, and how important it is that we are not left behind again by the changes needed to future proof our planet. Real investment in our valleys could see the coal tips made safe, and create thousands of green jobs for the future. That would be 'levelling up'. Instead, the people of Cynon Valley, and of Wales are once again being short-changed by the Tories. You can watch part of my speech [here](#) and read the whole thing [here](#).

I'm sure you will all join with me in calling for a humane and caring response to the plight of people trying to come to the UK, and the [recent deaths](#) of so many innocent men, women and children in the English Channel. To die seeking a better life for themselves and their families is a tragedy beyond words. I will continue to oppose the draconian policies of Priti Patel and her Tory colleagues in demonising these people, and call for humane solutions to this appalling situation, including the creation of **safe and legal routes**, and an end to the hostile environment.

Richard Ratcliffe went on hunger strike this month, demanding that the UK Government do everything in its power to release his wife Nazanin. I had the privilege of meeting Richard and was so moved by his situation and his bravery. I [wrote](#) to Foreign Secretary Liz Truss asking her to do everything in her power to secure Nazanin's release.

Earlier in the month, the Welsh Affairs Committee held a [session](#) on **Universal Basic Income**. UBI has the potential to [cut poverty by 50%](#) and child poverty by 64%. Despite this, I was confronted yet again with the usual answers about trade-offs and 'difficult decisions'. Sometimes I think we've all been conned into thinking a better world isn't possible. More and more working class people are being driven into destitution. At the same time, unimaginable wealth is being hoarded & siphoned to offshore tax havens. Lifting people out of destitution is not some utopian pipe dream. Poor health, mental illness, crime and antisocial behaviour are all expensive symptoms of poverty. As I see it, we cannot afford **not to** lift our children out of poverty.

In line with this, I was delighted to see Welsh Labour's announcement of a **cooperation agreement** with Plaid Cymru including so many progressive policies, not least on Free School Meals. This is something I have long championed and campaigned on. You can read my statement from February of this year [here](#).

I have been a vocal supporter of a number of EDMs this month, including Ian Byrne MP's campaign for an education programme about the **Hillsborough** disaster and Richard Burgon's campaign against MPs taking **second jobs**. There is an ever increasing unease in the country about **Tory greed, sleaze and corruption**, and the Labour party must continue to expose it. I fully intend to play my part.



like ours do not get left behind.

In the COP26 debate at Westminster



Richard Ratcliffe outside the Foreign Office.
Photo: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian



if not the highest rates of child poverty.

At Welsh Affairs Committee

Beth Winter MP

WORKING TOGETHER IN CYNON
FOR A FAIRER FUTURE FOR ALL

Rob's Review



Rob Hope
Senior Caseworker

Casework and policy work continues to be as busy and varied as ever. Recent concerns have been the increasing cost of living, the Health & Care Bill and the plight of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

Sue and I divide the casework up between ourselves and the policy emails that the office receive inform the issues that Beth seeks to raise in parliament. Even if Beth is unable to raise every issue directly we do regularly write to Government Ministers to put across the concerns of our constituents.

An increasing amount of my role is campaigning activities and I am currently working on a number of areas which include the Mineworkers Pension Scheme, State Pension

Inequality and concerns around anti-social behaviour in Aberdare and Mountain Ash.

Beth has held a meeting with residents and South Wales Police over anti-social behaviour but we are keen to meet with Youth Services to discuss what activities are available for younger people and we have a meeting to discuss this in a couple of weeks. We are mindful that this is a complex area and we view it as more than a matter of police involvement and enforcement.

Ever since Beth was elected she has wanted the Constituency Office to be an open Community Hub with volunteers joining the staff team being a key part of that vision. This hasn't quite gone to plan to say the least but we are hoping to be able to welcome volunteers to join us in the New Year. There are roles in the office that we feel would be ideal for volunteer involvement and we are actively seeking willing volunteers currently. **If you are interested in volunteering with Beth and the team then please get in touch.**

Finally let me wish you a peaceful festive period. This has always been one of my favourite times of the year so I hope you have a Merry Christmas.



Hopefully soon to become a Community Hub



Merry Christmas Everyone!

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