

Beth Winter MP



November 2020 Update

Annwyl gyfaill,

The coronavirus has dominated 2020, from the anxiety it brought in February, national lockdown in March and the various restrictions have been with us ever since. These restrictions impacted on our Remembrance services this month, and next month they will affect our Christmas. The leaders of the four Nations of the UK have agreed on a common approach with three households able to meet indoors over a 5 day Christmas period, between 23-27th December. If you take this opportunity please do so carefully and safely – and remember – look out for each other even if this means not meeting up this Christmas.

This year I have organised a Christmas Card Competition for all ages here in Cynon, with one winner to be chosen as my Christmas e-Card to be sent out to my contacts in the Cynon Valley and beyond. The deadline for entries has just passed, so watch this space for news of the winning entry!

As the New Year approaches, with it comes the end of the Brexit transition period. The cliff edge of January 1st is fast approaching under the cover of the pandemic and we urgently need clarity about what comes next for Wales. We are still totally in the dark about what the Shared Prosperity Fund which will replace EU funding here in Wales will look like.

I wish you a Joyful and Peaceful Holiday period. Pob hwyl pawb.

B Winter

In Cynon



This month was my first **Remembrance Sunday** as your MP. It was a very different occasion compared to years gone by as people were asked to stay away and join in a minute's silence from home. I tried to attend as many Remembrance events as possible and laid wreaths at war memorials across our valley. A massive thank you to all the RCT Councillors who accompanied me or laid wreaths on my behalf over the week.

At the end of the firebreak lockdown I took the opportunity to get out of the house and visit some of our businesses in communities across Cynon. The team have been working on a rolling programme of engagement to ensure that everybody in Cynon knows that my office is there and able to support them with any problems. I am absolutely committed to being an open and accessible MP and cannot wait for the office to be able to open to the public.

This month marked the 25th anniversary of the **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)** and on 1st December, the Western Mail are set to publish a joint article from myself and CLP Chair Richard Jones on the legacy of the DDA. Back in [September](#), I published a joint article with Morien Morgan about the Climate Crisis. I am very keen to continue using my platform to amplify the voices of the many experts and activists that live in Cynon.

My Advisory Groups have continued to meet regularly and are developing action plans. Cynon Valley Community Vision has a number of new members but is still calling for more as they embark on work surrounding enterprise and community regeneration.

In addition to my usual meetings with other RCT MPs and MSs, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board and other key local stakeholders, I was privileged to meet with representatives from Glyncoch Community Regeneration. The Regeneration will soon be launching a [Community Pantry](#), providing quality groceries for a small weekly cost.

I also met this month with representatives from the [NHS Fair Pay Campaign](#) who have been lobbying for a pay increase for all NHS staff.

I have really enjoyed our **Virtual Coffee Mornings, including** one earlier this month. It's always great to catch up with Labour Members. The next one is pencilled in for 12th December.

Finally, this month the pre-planning consultation for the **Cynon Gateway North** ended. I have been contacted by constituents both in favour and against the development. I have real concerns about future road building considering the climate crisis, however, I am still in the process of consulting with our communities about the merits of this road before I take a view.

In the Bubble

Last week came the Chancellors latest economic review. He failed to lay out a strategy to tackle unemployment and poverty, instead freezing public sector pay and failing to confirm he wouldn't cut Universal Credit back down by £20. He also failed to mention anything about money pledged to Wales earlier this year to repair the damage from the flooding. Sign RCT Labour's [petition here](#) to demand that pledge is honoured and the money is provided. I took the opportunity [to ask the Chancellor](#) about the situation for workers at GE Aviation, who face an uncertain future.

Earlier in the month I asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Therese Coffey whether she would meet with me as co-chair of the [cross party group on UBI](#) to discuss a UBI pilot as requested by Local and Devolved Governments across the UK. [Not for the first time](#), I found the [Minister's response](#) to be dismissive and disrespectful. I am determined not to let the matter lie, and will continue to fight for a fairer social security system here in the UK. In other UBI news, on 19th November, I spoke alongside Mick Antoniw and others at the launch of the [RCT UBI Lab](#). Get involved with the Lab's work [here](#).

Earlier in the month I met again with the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales Sophie Howe. As well as discussing the campaigns for Universal Basic Income and the 4 day week, we discussed the idea of a Future Generations Act for the UK. Here in Wales, the [Future Generations Act](#) means that public bodies must take account of sustainability and the wellbeing of Future Generations. I have since met with Big Issue founder Lord John Bird, who is leading on a UK Future Generations Bill.

At **Welsh Affairs Committee** this month I [once again raised concerns](#) with the Secretary of State for Wales about the UK Internal Market Bill. Despite the recommendations made in the Committee's October [report](#) on the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), we still have no answers whatsoever on the details of the SPF, which will replace European funding in Wales. Government's repeated promises of a consultation have failed to materialise. We are now only weeks away from the ending of the transition phase at the turn of the year. This lack of communication from UK Govt is unacceptable. We also had the opportunity to meet as a committee with Jeremy Miles MS, to discuss some of these issues. Co-working and discussions with Welsh Government is an important part of the work of the Welsh Affairs Committee.

Some of the Prime Minister's [remarks](#) in recent weeks have demonstrated the Conservative Party's disdain for devolution and their clear desire for a greater centralisation of powers at Westminster. We must vocally and vociferously make the case for devolution, for decentralisation and for this Welsh Labour Government.

This month I [asked](#) the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy what the Government is doing to protect workers from underhand #FireandRehire tactics. I also [asked](#) the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the UK would sign the UN treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

I have also signed jointly with others a number of letters to Govt ministers on issues such as the need to address the appalling level of sick pay in this country, and the need to decarbonise the waste industry in the UK.

Looking forward to the future and a post-covid society, I spoke at a recent [Claim the Future](#) event, developing socialist alternatives to our present society, and had an article published in the pamphlet "[Winning the Future](#)". In both I look at what lessons can be shared from Wales with the rest of the UK Labour Movement given our strong social and democratic history and present day policies.

I hope this gives you a flavour of the work I have been doing this month on the issues that I feel are so important to people in Cynon Valley and throughout Wales and the UK. I will continue to work for a fairer future for all, in an open and democratic way with your support.

Rob's Review



Rob Hope
Caseworker

As Beth's caseworker, my role is to deal with correspondence from constituents seeking advice and support.

The majority of correspondence so far has come through email however I am hopeful that we will have people coming to the office to speak face to face once it is safe to do so. In the absence of conventional advice surgeries, I have been organising Virtual Surgeries by appointment.

Prior to joining Beth's team, I worked as a Supervisor at Citizen's Advice Rhondda Cynon Taf. I've been doing advice work for 28 years.

There have been a few interesting differences in working with Beth compared to working at CAB. At CAB, I found that we were helping the tenant, rarely the

landlord. The employee, rarely the employer. If only because the landlord and employer would more likely get a solicitor than go to Citizen's Advice.

Often when problems are intractable and cannot be resolved by the advice agencies they are escalated to the MPs office, which means Beth writing off to various statutory bodies to find a way forward. This has meant working for Beth can be a little more varied.

We have Case Management software which enables me to analyse any patterns or track any emerging issues so that we can take further action where needed. Below is a recent word cloud generated by the software.

I'm leading on Beth's Welfare Reform Advisory group which is looking at the merits of Universal Basic Income and directed Beth to run a Pension Credit take-up campaign. I have also been involved in a number of local campaigns, namely the 'Valleys for Tourism not Trash' campaign and the campaign surrounding the quarry in Penderyn.

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