

Beth Winter

Cynon Valley MP



In Cynon

It has been great to be able to get out and about a little bit more this month as lockdown restrictions have eased. I was able to pop into Aberdare market, and to shops in Mountain Ash to see how things have been going.



This week I met with Darren Thomas, who has been doing important work in Aberdare on mental health, including running bootcamps every weekday morning at the Ynys. Last week I also met with Cynon Valley Organic Adventures in Abercynon, who have been doing tremendous work throughout lockdown. Earlier this month I popped along to the foodbank in Aberaman where I used to volunteer and, whilst it was lovely to see everyone, it continues to sadden and anger me that foodbanks exist at all in the 21st century – this must change.

I also spoke with the newly formed campaign group [‘Valleys for Tourism not trash’](#) who are campaigning against the installation of a 90m chimney at an incinerator in Hirwaun Industrial Estate. [I have written to Enviroparks](#) to set out my concerns about the development.

This month I hosted a discussion about Black Lives Matter in the Cynon Valley featuring local activists, Race Council Cymru and Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP. It was brilliant to see so many of you attend. The organiser of the Aberdare Black Lives Matter demonstration Martha Thickett is organising weekly [‘Take the Knee’](#) sessions outside Aberdare library and is leading on the formation of a steering group to keep the momentum going! If you are interested in getting involved, please get in touch.

I have since met with Race Council Cymru about Black History Month and decolonising the curriculum. I have also met with the family of Christopher Kapessa, and am scheduled to do so again, following the [verdict that the CPS](#) reached on Monday 20th July. I feel it is so important that we ensure that justice is done, and that Christopher’s family get the support that they deserve. I have arranged a meeting with the Shadow Secretary of State for Justice David Lammy, and will also be following this matter up with the Secretary of State for Justice at the earliest possible opportunity.

I’ve been working with Unite, and with other elected representatives in South Wales to find a way forward in terms of the situation at GE, with the impending threat of job losses. Over 200 Cynon Valley residents work at GE. These are highly skilled workers and good jobs that we cannot afford to lose. The loss of these jobs will affect not only the families directly involved but whole communities. You can see my letter to the Prime Minister on this [here](#). There is a ‘Walk for Jobs’ rally to defend jobs at GE Aviation taking place in Caerphilly tomorrow (1st August) the details of which can be found [here](#). I will be attending the rally and hope you can join me there.

In the Bubble

Parliament has now adjourned for the summer recess, and will return at the start of September. Although Parliament is not sitting, my office will remain open (virtually) over the summer months, so if ever there is anything you need, do not hesitate to get in touch!

I didn't have any luck in the shuffle in the final two weeks of the sitting, so was unable to ask any questions of Ministers in the chamber. Earlier in the month, I asked the Chancellor Rishi Sunak about wealth taxes. You can see that question, and the chancellor's response [here](#). I also asked Health Secretary Matt Hancock why he thought that over the course of the pandemic there has been a higher level of excess deaths in England than in Wales. You can see that question [here](#).

Throughout July I asked a number of Written Questions on a range of topics including the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), pandemic planning, unemployment and Turkish military action in Northern Iraq. You can see these questions, and the answers I have received [here](#).

This month the Welsh Affairs Committee published its interim report on Covid-19 and the Welsh economy which you can read [here](#). The Committee will return in the autumn to make recommendations. It has also this month announced that the previously paused enquiry into the impact of Brexit on the Welsh economy will now restart. The committee is [calling for evidence](#). The deadline for submissions is the 30th October.

I have continued work in my role as PPS to the Shadow Cabinet Office team assisting with preparations for discussions and debates in Parliament on a range of Covid-19 related, Brexit and Constitutional matters including the [Parliamentary Constituencies Bill](#) which passed its third reading in the House of Commons this month. Earlier this month, I also met with [Basic Income Conversation](#) to discuss how we can continue to push the conversation about Universal Basic Income into the mainstream. I have also this month met with Welsh Government Finance Minister Rebecca Evans MS to discuss a number of ideas including Universal Basic Income and wealth taxes.

I have been actively involved with the Labour Friends of Palestine Group in Parliament in opposing the annexation of Palestinian land by Israel. I wrote an article on this subject which was published in the Western Mail earlier this month. You can read the article [here](#).



Interest Groups

I'd like to take this opportunity to update you all on the interest groups that I formed in June. All of these groups are having really important conversations about the change we want to see. **If you want to get involved in any of the below, please get in touch!**

Post-Covid Economy Group

The group has now renamed itself **Cynon Vision '21!** The group has met twice and is currently compiling a survey comprised of different suggestions for how the economy should look here in Cynon post Covid. This survey will then be circulated among members. Watch this space! Ideas so far include; The introduction of an online shopping levy, the introduction of a Cynon Food Union, Rewarding Fulfilling Purposeful Creative Employment as a human right, Focusing on manufacturing for a Post-Covid recovery and the creation of mental health support networks in the workplace. **The group is set to meet next on Monday 3rd August.**

Devolution & Constitution Group

The group recently discussed the UK Government white paper on the UK Internal Market post-Brexit. These proposals could mean that devolved administrations would be unable to set their own rules in areas such as animal welfare. This could mean that if the UK Government agree a deal with the USA which allows lower standards of animal welfare (for instance chlorinated chicken) and these standards were adopted in England, it would be impossible for the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland to enforce regulations of a higher standard, even though food standards are a devolved matter.

Our political officer Gerald has since led a discussion on the topic, with the CLP set to make a submission ahead of the 13th August deadline. **The next meeting of the group will take place on Wednesday 5th August.**

Welfare Reform Group

The Welfare Reform Interest Group has been set-up in recognition of the fact that the current social security system impacts on many constituents in the Cynon Valley in a negative and debilitating way. The group is assessing what the problems are and what alternatives there might be to make the system a more accessible and humane one.

Already the group has discussed problems experienced with Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and has discussed Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a possible solution to the subsistence level of benefits that are paid currently. **The next meeting of the group is set to take place on Thursday 6th August.**

Introducing My Team

Mark Davey
Office Manager



I manage the MP's staff, budget, finances, diary and inbox. I am the Mid-Rhondda branch secretary and have been a Labour Party member since my teens. I worked previously for Anna McMorrin MP in Cardiff North. My background is as a Social Worker, Church Youth & Community Worker and F.E Health & Social Care Lecturer. I also ran my own organic catering company and café bar . I am the author of a fantasy fiction novel and live in Rhondda with my wife DeeDee.
mark.davey@parliament.uk

Rob Hope
Caseworker



I'm Beth's caseworker, responsible for dealing with individual constituent enquiries. I've worked as an advice worker for nearly 30 years, most recently as a supervisor at Citizens Advice RCT. I've been a union steward in most places I've ever worked. I'm from Birmingham originally and moved to South Wales in 2000. Brum is my emotional home in many ways but I like the down-to-earth friendliness of people I've met in Wales, the sense of community and feel that this is home.
robert.hope@parliament.uk

Greg Sproston
Parliamentary
Assistant



Before joining Beth's team, I spent two years as the Parliamentary Assistant for Chris Ruane, the former Labour MP for the Vale of Clwyd. I am a trade unionist who is driven by socialist, liberational, grassroots politics. In my spare time, I obsess over Man United and funk & soul music.
greg.sproston@parliament.uk

Tom Bateman
Communications
Officer



My job is to promote Beth on social media and in the press, and to lead on Community and campaigns work. Before joining the team I worked for CLP chairperson Richard Jones at [Accessible Wales](#). Originally from Aberdare, I have recently returned to the Cynon Valley having lived and studied in Liverpool.
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