



# Beth

A Voice for our Valleys  
Llais dros ein Cymoedd

## July Newsletter

I must begin by paying my respects to my predecessor as MP for Cynon Valley, **Ann Clwyd**, who passed away this month.

When the Women's Branch of the CLP organised a tribute event to her in March of last year as part of the International Women's Day celebrations, I was pleased to be invited to speak alongside others, including the late Tyrone O'Sullivan. Ann was never afraid to speak her mind, and she was known for her commitment to human rights over many years across the globe. I send my condolences to her family and friends. Yn cofio amdano chi, Ann.

July 5th marked the **75th anniversary of the founding of the NHS** by Welshman Nye Bevan. I was proud to march with the RCT Trades Council banner at the Bevan Festival in Tredegar.

I also was invited to join a panel at an **event in the Senedd** to mark the launch of a collection of Bevan's writings by Nye Thomas. Reading the book in preparation, I was struck by Bevan's repeated insistence that we must have a positive vision for what we want to do with the country.

A national health service and welfare system are important, but they should be a part of a greater, socialist vision. Labour in 1945 inherited a country with debt at 200% of GDP, and they were able to invest huge sums in public services because they had that vision of the society they wanted to live in.

The Labour movement cannot lose sight of that vision. Nor should we accept the argument that because the Tories are leaving us an economic mess, we cannot invest. We can and must.

**If we want to build a better Britain, it is fiscally responsible to invest in public services, and in our young people.**

In a Westminster Hall debate in July organised by Kim Johnson MP, I called on the UK Government to scrap the inhumane 2-child limit, as this ghastly policy is the biggest driver of child poverty in the UK.

A few days later, I was shocked by Keir Starmer's sudden declaration that Labour no longer stands for abolishing the 2-child limit.

The Labour Party must prioritise lifting children out of poverty, and there is no single better way to do that than to scrap the 2-child limit. I've argued that case firmly, including on Newsnight and on BBC Radio Wales as well as in Parliament.

Finally, the team and I have been inspired this month by two young people who joined the office for a week on their work experience. Ruby & Jacob from St Johns have been helping the team with their regular tasks and getting to grips with the work of an MP. Jacob was also able to travel up to Westminster on Tuesday. **Read their column on the back.**



Ann Clwyd who passed  
away this month



[www.bethwinter.wales](http://www.bethwinter.wales)

 @BethWinterMP  @BethWinterMP



# Cynon Valley

Back at the tail end of June, I dropped in to Glenboi Primary School where we had arranged to surprise **Ken O'Leary** from Mountain Ash with a Cynon Valley Champion award.

I've continued with my Cynon Valley Champions Awards to reward some of the exceptional individuals in our communities who go above and beyond.

Ken definitely fits the bill, having raised countless funds for various charities over the years. It was the very least Ken deserved for his many years of selfless charity work and it was an honour to present him with a little token of appreciation. It was really lovely to see the outpouring of support for Ken on social media.

At the start of July, I hosted the second of a short series of '**Appreciation Events**' to say a huge thank you to local community organisations for everything they do. Too often that hard work goes underappreciated, so I've been making time to actively thank organisations who have been making an impact in Cynon Valley.

Thanks to Rowan Tree Cancer Care, Ray of Light, Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council, Hirwaun YMCA and Cynon Valley Organic Adventures for coming along, and for everything they do.

**As Parliament is now drawing to a close for the summer months, my focus over the summer recess is to speak to as many local people as I possibly can, with my third annual Cynon Valley roadshow.**

Cllr Steve Bradwick recently invited me to **Aberdare Fire Station** to meet Megan Gait from Cwmaman who was last year involved in a serious car accident and was rescued by the Red Watch from South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Megan was so grateful to Red Watch for saving her and after coming out of hospital she brought them a huge box of goodies as well as a cheque to the firefighters' charity.

Following a delay due to the selection campaign, this month we picked up where we left off with work to establish a **Cynon Valley Development Trust**. I was delighted to be invited to Blaenau Ffestiniog with the Bevan Foundation and representatives from other Cynon Valley organisations for a study visit to **Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog**. It was so inspiring to see the work they have been doing up there over years, and the positive impact it is having on the local economy. There is now in Blaenau Ffestiniog a community owned mountain biking centre, a community owned pub, a community owned hotel and respite centre, a community owned hardware shop and a community owned bus.

The money made by all of these ventures circulates through the local economy, whereas money spent in big chains is extracted from our economies. As Sel from Cwmni Bro put it, '**Wales should be the richest nation in Europe. Instead, we are one of the poorest**'.

I will be following up on this over the coming months.

Closer to home, my team attended a regular catch up with Transport for Wales about the **South Wales Metro**, and one with Future Valleys about the **Heads of the Valleys** dualling.

**Regular coffee mornings** continue in my office. This month it is the turn of Age Connects Morgannwg.

Royal Mail this month announced a huge cut in opening hours for the Customer Service Point (CSP) at the **Aberdare Delivery Office** on Aberaman Industrial Estate. These CSPs are an indispensable part of the Royal Mail offering and it feels like they are being deliberately cut back in an attempt to eventually close them. I wrote to the Chairman of Royal Mail about this, as well as the relevant Minister.



With Ken O'Leary & Latch at Glenboi Primary School



With Rhian Dash from Rowan tree Cancer Care



In Blaenau Ffestiniog with friends from Cynon & Merthyr

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# In Parliament

I have stood against a series of disgraceful Tory Bills this last few weeks, including the Illegal Migration Bill and the Anti-Boycott Bill.

The **Illegal Migration Bill** is an inhumane piece of legislation which will only serve to put vulnerable people further at risk, and stoke division within our communities. Instead of attacking the human rights of asylum seekers, we should provide a warm welcome to all of those who seek sanctuary. I am proud of Welsh Government's commitment that Wales should be a Nation of Sanctuary.

I also spoke against what is being called the **Anti-Boycott Bill** which would prevent local authorities and other public bodies from boycotting regimes in order to apply political and economic pressure. In the House I quoted Nelson Mandela when he came to Cardiff and thanked the people of Wales for the anti-apartheid stance taken by Welsh local authorities in the 1990s.

We also saw this month the shameful order from Robert Jenrick to **paint over murals** designed to put children at ease at a child detention centre for asylum seekers in Kent.

The Tories have no positive vision for what they want to do with the country and are just trying to divide the working class with cynical culture war nonsense. **The sooner we get them out the better.**

This month we saw the dreadful **attack on a refugee camp** by the Israeli Government. The attack on the Jenin refugee camp included drone strikes, and left 12 dead, including 3 children, wounding over a hundred and destroying buildings. Three hospitals were targeted. I was granted an urgent question in the House to discuss the assault, meaning a Minister had to come and face questions on the subject.

Against this backdrop Palestine solidarity activity has ramped up over recent weeks. The **'Freedom Flotilla'** which is sailing around Europe to raise awareness of the blockade of Gaza and its consequences was in Cardiff this month. I attended a public meeting at the Temple of Peace in Cardiff to speak with members of the crew.

At a recent **Welsh Affairs session** on the South Wales Metro, I pushed the Chief Executive James Price on some of the problems the metro has caused. I told him about local people I'd spoken to who were on their last warning at work, due to persistent issues with rail replacement buses.

I was lucky to see a little bit of **Cynon Valley in Westminster** again this month, not only Jacob and volunteer Elisha, but also Byron, Mara & James from Rhigos who visited parliament. Back at the end of June I also saw Mel Blayney from YEPS & PC Lorraine Tinsley from South Wales Police who were in parliament to receive an award for their work on dealing with underage drinking.

On LBC's Cross Questions this month I made the case for **inflation proofed pay-rises** for public sector worker. We can afford, and people deserve, inflation-proofed pay rises, allowing people to have more money to spend, which would help their local economies. I took the opportunity to call for a tax on wealth as part of the solution.

I spoke in a debate about the **housing crisis** and unaffordable rents, using an example from Cynon Valley of the hardship faced by a carer.

I joined colleagues in signing Jess Morden MP's letter to the Defence Secretary asking for the release of all withheld documentation about the attack on RFA **Sir Galahad** & RFA Sir Tristram in the Falklands War.

Last, but not least, I was able to join **Mark Serwotka** in Parliament to wish him all the very best in his retirement. He has been a marvellous trade union leader and someone we in Cynon Valley can be so proud of calling one of our own.



With Mara, James and Byron from Rhigos



inflation-proofed pay rises

Making the case for pay rises on LBC



At leaving drinks for Mark Serwotka

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# Work Experience

Hello, we are Ruby and Jacob and we have experienced volunteering at the office of inspirational Cynon Valley MP Beth Winter.

We spoke with Beth about getting young people engaged in politics and that is the focus of our column.

After Beth asked us this question it made us really think as to why young people do not act. Most young people seem to feel very strongly about certain politics regarding trans rights, racism and more. If young people do feel strongly about politics, which we can confirm with experience knowing most of our friends are, that begs the question - why don't teenagers act and get involved in political decisions?

We think that young people are not involved in politics for many reasons- but perhaps for not the reasons you may expect. Here are the three words we have compiled to break down why young people aren't involved in politics. **Access, Influence** and **Mindset**.

Young people do not have enough **access** to be able to get involved in politics. Without the **influence** to act there is no point in going through the process of trying to influence a decision. This is because they are in the **mindset** that their input does not matter.

So, what can we do to get young people into politics?

We believe that you should first consider the three largest problems we discussed. Access, Mindset, and Influence.

**Access** may not seem like a huge problem however people don't realise that the access young people have to political decisions is very minimal. It is not as simple for us as it is for adults as we do not have the right to vote.

The fact that children do not have the right to vote puts them in the mindset that they don't have any say.

Young people deserve more power over things that impact our lives. To involve more young people in politics, we firmly believe that the vote should be rolled out to those 13+ as they are capable of making decisions about the world they live in.

Another reason that young people do not get involved in politics is because they are not in the correct **mindset**.

Most young people have political opinions but they don't think that they can make a difference so they do not get involved.

To change this, we need to advertise opportunities to do with politics so that young people learn that they do indeed have a voice. We could advertise in the spaces young people use.

A relatable young person talking on TikTok about problems faced by young people and how they can have their voice heard would be extremely effective in our opinion.

The third way that we believe that young people could be part of politics, is by giving them the **influence** to.

To do this we could use apps such as Instagram and TikTok to reach young people and tell them that they should be making effort to vote.

We should give young people a reason to vote. The more influencers promoting political choice in young people, the more young people we will have making political choices.

**Our experiences at Beth Winter's office.** We have learned so much and we will never forget this valuable and extremely helpful experience.

We are truly thankful for the experience you have given us, diolch Beth.



Ruby from St Johns CIW  
High School Aberdare



Jacob from St Johns CIW  
High School Aberdare



With Ruby & Jacob in my  
Aberdare office

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