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# Beth

A Voice for our Valleys  
Llais dros ein Cymoedd

## February Newsletter

Steel is part of our heritage in South Wales, but it is much more than that: if we are to build much-needed green infrastructure in the UK, steel is a vital part of our future too.

I was able to question the **TATA Steel** leadership at a recent meeting of the Welsh Affairs Committee. Despite their repeated statements that they will not deviate from their plans, the CEO of TATA told me that if funding is available, they would be willing to further invest in the site.

At the crux of TATA's plan was their 'responsibility to shareholders'. This is a crucial strategic industry, and too important to be left to the whims of shareholders and the private sector. If TATA won't keep virgin steelmaking going in Port Talbot, the Government should step in.

In a joint article with Selwyn Williams this month, I wrote that the closure of Port Talbot steelworks is the culmination of decades of free market ideology and managed decline that has devastated Wales.

**It's time for a new economy that puts public interest before private profit.** Read that article on the [Tribune website](#).

In Cynon Valley, we know all too well the impact of rapid de-industrialisation and the loss of 1000s of jobs. 2024 is the 40th anniversary of the 1984/85 Miner's strike, which had such a significant impact on the South Wales Valleys.

This month the **Voices from Underground** project **launched** in Aberdare. The event was very well attended, with ex-miners, musicians and speakers from across the South Wales coalfield congregating in St Elvan's in Aberdare to begin a year's worth of commemorative events.

Voices from Underground are co-ordinating and collating all events commemorating the anniversary.

Future events include a photographic exhibition at Rhondda heritage park, a film screening of *Pride*, and a new musical co-produced by RCT Theatres. Head to their [Facebook page](#) to find out more or if you would like support organising an event in your community.

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



@BethWinterMP



@BethWinterMP



**Steelworks at Port Talbot  
face an uncertain future.**



# Cynon Valley

**RCT Trades Council's Hunger March** took place at the end of January in Pontypridd. This was an opportunity for working class people to come together and campaign on the cost-of-living and food poverty.

There was a great turn-out, with over 100 people joining [the march](#) through the streets of Pontypridd. This was followed by a rally in YMA in Pontypridd, with inspiring speeches from food bank organisers, trade unionists and football legend Neville Southall.

The following week in parliament, I was able to catch up with Natalie from the Trussell Trust RCT. The Trussell Trust have gone from having a handful of food banks in 2008, to having over 1,600 food banks today, and there are over 1,000 independent food banks and pantries too.

At the Hunger March, Amanda Haydon-Hall from Pontypridd food bank read out the statistics for Trussell Trust in RCT. Over 23,000 people were fed by the Trussell Trust food banks in RCT this last year. **That's 1 in 11 people in RCT.**

With every passing month, local food banks are distributing record amounts to people. **This cannot continue and I will take every available opportunity to campaign on this issue.**

After a fantastic panto in Cwmaman Institute, I was honoured to present the first [Cynon Valley Young People's Community Award](#) to members of the Colstars Youth Theatre.

In the words of Derek from Colstars, "Colstars Youth Theatre is more than a group of performers, it's an asset to the local community and a hub of friendship and camaraderie". I couldn't agree more.

I recently caught up with **Michael O'Brien** from Mountain Ash. Michael was one of the Cardiff Newsagent Three, who were wrongly convicted of murder. Michael spent 11 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit. To add insult to injury, he was then charged £37,000 for 'bed and board' for the time he served in prison. This is an outrageous injustice, and one I will continue to [campaign](#) against.

This month, I popped up to visit **Ynysybwl Baby Bank**. This was my first visit to the Baby Bank after it was set up last winter to help families in Ynysybwl & Coed y Cwm with the costs of essential baby items.

My office held the latest **monthly coffee morning** with local support agencies, and this time we welcomed **Plattform** to the office. Plattform work with people to prevent housing crises and homelessness across south Wales. If you are worried about housing or homelessness, contact Plattform for support.

January 27th is **Holocaust Memorial Day**, and I attended a very moving service at St Johns High School in Aberdare to mark the occasion, and remember all those murdered in the Holocaust and all other genocides around the world.

In the summer and autumn of last year, I was honoured to be part of a Bevan Foundation **study visit** between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Cynon Valley, to learn from Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog and share good practice from South Wales, such as Cynon Valley Organic Adventures, Cynon Linc, The Bryncynon Strategy, Ynysybwl Vision and Down To Zero. Read the Bevan Foundation report on [their website](#).



**Campaigning for the Right to Food in Pontypridd**



**Presenting the Youth Award to Colstars Youth Theatre**



**The Holocaust Memorial Service at St Johns**

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# In Parliament

Once again this month, all eyes have been on **Gaza** and the ongoing humanitarian disaster. Every day we see hundreds more Palestinians die, many more injured with 100,000s already homeless and starving. Any ground invasion in Rafah must not be allowed to happen.

The International Court of Justice last month granted South Africa's request for emergency measures in Gaza due to the **risk of genocide**. The UK Government must respond and take all steps to secure an immediate ceasefire and end arms sales to Israel.

This month we crossed a terrifying milestone as the earth has remained over the **1.5C warming threshold for a full year**. **Global temperatures are at a record high**. Ocean temperatures are at a record high. As we hurtle towards climate catastrophe, this is the worst possible time to scale back on our climate commitments, so I was bitterly disappointed to see Labour drastically scale back its commitments to green infrastructure spending.

This month it was announced that the UK is technically in a **recession**. But we all know that living standards and life expectancies have been falling in this country for some time already. We must continue to highlight the devastating impact that the cost-of-living crisis is having on millions of people, and campaign against the politically created crisis.

Closely related to this collapse in standards are the obscene **profits** posted by some of the biggest companies in our country. Privatised rail rolling stock companies paid £410m out to shareholders last year, despite a year of strikes on the railways. British Gas paid out £144m to shareholders, paid for on the back of massive energy bills for customers, and BP reported its second highest profits in a decade.

At the same time, pay remains well below where it was in 2008 in today's prices. We must fight for real wages to be restored fully to 2008 levels.

This month also saw **Heart Unions Week**. The best way to ensure you get a fairer deal is to be a member of a fighting Trade Union. People earn higher wages and have better working conditions when they organise in trade unions. **Join a Union today.**

Although we had Recess this month, there were opportunities for me to ask questions in Parliament. This week, I asked about the devolution of justice to Wales at **Justice Questions**. This was one of the recommendations of the Comisiwn report into the future of Wales. The Minister responded by asking why Wales would want to leave the most successful legal services system in the world. I don't know how he was able to say that with a straight face. As Mick Antoniwi pointed out last month, our legal system is becoming a laughing stock.

I also spoke in a debate calling for an extension to the **Homes for Ukraine scheme**. In Cynon Valley and across Wales, many Ukrainians have thrown themselves into Welsh life, and been very unsettled by the uncertainty surrounding their future. I was glad to see an 18 month extension to the scheme announced subsequently, which I hope provides more stability.

This month I joined Plaid Cymru Westminster Leader Liz Saville Roberts in launching a campaign **Devolve The Crown Estate to Wales**. This popular demand has been backed by Plaid, Lib Dems, and many Welsh Labour Senedd members. I spoke about the long history of extraction in Wales and the opportunities offered by the idea of a sovereign wealth fund for Wales. I wrote about this idea for **Labour Outlook** this month.

Finally, I met with representatives from the **WASPI campaign**, which affects over 4,000 women in my constituency. I continue to support their demand for compensation and demands for full restitution.

## Beth



Calling again for a ceasefire in the Commons



Meeting Natalie from Trussell Trust at Westminster



Meeting WASPI women at Westminster

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# Work Experience

**At the beginning of February, we were lucky to be joined by Evie from Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun for a week of work experience, this is her report on the experience. Thanks for all your hard work Evie!**

“ This report will discuss the experience of volunteering at the office of Cynon Valley MP Beth Winter.

Young people often face barriers while trying to engage in politics. Undoubtedly, the Cynon Valley MP Beth Winter's office can educate young people on political action, as many individuals are uneducated on politics.

To allow young people to gain confidence in politics, provide them with initial teaching to continue professional development that makes them feel comfortable addressing what are (sometimes) controversial and difficult topics, as a lack of understanding in politics for younger people is not unique.

The youth has the potential to make a big difference over things that impact our lives. Often, young people have political opinions but struggle to express themselves as they believe they won't have an impact.

Young people would like to have their passionate voices heard and considered as it is likely that young people's voices don't often get the attention they deserve throughout politics. The youth does not get involved in politics as they may not realise the potential they hold to make a difference.

After meeting with the caseworker I gained a stronger comprehension of the responsibilities of her job. There are many qualities that are important for a successful caseworker, but some of the most important ones include empathy, patience, communication skills, and organisation. I

it is important to be able to understand and share the feelings of others in order to be able to effectively help them. Working with people who may be going through difficult situations can be challenging, so it is important to have patience in order to be able to work through those challenges successfully. Furthermore, it is crucial that you are able to communicate effectively with individuals and other professionals in order to ensure that everyone is on the same page and working towards the same goal. caseworkers offer support to those who require assistance by issuing food bank vouchers, offering fuel vouchers etc..

After speaking to the office manager, I gained new insights on what she carries out. The office manager plays a crucial role in supporting the MP's work and ensuring the smooth functioning of their office. They handle a wide range of tasks, including administrative, organisational, and communication responsibilities.

After discussing with Beth Winter MP, I learned interesting insights. Beth Winter is dedicated to representing young people and ensuring their voices are heard in politics. It's important for young people to have access and representation in political decision-making processes. It's inspiring to see MPs like Beth Winter working towards that goal.

Beth Winter MP has demonstrated strong support for the environment through her actions and advocacy. She has been actively involved in promoting sustainable practices and addressing environmental issues in her constituency. Overall, Beth Winter MP's support for the environment is evident through her consistent advocacy, legislative efforts, and community engagement. Her commitment to promoting renewable energy, protecting natural habitats, and encouraging sustainable practices showcases her dedication to addressing environmental challenges and building a greener future. ”

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**Volunteer Evie joined us at the office for a week this month**

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