

Scan the QR code
to read newsletters
on my website:



Beth

A Voice for our Valleys
Llais dros ein Cymoedd

March Newsletter

March 6th marked the 40th anniversary of the start of the **1984/85 Miners' Strike**.

The **Voices From Underground** group continues to co-ordinate a series of events and exhibitions across the whole South Wales coalfield to remember the strike. Go to the [Voices from Underground](#) website for more information.

In this anniversary year, there is renewed focus on **Miners' Pensions**. The surplus sharing arrangements agreed by the Government back in 1994 have never worked for miners, and has seen the Government profit to the tune of at least £4bn.

It is time to right this historic wrong, and ensure an immediate uplift for miners' pensions.

The National Mineworkers Pension Campaign group have been working hard to secure coverage of this scandal, and this month following an article in the Guardian, campaigner Peter Stefanovic contacted me about making a video in support of the campaign.

The group had no hesitation in accepting his kind offer, and at the time of writing, [the video](#) he made has over 1 million views, putting the pressure on all parties to put this right. **I will continue to push for this vital policy.**

Another historic injustice is that of the **WASPI women**, who saw their State Pension age increased without proper notice. I took the opportunity once again this month to raise the campaign in the House of Commons and demand full restitution for 50s born women.

The Treasury has saved over £200bn by not paying these women their pensions. Justice delayed is justice denied. Time is of the essence now, which is why I also joined calls from the WASPI campaigners for a one-off payment from the Government as fair and fast compensation.

Finally, **Vaughan Gething** was declared the winner of the Welsh Labour Leadership contest this month, beating his rival Jeremy Miles in the contest to replace Mark Drakeford. More on this overleaf.



Marking the 40th anniversary
of the Miners Strike



www.bethwinter.wales



@BethWinterMP



@BethWinterMP

March Newsletter

Vaughan Gething

This month, Vaughan Gething was elected as the Leader of Welsh Labour. It is significant that he will become Europe's first black head of Government.

In my opinion we are at crisis point for democracy in Wales. An ever growing majority of people in Wales are disengaged and disenchanted with politics. His decision to take a £200k donation from an individual convicted of environmental offences casts a long shadow, and so does the situation surrounding his nomination by Unite.

I hope that lessons will be learnt from this experience, and that we work to build trust and the involvement of people in the political life of Wales and in the UK.

Tribute to Mark Drakeford

I want to take this opportunity to thank Mark Drakeford for his years of service to Wales.

I've known Mark as a considered and thoughtful politician, able also to support new ideas and different ways of working.

One of the highlights of my time as an MP was sharing a platform with Mark and Prof Guy Standing to discuss the introduction of a Universal Basic Income pilot in Wales.

I was also privileged that Mark agreed to come to Aberdare to open my constituency office in Cynon Valley.

But the battle for change in society goes on, to build a fairer, greener future for the people of Wales and the world, turning that clear red water into clear red action.

Articles.

Over the duration of the election period, I wrote several opinion pieces setting out what I feel should be the priorities of the incoming First Minister.

This month I published a [joint article](#) with Prof Calvin Jones about the need for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to be central to the work of the next Leader.

Although it was not referenced in his manifesto, I hope that Mr Gething will ensure that this world leading piece of legislation gets the attention it deserves.

I also wrote an article about the [future of devolution](#). The Independent [Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales](#) (Comisiwn) concluded that 'the status quo is not a viable option for providing stability and prosperity for Wales'.

The next First Minister must lead a national conversation about the options proposed by the Comisiwn as we seek to build a truly democratic, fair, just and green future for all in Cymru.



Vaughan Gething. Photo Credit: Dan Kitwood/Getty Images



Mark Drakeford opening my Aberdare office



Future
Generations
Commissioner
For Wales

The Future Generations
Commission

Beth

A Voice for our Valleys
Llais dros ein Cymoedd

Cynon Valley

I was concerned this month to learn of **RAAC** in a number of [Trivallis properties in Hirwaun](#). I'm glad swift action is being taken by Trivallis and I hope resolution can be achieved swiftly and with the least disruption. I have been reassured by Trivallis that they do not have any other properties of this type, and that they do not believe there are critical risks to any other buildings. I'm aware of the support Trivallis are offering to affected families, but if there is anything I can do to help, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

We also received the unfortunate news this month that **Halifax** intend to close their Aberdare branch this coming July. Yet another High St bank decided to leave our valley. In my short time as the MP, I have seen banks retreating from not only Cynon Valley, but surrounding valleys too. I have written to Halifax will be meeting them to discuss the proposals, the impact on staff, customers and the town centre.

On International Women's Day, I was honoured to unveil a plaque to a formidable Cynon Valley woman, **Ceridwen Brown** from Aberaman. Ceridwen was a true trailblazer, and it was really fascinating to learn more about her thanks to Prof Dai Smith and Dr Daryl Leeworthy. It was a fantastic and well-attended event at St Elvan's, and all credit must go to Ann Wilson for her hard work in pulling the event together. Nation Cymru published an article about Ceridwen in the lead up to the event, which you can read on [their website](#).

Earlier that week, I attended the launch of a book by Member of the Senedd Mabon ap Gwynfor, Chair of CND Cymru, which also took place at St Elvans. The book, ['Going Nuclear'](#) is an account of the nuclear industry in Wales and the UK. Funds and donations raised on the day are to be split between CND Cymru and the Cynon Valley Eisteddfod Committee.

[St Elvans](#) have two brilliant exhibitions on in March, "Inspirational Women of the Cynon Valley" on the mezzanine, and Mothers Union "Rise Up" in the main body of the church, aimed at highlighting and tackling domestic abuse. Pop in when you get a chance before the end of the month.

At the end of February, I had the privilege of spending some time at **Abermant Primary School**. Learners were extremely knowledgeable and inquisitive. Thank you to everyone at the school for such a warm welcome, and an interesting discussion.

As part of the Miners' Strike commemorations, **BBC Radio 5 Live** were broadcasting live from **Hwb CANA** in Penywaun this month. Michelle from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust [spoke well](#) about the lasting legacy of the Miners' strike, and the work that the trust is doing to regenerate coalfield communities.

Also marking the anniversary of the strike was a Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (**WISERD**) [conference](#) in Cardiff. I was pleased to chair a fascinating discussion on the role of women and community during the Miners' Strike and today.

1st March is not only St David's Day, but also the Marie Curie National **Day of Reflection**. Volunteers at my office organised a short event on the day to remember those we lost during the Covid pandemic. The display remains on the wall of my office until the end of the month, so you can still light a candle and leave a message for anybody you lost during Covid.



Aberdare Halifax, which is set to close in July



The Blue Plaque to Ceridwen Brown at St Elvans



Meeting Learners at Abernant Primary School

In Parliament

As attention turns to the General Election manifestoes, we must remain focused on the ongoing humanitarian disaster in **Gaza**.

After the nonsense of the Prime Minister trying to whip up a frenzy about extremism and 'Mob Rule', I joined Charlotte Church and others in leading the **Ceasefire Now** demonstration in London to mark International Women's Day. There was no mob rule there, only hundreds of thousands of people coming together to campaign for peace. It was a special occasion to share with my mother and daughter, three generations of Welsh women campaigning for a ceasefire.

The scale of suffering is so unbelievably upsetting, and women and children make more than **70% of the death toll** in Gaza. I wrote for Labour Outlook this month about how women in Gaza need a **ceasefire now**.

I also raised in the Commons the appalling reports of **Palestinian medics being tortured** by the Israeli Military. The Govt must withdraw its support for Israel's war crimes in Gaza.

March also saw the Chancellor's spring **Budget**. Like the Prime Minister's Downing St speech, it failed to cut through to the public and will do nothing for ordinary people.

This Government is the **first in modern history to see a fall in living standards**. This shameful budget is forcing through cuts which will destroy services and cut people's incomes further. The next Government must turn things around by increasing public sector pay and funding public services, paid for by taxing wealth. Labour Outlook published my budget speech in full.

Ahead of the budget, I met with Mick Lynch and other **RMT** members, including from South Wales, as part of their campaign against Government-driven cuts on the railways. The proposed cuts will lead to an increase in safety risks and a reduction in performance on the railways.

This month, I met with campaigners from Haemophilia Wales about the **Infected Blood scandal**. Up to 30,000 people were given contaminated blood in the 1970s and 80s, and thousands have since died having contracted HIV or Hepatitis C from those blood transfusions. It is almost a year now since Brian Langstaff recommended that a compensation framework should be set up immediately. Still nothing from the Government.

At the start of March, I used the opportunity of the annual **St David's Day debate** in Westminster to pay tribute to Cynon Valley. On Saturday I shall be speaking at a festival in St David's looking at building renewal and resilience in Wales. The discussion in which I will be participating will be concentrating on devolving the Crown Estates.

Finally, I must mention the disgraceful treatment of **Diane Abbott**. I spoke about this in an interview on BBC Radio Wales last Sunday. Diane has been a trailblazer for decades, and is a senior member of the House of Commons. For the Speaker not to call her, in a debate *about her*, beggars belief. She should have been called. What she has to say about racism in the Tory Party, and in other parties, must be heard. Labour should immediately **restore the whip** to her.



Calling for a ceasefire with my daughter in London



Meeting Infected Blood campaigners in Westminster



Me and my sister Rhiannon on a St Davids day many years ago

Beth

A Voice for our Valleys
Llais dros ein Cymoedd