



HELEDD FYCHAN MS

Plaid Cymru - South Wales Central



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It has been a busy start to the year, since returning to the Senedd. Here is this month's newsletter which is a brief overview of the work myself and my team have been doing across the region and in the Senedd over the past two months.

As you will know Covid has impacted the way we work, but despite this myself and my team have continued to work with local community groups, supporting campaigns and providing support and advice to constituents.

Some of the key issues I have been raising on behalf of constituents this past month in the Senedd have been ambulance waiting times, the cost-of-living crisis and in my new role as Plaid Cymru's spokesperson for Children and Young people and the Welsh Language, the ongoing impact of Covid on education.



Out in the community

Following the Government's announcement to return to working from home, myself and my team unfortunately had to postpone a number of our visits to community groups and organisations in December and at the beginning of January. It was great to subsequently be back out visiting organisations such as Ahmadiyya Muslim Association in Cardiff, where I was presented with a copy of the Quran.

Myself and my team have also been back out to communities that were flooded in 2020 asking for their thoughts on the recently published section 19 reports and we will be organising public meetings in the coming weeks.

If you'd like us to visit a group or business in your area, or if you'd like to get advice, please get in touch.

Bus Users Group

In early December, I met with Barclay Davies – Director for Wales of Bus Users UK. We discussed the importance of investing in bus services, and problems with some services at present.

If your bus does not turn up and you have to take a taxi, please do ask for a receipt and contact the bus company for a refund detailing which service didn't run and sharing a copy of the receipt. If this is disputed, then Bus Users UK can help. Find out more here ([Complaints • Bus Users](#)).

Please also continue to report any problems with services to me by contacting my office or completing this form: [Bus Complaint Form](#)





Town Centre Developments

Following the launch of my Town Development survey in November it was great to meet with Alfie and Leo, two Youth Climate Activists from Pontypridd.

We discussed our separate experiences at COP26 and their thoughts on how local government are missing opportunities to make our town centres greener.

One of the innovative ideas they had was utilising existing buildings to create vertical gardens. I shared their ideas with the Deputy Minister Lee Waters MS in the Senedd, who welcomed their ingenuity and offered to meet with me and them to discuss the matter further.

It's important we listen to young people like Leo and Alfie when planning the future of our towns. The climate and nature emergency should be central to town centre regeneration, so I look forward to further discussions with the deputy minister to bring their ideas to life.

If you have any ideas on what you'd like to see happen to our town centres, please get in touch.

Surfers against Sewage

In December, I met with a group of 20 highschool pupils from y Pant and Fitzalan High School as part of their visit to the Senedd with Surfers Against Sewage.

Pupils had the opportunity to quiz me and Julie James MS (Minister for Climate Change) on important issues such as the environment, plastic pollution and their experiences at COP26.

Youth Voices are the most important in the fight against climate change so it was really inspiring to hear the innovative ideas that pupils had to help tackle plastic pollution in their own schools. I look forward to working with them all and supporting their campaign in the future.

To find out more about Surfers against Sewage and the work they do in Wales visit their website [here](#).



Supporting flooding victims

This month will mark 2 years since Storm Dennis which destroyed homes and businesses across the region. Since my election in May 2021, I have continued to campaign for justice for flood victims and through the co-operation agreement with the Welsh Government, Plaid Cymru has secured an independent review of the local government section 19 reports as well as more capital investment into flood management and mitigation.

I have been working with many of those communities, helping to set up flood action groups as well as continuing to campaigning for the answers.



Hirwaun's first Flood action group

Last month, it was great to join Cllr Karen Morgan and Hirwaun residents for their first Flood Action Group meeting.

Almost two years on from storm Dennis, the impact of the floods is still felt by many communities like this one. I look forward to working with similar groups to ensure we do everything possible to minimise the risk of flooding to our communities.

Clydach Terrace community meeting

On 22 December, I convened and Chaired a multi-agency meeting with representatives of residents from Clydach Terrace in Ynysybwl, Natural Resources Wales, Ynysybwl and Coedycwm Community Council, RCT Council as well as Beth Winter MP and Vikki Howells MS. The street suffered devastating flooding in February 2020, and are still waiting answers as well as solutions so that they can be assured that they will be safe from flooding in the future. Much further work and discussions are needed, but it is great to see that process finally starting.



Storm Dennis flood report update

Last month I called on Rhondda Cynon Taf Council to publish the remaining flood investigation reports. They subsequently published 6 further reports.

These cover:

- Treforest
- Glyntaff and Hawthorn
- Taffs Well
- Nantgarw and Upper boat
- Hirwaun
- Pontypridd

This brings the total of Section 19 reports published to 9 with several still not published, and no indication when they will be.

A further 28 flood investigation reports are also anticipated, and it is unclear at present whether these have been completed as the Council does not intend to publish them.

Whilst I welcome the publication of these reports at long-last, I'm disappointed to see that they provide very few answers or assurances for residents and businesses that were left devastated by the floods.

I was repeatedly told by local Labour representatives that an independent inquiry would take too long and that the Section 19 reports would be adequate, yet from my initial reading of all three, I still have a number of remaining questions and concerns.

Communities are still living in fear. Two years on, we should be able to provide greater assurances to those affected. I will continue to work with residents and businesses affected to ensure that we don't forget what happened and that everything possible is done to ensure that they continue to be supported and protected against future flooding.

If you live in one of the flooded communities would like to know your thoughts on the reports.

You can do this by filling out my Flood Survey by clicking the QR code below or you can get in touch with me by email.



Senedd Update

Ambulance wait times

I have raised a number of issues that constituents have contacted me on since the Senedd resumed at the beginning of January.

One issue that many have contacted me about is ambulance waiting times across the region. I raised this with the First Minister who has assured me that more is being done to tackle this problem. However, I was extremely concerned to see less than half of emergency responses to immediately life-threatening calls in Cwm Taf arrived within the target of 8 minutes.

It's clear that more needs to be done to tackle this problem. Because of significant challenges to the whole health service, lives are being put at risk. I will continue to raise this issue with the Government.

Cost of living crisis

Another issue I have been focussing on in the Senedd this past month is the cost-of-living crisis. Many families across the region have been hit by the rising costs of everyday items and household bills, whilst also dealing with cuts to vital financial support.

The rising prices of utilities is reflected in the amount of arrears for household bills, with debt charity StepChange reporting the 33% of household arrears is related to Water bills, 27% is electricity bills and 26% is unpaid gas bills.

However, the largest percentage of arrears highlighted by StepChange is unpaid Council tax, at 35%.

Over the past few months, I have raised these issues in the Senedd and Plaid Cymru has called for legislation from the Welsh Government to put measures in place that will prevent debt from happening in the first places.

Our public bodies shouldn't be creating more debt for people so I will continue to push the government on this issue.





Spokesperson announcement

Last Month, Plaid Cymru announced that I am their new spokesperson for Children and Young people, Welsh Language, Culture, Sport and International Affairs.

It is an honour to be appointed to this new portfolio. Investing in our children and young people is the key to creating a more equal Wales, where no one is left behind.

This means investing in our schools and ensuring opportunities for every child and young person to participate in cultural and sporting activities, giving everyone the best possible start in life.

The Welsh language belongs to us all, whether we speak it or not, and as Welsh Language spokesperson, I will hold the Welsh Government to account on how they will reach their own target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

I look forward to working with organisations, institutions, unions and a whole range of different stakeholders on these important policy areas.



Campaigning for Welsh Medium Education

Before Christmas, I had a virtual meeting with Jeremy Miles MS – Minister for Education and the Welsh Language - and local campaigners who fought for Welsh-medium education in north Pontypridd following recent changes.

It was a positive meeting, with the Minister listening to our concerns about inequality of access to Welsh-medium education. This is something that I will continue to support campaigners with, as it is vitally important that everyone can access Welsh-medium education close to where they live.

Finance and Grant Information

To help support local community groups and individuals, my team have gathered information on the latest grants and finance information available across the region.

Fund for Wales

To support community organisations to work more effectively in their communities. Now open to multi-year funding up to 3 years, will also continue to offer 1 year project or small capital item funding £500 – £2,000

Deadline: March 2022

More info here: [Fund for wales](#)

The Seaburne Fund

This fund supports people from secondary to further or higher education who have a genuine need for financial support with their educational attainment. Grants for Individuals, Organisations & Schools £1,000 - £1,500

Deadline: 15th of February 2022

More info here: [Seaburn fund](#)

Loneliness and Isolation Grant Fund

The Loneliness and Social Isolation Fund is for front line grass roots voluntary and community organisations that bring people together and help them build social connections in the vale of glamorgan.

Deadline: 12pm 18th February

More info here: [Vale of Glamorgan Loneliness and isolation grant](#)

RCT food support fund

The Food Support Fund has been established to provide resource to foodbanks & food support projects in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Grants of up to £500 are available.

Deadline: March 2022

More info here: RCT food support fund

For the latest information you can visit my website where I will be updating the information regularly.



Meet the team

Danny Grehan - Community Engagement Officer

Brooke Webb - Communications Officer

Eleri Griffiths - Caseworker

Elyn Stephens - Office Manager

Ken Moon - Sustainable Futures Coordinator

How we can help

I am holding regular telephone and in person advice surgeries offering help and support to local people.

Myself and my team are able to help with a range of issues including Health, Housing, Transport, Education and Local Government.

If there's anything we can do to help you please contact us to book an appointment via the details below.

Contact Heledd



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