



As 2023 draws to a close, I would like to thank you for reading my newsletter and taking an interest in my work as your Member of Parliament in Cardiff Central. I hope you and your family had a wonderful Christmas and wish you all the best for a Happy New Year.

## 2023 in Review

This year, we've seen much of the same chaos that we've come to expect from the Tories over the last 13 years. The Prime Minister is hanging on by a thread, unable to take any steps forward in fear of the extremists in his own party.

As the former Home Secretary, Suella Braverman gathers support against him, who does Rishi Sunak turn to for help? David Cameron, the unelected architect of the last 13 years of Tory misrule.

The Tories have given up on governing and Britain is crying out for change. Next year is our opportunity for a fresh start. Instead of Tory members choosing our Prime Minister, let's give voters the chance to decide.

Labour will offer a forward-looking vision of hope. We will change Britain's course, away from terminal decline, towards a decade of national renewal. Our mission-guided government will:

- Get Britain building again
- Switch on Great British Energy
- Get the NHS back on its feet
- Make our streets safer
- Break down barriers to opportunity

It's time to get Britain's future back.

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## In Cardiff Central

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# Celebrating Small Business Saturday

Small businesses are the beating heart of our local economy, providing jobs and breathing life into our high streets. Each year, ahead of Small Business Saturday I share the best Cardiff Central has to offer but this year I wanted to hear from you.

I received numerous responses highlighting your favourite small businesses throughout the constituency. Your valuable feedback helped shape my promotional campaign, encouraging people to shop locally this Christmas.

Under Labour, small businesses will get action on late payments, a reform of business rates, better access to finance and guaranteed shortlisting for small contracts.



## **Labour has a plan to back small businesses**

- ✓ **Scrap business rates for a fairer system**
- ✓ **Revitalise our high streets and tackle anti-social behaviour**
- ✓ **Introduce new laws to tackle late payments**
- ✓ **Give small and medium businesses a fair chance at public contracts**
- ✓ **Bring banks back to the high street**

## **Primary School Admissions**

Time is ticking to apply for primary school places to start in September 2024.

Parents are encouraged to use ALL five preferences to have the best chance of securing a school they want. Applications close on Monday 8th January 2024.

[Click here for more information on how to apply.](#)

**Apply now...**  
It's time to choose a Primary School

**Applications open on 13 November** and close on 8 January 2024.

**Apply online:** [cardiff.gov.uk/schooladmissions](https://cardiff.gov.uk/schooladmissions)

⚠ There are lots of great schools in Cardiff, but places go quickly. So, **don't be late.**

Child Friendly Cardiff

# Cardiff Christmas Market Named One of the Best in the UK

From Welsh jewellery to artisan cheese, Cardiff's Christmas Market offers a wide variety of high-quality gifts. Alongside Winter Wonderland and the Bute Park Illuminations, the markets have become a staple of Cardiff's Christmas scene, attracting visitors from across the UK.



It's no wonder that Big 7 Travel has recognised our market as one of the best in the country, putting it in the same league as major cities like Edinburgh, Birmingham, and Manchester.



# Air Pollution Levels Drop Below Pre-Pandemic Levels

A recent study of air quality in Cardiff shows residents breathed cleaner air in 2022, compared to pre-pandemic figures in 2019.

This positive shift highlights the importance of Cardiff Labour Council's commitment to active travel and eco-friendly public transport options.

Although this data is encouraging, there is more work to do. We need to continue to reduce the levels of pollutants. Not only will it benefit people's health but will help the city reduce our carbon footprint as we look to combat climate change.

Read the story in full [here](#).

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# Winter Reading Challenge

The Reading Agency has teamed up with the Youth Sports Trust for this year's 'Winter Reading Challenge' encouraging children to keep active and stimulated this Christmas.

This is a fantastic opportunity to bond with your child and ensure they keep up with all that they have learnt at School.

[Click here to log reading, play games and win rewards](#)



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# Office Closures

My office is closed for the festive period and will reopen on Thursday 4th January 2024.

If you need help or advice, please take a look at my out of hours contact list below.

## **OUT OF HOURS CONTACTS**

**Cardiff Council & Foodbank Support: 029 2087 1071**

**Welsh Water: 0800 052 0130**

**Western Power Distribution: 0800 6783 105**

**Wales and West Utilities: 0800 111 999**

**Non-Emergency Medical Issues: 111**

**Wales and West Housing: 0800 052 2526**

**CCHA: 029 2046 8490**

**Cadwyn Housing: 029 2049 8898**

**Hafod Housing: 0800 024 8968**

**Linc Housing: 0800 072 0966**

**Samaritans: 116 123**

**Live Fear Free: 0808 80 10 800**

**Womens Aid: 0802 8010 800**

**Shelter: 0800 0495 495**

**Migrant Help: 0808 8010 503**



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**JO STEVENS MP**  
Your Strong Voice for Cardiff Central

**Across Wales**



# Thank You Mark Drakeford

After 5 years as First Minister and Leader of Welsh Labour, Mark Drakeford has taken the decision to stand down. Mark has epitomised public service and public duty throughout his time as First Minister of Wales. His remarkable stewardship of Wales through the horror of the pandemic being the most obvious example.

Leading our country with care, skill and values firmly rooted in our Labour principles of social justice and progressive politics, he has dedicated so much of his life to bringing positive change to the people of Wales.

Mark has been there throughout our devolution journey, both as an architect and a builder. He has been instrumental in Welsh Labour's electoral success throughout the last 25 years and has earned the respect of opponents across the political spectrum.

As Mark ends his term as Welsh Labour Leader, I thank him for his leadership, his friendship and his outstanding contribution to Wales.





# Tory Failure on Welsh Railways

This hapless Tory Government's record on rail in Wales is dismal.

At Welsh Questions, I asked the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales, whether the UK Tory Government will pay for its promised electrification of the North Wales Mainline. This remains unanswered.

I've now written to the Secretary of State for Wales, to ask for clarification. People in North Wales deserve a clear answer.

Watch my questions to the Minister [here](#).



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

**David T. C. Davies MP**  
Secretary of State for Wales,  
William Morgan House,  
6-7 Central Square,  
Cardiff,  
Wales,  
CF10 1EP

[Sent by email]

19<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Dear David,

**North Wales main line electrification**

On 4th October 2023, you stated that your government 'are delivering North Wales Rail Electrification'.

During Treasury department questions today, your colleague, the Member for Delyn, raised your government's promise to electrify the North Wales main line.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury was asked to confirm that the Treasury will definitely fund the electrification of the North Wales mainline given its previous refusal to fund it in 2015 as the then projected cost of £850m, was not value for money. The Chief Secretary failed to provide that confirmation at the despatch box.

On December 6th during Wales questions, your colleague, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales also evaded answering my question asking for confirmation that your government will fully fund its promised electrification.

People in North Wales deserve a clear answer from you and your cabinet colleagues otherwise this is just another empty promise.

Is the government fully funding electrification of the North Wales main line?

What discussions you have had with the Prime Minister and the Treasury regarding the commencement of this project?

I look forward to receiving your prompt reply.

Your Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jo Stevens'.

**Jo Stevens MP**  
Member of Parliament for Cardiff Central  
Shadow Secretary of State for Wales

# In Parliament

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## Government Rwanda Policy

Since the Tory Government announced its Rwanda policy in April 2022, it has sent Rwanda £240m with £50m more due in April 2024, and further unspecified sums promised.

No asylum seekers have been sent to Rwanda, and the estimated capacity of the Rwanda scheme is just a few hundred people – less than 1% of those arriving in the UK. We need serious action to stop dangerous boat crossings which are putting lives at risk. No more gimmicks pandering to the extremists in the Tory Party.

That's why Labour has put forward plans for a cross border police unit, fast-track decisions and returns, to clear the backlog, and new agreements with France and other countries. In the meantime, I will continue to oppose this deeply flawed legislation.

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## VTE Awards

Congratulations to the NHS teams from across Wales who were recognised at the VTE Awards hosted by Thrombosis UK.

Teams from Betsi Cadwaladr and Cwm Taf health boards, Royal Glamorgan Hospital and the All Wales Hospital Acquired Thrombosis (HAT) Steering Group were all awarded prizes.

VTE also known as thrombosis or blood clots which include deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism, is a major cause of hospital deaths and disability. The awards celebrate outstanding practice in the management, education and provision of (VTE) services across the UK.



## Animal Testing

Animal test results lack human relevance, are unreliable and cause unnecessary suffering. Despite its shortcomings, the use of living animals in scientific procedures persists, with over 2.7 million procedures in Britain in 2022 alone.

It was a pleasure to meet with the Lush team, leading scientists and animal welfare organisations to discuss the importance of replacing all animal testing with human-relevant science and the benefits to society that can be achieved through this.





## National Lottery Birthday Celebrations

I was pleased to celebrate the 29th birthday of the National Lottery's Heritage Fund in a recent event in Parliament.

Since 1994, in Cardiff Central they have funded 107 projects to the tune of £25,596,320. Some of the largest projects supported in Cardiff Central include the conservation of Cardiff Castle, which was awarded £6.7m in 1998/99, and the restoration of Bute Park, which received £3.2m in 2006/07.

Read more about the National Lottery's impact [here](#).



# Sustainable Aviation Fuels

(SAF)

Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) are crucial to the future of our aviation industry.

I was pleased to meet with representatives from Unite the union and GMB Union to discuss how SAF will help the UK meet its net-zero targets & create more than 60,000 green jobs in the process.

