



As 2024 draws to a close, thank you for reading my newsletter and taking an interest in the work I do on your behalf as your Member of Parliament for Cardiff East and Secretary of State for Wales.

Season's Greetings and wishing you and your family a happy, healthy and successful 2025.

2024 in Review

2024 has been a momentous political year.

I was privileged to be re-elected to Parliament and following the constituency boundary changes, become the first Member of Parliament for the new constituency of Cardiff East. Before and since the election, I have had the pleasure of meeting so many new and existing constituents across Cardiff East.

The general election also saw a UK Labour Government with a huge majority, elected for the first time in 14 years. After so much political chaos and instability over the past nine years, a stable government with a big majority will provide the political and economic stability that the country has been desperate for, for so long. The inheritance left by the Tories couldn't be any worse, but we have moved quickly to take the difficult decisions needed to get the country back on track.

As we look to 2025, I have written about the early achievements of the government over its first 6 months. You can read my blog [here](#).

In Cardiff East

Christmas at Royal Mail Sorting Office

Christmas is an incredibly busy time for Royal Mail workers with millions of letters and parcels delivered in December. I joined the staff at Cardiff's Royal Mail delivery office to witness the mammoth effort that goes into delivering Christmas for customers across Wales and the whole of the UK.

I was also pleased to bump into my local postie, Tim and thank him and others for all they do to keep us connected to our family and friends all year around.



South Wales Fire & Rescue

South Wales Fire & Rescue Service were on the frontline during Storms Bert and Darragh, working around the clock to keep people and properties safe.

This month, I met with the crew at Cardiff Central Fire Station, who talked me through their state-of-the-art fire and water rescue equipment, and I learnt more about the technical skills, expertise and knowledge the crews have in order to prevent fire, fight fire and carry out rescues in a densely populated area of both domestic and business properties. I am very grateful to them all for the work they do, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Specsavers Visit

It was a pleasure to meet Jess, Matthew and the team at Specsavers on Albany Road to learn more about how they provide access to vital eye and hearing health care and see the new technology that is revolutionising both optometry and audiology.

We also spoke about how the store supports the local economy, through careers in health care and retail.

The branch is open 7 days a week. To book an appointment, visit their website or call 029 2043 7220.



Vista Technology

Vista Technology Support, based in Pentwyn, provides in-store technology and specialist support to some of the biggest names in retail, hospitality and leisure, including Lloyds Pharmacy, Monsoon and Odeon Cinemas.

I visited the business to meet the senior team and hear more about their growth strategy, which will mean more jobs in our local area.

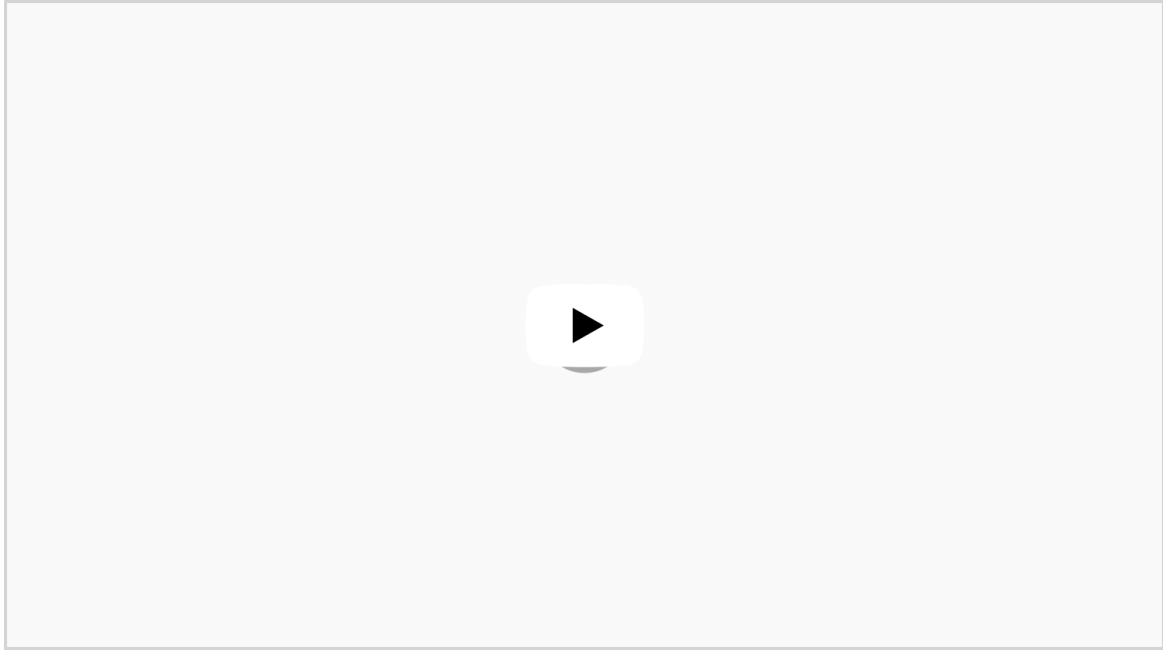


Celebrating Small Business Saturday

Small businesses are the heart and soul of our local economy and communities. Over 98% of businesses in Wales are small businesses and in Cardiff East, significant numbers of people are employed in them.

This Small Business Saturday, I launched my campaign to support small businesses across Cardiff East, not just for that day but throughout the Christmas period.

Thank you to everyone who suggested businesses to promote. You can find all the businesses that have featured in my campaign [here](#).



New Homes for Llanedeyrn

Cardiff Labour Council has announced plans for a new ground-breaking, energy-saving council housing development in Llanedeyrn.

The development will include 53 two, three and five bedroom affordable and spacious homes, as well as nine independent living flats for adults with learning difficulties.

All homes will include renewable technologies such as solar panels, air source heat pumps and electric car charging points to reduce household bills and protect the planet.

Read more about the project [here](#).



Winter Reading Challenge

The Winter Reading Challenge is back. This is a fantastic opportunity to read with children and ensure that they keep up with all they have learnt in school over the previous term.

Taking part in the challenge is easy, simply sign up, log the books you and your child have read together and unlock digital rewards when you complete the challenge.

[Click here for more.](#)



Primary School Admissions

The deadline to apply for primary school places to start in September 2025 is fast approaching.

Parents are encouraged to use **ALL five preferences** to have the best chance of securing a school they want. Applications close on Monday 13th January 2025.

[Click here for more.](#)



Christmas Waste Collections

Over the Christmas period, your recycling & waste collection could be later than usual. See below for the changes in collection dates.

Usual Date	Late Collection Date
Wednesday 25th December	Friday 27th December
Thursday 26th December	Saturday 28th December
Friday 27th December	Sunday 29th December
Wednesday 1st January	Thursday 2nd January
Thursday 2nd January	Friday 3rd January
Friday 3rd January	Saturday 4th January

Wrapping paper will not be collected from recycling bags or sacks and will need to be put into black general waste bins or bags for collection.

Christmas Trees

If you have a real Christmas tree, you can bring it to one of Cardiff Council's recycling centres or dedicated Christmas tree drop-off zones.

Please ensure any decorations or packaging have been removed before you drop off your tree.

[Click here for full details of drop-off locations and opening hours.](#)

Christmas Office Closure

So that my team have a proper break after an exceptionally busy year, my office has now closed for Christmas and will reopen in the new year.

During this time, we will be checking emails periodically. If your matter is urgent, please feel free to mark it as urgent and we will do our best to address it promptly.

If you need help or advice over the Christmas period, please take a look at my Christmas contact list below.

OUT OF HOURS CONTACTS

Cardiff Council & Foodbank Support: 029 2087 2087

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

Migrant Help: 0808 8010 503



Across Wales

A Budget for a Brighter Future

The Welsh Labour Government has announced its draft budget for the upcoming year. This follows the UK Labour Government's biggest real term settlement for Welsh Government since the dawn of devolution. £21 billion including an extra £1.7 billion for investment in our NHS and other public services.

The budget sets us firmly back on the path to better public services, providing extra funding for the things that matter the most to you. Each Welsh Government department has benefited from an increase in their budgets, this includes:

- Health & Social Care - An additional £610 million to support frontline services and ensure our NHS is fit for the future.
- Economy, Energy & Planning - An additional £140 million to speed up planning, support businesses and create new jobs.
- Education - An additional £111.6 million to raise school standards and improve attainment.
- Transport - An additional £120 million to improve rail, buses and roads.
- Climate Change & Rural Affairs - An additional £108 million to protect coal tips, lessen the impacts of flooding and build biodiversity.
- Housing & Local Government - An additional £399 million to support local government services and deliver more homes for social rent.
- Social Justice - An additional £9.8 million to help tackle poverty and provide emergency support to those most in need.

For the draft budget to be implemented with that additional funding, opposition parties in the Senedd need to vote in support of it, otherwise that extra funding is lost, and the Welsh Government has to revert to last year's much smaller budget figure.

Opposition parties must now make the choice, support the Welsh Labour Government's budget or starve public services of vital investment.

Increased Funding for Port Talbot Steel Communities

This government is acting decisively to support workers and businesses in Port Talbot.

We are doubling the funding available to businesses and workers and widening access to grants to ensure we support as many people as possible.

In just four months we have announced more than £40m in investment.

We said we would back workers and businesses affected by the transition at Port Talbot and we are doing exactly that.

While this remains a very difficult time for Tata workers, their families and the community, we are determined to support workers and businesses in our Welsh steel industry, whatever happens.

Read more about my announcement [here](#).

First Meeting of the Economic Advisory Board

This month, I chaired the first Welsh Economic Growth Advisory Group meeting in Cardiff.

Bringing together UK and Welsh Government, unions, businesses, universities and industry, the Group will help drive a new era of prosperity and growth for Wales through our UK Government modern industrial strategy that will focus on key industrial strengths in Wales, like advanced manufacturing, semi-conductors (microchips), creative industries, tech and digital, renewable energy, financial services and more.



Advanced Manufacturing in North Wales

I am focussed on growing the economy in Wales and ensuring that people have more money in their pockets. The advanced manufacturing sector in North Wales is a vital driver for economic growth.

This month, the Prime Minister set out our Plan for Change with the priority of kickstarting the economy and raising living standards for everyone.

During visits to Toyota, Magellan Aerospace and Triumph, I discussed with staff and business leaders, my priority to champion our Advanced Manufacturing in Wales, so businesses can invest, create new, well-paid jobs and expand their businesses.

Read more about my visit [here](#).



Investing in Neighbourhood Policing

The UK Labour Government is investing in neighbourhood policing, recruiting 13,000 police officers, PCSOs and Special Constables to make our streets safer.

It was great to join the new Chief Constable of Gwent Police, Mark Hobrough, Police & Crime Commissioner, Jane Mudd and police officers, contractors and the new Monmouthshire Labour MP Catherine Fookes to open Gwent Police's new base in Abergavenny.



Investing in Transport

I was pleased to welcome Heidi Alexander MP (UK Government Transport Secretary), Lord Peter Hendy (UK Government Rail Minister), and Ken Skates MS (Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Transport) to the Wales Office to discuss transport in Wales.

Under successive Conservative Governments, Wales hasn't had the rail investment it needs and deserves. I want to change that, with two Labour governments working together for the benefit of everyone in Wales.

We also discussed the ongoing issues at Holyhead Port following Storm Darragh. A safe operating environment is paramount for passengers and businesses. The UK Government's investment in the Holyhead breakwater will help to ensure the port is better protected in the future.



History Makers

The Wales Women Football team have made history, securing their place at UEFA Women's Euros for the first time ever.

The draw has now taken place and the groups confirmed. All that is left to say is good luck to Wales Women. We'll be supporting you every step of the way.

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CYMRU



FRANCE



ENGLAND



NETHERLANDS



EURO 2025 FINALS



In parliament

Our Plan for Change

This UK Labour government was elected on the promise of change. To do that, we have set out our Plan for Change with clear measurements that the public can expect to see delivered by the end of Parliament:

- **Higher Living Standards** - measured by Real Household Disposable Income per capita. So, working people have more money in their pocket as we deliver the fastest growth in the G7.
- **Police back on the beat** - 13,000 more officers, PCSOs and special constables in neighbourhood roles and a named officer in every community through our Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee in England and Wales.
- **Secure, home-grown energy** - bill payers will be protected as we deliver Clean Power 2030.

We are also providing extra funding to the Welsh Government to help them to deliver on key devolved priorities including:

- **Cutting NHS waiting times** - targeting those waiting the longest and in the most need.
- **The best start in life for children** - boosting standards in schools and colleges.
- **Backing builders** - accelerating planning decisions on infrastructure projects and building new homes.

Working together, we'll kickstart a decade of national renewal and deliver on your priorities.



Welsh Questions

The new UK Labour Government is working hard for Wales. At the last Welsh Questions session in the House of Commons of 2024, I shared how Wales is leading the way in delivering on Labour's missions to grow our economy and make our country a clean energy superpower.

It was also an opportunity to highlight the importance of opposition parties in the Senedd voting for the Welsh Labour Government's budget to invest in Welsh public services and deliver on the priorities of people across Wales.

Watch the highlights [here](#).

Water (Special Measures) Bill

The UK Labour Government is taking decisive action to clean up our water sector, tackle environmental degradation, and hold water companies accountable after years of inaction.

Our Water (Special Measures) Bill will ensure water companies are held to account and drive the investment needed to upgrade our crumbling infrastructure after years of Tory neglect.

Read more in my recent [blog](#).

Housing our Armed Forces

Armed forces personnel make considerable sacrifices, along with their families, to keep the country safe and secure. Yet many military families are living in sub-standard housing, often with persistent problems like damp and mould, when the very least they deserve is a good home.

The UK Labour Government is determined to turn this around and deliver homes fit for heroes. We will do this by bringing the military housing estate back into public ownership. Doing this will also save the taxpayer £230 million a year in rent.

This deal will unlock a major programme of rebuilding and refurbishing military housing and will help towards achieving one of the Prime Minister's priorities of kickstarting economic growth and boosting housebuilding across the country.

Clean Power Actions

The UK Labour Government's mission to become a clean energy superpower requires bold and ambitious change. Working with partners in the Welsh Government (planning decisions are devolved), we are offering an optimistic vision of Wales's future, with energy security, lower

bills, good jobs and climate action.

Our plan sets out new measures to get more home-grown clean power to households across Wales by:

- Cleaning up the dysfunctional grid system by prioritising the most important projects and ending the current 'first come-first-served' process.
- Speeding up decisions on planning permission by empowering planners to prioritise critical energy infrastructure.
- Expanding the renewable action process to stop delays and get more projects connected.

We will now plan an energy system based on what Wales and the UK needs.



Prison Capacity Strategy

The Tories promised to deliver 20,000 new prison places by the mid-2020s. They only managed to add 500 places to the prison estate across their whole 14 years in power.

The prison system is now at the point of total collapse. Our plan for change includes ensuring we have the capacity to imprison those convicted of serious offences. Our 10-year prison capacity strategy sets out how we will deliver this with £2.3 billion invested back into prison building and a further £500 million towards vital building maintenance.

More on the plan [here](#).

Situation in Syria

This UK Labour Government stands resolutely with the Syrian people and all victims of Assad's tyranny. His fall is not just a victory for the Syrian people, but also a blow to his allies, Russia and Iran, whose attempts to prop him up have ended in humiliation.

As we monitor ongoing developments in the region, the UK will remain vigilant and steadfast in supporting the Syrian people as they chart a course toward a better future.

Read more in my [blog](#).

Tobacco & Vapes Bill

Labour's new Tobacco and Vapes Bill will be the biggest public health intervention in a generation – breaking the cycle of addiction and disadvantage and putting us on track towards a smoke-free UK, ensuring that children turning 15 this year or younger can never legally be sold tobacco.

This historic legislation will save thousands of lives and protect our NHS.

Read more about our plans [here](#).





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