

WHAT THE LABOUR BUDGET MEANS FOR YOU

The cost-of-living is the most important issue facing residents across Cardiff East. That's the clear message I hear day in, day out, in my conversations on doorsteps and in the correspondence arriving in my inbox.

The war in the Middle East is driving up many prices and so the Budget package was designed to give households some breathing space. I've outlined some of the key measures below.

Supporting Households

- Increasing the National Living and National Minimum Wage by 3.9% to £13.21 per hour from April 2027, delivering a welcome £910 boost to the gross annual earnings of a full-time worker.
- Extending parental pay to over 160,000 additional parents across the UK - including self-employed dads and partners who previously missed out.
- Extending the temporary VAT cut on electricity bills until July 2027.
- Providing a £100 energy bill payment to households living in council tax bands A to D. That's around 33,000 households in Cardiff East.

- Abolishing gas standing charges and move them to unit rates, making bills fairer and giving families genuine control over what they pay.
- Removing tariffs from more than 100 products, like baked beans and chocolate.
- Increasing bank taxes from 3% to 6% for 15 months, raising £1.5 billion to help fund support for households and businesses.

Backing Drivers and Commuters

For the many people in Cardiff East who rely on their vehicles to get to work or look after family, the Budget delivers a better deal at the pump and supports greener travel. We are:

- Extending the 5p cut to fuel duty for a further six months.
- Deferring the planned inflation increase to July 2027, saving the average car driver £230 and keeping petrol and diesel 15p per litre cheaper than previous plans.
- Permanently increasing tax-free mileage rates to support the millions of employees and self-employed people who rely on their cars for work.
- Cutting prices at local, lower-powered public EV chargers to save electric vehicle drivers an average £150 per year.

Investing in Our Community

Significant investment into Cardiff East was announced to boost our local economy and create new skilled jobs, this includes:

- £30 million to progress the delivery of the Cardiff Parkway railway station (on which you can read more below), which will serve 40,000+ residents, create 6,000 new jobs, and deliver a massive annual economic benefit of £265 million to the local economy.
- £20 million to support UK reindustrialisation and high-tech jobs in AI, directly benefiting our local South Wales Semiconductor cluster.

Investment across the UK to boost the economy and jobs

- Investing £20 billion of additional capital into the National Wealth Fund and British Business Bank, to drive regional investment, alongside £1.85 billion for business scale-ups and a new tax relief to back entrepreneurs.
- The National Wealth Fund has agreed a strategic partnership with Cardiff capital Region and through the Strategic Sites Accelerator and will help remove barriers that hold back industrial and commercial sites and the most promising investment opportunities, providing access to finance, grid connections and removing planning constraints that would otherwise put off prospective investors and job creation.
- Investing in long-term economic and national security, including £700 million to strengthen Britain's AI sovereignty and nearly £300 billion for defence over four years.

Increasing the Spending Power of Welsh Government

This Labour budget gives the Welsh Government an extra £450 million to invest in our public service, on top of the additional £6.5bn from last year's budget settlement (the biggest in real terms in the history of devolution).

The Welsh Government now has an average of £22.4 billion per year between 2026-27 and 2028-29 from the UK Labour Government to invest in our public services.

BUDGET 2026

BREATHING SPACE FOR TODAY
FRESH HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

VAT cut on electricity bills extended until July 2027.

Standing charges on gas bills will be scrapped.

Cutting import taxes on things like baked beans, garlic, chocolate, gherkins and more.

Child Benefit will increase for all families.

The Minimum and National Living wage will increase for all workers from April by 3.9%.

Parental Leave rights are being extended to self-employed Dads and partners.

Cancelled a planned 5p per litre rise.

55p per mileage rate made permanent for the first 10,000 miles each year.

Carers Allowance cliff-edge will be abolished

ISA allowance will remain at £20,000 and not reduce as was planned.

Pensioners who only receive the New State Pension will not pay tax on it.

£100 for every household in council tax band A-D to help towards energy bills.

Promoted by Ian Bounds on behalf of Jo Stevens for Cardiff East , both at 116 Albany Road, Cardiff, CF24 3RU.

NEWS FROM CARDIFF EAST

CARDIFF PARKWAY

Once complete, Cardiff Parkway will serve 40,000+ residents, create 6,000 new jobs, and deliver a massive annual economic benefit of £265 million to the local economy.

I was so pleased that my representations to the Prime Minister, Chancellor and UK Transport Secretary for funding to be confirmed for the next 12 months' work, were successful. This builds on the long campaign with local Labour representatives in Rumney, Llanrumney, Trowbridge & St Mellons and former Senedd Member Vaughan Gething and current MS, Shav Taj.

£30 million was confirmed in the budget to progress development of Cardiff Parkway station over the next 12 months.

The Parkway project is part of a wider intergovernmental funding agreement between the UK Labour Government and the last Welsh Labour Government together with the private investors who are also funding it.

A note of caution however, because in the 5 months since the Senedd election, the minority Plaid Welsh Government have not publicly confirmed that they will honour that agreement.

I raised this in the House of Commons the day after the Budget.

Watch my question to the Transport Secretary here.



BRITAIN'S FUTURE IS IN THE EU

In the decade since the Brexit referendum, Britain has been mired in division, decline and uncertainty.

It won't come as a surprise to my constituents that I feel strongly about the UK renewing its membership with the EU. I feel the same about it in 2026 as I did in 2016 when I resigned from the Shadow Cabinet to vote against the triggering of Article 50.

We now know that there was no plan for Brexit. Despite years of empty rhetoric, May, Johnson, Truss and Sunak failed to get a good deal for Britain. Ridiculously, there are still politicians like Nigel Farage and Kemi Badenoch who are still trying to sell this disastrous project to the British people.

Since 2024, our UK Labour Government has sought to repair the damage by seeking closer ties with our EU partners, but this won't be enough to mitigate the effects. Full membership is the key to growing our economy and delivering a fairer country for all. The voices in favour of rejoining are growing louder by the day. It's time to look towards a better future inside the EU.

Read more about my comments on EU membership here.

LOCAL STORM UPDATE

Thank you to the brilliant Cardiff Council Highways and Parks teams, emergency services, and staff who worked tirelessly through the storm this month in poor conditions. Local crews stepped up to deliver an extensive, round-the-clock operation, dedicating hours to tackling the aftermath and keeping residents of Cardiff East safe.

The extreme weather brought down more than 40 mature trees across local roads and public footpaths, while heavy downpours left surface water and deep pooling across the local road network.

CHECK PUMP PRICES ON GOOGLE MAPS

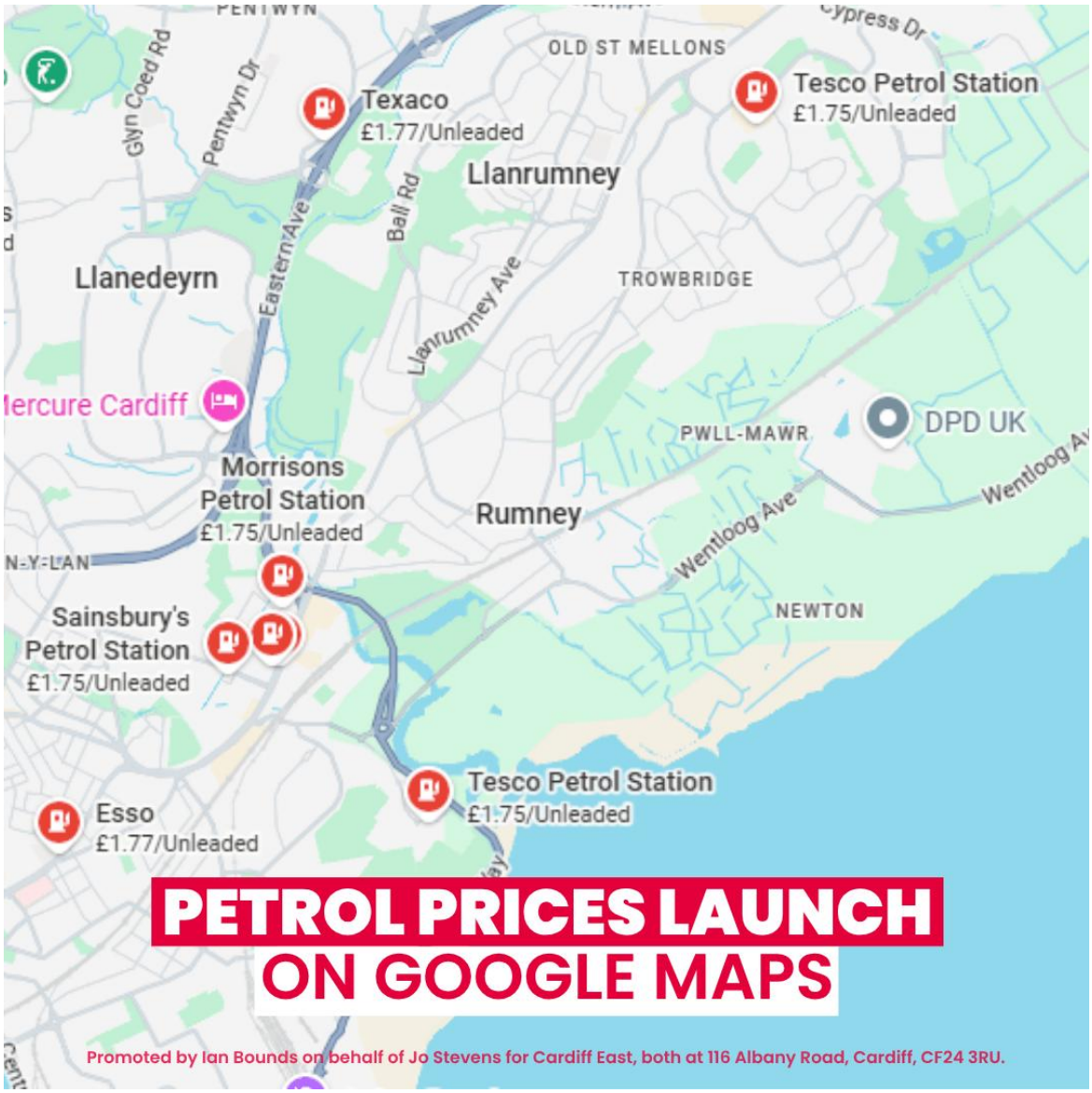
I know how much people across Cardiff East are worrying about petrol and diesel prices at the moment. Here's a practical step the UK Government has taken to try and provide some help.

Google Maps has integrated real-time petrol and diesel prices for the first time.

This new feature uses the UK Government's Fuel Finder data, which legally forces petrol stations to report price changes within 30 minutes.

With global events pushing up costs, accessing the cheapest local fuel is expected to save car-owning households around £40 a year.

Read more here.



KITS & KICKS

The rising cost of school uniforms, PE kits and footwear can be a real challenge for many families across Cardiff East.

I was pleased to meet Imy and Nathan from Cardiff Action Now to discuss their Kits & Kicks Campaign, which has set up an accreditation scheme for schools that have affordable uniform policies. this will help to keep costs down for parents and carers.

Currently only 40% of Cardiff Primary Schools meet the threshold to get accreditation. It's even lower for Secondary Schools at 15%.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">BECOMING A KIT APPROVED SCHOOL</th></tr>
<tr><th>Primary Schools</th><th>Secondary Schools</th></tr>
<tr><td>Maximum one branded item for main uniform.
Maximum one branded item for PE
Any colour trainers allowed for PE.</td><td>Maximum one compulsory branded item for main uniform and optional blazers
Maximum one compulsory branded PE Item and any type of sensible socks and shoes
Specialist sports kit only needed for pupils on sports teams.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">BECOMING A KICKS APPROVED SCHOOL
(Both primary and Secondary Schools)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Any coloured sensible shoes and trainers.
Mostly dark coloured sensible shoes or trainers with small logos allowed.
Plain black trainers are allowed.</td></tr>
</table>

I'm proud to support this campaign and hope all Cardiff East schools will sign up.

Watch my video about the campaign here.



BE READY PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Everyday emergencies can impact communities across the country, from severe storms to flooding. That's why the UK Government has launched it's 'Be Ready' public awareness campaign ahead of winter, to raise awareness of the simple steps households can take to be prepared.

To aid this important work, the UK Government has teamed up with trusted partners like the British Red Cross and engaged with more than 500 other organisations including local resilience forums and emergency services, so we get this right.

Read more about how you should prepare here.



AWARDS FOR OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY POLICING TEAMS

I am in very regular contact with our neighbourhood police in Cardiff East. They work extremely hard to prevent and respond to crime across the constituency. Congratulations to those involved in Operation Tellima and Operation Livewire for their outstanding work locally.

They are working decisively to dismantle drug dealing networks in Rumney and seize dangerous, illegal e-bikes across Cardiff East.

These targeted crackdowns have successfully removed weapons, illicit substances, and dangerous vehicles from our streets whilst reducing anti-social behaviour.

Not all of the work our police do on a daily basis is obviously visible to us, but these awards are a great example of how that undercover work brings successful results that help us all.



ROYAL MAIL PERFORMANCE

Our local postal workers work extremely hard. However, the performance of Royal Mail has been unacceptable for far too long. The Tory and Lib Dem coalition privatised Royal Mail and it has been beset by operational and financial problems ever since.

I've heard from many residents, particularly the most vulnerable, who have been let down, with delayed letters, such as legal correspondence and hospital appointment letters. Royal Mail performance is having serious consequences for people.

In the run up to Christmas, Royal Mail's busiest time of year, I will continue to press for improvement in services to ensure all residents receive the postal service we need and deserve.

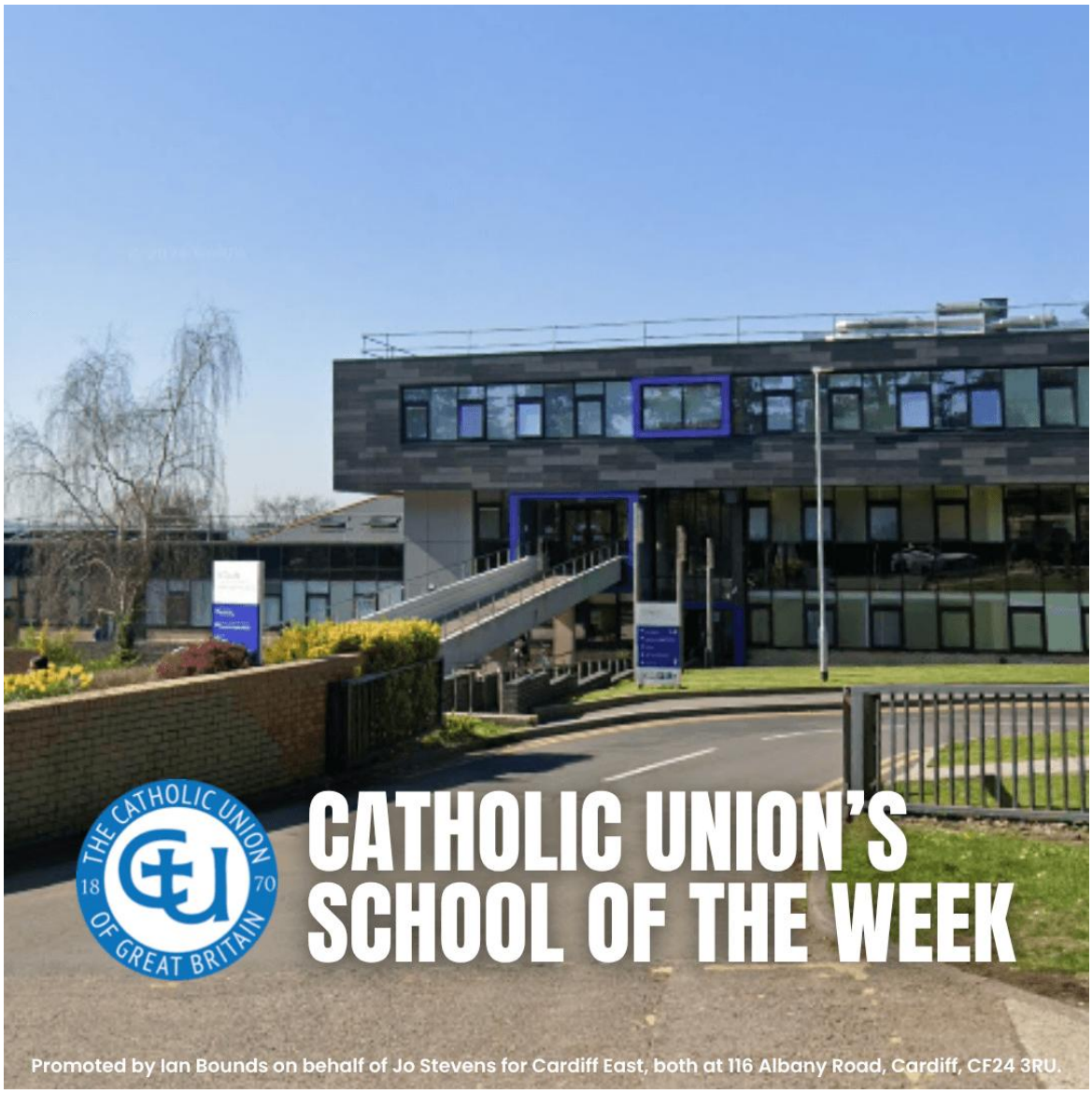
RECOGNITION FOR ST DAVID'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

St David's Catholic College delivers brilliant education to almost 1,700 students from Cardiff East and across South Wales. I am a regular visitor and see the impact the college has on its students' lives.

It was no surprise to me to hear that the college was recently recognised

as the Catholic Union of Great Britain's "School of the Week", highlighting the huge contribution it makes.

Congratulations to Principal Geraint Williams, all the college staff, and students on this fantastic achievement.



WINNIE THE POOH AT 100

This October marks 100 years since the publication of Winnie the Pooh, an all-time classic that children across Cardiff East and around the world continue to read (or watch on television) a century on.

Earlier this year, I saw this great, knitted post box topper in Rumney marking this milestone. A big thank you to local residents Karen and Angela for this and many more knitted art pieces that they create to brighten up our local community.



CARDIFF RUGBY: 150 YEARS, 150 TREES

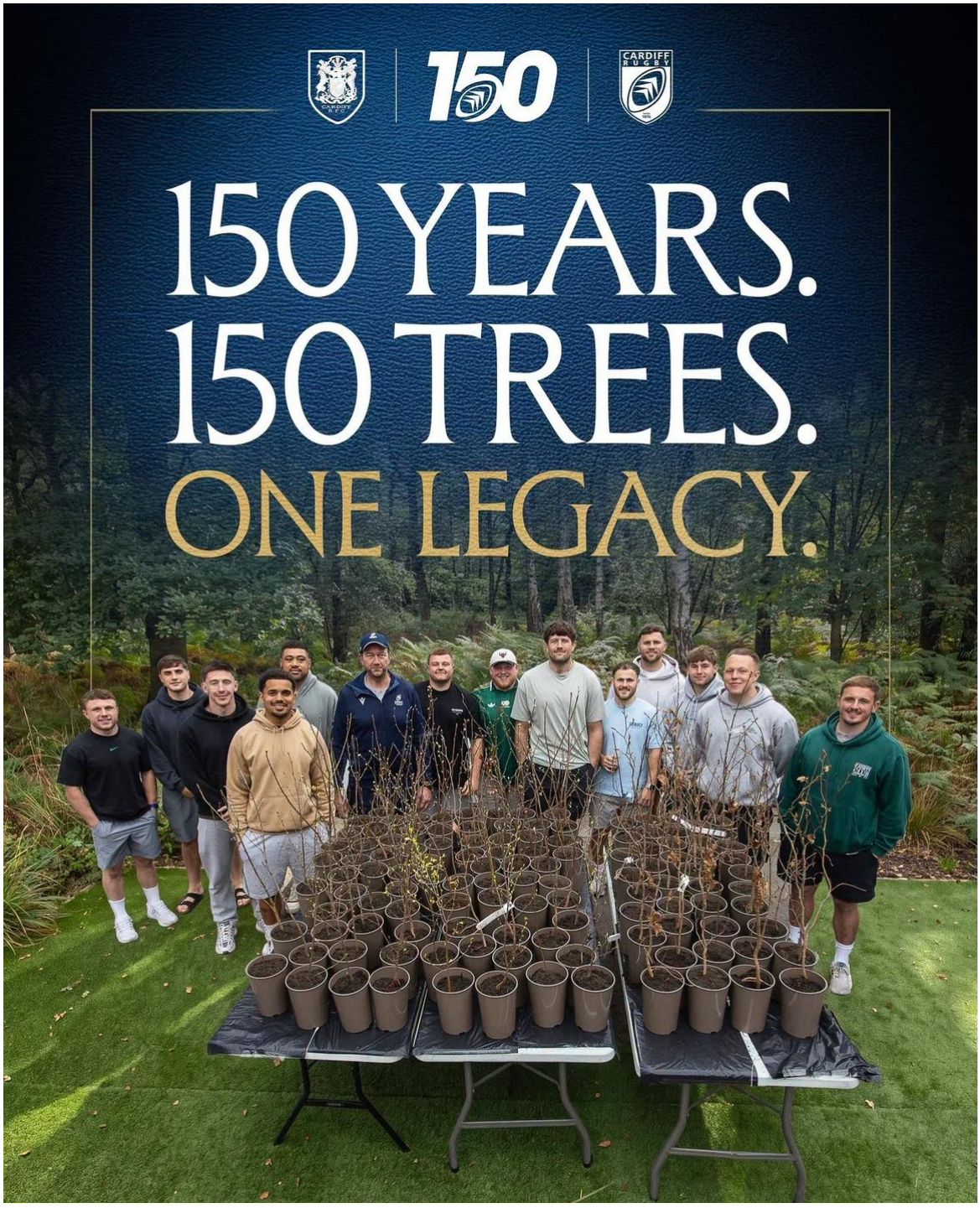
Cardiff Rugby's sesquicentennial season is in full swing. As well as looking back at the incredible 150 years of sporting history, they are also looking forward to the future.

In a lovely gesture and to create a lasting legacy that extends well

beyond this milestone season, they are donating 150 native trees to primary schools right across Cardiff.

Are you involved with your local primary school? Find out more and apply for your tree here.

This scheme is part of a wider series of celebrations, which include heritage kits, retro programmes, commemorative storyboards and a decades in the making match, against the Barbarians.



COMMEMORATING ABERFAN

The Aberfan Disaster is etched into the memory of people across Wales. Every year we remember the 116 children who went to school and never returned, alongside the 28 adults who also lost their lives.

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the disaster, my colleague Gerald Jones MP who represents Aberafan, brought the Lewis Merthyr Band to parliament for a special concert with the world premiere of composer Paul Mealor's 'From Darkness to Light', alongside works of remembrance and mourning.

It was an honour to have David Davies JP, survivor and Chair of the Aberfan Memorial Charity present with us alongside Paul Mealor.

It was a deeply moving occasion.

You can listen to an extract of the Band's performance here.



EXCELERATE TECHNOLOGY

When regular networks fail, local St Mellons Business, Excelerate Technology combines satellite, 4G and LTE networks so that voice and data communications never drop.

They keep tracking systems online for national transport fleets, support remote doctors with telemedicine, and protect the networks powering water and energy utilities. They also provide mobile command vehicles and internet setups for first responders and major global events like the Olympics, G7, and NATO summits.

It was brilliant to visit this cutting-edge Cardiff East business in their 25th anniversary year to hear more about their work and their expansion plans for the future.



GET VACCINATED

NHS Wales launched its flu vaccination programme this month and is inviting those eligible to book an appointment.

Routine flu vaccinations are estimated to have prevented more than 800 flu-related hospital admissions in Wales last winter.

If you're eligible for a free flu vaccine, take up the offer this winter to help protect yourself against serious illness and hospitalisation.

More info here.



SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD DAY

There is no place for racism in Cardiff East. Not here or anywhere else in the UK.

My constituency team and I are proud to again show our support for educational charity Show Racism the Red Card's Wear Red Day.



NEWS FROM PARLIAMENT

FUNDING THE GREEN TRANSITION WITH NORTH SEA TAX REVENUES

Energy security, bills and climate change are issues many residents raise with me.

With the recent UK Government decision to confirm consent for the Jackdaw Gas Field licence, I wanted to break down what this means for us locally and address some of the big questions being asked:

Why greenlight gas while pushing for net zero?

- This is about ensuring a just transition, not changing our destination.
- We are still heavily reliant on gas right now, and using our own resources is more secure than relying on volatile international imports that leave us exposed to global price shocks.

Does this mean we're slowing down the clean energy transition?

- Britain's long-term goal to reach net zero remains.
- The UK Government is banning new oil and gas licensing through the upcoming Energy Independence Bill, making us the first G7 nation to do so.

Where does the tax revenue go?

- A new North Sea Energy Wealth Fund is launching with a £2 billion down payment to reinvest oil and gas revenues directly back into clean technologies and the communities driving the transition.

Our climate ambition is unchanged, our clean energy investment is accelerating, and every decision on oil and gas will be considered on its own merits, consistent with our legally binding climate obligations. This decision is about how we manage the transition to clean power.



RESPECT ORDERS TO TACKLE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We all deserve to feel safe in our local communities. There are a small minority of people however, who cause persistent issues through shop lifting and anti-social behaviour.

This doesn’t just have a negative impact on residents; it also causes significant problems for small businesses and discourages people from using our local high streets when they don’t feel safe.

Our UK Labour Government has already invested an extra £17.2 million into South Wales Police, following a record £25.2 million increase in 2025, but we know we need to go further.

This month, the introduction of new Respect Orders was announced. Courts are being given new powers to place restrictions on adults who repeatedly cause antisocial behaviour.

Restrictions include banning public drinking on a specific street, helping protect residents and reclaim public spaces. Respect Orders will also require people to personally undertake action to change their behaviour and address its root causes, including through drug or alcohol treatment. This ensures we are tackling both crime and the root causes of it.

This is about delivering on our commitment to safer streets and stronger communities.



NEW RIGHTS TO CHALLENGE UNFAIR PRIVATE PARKING CHARGES

Our UK Labour Government has introduced a new Private Parking Code of Practice to protect motorists from unfair private parking charges.

The new rules will enforce mandatory grace periods, giving drivers a guaranteed 5 minutes to decide whether to park and 10 minutes to leave a bay once their session ends. Under the new rules, private operators must cancel charges on appeal for issues outside a driver's control, such as medical emergencies, vehicle breakdowns, or faulty ticket machines.

Minor administrative mistakes, like typing a car registration digit incorrectly or forgetting a permit, will see fines capped at a maximum of £20.

The nationwide cap on private parking charges remains frozen at £100. Parking operators who fail to comply with these guidelines risk losing access to crucial DVLA data, severely limiting their ability to identify vehicle owners and pursue payments.

This is another example of changes the Labour Government is implementing to make a positive difference to everyday life and ease the pressure on people's pockets.



SCRAPPING RIP OFF CHARGES WHEN FLYING

Holiday flights abroad are already expensive for families without worrying about rip-off charges to sit with your children or to change simple spelling mistakes on boarding passes.

Parents should not feel pressured to pay extra simply to sit beside their child. Currently, a parent and child could be charged up to £104 on a return journey. Under new plans announced by the Labour Government this month, airlines will be required to seat children under the age of 14 with a parent or accompanying adult free of charge.

Passengers will also be given greater flexibility to correct simple name errors on bookings for free, ending unfair charges, sometimes as much as £40, for minor mistakes or admin tweaks.

Read more here.

DOMESTIC ABUSERS MARKED AND TRACKED

Domestic abuse can affect anyone. Behind every statistic is a person who deserves to feel safe, supported and heard.

That's why I welcome new measures that will, for the first time, require courts to formally record when an offence involved domestic abuse.

Until now, domestic abuse could be recognised during sentencing, but there was no consistent way of recording that information across the justice system. As a result, opportunities to identify repeat offending and better protect victims could be missed.

Under these changes, when a court finds that an offence involved domestic abuse, that finding will be formally recorded and shared across police, probation and prison systems.

This will help frontline professionals build a clearer picture of risk, identify patterns of abusive behaviour, and ensure perpetrators are managed more effectively.

These measures sit alongside wider government action to protect victims, including expanding electronic monitoring, introducing specialist domestic abuse support in 999 call centres, rolling out Domestic Abuse Protection Orders, and improving access to support services.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, or if you're concerned about someone you know, please remember that you are not alone. Support is

available, and there are people who will listen and help you find the right path forward.

Victim Support Support Line: 0808 1689 111 (24/7)
Offender Release Helpline: 0808 168 9280 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)
In an emergency, always call 999

INVESTING IN DEMENTIA RESEARCH

Dementia is a cruel disease that impacts so many families across Cardiff East, with the daily realities and challenges of this condition.

To help address the delays that hold medical progress back, a new £48 million partnership has just been announced by the UK Labour Government.

This initiative, called the BARBARA Alliance, brings together charities like Alzheimer's Research UK, scientists, our NHS, and industry leaders. By joining up existing databases and networks, this funding aims to cut through administrative holdups so that new treatments can reach the people who need them much faster.

Importantly, this funding isn't just for one specific condition. It will support vital research across Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, and frontotemporal dementia.

This is a significant step forward in streamlining how research is delivered, ensuring that the UK remains at the forefront of bringing the next generation of treatments to patients.

Read more here.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLOMBIA PEACE AGREEMENT

Regular readers of my newsletters will know that I have a decades long interest in Colombia because of my work with the Justice for Colombia

campaign, set up by the TUC over twenty years ago to campaign against the human rights abuses and imprisonment of trade unionists and lawyers in Colombia.

Ten years ago, after tens of thousands of deaths and disappearances, a historic peace agreement was signed that aimed to bring an end to the senseless killings and bring reform to every part of Colombian society. Cross party politicians from Northern Ireland worked with Justice for Colombia and Colombian politicians and civil society to bring the benefit of their experience of the Good Friday Agreement.

To mark the 10 year anniversary, former President of Colombia, Juan Santos came to parliament to speak alongside others involved in helping to reach that agreement to discuss the implementation and how we sustain and protect the progress that has been made in the light of the new Colombian President trying to dismantle and undo ten difficult years of progress.

It was an important reminder that peace there is precious and we can’t afford failure.



Labour