



SAVE PONTYPRIDD'S RETAINED ENGINE

Owen Smith MP and I are fully behind the campaign to save Pontypridd's retained engine. The size and growth in population in Pontypridd is reason enough, but as the 'heavy tender' sited at Pontypridd is often called out to incidents across South Wales, we will be left with periods of zero cover if we lose the retained engine. Find out how you can support the campaign inside.



£1M CASH INJECTION FOR ROYAL GLAMORGAN

It's good to have some positive news about the Royal Glamorgan. And this cash boost is very good news indeed. Find out more inside.



INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY

I was delighted to host this event at the Assembly, which was attended by trade unionists from across Wales, including a number from the Pontypridd Constituency. Read more inside.



MINERS' STRIKE 30th ANNIVERSARY

The commemoration event held at Pontypridd rugby club on 11th April was a great success. More inside.

£1m boost for the Royal Glamorgan

After a difficult period it was good to get some positive news about the Royal Glamorgan.

The Welsh Government has allocated £1m to the hospital to set up a consultant-led psychiatric and acute assessment services.

I was delighted to join Dr Chris Williams, Jane Hutt AM and Health Minister Mark Drakeford to make the announcement of the welcome the cash injection and the increased focus on mental health it brings. This will make the Royal Glamorgan a centre of excellence in these fields, ensuring patients are assessed more rapidly and help to shorten stays.



St David's church, Tonyrefail wins lottery grant



Congratulations to the Rev Ruth Moverley and her team at St David's church in Tonyrefail.

I was delighted to assist in preparing their bid and couldn't be more pleased now that they have been successful.

The grant will allow them to proceed with their exciting plan to build a hall in the footprint of the church.

Confusion over Valley Lines electrification



I've criticised the unnecessary confusion created by the Secretary of State for Wales on how electrification of the South Wales Valleys lines will be financed. The UK Government's own website states: 'We are electrifying the Great Western Mainline to Swansea and the South Wales Valley Lines network.' What part of that statement doesn't the Secretary of State for Wales understand?

The Prime Minister and Secretary of State have confirmed on numerous occasions that the UK Government will finance the project. Indeed, they have made a great deal of it, citing it as an example of 'the Conservatives positively regenerating Wales.'

This is not a devolved matter. The UK Government has put £4.7 Billion into Crossrail, and a further £2.2 billion has been found for HS2. However, at the moment, it appears that when it comes to the electrification of the Valleys lines the UK Government is considering renegeing on its financial responsibilities."

Not only is electrification a key component of economic development in the valleys, it is also critical to other important infrastructure projects, such as the South Wales Metro. We need urgent confirmation from the UK Government that it will meet its responsibilities.



Save the Pontypridd retained engine!

Both Owen and I are right behind the campaign to retain the second engine at Treforest and the proposal to locate the new station at Upper Boat.

We're working with the Pontypridd crews on an on-going campaign and I'd encourage all members to sign the online petition at: surveymonkey.com/s/55VMLRC You can also contribute to

the consultation at: haveyoursay@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Miners' strike commemoration evening

What a terrific evening! Pontypridd's commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Miners' strike was an inspirational and sometimes emotional night.

Owen and I hosted the event held at the Pontypridd Rugby

Club and the full-house comprised ex-miners, students, politicians, party members, trade unionists and members of the general public.

Attendees were greeted by the rousing tones of the Corry Band, the brass band world-champions and amongst the speakers were Nicky Wilson NUM President, prospective parliamentary candidate for Cardiff Central Jo Stevens, whose involvement in Women Against Pit Closures brought her into politics and Wayne Thomas, leader of the South Wales NUM.

The keynote speaker was **Ian** Lavery MP, a previous President of the NUM and chair of the Parliamentary Trade Union Committee. Ian spoke passionately about the events of the time and the legacy of the strike, including highlighting the campaign for amnesty for miners arrested during the strike.

A number of speakers referred to the pivotal events at Orgreave. I was a member of the legal team which successfully defended the 90 miners arrested. The prosecution's case quickly fell apart, resulting in half a million pounds in compensation being paid. The arrests were politically motivated and, as recently released cabinet papers have shown, were part of a deliberated strategy by Margaret Thatcher's Government to destroy the mining industry.

The evening was concluded with a short set by singer Dave Burns, who delighted the audience with rousing versions of a number of iconic songs.



No flooding in Rhydyfelin!

Historically, flooding has regularly affected the llan area of Rhydyfelin, causing major damage to properties and a great deal of distress to residents.

Labour secured £3m in Welsh Government and European funding to implement a flood prevention scheme in 2012. Despite the most severe storms that we have had in a century, there have been no instances of flooding.

The funding was a result of a sustained five year campaign by Councillors and the recent atrocious weather has been a severe test for the defences. It's a test that has been passed with flying colours and means that residents can be confident that their homes and belongings are protected from bad weather in the years to come.

The experience in Rhydyfelin has been in stark contrast to what we've seen in parts of England where more than 6500 homes were flooded. The action taken by the Welsh Government has meant that in Rhydyfelin and indeed across most of Wales, the recent storms have not resulted in the chaos and misery that we have seen across the border.



International Workers Day

I was delighted to host a TUC event to mark International Workers' Day at the Assembly. It was good to see so many trade unionists there including a number from our constituency.

I used the occasion to attack UKIP's policies. There's no doubt that the price of UKIP success would be reduced pay and worse terms and conditions for Welsh Workers. UKIP's claim that more jobs would be created if the UK withdrew from the EU isn't just nonsense, it's dangerous.



More good news on Welsh apprenticeships

The number of apprenticeships in Pontypridd has soared by more than 30% over the last year. Pontypridd was already outperforming the Welsh average, which itself is well ahead of what's being achieved across the border.

There are now 28 000 apprentices in Wales, which is a record high, with 87% of participants completing their apprenticeships compared to just 72% in England.

Apprenticeship schemes form part of the Job Growth Wales strategy, which is part-financed by EU structural funding. It is a good example of how Wales benefits from our continued membership of the EU.

The Tory/Lib Dem Government is failing young people. UKIP would jeopardise the future of young people. I'm really proud that the Welsh Government has a programme that is leaving nobody behind.