gair rhydd

est. 1972

Rhifyn 1221 | Issue 1221

16 Tachwedd 2026 | 16 November 2026

"They'll suspend a protester but not a rapist"

Time to Act on Llais Rhydd



Alex Portman Ross
Politics Editor

Time To Act's founders Rebecca Rumsey and Emily Carr sat down with *Llais Rhydd* to discuss their work with students, our institutions and the Welsh Government.

Time To Act's foundation was catalyzed by a Freedom of Information request revealing Cardiff University's inaction regarding sexual violence. Despite hundreds of cases there had only been one expulsion prompting two survivors to decide it was *Time To Act.*

Becca and Emily's first move was a motion to the Student's Union's Annual General Meeting. The motion was instrumental in the university changing its code of conduct for student-staff relationships. TTA detailed how hard it was to achieve change in a period when our institutions wanted to 'wash their hands of... [sexual violence]' and focus on 'more pressing issues.' With the SU 'flat out denying' the spiking epidemic that Emily had highlighted as Women's Officer, any change was going to be hard fought.

Despite our institution's shifting attitude, *Gair Rhydd* asked if TTA's motion this year is overly ambitious. They responded it's time to 'go big or go home.'...

Read in full on page 18 and listen below

What is it like at Cardiff University Kazakhstan?

Oliver Hanlon
Features Editor

Last September, the first students walked through the doors of Cardiff University Kazakhstan. The opening of this transnational branch of Cardiff University was, and still is, highly controversial for the country's anti-homosexuality law which was passed just before it opened. The legislative pushes to restrict "LGBT propaganda" in Kazakhstan sparked immediate pushback from students and human rights campaigners, raising questions about how Cardiff University aligns its values with overseas expansion.

This law made itself visible to Cardiff University on Cathays Park campus when, last year, young people from Astana contacted *Gair Rhydd* to outline an example of the law being enforced. To read this piece, head to gairrhydd.com.

In an interview with *Gair Rhydd* in December 2025, Vice-Chancellor Wendy Larner defended the campus amidst scrutiny over travel expenses and simultaneous staff cuts here on the South Wales campus. "Transnational education is absolutely part of the future for UK universities, and I'm very proud of what we've done in Kazakhstan," Larner stated.

Read in full on pages 12-13

Tri Enw. *Un nod.*

Efa Jones
Golygydd Taf-Od

Beth yw'r gwahaniaeth rhwng yr UMCC, y GymGym ac Is-lywydd y Gymraeg?

I chi las-fyfyrwyr sydd bellach wedi ymgartrefu ac addasu i fywyd yn y ddinas fawr, rwy'n siŵr eich bod chi'n gyfarwydd â chlywed am yr UMCC, Is-lywydd y Gymraeg, ac wrth gwrs y gymdeithas hollbwysig i fyfyrwyr Cymraeg Caerdydd, sef y GymGym!

Dyma dair elfen hanfodol o fywyd Cymraeg Prifysgol Caerdydd. Ond beth yn union yw'r gwahaniaeth rhyngddyn nhw?

Darllenwch yn llawn ar dudalen 6

Medics Varsity CANCELLED



Read on page 24

University 1,100 residences deficit to cost £9.2m

Kyle Bright
News Editor

Cardiff University is to sign a deal to spend £9.2m outsourcing around 1,100 student residences to a private company just weeks after it struck a deal to sell off its own 673-room University Hall complex.

The deal between the University and accommodation provider Unite Students would give first-year's fewer options to stay in University-owned accommodation, while expanding their choices to live in private halls.

It comes as the University needs to find at least an extra 1,102 rooms for new students or it may be unable to fulfil commitments made with students starting in September 2027.

If urgent action is not taken, they forecast that the shortfall could rise to around 1,140 rooms for the 2027/28 year...

Read on page 3

GAA Founder on *Llais Rhydd Sport*

Read about it on page 22 and listen on Spotify



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Whether you're a politics regular who reads all our interviews, a sports fanatic wanting a round-up, or a culture lover wanting to hear more about the beating heart of Cardiff, *Llais Rhydd* allows you to engage with *Gair Rhydd* on the go.

Listen along while walking down Cathays Terrace, through Talybont, or even during a particularly boring lecture!

We are always looking for News writers, Illustrators, and Newspaper designers.

If that could be you, email editor@gairrhydd.com, or message us on Instagram

University 1,100 rooms short

Kyle Bright
News Editor

Cardiff University is to sign a deal to spend £9.2m outsourcing around 1,100 student residences to a private company just weeks after it struck a deal to sell off its own 673-room University Hall complex.

The deal between the University and accommodation provider Unite Students would give first-year's fewer options to stay in University-owned accommodation, while expanding their choices to live in private halls.

It comes as the University needs to find at least an extra 1,102 rooms for new students or it may be unable to fulfil commitments made with students starting in September 2027.

If urgent action is not taken, they forecast that the shortfall could rise to around 1,140 rooms for the 2027/28 year.

The outsourcing contract will last from January 2027 through to July 2028, and could be signed as early as mid-November.

In the contract notice, the University claims that if they are unable to secure enough rooms by the start of the 2027 academic year, there would be "significant recruitment, operational and reputational risks" to deal with.

One of those risks is that they that they "guarantee accommodation for full academic session undergraduates with a firm offer and international postgraduates arriving in September, providing certain deadlines are met."

The shortfall in rooms would follow not long after the University chose to sell University Hall to Cardiff Met in a multi-million pound deal, as part of a broader approach to downscale Cardiff University's overall estate.

A Cardiff University spokesperson claimed that "the disposal of University Hall forms part of the University's long-term Residences Strategy."

They continued, saying that the strategy "aims to provide good-quality accommodation that meets changing student demand", and it includes a mix of both University-owned accommodation and privately owned halls, like those operated by Unite Students.

When asked for a breakdown of the predicted shortfall of rooms, the spokesperson added that outside of the 673 rooms lost from the sale of University Hall, the deficit "reflects the University's latest student recruitment targets and forecast accommodation demand, informed by historical accommodation take-up rates."

Students who choose to stay in halls provided by Unite Students when choosing their accommodation through the University would enter a contract with the private accommodation provider instead of the University.

Unite Students operate many private halls across the city, but it is not yet known which specific locations will be offered as a part of the University's accommodation portfolio.

One student expressed to Gair Rhydd a concern for making the point that "one of the reasons Cardiff University was an attractive choice to me was the affordability of its own accommodation. If the University are outsourcing this, how can they maintain that attractive affordability for students from less means?"

However, a Cardiff University spokesperson has confirmed to Gair Rhydd that while they have "negotiated competitive rates" that are "broadly comparable to University-owned accommodation… they are higher than the current rates at University Hall."

In terms of any further outsourcing of student residences, the spokesperson explained that the University has an "established practice" of working with private accommodation providers to meet future demand and support its accommodation guarantee.

They added that the University will "continue to review future accommodation requirements in line with student recruitment forecasts and our long-term Residences Strategy."



Referencing system chaos for *joint honours students*

Elisabeth Ounsworth
Head of News

Referencing, a word most students dread. Everyone has to do it, yet it can often be tedious and time consuming. But, it turns out, even more so for dual honours students, who claim that the lack of a standardised referencing system across the university or even across subjects within the same school causes confusion and stress, especially for Freshers. Gair Rhydd spoke to some joint honours students to understand this issue.

For many students at Cardiff, the option to study not one but two disciples as part of a dual honours degree is an enticing one. The university offers many joint honours degrees, making them a significant proportion of their degree portfolio. But issues have emerged from the disparities between the required referencing systems both within and across different schools. JOMEC students, for example, are expected to use Harvard referencing, whereas certain English degrees require MHRA style. For anyone doing a joint honours degree across these schools, they must learn both.

Even within the new School of Global Humanities, composed of former schools including ENCAP, MLANG, Music, Welsh and History which have now been merged into shared departments, there are disparities in referencing systems. Students studying English Literature and Language must also learn MHRA and Harvard style referencing, despite them being within the same department of the same school.

Gair Rhydd spoke to one first year student doing joint honours across JOMEC and Global Humanities, who claimed that "just starting to figure out one system and then being made to learn another one is stressful", adding, "it's not teaching me anything but just confusing me and taking time away from what I'm actually writing. People shouldn't be forced to learn two different systems just because of the degree they picked". They claim that others on their course had shared similar concerns about the efficiency of this system and said it simply doesn't make sense.



CPS Estate Agent 'tried to hide black mould' during viewing

Meghan O'Neil
Features Editor

Students going to CPS homes have reported poor experiences with the company, including attempts to hide mould, and misleading photographs used to advertise properties.

Politics Editor Alex Portman Ross thought they had found what would be the "perfect house" as the photos online looked ideal. When they got to the house for the viewing, it was completely different.

Before the viewing had even begun, his group witnessed the CPS estate agent in a 'road rage' incident as they approached the house.

Imppresions were poor from the start. The group began by visiting the "horrendous" kitchen, where they bumped into a man who was almost naked. Going upstairs to the bathroom, the estate agent tried to shield them from seeing in, with the group having to ask multiple times to be shown.

Behind the bathroom door was a ceiling "covered in black mould". Alex said it took him a second to realise it was mould, then the smell hit him. After seeing this the group left and they said that the estate agent was "almost annoyed at us".

Shirona James, who used CPS in her first year said, "We heard through other people about CPS, so we went and had a look at some of the houses, but a lot of them were very messy".

"We then heard through a mutual friend about John Winters and decided to go with one of their houses as we left it a bit late". She added that, "They were really good with maintenance and it was good to have bills included; however, it is on the more expensive side."

When asked about the pressure of finding a house in first year, the common theme is that students find it a big pressure. One student said, "It's a lot of pressure to have to look so early, having to decide where to live next year when you're still figuring out who your friends are."

However, CPS Homes remains a favourite amongst freshers looking for their second-year house. A poll put out by Gair Rhydd found that CPS Homes was the most popular place for Freshers to be finding their second-year houses, shortly followed by 2 Let 2 and Purple Premier Properties.

CPS Homes were contacted for a comment but did not provide a response.



Are students a blessing or a nightmare for local businesses?

Ellie Dixon
Staff Writer

Coffee shops and cafes are a staple of student life. Whether it be as a study spot or to simply chill with friends, Cardiff students are spoiled with options near and around campus, from big chains like Costa and Greggs to independents like Hoffi Coffi, Metchy's and Brodie's. However, is owning a business in such an enormous student city a blessing or a curse?

"And could we, as students, be doing better to support our local businesses?"

Gair Rhydd spoke to the owners of two popular student spots, Ian Brodie of Brodie's Coffee and Leanne Tucker of Oat & Bean, to find out.

With an estimated 72.44% of Cathay's population consisting of students, there is no questioning their financial impact on coffee shops near campus. Both businesses agreed that term times were their best and busiest months, with business taking a noticeable dip during holidays. However, they also both had ways of coping with this: some part-time staff, being students themselves, went home during holidays, making it easier to shrink teams and save money. This, alongside a stable base of Cardiff regulars and a reputation for quality products, helps balance out the loss.

This hiccup hasn't soured a clear appreciation for student custom. Brodie states that students are often "the biggest supporters" of his business, and Tucker praises the "wonderful … warm welcome" she has received as a newer, vegan business. Both actively appeal and reach out to uni students; whether this be promotions at fresher's fairs, hosting societies, or simply having friendly staff who are open to chat and connect with students.

However, there are more severe issues for small business owners. In 2021, Brodie's Bricks 'n' Mortar opened on the doorstep of student life, only minutes away from Talybont Court in a central student area. Ian Brodie describes the former location as "feast or famine". He continues: "During term time Bricks was fantastic and the energy was great, the cons were that the terms are quite short these days, it was also really hard to strike a balance so that it wasn't a sea of laptops and a library energy". It is understandable that, as students, we want to seek out cosy spots to study and get a drink - and

" there have long been debates on the appropriateness of people with laptops taking up seats that could go to other customers for hours on end."

Regardless of your opinion on the matter, the impact is felt at a much deeper level by small independents - to the extent that Ian and partner Danni chose to walk away from the business after four years.

Once again, despite these struggles, local cafes continue to welcome students - but are there still ways in which things could be improved? Not just in the way us students treat independent businesses, but in support from the university as well?

The university has its own host of small cafes across campus, run by its own CU Foods service, but there is also an undeniable presence of large chains too: Costa and Greggs in the CSL, and (formerly) Starbucks in the SU. Businesses like Pret a Manger and Domino's are regularly spotlighted at Fresher's fairs, too. These are all easy first choices for students - familiar, convenient, and close to campus.

"But should the university give more room to small businesses,"

whether this be more opportunities to promote to students or giving them more space on campus instead of allowing chains to dominate the offerings?

Both Brodie and Tucker had the same sentiment: that it would be a great opportunity, but that large chains had presence and a budget for high rents that independents simply do not, and the university is not able to accommodate them.

The issue of financial highs and lows in a student city is, at the end of the day, a faultless issue - and one that business owners readily accept. However, could more be done by the university to promote them? As Ian says, 'it would be far better for Cardiff's local economy and the face of Wales as a whole if independent businesses were at the front and centre of the biggest university's offering.'







Leadership Say No Active Plans for ASSL

But Hints at Broader Review

Gracie Bradley
News Editor

Last year, Cardiff University announced that they had plans to repurpose the ASSL's second floor, taking away the silent, usually solo study space. After many students fought back against this news, the university vowed to pause the talks until Autumn Semester this year. Now that the time has come around, Gair Rhydd revisited this topic to find out if talks were still going ahead.

The ASSL, the Arts and Social Studies library, is a vastly popular venue for students to meet up with friends, study, read a book and even just get some quiet time. The first floor is designed for group projects, hangouts and meetings, but the second, silent floor is where most students lock in on their studies. Back when the plans were first brought to light last year, students were significantly unhappy, with some even campaigning against the actions. Campaign group Save Our ASSL took to independently researching and gathering opinions from alumni, students and teachers to support the opposition of the new ideas. They even protested and called out the university for disregarding students' and teachers' complaints. After all, studying at Cardiff University is not free; students feel they deserve to have their needs met.

Speaking to a finance student in his second year of study, he told *Gair Rhydd* "It would have been a big shame for it (the second floor of the ASSL) to have been shut considering it's a lot of students favourite quiet place." A journalism student also in their second year added, "I would have quite literally cried if the top floor had closed! That's where I do all my work." The main gripe shared by all the students spoken to was that they did not feel the university was listening to their requests.

Following a request for clarification after the one-year pause on its initial proposals had passed, Cardiff University said, "For the avoidance of doubt, there are currently no active proposals relating to the ASSL second floor. If future proposals emerge involving the ASSL, we have made a clear commitment to sponsor with students to ensure their views are known and help inform our decision-making." The spokesperson made it absolutely clear and emphasised that both student and staff's wants and needs were significant to them and will be considered if proposals do arise.

Cardiff University, however, have announced that they are undertaking a broader review of the university through the Campus Futures programme. They intend that this work will ensure that the future of the university's resources and buildings are aligned to their strategy and support teaching, learning, research and future student needs.

The university has not commented further on these plans. Perhaps they involve new sports facilities, more seminar rooms, bigger lecture halls? Or could new food places and wellbeing suites be on the agenda? At this current time, the impacts of these new plans are unknown.

Cardiff University has also expressed and emphasised the point that if any current plans change for the ASSL, or for any building on campus, students and teachers will be involved within the discussion and not kept in the dark. As of now, the ASSL's beloved second floor is here to stay. So, whether a solo study session is due, some alone time, or some reading, students can get back to it worry-free.

XPRESSATHON RETURNS FOR 2026 BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER



Jacob Crane, supplied by family

Kieran Miller
Sport Editor

Xpress Radio has announced that their annual 'Xpressathon' fundraiser will return for 2026 on December 5th and concluding on the 6th, the 24-hour charity fundraiser will be hosted by myself, in my capacity as Head of Sport for Xpress Radio, Station Manager Olly Shawcross, and Social Secretary Cole Davies with the aim of raising money for a chosen charity.

The fundraiser will include the presenters being live on-air for the whole 24-hours, challenges for milestones hit and segments with guests.

This year's fundraiser promises to be bigger and better than ever, with all your favourite shows participating. Students can expect everything from Pop, Hip-Hop, and RnB to House music, plus an exciting range of special segments.

In what promises to be a day full of excitement and entertainment, this is something you definitely wouldn't want to miss!

Last year's fundraiser was hosted by Giles Cosgrove and Niamh Holland, with both raising an astonishing £945 for Millie Mittoo children's project, a girl's orphanage in Islamabad, Pakistan. Cosgrove described the experience to Gair Rhydd:

"It felt like we were doing something worth donating for and for a great cause. Seeing the numbers go up through the 24 hours and being joined by such a variety of presenters and shows really cemented the Xpress community last year."

This year's chosen charity is the Jacob Crane Foundation, based in Swansea. The foundation aims to increase understanding and awareness of childhood cancers, supporting children and young adults up to age 25, along with their families, as they navigate diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.

Recently, volunteers from the foundation participated in the Cardiff Half Marathon and have hosted or partnered on numerous events, including the annual Jacob Crane Foundation ball, a Wales vs Europe football match with Joseph's Smile, and many others.

The Jacob Crane Foundation was established in honour of Jacob Crane, who was diagnosed with AML, a rare form of leukemia, just after his 16th birthday. Despite remarkable bravery and a period of remission, Jacob passed away on May 7th 2024. Determined to honour his legacy, Jacob's friends and family created the foundation to support other children and young adults facing cancer. The foundation has brought friends, family and communities together, all with the common goal of raising awareness for such an important cause.

This year, I'm honoured to host the fundraiser and support a cause so close to my heart. I've known Jacob since nursery. We played football together, went to the same schools, and were best friends through childhood. I've always wanted to do something to honour his legacy and give back for everything he did for me. This fundraiser has given me that chance.

The foundation has done incredible work and had a real impact on countless lives. Jacob remains an inspiration to many with the bravery and determination he showed throughout his treatment, while remaining the charismatic and charming young man we all knew.

Jacob, this is for you.

To donate or find any details, head to Xpress radio's instagram ***@xpressradiocardiff***.

Welsh Government 'called-in' on controversial Cardiff data centre

Barney Sturt-Bennett
Politics Editor

The decision on whether plans for a controversial data centre in Cardiff should go ahead has been taken away from Cardiff Council.

The decision, which was already under a holding direction, preventing Cardiff Council from granting permission while ministers deliberated, has been 'called-in'. A power that allows ministers to decide a particular planning application, rather than local authorities.

After fierce opposition, including from all of the area's Senedd Members (MSs), the final say on planning permission has been handed over to an independent planning inspector. Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) will examine proposals before a decision is made by ministers on whether the 7-storey data centre can be constructed on the site of an existing park and ride near Llanrumney.

The plans, which included permission for a gas power plant for the site, would construct the data centre just 250 metres from nearby homes. Residents have voiced concern around environmental damage and noise. The developer, Curtis Hall, has said the site would not significantly impact local air quality or produce local noise pollution.

The change in authority comes as a result of months of campaigning by environmental groups, residents and elected representatives. Concerns were raised over Cardiff Council's ability to judge the decision.

Nick Carter MS, a Plaid Cymru Senedd Member who has opposed the development since his election, hailed the decision as a "major step forward for everyone who has fought to protect this community." before going on to share concerns:

"There are also serious questions about Cardiff Council's role in this...

The council owns the land, stand to become the developer's landlord, and was also responsible for deciding whether the development should go ahead."

Although the ability to make the decision has been taken out of Cardiff Council's hands, a decision has not yet been made, the data centre may still go ahead. Zaynub Akbar MS, another advocate against the project, had this to say:

"We've stood alongside residents, challenging the developer, raising their concerns in the Senedd and pushing Welsh Ministers to step in. I'm delighted that they've listened. But let's be absolutely clear. The data centre has not been rejected. The call-in is an important step, not the final victory."

The decision comes as the Welsh Government is in the process of developing a "sustainable development policy", yet to be published. Planning minister Siân Gwenllian has previously stated that these data centre developments are essential to "sustain a modern economy" but "must be on our terms".

As part of its Digital Strategy for Wales Plaid promised before their election to secure the "full benefits of data campuses" and encourage the "ethical, innovative and worker-led adoption of AI".

Nick Carter MS' statement on the decision agreed with the need for these developments, saying:

"We recognise that Wales needs strategic digital infrastructure and that well-planned developments can bring investment and skilled jobs...

But those benefits must be real, with responsible energy and water use, and they must not come at the expense of people's health or the environment."

His statement acknowledged that the process was not over but that campaigners are "feeling more confident now that the decision now lies with an independent, experienced body".

Tri Enw. *Un nod.*

Efa Jones
Golygydd Taf-Od

Beth yw'r gwahaniaeth rhwng yr UMCC, y GymGym ac Is-lywydd y Gymraeg?
I chi las-fyfyrwyr sydd bellach wedi ymgartrefu ac addasu i fywyd yn y ddinas fawr, rwy'n siŵr eich bod chi'n gyfarwydd â chlywed am yr UMCC, Is-lywydd y Gymraeg, ac wrth gwrs y gymdeithas hollbwysig i fyfyrwyr Cymraeg Caerdydd, sef y GymGym!

Dyma dair elfen hanfodol o fywyd Cymraeg Prifysgol Caerdydd. Ond beth yn union yw'r gwahaniaeth rhyngddyn nhw?

Y Gymdeithas Gymraeg (Y GymGym)

Mae'r GymGym yn gymdeithas sy'n croesawu myfyrwyr Cymraeg Prifysgol Caerdydd i gymryd rhan a mwynhau amryw o weithgareddau sy'n hybu a dathlu'r Gymraeg.

Caiff nifer fawr o ddigwyddiadau eu trefnu trwy gydol y flwyddyn sy'n cynnwys llawer o gymdeithasu, digon o hwyl, a digon o ddiota! Ond yn bwysicach na dim, mae'n gyfle arbennig i wneud ffrindiau newydd drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg!

Ymhlith prif ddigwyddiadau'r flwyddyn mae'r Ddawns Ryng-golegol, Dawns Fawreddog y GymGym, yr Eisteddfod Ryng-golegol, Wythnos y GymGym, ac wrth gwrs, y daith flynyddol i naill ai Gaeredin neu Ddulyn. (Caeredin yw hi eleni, ac rwy'n edrych ymlaen yn fawr iawn!)

Mae'r GymGym hefyd yn cynnig cyfleoedd chwaraeon, gyda thimau pêl-rwyd, rygbi a phêl-droed llwyddiannus sy'n cystadlu'n wythnosol yng nghynghrair yr 'IMG'.

Er bod y gymdeithas wedi'i seilio ar yr iaith Gymraeg, mae yna groeso i bawb, gan gynnwys dysgwyr Cymraeg y brifysgol.

UMCC

Undeb Myfyrwyr Cymraeg Caerdydd (UMCC) yw llais y myfyrwyr sy'n defnyddio'r Gymraeg mewn unrhyw ffordd yn ystod eu hamser ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd, boed yn siaradwr Cymraeg rhugl, yn ddysgwr, neu'n fyfyriwr sydd â diddordeb yn iaith a diwylliant Cymru.

Caiff ei arwain gan Lywydd, sydd hefyd yn Is-lywydd y Gymraeg yn Undeb Myfyrwyr Caerdydd, gyda chefnogaeth pwyllgor etholedig.

Mae'r pwyllgor yn gweithio i sicrhau bod y Gymraeg yn rhan annatod o fywyd myfyrwyr y brifysgol, gan drefnu digwyddiadau cymdeithasol ac addysgol sy'n rhoi'r cyfle i fyfyrwyr ddod at ei gilydd.

Ymhlith enghreifftiau o waith yr UMCC eleni mae'r Clwb Rhedeg 'Nerth Dy Draed', y Clwb Brecwast ar ddechrau'r flwyddyn, a phwy all anghofio'r Cwis Tafarn?

Ond nid trefnu digwyddiadau yn unig yw gwaith yr UMCC. Mae'r undeb hefyd yn cefnogi a chynrychioli myfyrwyr Cymraeg y brifysgol, gan roi cyfle iddynt godi eu pryderon, rhannu adborth a chyfrannu at benderfyniadau sy'n effeithio ar eu profiad yn y brifysgol.

Is-Lywydd y Gymraeg

Ond beth am Is-lywydd y Gymraeg? Sut mae'r rôl hon yn wahanol i'r UMCC a'r GymGym?

Yn wahanol i'r ddau gorff, mae Is-lywydd y Gymraeg yn swyddog etholedig llawn amser o fewn Undeb Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd.
Prif gyfrifoldeb yr Is-lywydd yw cynrychioli buddiannau myfyrwyr Cymraeg, hyrwyddo'r iaith a'i diwylliant, a sicrhau bod eu lleisiau'n cael eu clywed. Yr Is-lywydd presennol ar gyfer y flwyddyn academaidd 2026/27 yw Owain Siôn.

Mae'r rôl yn cynnwys gweithredu fel pont rhwng y myfyrwyr, Undeb y Myfyrwyr a'r Brifysgol, gan gyfleu pryderon ac adborth myfyrwyr Cymraeg mewn cyfarfodydd a phwyllgorau swyddogol. Drwy hyn, gall yr Is-lywydd lobïo am newidiadau a cheisio dylanwadu ar benderfyniadau sy'n ymwneud â darpariaeth a datblygiad y Gymraeg yn y brifysgol.

Hefyd, mae'r Is-lywydd yn cydweithio'n agos gyda'r UMCC, gan gefnogi twf a datblygiad yr undeb, yn ogystal â gweithio gyda sefydliadau megis y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Mae'r swydd hefyd yn cynnwys helpu i drefnu ymgyrchoedd, gweithgareddau a digwyddiadau sy'n hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg a'i diwylliant.
Cymuned

Felly, er bod cyfrifoldebau'r tri yn wahanol, maen nhw i gyd yn chwarae rhan bwysig wrth sicrhau bod y Gymraeg yn ffynnu ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd.

P'un a ydych chi eisiau gwneud ffrindiau newydd, cymryd rhan mewn gweithgareddau Cymraeg neu godi pryder am eich profiad yn y brifysgol, mae cefnogaeth a chyfleoedd ar gael.



Undeb Myfyrwyr Cymraeg Caerdydd

Y GymGym Prifysgol Caerdydd

Adolygu'r Arlwy: *Cyfres 2 Bar Hansh*

Mea Verallo
Cyfrannwr

Mae'r gyfres boblogaidd 'Bar Hansh' wedi dychwelyd i S4C am flwyddyn arall, ond tybed a all y gyfres hon ragori ar gyfres y llynedd? Mae'r gyfres eto yn dilyn criw o bobl ifanc yn mentro i haul Zante, gan gynnig digon o ddrama, chwerthin ac adloniant i ni. Mae'n cyfuno elfennau rhaglenni realiti, cystadleuaeth a diwylliant Cymraeg mewn ffordd sy'n apelio'n naturiol at gynulleidfa ifanc.

Eleni, mae gan y bar 'fos' newydd, sef Kevin Williams, a chwaraeodd cymeriad Kelvin Walsh am 27 mlynedd ar y gyfres 'Rownd a Rownd'. Wrth gwrs, mae yna hefyd ymgeiswyr newydd y flwyddyn hon; chwe pherson ifanc yn mentro i'r 'strip' i geisio ennill y wobr fawr o £10,000!

Ymhlith yr ymgeiswyr mae Tyler, 22 o Langefni, Trystan, 21 o Fangor, Seren, 21 o'r Felinheli, Hamish, 21 o Gaerdydd, Elanna, 23 o Borth Tywyn ac Elan, 20 o Bontypridd. Mae'r cast yn griw cymysg o friciwr, model a chrëwr cynnwys.

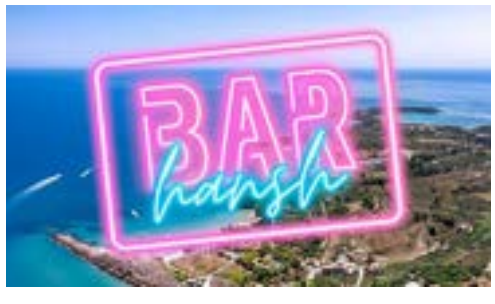
Un o gryfderau'r gyfres yw'r ffordd mae'n llwyddo i greu adloniant drwy bersonoliaethau gwahanol y cystadleuwyr. Wrth i'r gystadleuaeth fynd yn ei blaen, mae tensiynau'n dechrau codi, cyfrinachau'n dod i'r amlwg ac mae'r berthynas rhwng aelodau'r criw yn newid.

Mae'r bennod gyntaf yn herio'r criw gan fod rhaid iddyn nhw drefnu parti ym Mar Hansh ar gyfer y cyhoedd. Eu swydd nhw yw denu'r cyhoedd i mewn i wario eu harian yn y bar ac i greu awyrgylch hwyliog. Llwyddodd rhai aelodau i wneud hyn megis Tyler - bachgen hyderus sydd eisoes yn adnabyddus am gynnal cyfweliadau ar TikTok gydag aelodau o'r cyhoedd. Rhannodd y criw yn ddau dîm gan gystadlu yn erbyn ei gilydd i weld pwy fyddai'n gallu denu'r nifer fwyaf o bobl i mewn i'r bar. Mae'r elfen gystadleuol yn ychwanegu cyffro i'r rhaglen gan sicrhau nad yw'r ail gyfres yn mynd yn ailadroddus ac yn ddiflas.

Mae Bar Hansh yn llwyddiannus gan ei fod yn defnyddio'r elfen o Gymreictod drwyddi draw. Mae gweld criw o bobl ifanc yn ymdrochi yn hunaniaeth Gymraeg yn galluogi'r gynulleidfa i uniaethu â nhw. Weithiau, gall cynnwys S4C fod wedi'i deilwra i gynulleidfa hŷn sy'n achosi anhawster i bobl ifanc Cymru ddarganfod rhywbeth cyffredin o fewn y rhaglenni. Mae gallu gweld y Gymraeg yn cael ei defnyddio mewn amgylchedd mor anffurfiol yn un o 'hotspots' rhyngwladol ar gyfer partïon yn rhywbeth ffres a chadarnhaol. Nid yw'r Gymraeg yn cael ei chyflwyno mewn ffordd academaidd ond yn hytrach, fel rhan annatod o fywyd cymdeithasol pobl ifanc.

Mae'r gyfres hon yn llawn egni ac yn parhau i gynnig rhywbeth gwahanol i deledu Cymraeg ystrydebol. Mae'r elfen o hiwmor a chyffro yn profi bod modd cyfuno'r Gymraeg â fformat adloniant modern sydd cystal â rhaglenni realiti Saesneg.

Mae'r gyfres yn sbort ac yn addas i genhedlaeth ifanc – yn sicr yn un i'w gwylio gyda'ch mêts.



Ai Cymru Rydd fydd? *Addasiad gwefreiddiol o'r clasur*

Sami Sullivan
Golygydd Taf-Od

Oddyfodol annibynnol mewn Cymru lewyrchus lle ond yr iaith Gymraeg sy'n cael ei siarad, i Gymru heb hunaniaeth, diwylliant nag iaith: mae addasiad cyfoes cwmni'r Frân Wen o glasur Islwyn Ffowc Elis yn codi cwestiynau mawr bywyd sy'n parhau'n berthnasol heddiw.

Beth yw gwerth yr iaith os nad yw cymdeithas yn ei siarad? Ydy'r Cymry Cymraeg yn croesawu neu'n ynysu? Beth yw gwerth annibyniaeth os nad oes dyfodol i'r genedl? Dyma ambell gwestiwn wnaeth godi wedi i 'Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd' gyrraedd Theatr y Sherman yn Cathays yn ystod yr wythnos ddiwethaf. Dyma addasiad creadigol o glasur, wedi'i lleoli yn 2026, yn hynod berthnasol i'r genedl ifanc wrth archwilio rhwystrau cymdeithasol y byd modern.

Dilyna'r ddrama gymeriad Ifan sy'n cael ei actio gan Garmon Rhys, trydanwr o Bwllheli. Mae'n gweld bywyd yn anodd - mae'n hoffi yfed yn arw, yn byw gyda'i nain ac wedi profi cyfnod heriol gyda'i fam yn ifanc. Iddo ef, dydy bywyd ddim yn beth da, a cheisia ddianc yn gyson o realiti bywyd ac fe wna hyn drwy alcohol, rhyw a chyffuriau. Ond, mae yna ferch fel goleuni wedi'r tywyllwch, Mair (Lois Elenid), ac mae Ifan yn methu a rheoli ei deimladau drosti. Mae'r ddau yn gweld y byd yn wahanol: Mair yn genedlaetholgar, yn angerddol dros warchod yr iaith a'r diwylliant Cymreig, ac yna Ifan yn hollol ddi-gymhelliant ac yn ddiog. Er bod Cymru a'r Gymraeg hefyd yn bwysig i Ifan, mae'n cymryd taith i'r dyfodol (dwywaith) i werthfawrogi'r bobl a'r tir sydd o'i gwmpas.
Mae rhybuddion Islwyn Ffowc Elis ynglŷn â dyfodol yr iaith Gymraeg yn amlwg ac mae ail-ddehongliad Mared Llywelyn ohono'n gosod y syniadau yn y Gymru gyfoes, gyda thechnoleg a chyfleoedd gwleidyddol y wlad yn flaenllaw yn y perfformiad.

Cyfanwaith o fyfyrdod ac emosiwn sydd yma, a llwyddodd yr actorion i gyfleu hyn drwy fanteisio ar yr arddull gorfforol. Mae fel petai teimlad neu emosiwn yn cyrraedd bob ardal o'u cyrff i'r eithaf, gyda'u hystumiau estynedig a'r defnydd o lwyfan. Trwy'r ymdriniaeth ddiddorol â'r arddull gorfforol, llwydda'r actorion i gydio yn y gynulleidfa ac ennyn ein cydymdeimlad.

Mae dehongliad Garmon Rhys a Lois Elenid o'u cymeriadau yn nodweddiadol, wrth iddynt chwalu'r bedwaredd wal a siarad yn uniongyrchol â'r gynulleidfa. Pwyslais cyson sydd ar elfen wleidyddol y ddrama, gyda'r actorion yn ceisio perswadio'r gynulleidfa i weithredu dros yr iaith, sy'n bwerus iawn wrth geisio amlinellu'r neges.

Soniodd Mared Llywelyn mewn sgwrs, "da ni yn trio archwilio pwysigrwydd iaith a pa mor bwysig ydy iaith i hunaniaeth rhywun, a sut hefyd da ni'n gallu croesawu pobl i mewn i ddysgu a sut da ni'n gallu gwthio pobl i ffwrdd fel Cymry - dyna'r petha sydd yn teimlo'n eithafol yn y ddrama."

Tynnodd sylw at wreiddiau'r ddrama: "fersiynau gwahanol o be all fod sydd yma, i gyd yn ddibynnol ar y petha da ni'n neud heddiw i greu fory ynde".

Dyma gaiff ei harchwilio yn y pen draw - ein dylanwad ni ar y genedl nesaf.
Dyma oedd cynhyrchiad dwys, eithafol ond pwerus, a chydiodd yn effeithiol yn y gynulleidfa yn aml. Llwyddiant aruthrol gan gwmni'r Frân Wen oedd 'Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd'. Rhoddodd y cwmni lwyfan i glasur Cymraeg ar ei newydd wedd yn y brif-ddinas.

Aelwyd y Waun Ddyfal yn dathlu'r 20

Fflur James
Golygydd Taf-Od

Aelwyd y Waun Ddyfal- un o aelwydydd enwocaf Cymru. Ar draws Cymru bellach, mae Aelwyd y Waun Ddyfal yn cael ei hadnabod fel un o aelwydydd prifysgol gwreiddiol a mwyaf blaengar Cymru. Mae yma fwy nag Aelwyd neu gôr- cymuned o bobl ifanc, Cymraeg, sy'n mwynhau dod ynghyd i rannu rhywbeth arbennig sydd gan bawb yn gyffredin.

Gyda llawer o fynd a dod yng nghymunedau Cymraeg prifysgolion Cymru ar hyd y blynyddoedd gyda llanw a thrai siaradwyr Cymraeg yn anwadalu, mae Aelwyd y Waun Ddyfal wedi aros yn aelwyd gref, cyffrous a chystadleuol ym mhob agwedd ar ganu corawl- o gyngherddau i gystadlu ac i'r Eisteddfod.

Mae'r Aelwyd wedi'i lleoli yn y Waun Ddyfal, neu Cathays i chi a fi. Mae'r Aelwyd, fel unrhyw aelwyd arall ar draws Cymru yn croesawu unrhyw un sy'n 25 oed neu iau. Rydyn ni'n cwrdd bob nos Fawrth yn y Waun Ddyfal.

Rydyn ni'n canu yn y Gymraeg, ac yn falch iawn mai aelwyd wedi ei rhedeg gan fyfyrwyr, i fyfyrwyr yw hi. Mae'n harweinyddion, cyfeilyddion, swyddogion- i gyd, yn fyfyrwyr- ac ma' hynny yn sobri rhywun.

Eisteddfod yr Urdd yn uchafbwynt

Mae Eisteddfod yr Urdd wedi bod yn uchafbwynt i'r Aelwyd ers ei sefydlu yn 2006. Un o'r rhai sefydlodd yr Aelwyd oedd Huw Foulkes- un o arweinwyr corawl mwyaf adnabyddus Cymru bellach. Mae gan holl aelodau presennol ac o orffennol y Waun Ddyfal lawer o ddiolch i'w wneud iddo fe, a'r criw welodd weledigaeth i sefydlu aelwyd Gymraeg ei hiaith i fyfyrwyr brwd Caerdydd a'r ardal.

Fel Cadeirydd y Waun Ddyfal eleni, anodd yw rhoi mewn geiriau y pleser llwyr sydd gen i o brofi'r flwyddyn arbennig hon gyda'r ffrindiau arbennig sydd gen i yn yr Aelwyd, ynghyd â chroesawu glas-fyfyrwyr sy'n dod i'r brifddinas am y tro cyntaf, ac fel ro'n innau, yn ysu i fod yn rhan o gymuned fel yr un hon y des o hyd iddi. Dwi'n deisyf y bydd myfyrwyr eraill yn cael hyd yn oed hanner y pleser a'r mwynhad dwi wedi ei gael wrth fod yn rhan o'r côr. Dwi wedi gwneud ffrindiau oes, ac atgofion fydd yn aros gen i am sbel fawr.

Angerdd dros yr aelwyd heb bylu

Mae arweinydd y côr, Elis Roderick, yn dweud ei bod hi'n "fraint ac yn anrhydedd" cael arwain côr sydd â hanes mor gyfoethog, ond sydd hefyd yn parhau i ddatblygu a thyfu o flwyddyn i flwyddyn.

"Un o'r pethau mwyaf arbennig am Waun Ddyfal yw'r cyfleoedd mae'n eu cynnig i bobl ifanc, nid yn unig i ganu, ond hefyd i drefnu, arwain a chymryd rhan mewn amrywiaeth eang o gystadlaethau a gweithgareddau", meddai.

"Mae'n wych gweld pobl ifanc yn datblygu eu hyder, eu sgiliau a'u hangerdd dros gerddoriaeth drwy fod yn rhan o'r côr.

"Mae dathlu 20 mlynedd yn garreg filltir arbennig iawn ac yn dyst i waith caled, ymroddiad ac angerdd pawb sydd wedi bod yn rhan o'r côr dros y blynyddoedd.

"Edrychaf ymlaen at weld y côr yn parhau i dyfu a chreu mwy o atgofion yn y blynyddoedd i ddod."

I ddathlu'r 20, bydd Cyngerdd Nadolig y Côr yn cael ei gynnal yn Eglwys Dewi Sant, Caerdydd ar yr 12fed o Ragfyr, am 7 o'r gloch.

Cofiwch hefyd i'n dilyn ni ar yr holl gyfryngau cymdeithasol i glywed y diweddara', a chofiwch, mae'r drws o hyd ar agor i aelodau newydd!

Gan ddiolch am yr holl atgofion melys felly, hir oes i Aelwyd y Waun Ddyfal!







Cymry'n Swyno'r Sîn Gerddorol

Ela Rhys
Pennaeth Taf-Od

Mae'r wythnosau diwethaf wedi bod yn rai i'w cofio yng nghyd-destun y sîn gerddorol Gymraeg wrth i gantorion amryddawn ein cenedl hawlio sawl llwyddiant.

Daw'r Cymro, y cyfansoddwr a'r canwr Jamie Miller yn wreiddiol o Gaerdydd. Ef yw'r Cymro cyntaf i gyrraedd brig Siart Senglau'r DU ers 15 mlynedd; hynny gyda'i gân Babydoll wedi iddi fynd yn feiral ar TikTok.

Cyhoeddodd ei sengl lwyddiannus yn ôl ym mis Awst. Ond, wedi iddo gyhoeddi fersiwn fwy diweddar gydag Antonio Cipriano doedd hi'n fawr o amser nes iddi saethu i frig y siartiau.

Dod yn drydydd yn chweched cyfres The Voice UK yn 2017 a ysgogodd ei yrfa ac ers hynny mae'n sicr wedi mynd o nerth i nerth.

Mae llwyddiant ar The Voice UK yn chwarae rhan go bwysig yng ngyrfa ein hartistiaid Cymreig wrth ystyried y gantores nesaf; Cate McHugh.

Daeth cyfres 14 o The Voice UK i ben ddiwedd mis Hydref gan ddynodi'r amser i goroni pencampwr newydd. Roedd y gyfres hon yn perthyn yn arbennig i ni'r Cymry gan ei bod hi'n ddiwedd cyfnod i un o'r hyfforddwyr hoffus, y Cymro Tom Jones o Bontypridd.

Profodd Tom Jones lwyddiant ysgubol yn ystod ei ymddangosiad olaf yn y gyfres wrth fentora'r Gymraes, Cate McHugh o Lanilltud Fawr.

Yn wir, McHugh oedd pencampwraig y gystadleuaeth eleni. Yn ystod y rownd derfynol perfformiodd fersiwn o Blackbird gan The Beatles gan swyno'r gynulleidfa hefyd wrth ganu Take Me Home Country Roads gan John Denver mewn deuawd â Tom Jones.

Golyga hyn ei bod hi wedi ennill gwobr ariannol aruthrol o £50,000, cytundeb recordio gyda grŵp Universal Music a'r cyfle i ryddhau ei sengl gyntaf.

Dyma'r Cymry unwaith eto felly'n creu hanes.



Fodd bynnag, mae llwyddiannau cerddorol yng nghalon ein prifysgol hefyd wrth ystyried yr artist ifanc, talentog; Alis Glyn.

Nid yn unig bod Alis yn artist Cymraeg sydd eisoes wedi hoelio'i lle o fewn y sîn gerddorol yma yng Nghymru, ond mae hi hefyd wedi dechrau cyflwyno ei rhaglen radio, "Ar y Sîn", sy'n deillio o Xpress Radio Cymraeg, gorsaf radio myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd.

Mewn cyfweliad gyda Taf-Od, dyma oedd gan Alis i'w ddweud am ei phrofiad hyn yn hyn.

"Rydw i'n trafod popeth sydd ymlaen yn y sîn Roc Gymraeg ar hyn o bryd gan gyfeirio at artistiaid newydd a chaneuon newydd sydd wedi cael eu rhyddhau yn ddiweddar."

"Hefyd y gigs sydd ar y gweill o gwmpas Cymru, cyfleoedd sydd ar gael i artistiaid yng Nghymru a chefndir bandiau o'r gorffennol neu'r presennol o fewn y sîn Gymraeg."

"Yn ogystal â hynny, dwi'n hoffi creu rhestr chwarae yn ystod ail hanner y rhaglen sy'n cyd-fynd â digwyddiad arbennig dros y penwythnos neu yn ystod yr wythnos sydd i ddod e.e. Tân Gwyllt a Chalan Gaeaf."

"Mae cael cyflwyno rhaglen fy hun drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn wych! Dwi'n falch iawn mod i wedi mynd amdani ac wedi cael y cyfle."

"Dwi hefyd wedi sylwi pa mor ddefnyddiol ydi'r profiad yma i mi wrth edrych ymlaen at y dyfodol a'r posibiliadau o gael cyflwyno rhaglen fy hun ar y BBC rhyw ddiwrnod."

Mae Alis yn cyfansoddi a chanu caneuon hefyd ac felly yn rhan o'r sîn ei hun

"Dwi wrth fy modd fy mod i'n rhan o'r Sîn gerddoriaeth Gymraeg ar hyn o bryd gan fod cymaint o artistiaid cyffrous yn rhyddhau cerddoriaeth wych."

"Dwi'n teimlo fy mod i'n parhau i ddatblygu fy steil cerddorol fel artist ac yn cael mwynhad pur yn gigio o gwmpas Cymru."

"Dwi hefyd yn mwynhau gweld mwy a mwy yn gwrando ar fy nghaneuon i. Mae'n deimlad mor hyfryd a finnau wedi bod yn cyfansoddi am amser mor hir."

Mae Alis yn berson prysur iawn ond yn mwynhau bod yn rhan o gôr Aelwyd y Waun Ddyfal sydd yn rhoi profiad gwahanol o ganu iddi.

"Dwi'n joio bob eiliad o fod yn rhan o gôr Aelwyd y Waun Ddyfal. Dwi wedi gwneud cymaint o ffrindiau newydd o bob oed yn sgil ymuno â'r côr ac yn joio gwneud y ddau beth dwi'n eu mwynhau fwyaf sef cymdeithasu a chanu.

"Mi wnes i wir fwynhau Eisteddfod yr Urdd yn Ynys Môn y llynedd gan fy mod i'n teimlo fy mod i'n perthyn i aelwyd mor gefnogol sy'n llawn hwyl."

Does dim gorffwys i Alis dros yr wythnosau a'r misoedd nesaf gan fod ganddi sawl gig ar y gorwel dros gyfnod y Nadolig.

"Dwi'n perfformio yn y Ddawns Ryng-golegol yn Aberystwyth ar y 21ain o Dachwedd gyda fy mand ac yn gobeithio gigio dros gyfnod y Nadolig hefyd."

Fel un sy'n canu ei hun, mae gan Alis argymhelliad ar gyfer beth dylech chi wrando arno yr wythnos hon!

"Mi fyswn i'n argymell i ddarllenwyr Taf-Od wrando ar 'Nosi' gan Mared."

"Dyma un o fy ffefrynnau i ar hyn o bryd ac yn enwedig gan 'i bod hi'n tywyllu mor gynnar rŵan, dwi'n teimlo bod y gân yma'n siwtio'r tymor gaeafol yma i'r dim!"

Argymhelliad Alis Glyn



Nosi

gan Mared

Myfyrwyr Cymraeg yn gadael ac yn mynd i Loegr

Leus Tudor
Cyfrannwr

Aeth 45% o ddisgyblion Cymraeg ddechreuodd yn y Brifysgol eleni dros y ffin am Loegr.

Er ymdrechion Llywodraeth Cymru yn 2024 i fuddsoddi £104 miliwn ar grantiau i gynnal myfyrwyr fyddai'n aros yng Nghymru, mae canran uchel o fyfyrwyr yn dal i ddewis Lloegr. Rhaid gofyn felly, beth yw'r atyniad?

Dechreuodd Hana Evans o Bwllheli ym Mhrifysgol Leeds yn 2024. Yno, mae hi'n astudio Gwyddoniaeth Fiofeddygol.

'Mynd i rywle hollol newydd i fi!' oedd ei rheswm. Doedd gadael Cymru ddim yn broblem fawr iddi. Dywedodd mewn cyfweliad gyda Taf-Od:

"Mae bron pob Prifysgol yn Lloegr hefo cymdeithas Gymraeg rŵan, felly 'dwi ddim yn teimlo fel fy mod yn methu allan ar fywyd Cymraeg. 'Dwi dal yn gallu mynd i Rhyngol a chael gwneud y gorau o ddau fyd!"

Gadael mae'r graddedigion hefyd..

Er bod llawer yn graddio yng Nghymru, mae Cymru wedi colli mwy o raddedigion i Loegr yn hanesyddol na mae'n ei chadw. Sylwodd Llywodraeth Cymru yn 2020-21 fod 57% ddim yn dychwelyd i Gymru.

'Brain drain' yw'r term sydd yn cael rhoi i'r broblem. Golygai'r allfudo nad oes llawer o dalent yn aros yng Nghymru. Effeithiai hyn wedyn ar y math o ddiwydiannau a swyddi sy'n cael eu cynnig yn y wlad.

Caiff effaith ar yr iaith Gymraeg hefyd. Gyda chanran mawr yn gadael, mae canran fawr o siaradwyr hefyd. Cydnabyddai Gymdeithas yr Iaith fod "allfudiad siaradwyr Cymraeg yn dal i fod yn un o'n problemau mwyaf fel gwlad."

Wrth i Hana raddio eleni, dywedodd y bydd dychwelyd i Gymru iddi hi yn;

"Hollol dibynnu ar sefyllfa swydd. Dwi'n poeni fod fy Nghymraeg wedi dirywio, gan nad ydw i wedi ei ddefnyddio yn academaidd ers cyfnod TGAU."

Mae hyn yn pryderu llawer o fyfyrwyr, gan gynnwys Emma Davey o Gricieth. Mynegodd Emma;

"Dwi'n llawer mwy hyderus yn ysgrifennu yn y Saesneg, ac yn poeni am safon fy Nghymraeg os byswn yn aros yng Nghymru."

Mae'n werth cysidro felly - yw hyn yn un o'r problemau? Oes angen buddsoddi mewn codi a chynnal hyder pobl ifanc â'r Gymraeg i sicrhau eu bod yn aros?

Bydd Emma yn graddio mewn hanes o Brifysgol Caerdydd eleni, ac yn dechrau gradd meistr mewn newyddiaduraeth yn Lerpwl. Er iddi fod eisiau "profiad newydd" sylweddolai; "mae'r cyfleoedd gorau i mi yn y maes, fwyaf tebygol o fod yn Lloegr."

Ymgeision i adfer y broblem

Cafodd cwmni Darogan ei sefydlu gan raddedigion sylweddolodd "bod cyflogwyr Cymru ddim yn cyrraedd pobl dros y ffin". Mae'r cwmni felly yn cysylltu graddedigion yn llewyrchus â swyddi yng Nghymru a'u hatynnu yn ôl i'r wlad. Law yn llaw a holl grantiau'r Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, mae eu cynllun 'Cadw Cyswllt' yn eu galluogi i wneud hynny â myfyrwyr dros y ffin. Mae'n sicrhau eu bod yn gwybod am y llwybrau academaidd a phroffesiynol yn ôl i Gymru.

Gobaith Llywodraeth Cymru yw sicrhau eu bod yn "dangos i bobl ifanc fod Cymru yn lle gwych i astudio ac i weithio".

Y gobeithio felly, gyda pharhad y gefnogaeth a'r anogaeth, a chynlluniau newydd llewyrchus, caiff talent Cymru aros yng Nghymru.

darogan

Dilynwch ni ar Instagram!





Lluniau drwy Wikimedia Commons

Cyllideb Newydd:

Beth sydd ynddi i Gymrru?

Rhodri Jenkins
Cyfrannwr

Mae cyllideb newydd wedi'i gosod yn y Deyrnas Unedig wrth i'r Canghellor John Healey ei chyhoeddi ar yr 28ain o Hydref. Cyllideb yw'r arian sydd gan y llywodraeth, a sut maen nhw'n ei wario. Mae'r gyllideb wedi neilltuo £450 miliwn yn ychwanegol i Gymru dros y tair blynedd nesaf ar ben y £22 biliwn sydd eisoes yn cael ei dderbyn eisoes. Yn sicr, mae hyn yn newyddion da i Gymru, ac, diolch i ddatganoli, llywodraeth Gymru sy'n dewis sut mae'r arian yn cael ei wario.

Mae'r effaith fwyaf yn mynd i fod ar y gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yng Nghymru gan fod y £450 miliwn wedi'i dargedu at y sector hwn. Mae gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yn cynnwys y sector iechyd, addysg a llawer mwy ac felly maen nhw'n rhan hanfodol i'w cyllido. Er y cynnydd hwn i gyllideb y gwasanaethau cyhoeddus, mae llywodraeth Cymru yn honni nad yw'n ddigon o ganlyniad i chwyddiant yn economi Cymru a thu hwnt. Gall hyn felly arwain at barhad yn y pwysau ar y GIG, ar ysgolion ac ar ofal cymdeithasol.

Mae'n debyg y gall nifer o bethau eraill wynebu newidiadau o ganlyniad i'r gyllideb newydd hefyd megis costau byw yng Nghymru.

Mae nodweddion megis y toriad yn y dreth tanwydd ac estyniad i 0% TAW ar filiau trydan yn fwriadol i dorri argyfwng costau byw. Er hyn, gyda'r economi a'r chwyddiant sy'n newid yn barhaus, nid oes sicrwydd bod hyn yn mynd i arwain at welliant i gostau byw.

Mae buddion a chyfyngiadau wrth edrych ar effaith y gyllideb ar amaeth yng Nghymru. Yn amlwg fe fydd y gyllideb yn rhoi tamaid o ryddhad ariannol i ffermwyr ac amaethwyr y wlad ond nid yw'r gyllideb yn ateb parhaol i'r problemau ariannol sy'n wynebu ffermwyr wrth i'r fenter fynd yn fwy costus gyda phob eiliad.

Gall cyflog a swyddi weld gwelliant gyda'r gyllideb hefyd wrth i arian fynd at ddatblygiad sefydliadau megis M-Sparc, Parkway Caerdydd a llawer mwy. Gyda'r gyllideb, mae isafswm cyflog yn cynyddu hefyd ac felly mae'n fudd i weithwyr. Er hyn, mae nifer yn gwrthwynebu targedu peth o'r gyllideb at bethau fel hyn tra bod sectorau fel y gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yn dioddef go iawn.

Felly, heriol iawn yw dweud faint o effaith fydd y gyllideb newydd yn ei chael ar Gymru. Yn sicr, mae'n newyddion da bod mwy o gyllid ar gael, ond gyda phroblemau megis chwyddiant yn ein heconomi, efallai nad yw'r cyllid ychwanegol mor effeithiol ag y bwriadwyd iddo fod.

Dyfodol Disglair i Ddatganoli

Betsan Griffiths
Golygydd Taf-Od

Ar y 30ain o Hydref, cafodd cyfarfod Cyngor Economaidd Cenedlaethol y Gwledydd ei gynnal yn Glasgow rhwng Prif Weinidogion y Deyrnas Unedig. Bu iddynt drafod rhoi mwy o bwerau i wledydd datganoledig er mwyn rheoli cymorth cyflogaeth ac ail ariannu ar gyfer ail-ddiwydiannu.

Meddylfryd Burnham

Nod Burnham (Prif Weinidog y DU) yw creu strwythurau ar lefel rhanbarthol. Daw'r syniadau hyn ar ôl menter y Llywodraeth i sefydlu Rhif 10 yn y Gogledd, gan geisio dosbarthu pwerau ar draws Lloegr a gweddill gwledydd y Deyrnas Unedig.

Yn y cyfarfod, dywedodd Burnham fod datganoli wedi bod yn un o brif flaenoriaethau'r Llywodraeth yn ystod yr haf. Mae Burnham eisiau sicrhau nad oes unrhyw wlad yn cael ei "gadael ar ôl".

Yn ôl Burnham, cyfrifoldeb Prif Weinidogion y gwledydd yw hi i weithredu eu pwerau datganoledig. Pwysleisiodd Rhun ap Iorwerth (Prif Weinidog Cymru) mai mater i'r Senedd yn unig yw unrhyw ddatganoli pellach yng Nghymru. Dywedodd:

"Fe wnes i ailadrodd hefyd mai mater i'r Senedd, a'r Senedd yn unig, yw unrhyw ddatganoli pellach o fewn Cymru."

Perthynas Unigryw

Mae Rhun ap Iorwerth yn gweithredu'n gryf dros gael mwy o bwerau datganoledig i Gymru, gyda gobeithion o gynnal refferendwm ar annibyniaeth ynghŷd â John Swinney (Prif Weinidog yr Alban) ar gyfer yr Alban a Chymru. Mae hyn er bod Burnham yn diystyru cynnal refferendwm.

Yn gynharach ar ddiwrnod y cyfarfod yn Glasgow, llofnododd Rhun ap Iorwerth a John Swinney Gytundeb Caerdydd. Roedd y cytundeb yn adlewyrchu'r berthynas gref a'r cydweithrediad sydd eisoes yn digwydd rhwng y Llywodraethau. Mae'r cytundeb yn rhoi fframwaith clir i gefnogi a chryfhau'r cydweithio sy'n digwydd ar draws meysydd datganoledig.

Angerdd Rhun ap Iorwerth

Nid yw Rhun ap Iorwerth yn cydweld â chyllideb yr Hydref a gafodd ei gosod gan y Canghellor, Rachel Reeves, gan ddadlau nad oedd hi o ddifrif am faterion a chyllid Cymreig.

Un o'r prif themâu a drafodwyd yn y cyfarfod oedd rheilffyrdd yng Nghymru. Galwodd Rhun ap Iorwerth am fwy o gyllid ar gyfer prosiectau rheilffyrdd.

Ychwanegodd Iorwerth fod gan Burnham ddealltwriaeth o'r diffyg cyllid ar gyfer system reilffyrdd wan sydd wedi bodoli yng Nghymru ers degawdau. Dywedodd Prif Weinidog Cymru fod yna gam mawr ymlaen wedi cael ei wneud, gan drafod pwerau benthyca a gwario Cymru ar ôl y cyfarfod yn Glasgow.

Dywedodd Rhun ap Iorwerth: "O ran cyllid rheilffyrdd, roeddwn yn falch o glywed ymrwymiad personol y Prif Weinidog i edrych ar yr addewid o £14 biliwn."

Er lles cymunedau Cymreig

Mae'r argyfwng costau byw yn parhau gyda diweithdra a diffyg cyllid ar eu huchaf mewn cymunedau Cymreig. Dywedodd Prif Weinidog DU na allant aros am dyfiant mewn cyflogaeth yn y DU, a bod yn rhaid gweithredu i wella safonau byw a chyflogaeth drwy'r Deyrnas Unedig gyfan.

Mae'r consensws canolog yn dweud bod y pwerau cyllidol yn rhoi Cymru o dan anfantais o gymharu â gweddill y wlad. Felly, mae'r Llywodraeth yn San Steffan yn ystyried datganoli mwy o bwerau i Gymru dros gyflogaeth.

Er hynny, pwysleisiodd Burnham yr angen a'r cyfrifoldeb sydd gan Lywodraeth Cymru i gael yr offer angenrheidiol er mwyn gwasanaethu ein cymunedau yn well. Gobaith Rhun ap Iorwerth yw gweld twf gyda'r arian y byddai'n ei dderbyn gan Lywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig ym mhob cod post.

Edrych tua'r dyfodol

Er mor obeithiol yw Prif Weinidogion Cymru a'r Alban am fwy o bwerau datganoledig, nid oes yna amserlen wedi'i datgelu ynglŷn â datganoli pwerau cyllidol i Gymru. Dywedodd Rhun ap Iorwerth ei fod yn falch o'r Cyfarfod yn Glasgow, ac ychwanegodd:

"Pwysleisiais unwaith eto'r angen i Gymru a Llywodraeth Cymru gael yr offer angenrheidiol i wasanaethu ein cymunedau'n well."

Caiff cyfarfod nesaf Cyngor Economaidd Cenedlaethol y Gwledydd ei gynnal yng Nghaerdydd yn 2027, a Rhun ap Iorwerth a'i Lywodraeth fydd yn ei arwain.

The *Obsession* with Violence on Campus

Katie Gall
Opinion Editor

Halloween, for another year, has well and truly passed. The majority of pumpkins splattered across Cathays have been washed away, bank accounts have been emptied, and drink-stained costumes are either stuffed into the back of our wardrobes or squashed at the bottom of bins.

This year, popular costumes included *Monster High*, the X-men, Shrek, and, with an honourable mention to 'YOLOween', swarms of the Lorax. Whilst Cardiff students expressed not wanting to see any more 'overdone' couples costumes, I observed some unsettling alternatives.

As well as a police officer and his prisoner, a hunter and his 'deer' were frequently spotted, showcasing the girlfriend as the injured animal, complete with a bullseye on her forehead and dripping blood.

With increased reports of sexual violence on campus, and the Cardiff Uni Banter account making jokes out of rape, I could not help but wonder:

"should costumes which embody one-sided gendered violence be treated more seriously?"

Halloween is undoubtedly a time for self expression, and horror films are the perfect opportunity to embrace that. We are given the creative freedom to douse ourselves in blood or rip our clothes, offering a temporary form of escape as we choose to dress up as our favourite characters.

However, following the release of *Obsession* in cinemas in May 2026, a new costume opportunity arose. In the lead-up to Halloween, multiple couples online were preparing to dress up as Bear and Nikki. NBCUniversal even released costumes sets for each character, which pretty much sold out.

As to be expected, this sparked major controversy online. Bear, who makes a wish for his work crush to "love [him] more than anyone else in the world", is not a boyfriend or an opportunity for a costume. His wish comes true, and as the old Nikki loses her ability to act otherwise, he abuses her lack of agency and, ultimately, rapes her.

The mixed reactions met by the film, some of which sympathised with Bear or were largely distracted by Nikki's (Inde Navarrette) terrifying portrayal, misread this and failed to notice the obvious abuse which is at the core of the film.

Overlooking clear depictions of abuse is something which cannot be afforded in the media and, more importantly, amongst students. By normalising these characters, we are turning a blind eye to the actions and implications of sexual violence. Cardiff University must not fall into this ignorance.

Violent norms are not only something which perpetrates Halloween costumes, but university in general. We have seen societies banned for their outrageous initiations. Yet, should societies which handcuff members together on Wednesday night reconsider what this might be reinforcing? Where is the line?

Cardiff students are speaking up against sexual violence now more than ever. I can only hope that raising awareness will continue to bring light to these issues, and media depicting a lack of female agency will not be reduced to a 'cute' couples costume for next Halloween.

As we move into the rest of the autumn semester, we should challenge why there is such an obsession with violence at university, and leave our hunting hats and deer antlers squashed firmly at the bottom of our bins.



No One Can Win *This Productivity Race*

Bethan Jones
Head of Opinion

At some point, we have all come home from a long day, claiming we haven't been 'productive enough'. I know my mum is a sorry victim of this, always having a to-do list that somehow never gets shorter, exclaiming that she's "done nothing" in a day. We define our success and worth based on our output in a singular twenty-four-hour period — punishing ourselves if this imaginary quota isn't met.

To solve this, we invest in AI-fitted dishwashers and toothbrushes to fine-tune cleaning cycles, fitness watches to track running and sleep schedules, and strictly bland diets of beef, rice and broccoli to up our macros whilst reducing calories. These investments make us believe we are optimising our lives, planting small successes throughout the day and saving up time like tokens to spend elsewhere on more fruitful pleasures.

Capitalism has grabbed at this opportunity, pummelling us with products that are extortionately expensive and overly complicated, with the promise that this new, flashy piece of technology will eventually buy us all freedom.

The most absurd example of this is the new Dyson toothbrush – for a whopping £419, this little gadget is fitted with a camera that, after connecting to an app on your phone, gives you live feedback whilst you brush your teeth. The absurdity of this piece of machinery (as well as the price) is so clearly a marketing scam that it makes me grateful I can only afford a trusty little bamboo toothbrush.

And behind every smart gadget sits this intense nagging from AI, something which can produce at an incredible speed far greater than anything we could achieve in a day. By shoving it into every product with a battery, we have made it our competitor. And in this dog-eat-dog-world, if humans want to survive, we are now under the intense pressure to rival the machine, and ultimately become it.

But where are we trying to get to when we decide to make so many shortcuts? Doesn't this all feel like a race towards an inevitable end? Nowadays, no one can run without Strava or go on a walk without the desire to "get your steps in". We believe that this dependence on routine (and ultimately the tech that rules it) is maximising efficiency, forgetting that we will imminently reach burnout by the time we're thirty.

There seems to be this monoculture of maximisation in the hopes of presenting yourself as a specific, digestible archetype that has a parade of successes trailing behind you. We are all secretly begging the world to see us as this fully functioning, self-sufficient adult, whilst silently brushing the messy intricacies of the human experience under the rug. This desire to be perceived, archived into a specific, cultural subcategory is apparently all the rage now and our sickening optimal ideal starts to look a lot like narcissism.

Have we lost the art of slowing down? Of feeling the pleasure in doing something just for the sake of it? I can't help but think that this continuing affirmation of productivity is being chosen at the expense of creativity. Our outrage at slowing down is simultaneously a bargain with art, conversation, music and meaningful relationships. Humans were never meant to sprint through life, running on a hamster wheel until we drop down dead from pure exhaustion. This individualistic, obsessive lifestyle is distracting us from our true purpose – to connect with the world around us.

"If consciousness is experience, then observation is the only purpose we can give this strange and odd existence."

And how can you observe if you don't give yourself time to look up? We like to claim that stopping and slowing down is a "waste of time", but has a meander through the park ever left you with more doubts? And can a night spent chatting with friends ever be called anything but love? Time was never something to spend, only ever something to enjoy.

Too Polite to Protest: *Britain's Struggle Against Confrontation*

Phoebe Brown
Contributor

During the past few months protests have swept across Europe. Most notable are the protests turned violent riots in France which, to this day, seem only to be increasing. Similarly, in Germany peaceful protests turned into riots across Frankfurt, and in September the streets of the Pyrenees were filled with protestors.

Europe is overrun with protests, some peaceful, some violent but all over an incredibly similar and familiar outrage. The cost of living crisis, the housing crisis, and the lack of funding in schools are all things that the British public are also facing. Europe's youth hasn't kept their rage quiet; they've marched, camped and rioted in response to the very same issues plaguing Britain. Yet we stay quiet. Why are we so hesitant to protest?

I think we should look at the stark differences between Britain and France. With a long and intertwined history and such different cultures, we can trace back how we became such different nations. Of course, I'm talking about the French Revolution. The violent abolition of the monarchy in France changed them culturally in a way that still affects the public to this day.

Peasants, starved and underpaid, rose up against the wealthy elite and won. Ever since then protests have been a key part of their culture, the people seem to have far more power and agency than those feel they do in the UK. During and right after the French Revolution, a small and ineffective effort was made to re-create one in Britain but, with such a rigid class system and still so much loyalty toward the Crown, it went nowhere.

And now, over two hundred years later, we still have a monarchy, a prominent class system and a lack of power within the general public. After such a nation-changing series of protests and riots the culture of France was changed, a feeling of power and agency was given to the people that they will never let go of. In contrast, we have such a minimal history of huge successful protests, leaving a culture that doesn't consider protests an effective way to make a change.

We're too polite. As a nation we're poked fun at for being unable to start any form of confrontation; instead we've mastered the art of passive aggression. But perhaps it runs deeper than that, perhaps this obsession with being polite and keeping the peace is what's keeping us quiet even in the face of near-impossible living conditions.

Our inability to send food back in a restaurant, that compulsion to lower your head and thank the waiter for bringing you the wrong side, is suddenly sinister when applied to how we react to the government making our lives harder. We watch in silent outrage as energy prices skyrocket, fuel prices climb and food prices rise while our salaries stay stagnant and AI takes more and more jobs. We monologue about it at the dinner table, gasp at the news, worry over how and when it'll change. But never actually do anything. It may be time to retire the 'keep calm, carry on' motto; I fear we're far too good at it.

When it's all laid out like this, it's impossible to understand how we think any of this will get better without us speaking out. But most of the time, we're just going through the motions. I doubt many of us have the time or energy to fight past thousands of years of culture, get over our obsession with politeness and start fighting for change. But, maybe now's the time to try.

The Shift Of Class From A System *To An Aesthetic*

Keeley Powell
Opinion Editor

I've grown up in council estates. I'm sure many readers have had to at some point in their lives. Well unless your name is something like Theodore Spencer Beaumont IV, and grew up in some manor, then this statement probably doesn't apply to you.

But that's the issue with Britain, the class divisions that have been installed in us since birth. Are you some hoity-toity privileged arse who states 'rah!' every other sentence, or maybe someone who grew up surrounded by rubbish in the streets, with the sounds of sirens at 2AM on most nights, who has no care for their future?

These are some of the stigmas that the media has portrayed for decades about the economic gap between classes. However, when looking at the current state of households amidst an economic crisis, it becomes less clear on how we group people economically and socially.

Some may see their economic class as a defining feature in their personality, with terms such as 'chav'. I bet with that one word you already had a certain image in your mind, a stereotype that has been depicted in the media as loud, often violent and dressed in some designer sportswear, thanks to characters like Vicky Pollard.

While there's perhaps truth to these claims, especially when looking at some of the youths walking down Queen street, there is also deep rooted societal neglect. There's no wonder as to why younger people might adopt this style, it's a way to fit into the area that they've been brought up in.

Yet not everyone who comes from these areas acts the same; I've been brought up in council estates, but I've never felt connected to that subtype. Did our plants get stolen when placed by our front door once? Yes, but overall my experience hasn't been as depressing in council areas as they're normally looked upon by the media.

Areas do link to the way that we are all boxed into preconceived ideas of who we are. If we've been told from the beginning that where we live means that we're not cared about due to the lack of help from the council, or looked down upon due to other's actions who live near



No matter how hard we try to defy such titles by going to university and trying to seek employment, there will always be prejudice about what class you come from and where you were brought up.

Let's look at the battle of Britpop bands back with Blur and Oasis. One representing the more posh South; the other representing that tough working class. Class will always be shoved down our throats through pop culture in some way, intentional or not, because that's what gets people to relate to others.

impact the way that we perceive ourselves.

Have you ever seen those blokes on TikTok that cosplay as the working class? Wearing some Adidas tracksuit, with either a skinhead or classic Liam Gallagher haircut, walking around a run-down street to some 'Parklife'? That's an accurate example of class becoming the aesthetic, this performativeness of being someone you're not to get relatability.

These guys embody the issues of class being something we hang on to. To feel a sense of pride from not being brought up with a generational wealth held in your back pocket.

I think the reason we try to hang on to these titles of class is so that we can either feel like a part of a community, or perhaps for some, it's something to blame for the way that the government or society has looked down upon them. Socially, being from a working or lower class background might feel like it gives you a sense of grit, that someone like a trust fund baby might not have.

It's Time to Stop
Turning Back the Clocks

Bella Urdaneta
Contributor

There is something particularly offensive about leaving a lecture at 4pm, only to discover that the sun has apparently clocked out before you have. One minute, autumn is offering chilly mornings and picturesque walks across university, and next, you are walking home in darkness, questioning whether it's socially acceptable to get into bed before dinner.

On October 25th, Britain turned its clocks back an hour, marking the end of British summer time. We gained an extra hour in bed, which sounds like an excellent deal for sleep-deprived students. But, the novelty quickly wears off when you realise that your evenings have suddenly become considerably less exciting.

And so, the annual question returns: why are we still doing this?

The change was introduced in Britain in 1916, during the First World War, as a way of making better use of daylight and supporting the wartime economy. Over a century later, with no world war on the horizon, we're still slaves to a wartime tradition, obediently changing our clocks twice a year. Our lifestyles have moved on considerably, but apparently our clocks have not.

Britain should stop turning the clocks back altogether and keep British summer time throughout the year. Yes, this would mean darker winter mornings, but why have we collectively decided that sacrificing our evenings is preferable?

Think about it. At 8am, most of us are getting ready for lectures, commuting to work or, at the very least, desperately trying to remember where we left our keys. Regardless of the weather, we have somewhere to be.

At 4pm, however, an extra hour of daylight could make all the difference. Whether it's going for a run, meeting friends, walking home or simply enjoying some fresh air after a long day, having sufficient sunlight left makes these things considerably more appealing. Perhaps, it's time we stopped treating daylight after 4pm as a seasonal luxury.

Then there's the question of safety. For many women, walking home after dark involves an unwritten checklist: keys at hand, headphones off, location on, and footsteps monitored. Unfortunately, these precautions become part of everyday life, particularly during winter.

A YouGov poll published in March 2026 found that 88% of women surveyed had felt unsafe walking home alone after dark, while 71% had changed their routes to avoid walking in darkness during winter. These figures should make us question why something as ordinary as getting home can require so much calculation.

Of course, keeping British summer time would not eliminate violence against women, nor would an extra hour of daylight solve the wider problem of street safety. But giving people more daylight in the evening could make everyday journeys feel more comfortable, and encourage people to spend more time outdoors.

Naturally, there is an argument against this. The British Sleep Society recommends permanent Greenwich Mean Time, highlighting the importance of morning daylight for our circadian rhythms and sleep.

Keeping British summer time would mean darker mornings, with sunrise arriving an hour later by the clock. That's a genuine disadvantage, and one we shouldn't dismiss.

But perhaps we're too quick to prioritize the morning over the evening. Most of us have somewhere to be when we wake up. By the time the working day ends, we've already spent hours indoors, rushed between responsibilities and questioned our life choices once or twice.

An extra hour of daylight could be the motivation to do something other than go straight home and wait for summer.

Ultimately, we cannot manufacture more daylight. But we can reconsider how we use it. A system introduced over a century ago for wartime convenience shouldn't be immune to change simply because we've become somewhat accustomed to it.

After all, perhaps it's time we stopped organising our days around the clock and started organising the clock around the lives we actually live.

Trick, Treat or Trash:
How Halloweek Encourages Students to Overconsume

Isabella Schraibman
Contributor

Halloweek is October's biggest event in Cardiff students' calendars, turning Cathays into a sea of cowboys, pirates and bananas. From conversations on what niche costume you're buying, to spooky décor and trips to The Joke Shop, the celebration extends far beyond October 31st. This once lowkey event has become a week-long extravaganza. However, behind all the fun, how are we as students fuelling a culture of overconsumption? And what can we do to change?

For us students, Halloween is the perfect opportunity to let our hair down, go out with friends and escape the stress of midterms. However, the culture of Halloween celebration has shifted from improvised and borrowed to bought and binned. The streets of Cathays alone this week were a sure tell of that fact.

One of the biggest contributors to Halloweek consumer culture is the pressure to wear new costumes every time with the expectation that you can't rewear it. For students especially, there's an unspoken rule for your costume to be funny, yet sexy, yet unique and above all, Instagram worthy. This pressure encourages us students to shop fast fashion for the convenience and price.

Thinking back to childhood, most of us had a costume box with your hand-me-downs inherited from your neighbour, who inherited it from their cousin. Back then, your trusty witch costume would see you through five consecutive Halloweens, no questions asked. However, as time has gone on, we've made the switch to single-use cheap fixes which rarely stand the test of time.

Halloweek's environmental impact is hard to ignore with 7 million Halloween costumes in the UK being thrown away each year. Last week, Cardiff town centre was taken over by queues outside The Joke Shop with people flurrying to get a last-minute costume. An easy and often cheaper fix would be to take a look on Vinted, and then you feel very smug when asked where you bought your outfit.

As university students, we have to manage everyday expenses, rent, budgeting all whilst studying and having a social life. Halloweek places financial pressure to spend money where it may not be feasible for most people. With Yoloween tickets being resold on Overheard for £40 and

"Jager Bombs in the SU's Great Hall being bumped up to £5 each,"

a culture is being created which drives disposable buying.

You could argue that Halloween is one night a year so some fast fashion, easy décor and cheap fix can't hurt. However, in making small changes we could make a far greater difference then we may expect.

Nobody is perfect, but with a slight mindset shift from new to reuse, we could help a lot. You could text the group chat planning an Albany Road charity shop crawl, do a costume swap with another house's old classics or simply have a dig through your old cardboard boxes, grab some paint and do a bit of DIY.

Halloweek itself does not need to be cancelled. It's a highlight of the year and a staple of the university lifestyle. But it does reveal a broader culture of overconsumption, and the pressures driving it.

Most of us would admit to buying something new, wearing it once, then binning it or making a last-minute trip to B&M for cheap décor. Yet some of the best nights out come from that awful t-shirt you bought in the charity shop and managed to turn into a costume.

So, perhaps next October we switch from Shein to charity shop chic and reach for our old classics.



Backpacking In Someone Else's *Back Garden*

Milly Arthur
Opinion Editor

Few things seem to earn a young Brit quite as much admiration as stuffing a backpack and setting off around the world. We celebrate the gap year, envy the Instagram stories, and welcome home friends with tales of how much they have grown, as though crossing borders automatically broadens the mind.

Travel is sold as a way of finding yourself, but rarely do we stop to consider what happens when someone else's home becomes the setting for that discovery. Is there a valid reason that people trivialise the 'gap yah' experience?

Take the infamous Southeast Asian drinking bucket. Sold for a few pounds, it has become an almost obligatory part of the backpacking experience: cheap alcohol, shared straws, and nights that blur into morning. There is nothing inherently wrong with selling drinks to tourists, and local businesses have every right to profit from visitors.

But the relationship becomes more complicated when British tourists behave in ways they would never consider acceptable at home. We are happy to spend money in the local economy, but less concerned with what we leave behind.

The usual defence is that tourism creates jobs. For many communities, it is an essential source of income. But does the fact that somebody profits from our presence mean we are entitled to behave however we please? A business accepting our money is not the same as a community welcoming everything that comes with it. Economic benefit cannot be the only measure of whether tourism is ethical, particularly when those who bear its social costs are not necessarily those who profit most.

The problem extends beyond drunkenness. It appears in the small, everyday ways tourists treat people differently abroad. I have watched as tourists delight in photographing children without asking, describing local adults as "cute", and marvelling at poverty as though it were part of the scenery.

We would hardly approach an unfamiliar child in Britain, take their photograph and upload it as a charming holiday memory. Nor would we usually describe a grown adult as "cute" simply because their appearance, language or circumstances seem unfamiliar to us.

Yet elsewhere, people can become curiosities, their privacy apparently less important because they have become part of our imperial playground, the backdrop against which we perform the business of finding ourselves.

There is something I find particularly uncomfortable about the way poverty gets folded into the travel experience. The image of the impoverished child, presented as a symbol of innocence or a reason for Western generosity, allows us to feel compassionate without questioning our own position.

We have inherited the language of campaigns promising to 'feed the world', as though entire populations are waiting for wealthy outsiders to rescue them. We arrive as tourists and leave imagining ourselves as benefactors.

Spain's anti-tourism protests show what happens when residents begin to challenge this arrangement. In June 2025, protests across Barcelona, Mallorca and other destinations drew attention to housing costs, overcrowding and neighbourhoods increasingly organised around visitors. Tourism brings enormous economic benefits, but residents have questioned whether those benefits justify the cost of living in places transformed to accommodate holidaymakers. Slogans such as "tourism is terrorism" were used to convey this message.

Travel can be an extraordinary education, exposing us to lives and cultures beyond our own and challenging the assumptions we barely realise we hold. Perhaps that is precisely the kind of education missing from Band Aid's 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' whose infamous refrain reduces an entire continent to a single image of suffering, as though Africa were a country waiting for Western salvation.

Yet travel can reproduce the same narrow-mindedness it supposedly challenges. Respecting a place means understanding its history, recognising our own privilege and reconsidering whether haggling over a negligible amount is really worth it.

Above all, it means remembering that being welcomed as a tourist does not make us entitled to behave however we please.



Israeli Society And The Anatomy Of A *Broken Nation*



Arielle Melamed
Opinion Editor

A few weeks ago, my parents boarded a flight to Israel to cast their ballots: a journey neither had made for an election since leaving the country thirty years ago. As my mother put it with dry gravity, they were flying back to "save democracy".

Their decision was far from abnormal. An estimated 67,000 Israelis living abroad returned to visit the polling stations last week. Many making the trip because watching your home country descend into turmoil, while you can only watch on from afar, creates a palpable sense of hopelessness which cannot be mitigated.

I assume, like my parents, they made the journey to "save democracy".

When this article was still taking shape, before the election results had come trickling in, I deliberated over whether this article could be characterised as an exposition on Israeli society or merely a straightforward political breakdown. With the tallies becoming increasingly clear, this distinction now feels meaningless.

You cannot interpret the numbers without interrogating the fractured society they mirror.

For many years, Israel had existed for me in the peripheral manner familiar to many children of immigrants. Even as I write this, a sickening amount of guilt builds up inside of me for pulling apart a society from a safe, partially detached distance.

Whilst I am inextricably bound to the country, I remain sheltered from its immediate ramifications. Growing up British, I am free from the existential threat of violence which looms large in the lives of every Israeli. My lived experience grants me the ability to examine how the country functions through a lens that is simultaneously cold and yet rather intimate.

Abroad, Israel is routinely flattened into a monochrome caricature, an ethno-military monolith moving in lockstep behind its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. But, that caricature is miles away from the fractured and contradictory cacophony of voices which actually exists on the ground.

On the surface, a decisive majority of Israelis rejected Netanyahu's government. His coalition of war-mongering far-right zealots and ultra-Orthodox factions managed only a projected 53 seats: eight short of the 61-seat threshold required to govern. Arab parties emerged as unlikely kingmakers, racking up a significant number of seats.

"Unfortunately, this brings no clarity for the nation. "

While the anti-Netanyahu camp assembled more raw votes, the opposition displays the very malaise gripping the country. It has become splintered, suspicious, and fundamentally unable to cooperate. With more than thirty parties vying for the allegiance of barely 10 million people, the ballot box did not give us direction; instead, it delivered an autopsy of a deadlock.

To understand why a country of 10 million produces dozens of irreconcilable political camps, one has to recognise that Israeli society was stitched together by communities bound by shared persecution, displacement and survival. European holocaust survivors, and waves of Jewish refugees from Iraq, Yemen, North Africa, Ethiopia, the former Soviet Union, and more. This dizzying tapestry creates strong cultural vitality but also means chronic instability is practically baked into the country's foundations.

My parents grew up in an era where it seemed entirely reasonable to believe that their children would never have to serve in the army, where peace and coexistence were inevitable milestones waiting on the horizon. Figures such as former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was willing to stake his career, and ultimately his life, on the conviction that true security required coexistence and peace.

Decades of occupation and polarization, cultivated by Netanyahu and exacerbated by Hamas, bred an internal tribalism where compromise is viewed as surrender and empathy is treated as weakness.

"And what of Gaza?"

It sits barely an hour's drive away, destroyed beyond all recognition, yet it might as well be on another planet for all it registers in daily domestic debate. Caught in the frozen grief of October 7th, mainstream Israel cannot bear to look south, let alone reckon with the moral cost of its government's blood-filled campaign. Yet, fissures in that wall of silence exist.

In *NAZA*, a documentary by Israeli filmmakers Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor, titled after the military acronym for collateral damage (nezek agavi), anonymous soldiers break ranks from Tel Aviv rooftops to lay bare the machinery of destruction. Proving that, while a traumatized nation largely refuses to face the music, the first painful steps toward an internal reckoning have already begun.

Looking at Israel today, a nation exhausted, fractured and adrift, the election reflects a profound loss of direction. Yet, the 67,000 people who boarded flights just to mark a piece of paper prove that the desire for change has not entirely vanished.

If Israel is to survive its own internal fractures, it will need more than an electoral stalemate; it will require reviving the lost belief that ideas of peace and coexistence are not outdated relics of the past but the only viable way forward.



WHAT IS IT LIKE AT CARDIFF UNIVESITY KAZAKHSTAN

Oliver Hanlon
Features Editor

Last September, the first students walked through the doors of Cardiff University Kazakhstan. The opening of this transnational branch of Cardiff University was, and still is, highly controversial for the country's anti-homosexuality law which was passed just before it opened. The legislative pushes to restrict "LGBT propaganda" in Kazakhstan sparked immediate pushback from students and human rights campaigners, raising questions about how Cardiff University aligns its values with overseas expansion.

This law made itself visible to Cardiff University on Cathays Park campus when, last year, young people from Astana contacted *Gair Rhydd* to outline an example of the law being enforced. To read this piece, head to *gairrhydd.com*.

In an interview with *Gair Rhydd* in December 2025,

Vice-Chancellor Wendy Larner defended the campus amidst scrutiny over travel expenses and simultaneous staff cuts here on the South Wales campus.

"Transnational education is absolutely part of the future for UK universities, and I'm very proud of what we've done in Kazakhstan," Larner stated.

Addressing concerns over material benefits for UK-based students, she added: "I look forward to the day when more of our students here in Cardiff are going to Kazakhstan and indeed vice versa. So, this is again an enormous opportunity for staff, for students, for our partners in the city."

In the same interview, Vice-Chancellor Larner pointed out that Cardiff University is not alone in the choice to expand with international campuses in recent years. Other UK universities such as University of Birmingham, University of Nottingham and Newcastle University operate overseas campuses in places like China, Malaysia, Singapore, and Dubai.

Cardiff University is one of only two UK universities, alongside De Montfort University, with a presence in Kazakhstan.



In Vice-Chancellor Larner's view, this is precisely why Kazakhstan offers Cardiff University such an opportunity.

Now that its first full academic year has passed and a new one has begun, what is it like at Cardiff University Kazakhstan?

Cardiff University Kazakhstan is governed by the same university executive that governs the main Cardiff University, but it is registered as a separate legal entity. Vice-Chancellor Wendy Larner oversees both institutions, but the corporate separation ensures that financial liabilities, operational debts, or, importantly, legal risks incurred by the Astana branch do not fall on the UK institution.

Freedom of Information disclosures obtained by *Gair Rhydd* clarify that the operating costs of the Astana campus are held entirely by Cardiff University Kazakhstan as a distinct legal entity. However, financial ties between the two organisations remain direct:

"A percentage of any surplus income generated by Cardiff University Kazakhstan is repatriated directly to Cardiff University in Wales.

As Cardiff University continues to run a deficit, it is unclear what role this financial relationship will play.

The Freedom of Information response also confirms that

Over 50 Cardiff University staff members have traveled to Astana to deliver teaching or administrative support since the campus opened.

Under the operating agreement, the Kazakhstan branch covers all academic, travel, and accommodation expenses incurred by visiting UK staff.

However, the deployment of UK academics to Astana has drawn sharp criticism from the Cardiff branch of the University and College Union (UCU). Union representatives expressed strong opposition to staff travelling to the branch campus, raising concerns over staff safety, unmanageable workload pressures back in Cathays Park, and the ethics of expanding overseas operations while domestic staff faced severe restructuring and threat of redundancy. The union repeatedly pushed university management for specific risk assessments and explicit health and safety guarantees for any personnel asked to teach in Kazakhstan.

Despite being run by the same executive, student representation remains separate. Cardiff University Kazakhstan does not have its own Students' Union, nor are its students members of Cardiff Students' Union in Wales. Their campus does not use the sabbatical officer model we have here in Cathays. Instead, student representation is handled internally by a campus-wide Student Government.

I spoke to the president of the student government at Cardiff University Kazakhstan, Olzhas Malik, about his role and what the student experience is like in Kazakhstan. "The position of President was filled through a campus-wide election. I submitted my nomination and campaigned alongside several other candidates. The election had a 71% voter turnout across the campus, and I was elected by the student body," Malik says.

"The inaugural year has been a very unique experience because we were not simply joining an established university community, but in many ways helping to build one. Overall, I would describe the first year as exciting, formative and occasionally challenging, but there is something quite special about being part of the first generation of students shaping the culture of a new Cardiff University campus," Malik explains

In its first year, teaching in Kazakhstan relied mainly on guest lecturers from Cardiff, but Malik says the campus now employs more local staff in Kazakhstan to offer "greater continuity and day-to-day support for students," alongside ongoing visits from UK staff.

Students at Cardiff University Kazakhstan also have access to Learning Central, research journals, and the online library service.

"The Student Government acts as a bridge between students and the university," Malik says. "From my experience, management has been willing to listen when students raise issues through these channels. Feedback is gathered through Staff Student Panels, surveys and other mechanisms, and we have already seen improvements to services, facilities and processes following student input."

"Outside of lectures, student life has expanded quickly, with the campus now running more than 30 active sports clubs and societies," Malik says. "These cover a wide range of interests, including academic, professional, cultural, social and sporting activities, giving students the chance to build a real campus community from the ground up."

However, cross-campus links are limited despite the shared infrastructure;

Students are yet to move between the two campuses at this time, in either direction.

"Students in Astana do feel connected to the wider Cardiff University community, particularly through our shared academic programmes and systems,"

Malik says. "At the same time, I think there is still a lot of potential to make the relationship between students in Kazakhstan and Wales much stronger." To address this, he plans to meet with Cardiff Students' Union President Joshua Tandy to discuss formal collaboration between the two student bodies.

"Work is also underway to expand cross-border opportunities beyond digital links, with plans to introduce cultural initiatives and physical student exchanges," Malik says. "There is growing interest in the Welsh language, with plans for Welsh language lessons to be introduced on campus in the future. Looking ahead, there are opportunities for academic mobility in the later years of our programmes, alongside plans for a summer school programme which would give students in Kazakhstan the opportunity to visit Cardiff and experience student life in Wales firsthand."

For now, Cardiff University Kazakhstan remains a test case for overseas expansion; we can't fully know what the student experience is or will be until the first students graduate. Until then, questions remain over whether the promised exchanges, cultural links, and shared academic community between Cathays Park and Astana will ever fully materialise.



Images sourced from WikiMedia Commons

Designed by Olivia Nilsen

People Watching Counts as Studying, Right?

Helen Turnbull
Head of Culture

It's mid-November and exam season is looming. Halloween feels like a distant memory, and life suddenly feels more like University instead of Uni. I'm wrapped up in a thick coat and a hoodie, trudging down Woodville Road to the inevitable destination: the ASSL. Or the 'ASS', the 'lib', the 'hell hole', or 'where dreams come to die', as it's more affectionately known.

I tell myself that this study session will be different. I'll be focused, productive and an academic weapon. About half an hour later, I read the first line of my set reading and spent the rest of my time watching everyone around me.



I spot the 'Aggressive Typer' first. They're hunched over their laptop, a stack of Monster Energy cans growing around them and their legs tapping at 120 beats a minute. Hopped up on caffeine, the typing grows louder and more frantic. Just managing to sneak a peek at their screen, I make out a myriad of numbers and chemical symbols. Thank heavens I chose my 'Mickey Mouse' humanities degree.



Across the desks sits the 'Aesthetic Studier'. Glancing over their desk, it closely resembles a Pinterest board: a Hoffi Coffi iced vanilla latte, a pastel highlighter selection arranged in colour order beside an impeccable day planner and an extremely green salad in a glass Tupperware container. I poke into my own bag; the salad puts my Lidl £1.79 cheese balls to shame. They are gently typing out notes on their laptop, immersed in their Apple ecosystem with an iPad and Apple Pencil. There is an elegant demeanour to them, not stressed, just wholeheartedly locked in.

I now glimpse one of the worst types of people you can be near in the library. Or perhaps groups of people. The 'Chatters'. "Did you hear what happened after I left YOLO?" "Ugh, I'm so behind on my lectures… I've missed three in a row for this module and I've got a 2,000-word analysis due in two weeks." For a moment, it's theatrical. A relatable performance. But after five minutes of this, with their laptop lids still shut, it gets frustrating quickly. They'll chat for another half an hour, then say they're bored and go home.

In the corner lurks the 'All-Nighter'. Nobody knows when they arrived, but judging by their eye bags, it could have been a few days ago. There are too many tabs open in their window, and

"the pile of Greggs wrappers has warped into an emotional support figure."

I look over again, and they raise their gaze. It's a thousand-yard stare… they've experienced things no student should experience. They are no longer completing the assignment; it's a psychological battle with the concept of time.

Finally, the cherry on the cake, the 'Cougher'. It starts with a relatively polite cough. And then another. Before long, the entire section is waiting tensely for the next instalment. Each cough gets louder and more concerning than the last. People in the immediate vicinity subtly pull jumpers over their noses; others move seats. We've all just managed to shake off the Freshers' flu, so the end-of-term disease must be avoided at all costs. The 'Cougher' remains oblivious, sipping from an oversized water bottle that clearly isn't helping.

Yet, the worst person in the library is probably me: the 'People Watcher'. I arrive with ambitious plans, a stack of reading and immediately become fascinated by everything but my own work. Eventually, I give up, leaving me disheartened with the same stack of reading.



Are Students Listening to Welsh Music?

Liv Whitehead
Culture Editor

Cymru am byth! Even on Spotify Wrapped. This week Gair Rhydd was itching to know if students listen to Welsh music. I set out on my mission. I decided to lurk around The Taf, one leg against the wall and swinging an onion ring around my finger, waiting to pounce for an interview.

Targets spotted, I made my way around tables to pose the big question: "Do you listen to much Welsh music?" The results were nothing short of fascinating.

It seemed that the students who were fans of Welsh music were the ones who had actively sought to immerse themselves within Welsh culture, as well as those who had delved into the live music scene in Cardiff.

I was often asked the hasty question, "Do you mean Welsh language music, or can the singer just be Welsh?"

I decided to further investigate at an event. Cordia was performing at Clwb Ifor Bach at the weekend, and I was going to do some serious sleuthing. Upon arrival, I deduced that most of the attendees were students; I could tell by the reluctance to wear a jacket even though it was raining outside.

I went in undercover as a normal gig-goer, so no one felt pressured or harassed by an interview. Popping up to groups of friends and saying, "I'm with Gair Rhydd and I was wondering if I could ask you some questions please?" seemed to do the trick.

What was clear was that most if not all the students attending were Welsh and had listened to reams of Welsh music in their time. Some were kind enough to provide me with a database (Spotify playlists) and suggestions on where to dig deeper to find out more.

Eisteddfod was suggested to me at no end. Apparently this was where Cordia had first been sighted, at the final in 2015, before performing there again this year. Of course, I had heard of the festival, but I hadn't realised that Eisteddfod was a Welsh code word for "secret base of the best musicians in the universe".

Cordia stepped out on stage and I was enthralled. They were singing in Welsh, the lyrics could have been anything, but I had the best time ever. I couldn't sing along like everyone else was doing since the songs weren't just "shwmae" and "diolch" repetitively. I was just beyond thrilled to dance with my sidekick, Agent DoubleMalibu-Coke. I left Clwb Ifor Bach with daffodils sprouting from my ears.

Back to the previous question posed to me with frightened eyes, "do you mean music in the Welsh language?"

We are missing out on some absolute bangers by not listening to music in Welsh, but is that the fault of students who just want their music to encapsulate how they're feeling? Or have school curriculums deprived students of beautiful music, and Welsh musicians of more listeners, through not implementing Welsh into English curriculums? Inconclusive.

From my investigation, I have cracked the case on whether students listen to Welsh music. The results are that the students who have thrown themselves into Welsh culture, or are Welsh themselves, will have files upon files of tunes to share. Others will be familiar with the English-speaking Welsh artists, such as Stereophonics or Tom Jones, but are affirmatively missing out on so very much.

My New Band Believe Live at The Globe

Jasper Nicholas
Contributor

After releasing a brilliant self-titled debut back in April, My New Band Believe announced their theatrical art rock sound would be coming to Cardiff for their first show in Wales. Led by frontman Cameron Picton (who you may know from the disbanded Black Midi), this new band features no other constant members; not exactly a solo project, but a way for Picton to realise his ideas through performance and collaboration with a wide range of musicians. As such, no tour from the band is quite the same, with a variation of instruments, musicians, and song arrangements gracing different stages.

The night was held at The Globe, a lovely venue located in the heart of Roath on the bend of Albany Road. As a more intimate venue outside the city centre, it's worth keeping an eye on for some of the more alternative gigs coming to Cardiff. With minimal separation from the performers, the main standing area packs out nicely, while a central balcony area provides complete views of the stage.

Kicking off the support acts was Myer U Clark, a brilliant folk-pop artist whose brain-scratching melodies and ever-winding songwriting are on full display on his newest album *Tinderbox*. After a short interval was even more jaw-dropping fingerstyle from Evelyn Gray, member of the brilliant band 'Tapir!'. Her solo set combined masterful guitar dynamics with emotional vocals in a gripping performance best showcased on the single 'Clotheslines'.

Up next was the main event, composed of two guitarists, a drummer, and an upright bassist. The flailing ends of newly fit strings caught the stage lights as the two electric acoustics burst into colour. Backed by exhilarating drums that skipped behind the melodies, the upright bass slipped perfectly into all the space between. Picton's vocals are dramatic and deliver every syllable with a poetic rhythm, all the while sliding between low, husky murmurs and high, straining cries. At times the frontman championed a harmonica, and, pointing his guitar to the sky, breathed new life into the ringing climaxes of familiar tracks and new material alike.

This maximal side of the band (done best on 'In the Blink of an Eye') is magnified by the softer moments; when the bassist gently taps the strings, jazz brushes drag along the snares, and you could hear a pin drop before Picton's voice fills the room. The band's delicate skills are best portrayed on 'Love Story', a beautiful song that touches on the sides of love as simple as preparing dinner before swelling into a stunning climax.

All the band's strengths were on display in their final song, 'Heart of Darkness'. On the album it runs for just over 8 minutes, but the rendition we saw was closer to 20. After an explosive opening, whose frantic melodies have a perfect ebb and flow, the song twists into mystery before a dreamy middle section that descends into eerie harmonies, accompanied by the harrowing screeches of a cello bow drawn along a cymbals edge and the gentle tingling of bells. These transitions were all queued by intense eye contact between the band members that made for a truly gripping performance.

Picton especially gave his all for the final act, at one point holding a note until his breathless screech rang around the room.



The *Horror* of Cathays Lidl

Grace Belby
Culture Editor

It's that time of the week again when all of the food in your fridge is either gone or out of date and the only thing left in your cupboard is not even half a pack of pasta. It's a Sunday at 3 PM, Lidl is your closest (and cheapest) supermarket available. Sure, it's a Sunday, so it must be very busy because everyone is in the same boat. So, you take your reusable bags and make the short walk. Right when you turn the corner at the entrance, your heart stops.

Are you in Lidl Cathays or are you in the newest Purge movie? The overlapping beeps and ringing from the checkout section sound like the siren commencing the destruction. The aisles in front of you are individual streets of lawless destruction and the blue 'trolley baskets' are the weapons.

Most of the population are moving quickly, eager to get out and go home. You see a gang blocking the dairy aisle, defending their territory as they search for the most in-date milk. Luckily, you manage to swiftly snatch a pint whilst the fridge door is ajar. First aisle done, milk acquired. You're struck again, however, when you find the most heinous criminal: the 'Indecisive Slow Shopper'. These people do not care about the chaos around them, let alone their safety, and will stay in this corrupt city until they have what they specifically want. Are they hardcore or just really stupid? I'll let you decide. This particular variant is deciding on their pasta sauce, right in the way of your green pesto. You clear your throat and wait impatiently for a beat. After ultimately failing to push past, you give up and decide to potentially come back for it.

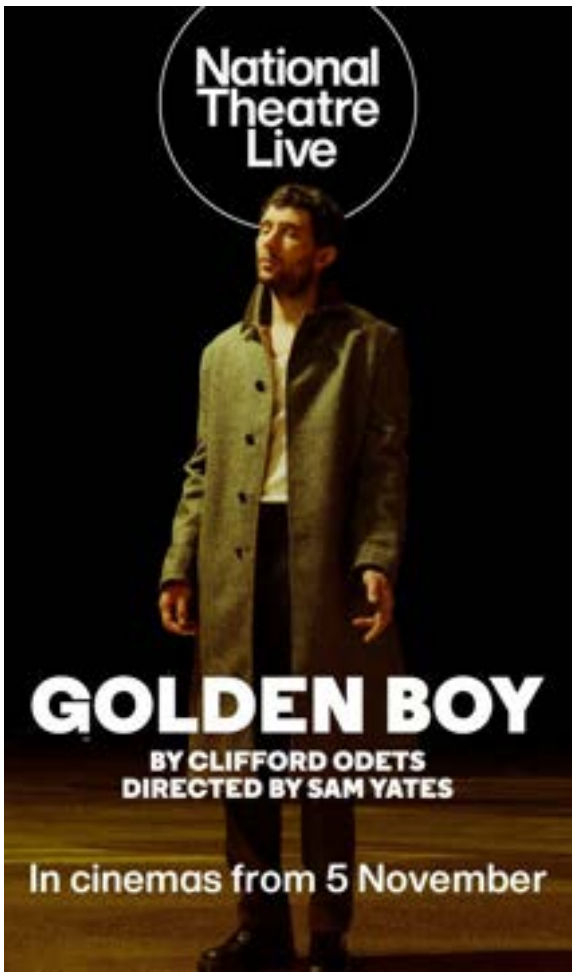
The final hurdles you need to overcome are the frozen and drinks aisles, or the death chambers. Around you are society members picking out their multitude of drinks for Wednesday. The entire section is blocked and bundled with herds of people, scrambling to grab anything they can, like hungry, agitated beasts. Packs of lemonade are being slaughtered and slit open for a single bottle, cans of Diet Pepsi are falling onto the floor, and leaking milk is slowly dripping from an indecisive shopper's 'trolley basket', causing harm to any passer-by.

The store is utter anarchy and no matter where you stand, you are somehow blocking someone else's way. You look down at your pesky basket: milk, some grapes you managed to grab (that expire tomorrow) and a loaf of bread (that has been squashed by your milk). You glance from your basket and back to the madness taking place in front of your eyes. You decide to brave it and push through the swarm, dodging the crowds of carnage.

After almost falling into a trap set by a rogue basket, maliciously placed in the middle of the aisle, you get to the finale: checking out. Everyone is scrambling to leave the hell hole and retreat to safety. More queues of people are flooding the area, and the line towards freedom is at most fifteen minutes long. Whilst whipping out your phone to navigate the Lidl app (you might as well earn some points whilst in this warzone), a pair of freshers push in whilst "joining their friend". That is your last straw. You drop your 'trolley basket' out of sheer irritation and immediately head back to the entrance door, pushing your way through the crowds of people amid the ruthless, violent, store-wide outbreak of lunacy.

Once home, you make do with the half packet of pasta and solemnly swear that next time you must aim for a weekday morning.

'The Fist is Mightier Than The Fiddle'
A Review of *Golden Boy* at The National Theatre



Lily Hill
Culture Editor

Set against the backdrop of 1930s New York during the height of the Great Depression, Clifford Odets' Golden Boy poses a question that still feels as relevant today as it did during the play's Broadway premiere in 1937: what is the cost of the American Dream?

The play follows Joe Bonaparte, a young Italian-American who has spent his life, up until now, as a gifted and aspiring violinist. Yet when he is presented with the opportunity to turn to the lucrative and brutal world of professional boxing, he finds himself drawn towards the ring. In a world in which Bonaparte himself states "you're just about dead if you don't got a dollar", Joe begins to abandon his artistic ambitions for music in favour of money, fame and the promise of a better life. But what he does not bargain for is how this decision will lead him down a much darker journey of self-destruction.

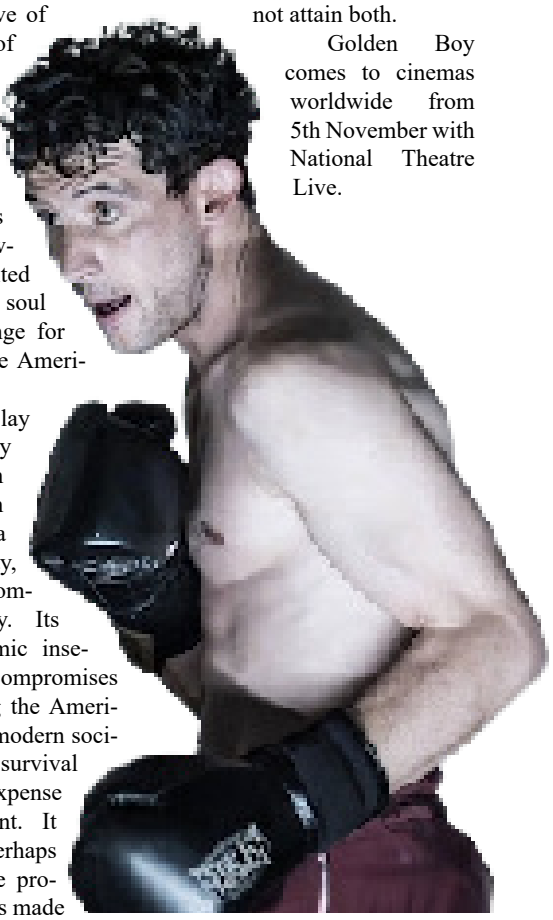
Josh O'Connor gives a particularly compelling portrayal of Joe, capturing the delicate balance between the sensitivity of the musician and the aggression of the boxer. He manages to handle moments of physical confidence and prowess in the ring, yet simultaneously hone in on the tenderness required in the moments when he steps out of that environment. As the play progresses, his transformation of Joe becomes increasingly difficult to watch. Not in a bad way, but in a way that is painful to witness, as his boyish ambition gives in to the brutal world that shapes him into this prizefighting phenomenon.

One of the production's most striking features is its use of music. A live string orchestra resides in an alcove behind the stage, whilst a younger version of Joe, violin in hand, consistently haunts 21-year-old Joe's narrative. He serves as a spectral reminder of the boy he once was, and makes his internal conflict seem almost tangible.

The concept of boxing cleverly encapsulates this conflict within the production itself. In one corner stands the future Joe believes will provide him salvation: aggression, greed and commercial interests of the boxing world. Whilst in the other stands everything he risks leaving behind: the love of his family, the beauty of music and the boy he once was. As he edges closer to the former, he becomes increasingly estranged from his past, and transforms into an angry, power-hungry and conceited man who has lost his soul and passion in exchange for what he believes is the American Dream.

Yet, whilst the play debuted almost ninety years ago, the question stands, why invest in a revival in 2026? In a hauntingly realist way, Golden Boy feels uncomfortably contemporary. Its exploration of economic insecurity, desire and the compromises necessary to achieving the American Dream speak to a modern society in which financial survival can still come at the expense of personal fulfillment. It presents the idea that perhaps the real tragedy of the production is not that Joe is made to choose money over music, but that he is made to believe he cannot attain both.

Golden Boy comes to cinemas worldwide from 5th November with National Theatre Live.



Comedian Nish Kumar on *the Far-Right, Representation and Why He's So, So Angry*

Ruby Collins
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

Last week, before his show in Cardiff, we got the opportunity to talk to political comedian and host of Pod Save the UK: Nish Kumar. Coming to the end of his UK tour 'Angry Humour from a Really Nice Guy', Nish reflected on his highlights, lowlights, and the things that make him very, very angry.

We started by asking Nish about his politically charged, opinionated comedy style. Nish commented that in the UK comedy scene, he feels like an "outlier right now" as there's not a "large appetite for an angry left-wing person shouting about the news". Aside from him and "three of his friends", not many comedians want to compound current cultural anxieties by allowing the news to consume what could be restful entertainment.

Despite this, Nish explained that joking about the news is his main outlet for navigating and expressing his most raw feelings on such complicated topics, adding that "the gap between who I am on-stage and off-stage has thinned to nothing".

After watching Nish's live performance, his feelings of total transparency certainly ring true. In interview and on stage, Nish speeds through historical and cultural minefields: a few examples being Mamdani's "outstanding" political communications, the unfeasibility of ethno-states and Tommy Robinson's fans who claim to be definitely (not) racist.

Despite provocative political humour being "part of the rich tapestry of stand-up comedy", Nish is questioned by audiences, critics and, most notably, his mother, for his "depressing" comedic material.

One question we wanted to put to Nish is his choice to unapologetically brand himself as the "angry" comedian, and whether this conflicts with the log kya kahenge (what will people think?) sentiment commonly transferred to South Asian youth. Nish acknowledged that "how you express your opinion is very often constrained by the person you are and the type of politics you're trying to espouse", noting that many social groups receive disparate critique for their opinions.

Additionally, we asked Nish about how different people in the South Asian community have responded to his career in comedy. Laughing, he explained that his mother and father were potentially the most upset. Despite their initial disapproval, once he saw it was possible for South Asians to flourish in British comedy, he felt his choice of career was "as simple as, oh", well "I can do that, so I guess I'm gonna do that".

Hearing more about Nish's journey into comedy truly reflected the importance of diverse representation in British entertainment. Having watched Goodness Gracious Me on television and even seeing their live show, Nish explained that he is part of a small generation of South Asian children whose aspirations to comedy were made possible by the representation this popular 90s show offered. Describing BBC sketches of British South Asian families, he explained this content felt "empowering": like "we had control and agency about the narratives that were being created about us".

Despite this moving reflection on his childhood inspirations, Nish commented disappointingly about current brown British politicians in the spotlight. Despairing of Rishi Sunak and Suella Braverman, Nish believes that there are politicians "cosigning racism" which is "absolutely appalling". While even his generation had "hardly any brown people on TV at all", he worries that "young South Asians" could "think that you have to prostrate yourself in front of White Britain" to succeed.

Adding to this pensive tone, Nish feels that we are in a "moment of regression" as Trump's election and subsequent "pushback against DEI" (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) have created a sense that people don't even need to "pretend" to care about diversity anymore. When asked about his feelings on Free Word, one of Gair Rhydd's key focuses and ambitions, he suggested that people now "have this illusion of free speech" which is actually "algorithmically controlled by tech billionaires". The internet is "masquerading" as free speech but actually only promotes hate.

Typical of Nish, we steered the conversation onto a brighter topic as he concluded that genuine Free Word is absolutely fundamental for humanity, partly because it is "what pays [his] bills" as "there's nothing free about my speech!".

Nish's tour is an exciting whirlwind of a watch. Characteristically disordered and empoweringly passionate, out of Nish's endearing chaos comes a leftist voice of rational critique.



The Messy Moral Compass of A24's *Primetime*

Ryan Greenhall
Culture Editor

There is something deeply uncomfortable about watching Primetime. Its subject matter is undeniably disturbing, following the pursuit of men attempting to exploit children. Yet the film is less interested in questioning whether these men deserve to be exposed. It examines the people who make a spectacle of exposing them. Primetime explores the uncomfortable possibility that even a morally necessary cause and action can become corrupted by the same people who claim to serve it.

Directed by Lance Oppenheim, Primetime follows Chris Hansen, the presenter of the controversial American reality television programme To Catch a Predator. The premise is straightforward. Using online decoys posing as underage teenagers, Hansen and his production team lure paedophiles into houses fitted with hidden cameras, where they are confronted with their own messages and frightening behaviour. The programme was an undeniable ratings success, but its proposed move into a primetime television slot brings an uncomfortable demand for increasingly sensational material.

Robert Pattinson is generating a lot of Oscar buzz for his excellent portrayal of Hansen. He plays an unsettling combination of self-righteousness and ambition. There is also something distinctly inhuman about his performance. His character seems more interested in delivering a great performance than achieving actual justice; the extremely important matter at hand. Merritt Wever is equally compelling as producer Andie Bender, whose professional detachment disguises a willingness to compromise almost everything for the sake of ratings and success. Meanwhile, Skyler Gisondo provides the film's emotional centre as Dan Plum, demonstrating how easily ordinary people can be drawn into something for money or approval.

However, this is where the film's moral argument becomes very nuanced. Primetime finds a pretty successful distinction between condemning the methods of the programme and condemning the predators themselves. The film never makes us believe that these men are innocent victims. The absence of criminal convictions, hypocrisy, manipulation and legal ambiguity surrounding the operations are all legitimate concerns. Two things can be morally wrong without being morally equivalent. One person's wrongdoing does not excuse another's, and I believe this film gestures towards this complexity quite well.

Visually, Oppenheim creates an atmosphere that almost feels physically rotten. The saturated colours, grainy footage and claustrophobic interiors give the film the appearance of a damaged television broadcast. As the story progresses, its thriller elements give way to something closer to psychological horror, leading to an intense finale that feels more like a haunting than a conventional dramatic resolution. The film leaves you with a lot of different questions and opinions.

In conclusion, Primetime is a fascinating and ambitious examination of the relationship between morality and entertainment. Its greatest strength is its willingness to spark debate and provoke conversations. Its weakness is that dealing with themes like this in a film can make the audience view it negatively, and sometimes the message of the film doesn't entirely land in the way it intends. Still, there is something compelling about a film that allows the audience to think after watching.



Culture Shock:
Looking Cultured at the National Museum (and Why It Is Worth It)

Tom Faithfull
Contributor

It is the character we all see at a museum. They stand there for hours, staring at a single painting or sculpture as you wonder what they are looking for. They make comments on individual brushstrokes, the texture and expression that no one could possibly find meaning in. However, is visiting a museum like this just pretension or a unique way to approach it?

Last week, I visited the National Museum in Cardiff with my family and, having studied Art at A-Level, only then did I realise the extent to which studying Art had impacted my view of the gallery. So, with admittedly limited education in the field, I ask: how can we utilise time spent immersed in culture and appear to understand what we are doing, be it to pursue self-improvement or to try to impress our friends?

Do your research. Some may loathe the thought of reading before going to visit a museum; however, it can completely transform how you perceive the works on display. The National Museum publishes its collections online, so there is something to discover in the switch from reading to viewing the real work. For example, I remember noticing the blue used in Christian paintings and linking it back to my A Level studies and the fact that the pigment was valuable during the period. Small snippets of context like this reveal hidden details that a quick glance cannot.

Avoid being quick to judge and take time to understand the work.The National Museum has several works that sit outside realism. Some view these as lacking skill; however, I believe engaging with culture means questioning why something is the way it is and how it communicates a feeling. For example, looking at their Van Gogh painting (yes, he who painted 'Starry Night'), I remember being surprised by the texture you see in person that digital scans don't reveal. It is pieces like this where, because they are unusual, you can ask questions about why they are painted so texturally and what this symbolises, like an art connoisseur, for your friends and family!

Read the plaques and think further. One element people don't see without context is the decisions behind the piece. The plaques, though typically seen as less interesting, provide a great overview of decisions you may have missed. However, there are connections you might find yourself, like a kind of grown-up treasure hunt. I came across this artwork which many see as a scene of hairdressing; however, taking Art at A-Level led me to see this as a similar composition to Vermeer. Suddenly, we ask: Why is this so? Does this change the meaning of the piece? Does it tell us about something in our lives today? Staff are often on hand at the National Museum to answer any of these questions and, honestly, are often ignored, so a friendly hello goes a long way!

And finally, to look cultured, there are behaviours to avoid. Firstly, appreciate the space, so avoid taking selfies with each painting or shouting to your friends. Also, there is no pressure to dress formally or wear something incredibly out there, like a contemporary art piece, culture adapts to everyone, regardless of fashion choice

Overall, finding culture at the National Museum results from taking a moment out of our busy schedules and appreciating this opportunity found in Cardiff. Beyond the interactive maps for children doing treasure hunts and the rushed guided tours at most museums, this is not a space for academic learning, but one marked by how it inspires the masses to learn, question and change; to not just look at culture, but integrate it into our lives.

From 17 to 70: The Characters at Cardiff Gigs

Arabella Cox
Contributor

There is something quite special about a live music crowd. No two people are there for quite the same reason, yet somehow thousands of strangers end up screaming the same words at the same time. With Sam Fender bringing his 'Proper Massive Stadium Tour' to Cardiff's Principality Stadium next summer, it seems the perfect opportunity to investigate the different species of gig-goer you might encounter in the Welsh capital.

First, we have the 'Original Indie Loyalist', they treat music taste like a long-term investment; mentioning seeing Sam Fender "before he got big" with the pride of someone who bought a house before property prices exploded. Usually sporting a leather jacket, Adidas Sambas and a pint they have been nursing since the support act; they know every word to 'The Dying Light' and consider the song's opening piano riff a religious experience.

Next comes 'The Emotional'. They insist they are simply there for the music yet are visibly reconsidering every life decision during Spit of You. Sam Fender has somehow mastered the art of making thousands simultaneously confront their feelings, with songs about family, growing up, working-class life, as well as supporting men's mental health, particularly through his song 'Dead Boys'. There is always one person in the crowd who appears to be having a personal breakthrough, and frankly, we love that for them, a reminder that you are never alone.

Then there is 'The Olivia Dean Convert'. Following the enormous success of 'Rein Me In', his audience has expanded beyond its traditional indie-rock following. Suddenly, the crowd includes pop fans, younger listeners and people who might previously have struggled to name another Sam Fender song. This raises an important question: are you a genuine fan if you only know 'Rein Me In'? Musical gatekeeping is nothing new, but perhaps the best thing about music is discovering an artist through an unexpected collaboration. Besides, everyone has to start somewhere.

And while the crowd gets most of the attention, there is another cast of characters working behind the scenes – 'The Sideline Singers'. The volunteers scanning tickets, security keeping an eye on the crowd, sound technicians perfecting every guitar riff and the countless people working backstage keeping everything running smoothly. But they're not simply there to do a job; many share the same love of live music as the people they've welcomed through the doors. Look closely and you'll spot security head-bobbing along from the sidelines, volunteers singing quietly between ticket scans and sound technicians tapping their feet behind the mixing desk. They might not have bought a ticket, but they're just as much a part of the atmosphere.

Of course, Cardiff's music scene is far too varied to be reduced to one artist. Only recently, emerging indie band Keo brought their sound to Tramshed, while The Royston Club are set to join Blossoms at Utilita Arena this November. From the smaller stages of Clwb Ifor Bach to the enormous crowds at the Principality Stadium, Cardiff has a gig for every musical identity. There is always another crowd to join, full of people '17 going under' to 70 and over! Perhaps that is the beauty of a Cardiff gig. You might arrive as an indie purist, a newly converted Olivia Dean fan or someone who simply fancied a night out. By the end, you're all singing the same chorus, with a stranger's arm around your shoulder. Different outfits, different playlists, different reasons for being there – but one shared experience. And if nothing else, at least the emotional has finally had a good cry.

Street TV: *Radical Film and Video*

Jasmine Comanescu
Culture Editor

Twenty-five minutes away from Cardiff Castle lies Chapter, Cardiff's centre for art and culture, located in Canton. Since its foundation in 1971, it has become home to some of Wales' most thought-provoking exhibitions. Currently, its gallery exhibition is 'Street TV: Radical Film and Video in Wales'.

As the name suggests, the exhibition focuses on how film can be used politically, specifically within Wales in the 1970s and 1980s. To understand the rise of community video workshops, one must first become familiar with the portapack.

The portapack is a portable battery-generated tape recorder, and it was entirely revolutionary for activist filming. The main reason for this was its convenience. Portapacks were smaller and easier to use than other filming equipment at the time. They also required fewer people to work with, typically only needing one person on the camera itself and another two taking care of sound and filters. This made filmmaking more accessible to people and made transportation much easier. For radical video, this was crucial. Many of the videos shown at the exhibition featured real footage from protests or of travellers being forcefully detained by the police. Portapacks allowed filmmakers to capture these moments up close and ensured they wouldn't be lost to history.

1973 saw the Adamsdown Summer Festival, which was filmed on a portapack. The success of this recording laid the groundwork for the establishment of Cardiff Street TV the following year. Terence Dimmick, Steve Gough and Jane Hutt created Cardiff Street TV, which later became the Community Video Workshop. This was done with the support of the Welsh Arts Council, which loaned portapack video cameras. The videos created focused on life from a Welsh perspective and sought to explore social and economic realities at the time. By 1983, these tapes had been distributed nationwide, and the workshops began receiving funding from Channel 4 for independent documentaries.

All of this information was readily available in the gallery in the form of a timeline stretching across the walls. In the middle of the room, there are nine televisions playing eleven different videos. Upon entering, you are given an information sheet with the names of the videos, as well as some background on Chapter and the Community Video Workshop. At either end of the gallery, two larger rooms played their own respective videos through a projector, allowing multiple people to watch together.

The films themselves were between 12 minutes and over an hour long, although most averaged half an hour. A major focus of the tapes is on miners' rights, with one tape called 'Whose Law?' being produced under the South Wales Miners Video Project.

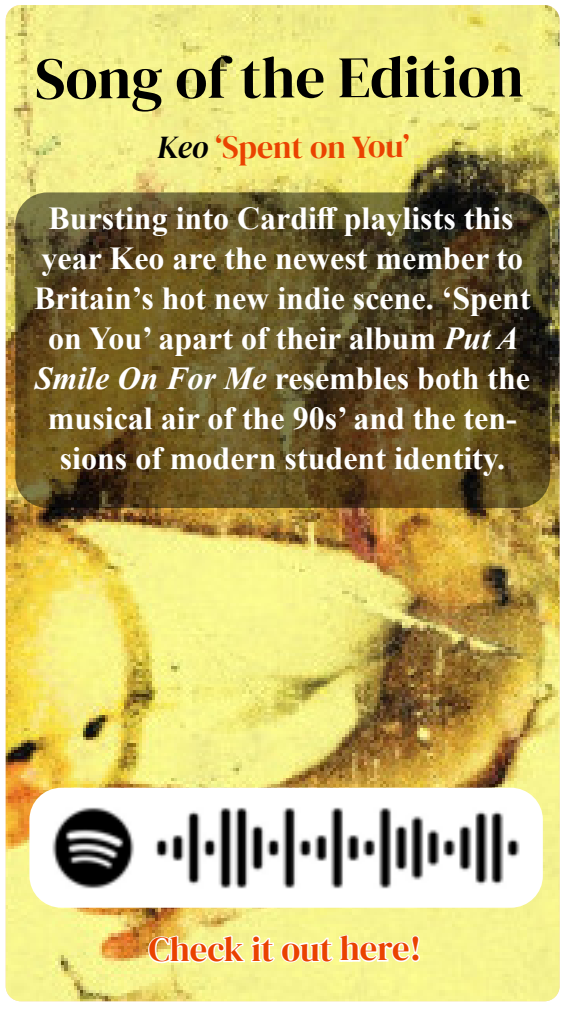
As much as the tapes are very much a reflection of their time, it was particularly interesting to see all the ways in which life back then still rings familiar with life today. 'Attitudes: A Survey' features young people's stress over growing unemployment rates. When asked what they blame for the lack of job opportunities in Wales at the time, one young man names "birthdates, technology and lack of recent war". While the latter is less common today, it's hard not to recognise similarities to "too many graduates" and the "rise of AI".

Whether you're looking towards the future or wanting to keep history alive, this exhibition is a must-see if you've got a spare afternoon in Canton.

Song of the Edition

***Keo* 'Spent on You'**

Bursting into Cardiff playlists this year Keo are the newest member to Britain's hot new indie scene. 'Spent on You' apart of their album *Put A Smile On For Me* resembles both the musical air of the 90s' and the tensions of modern student identity.



Check it out here!

"They'll suspend a protester but…[not]…a rapist."
Time to Act on Llais Rhydd

Alex Portman Ross
Politics Editor

Time To Act's founders Rebecca Rumsey and Emily Carr sat down with *Llais Rhydd* to discuss their work with students, our institutions and the Welsh Government.

Time To Act's foundation was catalyzed by a Freedom of Information request revealing Cardiff University's inaction regarding sexual violence. Despite hundreds of cases there had only been one expulsion prompting two survivors to decide it was *Time To Act.*

Becca and Emily's first move was a motion to the Student's Union's Annual General Meeting. The motion was instrumental in the university changing its code of conduct for student-staff relationships. TTA detailed how hard it was to achieve change in a period when our institutions wanted to 'wash their hands of... [sexual violence]' and focus on 'more pressing issues.' With the SU 'flat out denying' the spiking epidemic that Emily had highlighted as Women's Officer, any change was going to be hard fought.



Image credits: Time to Act Cardiff

Despite our institution's shifting attitude, *Gair Rhydd* asked if TTA's motion this year is overly ambitious. They responded it's time to 'go big or go home.' One part of the motion demands 'radical' change to student cases because 'ridiculous waiting times' mean some students graduate before their case is concluded.

Gair Rhydd worried our institutions will ignore ambitious goals in favour of more manageable objectives. TTA reassured us this is a 'litmus test' where our institutions can 'demonstrate their commitment.' Emily directly addressed Sabbatical officers: 'It's a challenge for you in your role, in your position. How far are you willing to push yourself?'

Worries that the institutions have already failed the 'litmus test' arise from the 'ridiculous' bureaucracy now required to organise protests on campus. Despite the impression 'the university doesn't want a protest here', TTA confirmed their reclaim the night event will return this December. The organisation feels the university has the wrong priorities. TTA told *Gair Rhydd* they think the University will "suspend a protester but they won't suspend a rapist."

The University's working group on sexual violence doesn't dispel this impression, with TTA terming it a 'tick box exercise.' Neither Becca nor Emily could remember the SU's working group meeting; however they later confirmed three meetings took place last year. Yet, TTA are still 'optimistic for the future' despite the fact these groups are currently not effective.

Gair Rhydd raised concerns about the effectiveness of any work pertaining to less engaged students. While acknowledging this, TTA cited their We are not a Shitty Committee campaign which brought students 'out of the shadows and into the conversation… [from]...sports teams…[to]...Historical reenactment societies.'

TTA don't want anyone to be 'removed from the conversation' to support this they use non-gendered language. Which is consistent with another part of their new AGM motion which aims to dispel the myth of a perfect victim. They encourage survivors to come forward but acknowledge how daunting that can be. TTA clarified that coming forward doesn't necessarily mean reporting their experience because survivors accessing support is the most important thing.

TTA made clear that when the organization itself needs support it will never turn to Reform UK. They offered harsh criticism of the party's use of rape rhetoric and suggested cooperation would contradict TTA's morals.

This comes despite TTA being left on read by senior figures who Emily noted '…know exactly who we are. They know exactly what the issue is.' Disappointingly, there has been limited action from the Plaid Cymru government. Plaid prioritise commissions with broad focuses which they deem more efficient than legislation. This contradicts TTA's push for legislation and ignores both the organisation's experience on this issue and the fact Welsh legislation lags behind provisions in England.

Gair Rhydd also raised two prominent campus issues: the Yolo queue fiasco and the actions of a banter page. For updates on those situations, the daunting reality of TTA's work and details on everything covered above, listen to *Llais Rhydd.*



North Korean Escapee Comes to Cardiff University:
Why Should Students Care?

Az Kim
Politics Editor

On the 28th of October, the Cardiff University POLIR department held a guest lecture with Timothy Cho, a North Korean escapee.

'Timothy escaped North Korea twice and was imprisoned four times in China and North Korea before he turned twenty.'

He gained asylum status in the UK when he was 18, and went on to study International Relations at Salford and Liverpool.

He now works in the UK Parliament as the Secretariat of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on North Korea. While this is a matter of interest for most politics students, I argue that all Cardiff University students should care about it.

I spoke with Hazel Choi, a Cardiff University PhD candidate who organised this event, to ask why it matters that students learn about human rights violations in North Korea.

At the core, she emphasised the importance of giving a spotlight to cases that aren't Eurocentric. She's found that Cardiff University does a wonderful job teaching and examining issues in Europe, but "there seems to be a gap in Asian politics and international relations." Even if students wanted to learn about North Korea and its politics, it's not an accessible topic: not only is there a significant lack of research published about it, but information regarding internal affairs in North Korea is also extremely censored.

Hearing from someone who lived through the horrors of the human rights violations in this country was not only an opportunity for students to learn about the topic, but also an opportunity to create more open discourse about North Korea.

Hazel and Timothy both stressed that the Global North has a responsibility to help the individuals of North Korea. The country, as well as the Korean peninsula as a whole, is isolated. The people of North Korea don't have the power to draw media attention, requiring international intervention. However, the majority of the information about North Korea in mainstream media relates heavily to nuclear weapons discourse, or focuses on the Kim family leadership—neglecting to produce conversations about individual levels of injustice.

South Korea has begun to produce stories about the people living under the Kim dictatorship, but these stories are often written in Korean and not accessible to the West. Furthermore, Hazel highlighted a point Timothy made regarding how traditional international aid does not work in North Korea. Aid trucks going into the country are saved for the elites, and heavy propaganda creates the circumstance where North Korean citizens believe it is their national duty to give up food received from aid to the Kim family.

Henceforth, the rest of the world cannot rely on conventional methods of intervention. When both Timothy and Hazel were asked how people wanting to help can get involved, their foremost answer was to "study about it."

'At the very core, power is rooted in knowledge.'

The first step to creating change is to be aware of what needs to change: university students are at the core of the nexus between information and action, which is why Hazel wanted to organise an event tailored to students. She hopes that this event is the catalyst for "more students getting interested in non-EU politics, and that the Cardiff University curriculum expands alongside this."



Image credits: HMP Cardiff via Wikimedia Commons

Are Wales' Prisons on the Brink?

Noah Smith
Contributer

Scotland's HMP and YOI Polmont saw officers from four other prisons required to deal with the riots among 30 inmates in September, the worst prison riot the country has seen for a decade. Following this announcement from the SPS (Scottish Prison Service), fresh concerns have been raised regarding the capacity and security of prisons.

However, as a result of overcrowding, increasing violence in prisons, and ever-present staff shortages across the UK, many are wondering: is the British prison service on the brink?

It was revealed in September 2026 by the Ministry of Justice that England and Wales had a prison population of 87,712, around a quarter of which in prisons deemed too overcrowded. Scotland saw a prison population of 8,278 in 2025-2026, which the SPS has declared its highest daily average on record.

Overcrowding however is not the only issue facing prisons, as concerns around staffing, safety and rehabilitative opportunities remain high. Despite the devolved status of prisons in Scotland, similar pressures seem to be present in all corners of the United Kingdom.

The impact of these issues is monumental, particularly on prisoners. The latest report by the Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales raised concerns at the statistics showing that some prisoners were spending 22 hours a day, some in cells meant for single occupancy, but being used as double occupancy to deal with the overcrowding.

Access to showers and other sanitationary measures have therefore also become limited due to the increase in users. Other concerns included drug use, violence and limited training opportunities- priming fears of whether prisoners are ready for release. This naturally puts pressure on the staff who work in these prisons, possibly being a part of the loss of 3.1% of them last year.

To deal with this, Governments across the UK have announced measures they feel will help numb the issue. Secretary of State for Justice Alex Noris has kept Labour's manifesto promise in Burnham's cabinet to aim to create 14,000 more prison cells, and keep the controversial Early Release Scheme to help tackle the numbers in prisons. The Scottish Government has also announced reforms, including the building of two new prisons in Glasgow and Inverness to replace their older predecessors. Both of which however have been criticised for their delays, lack of capacity and increased costs.

Holyrood has also announced an immediate use of modular buildings in their current prisons to increase space, and greater emphasis on community justice with the investigation into alternatives to short sentences. Despite this, HM Chief Prisons Inspector has cast doubts on how much these will actually impact overcrowding and bring prisons away from the brink.

The issues facing prisons have been brought back into the spotlight since the incident in Scotland. While the increase in prison spaces through modular buildings may quench the immediate overcrowding, lasting effects will depend on staffing, opportunities and building better rehabilitative methods. While prisons are, at heart, a place of punishment, they are also a place where people are prepared for release, which may prove difficult if the conditions are not the necessary ones for rehabilitation. The cycle of unrest may continue should the conditions not improve, and the chances of reoffending may increase too if the government gets this wrong.

Whether the riots in Scotland will be a turning point for British prison policies is yet to be seen, but the first steps towards some form of improvement are being implemented. Whether or not this issue can even be solved during the tenure of this parliament has also been doubted by critics.

To win the climate war,
Labour may need to lose some battles

Barney Sturt-Bennett
Politics Editor

Last month the Jackdaw gas field received the greenlight to begin supplying the UK, despite a year of heatwaves and extreme weather events that saw devastating flooding, the hottest June on record and an announcement encouraging the public to prepare emergency supplies "…for events such as extreme weather…".

Then, on the 4th of November, plans were introduced at Westminster to bar any new oil drilling developments in the North Sea. The government allows one project to advance while placing a blanket ban on others. Why the inconsistency, and why does Labour think Britain needs new fossil fuel developments in a net-zero future?

Environmental policy is not a simple field. Political decisionmakers are pulled in every direction by competing interests. New developments produce jobs, growth, tax revenue, all essential for political and national success. On the other hand, the globe is in climate crisis, many voters do not want to see new climate-damaging projects given the green light. Politicians must walk a fine line between development goals and environmental ones.

The Jackdaw development is a demonstration of a pragmatic approach pursued by the current Labour government. The official statement announcing the project outlines that despite net-zero commitments the UK will continue to rely on some degree of gas and oil resources for fuel and energy. Net-zero commitments are focused on, well, net-zero: Pollution that is balanced by anti-pollution projects is seemingly okay, according to our Labour Government.

This explains the apparent inconsistency between new gas and no new drilling; the Jackdaw project was a pre-existing one. The ecological costs have been calculated and, presumably, remediated. New drilling in the North Sea has not been vetted in the same way. This will be an unpopular policy with climate-concerned voters. With the Green party on Labour's left so inherently focused on climate issues, alienating voters on this point risks shedding them off to Zach Polanski's Greens.

A blanket ban on all new oil and gas projects will upset business, and business-minded voters (typically on the centre or right). Labour's reputation with business has always been shaky. The perception as a party of taxation and spending has haunted their recent electoral record, alienating business risks sending voters back to Kemi Badenoch's Conservatives (who have, recent events aside, a stronger perceived record on business policy).

This issue of clashing voter priorities puts Labour in a position where it is forced to listen to conflicting voices on each new decision. Ministers are forced to consider and reconsider policy at each turn, liable to be influenced by current news and opinion more than standing policy. Why does this matter? Because it makes decisions hard to predict.

Labour needs to win the next election if it wants to secure the future of eco-policy. To do this Labour must secure votes from those less concerned by carbon output and ecological impact, and more influenced by growth targets and GDP.

"An insult to the people of Wales"

Caitlin Ellison
Contributor

On the 28th October, Healey's budget was met with outspoken opposition from Plaid Cymru through Elin Jones, the Welsh Government's Minister of Finance.

Despite Healey's budget being considered moderate by many experts, Plaid were not happy. Whether or Plaid's reaction to the budget was a fair, one, however, can't properly be assessed without looking into the budget itself.

Healey aimed the budget at the cost-of-living crisis, something that has affected Welsh families as harshly as the rest of the UK. 105,000 Welsh households are set to benefit from the removal of a 4% tariff on kerosene, an extension of 0% VAT on household electricity bills for a further three months, and more from the general tax cuts on over 100 food products. Specifically, alongside cuts to fuel duty, Welsh farmers and rural haulers are set to benefit directly from a noticeable cut on red diesel duty. As of Healey's budget, it seemed as though Westminster was working in favor of the Welsh people.

Outside of the cost of living, measures were announced for wider investment, with £11 million going to replace the Port Talbot Aberavon Bridge and £2.5 million to expand the M-Sparc science park in Anglesey. Healey also announced £30 million to be invested in Cardiff Parkway railway station, the planned station for Eastern Cardiff, however this came under scrutiny from Plaid.

Preceding the budget, Elin Jones had called for Burnham's government to bring forward £1 billion of the £14 billion that UK Labour had committed to invest in Welsh railways, making the £30 million that was announced not only look like Westminster pulling back on previous promises, but also ignoring direct calls from the Welsh Government, continuing a legacy of underinvestment from the UK Government in Wales.

Alongside calling for the £1 billion for railways, before the budget, Jones made clear Plaid's expectations regarding social funding, asking for explicit support for the Cynnal scheme, a funding program aimed at lifting Welsh children out of poverty. This had been granted for Scotland when they launched a sister scheme in 2021, however went unmentioned in Healey's budget, as did Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, which Westminster left frozen, failing to address the Welsh housing crisis.

The UK Government's claims that Welsh investment is well over necessary and has reached a record level. This follows the additional £450 million granted to the Welsh Government to fund public services. This is a massive overstatement however, which Jones and Plaid Cymru has not been afraid to call out. According to Jones, this annual real term increase is set to be lower than in the previous parliamentary term, debunking myths of Westminster as an overly gracious body.

For the Welsh people, it's the cost-of-living crisis that affects everyday lives, and Healey's moves to improve that through fuel duty cuts, removal of tariffs and overall increased minimum wage, his budget is not an insult to everyday life. However the budget perpetuates a pattern of dismissal for the Welsh Government, and Plaid Cymru, who are unafraid to call it out.

Jones called for actions to directly address Welsh problems for Welsh people, not just the wider British cost-of-living. She championed schemes such as Cynnal and the Welsh LHA rates, which do not face the same restrictions in Scottish devolution, and yet went ignored in Healey's budget. Plaid Cymru's attempt to hold the UK Government accountable for its railway promises decidedly underscored, emphasizing the lack of care for Welsh needs from the UK Government.

While the budget was not necessarily an insult to the people of Wales, it certainly was one to Welsh autonomy, and suggests that despite promises and commitments, this UK Government will be no more committed to Welsh devolution than its predecessors, justifying the claims made by Plaid Cymru following the 28th October.



Image credits: Elin Jones MS, Finance Minister for the Welsh Government via Wikimedia Commons

Are the Doors Shut For Reform?

Reuben Badman
Politics Editor

A year ago, Reform UK looked like they were steamrolling their way into government. Nigel Farage sold his party as the voice of the ordinary person the establishment had ignored, and for a while this worked. Today, Reform sits third in the polls and the people who once zealously advocated for the party are looking elsewhere.

Last year, Reform UK led the polls by a comfortable margin, with Labour and the Conservatives being left scrambling for crumbs. This summer, Andy Burnham steered Labour back in front for the first time since March 2025. Labour now leads the polls on 27%, the Conservatives are on 24% and Reform trails on 21%.

The shift is clearest among Reforms own supporters. According to a YouGov poll, a year ago 90% of those who would have voted Reform would vote for the party again. Now, that figure has fallen to 70%. Former Conservative voters backing Reform has plummeted 10%. Meanwhile, the proportion of former Reform voters who now back the Conservatives has tripled. The Conservatives are taking back ground.

A question lingers: Is the two-party politics Nigel Farage labelled 'finished' returning? The two parties Reform set out to challenge are the ones benefiting from their fall. Between them, Labour and Conservatives now hold more than half of the vote, a reality that looked incredibly unlikely a year ago.

One explanation is that the opposition has started to show they can do the job. Reform built its appeal on the idea that nobody in Westminster was listening. Coming into Number 10, Andy Burnham said 'he was determined not to end up in that Westminster bubble'. If Labour have begun to challenge this disconnect between politicians and the public, voters may no longer need to back Reform to feel heard.

Reform has also faced growing scrutiny for who they really speak for. According to the Electoral Commission, the party has received £55 million in funding, with 78% coming from donations of more than £100,000 and 62% coming from two donors. For critics, those figures sit uneasily alongside Reform's claim to represent forgotten, ordinary voters.

Controversy may also be taking its toll. Reform's rise was built on frustration with mainstream politics, yet controversy has followed the party throughout its growth. Candidates and representatives have been suspended over racist comments and inappropriate social media activity, faced charges for serious sexual offences and have even been found guilty of accepting bribes to support pro-Russian political interests.

The Conservatives have seized the moment. When a wave of their MPs defected to Reform, it gave Kemi Badenoch the opportunity to draw a clear distinction between the two parties. Rather than allowing Reform to position themselves as the natural home to the right, Badenoch has worked to present the Conservatives as the more credible option.

At the same time, Reform's anti-establishment credentials have come under pressure. The party welcomed individuals such as Suella Braverman and Robert Jenrick, faces many voters associate with the political class Reform claims to oppose. An ITV documentary exposed these tensions further, with the party being found defending the attitudes and behaviour associated with the political culture they set out to challenge.

Reform's decline reflects more than a bad set of polls. As Labour and the Conservatives rebuild support, voters may no longer need Reform to feel heard. Questions over funding, a succession of scandals and growing doubts of the party's credentials have weakened Reform's appeal. So, are the doors shut for Reform? Not quite. But they are no longer being pushed open by the public searching for an alternative. Instead, voters are returning to the two parties Reform once claimed were 'finished'.



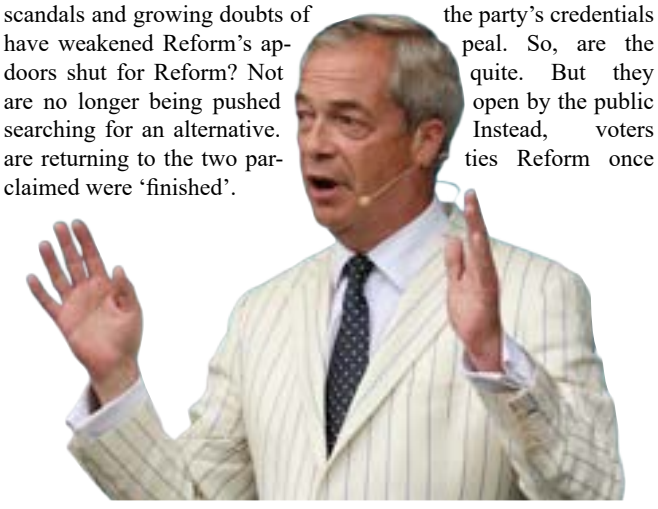


Image credits: Nigel Farage via Wikimedia Commons

big ideas...

London gets the money. When does the rest of Britain?

Hawra Ghor
Staff Writer

On October 28th 2026, the UK Autumn Budget was announced, but will their promises be sustained.

Alongside energy bill support and bus fare amendments, the UK Govwernment have yet again promised to spread economic growth beyond London and the South East. With pledges of regional investment, infrastructure spending and support for local economics, ministers have repeatedly argued that the UK's economy should not be purely concentrated in the capital. Yet, despite decades of initiatives aimed at reducing regional inequality, London remains the dominant force in the British economy.

Due to global conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, the UK Government announced this budget to lower costs for families and businesses in the UK considering the increase of cost of living. But was London the primary focus for this?

The Government has vowed to 'unlock good growth in every postcode by putting places in control of their economic future', but ultimately, this is only possible by devolving economic powers further to then reduce regional inequality. The Budget sets out a roadmap of fiscal devolution over the next few years. However, shifting economic power is much easier to promise than it is to achieve.

Previous successful governments have attempted to address this imbalance. From the 'Northern Powerhouse' under David Cameron's government to Boris Johnson's 'Levelling Up' strategy, policymakers have continually argued that economic power should be better distributed across the country in order to have fair living and earning. This has just continued as a trend where although in theory Britiain's economy should be fairly spread to everyone, it still lies in London where Londoners reap the benefits. As a Cardiff student you feel this with lower salaries however the benefit is lower housing prices in comparison to London. However a Cardiff University student told *Gair Rhydd* as a Bristol resident "it feels unfair that housing prices are so similar to London in Bristol, when you aren't gaining the benefits of working and living in London". The latest budget continues this trend presenting a fiscal devolution pathway as a regional investment to grow Britain's future.

London's economic influence has grown over centuries, reinforcing its network of business and investors. Ultimately, it is difficult to ignore, being the home to both Westminister and the UK's financial centre. Economists refer to this as 'agglomeration effects' where companies gain financially from operating in close proximity to other firms and skilled workers and customers.

For many young professionals and graduates, they feel pressured to find a job in London in order to climb up the corporate ladder and progress in industries such as finance, media and technology.

A Cardiff University Law student from the West Midlands told *Gair Rhydd*, "I feel incredibly pressured to work in London as this is where most companies will pay for your training, reducing your student debt".

This is not only pulling graduates away from their homes but it's creating immense pressure for a lower than expected salary, in a more expensive housing and living region.

Major businesses and projects cannot relocate immediately and will take time. Critics explain that although relocation could create jobs short-term and spread the economy across the country, previous pledges have been more ambitious than the realistic funding behind them.

Few would dispute London's importance to the national economy as the city remains one of the world's leading financial centres and generates significant tax revenue, posting the question of how could this be successfully spread. What appears to be increasingly clear is that regional growth cannot happen overnight, and requires sustained investment on transport, education, employment, tax and housing in order to have a strong disperse, thus benefiting more.

Being a major financial entity to the UK, London is a globally attractive city. Professionals from around the world travel to work there earning higher salaries and having better qualities of life, leaving many other UK towns and cities with lower wages, slower economic growth and reduced public spending.

So by decentralising Britain's economy from London it would not just be a matter of equality, but economic necessity. By relieving pressures off of London as the fiscal hub of the UK's economy it would have positive effects on high housing costs, congestion and overstretched public services.

As policymakers find suitable paths to unlock economic growth 'in every postcode', the debate on where economic power is likely to reside.



Image credits: Bank of England via Wikimedia Commons

How do the US Midterms affect you?

Jac Allen
Staff Writer

The Democrats won a landslide in this month's U.S. midterm elections, comfortably taking control of both houses of Congress. But what is a midterm election? Literally, a midterm election happens halfway through a presidency, and its purpose is to elect the House of Representatives and a third of the Senate, but culturally it's seen as a chance to show approval/disapproval of the current president. It happens at the 2-year mark because Representatives only have a 2-year term before they are up for election, so the political landscape can keep up to date with the U.S. population's political beliefs, and the Senate has 6-year terms, with a third of the Senate being up for election every 2 years; this is done so there is a gradual change in government, and so there can be politicians with some governmental experience. These 2 houses make up the U.S. Congress, the purpose of which is to pass legislation and has the executive power to declare war.

Democrats winning both the House and Senate, even flipping seats in Texas, which has been a red state for most of its history, speaks volumes about how the American people think of Donald Trump and his politics. The president said, in an interview with FOX News, that the Iran war and its subsequent rise in fuel prices were a "heavy hit" and probably played a big part in the outcome. Trump now faces a serious challenge, as he has to play ball with the Democrats, which could drastically change the political landscape in the U.S. The new electees will be sworn in in January, which means that until then the Republicans are still at the helm. Hilary Clinton stated that '[Trump]'s going to feel cornered,' so he might be more drastic in his decision-making.

But what does it mean for Europe? A study by the European Council on Foreign Relations found that only 11% of Europeans consider the US an ally, down 11% from November 2024, so public opinion might be on the incline as Trump's power diminishes. To circle back to the Iran war, it has had huge negative effects globally, with rising energy prices because of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. With the Democrats in charge of Congress, they could pass a bill to end the war in Iran, assuming it won't be vetoed by Trump. It has also been theorised that investigations will be launched against the president of the United States; for example, Senator Schumer explained that "Whenever Trump defies the will of the American people or the law, we will launch investigations."

Foreign policy and trade are powers that the President doesn't need to go through Congress to exercise, so the tariffs on European goods will still go forth. In reference to Ukraine, Congress can allocate money for the Eastern European country, but as Nevada, Joan Lee stated, "The president might not spend it" and delay its use until the end of the fiscal year, when it'll expire, although pressure could be put on Trump to maintain military support. In previous months, Trump has threatened to withdraw troops from European countries, as he feels that they are taking advantage of America, but they cannot have fewer than 76,000 soldiers in Europe in 2026 without Congress's permission, so Europe might have time to develop its own security before America pulls the rug.

America won't be a less controversial ally of Europe even after the record-breaking performance by the Democrats in the midterms, but with a more left-leaning Congress, progress can be made to amend global relations or at least slow their deterioration. The focus of both parties now is the 2028 Presidential election, and with the midterm results heavily leaning Democrat, it looks to be a globally important one.



Burnham's Devolution Dilemma

Oskar Hyams
Head of Politics

Andy Burnham proclaimed on the steps of Downing Street he would deliver "Power in every postcode". However, Labour's local government reforms so far have only created confusion and delay for the very people they are supposed to be empowering. With council leaders confirming they still lack "full certainty" on local government reforms, what were Labour's original reforms, how have they shifted since July and what does this mean for councils in England?



Image credits: Angela Rayner MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

While Burnham would like to be known as the king of devolution and empowering communities, he may be dismayed to discover that his Prime Ministerial predecessor has already set the blueprint for a local government revolution in motion. In late 2024, Keir Starmers government circulated a Local Government white paper that outlined a 'devolution by default' model. This includes metro mayors for all of England and completely dismantling a 2 tier council system, which splits council services in a confusing and in many ways incoherent way between district and county councils. This will be swapped for a unitary council structure for all, bringing services like bin collection (managed by districts) and roads and highways (managed by counties) under one 'mega' council. For local government leaders, these proposals were genuinely exciting as the new mayoral authorities would hold more power over transport, housing and skills while the removal of the two tier council system would bring to an end, what the white paper called, Westminister "micromanagement".

Following this announcement, councils were invited to send proposals to the government for how they believe their new council authorities should be geographically distributed. The initial wave of decisions were released in the dying embers of the Starmer Administration, in July of this year. This saw counties like Worcestershire and Warwickshire split in two while areas like Gloucestershire remained as united counties.

However, just as councils began their transition plans into motion, the Burnham Government hit the brakes. In September they announced they were pausing all restructuring so they could carry out a review. This included abruptly withdrawing the already accepted plans for four areas. While the Government argued that this was due to legal challenges and operational concerns, the sudden nature of these changes threw councils into administrative limbo.

Finally, after two months' delay, the Government has confirmed its final plans for local government reorganisation. While some clarity on this Starmer pet project is welcome, the plan is still full of contridictions and uncertainty. For example, the decision to split Worcestershire and Warwickshire in two (with 621,000 and 618,000 people per county respectively) while keeping similarly sized Gloucestershire (with a population of 659,000) united has left many scratching their heads. In their statement to the commons, the Government presented no clear answer to this discrepancy while also announcing they would be delaying some unitary elections until 2028.

So, what does all of this mean for councils in England? First and foremost, there is still no clear guidance for local governments with what comes next for their mayoral authorities. All that is obvious is that these authorities will cover 1.5 million people each but the Government is yet to release guidance as to how these authorities will be geographically assigned. However, for most councils, the move towards unitary authorities is well underway and elections for them will go ahead in the next few years.

The 'King of the North' is beginning to realise the sheer scale of reform required to deliver "Power in every postcode". A lack of clear guidance from the Government and the chopping and changing of decisions has left some more confused about the reforms than they are about the old two tier council system. Now, it remains to be seen whether Burnham can truely deliver his ambitious devolution goals while juggling Whitehall bureaucracy and local concerns.



STV: The path to a fairer electoral system?

Jamie White
Contributor

Elections in Britain require reform. The first-past-the-post (FPTP) voting system has had a stranglehold on British democracy since the Second World War. A fundamentally undemocratic system, FPTP causes unrepresentative results and forces voters to vote tactically, rather than for their preferred party . However, FPTP is not the only way forward. I'd like to propose that the UK adopts the single transferable vote (STV) as an alternative to FPTP. This will improve democratic representation and restore faith in British democracy.

So what makes FPTP so problematic? On the surface, it seems fair. A simplistic system, FPTP offers voters the ability to vote for just one candidate within their constituency. The winning candidate is determined by whoever receives the most votes, requiring a simple majority (candidates do not need to have at least 50% of the vote to win).

However, its flaws become apparent almost immediately. Candidates winning with a simple majority can lead to MPs entering Parliament with extremely low vote shares. Take the MP for South West Norfolk, who won the seat in 2024 with just 26.7% of the vote. Almost 3/4 of his constituents did not vote for their MP!

Taken to the national level, this can distort results even further. The 2024 General Election gave Labour 33.7% of the vote. However, they won 411 seats, or 63.2%. Meanwhile, Reform UK won just 0.8% of seats despite winning 14.3% of the vote.

Furthermore, FPTP encourages tactical voting to become the default option for voters. In a process called the spoiler effect, voters who split their support between two or more similar candidates can end up losing to an undesirable candidate. This happened in the previously mentioned South West Norfolk constituency, where the right-wing voting bloc was split between Liz Truss, Reform UK and an independent conservative. By preventing voters from supporting their favourite candidate, FPTP distorts results and harms democracy.

But there is an alternative. STV offers us the opportunity to revitalise British democracy and restore confidence in representative governance. STV combines constituencies into larger, multi-member constituencies and allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference.

Candidates win by meeting a quota of votes determined by the number of representatives allocated to a constituency. Extra votes above the quota are redistributed to second choices. If nobody wins, the least popular candidate is eliminated with their votes also redistributed until enough winners are declared.

STV is already used by the UK to elect the devolved Northern Ireland Assembly. It is also used in national elections in Australia and Ireland. Our Students' Union has also opted to use STV.

This gives STV a number of advantages over FPTP. As a fully proportional system, it ensures parties will receive a roughly equal number of seats relative to their vote share. Multi-member constituencies mean more of the electorate can have representatives that better reflect their views. Finally, tactical voting is made obsolete by ranked-choice voting, as voters can indicate all of their preferred candidates.

Fortunately, the Prime Minister has been supportive of electoral reform, announcing a national commission on electoral reform at the Labour Party Conference. The Liberal Democrats have already backed STV. This gives the UK's political establishment a historic opportunity for a revitalisation of British politics through electoral reform.

The Anglo-Welsh League:

a Pipedream or an Exciting Reality?

Dewi Williams
Contributor

On October 28th, WalesOnline reported that the WRU were in "negotiations" with the English Premiership and the RFU over two Welsh regions joining the Gallagher PREM. The proposed move would be seismic for Welsh rugby, overriding the union's plans to cut four regions down to three, and realising a vision of Welsh rugby that many fans and pundits have held for years.

The RFU and English Premiership were quick to establish their position on the matter however, confirming that they were concentrating on expanding the PREM with English clubs rather than Welsh ones. They insisted that negotiations had not taken place, but they interestingly did not rule out approving the Welsh teams' proposed move to the league.



The domestic game in Wales has struggled since the inception of the regions in 2003, where the WRU moved away from the traditional club-based top tier, leaving world-famous clubs like Pontypool, Aberavon, Bridgend, and their supporters, behind. Despite some successes for the Scarlets and Ospreys, poor crowds and performances have become commonplace for Wales' regions.

Made up of the Scarlets, Ospreys, Dragons and Cardiff, they currently play in the United Rugby Championship which includes sixteen teams from Scotland, Ireland, Italy and South Africa. The WRU intend to cut one of these sides by 2028, with an £18m loss for the last financial year supposedly affirming their plans.

The Ospreys and Scarlets are the teams in the firing line, although this potential alternative within the English setup has cast further uncertainty over the union's restructuring plans.

The prospect of an Anglo-Welsh league has long been discussed and debated in the sphere of Welsh rugby, with many seeing it as an appealing alternative to the current setup. It is thought that if the Welsh sides were playing the likes of Gloucester, Bath and Bristol week in, week out, the closer proximity and greater rivalry would draw in bigger crowds and interest compared to games that they are currently playing against Italian and South African sides in the URC.

Having two sides remain in the URC whilst two join the PREM, saving a region in the process, could be the perfect solution for a governing body which finds itself in a dire situation. The union's new chair, Lyndon Faulkner, has made it clear that he will "review everything" regarding the plans to cut a region and said that he is a fan of a potential Anglo-Welsh competition.

The cost to enter the Gallagher PREM is valued at £20m, however. The WRU currently spend £26m across the four professional sides, with plans to cut down to £20m across three. This raises questions around the financial viability of the proposed move. Further questions surround the logistics of splitting the regions between two competitions, as well as whether the RFU would be willing to accommodate Welsh sides at the expense of long-established English clubs.



Some may even question whether an Anglo-Welsh league would genuinely increase attendances and interest, arguing that the underlying problem comes down to a lack of connection between Welsh rugby supporters and the regions themselves. Whilst the cross-border competition looks like an attractive solution for Welsh rugby's ongoing issues, it simultaneously looks quite unlikely.

During the most turbulent period in Welsh rugby's history which has seen record-low crowds, record defeats on-field, and wide-spread unrest among supporters, headlines offered a glimmer of hope on Wednesday evening – particularly for Ospreys and Scarlets fans. Yet the fact of the matter is that until concrete proposals emerge, the future of Welsh rugby still remains uncertain.

Llais Rhydd Sport:

Gaelic Football

Jacob Hamblin
Sport Editor

In the second episode of Llais Rhydd Sport, Me and James Leigh sit down with Ciaran Maloney, President and part-founder of Cardiff University's GAA society. We discussed the club's beginnings, its success on and off the pitch and the general community that the society hosts.

We also, more broadly, took time to discuss all areas of the GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) from the more popular sport of Gaelic football, to the lesser known sports of Hurling and Handball.

The Cardiff University GAA is one of the youngest societies in the University, only being formed in February 2025. Despite this, they have grown into a sizable and proud community within not only the social space of University, but also competitive sporting space, with the Mens BUCS team placing 3rd in their first year of competition and the ladies team now also competing in a full league for the 26/27 season.

Whilst discussing the beginnings of the GAA society, Ciaran took time to appreciate how it had been formed out of the Cardiff Irish Society that now operates under the GAA. Making the GAA the focal point of the Irish community for Cardiff students whether playing or socialising. The socials were described to be just as, if not more important than the sports itself, with Ciaran being proud of the community he has helped to establish over the Society's first year and a half.

Ciaran also noted how the ladies within the club are the heart of the society, filling leadership roles, organising social events and posts online. The ladies side finally being able to compete in a league this year, led by captain Caoimhe Daly, was a massive step for the club, especially due to the lack of financial support available for their side, as there is not an official Female GAA league set up under BUCS, instead being ran under the independent LGFA (ladies gaelic football association).

If you're interested in GAA sports, Gaelic football, Irish culture or learning about one of the more niche sports that has found its home at Cardiff University, give this edition of Llais Rhydd sport a listen!

Price Puts World Championship

Gold on the Line in Cardiff Showdown

James Leigh
Head of Sport

Unified world welterweight champion Lauren Price will defend her titles against Michaela Kotaskova on Friday 20th November at Cardiff's Utilita Arena.

Price, from Bargoed, faces Czech fighter Michaela Kotaskova over ten rounds, with the fight shown live on BBC Two and BBC iPlayer. The Welsh fighter goes into Friday the clear favourite, undefeated in all of her ten professional bouts and ranked 8th in the world pound for pound by ESPN.

However, by no means will Kotaskova be a pushover. The Czech turned professional in 2022 and has only been defeated once in her fifteen-fight career, losing to current super-welterweight world champion, Chantelle Cameron.

Price returns seven months after perhaps her toughest night as a professional, when in April, the Welsh fighter faced unbeaten Puerto Rican, Stephanie Pineiro Aquino, over a gruelling ten rounds. The champion was left bloodied from the mouth and above the right eye, yet kept her composure to win a unanimous decision, with scores of 98-92, 99-91 and 98-92. That win took Price to 10-0, scoring two knockouts along the way.

"She turned professional after winning Olympic gold at Tokyo 2020"

and unified the welterweight division in March 2025 by beating Liverpool's Natasha Jonas. She now holds the WBC, WBA, IBF, IBO and The Ring titles. Her story extends well beyond the numbers and titles. A former kickboxing world champion who also played football for Wales, Price has become one of the most recognisable faces in Welsh sport, even winning BBC Cymru Wales 'Sports Personality of the Year' in 2021.

Her rise to stardom matters beyond Wales too. A woman headlining a major card on prime-time television hopes to inspire young women and girls into getting involved in sport, and shows that elite careers can start in small towns like Bargoed.

"Price has always embraced her Welsh identity,"

and Cardiff crowds have given her a reception to match. She has promised another big night for them.

If Price can claim victory, it is only a matter of time before rumours of a fight versus American, Claressa Shields, begin to stir again. Shields, a two-time Olympic champion, has dropped back to middleweight and regained two world titles with a win over Kaye Scott. Shields' promoter Dmitriy Salita has said talks with Price's team are ongoing, with both sides targeting a showdown in early 2027.

It would be the biggest fight in women's boxing, and it would ask Price to move up two weight classes.

First, though, Price has a champion's job to do on home soil.



Italy's Golden Boy

Won the Race to the F1 Mountain Top

Cole Davies
Contributor

On Sunday 1st November, F1 fans from across the globe tuned in to the Mexico Grand Prix in anticipation, wondering whether history would be made that day – fortunately for fans of the sport, we got to witness Kimi Antonelli become the youngest championship winner in history, along with becoming the first Italian in 73 years to claim the title.

From the Karting prodigy of Bologna, to the controversial successor of Hamilton's Mercedes seat, the career of the new F1 champion has been nothing short of meteoric and spectacular – and he's only 20 years old!

Dating back to his younger days, Kimi Antonelli was known for his incredible speed and dominance on the tracks; son to ex-racing driver, Marco Antonelli, and born in the F1 crazed country of Italy, he was almost destined for glory. At the age of eleven, an ambitious Toto Wolff and Mercedes team were eager to sign the next superstar, determined to avoid making the same mistake of losing Max Verstappen to Red Bull years prior. Ultimately, Mercedes succeeded and Ferrari were snubbed of their own native-born prospect, and thus the career of Kimi Antonelli truly began.

With eighteen Karting titles to his name, he moved into the world of racing with swagger and a pretty penny invested into his name by Mercedes. He certainly delivered; dominating within F4 by racking twenty-two victories and winning the Formula Regional European Championships, he bypassed F3 and moved on to his final hurdle.

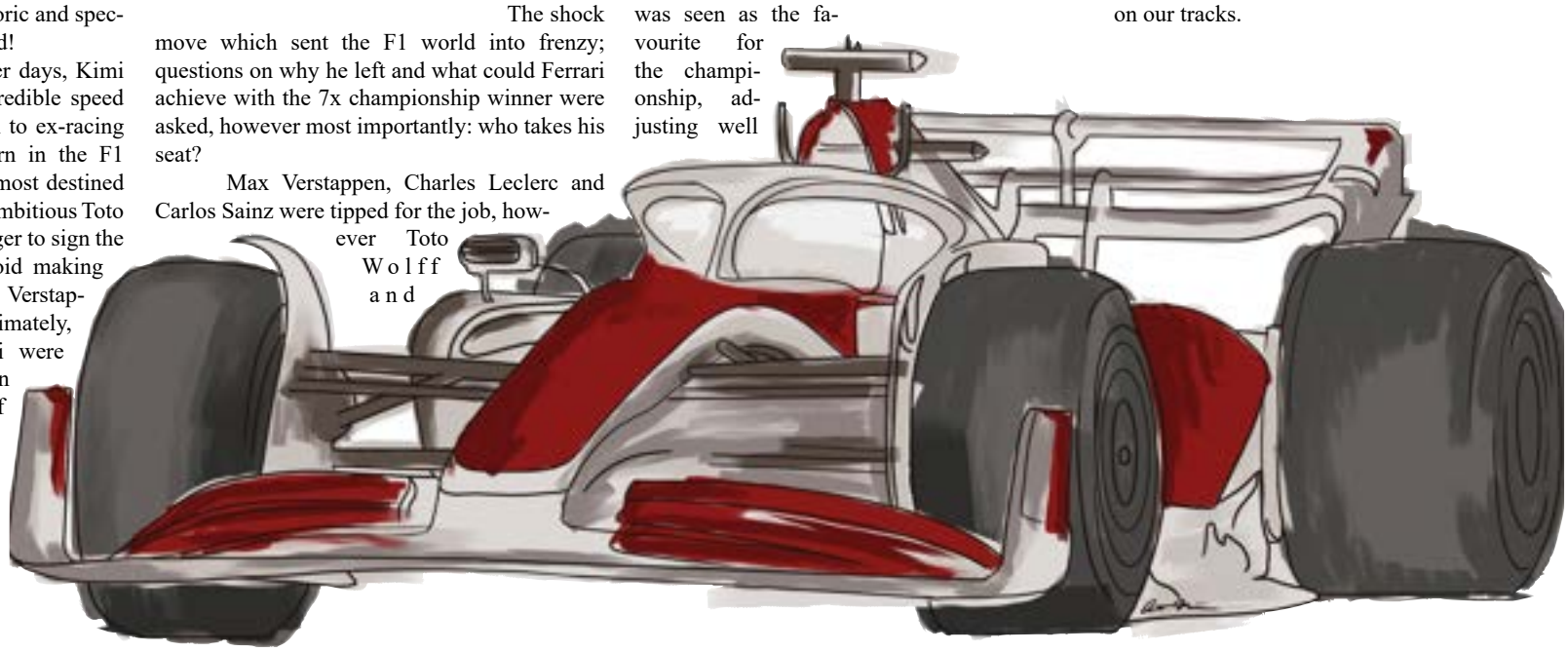
While we all know F1 is the crème of the crop of the sport, F2 is where the hungriest talents battle it out to prove themselves once and for all, where stars shine, and Kimi was certainly one of the brightest. A fantastic win in Silverstone – a good first impression for the British fans – and an impressive win in Budapest made sure to silence any doubts critics could have and kept his stock high. What was next?
"Sir Lewis Hamilton to Ferrari".

The shock move which sent the F1 world into frenzy; questions on why he left and what could Ferrari achieve with the 7x championship winner were asked, however most importantly: who takes his seat?

Max Verstappen, Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz were tipped for the job, however Toto Wolff and his team were sure they already had their man, the investment from the past, Kimi Antonelli. With his lack of experience at this level and a curfew to attend, the decision confused pundits and fans alike: how could he fill the shoes of arguably the greatest driver of all time?
Paired with George Russell for the 2025 season, the aim was to learn from those around him and familiarise himself with his new surroundings. While George delivered two wins and a respectable 4th place finish, Kimi Antonelli finished in 7th place, ending his season in the top half of the grid.

Heading into the 2026 season, Mercedes was seen as the favourite for the championship, adjusting well to the new regulations and confident that George Russell would perform and shoulder the heavier responsibility. Kimi had other plans.
Nine Grand Prix victories and sixteen podium finishes – highlighting his tactical brilliance and ability to remain calm under pressure.

The youngest F1 world champion, breaking Sebastian Vettel's record in the process, cementing himself in history and lifting the trophy on the shoulders of legends Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen – a fairytale ending to a blockbuster F1 season. Achieving so much already, we can only pray he stays healthy and motivated, because we have a generational star on our tracks.



Wales Scrape Past Japan

in Autumn Nations Opener

Ollie Hedley-Lewis
Sport Editor

Wales have secured their first win in the Autumn edition of the Nations Championship, in what was a crucial game for the boys in white.The clash against Japan at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff was Wales' first game of the Autumn Internationals, in which they will also face New Zealand and Australia.

Tighthead prop Archie Griffin got the ball rolling early, finding a gap in the Japanese defensive line after a quick ball from Tomos Williams just over three minutes in. Griffin's first try for the Welsh senior squad was undoubtedly vital for Wales' drive throughout the rest of the game and championship.

Japan retaliated quickly, with flanker Ben Gunter finding and exploiting a gap on the wing before running it home to be converted by Naoto Saito, leaving the score level at 7-7.The contest remained even for the next 15 minutes, before a well-executed set play by Wales freed up Jac Morgan, Louis Rees Zammit and Josh Adams on the left wing to make the score 14-7, following a conversion by Sam Costelow.

Much like earlier, Japan struck back just four minutes later after several driving phases within the Welsh '22 before Blossom's captain Warner Dearns ploughed through the Welsh defence to find the tryline. After a second conversion by Saito, the score once again sat level at 14-14.
before halftime after Rees Zammit sliced through Japanese defence on the right wing. The star of this phase was Eddie James, who dominated in heavy contact against a Japanese defender before finding the perfect time to offload to Blair Murray.

Murray excelled again in the 69th minute after collecting a loose ball from within the Welsh half, before putting the hammer down and beating three defenders before offloading to Williams, who in turn got the ball moving to Josh Adams who slipped through what was left of the Japanese defence to score a world-class try on the left wing. Wales now sat 14 points ahead of Japan after a successful conversion from fly-half substitute Dan Edwards.
after Opeti Helu drew several Welsh defenders before finding a perfectly timed offload to substitute scrumhalf Kenta Fukuda, who had his try converted by Shinya Komura to bring Japan within touching distance at 28-21.

Despite a late charge by the Blossoms, Wales retained their 7-point lead into the final whistle to take the win, marking their second in the 2026 Nations Championship. Louis Rees-Zammit won player of the match following a strong offensive performance, scything through the Japanese defence on the wing and securing a well-earned try by Wales.

This week, Wales look to take on New Zealand's All Blacks, who currently sit second on the world rankings, undoubtedly looking to put up a stoic performance much like last year to continue building confidence amongst fans and players alike.



Medics Varsity Cancelled

The two sides reportedly fell out over ticket prices



James Leigh and James Roberts

Medics Varsity 2026 has been cancelled, the Students' Union has announced. The sports fixture between medics sport teams from Cardiff and Bristol Universities had been planned for 21st November.

In a statement Margherita Puccinelli VP Sports and Head of Cardiff's Atheletics Union said "Unfortunately, despite arrangements, Bristol withdrew from the event. We understand the disappointment that may be felt by our medical sports teams in light of this news."

A source in the Students' Union said the event had been cancelled due to a dispute over a move by Cardiff to charge spectators, the first time this has happened.

They said that during the summer Cardiff's Atheletics Union had approached Bristol about charging spectators for tickets. Initially a price for tickets was agreed, however Bristol later withdrew their support. It is understood that teams from Cardiff had supported a charge, which would later land at the £10 mark, to make up for missing funds.

A meeting was held on Monday 9th, aiming to reach a final agreement. However, the two sides were unable to agree on pricing, and a decision was made to cancel the event.

"We are committed to finding new opportunities for these teams and are hopeful we can provide an alternative event for our students in the future," Margherita said.

She added that "We want to thank our teams for their commitment to the event and recognise the work that has been done by the AU."

Tom Holland, President of the Medics Football team said he was "really disappointed" by the decision to cancel.

Margherita said "Refunds will be issued to all students who purchased a ticket as soon as possible."

Efforts are now being made to provide an alternative fixture for medics teams, for whom the event was the highlight of the year.