

CONTACT



Community Magazine for the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil

Winter 2025



**'YOUR MERTHYR,
YOUR VOICE'
JOIN THE PANEL**

Page 2

**NEW INDOOR
MARKET ALMOST
COMPLETE**

Page 3

**FIRST MINISTER
VISITS ICC
PENTREBACH**

Page 5

Our Let's Talk: Living in Merthyr Tydfil survey ran from 01 July – 30 September and almost 900 residents took part.

The survey asked questions about the local area, your interaction with the Council, local democracy and your local councillors.

The results of the survey are now being analysed and will be published on the Council's website in the coming weeks.

Visit merthyr.gov.uk/haveyoursay for more information.



Cllr Brent Carter
Leader of the
Council

Hi all, welcome to our winter edition of Contact.

I'm delighted to announce that Merthyr Tydfil's Indoor Market is almost ready to open its doors. This has been such an exciting project, and will have a real positive impact on our Town Centre.

Read more on page 3.

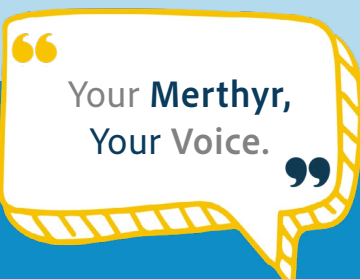
The Council has proudly opened The Flowers, a ground-breaking residential facility providing support for looked-after children. This will make a difference to so many lives within our County Borough. **Read more on page 5.**

Community safety is, and always has been, a top priority for us. Read about the partnerships and initiatives that are keeping our residents safe **on page 7.**

Finally, you may have seen on our social media channels that every Friday I share a Weekly Leader's Update video. It's a great way to keep up to date with the latest news and local events.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

B. Carter



Join our new Citizens' Panel

We're inviting local residents to join us and play a part in improving the lives of those working and living in our County Borough

For more information or to join please email;
corporate.communications@merthyr.gov.uk



As Merthyr Tydfil's Cyfarthfa Castle marks its 200th birthday, there's another reason to celebrate – work has started on the iconic Cyfarthfa Heritage Area thanks to a £4.5million funding boost to undertake urgent conservation works to help ensure its future for many more years to come.

Welsh Government - through its historic environment service Cadw - and the Council will each contribute £2.25 million to address the deterioration to the oldest part of the Castle as well as protecting Pont-y-Cafnau bridge, located to the south of the wider Cyfarthfa site - reputedly the oldest iron railway bridge in the world.

The Council is working in partnership with the Cyfarthfa Foundation - a charity established to champion the long-term development of Cyfarthfa, aiming to restore the building, expand museum displays and art galleries and develop the 160-acre park for future generations - to take these extensive projects forward.

The funding, and the work of the Council and the Foundation, also aim to boost the numbers of visitors who come and explore the castle, gardens and lake, enjoy the play facilities and participate in various activities offered throughout the grounds.



Marchnad Dan Do

Merthyr
Indoor Market



Cllr Jamie Scriven
Economy, Regeneration,
Leisure & Tourism
Cabinet Member

Work to relocate Merthyr Tydfil's new indoor market is almost complete!

The former Wilko premises has been transformed to a modern marketplace with traditional elements, following consultation with stallholders and the wider public.

Permanent stallholders will be complemented with pop-up traders to offer a wide-range of goods.

Keep an eye on our website and social media pages for information on the opening date!

Crews have begun the long-awaited restoration of Pont-Y-Cafnau bridge, a remarkable piece of industrial heritage that has stood as a testament to Welsh ingenuity for over two centuries.



These works are scheduled to complete by Winter 2025.

The ambitious project, backed by a £4.5 million joint investment from the Welsh Government through Cadw and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, marks the beginning of a new chapter for what's believed to be the world's oldest surviving iron railway bridge.

Built in 1793 by the pioneering Cyfarthfa Ironworks Company, this isn't just any bridge – it's a marvel of engineering that carried both water and a tram-road across the River Taff, featuring an ingenious three-tier design that showcases the innovative spirit of Wales' industrial revolution.

SCHOOL TERM DATES – 2025 / 2026



Autumn Term 2025

Term Begins	Half Term Starts	Half Term Ends	Term Ends
Monday 1 September	Monday 27 October	Friday 31 October	Friday 19 December

Spring Term 2026

Term Begins	Half Term Starts	Half Term Ends	Term Ends
Monday 5 January	Monday 16 February	Friday 20 February	Friday 27 March

Summer Term 2026

Term Begins	Half Term Starts	Half Term Ends	Term Ends
Monday 13 April	Monday 25 May	Friday 29 May	Monday 20 July

2025 marked a massive milestone: the 200th birthday of Cyfarthfa Castle, a beloved landmark in Merthyr Tydfil!



Cllr Gareth Lewis
Education, Culture &
Welsh Language
Cabinet Member

The Cyfarthfa200 celebration is continuing right through winter, and we're kicking off the festive season with a spectacular schedule of events.

Feel the magic at Cyfarthfa this Christmas, discover a sleigh-full of activities for all ages.

Don't miss out! For a full list of dates, times, and booking information, take a look at visitmerthyr.co.uk

Cyfarthfa200 has been co-ordinated and delivered by the Cyfarthfa Foundation and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and has been part-funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

cyfarthfafoundation.wales

This year marked the 10-year anniversary of the Welsh Government's school holiday enrichment programme, Food and Fun.

Children from 169 participating schools across Wales were invited to get creative and design a commemorative emblem.

We're thrilled to announce that the winner of this fantastic competition was a talented pupil, Troy Powell, from our very own Goetre Primary School in Merthyr Tydfil!



Pre-loved school uniforms...



Are available to collect **free of charge** from:
The New Lease of Life Shop during every school holiday.



Unit 20, Merthyr Tydfil Industrial Park,
Pentrebach, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 4DR

Donations of clean uniforms that are
still in good condition are welcome.



Merthyr Tudful yn ailgylchu
Merthyr Tydfil recycles



Check if your child is eligible
for **Free School Meals** and up
to **£200 for School Essentials**.



Gwneud
**i bob
dydd
gyfri**

Make
**every
day
count**



#CollwchYsgolCollwchAllan
#MissSchoolMissOut



Cllr Louise Minett-Vokes
Social Care, Health &
Youth Participation
Cabinet Member

**The First Minister of
Wales, Eluned Morgan
MS, visited the Integrated
Children's Centre (ICC)**

The visit marked a significant moment for Merthyr Tydfil, celebrating the full expansion of Flying Start childcare services and also the ICC's remarkable 20-year journey of supporting local childcare providers and families.

In a landmark development, the County Borough has achieved 100% coverage of Flying Start childcare, providing free access for all 2-3 year olds, with all 24 childcare providers approved to accept Flying Start children.

The Council proudly announced the opening of The Flowers, a groundbreaking residential facility designed to provide comprehensive support for looked-after children.

Attended by Dawn Bowden MS, Minister for Children and Social Care of Wales, The Flowers represents a £3.6 million investment from the Welsh Government's Housing with Care Fund, supported by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership.

The state-of-the-art facility will provide a nurturing home for up to 12 young people, offering critical services including longer-term accommodation, emergency assessments, and specialised support for those with additional needs.



Children of foster carers

Some families hesitate to foster because they aren't sure of the impact it may have on their own children. However, the children of our foster carers in Merthyr tell us how it's opened their hearts and made them feel proud.



Laila, Rhys, Freya

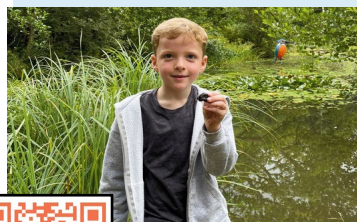
“We think fostering is a good thing to be a part of. It makes us feel proud we can make a difference to other children. We love keeping in touch with them and seeing them growing up...they are like little brothers and sisters to us.”

**maethu cymru
foster wales**

Merthyr Tydfil | Merthyr Tydfil

Harry

“I feel good about fostering because I like helping people. I was proud to tell my class what a foster family is and what we do. I think it's important to have more grown-ups to help keep children safe and healthy. I love fostering and meeting lots of new friends.”



Darllenwch fwy ar ein gwefan: **Maethu Cymru Merthyr Tydfil**
Read more on our website, search: **Foster Wales Merthyr Tydfil**

Wishing for a Greener Christmas

As the festive season draws near, the Council is launching its annual **Christmas Recycling Campaign** to help residents reduce waste and recycle more.

✓ What You Can Recycle

Many common Christmas items can be recycled, helping to reduce waste and support a circular economy:

- Cardboard boxes from gifts and deliveries (flatten them to save space)
- Glass bottles and jars (rinse first)
- Plastic tubs and trays (check for recycling symbols)
- Food tins and drink cans (clean and dry)
- Food waste – All cooked and uncooked food, including peelings, bones, tea bags, and plate scrapings, can go in your food waste caddy.

✗ Please avoid placing the following in your recycling:

- Foil or glitter-covered wrapping paper
- Christmas crackers with plastic toys
- Tinsel, baubles, and artificial decorations
- Polystyrene packaging and plastic film

These items should go in your general waste bin or be reused where possible.

Tips for a Waste-Free Christmas

Reduce waste and make your celebrations more sustainable:

- Reuse gift bags & boxes
- Compost food waste
- Freeze leftovers
- Donate unwanted gifts
- Avoid single-use plastics



Cllr David Jones
Deputy Leader
Climate Change & Communities
Cabinet Member

"Together, we can make this Christmas not only joyful, but environmentally responsible."

Let's keep Merthyr clean, green, and festive!"

Real Christmas Tree Recycling

Booking opens on 8th December 2025 & closes 1st January 2026.

Collections start from 7th January 2026.

For more info & to book;

merthyr.gov.uk **01685 725000**

Have a sustainable Christmas



Merthyr Tydfil Biodiversity Partnership was shortlisted for two projects (The Incline & Taf Bargoed Wetlands) for the Sustainability and Biodiversity awards held at the London Excel.

Launched in 2023, these awards showcase the most important innovation and initiatives across the UK landscaping sector, from design, to construction, to product supply/manufacturing and the people making this happen.



It's time to take charge!



Recycle your household batteries in the purple bag this Christmas including hearing aid batteries and removable batteries from vapes

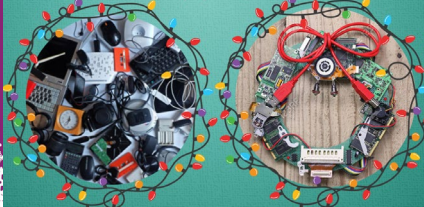
Recycle laptop batteries and car batteries at the local Household Recycling Centre

Merthyr Tydfil yn ailgylchu
Merthyr Tydfil recycles

Be a bright spark and recycle your electrical items this Christmas

Place small electrical items in a carrier bag next to or on top of your recycling box
Larger electrical items can be recycled at the local household recycling centres

Merthyr Tydfil yn ailgylchu
Merthyr Tydfil recycles



Our Household Recycling Centres will be closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.



Winter Opening Hours are 9.00am - 4.30pm

Dowlais HRC is closed every Tuesday.
Aberfan HRC is closed every Wednesday.



Cllr Declan Sammon
Transformation, Governance
& Social Partnership
Cabinet Member

Community Safety a priority for the Council

One of our priorities as a Council is to make Merthyr Tydfil a safer place to live, work and visit, and thanks to partnership work with organisations such as the Police and Housing Associations, we're taking steps to make this a reality.

Several initiatives have been launched in recent months, so we wanted to give you an update on some of the great work going on.

In July, Operation Clutch was launched to raise awareness and ask for support from members of the community to share intelligence on illegal off-road vehicles.

We're pleased to say that has resulted in action being taken against individuals who were identified as having no insurance or licence, off-road bikes have been seized, stolen bikes have been recovered, and a number of arrests have been made.

Together, we're sending a clear message: illegal and anti-social off-road biking won't be tolerated in Merthyr Tydfil. These bikes are not legal for use on public roads or public spaces unless they are fully road-legal, taxed, insured, and the rider holds the correct licence.



This summer the police launched **Merthyr Tydfil Together to combat anti-social behaviour** in the Town Centre, and we're already seeing positive results.

With increased patrols and additional CCTV cameras, this operation has so far resulted in over 100 arrests, over 100 anti-social behaviour referrals, a criminal behaviour order, and a number of vehicle seizures.



In October 2025, two Crimestopper Zones were identified in Merthyr Tydfil; one in Gurnos and one in the Town Centre. These were identified through engaging with residents at PACT meetings and listening to the challenges they face in these areas.

We understand that people want a quick and reliable way to report crimes, which these zones will give them. We look forward to learning in the coming months the benefits of these zones to residents.

Councillor Declan Sammon said: *"Residents have a right to feel safe, whether they're at home or out and about in the community, and we're working hard to make this a reality."*

"Working with partners is key. We hope to make a real, positive difference and we will share the progress of our journey with you along the way".

Crimestoppers is also available to everyone across Merthyr Tydfil to report crimes anonymously.

0800 555 111

crimestoppers-uk.org





Have Your Say

Your views matter to us. Complete our surveys and consultations by visiting: merthyr.gov.uk/HaveYourSay

We're Here to Help

Did you know...?

Our Contact Centre handles over **87,000** interactions every year – all to keep you connected and supported!

Every month, that's:



560 face-to-face visitors at reception



6,569 calls answered



142 emails handled

Whether you're looking to find out about Council services, report an issue, make a payment or book an appointment, our team is here to help.

01685 725 000
customerinfo@merthyr.gov.uk



Check your eligibility

With the winter months upon us, we're encouraging residents to check their eligibility for extra support with things like Pension Credits, Council Tax and Housing Benefits.

A hub of information is available on our website; merthyr.gov.uk/check-your-eligibility



Cllr Anna Williams-Price
Financial Sustainability,
Assets & Commercial
Cabinet Member

Budget Consultation 2026/27

Thank you to everyone who took part in our annual Budget Consultation.

Your feedback is invaluable in helping us set a balanced budget. The initial results of the consultation can be seen at: merthyr.gov.uk/haveyoursay

How the Council's Budget is spent

The Council provides hundreds of services for residents, some of which, you probably aren't even aware of. merthyr.gov.uk/budget-video

GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL

Did you know...

You can ask a question, add an item to a forward workplan, or attend a public meeting in person?



merthyr.gov.uk/council/have-your-say/the-councils-participation-strategy