

CONTACT



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

Newspaper for the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil

Issue 55

December 2018



**Looking back
at 2018
page 6**



merthyrtydfilCBC



@MerthyrCBC



www.merthyr.gov.uk



Welcome to this issue of your Contact community newspaper.



This year has been very busy for us as a Cabinet and some of the events and initiatives that we have been involved in are shown on page 6. Some of my most memorable moments have been the Cyfarthfa Park Crucible, the opening of Trago, The Rising, the launch of the newly refurbished tennis courts in Thomastown and the new homes in Merthyr Vale.

Now that we're in December and the temperature has dropped, our thoughts go to those who unfortunately don't have a place to call home. As a Council we have been working hard to help those in need and to put in place schemes to help address this issue, namely with the launch of Housing First. Details can be found on page 4.

During winter weather of snow and ice, we do all we can to keep our services and the County Borough running as smoothly as possible and I'd like to thank all residents who help in their communities to clear snow and check on neighbours. We provide advice on how to do this on page 5.

Christmas generates a lot of extra waste and we want you to recycle as much as possible. Information on what you can recycle and how is on page 3.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Kevin O'Neill
Leader of Merthyr Tydfil
County Borough Council

Annual Residents' Survey 2018 : An Update

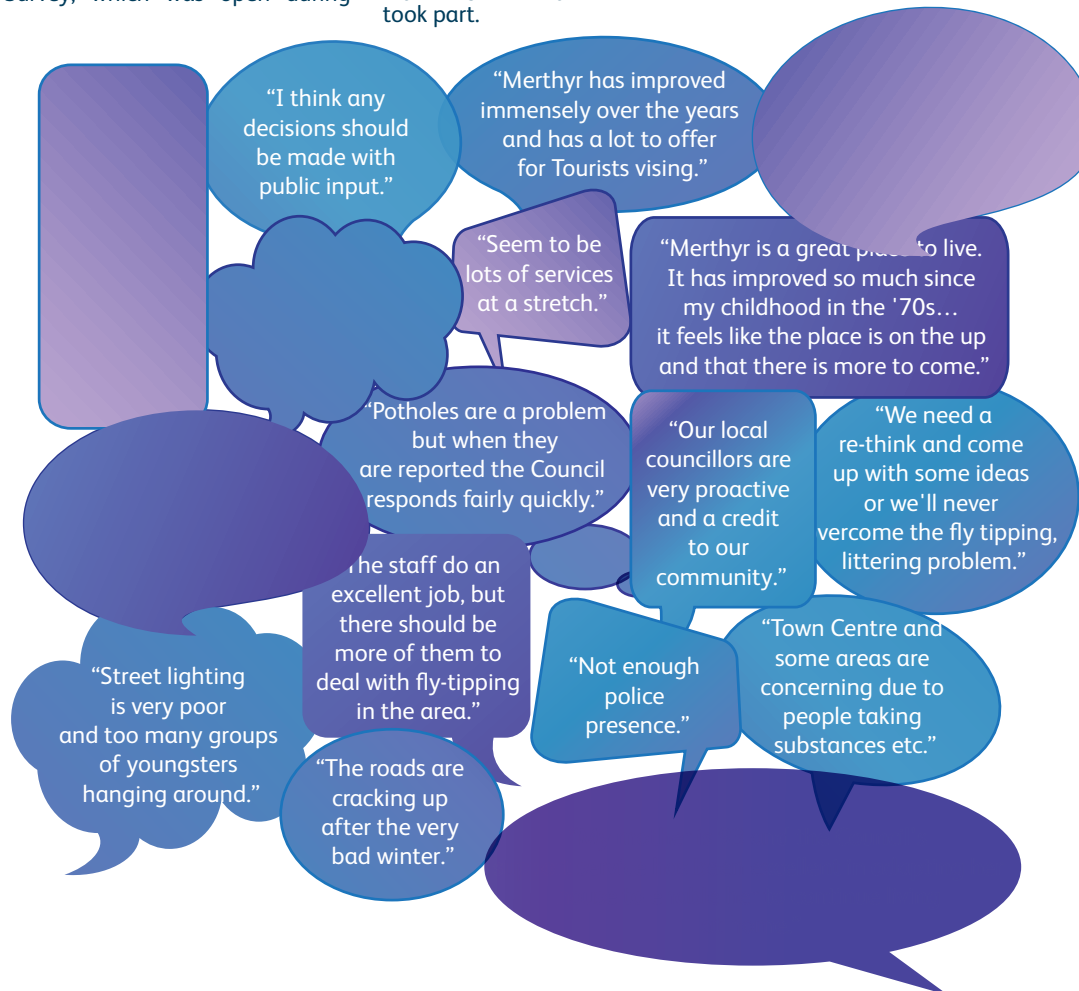
In the last issue of Contact, we told you about the 2018 Residents' Survey, which was open during

August this year.

This is the second year that we've run the survey and this year's response was far greater than expected – so we'd like to say a huge thank you to those who took part.

We had hundreds of comments, all of which will be presented to Council and will help inform our service delivery in future.

Here's a flavour of some of the comments received...



Access information quicker with our new phone system

We've introduced new phone options in our Contact Centre, which will direct you to our relevant online services or to the most appropriate department. When dialling 01685 725000 please listen carefully to the new options.



The Mayor

Councillor Clive Tovey, the Mayor of the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil is half way through his Mayoral year in office for 2018-19. He was elected as Mayor in 2010-11 and this is his second term in office.

He has already attended many events and has raised over £6,000.00 so far for his charity appeal's which this year are Macmillan Cancer Support and St John Ambulance.

If you wish to invite the Mayor to attend your event, then please contact mayoral@merthyr.gov.uk



Budget Consultation 2019/20 well underway

We'd like to thank everyone who's taken part in our 2019/20 Budget Consultation to-date.

We've had a fantastic response, so much so we are adding more dates to our roadshows!

Keep a look out on our social media pages for updates on times and locations.

If you're unable to attend one of the sessions you can complete the survey online by

visiting www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BudgetConsultation

The survey is open until Monday 7th January 2018.

Financial Update

Like all Councils across the Country, local authorities are now feeling the strain more than ever with the continued budget cuts from Central Government.

On 9th October, Merthyr Tydfil CBC received its provisional Welsh Local Government Settlement for 2019/20 of +0.33%. Whilst this was an increase to last year's settlement, this still leaves Merthyr Tydfil CBC with a budget shortfall for the next 3 years of approximately £5.6m for 2019/20, £13,850m for 2020/21 and £17m for 2021/22.

As a local Council, our elected members have a statutory duty to set a balanced budget at the end of each financial year. This however, is getting more and more difficult especially with the continued social care obligations exhausting local authority budgets. The pattern of growing overspends on services and dwindling reserves exhibited by an increasing number of authorities is not sustainable long term.

This Council has been working hard to identify a range of options to save money. These have included a recruitment freeze, restriction on expenditure and the continued scrutiny of service area budgets. In an attempt to reduce the number of compulsory redundancies, the Council has also offered a voluntary Redundancy/ Voluntary Early Retirement package for Council employees who may wish to leave the organisation via this route.

As part of the proposals to save money, consideration will also be given to the setting of the Council Tax for 2019/20. Some Councils across Wales have already indicated an increase to Council Tax in order to stay afloat. We must also consider this if we are to continue to deliver some of our services.

We will continue to engage with all stakeholders to look at how we can deliver services more efficiently and effectively. We are doing everything we can to protect those services provided to those most vulnerable within our communities but this is becoming more and more challenging as times goes on.

The long term financial plan for Councils is still unknown. In the meantime, we will continue to focus on our priorities and develop new ways of working to deliver services the best we can for the residents of our County Borough.



RECYCLE THIS CHRISTMAS

Most of us have more waste than usual during the Christmas period, so do your bit for the environment and recycle this Christmas! All waste generated can be presented at the kerbside and must be separated in the normal way.

KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICE

Glass can be recycled over and over and can be recycled in the weekly recycling scheme
Metal food and drink cans should be rinsed and placed in the blue bag
Plastic bottles, tubs, pots and trays should be rinsed and placed in the blue bag
Clean aluminium foil which is free of food can be scrunched into a ball and recycled in your blue bag
Paper and magazines should be presented separately to other materials
Cardboard should be flattened and free of polystyrene or packaging before being placed out for collection

Top tip!

Avoid wrapping paper altogether and give presents in paper bags, which can be reused.

WRAPPING PAPER

Conventional wrapping paper isn't recyclable because it contains glitter and ribbons, so please try to use brown paper to wrap presents – it's much cheaper and can be recycled afterwards in the paper recycling box!
If you generate any non-recyclable wrapping paper, please take this to the household waste and recycling centre.

REAL CHRISTMAS TREES / GARDEN WASTE

Real Christmas trees will be collected on request between Monday 8th January and Friday 19th January 2019. Please call 01685 725138 to request a collection.

Real trees and garden waste can also be taken to the Household Waste and Recycling Centres.

FOOD WASTE

All types of cooked and uncooked food which is free of packaging should be placed into compostable bags and into your food waste bin. Food waste is collected weekly.

ELECTRICAL ITEMS

Electrical items are harmful to the environment and should never be placed in the wheeled bin as they need to be broken down and disposed of correctly. The Council collect small electrical items at the kerbside and larger items can be taken to the HWRC sites. You can book a chargeable bulky waste collection by phone on 01685 725138 or via our website.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

The Council is running a Christmas card recycling competition with local schools, please check if your local school is participating and donate any cards to them to improve their chances of winning this year's competition. You could also send e-cards or donate money normally spent on cards to a charity instead.

Top tip!

Always make a list before you shop and plan recipes to prevent food waste occurring and to save money too!



REFUSE / RECYCLING COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAY PERIOD

NORMAL COLLECTION DAY:	WILL BE COLLECTED ON:
Monday 24th December	- Normal Day
Tuesday 25th December	- Thursday 27th December
Wednesday 26th December	- Friday 28th December
Thursday 27th December	- Saturday 29th December
Friday 28th December	- Sunday 30th December
Monday 31st December	- Normal Day
Tuesday 1st January	- Wednesday 2nd January
Wednesday 2nd January	- Thursday 3rd January
Thursday 3rd January	- Friday 4th January
Friday 4th January	- Saturday 5th January

HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING CENTRES (HWRC'S)

You can take your waste and recycling to your nearest HWRC at either:

- Aberfan Household Waste and Recycling Centre, Aberfan Road, Aberfan
- Dowlais Household Waste and Recycling Centre, The Bont, Gellifaelog Old Road, Dowlais

Both sites are open 9.30am - 4.30pm seven days a week all year round, except 25th December and 1st January.

Please remember:

- All waste must be separated by type and placed in the correct container.
- Packaging must be removed from cardboard before placing it into the correct skip.
- Bags containing mixed waste will need to be sorted at home before being brought to the site. Sorting stations are available at the sites, which you will be directed to in order to sort any mixed materials.
- You should flatten cardboard before taking them to the sites.
- Always ask a member of staff if you're unsure which skip to deposit your materials into.

To ensure that there is a consistent traffic flow through the Dowlais site, all traffic must pull in to the right hand lane to deposit materials. Parking in the left hand lane reduces traffic flow and creates a health & safety issue for site users.

Dunk, rinse and recycle.



REAL CHRISTMAS TREE COLLECTION

ON THE SAME DAY AS YOUR REFUSE COLLECTION FROM 8TH - 19TH JANUARY 2019

PLEASE NOTE YOU NEED TO PHONE AND REQUEST A COLLECTION ON 01685 725138

Lift the lid - then recycle!



THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE RESIDENTS WHO TOOK PART IN THE PLASTIC BAG RECYCLING TRIAL!

* GARDEN WASTE

THIS YEAR'S KERBSIDE GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS HAVE NOW CEASED FOR THE AUTUMN/WINTER MONTHS. COLLECTIONS WILL RE-COMMENCE FROM 1ST APRIL 2019.

PLEASE NOTE YOU CAN TAKE YOUR GARDEN WASTE TO OUR HOUSEHOLD WASTE & RECYCLING CENTRE'S YEAR-ROUND. *



Storm Callum leaves its mark on Merthyr Tydfil

As you are no doubt aware, Storm Callum which hit the UK in October, had a big impact on some of the roads in Merthyr Tydfil.

Below is an update on road closures and works currently taking place.

Dowlais High Street: During excavation works Welsh Water have discovered further issues with collapsed combined sewer

main therefore it is anticipated that the High Street will be closed until January 2019. Due to vehicles speeding in the area which is causing a risk to Welsh Water operatives and the public, the extent of the road closure will be increased to include the junction at Market Street leading on to the High Street. Full access will remain

to OP Chocolates and the Engine House.

Ffynnon Dwyn: Following the landslide at Ffynnon Dwyn, work has started to construct a 5m high retaining wall to support the highway with associated drainage work. It is anticipated that the highway will be re-opened by 14th December.

Pontsticill: Works to address the landslide at Pontsarn are far more complex due to the poor ground conditions and the potential for a further landslide. A drill rig is currently onsite carrying out boreholes and extracting soil samples to supplement a detailed ground investigation. Following this an appropriate method of slope

stabilisation will be designed. It is anticipated that the closure of the stretch of road between Pontsarn and Pontsticill (near the Spanish house) will be in place until the end of February 2019, however we will post further updates to our social media account as and when they are available.



Jobs project finds bulk of staff for newest pub

Staff at Merthyr Tydfil's newest pub were almost all recruited through a County Borough Council-run project to get help get long-term unemployed people back into work.

A total of 10 bar staff were taken on at The Iron Dragon after joining the local authority's Communities for Work (C4W) and Communities for Work Plus programmes.

People signing up to the Welsh Government initiative are assigned project mentors who help them access training, volunteering opportunities and work clubs.

"Implementing the principles of the Merthyr Tydfil Economic Growth Partnership, our officers co-ordinated the recruitment process using a one point of contact for the employer and potential employees," said Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Public Protection Cllr Geraint Thomas.

"This support helped the bar

managers' transition to the town and also allowed Iron Dragon owners Amber Taverns to focus on being ready and open for business."

Charlotte Holding, 33, had been out of work for six years since living in her native Essex. She went to the local Job Centre Plus, who put her in touch with Communities for Work Merthyr Tydfil. After receiving one to one support – advice, guidance and training – she was interviewed for the job and working there within two weeks.

"I'd done bar work before and I love it here," she said. "The customers are a diverse mix of characters and great fun. I'm very grateful to the C4W officers for all their support in finding the job and providing training."

Landlady Donna Molloy said she and husband Dave would have found it much tougher to employ staff without C4W. "We'd have had a lot of work to do it all on our own. C4W promoted the vacancies, sifted through all the applications and arranged the interviews.

"All the staff we've taken on through C4W have done really well, considering they came to us with no previous experience – we had a manic opening week and have been busy ever since!"

Housing First launched

A new approach to addressing rough sleeping that has been successful in the United States and parts of Europe and the UK has been launched in Merthyr Tydfil.

Run in partnership with The Salvation Army, the Merthyr Tydfil Housing First Project will see some rough sleepers who want to be part of the project being moved from the streets directly into their own home, with no homeless shelters in between.

The idea is that a homeless person – who often has a range of other issues – will be given independent accommodation while focusing on addressing other issues like substance misuse or poor mental health. The accommodation is separate from the support.

The project was launched at the Merthyr Tydfil Homelessness Summit, which saw members and officers from the Council, agencies, charities and volunteers from the Merthyr

Tydfil Night Shelter meet at the Orbit Business Centre to discuss the plans.

"The idea of Housing First is simple – it's housing with no strings attached. Then come the support services to help meet people's needs," said Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Public Protection Cllr Geraint Thomas.

"The approach has been adopted in different ways in different countries, achieving mostly encouraging results. I'm pleased that we are trialling it in Merthyr Tydfil and very hopeful of it being a significant step forward in solving the problems of homelessness," he added.

"The homelessness summit was thought-provoking and presented a great opportunity for individuals and agencies to provide their views on the changes and improvements needed locally to help improve our collective response to rising homelessness."

'Crucible' plans progress

Plans to transform the Cyfarthfa area into a heritage centre of international significance have taken a step forward with a proposal to set up a working group to progress ideas and develop a fundraising strategy.

A report, *The Crucible*, published earlier this year by the Design Commission for Wales called for an investment of at least £50m over the next decade to develop a modern interpretive centre that would 'showcase Merthyr Tydfil's standing as the world's largest centre of iron production in the 18th and 19th centuries'.

The report was the result of a 'charrette' – a 'visioning exercise' bringing together architects, landscape architects, planners, museum and heritage specialists and artists, as well as local community groups – to appraise Cyfarthfa's regeneration potential.

The Council has now agreed to establish the working group, one of the aims of which will be to explore forming links with major London based charities, trusts, Welsh Government departments, and all relevant UK based funding organisations. A total £1,320,000 has already been secured through the Council's Capital Programme between 2018/19 and 2021/22 to use as matchfunding against any funding applications.

"Much of Merthyr's physical heritage has been lost or hidden, but over the last 30 years there has been a greater consciousness of the importance of conserving what remains," said Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Public Protection Cllr Geraint Thomas.

"The central proposition in *The Crucible* is the need to create at Cyfarthfa a visitor experience of a scale and quality that would mark it out as a major national landmark with international appeal, befitting the town's central contribution to the industrial revolution," said Cllr Thomas.

"Properly connected to other key sites, through imaginative physical and online signposting, the effects of such a development would be felt over time across the rest of the town and the region."

be positive
not perfect

Caring for a family is a journey and no one gets it right all the time.

Parenting can be the most fulfilling experience, but it can also be stressful at times.

Most parents experience insecurity and worry that they aren't doing the right thing for their child or that they aren't doing enough to help their child through the stages of development.

Are you worried about your child's behaviour? Do you need advice on caring for your toddler or maybe you need help guiding your older child or teenager?

With a positive parenting approach and engagement, you can ensure that you're approaching parenting issues without worrying about being that social media picture perfect family.

Parental engagement plays a vital role in supporting a child's education and wellbeing, helping you build a positive relationship with your child by engaging with all aspects of their life. Whether you read to them, help with homework, or take a class with them, you can be involved in a healthy, mutually rewarding way.

If you're struggling to deal with family issues, don't wait to ask for help. There is plenty of local support available to you and your family in the Merthyr Tydfil area, helping you to achieve a positive home life, encourage positive education and enjoy positive relationships.

Information, advice and support are just around the corner.
Get started at MerthyrPIS.org



School transport consultation ends in February

You have until 4 February 2019 to give us your thoughts on plans to change the current home to school transport provision for students.

We are consulting on potential changes following a review that identified children are being transported to schools outside Merthyr Tydfil when suitable schools are available within the County Borough.

At present, it costs the Authority more than £162,000 a year to transport pupils to schools outside the County Borough, excluding the Welsh medium school Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun.

"The current provision doesn't align with the school admissions policy, which means Merthyr Tydfil students are travelling to schools outside the County Borough when suitable schools are available within it," said Cabinet Member for Learning Cllr Lisa Mytton.

Pupils are currently transported to the following schools outside the County Borough: Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun, Lewis School Pengam, Lewis Girls' Comprehensive School, Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, St John's Baptist Church in Wales School, Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School and St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School.

A number of options are being considered for the future of the service. These are:

1. Remain as is – there is no change to the existing arrangements. Pupils will continue to be transported to their 'nearest suitable' school in terms of distance, providing it is more than two miles (primary) or three miles (secondary) away from home.
2. Providing free transport for pupils attending schools within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough only, and to Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun as a Welsh language provider and St John's Baptist Church in Wales School as a faith provider.
3. Providing free transport for children attending schools within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough only, along with Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun as a Welsh language provider.

The final consultation drop-in event is taking place at Bedlinog RFC on 9 January 2019 from 4pm–6pm.

All stakeholders will be able to contribute to the consultation online using this link <https://bit.ly/2CEwk6s> and www.merthyr.gov.uk Alternatively paper copies of the consultation can be obtained from corporatecommunications@merthyr.gov.uk



SIR STANLEY THOMAS

Sir Stanley Thomas, pictured here with The Mayor, proudly holding the last edition of Contact Newspaper – the cover of which featured the Silent Soldier he sponsored at the War Memorial, to commemorate 100 years since the end of WWI.



Your dog did his duty...

now do yours!

Please clean up after your pet.



Pupil's survey leads to additional dog fouling bins – an update!

In the last issue of Contact Newspaper, we told you how the pupils of Edwardsville Primary School had done a litter and dog fouling survey on the roads leading up to their school.

As a result, two new bins have now been installed by the Council and pupils will run another survey later in the school year to see if any improvement has been made.



Stay warm, well, and safe this winter

With winter upon us, we all need to take more care to keep warm, well and safe and this is even more important for the elderly amongst us.

Age UK have produced an informative leaflet called 'Winter Wrapped Up' which provides lots of

useful advice on how to keep well and warm this winter. To view and download a copy, visit

www.ageuk.org.uk

Many people can feel increasingly lonely during the dark, winter months, but it doesn't have to be this way.

There are local organisations in Merthyr Tydfil who provide Befriending services:

Welcome Friends - Contact Maureen Winters on **07469 858761**

Red Cross Positive Steps - Contact Ken Carpenter on **07415 597440**

You can also visit

www.ageingwellinwales.com

to access a guide called 'Making a Difference' to help you deal with loneliness.

If you, a family member or neighbour are worried about a relative or elderly neighbour, contact the Council on **01685 725000** or phone Age Cymru's helpline free on **08000 223 444**

between Monday to Friday during the hours of 9am and 5pm.

If you are an older person or you care for an older person, please contact Deanne Rebane, your local Community Coordinator for information and advice on local services, groups or activities. Telephone **01685 354954** or **07580 869983**.

Winter Weather Information



Winter weather of snow and ice can cause disruption to services, transport and affect access to communities within Merthyr Tydfil.

The Highways Department has drawn up a Winter Maintenance Plan which covers Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's response to winter weather, specifically low temperatures and heavy snowfall.

The aim of the plan is to facilitate and coordinate Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's assistance to communities during winter weather.

How do we decide when to treat the roads?

This winter could be the coldest in five years, according to weather forecasters. When roads are icy and covered by snow, naturally residents ask what is being done to clear the roads and footpaths.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council as the Highway Authority is responsible for providing a winter maintenance service. This enables us to assist the travelling public to use the County Borough road network with reasonable safety throughout

adverse winter weather. Our aim is to maintain or reinstate as quickly as possible, the traffic flow on all routes during the winter period and to ensure that vehicles and pedestrians can use them with safety.

Between 1st November and 31st March daily weather forecasts will be received from the Weather Forecast provider. These are analysed very carefully and a decision is made on what action is required on that day.

Where the forecast does not give a clear indication of ice or snow the Council can call upon a number of road sensors around the County Borough, which can give up to the minute information on the surface temperature of the road.

When we grit?

Gritting usually takes place overnight during snow or icy road conditions. The gritting routes will be treated as a precaution and we will re-treat the area if snow or ice is still present after precautionary treatment.

We will carry out a precautionary treatment if either snow has been forecast, or if freezing conditions occur immediately following rain.

If snow levels build up, snow ploughs will be used.

If you notice a grit bin that needs filling, please use our online form on our website to request a refill.

Clear snow from a road, path or cycleway

You can clear snow and ice from pavements yourself. It's unlikely that you'll be sued or held responsible if someone is injured on a path or pavement if you've cleared it carefully.

How to clear snow and ice

When you clear snow and ice:

- do it early in the day - it's easier to move fresh, loose snow
- don't use water - it might refreeze and turn to black ice
- use salt if possible - it will melt the ice or snow and stop it from refreezing overnight (but don't use the salt from salting bins as this is used to keep roads clear)
- you can use ash and sand if you don't have enough salt - it will provide grip underfoot
- pay extra attention when clearing steps and steep pathways - using more salt may

help.

This information is supplied by the Department of Transport gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway

Check on your neighbours

Older people, those with long-term health conditions, pregnant women and young children are more at risk in cold weather. If you know or look after someone who may be particularly susceptible to the effects of very cold weather, please help them stay warm and well.

- Make sure they're warm enough, especially at night.
- Top up stocks of food and medicines so they don't need to go out during very cold weather.
- If they start to feel unwell, even if it's a cough or cold, don't wait until it gets more serious. Seek advice from your pharmacist or your local GP surgery.
- If you're worried about an older person, contact a family member, or Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's Adult Social Care on **01443 425011**.

For further information on how to keep your house warm to protecting yourself from common ailments, find out how to stay healthy this winter on the NHS website. www.nhs.uk/staywell/

In this cold weather, we hope that everyone in the community will come together to help themselves and each other. Thank you for your co-operation.

Recycling and Refuse Collections

During adverse weather conditions, we will continually review the situation in relation to our refuse and recycling collections.

On occasions, collections may have

to be suspended. As soon as it is safe to resume our rounds, we will continue with normal collections with catch-ups in between.

Please bear with us. During severe weather conditions, we may have to deploy our crews to assist in clearing the snow.

Please check the Council's website on www.merthyr.gov.uk and Facebook and Twitter pages for regular updates on refuse and recycling collections during the bad weather.

Schools

To access information on school closures during adverse weather conditions visit the Council's website and follow the link to the school closure information.

Where you can access information:

For further information and regular updates during the winter months visit the Council's website or the Council's social media sites:

Facebook: [/merthyrtydfilcbc](https://www.facebook.com/merthyrtydfilcbc)
Twitter: [/merthyrCBC](https://twitter.com/merthyrCBC)

How to contact us during an emergency

The Council's Out of Hours and Emergency telephone number is **01685 385231**.

Public Transport

For information in relation to public transport, you are advised to contact the relevant companies directly with regards to disruption of services during periods of bad weather.

- Traveline Cymru
- Transport for Wales Rail Services
- Stagecoach



LOOKING BACK AT 2018

Looking back, 2018 has been an extremely busy 12 months. We as a Cabinet have been fortunate enough to play a part in developing some great projects and initiatives within our communities which has improved the lives of those living and working in our County Borough. Our commitment to you is that we will continue to do the best we can for the people of our County Borough making Merthyr Tydfil, a place to be proud of! Here are some of our highlights of 2018



January

We kicked off the year with our annual Budget Consultation roadshow, where we were out and about asking residents to help inform our 2018/19 budget. This was the first time for our administration to do this specific consultation and it was great to get out there and hear the views of the public.



February

Leader of the Council Cllr Kevin O'Neill and Cllr Geraint Thomas - together with representatives of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Welsh Government, Sustrans and rail maintenance company Hammond - travelled through the Merthyr (Abernant) Tunnel to look at the possibility of bringing it back into use.



March

March saw the 'Beast from East' hit the UK and, as with most of the country, Merthyr Tydfil came to a standstill. But with a lot of hard work, grit and huge amounts of community spirit Merthyr rose to the challenge, making sure that the vulnerable and those in need were looked after and services were resumed as quickly as possible.



April

The artwork of 10-year-old Tia Metz of Goetre Primary School was chosen from more than 250 entries in a competition to help launch the Council's 'Shwmaerionment' initiative, where we're hoping people will start using different Welsh words and phrases with one another in a 'unique, bilingual environment'. Tia is pictured with Cabinet Member for Learning Cllr Lisa Mytton.



April

Man Engine Cymru's appearance at Cyfarthfa Park and Castle attracted more than 5,100 people, not only from South East Wales but also from as far afield as Oxford and Surrey. Mayor Cllr Kevin Gibbs and Cllr O'Neill meet two of the actors.



May

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's 'Meanwhile' programme, which started in 2015, is also helping turn one of the most historical parts of the centre - Pontmorlais - into a haven of unique independent shops. The latest four businesses to open include Twin Taff Brewery, the brainchild of twin brothers Darryl and Daniel Williams, whose garden shed hobby has blossomed into Merthyr Tydfil's first town centre specialist microbrewery, based in Star Yard, Court Street.



May

Support and respite group for adults with learning difficulties Ymlaen (Welsh for 'the way forward') received a boost from a grants scheme aimed at helping Merthyr Tydfil people enjoy a healthier and better quality of life. The £5,000 from the Ffos-y-fran Community Benefit Fund will cover the cost of food and drink for a year for its service users. Cllrs Geraint Thomas and Dave Hughes are big supporters of the project.



May

Merthyr Tydfil's Cyfarthfa Castle, its park and the surrounding areas should be developed as an industrial heritage centre of international significance, in line with its place in history, according to a report published by the Design Commission for Wales. Author Sir Geraint Talfan Davies is pictured with Cllrs Thomas and O'Neill and DCW advisor Amanda Spence.



June

Merthyr Tydfil Tennis Club is looking towards an exciting future after taking on ownership of the former Council premises and unveiling over £50,000 worth of refurbishment and new equipment. Our Community Regeneration department helped the club secure £23,673 from the Ffos-y-Fran Large Grants Fund and a further £30,000 to resurface the Thomastown Park tennis courts and purchase much needed equipment.



July

Coed-y-Dderwen Community Primary School became the first-ever winners of the inaugural Merthyr Tydfil Primary Schools Cricket Tournament and the first team from the county borough to reach the Mid Glamorgan Quarter-finals. The team was presented with a trophy and medals by Mayor Cllr Tovey.



August

Merthyr Tydfil's growing status as an activity tourism destination is set to continue, with the county borough bucking the national trend towards closure of Tourist Information Centres. By situating the new TIC at Trago Merthyr Tydfil's Swansea Road premises, the Council is hoping to capture a significant share of the anticipated two-and-a-half to three million annual shoppers at the store.



August

Cyfarthfa is looking cleaner and greener as the result of an exercise in good neighbourliness by its local McDonald's as a result of the restaurant's annual Love Where You Live campaign in which the business runs a local community support project. Staff from McDonald's outlets across South Wales joined Cyfarthfa Community Group and Cllr Thomas in constructing and placing planters and flowers around Heolgerrig and Swansea Road to attract pollinators.



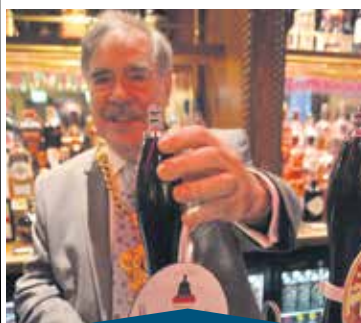
August

Mayor Cllr Tovey is pictured with Welsh Snooker Youth Champions Luke James, 16, who is Welsh under 16s No 2; Ryan Davies, aged eight, who qualified to play for Wales in the Celtic Challenge; and Liam Davies, 12, Welsh under 14s No 1 and Welsh under 14s & 16s Champion.



September

Mayor Cllr Tovey with winner of the 2018 Roman Run, Simon Lewis of Pontypridd Roadents. A record number of people entered this year.



October

Mayor Cllr Tovey officially opened the county borough's newest pub, The Iron Dragon - the refurbished former Water Board building, Taf Fechan, in Castle Street.



October

Cllr O'Neill, the Mayor Cllr Clive Tovey and Chief Executive Gareth Chapman were at a breaking-ground ceremony to mark the start of work on 153 new homes at the former Merthyr Vale Colliery site. Regional Director with homes developer Lovell, Kate Rees, and Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association Chief Executive Karen Courts were also at the start of work on the £25m Ymyl Yr Afon development.



November

November 2018 marked the centenary of the end of WWI and was marked in Merthyr Tydfil with a procession through the town centre and a service at St David's Church. Cabinet Members were honoured to be a part of such a special and important occasion.



SHARE YOUR WISHES WITH SANTA!



Children will have the chance to share their festive wishes with Father Christmas at this year's St Tydfil Shopping Centre Santa's Grotto.

The free grotto is open between 10am and 4pm every Friday and Saturday until Saturday 22 December, with each child visiting receiving a goody bag.

A Christmas craft fairs will also be held in the shopping centre on Saturday

15 December, giving visitors the opportunity to purchase unique gifts for friends and family.

"Our Santa's Grotto was extremely popular last year and we're once again delighted to welcome Father Christmas back to Merthyr Tydfil to meet local children," said Julie Calderbank, St Tydfil Shopping Centre Operations Manager.

Gerald Jones MP



Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney



Best wishes for Christmas & the New Year



For my surgery details or help and advice please contact my office:

Telephone - 01685 383 739

Email - Gerald.jones.mp@parliament.uk

www.Geraldjones.co.uk

Just in time for Christmas – the Merthyr Gift Card



Are you stuck on what to give that relative or friend who has everything this Christmas? How about a Merthyr Gift Card?

Just launched by The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil Business Improvement District to support town centre shops and businesses, there are many reasons why giving a Merthyr Gift Card as a present makes sense.

The lucky recipient has the choice of more than 35 shops, restaurants and businesses where they can spend their gift card. They don't need to redeem the full value in one go and can spread their spend by using it for a meal, a day out, something for the house, a pampering session - and much more.

"Another great reason is that purchasers will be supporting their local town centre and business community," said BID Co-ordinator Antonia Pompa.

"When you buy on the internet, most of the money you spend leaves the local area instantly. But when you buy in the town centre using your gift card, much more of that money stays in the local area. So, think local and shop local!"

It's really easy to buy a gift card – visit the merthyrgiftcard.com website, select the card value you want, with the option of including a personalised message, and ask for the card to be sent first class if time is short.

The card can currently be used in over 35 town centre businesses with more to follow. These include: A Better World Comics and Games, Boots, Bumbletree, Card Value, Darlington Opticians, Edwards Holidays, F Hinds, Fresh 'n' Fruity, Greyhound Rescue Wales, Hardie's (opening soon), H Samuel, Infinity Toys, IQ Clothing, JOL's, Key Vapours, Key Vapours CBD Store, Lazarou Barbers, Maridene Curtains, Peacocks, Papa John's, Pet and Garden Centre, Redhouse, Redhouse Café, Regenerate, Ruggers, Sew It Seams, Shuzz, Specsavers, Step Forward Physiotherapy, The Beauty Box, The New Crown Inn, Trenchers, Trendy Tots Baby Boutique, Trespass, Vodafone, Wilko and Woodfired.

MINI-MUSICIANS MAKING THEIR MARK

Merthyr Tydfil pupils are making their mark on the world of music – thanks to a free initiative giving them all the chance to learn to play an instrument.

The County Borough Council Music Service saw its students enjoy a fruitful autumn, with a number of them representing Merthyr Tydfil at concerts and many others honing their skills in weekly groups and special workshops.

Merthyr College trumpet student Morgan Rees played an impressive recital in an annual young musicians' concert held at Cowbridge Music Festival. French Horn students Sadie Sambrook-Deery and Victoria Styber from Bishop Hedley High School and Eva Sullivan from Heolgerrig Primary represented the county borough at the British Horn Society Festival held in Cardiff.

More than 100 pupils - both from local schools and home-schooled, and playing instruments ranging

from violins to saxophones and drums - came together for a morning of making music and new friends at an instrumental workshop.

"The service is also extremely grateful to fundraising charity Merthyr Mendicants for donating £500, which will establish a bursary fund to which the young musicians who represent Merthyr in the Four Counties Youth Music ensembles can apply for help with the costs of the FCYM courses they attend," said Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Cabinet Member for Learning Cllr Lisa Mytton.

The extra-curricular youth music groups are organised by the Music Service free of charge, and new members are always welcome.

They are held at Pen Y Dre High School on Wednesdays, from 4pm-5pm (choir), Thursdays, 4pm-5pm (guitars), 4pm-6pm (windband) and 5pm-6pm (brass), and at Cyfarthfa High School on Fridays, 4.30pm-6.30pm (orchestra).

For further information about the service, please contact Sarah Jones on 07712 234036, email sarah.jones@merthyr.gov.uk



YDYCH CHI'N TORRI'R GYFRAITH? ARE YOU BREAKING THE LAW?

Os ydych yn cludo pobl yn eich cerbyd ac yn derbyn tâl am wneud hynny, yna YDYCH!

Fe ddaethom ni i wybod am nifer cynyddol o bobol sy'n cynnig "liffitiau". Mae angen i chi fod yn ymwybodol bod cludo pobl am elw heb y trwyddedau perthnasol yn anghyfrethlon.

Os ydych chi'n rhoi "liffitiau" am arian, tydych chi'n torri'r gyfraith a gallech gael:

- Cofnod troseddol am weithredu fel taci heb drwydded
- Eich cerbyd yn cael ei atafaelu gan yr Heddlu am yswiriant annilys
- Anghymhwysio rhag gyrru.

Os hoffech wybod sut i fod yn yrrwr taci trwyddedig neu os oes gennych unrhyw wybodaeth ar ymwybodol neu os oes gennych unrhyw wybodaeth ar ymwybodol neu os oes gennych unrhyw wybodaeth ar ymwybodol, please contact the Licensing Department – licensing@merthyr.gov.uk neu ffôn: 01685 725000.

If you transport people in your vehicle for payment, then YES!

We have been made aware of an increasing number of people offering "lifts". You need to be aware that transporting people for profit without the relevant licences is illegal.

If you give "lifts" for money, you are breaking the law and could end up with:

- A criminal record for acting as an unlicensed taxi
- Your vehicle being seized by Police for invalid insurance
- A disqualification from driving.

If you wish to find out how to become a licensed taxi driver or if you have any information on unlicensed drivers, please contact the Licensing Department – licensing@merthyr.gov.uk or 01685 725000.

Thank you for having your say.

We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who took part in our recent toilet strategy needs assessment survey – we had some great feedback, which will help inform our main consultation starting in January 2019.

Keep a look out on our website and social media pages for information on when it starts, where you can obtain a paper copy and any planned events.

Did you know?

We as a Council have a responsibility to assess the community's need for toilets and to put a plan in place to meet the identified needs. The Council must also prepare and publish a local toilet strategy by 31st May 2019.

Hoppa running until Christmas

The free Saturday shuttle bus between Merthyr Tydfil's shopping, leisure and heritage attractions will operate until the end of the year.

The Merthyr Hoppa coach linking Trago Mills to Cyfarthfa Park, the historical Redhouse in Pontmorlais, Merthyr Leisure Village, the town centre and Cyfarthfa Retail Park has been running since July.

The County Borough Council initiative is sponsored by The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil Business Improvement District (BID) and operated by Edwards Coaches. The timetable is:

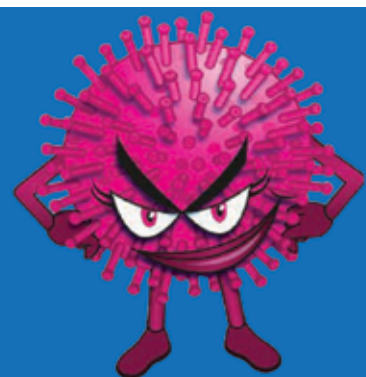
- On the hour from Trago Mills
- Five past from Cyfarthfa Park bus stop

- Quarter past from the Redhouse
- 20 past from the Leisure Village bus stop
- 25 past from Merthyr College, to cross the footbridge to St Tydfil Shopping Centre
- 25 to the hour from Cyfarthfa Retail Park.

The bus is low floor and Disability Discrimination Act-compliant to cater for wheelchair users and prams. It also has a range of local tourism leaflets, and drivers will be able to inform passengers which attractions to alight for at each bus stop.

BID Co-ordinator Antonia Pompa said: "The aim is to maximise the benefit of new people coming to the area and encourage them to visit the town centre's retail, hospitality and leisure businesses."



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALESBwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf
University Health Board

BEAT FLU BEFORE IT BEATS YOU!



WHO SHOULD HAVE THE VACCINE?

- Anyone aged 65 or over.
- 6 months to 65 years if in an 'at risk' group such as Diabetes, Asthma, COPD,

Heart Condition, Chronic Liver Disease, Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 or more (adults only), a previous Stroke, Immune System that isn't working.

There are many more conditions that should have the vaccine, speak to your GP or Practice Nurse if you are unsure.

It is also recommended for people who are

- Pregnant
- Living in a long stay care home/residential homes
- Carers
- Community first responders
- Members of recognised voluntary organisations who provide planned emergency first aid at organised public events
- Health and Social Care staff delivering patient care
- Children aged 2 to 11 years (School Year 6)

WHEN TO GET VACCINATED?

The best time to have a flu vaccine is before flu starts to circulate which is usually mid-December at the earliest. **New for 2018, the recommended flu vaccines for children and those aged over 65 will be delivered in stages between September and November.** GP practices will offer vaccination as soon as possible, but delivery will be staggered so some people may be asked to wait until the recommended vaccine for them is available. Please be patient during this period.

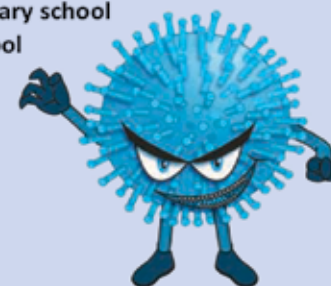
DID YOU KNOW?

- You need the flu vaccine every year as the virus constantly changes
- Some people are more likely to be very ill with flu than others
- As we get older our immune system doesn't work as well, so older people are more at risk of catching flu
- Having the vaccine not only protects you but also those around you. This is especially important if you have someone in your family who is pregnant, or has a long term illness, or you have contact with young children or people more at risk of infection due to illness
- If you are not in any of the 'at risk' groups you can still obtain the vaccine from your pharmacy for a cost of around £10

NEW FOR 2018/19 SEASON: ANYONE AGED 65 OR OVER SHOULD HAVE A DIFFERENT INJECTABLE FLU VACCINE, DESIGNED TO WORK BETTER IN OLDER PEOPLE. IT IS KNOWN AS ATIV AND IS THE BEST FLU VACCINE FOR THIS AGE GROUP.

WHERE WILL CHILDREN BE VACCINATED?

- 2 year olds should attend GP practices for vaccination.
- 3 year olds that attend local authority nurseries will be vaccinated in schools. 3 year olds not in local authority nurseries should attend their GP.
- **New for 2018, all reception and primary school children will have the vaccine in school up to year 6.**
- The school programme will be delivered between October and December. School dates will soon be available online at cwmtaf.wales.



FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE IS AVAILABLE FROM
www.beatflu.org, your local pharmacy or GP practice

GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES