

Christina Rees MP

Monthly Report - September 2017



Neath Real Ale and Cider Festival

Popular event returns for another year!

Following a resurgence of town events in the shape of the Carnival, food and drink festival and the Great Guitar Gig, the Neath Real & Cider Festival has gone from strength to strength, and Christina was delighted to attend once again and celebrate the exceptional local tipples on offer.

The festival, organised by Neath Town Council and opened by its Mayor Cllr. Mark Protheroe, is a showcase of local ales and ciders, with the least local being made only 30 miles away. The organisers and volunteers need to be commended for putting on an event that not only promotes local producers but also our wonderful Neath Town.

A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD

It's been a very busy summer recess, and I have been lucky enough to visit some wonderful events around Wales, including the Royal Welsh Show, Pembrokeshire Country Show and the National Eisteddfod on Ynys Mon. It was wonderful to see Wales on the global stage, attracting visitors from across the world.



I was delighted to visit Ty Maesmarchog this past month to discuss local concerns with residents and listen to ideas.



It was lovely to kick off summer recess with a night of music from local talent Bronwen.



I had a great time at Pantyffordd Carnival with Cllr. Sheila Penry, judging the fancy dress was a tough job!

Weekdays in Westminster

Legislation, debates, Parliamentary commitments and holding the Government to account.

Parliament returned on Monday 4th September and without drawing breath I was preparing for the next session of Wales Questions on Wednesday 6th September.

Being the first Welsh Questions since the recess, and indeed since the General Election, this was an opportunity to pin down the Secretary of State on the matters that the Tory Government have let Wales down, including the u-turn on electrification to Swansea and the continued failure to support the Tidal Lagoon.

I was very keen to pin Mr. Cairns down to committing on record in the House that electrification will actually get as far as Cardiff, given his track record of broken promises. I also used the opportunity to draw attention to the #lovethelagoon campaign, and try and push the Government on supporting a world-leading tidal energy project that will deliver jobs, an economic boost and long-term tourism opportunities, as well generating enough power for thousands of homes.



“Will the Secretary of State promise that the electrification will go ahead and not join the ever-growing list of broken promises the Government have made to the people of Wales?”

I was also pleased to be re-elected as an officer on the APPG on the Hair Industry, and Chair of the APPG on Sepsis. As we know, Sepsis is a very serious condition, and raising awareness of the symptoms is one of the best ways to save lives. I was also elected Vice Chair of the APPG on Rail in Wales, where we will be pushing for the best rail services across the Country and supporting the continued development of electrification and quicker commuting times.

OUT AND ABOUT IN THE CONSTITUENCY

One of the great honours of being an MP is the opportunity that recess presents to get out around the constituency. This summer has been no different, and I have managed to visit businesses in Resolven, Age Connects meetings in Glynneath, Tonna Music Festival, Seven Sisters Carnival and the Melin Primary School Enrichment Project. I have been delighted to see such events and activities so well supported by local people, and it makes me proud to represent Neath. I love this great constituency and ask anyone reading to please invite me to any projects or events you are organising.



NEATH YMCA OPENING EVENING

This past month has seen me visiting several local organisations, which is always a humbling experience. I am always impressed with the commitment and hard-work of volunteers and workers, and never more so than when I visited the open day at Neath YMCA recently. A facility clearly rooted in its community, I was amazed to see the involvement of local residents and the variety of services and projects on offer. I was delighted to meet representatives from Shaw Trust and hear about the work they do to support residents back into employment. I have personal experience of how good Shaw Trust are, and was impressed to hear of their new Work Choice scheme.



Christina Rees MP visits Pen y Cymoedd

Shadow Secretary of State for Wales welcomes on-shore wind project

Following on from 2015's visit to the Pen y Cymoedd site, Christina returned to see the 76 wind turbines fully installed. An innovative, groundbreaking project, Pen y Cymoedd has only happened because of the partnership between Vattenfall, Siemens and Natural Resources Wales.

The site generates power to the equivalent of 188,000 homes every year (around 15% of the total homes in Wales). It will have paid back its carbon footprint by 2020 and will continue

generating fossil fuel-free electricity until at least 2037. Christina said "I am delighted to see the Pen y Cymoedd site fully operational and commend all those involved in delivering this innovative renewable energy project".



UNISON NEATH PORT TALBOT QUESTION TIME EVENT

On Friday 8th September I was pleased to attend a 'Question Time' event organised by the Unison Neath Port Talbot branch. As part of the STOPS campaign, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council offered time off to staff in order to ask elected representatives their opinion on austerity and cuts to public services. I was a member of the panel along with my Parliamentary colleague Stephen Kinnock MP, and local AMs David Rees and Jeremy Miles. Chaired by Unison Branch Chairman Mark Fisher, the event was a great opportunity to discuss the real life impact of cuts, further consolidating the need to end Tory austerity, lift the public sector pay cap and invest in public services.





STREET SURGERIES

During the past two years I have been proud to call my office a truly accessible advice centre, where my team are available between 9:30 and 4:30, Monday to Friday, and run an open-door service for people seeking help and advice from their local MP. However, I fully understand that not everyone is able to make it to Neath, or even out of their homes, and so I have been running Street Surgeries all across the constituency, working with the local Councillor where possible. The street surgeries work by people putting up a flyer in their window (that would've been delivered the day before) if they'd like us to call. This approach has been both very successful, and popular with constituents, and I will be continuing to hold them in communities across Neath.

LEAGUE AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS

Christina Rees calls for tougher penalties for animal abusers

Christina has joined growing calls for tougher penalties for animal abuse and action to be taken to enforce bans on offenders from keeping animals. Attending the League Against Cruel Sports' Annual Reception in Westminster on Wednesday, Christina heard how sentences are currently inadequate and outdated, remaining unchanged for over a hundred years and therefore failing to reflect the horrific cruelty inflicted on animals in the name of barbaric 'sports' such as dog fighting.

England and Wales are lagging behind when it comes to punishing people who abuse animals, and so the League is calling for maximum sentences to be increased from the current maximum of six months to the more appropriate ceiling of five years. This would bring the law in

line with much of the rest of Europe and Northern Ireland, and would better reflect the seriousness of the abuse involved.

Christina said: "I'm delighted to be supporting the League's campaign for tougher sentences for animal abuse. As League investigations have shown, dog fighting is a horrific crime involving immense cruelty, and this needs to be better reflected in the penalties handed to perpetrators.



PRIDE CYMRU

Supporting equality and diversity is something close to my heart, and every year I am proud to march in solidarity at Pride Cymru. The event is always well attended, always vibrant and always powerful, and this year was no different. I was proud to march with LGBT Labour and my Assembly and Parliamentary colleagues, and to stand with them to support our very own Jeremy Miles as he gave a passionate and heartfelt speech about the importance of being yourself and having a voice. I am proud to be a supporter of Pride Cymru and urge everyone who cares about equality to do the same.

