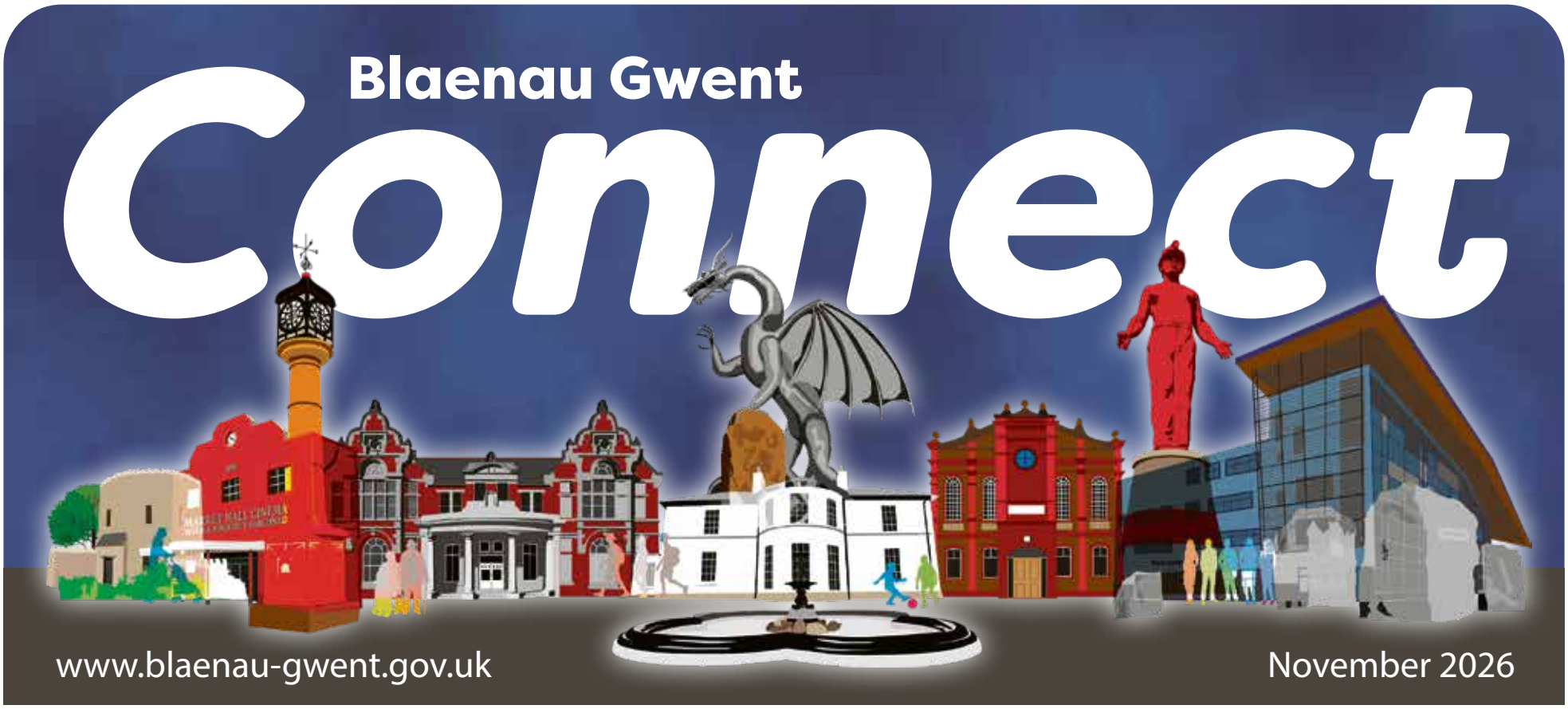


There is a lot happening across Blaenau Gwent at the moment, and despite the challenges we continue to face, we are making real progress in improving our communities and creating new opportunities for the future.

One of the things I am particularly pleased about is the headway we are making with the Blaenau Gwent Deal. This is about changing the way the council works with our communities, making sure local people have a greater say in the decisions that affect them and helping us work together to improve the places where we live. We are already seeing some excellent examples of this happening, and you can read more about them throughout this issue.

We are also continuing to attract significant investment into Blaenau Gwent. The £20 million Pride in Place programme in Tredegar, alongside a further £1.5 million for improvements elsewhere in the borough, provides us with a real opportunity to make a difference to our towns and communities.

Our new strategic development and investment partnership will also help us bring forward new housing, improve infrastructure, support businesses and create opportunities for the future. You can read more about some of this work on pages 6 and 7.

Of course, the past few months have also brought some real challenges, particularly the wildfires we experienced during the summer. I saw first-hand the tremendous efforts made by our emergency services, council staff, partner organisations and, importantly, local residents who came together to help and support one another. The response from the Cwm Task Force was a particularly good example of the community spirit that exists across Blaenau Gwent. I want to put on record my sincere thanks to everyone involved. On page 8, you can also find some useful advice on how to prepare for the winter months ahead.

Finally, I want to encourage as many residents as possible to take part in our Let's Talk: Living in Blaenau Gwent survey. It only takes around ten minutes, but it gives you an opportunity to tell us what matters most to you, what we're getting right and, just as importantly, where we need to do better. Your views really do matter, and they will help us make decisions about the services and priorities that affect us all. Please take part by scanning the QR code and encourage others to do the same.

We have achieved a great deal together, but I know there is still much more to do. I want to see Blaenau Gwent continue to move forward, and I will keep working with our residents, communities and partners to build on what we have delivered and make our borough an even better place for us all.

Steve Thomas, Leader of Blaenau Gwent Council


Leader Steve Thomas and Cabinet Member John Morgan with Tredegar business owner Beth Donelon

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Inside >>


Volunteers helping to deliver play *see page 3*


Swffryd community paints their park *see page 5*


Town centre properties transformed *see page 6*


Pride in Place Tredegar latest *see page 7*

Cwmtillery coal tip works reach major milestone



Phase one improvement works at a former coal tip in Cwmtillery are complete.

Forty homes were evacuated following the landslide on 24 November 2024. Working with Welsh Government and partners through the Coal Tip Safety Grant Scheme, the council secured £1.3 million for phase one and a further £3 million for phase two over the next two years.

The first phase focused on improving water management ***(see photo)*** and phase two, due to begin early next year, will focus on reprofiling the tip slopes.

This will involve reshaping steep areas, adding more drainage and carrying out landscaping work, including grass seeding and tree planting.

Throughout the work, the council has kept residents engaged and informed through regular meetings and has listened and acted upon their concerns.

The community has also had the opportunity to see the work carried out for themselves.

Councillor Tommy Smith, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Environment Services, said: "We have worked closely with the community to keep residents informed and ensure their voices are heard. Working together, we are making this site safer and more resilient for the future."

Blaenau Gwent Community Hubs

LOCATION	OPENING HOURS	DAY
Abertillery Library	**OPEN:** 9am -5pm - Tuesday, Thursday and Friday **CLOSED:** 1pm - 2pm **OPEN:** 10am - 5pm - Wednesday **CLOSED:** 1pm - 2pm	Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday and Friday
Brynmawr Library	**OPEN:** 9am -5pm **CLOSED:** 1pm - 2pm	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
Ebbw Vale Library	**OPEN:** 9am -5pm **CLOSED:** 1pm - 2pm	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
Tredegar Library	**OPEN:** 9am -5pm - Monday, Tuesday, and Friday **CLOSED:** 1pm - 2pm **OPEN:** 10am - 5pm - Wednesday **CLOSED:** 1pm - 2pm	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
Blaina Library	**OPEN:** 9:30am - 4pm **CLOSED:** 1pm - 2pm	Monday
Cwm Library	**OPEN:** 9:30am - 5pm **CLOSED:** 1pm - 2pm	Thursday
Llanhilleth Library	**OPEN:** 10am - 4pm **CLOSED:** 1pm - 2pm	First Wednesday of every month

Need information or support from a council service?

There are many ways you contact the council and access services online, but if you would like to speak to a customer service advisor face to face we have community hubs in all libraries around the borough. Scan the QR code for opening hours

You can access support and advice on:

- Council tax and non-domestic rates information and advice.
- Benefits information and advice including Universal Credit, council tax reduction, free school meals, school clothing grants and benefit overpayments.
- Blue Badge Scheme
- Highways and street lighting
- Waste and recycling

You can also make payments (card only) and pick up battery recycling and food waste bags. On certain days, Citizens Advice are also available, see our website for more details. Other ways to contact the council:

- **My Services:** sign up or log in via our website
- **E-mail:** info@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
- **BG App:** For download on mobile devices
- **Telephone:** 01495 311556 (out of hours emergency number also)

Our community hubs also have digital exclusion officers available to help anyone struggling with online services - pay them a visit!

The Deal Village

Thank you to everyone who came along to visit our first Blaenau Gwent Deal villages in Brynmawr and Tredegar.







The events brought together a range of council services and key partners including Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations to show how we are working to improve people's lives and the local area, and how they can get involved in their community. More Deal villages are planned for next year.

Find out more about the Blaenau Gwent Deal on the Blaenau Gwent Council website. For volunteering opportunities, visit: www.gavo.org.uk/blaenau-gwent

GET INVOLVED Blaenau Gwent!

We have an exciting new way of engaging and consulting with local people - Get Involved Blaenau Gwent.

If you want to have your say on council consultations and keep up to date with important projects and plans, then join our new engagement platform now.

People have already been having their say on the £750,000 being invested into Brynmawr Welfare Park, the Active Travel Network Map and our Towns Together programme.



It's really quick and easy to sign up. Scan the QR code to register now. You can also find out how to become more involved more in your community and work with us through the Blaenau Gwent Deal.

Connect

BG Connect is published by Blaenau Gwent Council.

It costs just 18p to design, print and deliver to your home. Once read please pop it in you kerbside recycling.

Let's Talk - Living in Blaenau Gwent

The Let's Talk - Living in Blaenau Gwent survey is your chance to have your say on what's important to you about living in Blaenau Gwent, including your local area, what council services you value as well as community life, wellbeing and local democracy.

Your views will help support the aims of our Blaenau Gwent Deal to create thriving, connected communities where people can live well and feel supported. Visit the Get involved Blaenau Gwent website.



Are you registered to vote?

Voters will go to the polls next May to elect their local councillors.

33 councillors will be elected in 14 wards across the county borough. Make sure you are registered to vote now. It's quick and easy to do so at **www.gov.uk**. If you have any queries about voting or to find out if you are registered to vote call us on **Tel:** 01495 369706 or 369707.



MISSION 1 Early years - building a brighter future

In Blaenau Gwent we are committed to working with partners and our communities to ensure children have the best start in life. Where we can, we work differently through the Blaenau Gwent Deal to bring communities and families with us on a journey where they can support themselves and also those around them. We're building fairer, healthier and stronger communities.

Nurture and Nourish

The council has become the first in Gwent to launch a new early years nutrition pathway, which supports families with healthy eating from pregnancy through to pre-school years.

Nurture and Nourish has been developed in response to childhood obesity trends, and provides consistent, evidence-based guidance on healthy eating, infant nutrition and child development.

This builds on the huge success of the Get Blaenau Gwent Breastfeeding campaign and aims to help families establish healthy habits early on.

It's also being championed by volunteers at play groups around the borough.

Recent data shows encouraging progress with the proportion of four to five-year-olds classified as overweight or obese, falling from 28.9% in 2021-22 to 25% in 2024-25, placing the county below the Welsh average.

To mark the launch, Flying Start hosted family activities across its hubs. Feedback from families highlighted increased confidence around healthy eating, greater awareness of portion sizes and positive experiences of children trying new foods.

> *"We have enjoyed the session; it was lovely for the children to prepare their own food."*

> *"Great session. It was nice to be able to make a meal all together."*

> *"I like the pathway and knowing where to get help. Having clear guidance from pregnancy through to preschool makes me feel more confident."*

> *"The nutrition pathway gives practical advice, reassurance and confidence to build healthier habits for the family."*



Volunteers help Pop in and Play

Volunteer parents are helping to deliver pop in and play sessions for children.

The sessions are helping families build confidence, develop new skills and find support networks within their communities.

Parents and carers are in control and are at the heart of shaping and delivering support for families. It also frees up time for professionals to focus on the most vulnerable families.

Sessions have been designed by the parents themselves and provide a welcoming environment where families can share experiences, access support and develop practical skills, including opportunities to undertake training such as paediatric first aid.



Empowering parents and carers to support one another means children and families thrive and creates lasting benefits for future development, wellbeing and school readiness.

Scan the QR code and watch the video to find out more about Pop in and Play.

Children 'Get Ready with Teddy'

A guide to help pre-school children develop the confidence, independence and skills they need to start school has launched in Blaenau Gwent.

Get Ready with Teddy is part of a wider school readiness campaign, which recognises that preparing a child for school is a shared journey between families, childcare providers and early years education settings.

Get Ready with Teddy provides parents and carers with practical guidance on a range of important developmental areas, including communication and language, independence skills such as dressing and toilet training, establishing routines, building confidence, managing emotions and adapting to change.

The guide also highlights the importance of social development, encouraging skills such as sharing, taking turns, making friends and understanding how to play cooperatively with others.

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, councillor Sue Edmunds said: "Our friendly bear Teddy is helping families with young children be ready for the world of learning. We want to help every child reach their full potential and we know that starts at home. By developing essential life skills from an early age, children can feel more confident, resilient and ready to embrace the exciting transition into school and beyond."



Dads' project offers support

Dads across the borough are helping each other with the challenges of parenthood and family life.

The Blaenau Gwent Dads Support Project provides practical and emotional support for fathers, fathers-to-be, stepfathers, foster carers, grandparents and male caregivers with children aged 0 to 18. Dads can find support on a wide variety of issues, including children's health and wellbeing, mental health, family relationships, household and financial matters, and contact arrangements.

They can also access opportunities to build confidence, family activities and specialist programmes designed to strengthen parenting skills.

The project also offers walking groups, coffee mornings, volunteering opportunities, and help with returning to work or training. Delivered by an experienced team of support workers, the project aims to ensure that no father feels alone when facing challenges.

For more information contact the Family Support Hub on 01495 315700 or email familysupporthub@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.



IN BRIEF

Play areas refurbished

Two more children's play areas have been refurbished in the borough. Playgrounds in Newtown and Pennant Street, Ebbw Vale, have received brand new, modern, accessible equipment, thanks to Welsh Government and council funding.

Free school clothes helping save the pocket and planet

A new online service has launched FreeSchoolClothes.com, has launched to help families save money, reduce waste, and protect the environment.

The digital swap shop allows families to list good quality outgrown school clothes within their school community and request items they need for free.

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, councillor Sue Edmunds said: "This free to use platform supports the Blaenau Gwent Deal, which focuses on community action and working together to address inequalities".

Sign up and swap today at **FreeSchoolClothes.com** or **Email:** support@freeschoolclothes.com

Pupil voice brings safety improvements at Ebbw Fawr Primary



Ebbw Fawr Primary's Heddlu Bach 'Little Police' have helped to bring about road safety improvements at their school.

After raising concerns around parking during school drop-off and pick-up times, the council arranged for new bollards to be installed to discourage parking on the pavement. This has helped visibility and created a safer route for pupils and families travelling to and from school.

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, Councillor Sue Edmunds, and local police worked closely with the pupils on their aim.

Councillor Edmunds said: "It was fantastic to meet with the Heddlu Bach pupils and hear their concerns. They spoke confidently about the issues affecting road safety around their school and wanted to make a positive difference in their community.

The outcome shows just how important it is to listen to young people. Their observations have helped identify a practical solution that will improve safety for everyone using the area."

Heddlu Bach is a Gwent Police initiative for pupils aged 9 to 11, and provides a fun, interactive and educational volunteering opportunity that encourages young people to play an active role in improving their communities and promoting safety within their school environment.

Pupils taste a healthier future

Pupils at Willowtown Community Primary School in Ebbw Vale have been learning about healthy eating and where their food comes from as part of a Wales-wide initiative supporting healthier lifestyles and local agriculture.

The school is one of five primary schools in Blaenau Gwent taking part in Castell Howell Foods' Growing Healthy Futures programme, which brings together Welsh growers, schools, caterers and communities to increase the use of locally grown organic produce in school meals while encouraging healthy food choices from an early age.

As part of the programme, pupils took part in the Superhero Food campaign, led by former Scarlets and Wales rugby player Steff Evans, who now works as Castell Howell's Engagement Officer. Through interactive activities, children learned how carrots, broccoli and cauliflower help fuel their bodies with essential vitamins and nutrients.

The session also explored the journey food takes from farm to plate, the importance of supporting local farmers, and how fresh, sustainable produce can help create healthier communities.



Secondary school award is a first

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community is Blaenau Gwent's STEM School of the Year.

It is the first time a secondary school has won the award, presented by the council, which recognises outstanding commitment to science, technology, engineering and maths in education.

Hundreds of pupils at the school have benefited from aerospace engineering workshops, healthcare careers events, sustainability projects, coding challenges and industry partnerships run throughout the school year.

The school's name was also included in NASA's Artemis II mission in April, the first crewed mission to travel around the moon in more than 50 years, placing Ebbw Fawr at the heart of one of the world's most ambitious space exploration programmes.

Through its continued investment in STEM education, the school is helping pupils build the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to succeed in an increasingly technological world.

St. Illtyd's celebrates inspection report

Well done to everyone at St Illtyd's Primary School, Llanhilleth, on their Estyn report.

The school was praised for its 'friendly, inviting, and inclusive' environment. Amongst the many highlights, the report noted that pupil well-being is central to everyday life, creating a warm, nurturing environment in which children thrive and pupils engage enthusiastically in lessons and benefit from an attractive, well-resourced learning environment.

Inspectors also recognised the strong progress made by many pupils, including those from low-income households and those with additional learning needs. The school's 'effective and insightful' approach to supporting pupils with additional needs was identified as a particular strength, with tailored support ensuring individual needs are met.

Councillor Sue Edmunds, the Council's Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families said: "Congratulations to St Illtyd's Primary on this wonderful report. Giving every child the best start in life and the opportunities to thrive is a priority for us as we work to empower children and young people to lead informed, independent, and healthy lives. Well done to everyone involved."

Find out why St Illtyd's pupils love going to school - Scan the QR code.



MISSION 3 Wellbeing through community leadership

Recycled plaque made by community artists

A new reuse shop in Ebbw Vale has recently unveiled a plaque made entirely from recycled materials.

The new Big Den sign was created by community groups and supported by the council's arts service, BG Arts, and artist Stephanie Roberts, as part of a Make It Trailblazer project, funded by Welsh Government. Each letter included in the sign represents the range of items that are in stock at The Big Den shop, at New Vale Recycling Centre.

The groups who contributed to the artwork were:

- Inside Out Craft Group Tredegar
- Drop in and Draw, based at Ebbw Vale Sports Centre.
- Ebbw Vale Institute Sunflower Carers group
- Young people through the 16-25 Blaenau Gwent Youth Service team.

Bethan Lewis, of BG Arts, said: "Taking part has helped participants learn new skills, build confidence, connect with others and contribute to a collaborative piece that is on display in their local community. It has also helped to raise their awareness of sustainability, repurposing items and to think creatively about how waste materials can be utilised.



Tackling underage drinking

Two new Community Alcohol Partnerships have been launched in Ebbw Vale and Tredegar, bringing organisations together to reduce alcohol-related harm among young people and support safer communities.

This is a key priority of the Blaenau Gwent Anti-Social Behaviour Taskforce, led by the council, which has recognised the impact that underage drinking can have on young people's health, wellbeing and life chances, as well as on the wider community.

Partners have pledged to:

- **Educate and support young people**,
- **Restrict access to alcohol**,
- **Source funding to provide positive alternatives and activities for young people**

Partners include the council, Gwent Police; South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Tai Calon Community Housing.

The Community Alcohol Partnerships are able to apply for funding to support targeted initiatives and a range of activities took place for young people over the summer.



Teamwork makes the dream work at river clean

Volunteers joined the council and environmental organisations for a river clean-up and biodiversity project at Bedwellty Pits, Tredegar.

Equipped with sun hats, sun cream, litter pickers, gloves, bags and waders, volunteers split into groups to litter pick, drag debris from the river or take part in water sampling and biodiversity surveys.

They also removed Himalayan balsam, an invasive species. Taking this away helps protect local ecosystems and restores native habitats.

The project was part of Groundwork Wales' Healthy Rivers Programme, which aims to improve river health, enhance biodiversity and engage communities in the protection of local waterways.

Cathy Johnson, volunteer, said: "I volunteer because I want to help keep the environment clean. I enjoy being outdoors in the fresh air, and there's a real sense of achievement in making a visible difference to the local area."



Community helps Paint their park

Thanks to all the volunteers who turned up to our Paint Your Park event in Swffyrd in October.

The community lead initiative sees volunteers team up with the council and local organisations to give their local park a refresh.

All paint and equipment is provided by the council and volunteers give up their time, roll up their sleeves and help to get the job done.

This is all part of the Blaenau Gwent Deal, which is about working differently with our communities to make them the best they can be and to help reduce inequalities.

To express in an interest in bringing Paint Your Park to your area visit Get Involved Blaenau Gwent now.





Green Flag Award for Woodlands

Well done to all the volunteers at Sirhowy Valley Woodlands who have been awarded the Green Flag by Keep Wales Tidy.

The Green Flag has been awarded in recognition of the group's environmental efforts, excellent visitor facilities, and work within the local community.

Schemes such as plant to plate and cooking classes in the community and local school are helping community wellbeing by promoting food sustainability and heathy choices.



Scan the QR code to watch the Sirhowy Woodland Volunteers at work

Cwrt Mytton garden makeover

Residents at the council's care home are enjoying a brighter and more welcoming outdoor environment thanks to the efforts of volunteers.

Volunteers from British Gas and the Welsh Government Warm Homes Nest Scheme, and the local community worked alongside council staff to refresh the outdoor spaces.



IN BRIEF

Businesses recognised at awards

Congratulations to all the businesses shortlisted for the Monmouthshire, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Business Awards 2026.

Follow our channels for more information about who won big at the awards in November.

Innovative curb chargers first in UK

The council has installed the UK's first electric vehicle Pierburg Curb Charger technology.

The scheme, across eight sites, is an opportunity to test an alternative near to home charging solution for residents who may not have access to off-street parking, or who are unable to benefit from other home charging solutions.

A4046 works underway

A major £2.5 million improvement scheme on the A4046 between Aberbeeg and Cwm is underway. The road is an important route for residents, businesses and commuters.

Work is scheduled to continue through to spring 2027, subject to weather conditions, and will include improvements to highway drainage, carriageway resurfacing, kerb replacements, new road markings, upgraded signage and other highway infrastructure enhancements.



Investment transforms high street properties

Three town centre properties have had a makeover thanks to a Welsh Government grant.



The Transforming Towns Place-Making Grant.aims to help people enhance their business, support local employment and contribute to the improvement and rejuvenation of high streets.

The funding was given to:

Homestead Café, Bailey Street, Brynmawr

This eatery on the town square in Brynmawr has been transformed following an extensive programme of works that included a new roof (inc. Photovoltaic panels and battery technology), insulated render to three elevations and new windows realigned to the building original character.

Classic Fish Bar, Bailey Street, Brynmawr

The popular chip shop has been significantly improved thanks to a new roof that incorporates photovoltaic panels and battery storage technology; rendering and the replacement of shop fronts to the front and rear. Minor works have also been carried out to the inside space – including tiling and upgraded lighting.

Positif Care, Abertillery

This former empty property has benefitted from a new double shop front, new signage, external render, new upper windows and roof replacement works that include Photovoltaic panels. The property is now operating as an office/hub for those working in the private residential care for children sector.





Shopping centre forms part of ambitious regeneration

Gwent Shopping Centre in Tredegar has been bought by the council as part of long-ambitious regeneration plans for the town.



The purchase was funded from the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns programme and the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund.

The short-term goal is to improve the look of the centre and cleaning and repairs have been taking place over the past few months. The council will also be looking to attract businesses to empty properties.

Options for the future will be developed over the next year, with the local community having the opportunity to have their say and shape plans.

The shopping centre is a key asset in the town, so this is a really positive step forward in the area's wider regeneration on top of the £20million investment from the Pride in Place funding.

Events are a big success!

Town centres in Blaenau Gwent have been bustling with a series of events organised by the council over the past few months.





From beach days, two food festivals, classic car shows and fun fairs to Halloween events, there's been lots on offer, to attract people to their local high street.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us. Keep an eye out on the council's social media pages and website for details of Christmas events.

The Light We Carry mural trail to cross boroughs

A new mural has been wowing visitors to Abertillery. The mural depicts Welsh mythological queen Rhiannon, creating the 'tapestry' of the landscape that shapes Abertillery.

The mural is located in the centre of town and was the work of artist Walls by Paul.

The mural will now form part of a trail being developed by Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen councils. The Light We Carry mural trail will symbolise guidance, warmth, hope and how local heritage is carried forward and shared. New and existing murals will be brought together in a trail which will be available for people to follow online. Follow our channels for more information on the mural trail.



Find out where you can charge your electric vehicle in Blaenau Gwent

MISSION 4

Community makeover town

A Towns Together initiative saw the council work with businesses, community groups and residents of all ages to makeover a street in Brynmawr town centre.

Over 70% of people polled chose Beaufort Street for the makeover and on the day volunteers helped to paint shop fronts and street furniture; clean; weed and install new planters and flowers. A new nature themed mural has also been painted by a local artist, Matt Dey, and a new 'Thank you for supporting Brynmawr Town Centre' store banner installed.

The Towns Together programme is part of the council's new Blaenau Gwent Deal approach to working alongside communities. The makeover was funded by the UK Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund.

Councillor John Morgan, Cabinet Member for Economy and Place said: "This is a perfect example of The Deal, showing how communities can come together with the council to improve the area in which they live. It was absolutely fantastic to see people of all ages take part and the children were brilliant, so inspiring.

"With collective action like this, we hope to make our town centres into areas where people want to visit and businesses want to invest." **Follow our socials for details of more Towns Together events.**



Partnership to boost investment

Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen councils have approved the appointment of a development and investment partner to bring forward regeneration and development opportunities.

Willmott Dixon Developments will help identify, assess and progress opportunities that can deliver new homes, employment opportunities, infrastructure improvements, inward.

Councillor John Morgan, Blaenau Gwent Council's Cabinet Member Economy and Place, said: "Our focus remains on delivering high-quality homes, improving infrastructure, supporting local businesses and creating the conditions for sustainable economic growth. Working with a strategic partner will strengthen our ability to unlock complex sites and bring forward projects that make a real difference to residents across the county borough."



THE DEAL BLAENAU GWENT **MISSION 5**

Empowered communities, shared power & success

Pride in Place Board overseeing £20million investment in Tredegar

Eight local residents have been appointed to a Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board to help decide how £20million of UK Government funding will be invested in Tredegar.

The area will receive the money from the Pride in Place programme over the next 10 years. The aim is to fund projects and ideas that will regenerate and revitalise the area. The power really is with local communities to decide how the money is best spent to benefit their town.

Local vicar, Rev'd Matt Davis has been appointed Chair of the board, which also has a council representative and MP Nick Smith.

Matt said: "We have a great Neighbourhood Board in place that reflects the views and diversity of our communities and are really keen to take Pride in Place forward in Tredegar.

"This funding could help turn good ideas into lasting change and build a confident, hopeful future for the town and working with local people is key, so please get involved."

The board has already held meetings and information events, including a funding event in Ashvale where local organisations found out about how the funding could help their community work.

The council put forward the Sirhowy Valley as the neighbourhood to receive the funding based on the UK Government's criteria.

Blaenau Gwent Council Leader, Steve Thomas said: "These people are all very passionate about Tredegar and its future and now really have the opportunity to identify the priorities and how this money can be spent on what really matters to local people."

The residents appointed to the board are:

- **Business & Economy:** Ryan Davies
- **Community & Voluntary:** Ken Cowen
- **Environment:** Cathy Johnson
- **Finance:** Lloyd Harris
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Leon Yandle
- **Skills & Employment:** Laura Callaghan
- **Young Person:** Rhiannon Wooldridge
- **Older People:** Sarah Meyrick-Carr





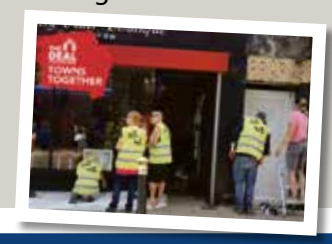
BE INVOLVED! Keep up to date with all the latest news, events and opportunities to have your say on the Tred 2036 social media channels. You can also stay updated and leave your ideas on the Pride in Place hub on Get Involved Blaenau Gwent.

Running alongside the main Pride in Place funding is a £1.5million impact fund.

£750,000 will be spent on improving facilities at Brynmawr Welfare Park with local people having a say on what they would like to see and how they can be involved.

£590,000 is being awarded to local organisations. The money is being allocated through Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations and those benefitting include sports clubs, choirs and musical groups; nature volunteer groups and much loved community venues.

£160,000 is being invested in the Brynmawr, Blaina and Nantyglo areas to make improvements to the town centres through the Towns Together initiative. This sees community and council work together on enhancing and caring for their high streets.



We're getting ready for winter

Council teams are busy checking culverts, gullies, drains and grit bins as part of our winter preparedness in Blaenau Gwent.

The Council has 3,400 tonnes of salt, five large gritting vehicles which double as snow ploughs, and two smaller gritting vehicles. Plus, all 600 salt bins are being refilled ready for winter.

Our work force is also ready to respond 24 hours a day throughout the winter. The core service is staffed by 30 drivers and on call officers plus the team who maintain our winter fleet.

Met Office weather forecasts are monitored three times a day, and road temperatures are monitored by weather stations across the borough. This allows the council to grit, where and when it is most effective to do so.

Councillor Tommy Smith, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and the Environment said: "We are getting ready for winter and we'd encourage communities to get ready, too. Please keep an eye on drains and report blockages as soon as possible. We carry out routine checks, but blockages can happen suddenly, and we rely on the community to be our 'eyes and ears' so we can respond to issues quickly.

"We salt around 48% of our highways with all A and B roads our priority. Main bus routes and distribution routes, and roads around schools, industrial and retail areas are then prioritised and get treated on a precautionary basis when forecasts dictate, with other areas gritted as and when resources allow.

"Please also check in on neighbours during severe weather and remember we have our warm hubs open during cold snaps."



Scan the QR code to view gritting routes and to find your nearest grit bin!

How you can Be Ready this winter

Emergencies such as flooding, fires and power cuts can affect us all. They can happen quickly and can last a few hours, or several days or weeks. Below are some quick steps to prepare yourself for emergencies.

- Be Better Informed - sign up for alerts and warning and learn some basic first aid.
- Sign up to a Priority Services Register (PSR). Visit thepsr.co.uk to find out if you are eligible from utility providers' to get additional support during an emergency.
- Make a plan - write emergency phone numbers, insurance and medical information on paper and store them somewhere easy to find – even in the dark. Keep important documents such as passports, birth certificates and insurance policies in one place so you can grab them quickly if asked to evacuate – you might hear this called a 'grab bag'.

Be home ready

- Set phone alerts and check smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water – if you have to leave your home due to an emergency.
- Check your insurance is in place for your home or business, with flood insurance if you're in a risk area.
- Talk to and involve your children about emergencies – teach them how and when to call 999 and what they should do if there's an emergency, such as a fire at home.
- Talk about preparedness with your friends, family and neighbours. Swap contact details and consider creating a local instant messaging group.
- Ask neighbours if they have additional medical needs during an emergency and check in on them if an emergency happens, particularly if the power goes out.

Put together a home emergency kit

Consider what supplies you might need at home during an incident. This could include:

- Battery or wind-up torch – torches are safer than candles.
- Portable power bank for charging your mobile phone.
- Battery or wind-up radio to get updates during a power cut or a car radio can be used.
- Spare batteries for torches and radio and a backup battery for medical equipment.
- A first aid kit, hand sanitiser and wet wipes for personal hygiene.
- Bottled water for drinking, cooking, hygiene and if needed to make up baby formula.
- Non-perishable food that is ready-to-eat, tinned meat, fruit or vegetables and baby supplies such as nappies and baby formula.

Be Flood Ready

The Met Office are predicting a wetter and windier Winter than usual, so we all need to be ready to take action. Knowing your flood risk and preparing in advance is the best way to protect yourself and your property.

An easy step is to sign up for free Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Flood Warnings.

NRW monitor rainfall and river levels in Blaenau Gwent to provide around the clock flood forecasting.

With 1 in 7 homes and businesses in Wales at risk of flooding, it is more important than ever that residents know and understand their flood risk and take three simple steps before the heavy rain starts to fall.

Flood warnings can give you valuable time to take action and reduce the flood risk for your loved ones, home, business and belongings.

- ***check your flood risk by postcode online***
- ***sign up for flood warnings - you can choose email, phone or text.***
- ***be prepared when flooding is forecast***

Signing up is simple and free - just visit naturalresources.wales/register or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.
The NRWwebsite has a wealth of information to help you naturalresources.wales/flooding



Know your community risks

The Gwent Community Risk Register 2026–27 highlights the biggest risks facing our communities, from flooding and severe weather to infrastructure loss and infectious disease.

The Risk Register doesn't just explain the risks; it also shares what work is happening across Gwent to reduce the impact of emergencies and help communities stay resilient. Being informed helps us all be better prepared. Search online for Gwent Prepared for more information on community risks and resilience.

