

THE USK & LLANBADOC INDEPENDENT

ISSUE 10

BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 2025

BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOUR INDEPENDENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR MEIRION HOWELLS

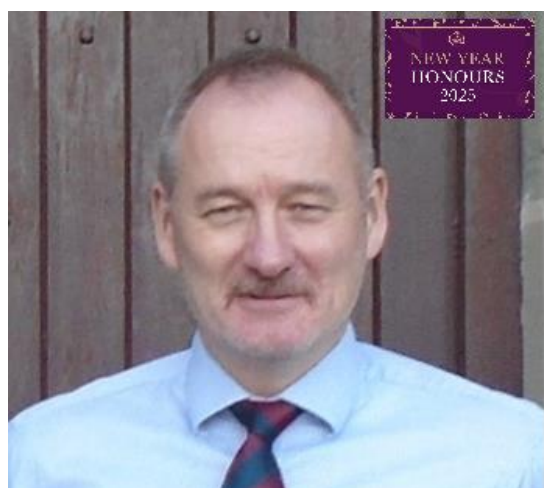
FEWER CASUALTIES ON WELSH ROADS SINCE 20MPH SPEED LIMIT CHANGE

New data shows around 100 fewer people were killed or seriously injured on 20mph and 30mph roads in Wales in the year following the introduction of the default 20mph limit. Casualties fell by 28% compared to the previous year. Welsh Government estimate the £34 million cost of implementing the change was recouped within the first six months, with an ongoing £100 million annual savings to the NHS and emergency services. Due to these reductions in casualties and costs, many English local authorities are now also looking to implement



similar changes in their counties. Da iawn Cymru!

SIR GERALD DAVIES Llongyfarchiadau/ Congratulations to Sir Gerald Davies CBE on receiving a knighthood in King Charles' New Year Honours list, a fitting recognition of his remarkable contributions to rugby and public service. His excellence, on and off the field, has inspired many generations, showcasing integrity, leadership, and dedication. This esteemed honour celebrates a lifetime of achievements. Sir Gerald, your legacy is truly extraordinary!



ROB DENMAN O.B.E. Llongyfarchiadau/ Congratulations to Rob Denman VR, Governor of HM Prison Usk and Prescoed on being awarded an OBE in King Charles' New Year Honours list for his outstanding contributions to public service. This prestigious honour recognises Rob's dedication, vision, and leadership, and his lasting impact in his field. This accolade is a well-deserved testament to the exceptional work he oversees at both prisons and the farm at Prescoed. Wishing him continued success!

A WARM WELCOME TO INFINITY – USK

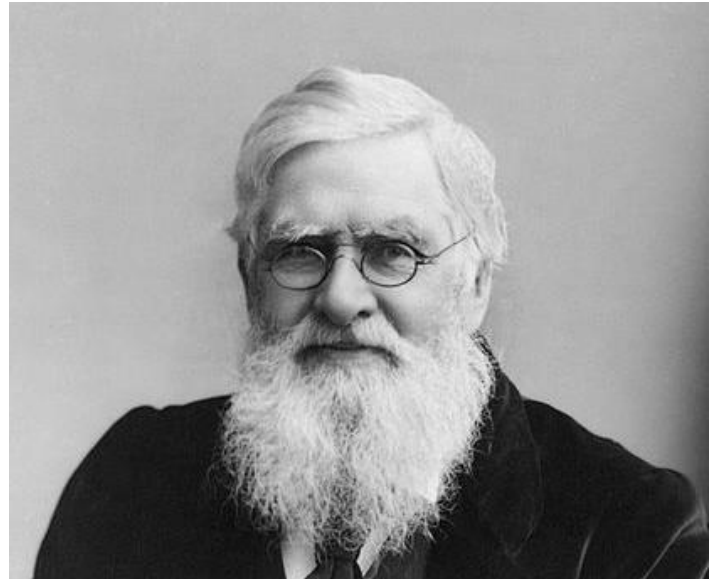
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located at the Cardiff Arms, 69 Bridge St, Usk. The new showroom is now open with high quality interiors and gifts. Brands include:- Nkuku Furniture and Homeware, Garden Trading Furniture and Accessories, Chic Antique Homeware, Light & Living Homeware, Freckleface & Freckleface, Laura Ashley, Beauty Scents Giftware, Tweedmill, Roly's Fudge, Grass & Air Children's clothing and footwear, plus many other local homemade gifts. The shop is open Monday - Saturday - 10am - 4pm. Pop in to say hello to sisters Carol and Hazel or visit www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61570537521109

BORN IN LLANBADOC, USK

Usk proudly celebrates our famous son, Alfred Russel Wallace, born 202 years ago on 8 January 1823 in Llanbadoc, Usk. A renowned naturalist, explorer, and co-developer of the theory of evolution by natural selection, Wallace's work alongside Charles Darwin revolutionised science. His extensive travels and studies in the Amazon and south-east Asia contributed significantly to biology, geography, and conservation. Wallace's legacy continues to inspire, and his connection to Usk remains a source of pride for our community. To find out more about this extraordinary Llanbadoc man, visit <https://wallacefund.myspecies.info>



WORLD'S FIRST DEFORESTATION FREE CHAMPION



Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) has become the world's first Deforestation Free Champion Council, committing to sustainable procurement practices that combat climate change and protect biodiversity. By signing the Deforestation Free Charter, MCC pledges to reduce deforestation risks through local food promotion, fair trade, and advocacy. Monmouthshire pupils and the charity Size of Wales <https://sizeofwales.org.uk>

helped drive this initiative. Cllr Catrin Maby praised young people's efforts, highlighting how local actions can inspire global change.

2025/26 MCC DRAFT BUDGET Monmouthshire

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County Council has unveiled its draft 2025/26 budget, prioritising vulnerable residents and essential services. The £216m net revenue budget, an 8% increase on last year, boosts Social Care and Health funding by 10.6% and Education by 10.7%. Over £2.3m is allocated for infrastructure improvements, including vital highways improvements and more investment will go into the Foster Care Service to retain and recruit valued carers. Funding is assisted by an increased 2.8% Welsh Government settlement and a proposed 7.8% council tax increase. To ensure a collaborative approach, the council are inviting residents to share their feedback in a consultation on the draft budget which began on 23rd January 2025. To take part in the consultation visit www.letstalkmonmouthshire.co.uk/budget-2025-26 For more details of the draft budget or to register for the online briefings - www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2025/01/monmouthshire-county-council-publishes-draft-budget-for-2025-26

CALLING ALL CRAFTERS The BioTapestry Goes Big! The Gwent Green Grid Partnership is creating a 70m-long multimedia BioTapestry celebrating biodiversity across Greater Gwent. Featuring 20 panels of iconic species from woodland, aquatic, grassland, and urban habitats, it highlights our interconnected ecosystems. Craft contributions from all skill levels are welcome. To join, contact colettemooney@monmouthshire.gov.uk and help celebrate the Tapestry of Life!



HAVE YOU AN HOUR A MONTH TO SPARE? The Usk Conservation & Environmental Group (UCEG) are looking for volunteers to spare one hour a month. You will be sure to meet some new friends, and help the bees, butterflies, pollinators and beautiful wildflowers flourish in Usk. UCEG meets at 10am on the third Saturday of each month for an hour on the Owain Glyndwr Park ...plus time added on for coffee, cake and a chat! Bring gardening gloves, shears, secateurs - rakes are optional! For more information visit their Facebook page or call Glenn Roderick 07376-236730



A GYM ON YOUR DOORSTEP! Coleg Gwent staff are looking forward to welcoming existing and new members to the Usk campus gym as they reopen after their holiday break. Their timetable remains unchanged and they are looking into opportunities to increase their opening times in the coming weeks, watch this space! Bring a friend and together you can support each other towards achieving your goals in 2025. Call 01495 333643 or email ray.morgan@coleggwent.ac.uk or visit www.coleggwent.ac.uk/our-college/facilities/sports

Usk Campus Gym and Studio

JOIN NOW

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Student Pay As You Go | - £2.00 |
| Public Use Pay As You Go | - £3.50 |
| Student 10 Sessions | - £10.00 |
| Public Use 10 Sessions | - £25.00 |
| Public Half Term Membership | - £35.00 |

WINTER ADVICE FROM ABUHB

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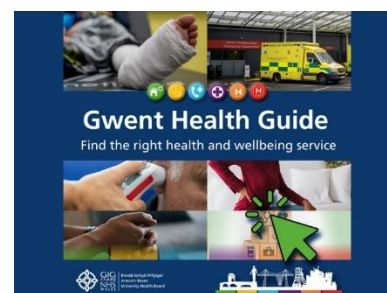


Winter is here – dark mornings and evenings, ice, snow, and chilly winds mean that we're all at risk of needing a bit of extra care. ABUHB want to make sure that you have all the information you need to help you and your loved ones get through the winter safely and comfortably. No matter how old they are, everyone is more vulnerable to colds, flu and infections in winter. Cold weather can bring on an abundance of illnesses, particularly if you are an older person or have a

long-term health condition, such as asthma, diabetes or a heart condition. Find lots of useful help and advice below on the best ways to look after your physical and mental well-being this winter. Visit <https://abuhb.nhs.wales/hospitals/staying-well-and-healthy/keeping-well-this-winter>

FINDING THE RIGHT HEALTH AND WELLBEING SERVICE.

The Gwent Health Guide is a comprehensive resource, compiled by the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, for promoting well-being in the Gwent. The guide provides information on local healthcare services, emergency contacts, and community support programmes. It offers practical advice on healthy living, including nutrition, exercise, and mental health care. Designed to empower individuals, it encourages preventative care and informed health choices. Accessible and user-friendly, it's an essential tool for improving personal and community health. Visit <https://abuhb.nhs.wales/hospitals/gwent-health-guide>



ABUHB COMMON AILMENTS SCHEME

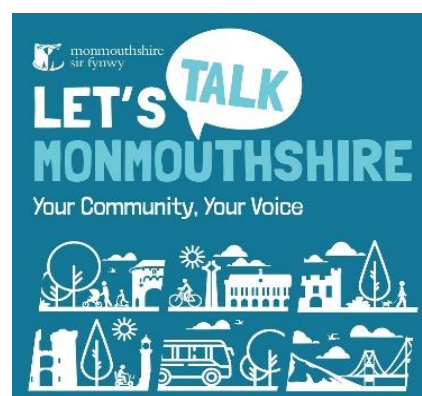


Did you know you can receive FREE treatment and advice at your local pharmacy through the Common Ailments Scheme? The Common Ailments Scheme offers patients access to free NHS advice and treatment for common conditions. The service is available from all community pharmacies in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and offers an alternative to making an appointment with the GP, just call in to your local pharmacy. You can view the common ailments covered by the scheme

on the ABUHB website: <https://bit.ly/3T6KfJD>

LET'S TALK

Monmouthshire County Council has launched Let's Talk Monmouthshire, a new platform to engage with residents and gather feedback. This digital hub encourages discussions on local policies, services, and community issues. Alongside the online platform, face-to-face events, forums, and printed materials will ensure inclusive engagement. The initiative also supports collaboration with community groups to improve services. Visit www.letstalkmonmouthshire.co.uk to register and stay updated on consultations and events.



THE GATHERING ABERGAVENNY.

Campaigners have celebrated a major milestone in their effort to revive the Tudor Centre in Abergavenny, holding their first meeting in the building they worked tirelessly to save. Closed since the pandemic in 2020 the Victorian building is now under the care of the newly formed charity 'The Gathering Abergavenny'. This group was formed to restore the building to a vibrant hub for people



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with vulnerabilities and disabilities, they have until now been operating from the Wellbeing Centre in Abergavenny. Thanks to overwhelming community support the centre is set to re-open soon. The group have plans for a café, arts and crafts, and counselling services. There is still plenty of work to be done and anyone wishing to help clean, paint or volunteer should contact the group by emailing the.gathering.comm.group@gmail.com

VILLAGE HALL TRUSTEES WANTED

Little Mill Village Hall is this year celebrating 90 years of bringing people together and hosting events! Becoming a trustee is a fantastic way to give back to your community. You'll play a key role in maintaining and improving this vital local space, supporting events, and shaping its future. It's a rewarding opportunity to develop skills, meet new people, and make a lasting impact. Whether you have experience or just enthusiasm, your contribution will help ensure the hall continues to thrive for generations to come. Get involved today, email lmvhall@gmail.com



DEMENTIA AWARE INFORMATION SESSIONS

Join the Regional Partnership Board at one of their FREE information sessions to help you understand more about supporting those living with dementia. To celebrate the launch of our dementia hubs, Dementia Friendly Gwent and Dementia Friendly Swansea are providing FREE training sessions for people living with dementia, their family, friends, carers, professionals, or for anyone who would simply like to learn more about how we can improve the lives of those living with dementia. Dates are the 12th February at the Riverfront, Newport - 6th March at the Wellbeing Information Centre,

Abergavenny - 12th March at the Civic Centre, Pontypool. Please see session details at www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/gwent-regional-partnership-board-66627962663

DEMENTIA AWARE
INFORMATION SESSIONS

Join one of our FREE information sessions to help you understand more about supporting those living with dementia.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO BOOK YOUR PLACE.

SCAN ME

For more information please contact
gwentregionalpartnershipboard@torfaen.gov.uk
01495 761691

SEVERN WYE ENERGY ADVICE



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Stay warm and save money at home

We help you...

- save energy in your home
- reduce your fuel bills
- switch energy supplier
- access support when times are hard

By providing...

- free energy efficiency advice
- home energy advice visits
- information on renewable energy
- help with insulation and heating grants

Call our free home energy advice team (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Our community-based energy advisers are also available for practical support at local community hubs or can arrange a home visit.

0800 170 1600
severnwye.org.uk/monmouthshire



We'll talk you through any eligibility criteria when you contact us.

Severn Wye Energy Agency is a sustainability charity working across Wales and the English border counties. Their vision is a stable climate with energy for all. They work towards this aspiration by supporting people to overcome fuel poverty and providing expert, impartial advice on energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. Severn Wye use their 25 years' experience to support tenants, home-owners, landlords, businesses and community organisations to manage their energy use, stay warm and healthy, cut costs, and contribute to the UK's net zero goals. To find out how they can help you, visit <https://severnwye.org.uk>

0% HOME IMPROVEMENTS LOANS Interest Free Loans for Home Improvements

in Monmouthshire at 0% APR, the cost of a loan for repairs, improvements or renewables might never be cheaper! Working with Monmouthshire Council, Robert Owen Community Banking are helping householders and landlords make home life more comfortable, fuel bills more affordable and improvements more attainable. The loans are easy to apply for and help is available to you at any stage during the process if you need it. Get in touch today to see how you could apply for a 0% APR loan. www.rocbf.co.uk/monmouthshire-0-home-improvement-loans

Robert Owen
Community Banking

0% Interest
Home Improvement Loans in Monmouthshire

Up to £20,000 per household *
*Subject to affordability

Set up fees apply.
No early repayment fees.

Up to 60 months to repay

Available to owner occupiers

In Partnership With

monmouthshire
sir fynwy

01686 626 234
 www.rocbf.co.uk/home_loans
 homeloans@rocbf.co.uk

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. FCA Company Registration No:726281. Companies House Reg. No: 5832750

USK POLICE REPORT DECEMBER 2024 REPORTS RECEIVED: 05/12/24 – A



report has been received of a large branch obstructing the road. MCC contacted and cleared the obstruction. **14/12/24** – A report has been received of a suspicious incident where persons have been reported trying door handles. **31/12/24** – A

report has been received of sheep on the road. Officers attended but did not come across any sheep. Gwent Police hold monthly surgeries should anyone wish to speak to them. They are held in the Usk Community Hub, dates tbc. Should you wish to report anything, then please do so through the 101 non-emergency number, Gwent Police website, social media or 999 for an emergency. **Action plans** • North Monmouthshire Burglaries • 20mph Speed Limits **On-going operations** • OP Harley - on going operational throughout Gwent tackling anti-social motorbike riding and off-road bikes. Monmouthshire North Neighbourhood Policing Team. More info www.gwent.police.uk

GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS Monmouthshire



garden waste collections for 2025 begin on 3rd March and run fortnightly until 5th December 2025. Cost remains as last year at £55. You can now register at the Usk Hub, Maryport Street or online for your garden waste collections:

www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/garden-waste

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HIGHWAYS

MILL STREET PUMP STATION UPGRADE



Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) has commenced the next phase of a £10 million upgrade to improve wastewater systems in Usk. Essential work at the Mill Street Pumping Station will run for six months, concluding by June 2025. Starting 15th January 2025, deliveries and road closures will temporarily affect Mill Street, with resident access maintained. Stay updated by registering at www.dwrcymru.com/InYourArea DCWW thanks residents for their patience.

PRINCE OF WALES BRIDGE

Update December 2024. Resurfacing and re-waterproofing of the M4 Prince of Wales Bridge began earlier in 2024 —the first major maintenance since its opening in 1996. Unfortunately, in November, damage was found close to the central reservation during the resurfacing work, and along with adverse weather, this has meant work will now continue into 2025. The repair works are expected to finish in April 2025. A contraflow and resurfacing will then resume for resurfacing of the eastbound section. Safety remains the priority, and traffic management will remain in place with completion expected in autumn 2025. National Highways thank you for your patience as they future-proof the bridge. For more info, visit <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/travel-updates/the-severn-bridges>



MAIN PONTYPOOL ROAD TO CLOSE FOR TWO MONTHS



Hanbury Road in Pontypool town centre will shut both ways for eight weeks from 10th February for Welsh Water sewage network improvements. Torfaen Council acknowledges the closure's "significant impact" but confirms pedestrian access and diversions via the A4043 will be in place. The Civic Centre and multi-storey car park will remain open, though bus stops and Hanbury Road toilets will close. The work forms part of wider town centre regeneration plans. For more info, visit <https://orlo.uk/EJ1UX>

EVENTS

USK BRASS BAND AND SŴN Y GÂN CHOIR - Sat 1st March 7pm at the Memorial Hall, Usk. Following on from the success of their joint concert last year, they join forces once again for a brilliant evening showcasing a varied programme of brass and choral music. Tickets £10 available www.jumblebee.co.uk/brassandvoicesvolume2

USK MAYOR'S FUNDRAISING DANCE WITH 400WHAT? – Sat 29th March 7pm at the Three Salmons Hotel, Usk. Fundraising event for the Usk Mayor's Appeal with live music from 400What? a dynamic local band blending energetic performances with a diverse genre of music that is guaranteed to entertain audiences. Tickets £10 available from the Sessions House 01291 673011, The Hub or Three Salmons Hotel <https://fb.me/e/5J7Sb8QyZ>

VE DAY 80 YEARS Thursday 8th May 2025. Save the date . Details to be confirmed, for up to date information, visit <https://fb.me/e/64ZDpVoBo>



USK TOWN COUNCIL MONTHLY MEETING – meet at 6pm on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Sessions House, Usk. These are Open Meetings and Minutes & Agendas are available on www.usktown.org



LLANBADOC CC MONTHLY MEETING Meet alternately at Little Mill Village Hall or County Hall at 6pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month. Minutes & Agendas are available on www.llanbadoc.org



MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL hold regular council meetings, all of which can be viewed live or on catch-up online via the 'meeting calendar' function at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/your-council Contact details for MCC are Mon-Fri 01633 644644 Out of Hours 0300 123 1055. Download MyMon App www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/my-monmouthshire



USK CIVIC SOCIETY – have their Spring and Autumn Lectures on the second Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm in the library of the Sessions House, Usk. Membership of the society is open to all, individual members £6 a year; dual £10. www.uskcivicsociety.org.uk



USK TOGETHER FOR THE CLIMATE (UTFTC) MONTHLY MEETING. meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Sessions House. Pop-in Climate Café every Thursday 12-2pm Usk Hub. New members are welcome. For more information visit www.usktogether.org



SAVE THE RIVER USK (STRU) have regular monthly meetings held in Usk and Abergavenny. For more information visit www.savetheriverusk.org To support www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/stuart-pearce-STRU?utm_term=z5vVveYVY



USK SINGING CLUB if you enjoy singing, come and join us! We are an informal mixed group of men and women that rehearse every Tuesday 7.30 pm at the Sessions House, Usk. For more information visit www.singingclubber.co.uk or simply join us on a Tuesday. the Sessions

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Thank you for reading this bulletin. The bulletin is to keep residents and businesses informed of various relevant issues concerning the Llanbadoc & Usk Ward along with other issues Meirion has been involved with. For regular updates, like my Facebook page www.facebook.com/MeirionHowellsForLlanbadocAndUsk or scan the QR Code. For more information or to register on the email bulletin list contact MeirionHowells@monmouthshire.gov.uk

