

with Ynys Môn MP
Virginia Crosbie

londonbeat

Bridge closure is shocking... and an appalling example of the Welsh Government's misplaced priorities

MAE Llywodraeth Lafur Cymru - gyda chefnogaeth ei chyfeillion Plaid - yn di-flaenoriaethu Gogledd Cymru trwy fethu â buddsoddi mewn cynllun ar gyfer Bont Y Borth.

THE Welsh Labour Government - propped up by its Plaid chums - are deprioritising North Wales by failing to invest in a plan for the Menai Bridge.

However, instead of focusing its resources on our critical North Wales transport links or failing NHS, the Welsh Government's priority is increasing the number of Senedd members from 60 to 96 at an estimated cost of £100m. Just think how many nurses and GPs that would pay for!

Under their current plans Ynys Môn will be represented by six Senedd members - up from the current five. But, disappointingly, not one of these six will specifically be responsible for Ynys Môn. This is shocking. Can you name all five of the MSs currently responsible for Ynys Môn?

Under the new Welsh Parliamentary constituency boundaries announced last week, the number of Members of the UK Parliament will reduce from 40 to 32 MPs. Last year, I succeeded in getting special protected status for the Ynys Môn constituency to reflect its unique island culture. As a result, my constituents will continue to have one dedicated representative in Westminster whilst in Cardiff we will lose that representation. I will always use my contacts and my influence in Westminster to champion our island and ensure it has a voice - this will not be the case in the Senedd, if their plans are enacted.

The sudden closure of the Menai Bridge and its impact on the people of Ynys Môn is a clear example of the importance of special representation for our island.

I was shocked and appalled by the sudden decision by Welsh Government to close the Menai Bridge - without notice - for up to four months due to structural weakness caused by heavy traffic.

The Welsh Labour Government contracts with a company called UK Highways A55 Ltd to provide services relating to the bridge and has, once again, failed to invest in our island. Anglesey will endure serious access problems for months to come.



● Virginia Crosbie MP by the Menai Suspension Bridge

On average 46,000 vehicles cross the Menai Strait every day. The closure will affect people commuting to work and school and be a blow for hauliers using the second busiest ro-ro port in the UK - Holyhead. For the 93% of people on Anglesey who are already concerned about getting an ambulance if they need one, this will further exacerbate those fears.

We have all experienced the delays and interruptions that occur when there is an accident on or near the Britannia Bridge, or it is closed to some vehicles in stormy weather. Without the Menai Bridge as back-up through the winter months there is a significant risk to both our daily lives and our island economy.

I have received a flood of messages and emails from concerned parents worried about how their children will now get home from school. Businesses are concerned about increase costs. I enclose a few examples here:

'I feel for the local businesses at what - in these difficult times - is a critical time of year. I am not one to write or cause a fuss but I could honestly cry about this'

'The thought of not being able to get my daughter - with

all her needs - to the hospital in an emergency is terrifying'

'This reinforces the very real North / South divide in Wales and I honestly don't understand how we are in this position. I can already imagine hauliers routing traffic through other ports and making Holyhead an obsolete port. The more I think about it, the more the horror unravels'

Earlier this year the Welsh Government axed flights between Anglesey and Cardiff. In June 2021 they froze all new road-building projects to conduct a review. The delays caused by this review and the lack of investment in our transport infrastructure is having a devastating and unacceptable impact on Anglesey.

It is a privilege to be the Member of Parliament for Ynys Môn and I am honoured that the people of Anglesey have put their trust in me. My Dad had to leave Wales to find work and I do not want people on Anglesey to face the same choice.

That is why I work so hard to ensure other young people do not have to leave their homes, their communities, and their Welsh language to find good quality jobs.

I am trying to bring invest-

ment and opportunity back to Ynys Môn - following decades of disinvestment and the loss of key employers like Wylfa and Anglesey Aluminium.

Our 'Energy Island' has wind, wave, solar, tidal, hydrogen and hopefully nuclear energy, offering our young people a new generation of skills and opportunities. I will continue to focus on UK Government initiatives like a Freeport and Levelling-Up and I will never give up on campaigning to bring new nuclear to Wylfa.

However, the Welsh Labour Government, in its co-operation agreement with Plaid Cymru, cutting off our transport links and failing to maintain critical infrastructure will put businesses off bringing new opportunities to Ynys Môn.

I am working with my Welsh Conservative Senedd colleagues to investigate why an almost 200-year-old suspension bridge was not protected from the forces imposed by modern traffic.

Your Conservative representative for Ynys Môn and North Wales - Sam Rowlands MS - put in an Urgent Question and I have written to the First Minister along with the Con-

servative Shadow Transport Minister - Natasha Asghar MS. Natasha has urged Lee Waters MS the Deputy Climate Minister to visit Menai Bridge.

In Westminster I will be asking the Cabinet Minister on the floor of the House of Commons Chamber 'does my Right Honourable Friend agree that our island communities need and deserve strong, secure and robust links to our mainland in order to thrive?'

Here on the island our community is coming together once more to support one another as we face this new challenge.

I would particularly like to give a big shout out to Clare and Jonathan - the enterprising team at Plas Llanfair - who are collating ideas and suggestions as to how our Anglesey community can support each other through the Menai Bridge closure.

The closure is a challenge but it is also an opportunity for us to work together and develop new partnerships to help each other.

I have listed some of their ideas here.

Please do check out their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/LlanfairPlas> to share your own feedback.

● Set up car share schemes for travelling to and from Bangor

● Establish an electric or non-electric bike hub in Bangor

● Make the Britannia Bridge two lanes off the island in the morning and two lanes onto the island in the evening, with a single lane for the opposite direction

● Build a new bridge and have one way system (in the future)

● Establish a boat service from Holyhead marina using small business boat charters or those who do the cruise tenders and know the waters to offer shuttles for pedestrians and bikes to Bangor Pier/marina

● Increase train frequency

● Set up a cable car - which could remain as a tourist attraction.

I am always delighted to hear your ideas as to how we can work together to make our island an even better place - so please get in touch.

You can contact me at virginia.crosbie.mp@parliament.uk or call me on 01407 644645.

Diolch yn fawr.

Gallwch gysylltu â mi ar virginia.crosbie.mp@parliament.uk neu ffoniwch fi ar 01407 644645.

Diolch yn fawr.