

Blwyddyn newydd dda!

WRTH i ni barhau â'n taith i mewn i 2024, hoffwn gymryd y cyfle hwn i fyfyrto ar y pethau a gyflawnwyd gennym gyda'n gilydd yn 2023.

Rydym wedi cymryd cymaint o gamau cadarnhaol fel etholaeth dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf - camau sydd wedi ein harwain at drothwy adfywiad economaidd ar Ynys Môn.

Er y cafwyd amryw o gyhoeddiadau gwych a llawer o fwrilwm y tu ôl i'r lenni, rydym yn parhau i ddisgwyl gweld ffrwyth ein llafur o 2023.

Er nad oes "llawer i'w weld eto" mae'n bwysig cofio cymaint o bethau y llwyddom i'w datlu y llynedd.

AS we embark on our journey into 2024 I wanted to use this opportunity to reflect on the things we have achieved together in 2023.

We have taken so many positive steps as a constituency in the past year - steps that have led us to the edge of an economic renaissance for Ynys Môn. Whilst there have been some fantastic announcements and much fervent activity behind the scenes, we have yet to feel the full weight of some of our 2023 achievements. When there is "not much to see" yet, it is important to remember how much we had to celebrate last year.

We began 2023 with a huge announcement from the UK Government in January - Ynys Môn's bid for Levelling Up funding had been successful. After so many years of decline, Holyhead was the target of our island's bid and was awarded £17m as well as £5.5m match funding for its Culture and Heritage Driven Transformation to regenerate Holyhead's Town Centre and attractions.

This will include making significant changes and improvements to St Cybi's Church, the cinema, the Ucheldre Centre, the Newry Shelters and other key town centre buildings that are currently lying vacant. There will be enhanced signage and funding to improve access between the sites.

Works are well underway already with scaffolding up at the Ucheldre Centre, St Cybi's closed for works and local businesses Island Bakes, Môn Ice, Cuffed-In Coffee and Anglesey Hamper Company already selected to take the new retail kiosks on Newry. We can expect to see the results of some of this transformation in the coming months with a more attractive and engaging offering for both locals and visitors to Holy Island. I believe that the work in Holyhead will benefit the economy across Ynys Môn as we attract more people to spend time and money on the island.

March saw two further major funding commitments for Ynys Môn from the UK Government. The Chancellor's Spring Budget awarded £20m for the refurbishment of the breakwater in Holyhead.

A year of positive steps for Ynys Môn



● Virginia Crosbie MP celebrating the Coronation with Morgan Ellis at Ysgol Caergeiliog Foundation School

Although the breakwater is the responsibility of the Welsh Government and port owner, Stena, I had been speaking with Treasury Ministers about its importance to the future economic success of Anglesey, Wales and the UK. If the Holyhead breakwater fails then Holyhead port will fail and with it a huge source of jobs and revenue for the whole island.

I was delighted that my message hit home and I look forward to seeing developments on the refurbishment continuing with this additional funding.

A couple of weeks after the budget came the second announcement, which is probably the most significant thing to happen to Anglesey for decades. Following my three-year campaign to create a Freeport on Anglesey, we were granted freeport status with £26m of UK Government funding. Establishing UK freeports was a key pillar of the Conservative Manifesto for the 2019 General Election and so I started working on ideas for Anglesey Freeport as soon as the Island elected me.

The benefits of freeport status for Anglesey are clear; our bid projects up to £1bn of investment and thousands of new jobs. I started the Freeport Bidding Consortium in 2020 to get key stakeholders like Stena, the Council and Bangor University together to start planning our Anglesey Freeport and it was wonderful to see this early work come to fruition.

The bid was submitted with forty letters of support which I pulled together from local, national and global firms. Since the announcement I have brought many of those compa-

nies and more to visit sites across Anglesey. Companies like GE-Hitachi, Westinghouse and UK Atomics are keen to invest here bringing new employment opportunities and I am asking them all to sign up to my 'Local Jobs for Local People' campaign.

My 'Local Jobs for Local People' campaign commits companies to prioritising local people for the jobs they create and working to provide the skills training needed to take those jobs.

The Outline Business Case for Anglesey Freeport was submitted by Anglesey Council and Stena just before Christmas and I cannot wait to see the positive changes that Anglesey Freeport will bring over the coming year.

In May we celebrated the coronation of King Charles III and I spent a busy weekend going from one event to another across Anglesey. I donated a mile of bunting to the island's community events and enjoyed visiting parties and celebrations from Aberffraw to Amlwch and Llainfawr to Llandegfan.

It was fabulous to see people of all ages enjoying this important historic event together. One of my favourite photos from 2023 was with Morgan Ellis at Ysgol Caergeiliog Foundation School.

I was also celebrating my amendment to the Employment Act which became the first Parliamentary Bill to achieve Royal Assent from His Majesty. This Tips Bill means that workers in industries like hospitality will keep 100% of the tips due to them. It is now illegal for employers to withhold tips.

Thousands of people on

Anglesey are employed in the tourism and hospitality industry and this law is expected to add an average £200 each year to their pay. I entered politics to give a voice to those who have none and this is an example of what I wanted to achieve for my constituents: alongside the big picture gains like our Freeport and Levelling Up, I am delivering tangible day-to-day results at an individual level.

In June I held my first Over 50s jobs fair at which companies and voluntary operations could advertise and discuss their opportunities with local people. Jobs Fairs are a key part of my 'Local Jobs for Local People' campaign and I am looking forward to hosting my next jobs fair along with our brilliant Anglesey DWP team. This will be a Disability Confident Jobs Fair in Holyhead Town Hall on Friday 9 February 10am to noon.

In July I went to the launch of Great British Nuclear (GBN) - the vehicle set up by the UK Government to deliver a programme of nuclear power production to give us energy security for decades to come.

GBN is headed up by our own Gwen Parry-Jones, who started her career in Wylfa and still lives on Anglesey. I am continuing to campaign to bring New Nuclear to Ynys Môn and pushing hard at every opportunity for movement at Wylfa - whether that is large scale plant or small modular reactors or both. That is why I continue to bring companies like Rolls-Royce and KEPCO to visit Wylfa so that they can see first hand what a prime site it is.

In August I welcomed the Rail Minister, Huw Merriman, to

Anglesey. We visited Tŷ Croes railway station to discuss the height of the station platform with local constituents after they had contacted me to say it was inaccessible to those with mobility problems.

We were all thrilled that he used the visit to announce £1m UK Government funding is being committed to put in a Harrington Hump which will raise the height of the station platform.

In September I received the very welcome news that the £4.8m UK Government funding for the Holyhead Hydrogen Hub had been ratified following their detailed business case submission and a number of meetings between myself and the Minister responsible. This announcement has allowed the Hub to make significant progress in the last quarter of the year and find more takers for its anticipated hydrogen generation. The Hub is an important part of my campaign to Drive Net Zero from Energy Island and has benefited significantly from the Anglesey Freeport announcement which has brought new companies and opportunities to its door.

In November our Freeport received another potential boost when the Chancellor used his Autumn Statement to announce that tax incentives for freeports would be extended from five years to ten. I was very happy that he attributed this change to me in his speech because I have had a number of conversations with him outlining why this would make freeports more robust and successful.

By extending the tax incentives companies will be even more keen to establish operations here on Anglesey and provide long-term, secure employment to local people.

In December I stepped up my campaign to provide better access to healthcare for local people, by contacting Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board about the long-anticipated Holyhead Health Centre. After years of discussion, this centre is still on the drawing board and many people in the west of Anglesey who rely on GP services in Holyhead continue to struggle to get seen.

It is clear that BCUHB has not prioritised this matter despite the evident need for it. Although health is devolved to the Welsh Government, it still forms around a third of my postbag. To get the quality health services my constituents need and deserve we must fight to be pri-

oritised where budgets are tight. That is why I will be stepping up my campaign for a proper integrated Health Centre in Holyhead as we move into 2024.

Amongst the many other things that have taken my time in 2023, one of the most important is my campaign for a Third Menai Crossing. As I have taken businesses around the island, seen the impact of the 20mph speed limit imposed by the Welsh Government and spoken to individuals and businesses about the effect of the closure and restrictions on the Menai Suspension Bridge, it has become clear to me that our road infrastructure falls well short of our local needs.

In 2016 the Welsh Government commissioned a report which clearly stated that by not putting a third crossing in place they would be holding back the economic future of Anglesey. I can see that quite clearly when I speak to companies that want to invest here. Our connections with the mainland are simply neither robust nor resilient enough and that is holding us back.

I have now had a commitment from the group responsible for managing the programme which includes the Menai Suspension Bridge repairs, to hold a community information event in Porthae-thwy in the New Year. I hope that many of you will be able to attend this event so that the Welsh Government get a clear message that we need another crossing because what we have at the moment is simply not good enough.

It is a privilege to be your Member of Parliament. There are so many things to look forward to over the coming year and I am looking forward to continuing to work on your behalf as we go through 2024.

I enjoy meeting as many constituents as possible, as well as helping individuals, groups and organisations with problems, projects and ideas. You can contact me at virginia.crosbie.mp@parliament.uk or call me on 01407 644645. Diolch yn fawr.

Rwy'n mwynhau cyfarfod â chy-maint o etholwyr â phosibl, yn ogystal â helpu unigolion, grwpiau a sefydliadau dau gyda phroblemau, prosiectau a syniadau. Yna cysylltwch â ni - byddwn wrth fy modd ynclwyd gen nych - gallwch gysylltu â mi ar virginia.crosbie.mp@parliament.uk neu ffonio'n rhych ar 01407 644645. Diolch yn fawr.