

December 2025



UNISON Representatives prepare for candle light vigil

MERTHYR TYDFIL WHITE RIBBON COMMUNITY INAUGURAL MEETING

The first White Ribbon Merthyr Community Group event took place on Tuesday 25th November 2025 in Merthyr town centre.

South Wales Police, Community leaders, partners, and residents gathered in Merthyr Tydfil to observe White Ribbon Day, reaffirming a united commitment to ending violence against women and girls. The event highlighted that this is not solely a policing issue, but a community-wide responsibility requiring action from everyone — especially men — to challenge harmful behaviours and create safer spaces.

The event started with a ceremonial raising of a White Ribbon flag outside the Civic Centre, followed by key note speakers and a performance by The Dowlais Male Voice Choir in The Hub.

White what?

White Ribbon Day is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, also known as White Ribbon Day, launches 16 Days of Action Against Gender-Based Violence.

The White Ribbon is a globally recognised symbol to end men's violence against women and girls. Since its inception 35 years ago, the movement has worked to challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours that lead to gender-based violence. White Ribbon UK partners with thousands of individuals and hundreds of organisations to create a culture where women and girls can live free from fear and harassment.





Councillor Gareth Richards

WHITE RIBBON FLAG RAISING

Councillor Gareth Richards welcomed attendees with a powerful message, before raising a white ribbon flag outside the Civic Centre - stating:

“Today, as we raise the White Ribbon flag, we mark the beginning of a powerful and important campaign—one that stands against violence, especially violence against women and girls.

“The White Ribbon is more than just a symbol. It represents our shared commitment to creating a world where respect, safety, and equality are not ideals, but everyday realities. It calls on us all—especially men and boys—to take a stand, to speak out, and to act.

“By raising this flag, we are making a public promise: to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence. We are saying that enough is enough. That change begins with us.

“Let this flag fly as a reminder of the work we must do, the conversations we must have, and the courage we must show. Together, we can build a future free from violence”.

Attendees then moved onto The Hub to listen to key note speakers and were entertained by Dowlais Male Voice Choir

Safer Merthyr



Jodie Saunders (above) from Safer Merthyr Tydfil

delivered a moving reading of a victim’s account, offering a powerful reminder of the lifelong impact of domestic abuse. The story shared the experience of a woman who had been with her partner for 20 years and had a daughter. She described the immense physical abuse she endured and the lasting effects it has had on her life.

Her words conveyed both pain and resilience: “We are safe and away from him now—each day is a blessing.” This testimony highlighted the importance of support services and community action in helping survivors rebuild their lives and find safety.



Chief Fire Officer Fin Monahan

Chief Fire Officer Fin Monahan delivered a powerful message, speaking as a father, a retired veteran, and now the leader of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. He underscored his unwavering commitment to safeguarding women and children, stating that this priority has always been central to his personal and professional values.

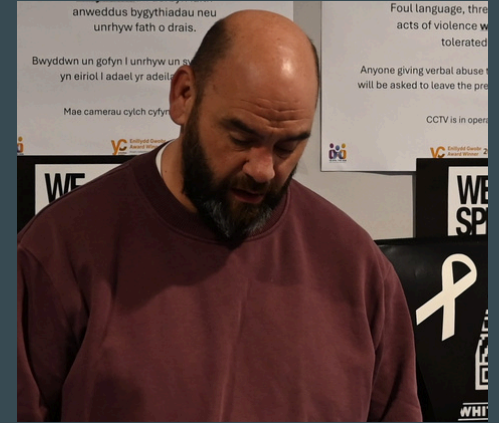
The Chief Fire Officer announced that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service has strengthened its role in the White Ribbon campaign by elevating the Ambassador programme, ensuring that the Service continues to provide safe hubs for anyone who feels threatened or in need of help.

Sharing a personal perspective, Monahan stated: “Each of my daughters takes a photo of a taxi’s registration plate before getting into the vehicle and sends it to someone they trust. My son would never think to do this—because he doesn’t need to. This is the reality we live in.”

“In today’s world, any form of violence—whether physical or psychological — must be addressed urgently and collectively.”

SAFE HAVEN - If you find yourself at risk, whether it be during a night on the town or if your domestic situation becomes dangerous, you can call in Merthyr Tydfil Fire Station and they will keep you safe short term, and if necessary help you find long term sanctuary.

Safer Merthyr



Karl Hazard from Safer Merthyr Tydfil (above)

delivered a deeply impactful reading of a perpetrator’s story, offering a rare and honest insight into the journey of change. The account told the story of a man married for 25 years with three children. His turning point came when his wife confronted him, explaining that unless he changed his behaviour, she would consider leaving the marriage. Initially, he believed there was nothing wrong—until he sought his mother’s opinion, who supported his wife’s concerns.

This moment of clarity was transformative. Realising the harm his actions were causing to those he loved gave him the motivation to make positive, lasting changes. The story served as a powerful reminder that accountability and self-awareness are critical steps toward breaking the cycle of abuse and creating safer homes and communities.



Dowlais Male Voice Choir delivered a powerful opening to the indoor segment of the event. Their strong, resonant voices filled the venue with three stirring songs that set a tone of unity and reflection. The performance created an atmosphere of solemnity and hope, perfectly aligning with the event's purpose of raising awareness and promoting action against violence towards women and girls. Their contribution not only showcased the rich cultural heritage of the community but also underscored the collective commitment to this vital cause.

Key initiatives showcased at the event include:

- Safer Streets Programme: Improved lighting, CCTV, and safer town-centre environments.
- Operation Teignmouth: Licensing work to make the night-time economy safer and more accountable.
- Ask Angela Campaign: Providing discreet support in licensed venues; next awareness event at the Orbit Centre on 5 December.
- Operation Libertaria: Plain-clothes officers tackling predatory behaviour in town centres.
- Rapid Response and Vulnerability (RVR) Team: Delivering trauma-informed support and reducing repeat harm.
- Pili Pala Project: A national first at Merthyr College, empowering young girls through education on healthy relationships, resilience, and online safety.

The event concluded with a pledge to strengthen partnerships across policing, local authorities, education, and third-sector organizations to build a safer Mid Glamorgan for women and girls. A poem was then read by Jacob Bridges MTCBC Youth Mayor.



Inspector Richard Gardiner of South Wales Police

(above) stated:

“White Ribbon reminds us that change requires more than wearing a badge — it requires everyday action, accountability, and the courage to challenge behaviour when it matters most.”