

Caerphilly Homes

Issue 4

Welcome to your Caerphilly Homes Newsletter

Welcome to this, the fourth edition, of your Caerphilly Homes newsletter. Inside you'll find news from Caerphilly Homes, along with lots of really useful information and advice - including tips on getting your garden ready for summer! Plus your chance to win a signed Newport Gwent Dragon's jersey – check out our competition on page 3!

Transforming Lives and Communities Awards

Do you know someone who's made a difference in your community, or gone the extra mile to help others? Why not nominate them for a Transforming Lives and Communities Award?

The awards are an opportunity to recognise local people who are helping to transform tenants' lives and the communities they live in.

There are four award categories:

- **Transforming Lives Award – Individual tenant**
- **Transforming Communities Award – Group**
- **Young Person of the Year**
- **The 'Extra Mile' Award - Caerphilly Homes' employee**



For more information on the criteria or to request a nomination form, please contact Caerphilly Homes' Transforming Lives and Communities Team on 01443 866493 or by emailing morgao@caerphilly.gov.uk. Closing date for entries is Friday 27th June – all nominees will be invited to attend an awards ceremony later in the year where winners and runners up will be announced.



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Have you got what it takes to be an Armchair Reviewer?

Mrs John and Mr Mayhew do – they've both won £25 shopping vouchers just by giving us their views!

Armchair Reviewers are tenants who give us feedback on this, your Caerphilly Homes newsletter. Some Armchair Reviewers, like Mr Mayhew, are also working with us to help improve our website.

We're already using feedback from the Armchair Reviewers to help us improve the newsletter, like the new 'What's on' section on page 8.



If you'd like to give us your views and be in with a chance of winning, like Mrs John and Mr Mayhew, then sign up as an Armchair Reviewer! You'll be able to comment on the newsletter before it's published, from the comfort of your own home! Each time you send in your feedback, you'll be entered into a prize draw to win a £25 high street shopping voucher.

To find out more contact the Tenant and Community Involvement Team on 01495 235011 / 235557 or by email at housing@caerphilly.gov.uk

Community Connectors

Connecting people in the community, to their community

Would you, or someone you know, like to get out more, make new friends and meet new people?

The Community Connectors can help you find out more about what goes on locally and can help you get involved. They can also give you ideas of how you could use your strengths, skills and experience to help others.

Community Connectors can:

- Help people remain as independent as possible.
- Help people to improve their sense of wellbeing.

- Help people to feel less lonely.
- Help people feel part of a community.
- Find out what support is available close to where people live.
- Give information and advice to people about local services and activities.

For more information about the Community Connectors please call 0808 100 2500 or email asdit@caerphilly.gov.uk

Launch of Tenant Choice Area

Tenants will soon be able to view the choices of materials available for Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) improvements in their homes, such as kitchen and bathroom choices, at the Caerphilly branch of Robert Price Builders' Merchants.

Last year Robert Price Builders' Merchants were awarded a 10 year partnership agreement to supply materials to Caerphilly Homes. This means that they

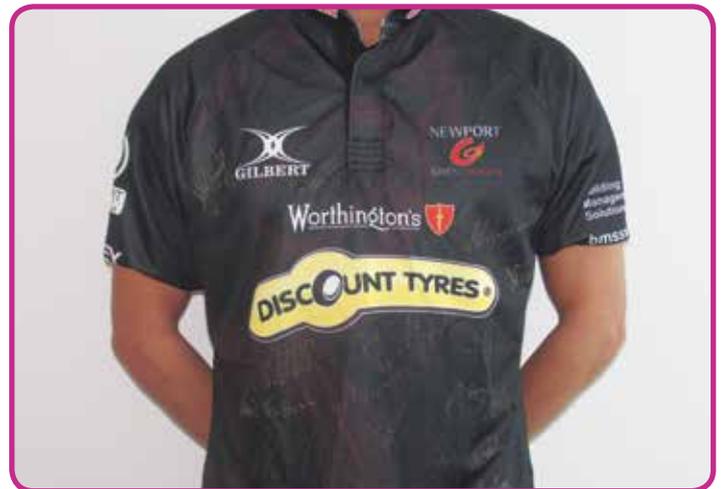
will be supplying all of the materials for our in-house workforce who are delivering WHQS improvements in tenants' homes, along with components, such as kitchens and bathrooms, to contractors who are awarded elements of the programme.

The 'Tenant Choice Area' will officially open later in the year, at Robert Price Builders' Merchants, 145 Pontygwindy Road, Caerphilly, CF83 3TD.

Win a signed Newport Gwent Dragons jersey!

To celebrate the launch of the 'Tenant Choice Area' we have a signed Newport Gwent Dragons jersey up for grabs! The prize has been donated by Robert Price Builders' Merchants – who are jersey sponsors. One winner will be drawn at random after the competition closes on Friday 20th June.

Complete the form below and send to the Transforming Lives and Communities Team, Cherry Tree House, Carlton Drive, Pen-y-Fan Industrial Estate, Crumlin, NP11 4EA or you can email your answers along with your name and address to housing@caerphilly.gov.uk



1. Name 1 item of equipment available from our Tenancy Enforcement Section to support victims of anti-social behaviour.

Answer _____

2. What is the weekly starting price for home contents insurance from the council?

Answer _____

3. What does CSIMs stand for?

Answer _____

Name _____ Telephone number _____

Address _____

Protect your home contents

Have you thought about what would happen if you lost any of your belongings in a fire, through theft or as a result of a burst pipe?

For total peace of mind, Caerphilly County Borough Council provides tenants with a home contents insurance that can be paid weekly with your rent, starting from just £1.08 per week.



With **NO EXCESS** to pay on a comprehensive standard policy - can you afford not to take out cover?

Full accidental damage cover is also available with just a £25 excess.

Please contact Angela Davies on 01443 863430 to join the scheme or by emailing daviea36@caerphilly.gov.uk

Could You Be A Caerphilly Homes Task Group Member?

Tenant representatives on the Caerphilly Homes Task Group were elected for a two year term which ends this September. We are now inviting expressions of interest from tenants who would like to stand as a Task Group Member until the end of the current Council administration in May 2017.

The Task Group is a group of tenants and councillors established to oversee the progress of the WHQS investment programme and other promises made by the council to tenants, as part of the housing stock transfer ballot in 2012. It acts as a consultative group on all matters relating to the public housing service.

There are places on the group for 7 tenants from across the county borough; 3 places for tenants from the Eastern Valleys, 2 places for tenants from Lower Rhymney Valley and 2 places for tenants from Upper Rhymney Valley.

Depending on the number of people interested, there may need to be an election in some or all of the three areas. All tenants in a particular area will be able to vote for candidates from that area.

The Task Group meets on a six weekly cycle, meetings are currently held at Penallta House and start at 5.00pm. Transport can be arranged if needed or mileage costs will be reimbursed. The Council can also assist with any carer or childcare costs if those services are needed for you to be able to attend a meeting.

If you would like to register your interest, or would like more information please contact the Tenant and Community Involvement Team **by Wednesday 18th June.**

You can contact us: Telephone : 01495 235025/ 235011/235557, Text: Text 'Task Group' with your name to 07919 627530 and we'll call you back, Email: housing@caerphilly.gov.uk

Delivering our promises

Extra support for victims of anti-social behaviour

Our Tenancy Enforcement Section is offering extra support to the victims of anti-social behaviour by providing equipment to help them feel safer in their homes.

A promise was made to tenants, in the Offer Document before the stock transfer ballot, to enhance the work of our Tenancy Enforcement Section. The new equipment now being offered to tenants is one of the ways that we're delivering on this promise. Extra resources have also been added to the section, with another Tenancy Enforcement Officer to deal with cases of anti-social behaviour.

There is a range of equipment available from the Section to provide extra security and reassurance for victims of anti-social behaviour. The equipment includes personal alarms with torches, door handle alarms, door wedge alarms, window shock alarms, sensor alarms and 24 hour segment timers. Tenancy Enforcement Officers can give a number of different items to tenants, depending on their needs, and tenants are able to keep the equipment.

A number of other items are also available on loan from the Tenancy Enforcement Section to make tenants' homes more secure, including door braces and letterbox fireguards.

Learning Festival Event



In February we hosted an event as part of the Caerphilly Learning Festival.

The event was arranged in partnership with Communities First and Adult Education teams.

Free adult education 'taster' sessions were held during the event at the Twyn Community Centre, Caerphilly. Taster sessions available included planting, managing your money, using your iPad, photography, Welsh, arts and crafts.

It's never too late to learn new skills, so watch out for events taking place near you during Adult Learners' Week in June!

Tenant Involvement – Working groups update

Repairs & Improvements Group

The group has been looking at the council's recharge policy on repairs and the standard of properties when they are re-let. The group also continues to monitor the progress of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) improvement programme.

Older Persons Housing Working Group

After a busy time overseeing the review of the sheltered housing service, the group has been catching up with some information about service areas and revising their future role. Representatives of the group visited a scheme in Ebbw Vale recently to see how using Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) standards within sheltered housing can help tenants with sight problems.

Home exchange events

Three home exchange events were held recently in Blackwood, New Tredegar and Caerphilly to help tenants looking to move.

The events encouraged people looking to swap homes to come together to see if they could find a property to meet their needs.

Event prize draw winners were: Mrs Humphreys, New Tredegar, Ms Foxcroft, Penyrheol and Mr Rothwell, Markham.

If you would like more information about a home exchange please contact your local housing office. You can also register yourself on the Homeswapper website at www.homeswapper.co.uk. If you don't have access to the internet please contact your local housing office, as officers there could complete the registration for you.



Estate walkabouts

Over the coming year a series of estate walkabouts are planned. The first will be held in Lansbury Park, Caerphilly.

The walkabout will offer opportunities for tenants, housing officers and councillors to identify environmental concerns on individual estates. The walkabouts will help housing officers address issues that are important to local tenants and residents.

Tenants in walkabout areas will receive an invitation giving notice of the route, date and time.

For more information contact the Tenant and Community Involvement Team on 01495 235011 / 235557 or by emailing housing@caerphilly.gov.uk

Get gardening!



After one of the wettest winters on record, now is the time to start thinking about getting your garden ready for summer.

Here are some simple tips from Kevin Fortey, our Housing Enabling Officer and resident gardening expert!

- Start cutting your lawns at the beginning of April and continue to maintain them each week until late October.
- To prevent hedges from becoming unmanageable keep them regularly trimmed.

For the more adventurous...

- Planting summer bulbs and perennials in borders will help brighten up your garden.
- If you have a patch of lawn in an open, sunny site it could be transformed into a wildflower meadow. Apart from providing cover and food for wildlife, it requires far less maintenance than a traditional lawn and can be planted with a wide range of wildflowers to provide interest from spring to the end of summer.

You could also think about growing your own fruit and vegetables in your garden. Or, if you don't have enough space, you could register for a plot at one of the council's 81 allotment sites throughout the county borough. Contact Alun Jones, Area Parks Officer, on 01495 235473 for more information or email publicservices@caerphilly.gov.uk



Caerphilly Service Improvement Monitors – CSIMs

The CSIMs is a group of tenants who are helping us to monitor standards within the housing service. The first area that they have been involved with is the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) improvement programme.

All tenants receive a satisfaction survey once improvements, such as new kitchens and bathrooms, have been finished and some tenants have kindly agreed for the CSIMs to carry out a face to face survey with them. To date, CSIMs have carried out surveys in Rhydney, Panside and Senghenydd. Their visits complement the postal

surveys that are returned. Surveys can also be carried out by telephone.

We would like to train more people as Service Improvement Monitors so that we can expand to monitor other areas of the housing service. You would have to do some training but you don't need any specific skills or knowledge.

If you're interested in becoming a Service Improvement Monitor please contact the Tenant and Community Involvement Team on 01495 235011 / 235557 or by emailing housing@caerphilly.gov.uk

Leaseholder sessions

External works being carried out as part of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme affects leaseholders as well as tenants, as leaseholders have to make a financial contribution to the cost of the works. We will be holding information sessions for leaseholders to explain more about the WHQS programme and to discuss any concerns people have.

All leaseholders will receive an invitation to attend a session in their area, but in the meantime if you are a leaseholder and would like more information please contact Laura Jones on 01495 235387 or Allison Davies on 01495 235387 or email housing@caerphilly.gov.uk

What's On?

Look out for the **Caerphilly Homes** stand at:

Blackwood Beach Party, Blackwood High Street – 28th & 29th June

The Big Cheese, Caerphilly town centre – 26th & 27th July

Work Clubs

Do you, or someone you know, need help finding work? Drop in to one of the work clubs hosted by Communities First teams throughout the county borough:



Day	Venue	Times
Monday	Cefn Fforest Community Centre	9:00am – 12:00noon
	*Risca Library	1:00pm – 4:00pm
	*Trecenydd Community Centre	10:00am – 12:00noon
	*Graig y Rhacca Resource Centre	2:00pm – 4:00pm
Tuesday	Abertysswg Community Centre	9:30am – 11:00am
	Newbridge Library	10:00am – 1:00pm
	Fochriw Community Centre	11:30am – 1:00pm
Wednesday	White Rose Information & Resource Centre	10:00am – 12:00noon
	Rhymney Library	2:00pm – 4:00pm
Thursday	Neuadd St Cattwg, Gelligaer	10:00am – 12:00noon
	Bargoed YMCA	1:00pm – 3:00pm
Friday	Van Community Centre	10:00am – 12noon

*Trecenydd & Graig y Rhacca by appointment only – please contact 07766 554887

*Risca also by appointment only - please contact 01495 222605

Also work club every Wednesday during May 9:30am – 12:30pm at Markham Community House & Centre.

Digital Fridays

Need help getting online or improving your computer skills?

Drop in to one of these free sessions held every Friday:



10am – 1pm

Blackwood Library
Caerphilly Library

10am – 1pm

Bargoed Library
Newbridge Library
New Tredegar Library
Risca Library

Events coming up at the White Rose Information & Resource Centre, New Tredegar:

14th June - Community Market – loads of stalls and activities, plus free entry!

14th – 20th June - Adult Learners Week – try some taster sessions and find out what courses are on offer in your local community.