

SHELTERED HOUSING NEWS

WELCOME to the second edition of your special sheltered housing newsletter.

Inside this edition you'll find lots of information including useful contact details, an update on activities and some of your fantastic fundraising efforts! We also have an update on the Welsh Housing Quality Standard improvement programme, including answers to frequently asked questions. There's also a wordsearch to get you thinking!

FUNDRAISING SUCCESS!

Lots of schemes have been busy holding charity fundraising events over the past couple of months.

Congratulations to the tenants at;

- **Grove 2 Estate**, Trethomas who raised a staggering £2,190.00 for the Motor Neurone Disease Association through raffles, coffee mornings and other activities
- **Gwyddon Court** in Abercarn held a table top sale at their scheme in March, where they raised £370. The donations were split equally between Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon, the Welsh primary school in Abercarn, and the Children's Cancer Unit at Heath Hospital, Cardiff

Several schemes also held coffee mornings recently with **Ty Bedwellty, Blackwood** raising a fantastic **£220.50** for the **Cystic Fibrosis**

Trust. Oaklands in Bargoed also raised **£50.61** at their coffee morning which was donated to the Alzheimer's Society.

If you would like help with any fundraising ideas please contact Liam Bouse, Activities Co-ordinator, on 01443 866449 or by emailing bousel@caerphilly.gov.uk



Tenants at Grove 2 presenting their cheque to the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD (WHQS) IMPROVEMENTS

We are very pleased to announce that our WHQS sheltered housing improvement programme has now begun.

Works have started at Ty Bedwellty, Gibbs Close and Palmer Place in Blackwood. We've also continued with our visits to a number of schemes where surveys are underway.

During these visits we've had lots of questions about the programme and work to individual homes. Here are some of your frequently asked questions and answers to them.

Do I have to have the work done?

You can refuse some improvement works, but there are some that will have to be carried out in order to comply with health and safety regulations. Please discuss any concerns with the Surveyor when they visit or your Tenant Liaison Officers.

Will we have help to move things?

The workforce will move large items and appliances, such as cookers and fridges / freezers. If you need support with packing away or moving smaller items please speak to the Tenant Liaison Officers who will be able to help you.

Will I have to move out while the work is being done?

Most tenants will not need to leave their homes while the work is carried out. However, due to the scale of the works needed in some schemes and to ensure everyone's safety, there will be some tenants who will need to move out temporarily. If your scheme is one of those affected we will visit to explain fully; providing you with plenty of notice and also make sure you are supported throughout.

Who will be doing the work?

The work will be carried out by the council's in-house workforce, supported by sub contractors where necessary.

Will our medical / mobility needs be taken into account?

If you have any medical or mobility issues please let the Tenant Liaison Officer or Surveyor know when they call. You do not need to disclose any details to them as they will pass your details on to one of our Occupational Therapists who will visit you and carry out an assessment. We will also take any special requirements you have into account whilst the work is carried out.



If I have put my own kitchen in will I be made to take it out?

The Surveyor will assess whether or not your current kitchen meets the standard. If it does not, then you will be offered a new kitchen. You can refuse this if you wish to keep your own kitchen. Please note that if electrical upgrade works are needed you will not be able to refuse these as they are essential for your health and safety.

Will all of my appliances fit into my new kitchen?

Yes. All of your existing appliances will be taken into account when the new kitchen is designed. If you plan to buy replacement appliances please let us know when your new kitchen is being designed, or they may not fit in the space provided.

Will my home be redecorated when the work is done?

If you are having a new kitchen and / or bathroom then these rooms will be decorated as part of the works. We will not be

decorating any other rooms and will not be able to give a decoration allowance.

Will we have a choice of kitchens and bathrooms?

Yes; there are a number of colour choices available which the Surveyor will discuss with you during their visit. There are also separate colour options available for those tenants who have visual impairment and require works carried out in line with Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) standards.

Will the heating system be renewed?

This will depend on the age, condition and suitability of your current heating system. Each heating system will be assessed and renewed if necessary.

Do you have enough money to complete the programme?

Every council owned property in the county borough must meet the WHQS standards by the 2020 deadline set by Welsh Government. Our commitment

to you is that all your homes will achieve this standard by then. Except for the 6 schemes identified for remodelling and feasibility studies.

How is the work being funded?

Each year we set an annual budget for improvement works. This is funded by a combination of council home rent income and borrowed money (prudential borrowing). Caerphilly County Borough Council also receives a Major Repairs Allowance from Welsh Government; in 2016/17 we received £7,340,000 which contributed to WHQS improvements.

Will you keep us informed?

Yes; we'll be using as many ways as possible to make sure you're kept informed throughout the programme. These include newsletters, events at your scheme such as coffee mornings or afternoon teas, individual letters and visits from our Tenant Liaison Officers.



Review of service charges

The Council has been tasked by the Welsh Government to carry out a review on the way in which we charge for services. Service charges need to be more transparent and be broken down so that tenants can see what they are paying for.

A service charge is a payment made by a tenant towards the cost of services and repairs beyond those specifically for their bungalow or flat.

Services charges have been discussed at quarterly tenants' meetings with a copy of the minutes issued to each tenant.

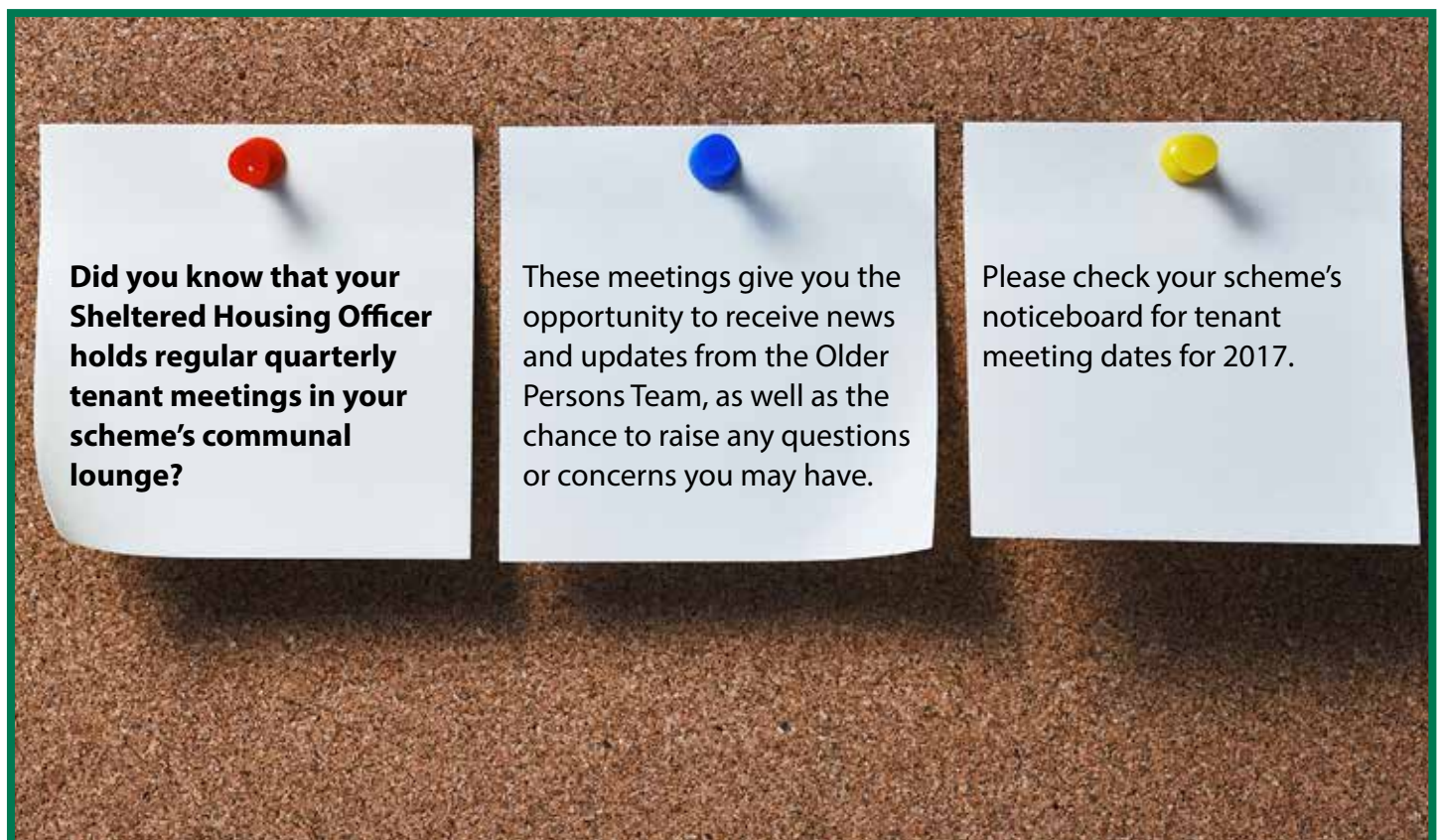
Tenants will receive regular communication throughout the review process by way of the regular quarterly meetings, Facebook, Sheltered Housing Newsletter, information leaflets and Frequently Asked Questions. A report is due to be presented at a Cabinet meeting on 22 June 2017 for Members to approve the review proposals. Following the Cabinet meeting every tenant will receive a letter regarding the service charges specific to their scheme.

Service charges cover items such as staff cover, the alarm

service and related repairs, laundry facilities, lighting and heating of communal areas, window cleaning, communal television, fixtures and fittings in the communal areas, grounds maintenance, general repairs and maintenance of communal areas and provision of scheme equipment, eg kettles, cookers, toaster and microwaves.

If you have any questions or concerns please raise them with your Sheltered Housing Officer.

Tenant meetings



A message from Liam Bouse, Activities Co-ordinator

"The start of 2017 has been very busy, with tenants engaging more than ever in activities.

We've held gentle exercise classes and IT classes, as well as hosting talks from Gwent Police in a number of schemes.

There have also been meetings at every scheme in the county borough to discuss social activities and day trips. Every scheme in the county borough will now be offered the opportunity to go on at least one trip a month.

Where trips have been arranged, all tenants should have received a list of dates and times for all planned trips; if you haven't received them please speak to your Sheltered Housing Officer.

We were also lucky to be treated to a number of school choir performances over Easter.

The performances were all excellent and I'd like to thank all of the schools who took part: Maescwmmer Primary, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Junior, Ynysddu Primary, Pontllanfraith Primary, Abercarn Primary, Waunfawr Primary, Trinant Primary, Deri Primary, Panside Primary and St Gwladys Primary. We hope to arrange more school choir performances in the future.

Thank you all for your ongoing support. I hope you will continue to take part in the activities and trips planned for you this year. If you have any ideas for activities you'd like to take part in, please let me know and I'll see if I can help."

Tenants from Pleasant Place, Penyrheol with officers from Gwent Police.



Floating Support team continuing to help tenants

Since April 2016, the Floating Support team has had a running total of over 200 clients.

Success stories include an assessment the team carried out with a married couple. The husband was working at the time of the assessment; he wanted to retire but thought he would not be able to afford to pay the rent if he did. The Floating Support Officer explained that he may be entitled to claim housing benefit. When the calculations were completed, the gentleman was able to retire knowing he was financially secure.

For more information on the services provided by our Floating Support Team telephone 01495 235614 or email floatingsupport@caerphilly.gov.uk



Spring flower word search

W	D	E	L	A	Z	A	L	E	A	B	C
Q	I	N	C	O	R	B	E	Z	Y	E	L
R	B	B	L	U	S	D	E	A	O	R	X
O	R	L	T	F	A	T	U	L	I	P	D
S	A	P	U	R	J	B	E	G	O	G	E
E	R	O	G	E	R	A	N	I	U	M	R
T	I	P	E	E	B	D	S	O	R	X	L
P	O	P	P	S	B	E	B	M	A	T	I
R	O	Y	T	I	T	U	L	A	I	T	O
G	A	R	E	A	J	A	S	L	B	N	T
A	M	O	R	C	H	I	D	S	A	P	E

Words to find:

Azalea
 Bluebell
 Freesia
 Geranium
 Jasmine
 Poppy
 Rose
 Tulip
 Orchids

Useful contacts

Older Persons Services Team

Email: olderpersonshousing@caerphilly.gov.uk

Tel: 01495 235383

Floating Support Team

Email: floatingsupport@caerphilly.gov.uk

Tel: 01495 235614

Report a Repair

Email: DLOPBE@caerphilly.gov.uk

Tel: 01443 864886

Liam Bouse, Activities Co-ordinator

Email: bousel@caerphilly.gov.uk

Tel: 01443 866449

Eastern Valleys Area Housing Office

Email: eastvalleyaho@caerphilly.gov.uk

Tel: 01495 235229

Upper Rhymney Valley Area Housing Office

Email: urvaho@caerphilly.gov.uk

Tel: 01443 873535

Lansbury Park Neighbourhood Housing Office

Email: lansburyparknho@caerphilly.gov.uk

Tel: 02920 860917

Graig y Rhacca Neighbourhood Housing Office

Email: graiyrrhaccanho@caerphilly.gov.uk

Tel: 02920 853050

Emergency repairs (outside office hours)

Tel: 01443 875500

Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) team

Email: whqsenquiries@caerphilly.gov.uk

Tel: 01443 866497