

through the keyhole

Official Newsletter of
Cynon Tâf Community Housing Group

SUMMER 2009

🔑 SUCCESSFUL HOUSING BOOST



Pictured left to right are RCT Public Health & Protection Director Paul Mee; Board Member Jeff Davies; Deputy Chief Executive Antonia Forte; Chief Executive David Lewis; Jocelyn Davies AM and RCT Cabinet Member Councillor Paul Cannon.

Jocelyn Davies AM, Deputy Minister for Housing has visited one of the first houses to be bought with some of the £42 million funding provided to help boost the economy.

The money was provided to housing associations to create up to 500 new affordable homes. Matching the allocation with private funding, we at Cynon Tâf Community Housing Group used the money assigned to the County of RCT to buy

twelve extra homes at an overall cost of £1.4 million.

Among the properties purchased are three 2 bedroom houses at Regent Court, Barry Road, a new David Davies Homes development of eight terraced houses in Pontypridd. New tenants have already moved into the properties including Mr & Mrs Mohammed. Mrs Mohammed said "This process was very quick, I think from receiving the letter

🔑 HELPING TO DEVELOP LOCAL TRADES

Cynon Tâf Community Housing Group is involved in a scheme to help a number of students from Ferndale Community Comprehensive School gain NVQ level 1 in general maintenance.

Since February, five young men have been shadowing our small repairs and handymen employed both at the Association and our subsidiary, Care and Repair Rhondda Cynon Taf.

This is working well, with students confirming that arrangements are fulfilling their expectations of gaining practical skills and knowledge of the workplace.

about the house to moving in was one week!

Cynon Tâf Community Housing Group has been wonderful – very supportive and helpful".



🔑 TENANT FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

Many thanks to all who responded to our quarterly questionnaire focusing on improving our means of contact with you our tenants via mobile and text. 74% of those who replied owned a mobile phone and 65% would be happy to receive a text message from us. All feedback we receive is appreciated and all goes to help in giving you the best service possible.

Congratulations to Mrs Dallison from Cwmaman who won the £20 Argos voucher.

“It’s a very good idea for us Tenants to receive feedback from you, much appreciated”

“IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO TEXT. CHEAPER THAN POSTING A LETTER”

“It’s a good way for Cynon Tâf to communicate with residents, rather than letters through the post”

“YES I THINK IT’S A GOOD IDEA, IT WILL KEEP US UP TO DATE WITH EVERYTHING WE NEED TO KNOW”

🔑 ECO TERRACE SCHEME

We have been working with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the Heads of the Valleys Initiative on plans for the regeneration of Penrhiwceiber. Part of the group’s work involves a pilot project for refurbishing a number of houses in Tyrfelin Street.

The scheme offers a new way of looking at terraced housing, it demonstrates how retaining the historic character of the environment does not have to mean losing modern, attractive and functional housing.

Objectives of the scheme are to improve the energy performance

and to create a new property design that can be repeated. The scheme aims to reduce carbon footprint by upgrading the buildings and providing more efficient fixed fittings and services. The new central heating system will include the integration of solar hot water systems.

The Group has secured funding from the Heads of the Valleys Initiative with match funding from the Association’s own resources.



🔑 COMPLAINTS

Every six months we give tenants a summary of the complaints that we have received and any action taken. These are the complaints received between 1st September 2008 and 31st March 2009.

- We received 1 complaint concerning various issues around how a staff member dealt with neighbour problems.

OUTCOME:
NOT UPHELD

- We received 2 complaints concerning the way in which services are delivered at a Sheltered Scheme.

OUTCOME:
1 PARTIALLY UPHELD
1 INCONCLUSIVE

As well as the formal complaints reported above, we also collate all service feedback reported by customers. These consisted of 80 expressions of dissatisfaction with repairs, which were later resolved, and 8 regarding the administration of the gas service contract. We received 7 service improvement suggestions as well as 28 compliments about our service. Thank you to all tenants who provided us with this valuable information.



🔑 WORKING WITH PARTNERS

We have been working in partnership with Aspire, a national charity which works with people who have spinal cord injuries.

Aspire's goal is to provide the support needed to take those who use them from injury to independence.

Using social housing grant, the Association has been able to purchase a bungalow in Hirwaun which will be fully adapted for wheelchair accessibility, promoting maximum independence and enabling the person to experience independent living either with their family

or near to their community, whilst awaiting full return to home.

The property will provide accommodation for patients from the Welsh Spinal Injury Unit at Rookwood Hospital. This facility will enable a patient to be discharged from hospital to suitable accommodation whilst waiting appropriate home adaptation or rehousing. This will reduce the time someone stays in hospital or in a residential or nursing setting, reducing costs as well as promoting independent living.

The bungalow will provide an

essential support to those people who have experienced the life changing event that spinal injury can bring, enabling them to return to their communities to lead independent lives.



🔑 CARILLION PRIZE DRAW

Our gas contractor Carillion holds a quarterly prize draw. If Carillion are able to carry out the annual gas safety check at first appointment then your name will be entered into the draw. Congratulations to **Mr & Mrs Evans of Hirwaun**, the winners of the Summer Draw who have won £25 in Tesco Vouchers.

🔑 IT'S ABOUT TIME!



LOTTERY FUNDED

Across the valley, various community groups are participating in a variety of activities that enable them to be involved in local initiatives, meet people and also earn time credits as a thank you, for donating their own time. Here is the latest news about time banking projects in Cwmbach

supported by Cynon Tâf Community Housing Group.

TTEG (Tre-Telynog Environmental Group) have completed a time banked litter pick where 40 bags of rubbish were handed over to the council's refuse department for collection. The efforts of the young people involved were rewarded with Go-Karting trip to Newport. Carbon Footprint training is being offered to the young people, thus raising local and global awareness. TTEG has also produced

leaflets about their group's mission, to encourage new members to join, and to raise further awareness.

Working closely with Cornerstone Church and Communities First the Time Bank Co-ordinator has enlisted the services of a tutor to encourage time banked chair exercise sessions. Taster sessions will commence soon.

For further information on time banking, please contact the Time Bank Co-ordinator Nia Hopkins on 07500884508.



🔑 TENANTS' FORUM NEWS



We encourage all tenants to be involved with the Association. We realise your time is valuable but any time you are able to spare will be appreciated.

There have been two Tenant Forum meetings since our last newsletter. At the March meeting the Tenant Forum budget for 2009 – 2010 was agreed, and the Forum was joined by a Guest Speaker from Grant Finder. Grant Finder is the UK's leading grants and policies database and includes details in excess of 6000 funding opportunities. The Forum agreed that Grant Finder database was a great idea and could benefit the Housing Association and any other grant orientated

organisations, however it was not seen to be a realistic investment for the Forum to make.

At the May meeting the Forum were joined by Guest Speaker – Edwina O'Hart, Public Relations Officer, Community Housing Cymru, who gave an interesting talk on 'Changing People's Perception of Housing Associations' which was well received by the Forum, who thought the speaker raised some interesting points.

Why don't you come along and be part of the Tenants' Forum? The next meeting will be held at 11am on Wednesday 8th July 2009 at our office in Abercynon. We can also arrange transport for you.

If you would like more information about becoming involved please ring Ann Costanza on 01443 743204.

🔑 EASTER ACTIVITIES

Our tenants at Maesyfelin held a very successful Easter Bonnet party. As you can see the gentlemen also enjoyed dressing up for the occasion.

Our residents at Cwrt Alun Lewis also enjoyed a visit from the local Brownie Pack who were all wearing their Easter Bonnets.



🔑 OUR WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD STRATEGY



We have just completed a project which involved a number of tenants in setting priorities for the implementation of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. This work has been a valuable exercise and helped us with the development of the Association's Strategy. We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who took part.

🔑 LATE SUMMER HOLIDAY CLOSURE

The office will be CLOSED on
Monday 31st August 2009
Tuesday 1st September 2009

IN AN EMERGENCY RING 0345 2602633

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