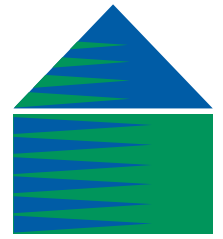


# in view

spring 09



newydd housing association



**Newydd's proposed development  
at Jackson Quay, Barry Waterfront**

If you require this newsletter in  
another format or language,  
please contact your local office

[www.newydd.co.uk](http://www.newydd.co.uk)



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## tenants survey

**As we mentioned in the last “In View” the responses to the 2008 Tenants Survey have been looked at, discussed by the Community Panels and the Newydd Board, and an action plan has been developed to address the issues you raised.**

The action plan is 14 pages long. A summary of the main points is shown below. If you want to know any more detail, or want to see the rest of the action plan, contact one of the housing offices:

**Vale Office: 01446 701501**

**Valleys Office: 01443 408080**

**Newtown Office: 01686 621965**

You said:	What we have done / will do:
The biggest concerns were anti-social behaviour and repairs	With the Community Panels we have completely reviewed our anti-social behaviour service and launched a much improved service (see page 18) We have made significant improvements to the maintenance service (see page 6) including increased staff numbers, reporting repairs online and a better telephone system for reporting repairs
Concerns about the quality of contracted estate gardening and cleaning service.	Regular estate inspections are now carried out to ensure the quality of services are high
That Newydd may not fully understand the needs of its tenants	“Tenant Insight” has been a theme of the business plan of the Association for the past two years and we aim to find out more about the services and information that you require. One example is that we will be working with tenants this year to give you performance information that YOU want to see, not that we want you to see. We have also considerably increased the number of different ways that you can get involved with the Association and let us know how you want to see things done differently.
Issues around the heating in your home (too expensive, difficult to control etc.)	We have developed an Affordable Warmth Strategy (AWS) to improve energy efficiency in Newydd properties. The AWS requires Newydd to identify which tenants are at risk of being in fuel poverty and address the causes of fuel poverty by improving insulation in the home and assisting tenants to find the best fuel tariffs.
We should regularly inspect properties to ensure tenants are keeping them in good condition	We have introduced a Property Inspection policy which allows us to call on properties where we think there may be a problem with the condition.

You said:	What we have done / will do:
We should vet applicants before offering them a property	Unfortunately we are not allowed to vet applicants before offering them a property – however we can ask for references and we can also now implement “Local Lettings Policies” which mean we can restrict certain groups of people from moving on to our estates for a set amount of time – for example only letting to people over 40 years old.
There are problems with services charges	With the help of the Community Panels we have completely reviewed the way we set, consult and review service charges each year – see page 19
Sometimes messages left with staff are not responded to	We have been reviewing our approach to customer care with staff and will be reaffirming the need to respond to ALL messages
That the menu system on the telephones was too long and complicated	We have completely changed the menu systems on the telephone down to 2 options – option 1 is for the Repairs Hotline and option 2 is for all other enquiries.
That you want to see more staff out on the estates and that you want the regional offices (Broad Street, Glyntaff and St David’s House) to reduce their opening hours in order to achieve this. You also said that the principal way of contacting us was by telephone and that we should consider more local based services.	We will fully review the way we deliver housing services from the regional offices this year. In conjunction with the Community Panels we will look at whether we can provide more local services to your specific area through community flats and surgeries, rather than regional offices.
The top three priorities for improving properties should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New kitchens</li> <li>• New bathrooms</li> <li>• Central heating</li> </ul>	These priorities have been included into the planned maintenance programme and will form the principal areas of work in the coming 2-3 years.
That we need to change the way we set and consult on service charges	The Community Panel set up a Task & Finish Group on service charges which has worked with the Association to completely review the way service charges are set and consulted on. Have a look at the article on page 22 for more information.
That there is little desire for any new tenants and residents associations.	We will review the way we encourage involvement through the use of tenants and residents associations and, with the Community Panel, we will look at other ways of involving residents that are less formal.
That 30% of you had been approached by a doorstep lender and that of those a quarter took up the offer.	We have developed a Financial Inclusion Strategy that aims to tackle some of the issues that cause poverty. We are also themeing this year’s tenants Festival around this topic and hope to help people find cheaper ways of getting credit. See page 21 for more details.

Of course there were lots of positive things you raised in the survey – satisfaction with the repairs service has improved, satisfaction with your home is high and satisfaction with many of the services Newydd provides was very high. Overall, there was 82% satisfaction with Newydd Housing Association.

**We will be carrying out a much shorter survey this summer which will check that our performance is improving and will be asking for more detail on some of the issues you have raised.**





## improving services – with your help

**Newydd is continually trying to improve the services it provides you and each year we focus on key areas where you have told us improvement is needed. During 2008 we carried out six improvement reviews with the input of tenants, Board members and staff as well as experts from outside the organisation who gave us new ideas for delivering services.**

### **Anti Social Behaviour**

Please see the article on page 18.

Anti social behaviour is unacceptable and we will take action against the few who repeatedly cause problems for their neighbours. We think you will see a big improvement in our response to this issue.

If you are concerned about anti social behaviour please contact your Housing Officer or your local office in the first instance. We will be happy to treat your enquiry in confidence and will explain how we can help.

### **Access to Services**

No matter how good services are they are no use if people cannot access them. Over the past year we have been reviewing all our services to see if they can be used easily by everyone. The review involved a lot of hard work from staff, Board members, tenants and the Newydd Equality and Disability Subgroup (NEADS). The review found that we are making good progress and have a clear commitment to providing easy to use services but some issues are holding us back. The review found:

- That we do not always have up to date information on tenants' changing needs
- That some of our services may be hard to use by some people, for instance disabled people or people with visual impairment
- We need to work with other agencies to ensure that our services are well publicised and are suitable for people who may not be aware of them

We are now working hard to address these issues and are grateful for the effort that everyone put into this important work.

## Maintaining Your Homes

We carried out four reviews on the repairs services. We looked at the full service from the first contact you make with us to report a repair through to the repair that is carried out by our contractors. We also looked at the improvements that we are making to ensure we meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

The review agreed with what you have already told us needs to improve:

- You have told us that you would like a better appointments service for repairs and a better out of hours service
- We need to improve the information we provide on our plans for improving your homes to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and to let you know if and why our plans change
- You want better information on the repairs service and what Newydd is responsible for

We are now making these and other improvements to the repairs service and a repairs handbook for tenants is being prepared.

**2009 promises to be as busy as 2008 as we start to review some of our work in managing Newydd. This year we will be looking at how we control our finances, how we ensure that things don't go wrong and how our Board runs the Association. Each year we also review our plans for the future and how we are involving tenants and residents.**

**A big thank you to everyone who helped us to improve services in 2008. We could not have done it without you.**

## wales audit office

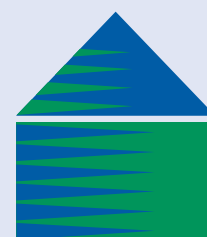
**Back in 2006 we were visited by a team of inspectors from the Wales Audit Office who reviewed our work and made suggestions on how we could improve our services. Unfortunately the inspectors' final report took over two years to prepare so in December 2008 they visited us again to look at the improvements we had made since 2006. The summary report produced by the Wales Audit Office has been enclosed with this edition of In View.**

We have used the feedback from the Wales Audit Office inspection together with input from our tenants, stakeholders, staff and Board members to develop and further improve services to tenants and our role in providing good quality affordable homes.

We are keen to further improve performance and welcomed the agreement of the Wales Audit Office to review the three service areas where we had received less than satisfactory judgements. The review was an opportunity to reflect on progress made and identify the work that remains to be done. The outcome of the review confirmed our own assessment of progress made since 2006 and confirmed the inspection conclusion that the organisation was raising standards in service delivery.

## Newydd logo

**Tenant members of Newydd 90 and members of the Community Panels will be aware that Newydd has looked at the possibility of changing the Newydd logo during the last 6 months. The reason for doing this was we felt that the existing logo was getting very out of date. We used Carrick to assist us with new designs and undertook several surveys of tenants, staff and Newydd Board members to get comments and feedback.**



A number of you asked why we thought it was necessary to change the logo and felt that it was a waste of time and money because the existing logo was OK. The feedback we received from tenants and staff was discussed with the Newydd Board and as there was no clear support to change the logo, the Board agreed that we should remain with the current logo.

**Therefore, the Newydd logo and identity will not change.**



## maintenance news

**The Winter edition of In View magazine highlighted several changes that we made to the way the repairs service is delivered. However, since the Winter edition, we have introduced and are planning to introduce some more changes aimed at improving the maintenance service that you receive.**

The main changes that Newydd has introduced since the last edition of In View are:

- Changes to our out of office hours emergency repairs service (see opposite)
- Appointed a new contractor to undertake the gas servicing in Newtown
- Introduced a new schedule for estate inspections
- Welcomed two new members of staff to the maintenance team
- Introduced call management software on our maintenance repairs line

We are looking to introduce a new service – Housecare – during May 2009. Details of the Housecare service are on page 9.

We are looking to change our contractual arrangements with Celtic Developments, who provide our reactive maintenance service in Newtown (see page 7)

### **Out of Office Hours – Emergency Repairs**

As part of Newydd's recent improvement review, the out of office hours service was identified for improvement. Tenants raised a particular concern with using the Newport call centre.

Following the feedback we received, we have been negotiating with our contractors to enable tenants to contact our contractors direct instead of reporting an emergency repair to the Newport Call Centre, who then alert the appropriate contractor. After finalising negotiations with our contractors, we are pleased to confirm that as of the 1st April 2009 all Newtown residents were able to contact Celtic Developments Ltd direct and as of the 1st May 2009 all residents living in the Vale and Valley region will be able to contact R&M Williams Ltd direct too.

**As of the 8th May 2009, all tenants should ring the maintenance repair line 0845 603 1696 for out of office hours emergency repairs. This number will then present you with an option to be transferred to the appropriate out of hours contractor for your area.**

## Reactive Maintenance in Newtown

Newydd is planning to change the way it works with Celtic Development Ltd who provide Newydd with a reactive repairs service in Newtown. We will be moving away from an 'openbook agreement' to a schedule of rates agreement during the spring. These changes will introduce increased control of costs prior to work being issued and improvements to the performance monitoring. This will also mirror our existing agreement in place with R&M Williams who provide reactive maintenance services to Newydd in the Vale and Valleys.

## Changes to Gas Servicing & Heating Arrangements

During the latter part of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, Newydd was having difficulties with its gas servicing contractor in Newtown. Newydd invited quotes from alternative contractors to provide this service and have now entered into an agreement with Wil Mor Wil Ltd. The agreement with Wil Mor Wil Ltd began on the 1st April 2009, and is subject to a review after a period of three months. This is to ensure that a high standard of service is delivered by Wil Mor Wil Ltd to residents on behalf of Newydd. We are keen to receive feedback from our tenants in Newtown in relation to their performance.

**Further to this, we have also now arranged for Celtic Development Ltd to undertake all 'day to day' gas repairs to Newydd's homes in Newtown.**

## Estate Inspections

Following the recent publication of Newydd's Customer Service Standards, we have now produced a scheme inspection schedule so that residents will know in advance when surveyors from Newydd's Maintenance department will be undertaking an estate inspection. Please see the Estate Inspection Sheet included with this edition of In View, which lists estates along with the surveyor inspecting and date of inspection.

## 2009-2010 Planned & Cyclical Maintenance Programme

Newydd's maintenance department is frequently asked what, when and where we are intending to carry out our planned maintenance work. In response to this request for information, please see the 2009-2010 Planned and Cyclical maintenance programmes included with this edition of In View.

It is Newydd's intention to keep to this programme, but there may be circumstances where things change for a variety of reasons. If the programme does change during the year, we will attempt to let you know in advance of the changes being made, why the changes have to be made and when the delayed work is likely to be carried out.

Although this programme only highlights the properties receiving planned maintenance this year we are also intending to consult all our tenants later in the year about Newydd's future 5 year planned maintenance programme.

## Maintenance Welcomes Two New Team Members

**The Newydd maintenance team has recruited two new members of staff since the Winter edition of In View. These appointments relate to the Reactive Maintenance Surveyor and Maintenance Assistant roles.**

Mr Derrick Evans joined the maintenance team during March 2009 and has been recruited as the Reactive Maintenance Surveyor covering the Vale. Derek has spent most of his life in the housing new build sector and is very experienced at diagnosing building defects. Derrick is replacing Kerry Baul who recently left Newydd.



Mrs Alison Davidson has also been recruited as a Maintenance Assistant during March 2009 and has a wealth of administrative and customer service experience. Alison joined the team after spending many years working for British Gas and has replaced Donna Exton.





## Maintenance Repairs Line – Call Management System

During 2008, Newydd has been looking at improving the Maintenance Repairs Line, as this is currently the method used by most of you to report a repair to us. We have been aware that there was some dissatisfaction with the Maintenance Repair Line and that some of you found it difficult to get through. This was usually due to the fact that all the Maintenance Assistants were busy on the telephone answering repair requests!

In order to improve the Maintenance Repairs Line, we have recently introduced a call management system which acts like a call queuing system you get when you call a bank or insurance company, for example. When the number of calls coming into the Maintenance Repair Line is high, instead of getting an engaged tone, or the telephone ringing constantly, an automated voice registers your call and you are put in a queue. Your call will be answered by one of the Maintenance Assistants as quickly as possible.

**If you have used this service recently, we hope that you found it helpful. If you wish to suggest how we could improve it, please let us know.**

## Housecall – Reporting Repairs on the Internet

Housecall is the service that Newydd provides that enables you to report repairs via the internet. Newydd introduced Housecall in 2007, but up to now not many of you have used it to report repairs. We would like to encourage as many of you as possible to use this method of reporting repairs because it will help reduce the amount of telephone calls received via the maintenance repair line. This will then enable maintenance staff to focus more time on monitoring our contractors and ensuring they provide you with a good service.

Housecall is accessed via Newydd's website ([www.newydd.co.uk](http://www.newydd.co.uk)). It is easy to use and uses pictures and diagrams to help you identify the repair needed and then allows you to submit the repair request via the internet. If you have used Housecall before, or are a first time user, we would welcome your feedback and any recommendations that you feel would be of benefit.

**Please remember that Housecall should not be used to report emergency repairs.**

## Housecare – Tenant's Repairs Handbook On The Internet

Housecare is similar to Housecall. The Maintenance department is intending to introduce this new service during the course of May 2009. If you wish to diagnose a repair in your home, you will be able to log onto the Newydd website and look at a Tenant's Repairs Handbook. Once you have a clear idea what the problem is, you can then report the repair using Housecall which is linked to Housecare. Alternatively, you can report the repair to Newydd's maintenance department on the Maintenance Repairs Line on **0845 6031696**.

We will also be including the Repairs Handbook in the revised Tenant's Handbook, which is due to be sent out during the summer.

## Tenant Satisfaction Prize Draw

Another big **Thank You** goes to all those tenants who have filled in and returned the repairs satisfaction questionnaire. This information is warmly received and helps us address any concerns that you have about the way repairs have been completed.

We would like to remind all tenants that every three months there is a prize draw for all completed and returned questionnaires, with the winner receiving a cheque for £150.00. The lucky winner for the three month period October-December 2008 was Mr K McPhail of Wordsworth Gardens. The prize draw for the three month period January – March 2009 will be taking place in the middle of May 2009 and the winner will be notified by post. Please keep returning the completed satisfaction forms because you have got to send it in for your chance to win.

## Asbestos

Newydd has previously employed a local consultant, City Environmental Services, to undertake surveys of its homes to identify the location of any asbestos.

We have completed surveys to all of the communal areas and external areas to flats and are continuing with our houses and flats ahead of planned maintenance works that we intend to carry out.

The asbestos surveys that Newydd has carried out to date show that there are very low levels of asbestos



in its homes, and found in ceiling artex. We would like to take this opportunity to remind all tenants that the level of asbestos present is **NOT** harmful, but that work involving contact with asbestos may have serious consequences to your health if the correct working practices are not followed. Ceiling artex is a 'self-finished' material and so should not require decoration. **We would like to stress that the levels of asbestos in Newydd's properties is NOT something to worry about, but we would urge you to take the necessary precautions if you intend to drill into or use sand paper on ceilings for any reason.** If you require any information in relation to the risks and best practices whilst working in areas that may contain asbestos, please contact the maintenance team who will be able to provide you with further information.

# your chance to get involved

**Last year many of you helped us by filling in a Newydd 90 survey on tenant involvement in the running of Newydd. 90% of you said it is important that tenants are involved in the running of the Association. Becoming a share member or a Board member are two ways in which you can achieve this.**

## Becoming a share member

Becoming a share member is easy. Tell us you want to be a share member and we will collect some details from you for our records. Pay £1 and that's it. Your application will be reported to the Board for approval and if approved a share certificate will be issued to you. Newydd has an open share membership policy and particularly welcomes applications from tenants.

## What do share members do?

Share members effectively own the Association. This means that no important decisions can be made about the Association's future without most share members agreeing to the changes. Share membership can provide tenants with some protection that Newydd is not going to make any major decisions that will affect tenants negatively. Currently 77% of Newydd's shares are owned by tenants.

The sort of decisions that need share members' approval are those that involve changing the rules, elections to the Board and any decision to merge or shut down Newydd. These decisions can only be made at meetings that share members must be invited to.

As Newydd is a 'not for profit' organisation shares are limited to one per person and will not increase in value, they do not attract bonus payments so sadly they won't make you rich!

If you want to share in the ownership of Newydd then ask any member of staff who will be pleased to deal with your application.

## Becoming a Board member

In the Newydd 90 survey over 92% said that they thought tenants should be on the Board. Newydd has reserved up to four places on the Board for tenant elected members. Who takes these places is decided by an annual ballot.

The full rules and nomination forms have been sent to you with this edition of In View. We will appoint the Electoral Reform Services to run the ballot on our behalf to ensure it is carried out fairly and independently. The ballot will be run as follows:

- Candidates for election will be asked to submit up to 100 words setting out their full name, address, and occupation, and the reasons for their suitability to be a tenant elected board member.
- One voting paper will be sent to every tenanted property. Joint tenants will only receive one voting paper. The return of a voting paper will be assumed to have been submitted on behalf of the tenant.
- Tenants will be able to cast votes (in no order of preference) equal to the number of vacancies to be filled. Votes must be cast on the voting slip.
- The candidates with the greatest number of votes will fill the vacant places. In the event of a tie the successful candidate will be decided by the drawing of lots.
- The successful candidates will become Board members with effect from the Annual General Meeting or the next Board meeting.
- All tenant elected Board members will be required to accept the obligations agreed for all Board members by the Board.
- The results of the election will be published to all tenants. Vacancies occurring in between elections may be filled or kept vacant at the Board's discretion.
- Each year one half of the tenant elected members will stand down and may if they wish stand for re-election.

In the Newydd 90 survey nearly half said they were interested in standing in the election but many said they would like to know more about what is involved before deciding. We are contacting everyone who has said they are interested to provide them with more information and to help them decide whether to stand for election.

If you want to know more then please contact Paul Roberts, Chief Executive on 029 2062 9364 or any member of staff. We will then get in touch.



# Newydd back on the road

**Further to the success of the road-shows last year, Newydd will again be hiring a motor-home and visiting estates in the Vale and the Valleys this summer!**

We will be asking tenants to complete a short survey to get their opinions on the services they receive from us. There will again be ten chances to win £100 – so check out the time-table below to see when we are visiting your estate!

(Please note that other events are being held at Sheltered Housing Schemes and in Newtown – tenants in these areas will be notified of further details in due course).



Date	Morning	Afternoon
Monday 22 June	Thompson St, Barry	Thompson St, Barry
Tuesday 23 June	Ffordd Elin, Barry	Maes yr Ysgol and Heritage Drive, Barry
Wednesday 24 June	Columbus Close and Magellan Close, Barry	Clos Llawhaden, Barry
Thursday 25 June	Penarth	Penarth
Friday 26 June	Ely	Tongwynlais
Monday 29 June	Rhydyfelin	Rhydyfelin
Tuesday 30 June	Rhydyfelin	Aberaman
Wednesday 1 July	Glynneath	
Thursday 2 July	Rhiw Ceris	Llys Celyn, Tonteg
Friday 3 July	Gilfach Goch	Newpark, Talbot Green

Jackson Quay, Barry Waterfront  
(artist impression)



## new developments

It is an exciting time for the Association with a number of new and innovative housing projects being developed in Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Work is underway on four developments with a further two programmed to commence in the next few months. The Association is building for the future and is striving to ensure

the delivery of the highest standards in sustainability, construction and design.

Below is an update on our development programme. If you would like any additional details on the featured schemes please contact Rhianydd Jenkins at [Rhianydd.jenkins@newydd.co.uk](mailto:Rhianydd.jenkins@newydd.co.uk)

Fern Close, Rhydyfelin (completed)

### Fern Close, Rhydyfelin, Rhondda Cynon Taff

We are pleased to announce that this development of 2 adapted bungalows was completed in September 2008. They were designed specifically for local families who have a member that is disabled. These spacious bungalows provide improved living space and accessibility for the family.

Designed by Pentan Architects and built by M& J Cosgrove the scheme was runner up in the Sustainability Project category in Rhondda Cynon Taf Building Control Awards 2009.



### **Poets Close, Rhydyfelin, Rhondda Cynon Taf**

The delivery of 15 family homes, which now includes 1 adapted disabled bungalow, is on target to be completed in August. We have recently been notified by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council that the development has been named Byron Close.



**Poets Close, Rhydyfelin**

### **Treforest School, Pontypridd, Rhondda Cynon Taf**

The 23 new homes are programmed for completion in September. Like Poets Close the site has recently been named by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council as Ruler Way – keeping the school link! The Association has set up close working links with the community and the local Parc Lewis Primary School, where the former pupils of Treforest School are now taught. Details of the design competition run with Parc Lewis Primary School are included within this issue.



**Poets Close, Rhydyfelin**

### **Vere Street, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan**

Works commenced on this site in January 2009 for the delivery of 7 flats. Completion is due in October 2009.



**Poets Close, Rhydyfelin**

### **Main Street, Barry (Phase I), Vale of Glamorgan**

Works commenced in December 2008 on the delivery of 20 new homes in Main Street. The development comprises of 14 two-bed flats, 1 one-bed flat and 5 three-bed houses.



**Main Street, Barry**

### **Jackson Quay, Barry Waterfront, Vale of Glamorgan**

Works for this prestigious 70 new home residential scheme is due to commence shortly. Mi Space Contractors, who are also the contractors on our Main Street development, will be carrying out the works on this exciting project.



Treforest School, Pontypridd



Elfed Avenue, Penarth (artist impression)



Vere Street, Barry



Court Road, Barry (before work)

### Court Road, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan

Like Jackson Quay, work will shortly commence on the development of 4, four-bed townhouses and 8 two-bed flats at Court Road. This development includes the refurbishment of the existing church to provide the 8 flats.

### Elfed Avenue, Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan

The Association is currently working on a significant sustainability scheme in Penarth. The delivery of 4 houses on the site of former St Luke's Church will achieve high levels of sustainable design and will form a pilot sustainability project for the Welsh Assembly Government and the Vale of Glamorgan. The Association is currently working on the scheme and will shortly be taking it to planning, watch this space!

## best garden competition 2009



**Further to the massive success of the gardening competition last year, we will be holding a competition again to find Newydd's best gardens this coming summer. The categories will be as follows and there will be prizes for the first place winners:**

- Best kept garden
- Best kept communal garden
- Best kept sheltered housing scheme
- Best hanging basket or window box

If you would like to enter the competition, or nominate a neighbour, please contact your area office for an entry form. The closing date for entries will be May 31. Photos of the gardens will be taken during July ready for the judges and winners will be announced in early August. Good luck to all who enter!

Photo provided by  
Linda Chamberlain



## tenant trip to trafford hall

**In February, Cath Kinson, Linda Chamberlain, Sue Nipper and Ellen Morgan, all members of the Newydd's Equality and Disability Subgroup (NEADS), attended training at Trafford Hall in Chester on the Welsh Equality and Diversity Policy to find out more about the Welsh Assembly governments commitment to equality of opportunity. They all wanted to develop their own thinking about equality and diversity and investigate how it is reflected in their work within the NEADS group and within their community as a whole. Linda Chamberlain kindly agreed to feed back on their stay:**

*"When we arrived at Trafford Hall in Cheshire, we were made to feel extremely welcome. First of all by Jane, who was the day receptionist, then by all the other people who run this Grade 2 Listed Georgian manor house.*

*After registration, we were shown to our rooms which were cabins overlooking the sunken garden*

*and their own vegetable garden. Everything at Trafford Hall is ecologically friendly, even the cabins where we slept are roofed with the turf cut from the grounds where the cabins are built. Nothing is wasted. They use Solar Panels and a BioMass Boiler for heating and hot water. The gardens are completely organic and they re-cycle everything that is re-cyclable. Even the two cats that live there are vegetarian and they keep any pests down that could damage the crops grown in the gardens.*

*We thoroughly enjoyed our stay at Trafford Hall. The course was very informative and will help with the work we undertake with Newydd. I would recommend it to anyone thinking of going there for whatever reason. You can stay there for a short break as well as using the Hall for meetings and most training courses are free.*

*Trafford Hall is a Resource Centre and if you would like to become a friend of Trafford Hall, donations are always welcome and, the food is FANTASTIC!"*

**Please speak to your Community Involvement Officer if you would like to join the NEADS group as new members are always welcome.**

# development in the community

**The development team at Newydd have been working with local school children at Parc Lewis Primary School, Treforest to create a design for a plaque that will be incorporated within Newydd's new development of 23 new homes on Princess St in Treforest.**

Newydd purchased the former Treforest Primary school site from Rhondda Cynon Taff council in 2007, and are keen to ensure the former school is commemorated in the new development. A picture competition was arranged with the school and the children, some of whom attended the former Treforest Primary school, were asked to draw a picture with the theme 'the playground'. The winning picture will now be used to create a stainless steel plaque which will be placed at the entrance to the completed development commemorating the fact that the site was a former school.

Simon Morris, Property Director, said "purchasing the former Treforest Primary school site has provided us with a great opportunity to involve the local community in our new development. It seemed appropriate to us that as we are redeveloping a former school site we involve the children from the local primary school to help us commemorate and record the history of the site."



**Left to Right Back Row – Rhianydd Jenkins, Development Assistant; Simon Morris, Property Director; Mrs Williams, Head Teacher.  
Front Row – the winning pupils**

Mrs Williams, Head teacher at Parc Lewis Primary school said "she was delighted that the school had been involved in the competition, and that the children had thoroughly enjoyed taking part, as this was a very special competition involving the community and, especially, the former pupils of the Treforest School"

Newydd will continue to involve the school as the new houses are built by organising site visits during the spring and summer for the children. The new development is due to be completed in autumn 2009.

## Are you looking for a step into education and housing?

**Newydd is introducing a new programme to provide annual sponsorship for a tenant to attend higher education. Financial support will be provided through an annual allowance towards travel expenses and books. When available, paid work experience will be provided during the Easter and summer holidays. The subject areas that**

**we will consider supporting are studies in housing, community involvement, development and maintenance.**

**For further details and to register your interest in the programme please contact Keiron Montague on 01443 408080 or keiron.montague@newydd.co.uk no later than 31 May 2009.**



## Newydd makes a splash!

**Over the past 9 months Newydd's Community Involvement team have been working with youth groups around our housing stock in the Vale and the Valleys areas. Our aim is to build links with existing groups and raise a positive profile of the Association amongst the young people on our estates. Newydd has identified young people as a 'hard to reach' group and intends to carry out projects and events with them to build their confidence in the Association, improve accessibility of services for young people and also to build stronger links between the Association and the youth organisations that work hard on our estates.**

We carried out consultation by way of a youth survey and general discussions held with the groups. The information we received from the surveys will now be used to put together some form of action plan to assist the Association in tackling issues surrounding this hard to reach group. There were four £50 prizes for completing the survey and the winners were drawn at random by the Chair of the Newydd Board on

Wednesday 25 March, the winners were:

Scott Philpot – Aberaman

Ceri Whealleans – Rhydyfelin

Rhodri Garland – Rhydyfelin

Aaron Harris – Rhydyfelin

Valleys Kids, Rhydyfelin Project was our starting point. We have spent time building a firm partnership with the large group of young people that regularly attend the youth sessions in the Ilan Centre, Rhydyfelin. The sessions accommodate over 70 young people on any one night and, with around 90% of those youngsters living in Newydd stock on the Glyntaff, it is a perfect target audience to kick start our work with youth as a hard to reach group.

On Saturday 7 March Newydd sponsored a consultation event which was based around team building and leadership skills with 10 youngsters from Rhydyfelin. We travelled to Margam Park near Port Talbot for a Raft Building session. It was very cold and wet but it was a huge success and lots of fun was had by all.

This is hopefully the first of many consultation projects which will be carried out with the young people across our stock and is the start of a very productive and promising partnership with Valleys Kids and the young people of Rhydyfelin.

# anti-social behaviour

## Newydd launches its new Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure

**Newydd has been working with Housemark over the past 12 months to develop a new anti-social behaviour policy and procedure. Staff met with a number of tenants last year to find out what you thought about the way that we tackle anti-social behaviour and what we could do to improve.**

### What you told us;

- Policies are not firm enough.
- Complaints need to be recorded in a better way.
- Timescales can be lengthy.
- Letters don't work.
- Court shouldn't be the only option.
- We should work more effectively with other agencies such as the police.
- Tenants would like more information about what is happening with their complaint.
- Tenants would like ongoing support and regular updates from their Housing Officer.

### What we have done to address this;

- If you make a complaint the details will be recorded and you will be given a unique complaint reference number.
- We will respond to all reports of nuisance within 5 working days (domestic violence, harassment or racial harassment within 1 working day)
- Your Housing Officer will discuss the complaint with you and will advise you what options we can take.
- Your Housing Officer will agree an action plan with you.
- With your consent, we will interview the alleged troublemaker within 10 working days.
- You will have frequent and regular contact with your Housing Officer until the complaint is resolved
- We will ensure that our partner agencies such as Police, Social Services and Schools are kept informed about the progress of any anti social behaviour complaints.
- When your complaint is closed you will be sent a satisfaction questionnaire.
- We will monitor, report and publicise all actions taken to resolve anti-social behaviour.

For more information about our policies and procedures please contact your Housing Officer.

## saving for the future

### Cardiff and the Vale Credit Union offer new child trust fund account

Cardiff and the Vale Credit Union now offer a Child Trust Fund account. As well as adult savings accounts and affordable loans, the credit union has recently added the new account for parents to begin saving for their children.

A safe and risk free cash savings account, the Child Trust Fund is tax free and available to all children born after 1st September 2002. The government issues a £250 voucher on the birth of each child to deposit in a Child Trust Fund account. Parents can top up the account to a maximum amount of £1200 each year. Money can only be withdrawn from the account by the child when they reach 18 years of age.



Glenda Porter, manager of Cardiff and the Vale Credit Union said "If parents open up a Child Trust Fund account with the credit union and add to it regularly, they could help their child buy their first car, pay university fees or put a deposit on their first house."

The current rate of interest is a very competitive 3.5% AER. Child Trust Funds can be opened up with the voucher or you can transfer the funds in from an existing Child Trust Fund account.

**If you would like to find out more information or open an account, please visit our website [www.cardiffcu.com](http://www.cardiffcu.com), email [ccu@cardiffcu.com](mailto:ccu@cardiffcu.com) or call 029 2087 2373.**

# community panel

The Community Panel will be busy and recently set up a Task & Finish Group to look at how they have performed over the past year and to recommend any changes that need to happen to improve the way they represent you as tenants.

## The recommendations made were:

- Just have one joint Community Panel (there used to be two – one in the Vale and one in the Valleys)
- To open up the membership so anyone can come along – although places are limited to keep meetings manageable! (previously you could only attend if you were part of a Tenants & Residents Group, or a member of the Panel's sub-groups)
- To provide 'Managers Surgeries' where tenants can come along and talk directly to the Head of Housing and the Property Manager (more information will follow soon on this!)
- To have an advisory group on sheltered housing

- To make the Community Panel more accessible by having a freepost address, freephone number and email address which will go directly to the Community Panel

- To change the way that Newydd reports performance information so that it is relevant to the Community Panel and to all tenants.

If you would like to know more about Community Panel, Manager's Surgeries or the numerous ways that you can get involved and directly affect the way Newydd provides services, contact one of the housing offices:

**Vale Office: 01446 701501**

**Valleys Office: 01443 408080**

**Newtown Office: 01686 621965**



# housing benefits

If you are claiming Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Second Adult Rebate or Free School Meals and your circumstances change please remember to tell your Housing Benefit Department straight away. The change may mean that you are eligible for more benefit. If it means that you get less benefit, it is better you find out as soon as possible – rather than later when they may have paid you too much and have to claim the overpayment back.

You will also need to provide documentary evidence of any information you tell them about. They can only accept original documents, photocopies are not acceptable.

## Contacting Your Councils Housing Benefit Department

<p><b>Rhondda Cynon Taf</b></p> <p>In person at our One4aLL centres in: Treorchy, Pontypridd, Porth or Aberdare or at your local Housing Office.</p> <p>By writing to the Housing Benefit Section, Bronwydd House, Porth, CF39 9DL.</p> <p>Tel: 01443 681081</p>	<p><b>Vale of Glamorgan</b></p> <p>Civic Offices Holton Road Barry CF63 4RU</p> <p>Tel: 01446 700111</p> <p><b>Powys</b></p> <p>Newtown Area Office Back Lane Newtown</p> <p>Tel: 0845 6027030</p>	<p><b>Cardiff</b></p> <p>Marland House Central Square Cardiff</p> <p>Tel: 02920 872087</p> <p><b>Neath Port Talbot</b></p> <p>Civic Centre Neath SA11 3QZ</p> <p>Tel: 01639 764755</p>
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# tenant group funding

**Each year, Newydd Housing Association provides funding to support recognised Tenants & Residents Groups in engaging with residents. This year funding has been provided to:**

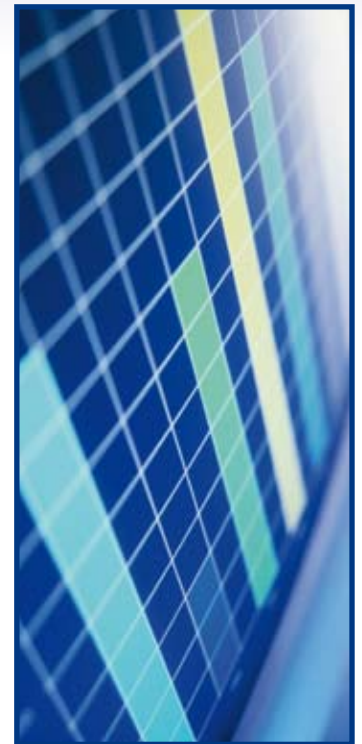
<b>Group</b>	<b>Funding Awarded</b>
Maes Yr Eglwys	£4,100.00
Glyntaff Tenants & Residents Association	£11,655.00
Rhiw Ceris	£1,750.00
Aberaman	£2,041.00
Alltwen	£2,430.00
Phillipa Freeth Court	£1,670.00
Gwyn James Court	£1,700.00
Elis Fisher Court	£ 660.00
Arthur Davis Court	£1,300.00
Thompson Street	£1,800.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£29,106.00</b>

Contact your local Tenant & Residents Group to see what plans they have for spending the funding. Alternatively if you wish to set up your own group or want further information regarding funding or Tenants & Residents Groups, contact one of the housing offices:

**Vale Office:**  
**01446 701501**

**Valleys Office:**  
**01443 408080**

**Newtown Office:**  
**01686 621965**



## insurance

**Have you got adequate home contents insurance?**

**What happens if your house is flooded, or damage occurs to the contents in your home?**

**Newydd insures the building, but does not insure your contents.**

Newydd HA has teamed up with Jardine Lloyd Thompson (JLT) through Community Housing Cymru to provide low cost home contents insurance. See the advert on page 23 and contact JLT directly if you are interested in their offer.



# struggling to pay your rent?

**If you are experiencing difficulties in paying your rent it is important that you notify your Housing Officer as soon as possible.**

**Don't ignore the problem. It won't go away and the longer you leave it, the worse it gets.**

**We may be able:**

- To give you help and advice on claiming Housing Benefit and other welfare benefits.
- To put you in contact with specialist and or independent agencies who will help you with debt counselling and managing your money effectively.
- To make agreements with you to enable you clear your rent arrears by regular instalment payments.

Your home is at risk if you do not maintain any agreed payments and Newydd will have no alternative than to take legal action through the courts which may result in you being evicted from your home.

If you are evicted a County Court Judgement (CCJ) will make it difficult for you to obtain credit and you will still be liable to pay any debt that you have left behind. You may also find that the Local Authority and other Social Housing providers will not assist you with re-housing.

Eviction is only used as a last resort where we have been unable to work with the tenant to resolve the rent arrears. If you are worried about your arrears or rent payments please come and talk to us.



## Newydd's money market and agm

In this time of economic crisis, this year Newydd has decided to focus on access for tenants to appropriate financial products and services, and help tenants beat the credit crunch. So, at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) we will also be holding a 'Money Market' at the Hub in Barry on Wednesday 16 September 2009.

Why not come along and visit the stall holders who will be giving expert advice on how to maximise your income and make your money go further! There will also be workshops and invited speakers. Crèche facilities will be available, refreshments provided and all travel expenses reimbursed.



**A free crunchie will be given to all who attend!**

**Further details on the event will be publicised closer to the time!**

**Paying your rent couldn't be easier.**

**We have 6 simple ways to pay your rent;**

**By Direct Debit**

**By Standing Order**

**By Allpay Card**

**At your Area Office**

**At your Post Office**

**By Cheque in the post**



# confused about your service charges?

**This year we have revised the way that we send out service charge information. A task and finish group highlighted that tenants found the whole issue of service charges confusing and that the information we send out could be much better.**

Our new service charge policy advises that the following information will be provided for tenants, leaseholders and homeowners;

- Tenants will be given information detailing what services they are paying for, including the frequency and quality of the service at the start of the tenancy

- An annual service charge consultation event will be carried out with all tenants/ leaseholders and homeowners who pay a service charge
- An annual statement providing a breakdown of service charge costs will be sent to all tenants/ leaseholders and homeowners who pay a service charge.

To make sure that the information we send out is as user friendly as possible Jo and Ellen, who are tenants in Aberaman, worked with staff and the Community Panels to develop the new service charge statement and this is what it looks like;

The services you receive are ticked below	Your contractor	How much you pay	When is this work done
Grounds Maintenance - Cut grass and weed flower beds  (Please note that grass is only cut in the summer season)	Grounds Maintenance Wales	£2.84	Monthly
Landlords lighting – communal power supply	N/A	£0.03	N/A
TV Aerial System Servicing and depreciation	Elite Aerials	£0.09	Annually
<b>Your total weekly charge is</b>		<b>£2.96</b>	

The new schedules were sent out at the end of February and we have had lots of positive feedback from tenants and staff.

**If you have any queries regarding your recent service charge statement please contact your Housing Officer.**

## mystery shopping

**Once again a dedicated group of Newydd tenants has been testing the service you receive through 'Mystery Shopping'. The volunteers ring up each Newydd office and ask some prepared questions in order to test whether we provide the service that we say we will in our Service Standards.**

So far, the Mystery Shoppers have reported that the service is generally good, although we need to be

better when replying to messages that are left either with staff or on our answerphones.

We are always looking for more volunteers to join the Mystery Shoppers – we will need you to make approximately 12 calls to the Association every three months and report back what happened. We provide full training and support, and give out vouchers to all our Mystery Shoppers each time as a thank you. Tenants are chosen in alphabetical order.

If you are interested in joining, or want to know more, contact one of the housing offices:

**Vale Office: 01446 701501**

**Valleys Office: 01443 408080**

**Newtown Office: 01686 621965**

## My Home Contents Insurance scheme



# 10

reasons to choose  
the My Home  
contents insurance  
scheme.

- Flexible regular pay as you go payment options.
- No fuss, quick and easy to apply either through the post or over the telephone.
- No excess (you don't pay the first part of the claim).
- Covers theft, water damage and fire.
- Covers damage to internal decorations.
- Covers accidental damage to sanitary fixtures such as toilets and washbasins.
- Covers damage to external glazing for which you are responsible.
- Covers lost or stolen keys and freezer contents.
- You don't need to have special door or window locks.
- All post codes are included.

Sums insured are available from £6,000 to £35,000; all premiums, terms and conditions contained within the free information pack.

Ask your local Newydd office for an information pack or telephone 0845 337 2463



The National Housing Federation My Home Contents Insurance Scheme is a product name arranged and administered on behalf of The National Housing Federation by Jardine Lloyd Thompson Tenant Risks. A division of Jardine Lloyd Thompson UK Limited.

Lloyd's Broker. Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Services Authority. A member of the Jardine Lloyd Thompson Group. Registered Office: 6 Crutched Friars, London EC3N 2PH.

Registered in England No. 244 2321 96. The National Housing Federation and Community Housing Wales are Appointed Representatives of Jardine Lloyd Thompson UK Limited.

# Resident Involvement Statement

**Newydd Housing Association believes in delivering the best possible housing services to all its residents. To achieve this, we believe that the role of tenants, residents and partners is important in making sure that our services reflect the views of the people and communities with whom we work.**

At Newydd, we feel that offering flexible ways of becoming involved allow all our tenants the opportunity to inform us of what they want us to achieve in a way best suited to individuals.

## **At Newydd we will:**

- Be clear of how our tenants can get involved
- Provide a variety of ways to get involved to suit the needs of our tenants
- Ensure that tenant involvement is at the heart of the work we carry out
- Show you how your involvement has made a difference

## **What we do:**

**Community Panel** – Newydd has a panel made up of tenants which is consulted on all issues.

**Tenants' survey** – Gives the opportunity to give your views on all Newydd services.

**Newsletters** – Offer you easy to read updates on all that's going on within the organisation and on our estates.

**Newydd 90** – Offers those who wish to get involved the opportunity to express their opinions on a wide range of Newydd services.

**Advisory Groups** – We consult with a number of issue specific groups (e.g. Disability and Equality) working together to improve services.

**Accessible information** – Provide documents in a language (e.g. Welsh) or format (e.g. large font) which is best suited to the needs of tenants.

**Task and Finish Groups** – Provide tenants the chance to work with staff to improve specific aspects of our service (we have already had Task and Finish groups looking at anti social behaviour and service charge policies).



**Tenant Festivals and Events** – Offer you the opportunity to meet other tenants and have access to staff and information at a fun occasion.

**Board Membership** – Elections take place every year to allow everyone to stand for election to the Newydd Board.

**Tenants Groups** – We fund and support tenants groups. If you are interested we will signpost you to your local group. If no group exists in your area we will help you set up a group in your area to improve your community. Where there is no demand in your area, you can always be as estate champion.

**Newydd AGM** – We invite all tenants to attend our Annual General Meeting where you can learn more of what we are doing as well as express your own views.

**Newydd Reading Panels** – All information sent to tenants is first sent to the Reading Panel. The panel is made up of tenants and aims to make sure that all documents are clear and easy to read.

**Interested?** If you would like to get involved in any of these aspects of our work or if you would like a copy of our full Resident Involvement Strategy, please contact your local Community Involvement Officer.

## **Valleys Region**

Keiron Montague (01443 408080) or by email on [keiron.montague@newydd.co.uk](mailto:keiron.montague@newydd.co.uk)

## **Vale Region**

Tracy James (01446 701501) or by email on [tracy.james@newydd.co.uk](mailto:james@newydd.co.uk)

**Please advise if you would like this document in any other language or format.**