

Caerphilly Homes

Winter 2018 Issue 12

Winners of Caerphilly Homes awards announced



Cllr Lisa Phipps, Tomos Hooper, Ceri Hooper (Valley Daffodils) & David Pattison (Robert Price).

In September we held our Caerphilly Homes celebration event, where the winners of the annual tenant gardening contest and Transforming Lives and Communities Awards were announced.

The evening was sponsored by Robert Price Builders' Merchants and their suppliers: Seren Electrical, Nuaire, 3D Flooring and Rixonway Kitchens. Robert Price is the single source supply partner for our £220 million Welsh Housing Quality Standard improvement programme.



Cllr Lisa Phipps, Deanne Jurich & Clive Davies (Vice Chair of Caerphilly Homes Task Group).

WINNERS AND RUNNERS UP:

BEST HANGING BASKET / POT / CONTAINER:

Winner - Bill Rothwell, Markham
Second place - Colleen Phillips, Pontywaun
Third place - Steve Perkins, New Tredegar

BEST GARDEN:

Winner - Deanne Jurich, Rudry
Second place - Sandra Williams, Abercarn
Third place - Bill Rothwell, Markham

BEST SHELTERED HOUSING COMMUNAL GARDEN:

Winner - Maesteg, Pentwynmawr
Second place - Ty Melin, Crosphenmaen
Third place - Highfield Court, Newbridge

EMPLOYEE AWARD

Winner - Older Persons' Housing Team

GROUP AWARD

Winner - Valley Daffodils
Runner up - Trevelyan Court Residents Association

INDIVIDUAL AWARD

Winner - Mike Barugh, Pentwynmawr
Runner up - Gary Pritchard, Ynysddu
Runner up - Sandra Jones, Penyrheol



Cartrefi Caerffili
Caerphilly Homes

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.
This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.





The Right to Buy is ending

The Right to Buy and Right to Acquire will end for all council and housing association tenants in Wales on 26th January 2019. The Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill received Royal Assent and became an Act of the Welsh Assembly on 24th January 2018.

The Right to Buy, Right to Acquire and Preserved Right to Buy ended for “new homes” only on 24th March 2018. A “new home” is one which has not been let as social housing for the six months before 24th March 2018, for example a new build property or a home that has recently been acquired by the landlord. No Caerphilly County Borough Council properties fall under this definition. Qualifying secure tenants are entitled to buy their home if they have been a public sector

tenant for five years. This period may also include time spent in certain accommodation provided by the armed forces.

We are advising tenants that, if they are eligible to purchase their homes, they will need to submit their application by 25th January 2019. Any applications made after this date will not be accepted.

More information about the Right to Buy and a Welsh Government document explaining the ‘Abolition of the Right to Buy Act and Associated Rights (Wales) Act 2018’ legislation can be found on the council’s website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Housing. Tenants can also find out if they’re eligible for the Right to Buy their home by calling the council on 01443 864221, or email tenantinvolvement@caerphilly.gov.uk.

Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) - fact or fiction

There isn’t enough money left to complete the programme

FICTION - we are working to a business plan which includes costs for WHQS to be delivered to all council owned homes in the Caerphilly county borough by 2020.

Not every home will receive all improvements

FACT - each home will be assessed to determine what works are needed to bring it up to the WHQS, with some homes needing more than others. However, all

properties will receive an element of work as part of the programme.

Tenants whose homes are at the end of the programme will not receive the same improvements as those at the start

FICTION - the WHQS contains a number of elements that must be completed in order for each home to reach compliance. This means that each home will receive all of the works required for it to reach WHQS regardless of where it is on the programme.

How to contact your local housing office

UPPER RHYMNEY VALLEY AREA HOUSING OFFICE

Gilfach House, William Street, Gilfach, Bargoed, CF81 8ND

Tel: 01443 873535

Email: urvaho@caerphilly.gov.uk

AREAS COVERED: Fochriw, Rhymney South, Deri, Bargoed, Cascade, Gelligaer, Maes Mabon, Nelson, Penpedairheol, Penybryn, Gilfach Estate, Lower Gilfach, Cefn Hengoed, Hengoed, Rhymney North, Bute Town, Pontlottyn, Aberbargoed, New Tredegar, Phillipstown, Brithdir, Abertysswg, Tirphil, Maesycwmmmer, Tiryberth, Ystrad Mynach, Penyrheol, Thomasville, Ty Isaf, Ty Nant, Pwllypant and Llanbradach.

EASTERN VALLEYS AREA HOUSING OFFICE

Unit 5, The Market Place, Blackwood, NP12 1AU

Tel: 01495 235974

Email: eastvalleyaho@caerphilly.gov.uk

AREAS COVERED: Argoed, Britannia, Fleur-de-lys, Markham – Hollybush, Pengam, Upper Trelyn, Cefn Fforest, Fairview, Twyn Gardens, Penllwyn Lower, Penllwyn Upper, Springfield, Blackwood, Ty-Sign Lower, Ty-Sign Upper, Risca, Pontymister, Croespenmaen, Oakdale, Gelligroes, Morrisville, Pontywaun, Treowen, Trinant, Wattsville, Ynysddu - Cwmfelinfach, Pentwynmawr, Abercarn, Crosskeys, Cwmcarn, Highmeadow, Llanfach, Newbridge, Panside Lower, Panside Upper, Persondy and Westend.

LANSBURY PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSING OFFICE

45 Attlee Court, Lansbury Park, Caerphilly, CF83 1QU

Tel: 02920 860917

Email: lansburyparknho@caerphilly.gov.uk

AREAS COVERED: Abertridwr, Brynccenydd, Caerbragdy, Churchill Park, Claude Road, Trecastell, Nantddu, Senghenydd, Waunfach, Lansbury Park and Porset Park.

GRAIG-Y-RHACCA NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSING OFFICE

Grays Garden, Graig-y-Rhacca, Machen, CF83 8TW

Tel: 02920 853050

Email: graiyrhaccanho@caerphilly.gov.uk

AREAS COVERED: Bedwas, Machen, Rudry, Trecenydd, Trethomas and Graig Y Rhacca.

Get ready for winter - frozen condensate pipes

A condensate pipe carries condensation from your boiler to your outside drain. During prolonged spells of extremely cold weather condensation in the pipe may freeze, resulting in a blockage and causing the boiler to break down.

Below is some guidance on what to do if this happens. This is only a guide - please do not attempt if conditions are bad or you don't feel competent to do so. Instead, call our Housing Repair Operations team on 01443 864886 or 01443 875500 outside office hours.

How to defrost the pipe?

1. Confirm the condensate pipe is frozen

If your boiler has broken down due to freezing of the condensate pipe, a fault code will usually be shown on your boiler's digital display or by some other alarm. On some occasions the boiler will make a gurgling noise.

2. Locate the blockage

It is likely that the pipe is frozen at its most exposed point or where there is some obstruction to the flow; this could be the open end of the pipe, or at a bend or elbow. Running your hands over the pipe until you find a section that feels colder than the rest should help you identify the blockage quickly.

3. Thaw the pipe

The pipe can be thawed by applying a hot water bottle, microwaveable heating pack, or cloths soaked in warm water to the exterior of the pipe close to the point of the blockage. Warm water can also be poured onto it from a watering can or other container - do not use boiling water.

Do not attempt to thaw a condensate pipe which cannot be easily reached from ground level. Also be aware that any water used can freeze quickly on pathways, causing a slip hazard.

4. Restart your boiler

Once the frozen section has been melted and cleared, check your boiler manual for instructions on how to reset the boiler correctly. Your boiler should now restart. If your boiler doesn't restart you will need to call our Housing Repairs Operation team.

How to prevent the condensate pipe from freezing

If your condensate pipe isn't already insulated, wrap it in some old towels immediately to prevent it freezing again. During extreme weather conditions, even proper insulation may not be enough to prevent the condensate pipe from freezing. It may help to temporarily run your boiler with the boiler thermostat set as high as possible for as long as the cold spell lasts. If you continue to experience problems, it's best to call our Housing Repair Operations team for help.



Transforming homes, lives and communities

As well as transforming tenants' homes, our Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme is also transforming lives and communities.

We have invested over £150 million since the start of the programme. This investment has resulted in the creation of 43 permanent jobs, 58 apprenticeships and 44 work placement opportunities, as well as supporting and providing expansion opportunities to local businesses.

Communities are also being transformed thanks to our £10.6 million WHQS environmental improvement programme which aims to ensure that homes are located in attractive and safe environments. Works delivered as part of this programme could include anything from repairs to communal pathways and walls to new play equipment or measures to address anti-social behaviour.

Physical improvements to homes delivered through the programme, including external and internal refurbishments, have helped improve the safety, health and wellbeing of tenants. A number of homes have also benefitted from energy efficiency

improvements; helping to address fuel poverty and improving the environment through reduced carbon emissions.

The WHQS also includes a requirement that homes should meet the specific needs of individual households. In order to fulfil this requirement, we've delivered a range of adaptations to tenants' homes to help promote independent living. Since the start of the programme approximately 6,500 adaptations have been provided.

The home of Jennifer and David Holmes in Bedwas, Caerphilly was one property that recently benefitted from adaptations as part of the programme. Improvements were designed around the couple's specific needs, including a new kitchen and wet room which meet RNIB Visibly Better Standards.

Mrs Holmes said, "I'm sight impaired and the team helped advise my husband David which colours would be best to suit my needs in the kitchen and bathroom. Both were designed to help suit my condition and we are really happy with the result. We sent a letter to say thank you to the workmen for all their hard work."



Mr & Mrs Holmes



What is Universal Credit?

If you're out of work or on a low income and need help with your living costs you can apply for Universal Credit.

Universal Credit was introduced in the Caerphilly county borough on 5th September. It replaces Housing Benefit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance (income based), Employment and Support Allowance (income based), Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

What's changed?

The main changes for most people are:

- It's a single benefit payment
- It's paid monthly into a bank account
- You claim it online
- You have your own online account
- Money is paid directly to you and not your landlord in most cases

How to apply

Universal Credit is claimed and managed online. You can apply here:

www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk

You will also need a bank account to be able to claim Universal Credit.

If you don't have access to the internet or are not confident using computers then you can visit your local library.

If you have any issues that make using the telephone or applying online difficult your Jobcentre Work Coach can offer you support.

Paying your rent

Under Universal Credit housing costs will be paid directly to you and not your landlord, i.e. us. This means that you will have to pay your rent from the Universal Credit payment you receive each month.

To make paying your rent easier, you could set up a direct debit. As well as saving you time and effort, if you set up a direct debit you'll receive a one-off payment of £20, which will be credited to your rent account.

You can set up a direct debit by downloading a form from our website. Search for 'Pay your rent' at www.caerphilly.gov.uk or call our Rents Team on 01443 811450 rents@caerphilly.gov.uk.

Council obtains Closure Order to address anti-social behaviour

In September we successfully obtained a Closure Order on one of our properties.

The Order is a first of its kind for the council in addressing concerns relating to visitors.

The application for a Closure Order was made in response to issues being experienced by the local community as a result of visitors to the property, including criminal and anti-social behaviour.

The Closure Notice was served on the property on 12th September 2018 and the Court Hearing for the Closure Order took place at Newport Magistrates Court on 13th September 2018. Evidence for the Order was provided by council officers and the Police.

The Closure Order allows the occupants to remain at the address but excludes all other persons unless they are authorised to enter the premises, such as council officers, health personnel, Police etc. The Order lasts for 3 months but can be extended for a further 3 months if granted by the court.

Cllr Lisa Phipps, the council's Cabinet Member for Homes and Places, said "The decision to apply for a Closure Order came as a result of the council working with its partner agencies to find a solution to the negative impact this property was having on the wider community. We welcome the court's decision to grant the order, which will prevent further incidents of nuisance at this property."

Autumn award success!

During the autumn the 'Free from Fear' domestic abuse project that we developed along with housing providers across Gwent was awarded the Pat Chown Capturing Creativity Award by Community Housing Cymru. This award celebrates innovation in housing and is named in memory of Pat Chown; a significant figure in the Welsh housing sector who was committed to new ways of working.

We were also finalists at this year's national APSE Service Awards. Our successful regeneration programme in Rowan Place, Rhymney was shortlisted in 'Best Housing, Regeneration or New Build Initiative'. Caerphilly Homes' in-house workforce, currently delivering our £220 million Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) improvement programme, were also named as finalists in the 'Best service team: Construction and Building Service' category.

The APSE Annual Service Awards, now in their eighteenth year, celebrate the very best in local government.



John Chown, Kay Helyar (Charter Housing), Abbie Clifford (Bron Afon Community Housing) & Rachel Thornett (Caerphilly Homes).



Staff with APSE certificates.

Environmental improvements

There has been lots of activity throughout the county borough over the past few months as part of our WHQS Environmental Improvement programme. As well as continuing to consult with local communities on possible projects, a number of projects have been approved and improvements are underway.

We've also completed several projects including new fencing and car parking at Greensway in Abertwssyg, new car parking in Penyrheol and improvements to roundabouts in Churchill Park.

Work also recently began on a replacement skate park in Ty Sign, Risca. The skate park has been funded jointly between our WHQS environmental improvement programme and Risca Play and Learn Community Group.



Works underway at Risca skate park.



Completed roundabout in Churchill Park, Caerphilly.

Do we have your number?

If you haven't provided us with your contact details recently, or if they change in the future, don't forget to let us know so that we can update our records. Contact your local housing office, email tenantinvolvement@caerphilly.gov.uk or return the form below to Tenant & Community Involvement Team, Public Sector Housing, PO Box 129, Hengoed, CF82 9BQ.

Name

Address

Mobile contact number

Email address (optional)

Landline contact number

Please note it may take up to 28 days for your details to be updated on our systems.

Whilst we do our best to make sure that the information in this newsletter is accurate, we can sometimes get things wrong; please always check with us first!