

# Caerphilly Homes

Issue 6

## Breathing new life into Rowan Place

A £4.2 million improvement programme is helping to breathe new life into Rowan Place in Rhymney. The two year programme is being delivered by Caerphilly Homes, in partnership with Communities First and Welsh Government.

The programme will see homes benefit from extensive internal and external works, along with environmental improvements to enhance the overall appearance of the area.

An additional £1 million is also being provided by Welsh Government, through its Vibrant and Viable Places tackling poverty fund. As well as enhancing the project at Rowan Place, this funding will also be used to refurbish Hafod Deg centre on Rhymney High Street; creating a 'hub' for local people to access a variety of services.

## Available Soon

A number of fully refurbished two bedroom flats will shortly be available for rent in Rowan Place.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in one of these homes or would like to view a completed show flat contact us on 01443 873527 or by emailing [urvaho@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:urvaho@caerphilly.gov.uk)



Working in partnership with



Uyweddau Cymru  
Welsh Government



Caerphilly Homes  
Cartrefi Caerffili



# They're back!

## Transforming Lives and Communities Awards

The search has started again for the heroes in our communities who dedicate their time to transforming the lives of tenants.

Following the success of last year's awards, this time they'll be bigger and better – with extra categories to recognise even more people who are making a difference in the county borough.

This year's categories are:

- Young Person of the Year (under 21 and living in a council home)
- Transforming Lives Award:
  - Individual
  - Group
- Transforming Communities Award:
  - Individual
  - Group
- 'The Extra Mile' employee award



To request a nomination form, or for more information, contact our Transforming Lives and Communities Team on 01443 864262 or by emailing [watkik1@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:watkik1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Closing date for entries is Friday 10th July – winners will be announced at an awards ceremony later in the year.

## Look out for our 'boys in blue'



The Caerphilly Homes team has a new look! The old green uniforms have been replaced with navy blue and they also now feature 'Caerphilly Homes' below the council logo, so that you can easily identify our workforce.

Remember all council staff should carry identification and will not mind if you ask to see it. If you are ever in doubt about the identity of a caller, please do not let them into your home.

# DWP announces Universal Credit national expansion

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has recently provided details of the Universal Credit national expansion across Jobcentre areas.

Universal Credit is being introduced across the UK in stages and started to be introduced into Jobcentres in Caerphilly area on the 4th May 2015.

Universal Credit will roll out to new claims from single people, who would otherwise have been eligible for Jobseeker's Allowance, including those with existing Housing Benefit and Working Tax Credit claims.

For more detail on the roll out and Universal Credit you can visit DWP website <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit> or visit your local Jobcentre Plus.

# Caerphilly highly commended at national procurement awards



Tenants and the council's Procurement Team with the award

Caerphilly County Borough Council has been honoured alongside the UK procurement community's finest at the National Government Opportunities (GO) Excellence in Public Procurement Awards 2015/16, held at The Midland Hotel in Manchester.

Caerphilly was highly commended in the Small Business / Third Sector Engagement Initiative of the Year category which was sponsored by Supply. Thank you to the tenants on the Repairs and Improvements Group who helped make this possible and for the many hours they have dedicated to the procurement process for our Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme.

# Taking care of your pets

Owning pets can bring huge benefits; it can even help improve your health! But owning a pet is also a big responsibility.

**Your Tenancy Agreement states that you may keep one domestic animal at your home without needing permission from us, except if you live in a flat or sheltered housing.**

**You must ask us for permission first if you would like to keep any of the following at your home:**

- **More than 1 dog, cat or other domestic animal**
- **Any dogs, cats or other domestic animals in flats or sheltered housing where buildings have communal areas**

- **Pigeons**

- **Any non household pets or animals**

Whilst most pets are well behaved, all owners have a responsibility to ensure their pet doesn't cause a nuisance to others. Pets can cause a nuisance in lots of ways, such as:

- Roaming and unattended animals
- Pets fouling in communal areas and owners' gardens and not being cleaned up straight away
- Pets fouling in neighbours' gardens
- Excessive noise, e.g. dog barking all the time
- Unpleasant smells from pets
- Aggressive animals

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## Did you know?

Pet waste can contain toxins and parasites that can be very harmful to humans, especially infants, older people and those who are unwell.

For example, toxocariasis is an illness that can be caught from dog waste. Symptoms of toxocariasis can

include seizures, breathing difficulties, a very red and painful eye, and clouded vision, usually only in one eye. Left untreated, toxocariasis can cause permanent loss of vision in the affected eye.



Before deciding whether to get a pet ask yourself these questions:

- Does the pet fit your lifestyle and family circumstances?
- Do you have young children?
- Is your home suitable?
- Do you have easy access to open spaces?
- How much is it going to cost? Can you afford it?
- What will happen to the pet if you are away, e.g. on holiday?

**Remember – pets are your responsibility at all times.** This also means that when any of our staff or contractors visit your home, e.g. to carry out repairs or surveys, you must make sure that pets are kept safely away. This is to protect the safety of your pets, as well as the safety of our staff and contractors.

**Are you aged 60 or over, or have a disability?  
Do you have odd jobs that need doing, but can't do them yourself?  
Our Handy Person Scheme could be just what you need!**

**50% OFF HANDY PERSON SERVICE FOR FIRST TIME USERS**

We're very pleased to announce an introductory rate of just £10 per hour for everyone using the service for the first time!

Mrs Morgan, from Cefn Hengoed, is one tenant who's used the service and here's what she said

"I used the scheme because I wanted to have a shelf put up in my house and, as I live alone, don't have anyone to help me. The man who came was very polite and courteous, he made sure my carpets were covered before doing the work and tidied up afterwards. I think it's a marvellous service; I'm moving home soon and will definitely be using the scheme again to help."

The service is excellent value for money and carried out by a member of our maintenance team equipped with their own tools. You could use the service for things like:

- Fitting curtain tracks or poles
- Hanging curtains
- Trimming internal doors
- Fixing shelving
- Assembling flat-pack furniture
- Hanging pictures and mirrors

Don't forget the price is per hour, not per job, so you could get more than one thing done!



For more information on the Handy Person Scheme contact your local housing office:

Upper Rhymney Valley Area Housing Office

Tel: (01443) 873535

Fax: (01443) 873533

Email: [urvaho@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:urvaho@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Eastern Valleys Area Housing Office

Tel: (01495) 235229

Fax: (01495) 235036

Email: [eastvalleyaho@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:eastvalleyaho@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Lansbury Park Neighbourhood Housing Office

Tel: (02920) 860917

Fax: (02920) 881815

Email: [lansburyparknho@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:lansburyparknho@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Graig y Rhacca Neighbourhood Housing Office

Tel: (02920) 853050

Fax: (02920) 868997

Email: [graugyrhaccanho@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:graugyrhaccanho@caerphilly.gov.uk)

# Winner of housing survey prize draw

Congratulations to Pam Collins, from Penyrheol, who won £50 for giving her views in our recent housing survey. Pam's name was drawn at random from all responses received during the consultation.

The consultation exercise took place over a 12 week period, where members of the public were asked to give their views on a draft common allocation policy.

The council has been working in partnership with local housing associations to develop this policy which aims to make it easier for people to apply for social housing in the Caerphilly county borough.

We are currently considering the responses we received during the consultation and will take these into account before the policy is finalised.

An equality impact assessment will also be carried out on the policy with our partners and Tai Pawb (Welsh organisation dedicated to promoting equality and social justice in housing). This assessment will help us make sure that the policy does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people.

A final report will be presented to the council after the summer and the new policy is expected to be introduced in early 2016.



## Celebrating Success Event



Congratulations to everyone who received awards at the recent Celebrating Success, Recognising Achievement event.

The event was organised by the Mid Valleys East Communities First team and was held at Newbridge Memo. The event recognised those people who have worked so hard with the Communities First team over the past year to achieve successes.

# Phillipstown community house makeover

The community house in Phillipstown, New Tredegar recently had a makeover thanks to a number of generous donations and the hard work of its volunteers.

The house has been at the heart of the community since it opened in 2007; the volunteer run building plays host to a number of regular activities including luncheon clubs, IT classes, cookery sessions and youth clubs. But in recent years the building had become quite tired looking and in need of a facelift.

The group who run the house enlisted the support of a number of agencies and businesses to help make the improvements to the building a reality.

Caerphilly Homes' single source supply partner, Robert Price Builders' Merchants, donated paint and decorating equipment to the community house along with a brand new timber shed. Volunteers from Wales and West



The community group in one of the newly decorated rooms

Utilities and Thermo Fisher provided the hands on help to makeover the community house; decorating almost every room inside the building. The garden is also now blooming thanks to donations from New Tredegar Building Supplies and children from Phillipstown Primary School who helped with planting.

## Compliments & complaints

We always try our best to deliver excellent services which meet the needs of you, our tenants. If you think we've done a great job, or you feel a member of staff has gone the extra mile, then we'd love to hear from you! You could do this by sending a letter or an email directly to the person who has delivered the service, such as your local housing office.

We also understand, however, that things can sometimes go wrong. If you are not happy with a service you have received you should contact the person who has provided the service, for example your local housing office.

If you are still unhappy and feel you need to make a complaint then please report it to us. Complaints

are very important as they can help us to see when there are faults in the way we do things and what we can do to improve.

You can make a complaint in the following ways:

- Fill out the form on our website at [www.caerphilly.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/complaints)
- Email us at [complaints@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@caerphilly.gov.uk)
- Write to the Corporate Complaints Officer: Mrs A Jones, Legal Department, Caerphilly CBC, Penallta House, Ystrad Mynach, CF82 7PG
- Telephone us on 01443 864221
- You can also request a form from the person you are already in contact with. Tell them that you want us to deal with your complaint formally.

# Construction that really works

Gwilym Rothwell is one young person in the Caerphilly county borough who's proved that construction really does work!

In October 2014 Gwilym took part in a 'Construction that works' course delivered by Upper Rhymney Valley Communities First. The course was funded by NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) and provided participants with the skills to pursue a career in construction, including the opportunity to obtain a CSCS card.

Using the knowledge and practical skills he gained through this course, coupled with previous qualifications in carpentry, Gwilym was successful in securing a placement with our Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) team.

Through his placement, under Welsh Government's Jobs Growth Wales Scheme, Gwilym has been able to gain hands on experience in a variety of trades; including floor laying, tiling and carpentry.

Gwilym said "I really enjoyed the 'Construction that works' course and Communities First staff really helped me find a placement after it finished; they still contact me now to see how the placement is going. I'm really enjoying what I'm doing at the moment and it's great being able to see the end result of my work in people's homes."



**Did you enjoy reading this newsletter?**

**Or maybe you have some ideas on how it could be improved?**

If so, become one of our Armchair Reviewers. You get a chance to see the draft and comment on the content before the newsletter goes out and you go into a prize draw to win a £25 shopping voucher.

For more information contact us on 01495 235025 or email [tenantinvolvement@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:tenantinvolvement@caerphilly.gov.uk)