



Work starts on flagship school

Preparatory works on the site of a new multi-million pound school in Oakdale are now underway, as contractors prepare to start construction of the new £25 million development on the former Oakdale Colliery site.

The 3-storey Islwyn West School will replace Oakdale and Pontllanfraith secondary schools, and will house a range of diverse teaching spaces, including modern science and technology labs.

The school will also benefit from a 3G pitch, 200 metre athletics track and multi-use games area as well as outdoor learning spaces and a small amphitheatre.

Contractors Willmott Dixon have been appointed by Caerphilly County Borough Council to undertake the construction work, and the initial phase of the project is focusing on the sub-structure and ground improvement works.

A group of pupils from Oakdale and Pontllanfraith schools who have been made 'Building Ambassadors' will also be heavily

involved in the development project. They will represent their fellow pupils over the coming months by making regular visits to the construction site to follow progress and give their opinions and offer ideas.



Cllr Rhianon Passmore said, "It's great to see that work has started on this exciting new school development, which will provide pupils in the area with a state-of-the-art school fit for the 21st century. This will be one of the best and most modern school developments in the whole of Wales once completed."

It is anticipated that construction work on the actual school building will commence in October/November 2015. The school is set to open in Summer 2017 ready for the new school year.

In Caerphilly, pupils from Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Caerffili have also recently relocated from their former school site on Parcyfelin Street into the refurbished and modernised listed building on the Y Gwindy campus (former St Ilan School site).

Pupils and staff relocated into this building at the start of the school year, which is already resulting in a much improved teaching and learning environment for the pupils.

Works continue on site to expand the secondary age provision for pupils, and the final phase of works will also involve the provision of an all-weather sports pitch, running track and junior sized grass pitch, which will be developed ready for September 2016.

For more information, please visit www.caerphilly.gov.uk

IS YOURS A SIN BIN?



Don't waste your recycling!

Did you know that putting wrong items in your brown recycling bin reduces the amount of material that can be recycled, which costs us all money?

We need your help to improve the quality of our recycling by ensuring that none of the 7 bin sins listed below get into your household recycling!

THE 7 RECYCLING BIN SINS



NAPPIES

Should be placed in your refuse bin.



PET POO

Should be placed in your refuse bin.



ELECTRICALS

Take to your recycling centre.



FOOD WASTE

Recycle all food in your separate food caddy (remove all packaging first and recycle as much of the food container as possible).



CERTAIN PLASTICS

Place plastic film in your refuse bin. Take hard plastic (toys, cd cases, plant pots etc) to your household waste recycling centre.



CERTAIN PACKAGING

Crisp packets/pet food pouches/polystyrene trays/polystyrene packaging from electrical goods. These should be placed in your refuse bin.



TEXTILES

Take to your recycling centre or a charity shop.

DID YOU KNOW?

75% of your rubbish can be recycled

RECYCLING YOUR FOOD WASTE IS EASY

The best thing that can happen to food is for it to be eaten. But for anything you can't eat, like meat, mouldy bread, fruit and veg peelings, bones, meat gristle, plate scrapings and tea bags, the best thing to do is recycle them.

Why recycle food waste?

By recycling food waste it can be turned into energy to power homes and compost to grow food.

Additional Information

Other items such as wood, rubble, small and large electrical appliances, large metal and plastic items can also be taken to your nearest recycling centre. Please visit:

www.caerphilly.gov.uk

If you want more information on date labels and what they mean, please visit: www.wales.lovefoodhatewaste.com

The site also includes creative ideas on how to use up your food leftovers.

Caerphilly County Borough is getting really good at recycling but we need more people to recycle more of the right items. With your help, we can achieve higher recycling rates to save money.

If you're still unsure what can and cannot be recycled please get in touch at:

01443 866533

www.caerphilly.gov.uk

@CaerphillyCBC

www.facebook.com/yourcaerphilly



How can I recycle my food waste?

STEP 1

Get the right equipment – you will need a kitchen caddy and a kerbside caddy. Contact us if you need any of these items. See contact details below.



STEP 2

Line your kitchen caddy with a liner or newspaper.



STEP 3

Place any food waste into the caddy, taking care to exclude any packaging.



STEP 4

When your kitchen caddy is full, empty into your kerbside caddy and put out for collection once a week so it can be recycled.



MORE REASONS TO RECYCLE YOUR FOOD WASTE



IT'S EASY

CONTROLS FOOD SMELLS



CADDIES LOCK TO STOP PESTS GETTING ACCESS

IT'S COLLECTED ONCE A WEEK



TURNED INTO COMPOST AND ELECTRICITY

If you're unsure what items can be recycled in Caerphilly County Borough Council, please visit: www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Help us shape our budget

Caerphilly council, like all local authorities across Wales, continues to face major budget pressures due to the ongoing funding reductions as a result of continuing austerity.

Last year, local people helped us shape our budget and you may recall that we carried out widespread consultation to gather views about how the council should deliver its services with reduced resources.

The messages coming from both UK and Welsh Government again this year is that the financial outlook is likely to worsen, so we will need to take even more difficult decisions as our budget continues to shrink.

We have been working on a projected savings requirement of £26million over the next two years. However, it now seems that a more realistic estimate of £31million of savings should be the target.

Cllr Keith Reynolds, Leader of Council said, "The financial outlook for Welsh councils is not getting any easier, but thankfully here in Caerphilly we have been managing the situation with minimum impact on frontline services thanks to our robust budget strategy."

"However, there are still major challenges ahead and we will once again be asking local people to have their say on our budget proposals for 2016/17. It is likely that we will start our public consultation a little earlier this year, although we won't have an indication from Welsh Government in October about our likely settlement. It is important that as many people as possible get the chance to have their say before the final budget is agreed early next year," he added.

Further details about this year's budget consultation will be released by the council over the coming weeks.



Cllr Keith Reynolds
Leader of the Council

Plans for Pontllanfraith

Residents have been helping to shape the future redevelopment of over 30 acres of land in Pontllanfraith.

The council asked for input from the public about plans for land currently occupied by Pontllanfraith council offices and Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School.



Both buildings, on Blackwood Road, are set to close next year so the council appointed a national planning, design and economics consultancy called Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP) to produce a Development Brief to guide any future development.

Cllr Ken James, CCBC Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, said: "We are looking at the two sites as an exciting opportunity to support the sustainable growth and development of the Blackwood and Pontllanfraith communities."

"The sites are adjacent to each other and the council wants to explore the possibility of using them to help overcome the acute shortage of housing in the county borough. All local authorities have to ensure that they have a five year land supply for housing and unfortunately we only have enough land at present for two and a half years."

The school is closing as a new replacement for Pontllanfraith and Oakdale Comprehensive Schools is being built at nearby Oakdale Business Park. Services currently housed in the council offices will be relocated to other sites and the building will be vacated as part of the council's future savings requirements.

Consultation events have already been held in the community but more information can be found on the dedicated website - www.plans-for-pontllanfraith.co.uk

New opening times for Libraries

ABERBARGOED	
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
ABERCARN	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
ABERTRIDWR	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Thursday	14:00 - 18:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Saturday	9:30 - 13:00
BARGOED	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Saturday	9:30 - 16:00
BEDWAS	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Tuesday	14:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Saturday	9:30 - 13:00
BLACKWOOD	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Saturday	9:30 - 16:00
CAERPHILLY	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Saturday	9:30 - 16:00
DERI	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
LLANBRADACH	
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
MACHEN	
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Thursday	14:00 - 18:00
Saturday	9:30 - 13:00
NELSON	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Saturday	9:30 - 13:00
NEWBRIDGE	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	14:00 - 17:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
NEW TREDEGAR	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
OAKDALE	
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
PENGAM	
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
RHYMNEY	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
RISCA	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Saturday	9:30 - 16:00
YSTRAD MYNACH	
Monday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Tuesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Wednesday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 17:00
Thursday	9:30 - 13:00
Friday	9:30 - 13:00 + 14:00 - 18:00
Saturday	9:30 - 13:00

Customer Service Centres

Please note: there will also be changes to the opening hours at our Customer Services centres from October 1st. For more information please visit your local centre at Caerphilly (Caerphilly Library), Bargoed (Hanbury Chapel), Risca (Risca Palace), Blackwood (Market Place), Ystrad Mynach (Penallta House), Pontllytyn (Merchant Street) and Newbridge Cash Desk (Newbridge Library).

Alternatively call 01443 815588 or visit www.caerphilly.gov.uk for more details.

One Beat takes to the streets

The ever-popular One Beat event, which celebrates and showcases the work of local voluntary organisations, has taken to the streets this year, visiting a number of venues to bring these events to the heart of local communities.

The first of the travelling roadshows – held in Blackwood in July, played host to over 25 voluntary organisations that joined together to showcase the valuable work they carry out within Caerphilly county borough, as well as to offer advice and support to members of the public who came along to the event.

The next of these roadshow events will take place on Wednesday 7th October between 10am and 2pm at St David's Community Centre in Rhymney.

Similar events will also be held in Caerphilly and Risca over the coming months. One Beat is organised in partnership with Caerphilly County Borough Council

and Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO). If you are part of a voluntary organisation and would be interested in hosting a stall at one of the forthcoming events, please call **01633 241 550** or email: gina.jones@gavowales.org.uk

Contact details for voluntary organisations within the Caerphilly county borough are detailed in a useful online directory, which contains over 700 entries can be found at www.caerphilly.gov.uk



YOUR BUS MATTERS!

Residents will have the opportunity to talk face-to-face with bus service providers at a series of forthcoming events.

The 'Your Bus Matters' events have been arranged by the council, in conjunction with Bus Users Cymru. The events will offer people the opportunity to speak directly to council officers and bus company managers about any issues relating to their bus service, as well as the opportunity to suggest any changes that could be incorporated into future timetables.



EVENTS WILL BE HELD ON:

- **Tuesday 29th September :** Newbridge Library, 9.30am - 1.30pm
- **Wednesday 30th September :** Rhymney Library, 10am - 12pm
- **Wednesday 30th September :** Nelson Library, 2.30pm - 4.30pm
- **Thursday 1st October :** Bargoed Library, 10am - 2pm
- **Monday 5th October :** Risca Library, 10am - 2pm
- **Wednesday 7th October :** Ystrad Mynach Library, 10am - 1pm
- **Wednesday 7th October :** Caerphilly Library, 2pm - 5.45pm
- **Friday 9th October :** Blackwood Bus Station – waiting room, 10am - 2pm

For further information on the 'Your Bus Matters' events, please call **01495 235 223**

Electoral register update underway

Over recent weeks, residents will have received a letter from the council's Electoral Services team as part of the council's annual registration process. This letter contains details of who is registered at each address.

Thank you very much to all households that have already replied – but to those who are yet to, it is very important that they respond as soon as possible. Residents who haven't yet responded will be sent a reminder, asking them to confirm if the information is still correct or to provide details of any changes at the address. If there are no changes residents can respond by freephone, text, on-line or by post. Any changes can only be made by returning the form or on-line at www.register-online.co.uk.

If householders want to add a name to the register, the council will then contact that individual to arrange for them to register. By law, every household must respond to this form, and anybody who does not will receive a visit from a Council inspector.

Chris Burns, the council's Returning Officer said, "I cannot stress enough how important it is that residents take proactive steps to make sure they are on the electoral register. The electoral register is used for a wide range of things, including credit checks, and those residents who are not on the register may well find it hard to get a loan, mortgage, finance agreement or even a mobile phone contract."

He continued, "Registering is a legal obligation, and chasing residents who aren't registered also costs the council money. Most importantly however, if residents aren't registered, they won't be able to exercise their democratic rights at the ballot box for next year's Welsh Government and Police and Crime Commissioner elections."

The Electoral Register will be published on 1st December this year.

For more information, please contact Caerphilly County Borough Council's Electoral Services team on **01443 866909** or by visiting www.caerphilly.gov.uk



Ensuring better outcomes for young people

'Youth Engagement and Progression' is a Welsh Government scheme which aims to ensure better outcomes for young people aged between 11 and 24.

To enable the council to manage this area of work effectively, it has a coordinator and a team of youth workers who have the responsibility to deliver a programme of work in order to achieve six key objectives:

- Early identification - to identify young people as early as possible who may require support.
- Tracking - to work with other organisations to track the achievements of young people.

- Brokerage - to provide lead workers to young people who may find it difficult to move into further training or employment.
- Provision - to compile information on opportunities available for young people, to work with organisations and employers who may provide traineeships and to implement the Welsh Government's Youth Guarantee, which will help ensure that every young person has access to a suitable destination.
- Employment - to work with various Council departments and Businesses to enhance young people's employment prospects.

- Accountability - to assess and evaluate progress on the project plan that enables the Council to demonstrate progress on delivering the Welsh Government guidance.



For further advice or support on opportunities for young people, please contact John Poyner on **01443 864970** or via email: poynej@caerphilly.gov.uk

Championing the Armed Forces

Cllr. Alan Higgs, local member for Aberbargoed, was first nominated as the Armed Forces Champion in 2013, coinciding with the signing of the Caerphilly Armed Forces Covenant by the Caerphilly Local Service Board, partner and associated organisations and our Armed Forces community (including those serving, veterans and their families) and representative organisations.

Alan is passionate about his Champion role, ensuring that the commitment to mutual respect and support outlined in the Covenant is delivered locally by all partners on the Caerphilly Armed Forces Forum.

Over the last few years, building on the various military parades, Armed Forces Day celebrations and other events that have taken place throughout the county, Alan has continued to raise awareness of the issues facing our Armed Forces community, working with the Royal British Legion (RBL) and SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association) to provide support to those of our veterans who are in need. For example, by facilitating the establishment and access to RBL "surgeries" and outreach sessions in the county borough, re-dedication of various war memorials, etc.

Alan commented, "I am extremely proud that the people of Caerphilly county borough continue to be great supporters of our Armed Forces, and as Champion I will work tirelessly to forge ever-closer working relationships between those serving in the military (both regular and the reserves), veterans, cadet forces, their respective support organisations and our local communities."



■ Cllr Alan Higgs is pictured second left (front row)

Alan is supported in his role by Howard Rees (Armed Forces Lead Officer & Chair of the Forum) & John Elliott (Assistant Lead Officer) who can be contacted on **01443 864754**.

For further details please see the Caerphilly Armed Forces webpage at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/My-Council/Armed-forces

Making a complaint

The Welsh Government have recently changed the way that complaints about social services in Wales are handled.

There is now a two-stage approach to complaints. At stage one, the council's Customer Services team will support someone to try and put things right at a local level with the staff who are working with the person. If they remain unhappy at the end of stage one, we will ask someone who does not work for the council to carry out a formal investigation into their complaint. If a resident remains unhappy after the conclusion of a stage two investigation, they have the right to progress their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

People should not be worried or afraid to complain – we welcome all comments, whether good or bad, as they help to improve services for everyone.

New leaflets explaining the process can be found in all council offices, from a social worker, support worker or carer, or online at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Complaints or comments can be made by calling **0800 328 4061**, in person or by email: socialservices@caerphilly.gov.uk

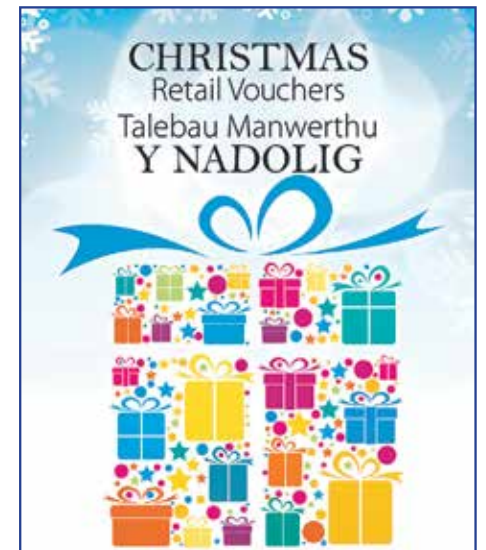
For people who have particular needs, and for children and young people, the council can help by finding an independent advocate to support them through the complaint's process.



Christmas is Coming...

Choose the
HIGH STREET

Town Centres - Unique Places



It may only be September, but the council's Town Centre Management team are already busy gearing up for the festive period ahead!

The council has once again joined forces with retailers across Caerphilly county borough to unveil a special Choose the High Street Christmas Voucher Booklet, which will offer shoppers fantastic discounts and offers from retailers on the county borough's high streets.

A similar voucher scheme proved very popular during December 2014 with over 90 different offers, so it is hoped both retailers and shoppers alike will be keen to take part in the scheme this Christmas too!

The voucher booklets can be picked up from selected visitor attractions, as well as libraries and customer service centres from mid-October onwards, and the vouchers can be used between Monday 16th November and Thursday 31st December.

The well-established Choose the High Street campaign focuses on raising awareness of consumer choice, and aims to encourage people to use their local high streets more often – particularly during the crucial pre-Christmas trading period.

More information on Choose the High Street can be found by visiting www.caerphilly.gov.uk or by calling **01443 866213**

Council Performance

Next month, the council will publish its annual performance report which informs the public how the council has performed in 2014/15.

This report will include what has gone well, areas for improvement, how the council has performed against its priorities, its financial statement and other relevant information. A short summary document, as well as a longer technical document will be published towards the end of October – both as a hard copy and online at www.caerphilly.gov.uk. Hard copies will be available to view in libraries, council office receptions and Customer First centres.

Residents can comment on the publication by contacting the council's Performance Management Unit on 01443 864 382 or by visiting www.caerphilly.gov.uk



Office Moves

Key services will be moving out of Pontllanfraith Council Offices at the end of September as part of the planned closure of the site early next year.

Trading Standards, Licensing, Environmental Health and the Community Safety team will be relocating to the main council offices at Penallta House in Ystrad Mynach.

Disruption will be kept to a minimum during the moves and existing telephone numbers for the teams will remain the same.

Later in the year Planning, Housing and Engineering Services will also relocate to alternative sites. Further information about these moves will be made available in due course.

If you have any queries please contact the council's main switchboard on 01443 815588. The emergency out of hours number for the council is 01443 875500.



A front door to contacting Social Services

The council has a duty to establish an Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The Act will come into place in April 2016 and will transform the way social care services are delivered across Wales placing a duty on local authorities to provide people with information and advice relating to care and support and assistance in accessing care and support.

The role of the IAA Service is to:

- Engage people to find their own best way to wellbeing
- Help connect people with their communities
- Be alert to any signs of safeguarding concerns
- Reach agreement with outcomes the person wants or needs to achieve and what steps need to be taken to do that

The service must also be accessible to all people by providing an entry point for services, and direct people to the most appropriate solution to meet their needs. The IAA Service has been formed by merging the Directorate's Adults Services Duty and Information Team (ASDIT) and the Children's Services Contact and Referral Team (C&R Team).

The freephone numbers to contact the IAA Service remain unchanged:
Children's Social Services 0808 100 1727,
Adults' Social Services 0808 100 2500
or visit www.caerphilly.gov.uk



Roadworks ROUNDUP

Pwll-y-Pant roundabout improvements

Proposals to improve the A469/A468 Pwll-y-Pant roundabout in Caerphilly are still progressing. The council is currently involved in a procurement exercise to select a contractor for the scheme and the works are still subject to securing Welsh Government funding.

Plans for the improvement works remain available on the council's website, and advance signage will be placed on site, as well as further information available prior to construction works starting.

Crumlin junction improvements

The recent bad weather has impacted the A467/A472 Crumlin junction improvement Scheme. Resurfacing and road marking works has been affected by the wet weather, so we anticipate that completion will now be the end of September.

Every effort is being made to finish the scheme as swiftly as possible, and the council would like to apologise for any inconvenience and disruption caused.

For more information please call 01443 866 511 or email: engineering@caerphilly.gov.uk.

M4 corridor proposals

The Welsh Government are holding a series of public information exhibitions for residents to find out more about their proposals for a new section of motorway to the south of Newport, which would reduce traffic and address transport problems on the existing M4 around Newport.

The most local exhibitions for Caerphilly county borough residents are:

- St David's Shopping Centre, Cardiff – Friday 18th September – 12pm-6pm
- Kingsway Shopping Centre, Newport – Monday 21st September – 9am-5.30pm
- Lysaght Institute, Newport – Friday 25th September – 11am – 7.30pm and Saturday 26th September – 10am-4pm

For more information on the M4 corridor proposals, please visit www.gov.wales/m4newport



Retail rate relief scheme

Caerphilly County Borough Council is urging eligible local businesses to claim savings in business rate relief.

Introduced by Welsh Government in 2014, the Wales Retail Relief Business Rate Scheme is now running for a further year and aims to give qualifying ratepayers assistance on a business rates bill for the financial year 2015/16.

The grant assistance applies to qualifying occupied retail premises with a rateable value of £50,000 or less, that are wholly or mainly providing a service to visiting members of the public. This year retail relief of up to £1,500 is available subject to the scheme's criteria being satisfied.

Officers from Caerphilly County Borough Council have posted application forms to qualifying establishments encouraging them to take advantage of the financial support on offer.

For more information please contact 01443 863006 or visit www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Business/Business-rates



Stay connected with NewsLine

It's now even easier for residents to stay connected to Caerphilly County Borough Council - thanks to the recent launch of a brand new fortnightly email bulletin.

Intended to complement the council's ever-popular Newsline – the fortnightly electronic update, aptly called 'NewsONLine', enables residents to get all the latest news and information about upcoming events, job vacancies, roadworks, planning lists and council meetings sent directly to their inbox every fortnight.

The free service also highlights and celebrates the achievements made by schools and community groups across Caerphilly county borough. As well as the latest news, residents can also sign up to receive emergency notifications about road closures, school closures, service disruptions and more – meaning they will be kept informed of issues which affect them across the county borough.

CLLr Barbara Jones said, "The introduction of 'NewsONLine' is a real step forward for us, as we look to connect with our residents as directly and efficiently as possible. Receiving the latest news and information from a wide range of council services in one email will make it easier for residents to find out what is going on, and how they can get involved and have their say."

For more information, and to sign up for 'NewsONLine', please visit www.caerphilly.gov.uk and click on the 'Stay Connected' button.



Success for hygiene rating scheme

Good food hygiene in restaurants, pubs, cafes and other places that sell or serve food is now much easier to spot, thanks to the success of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

The scheme, which was introduced in October 2010 gives businesses a rating from zero to five (with five being the highest) on their food hygiene standards, when a food safety inspection is carried out by the council's Food Safety team.

A combination of food business owner's commitment and officer advice and support has contributed to a rise in food hygiene standards within food businesses across Caerphilly county borough over recent years.

In 2010/11, 87% of food businesses located with the county borough were awarded a food hygiene rating of three or above. This has risen to 95% in 2014/15 - an increase of 8% in the four years since the scheme was introduced.

Currently 172 businesses within the county borough have a three food hygiene rating, 344 have a four and 621 have the highest rating of five. Evidence shows that most food business operators are working hard to maintain and improve food hygiene standards within their businesses.

In November 2013 it became compulsory for food businesses to display their food hygiene rating at or near each customer entrance to the establishment. Also for customers that place telephone orders it became compulsory for the food business to provide the customer with their food hygiene rating if requested.

If you see a business that is not displaying their food hygiene rating sticker, please call **01495 235340** or email: foodhealthsafety@caerphilly.gov.uk. Check out food hygiene ratings online by visiting www.food.gov.uk/ratings



Tell us about your changes

Residents claiming housing benefit or council tax reduction from the council are being urged to get in touch straight away if their circumstances change.

The council needs to know about any changes affecting residents, their partners and anyone else living at the home. It is important that residents notify the council of any changes, as it could affect the amount of benefits that they receive. Also, failing to notify the council about a change in circumstances within one month of it happening may mean residents lose out on benefits.

Examples of changes residents must tell the council about include:

- Changes in income of anyone living at the address - including benefit changes
- Receiving Universal Credit
- Changes in address
- Changes in savings/investments
- Changes to Income Support, Employment & Support Allowance or Job Seeker's Allowance
- Changes to Child Tax Credit and/or Working Tax Credit
- Your or your partner start work, change jobs, go into hospital or if someone joins or leaves the household
- A child leaves school or someone living at the property aged 18 or over starts or stops work
- A rent change (non council tenants only)



When contacting the council, residents will need to explain what has changed, the date of the change and send proof of the new circumstances. Not reporting a change which may affect your benefit is an offence. Action may be taken against residents if it is felt they have deliberately delayed or not reported a change in circumstances. Residents in Caerphilly can now complete 'Change of Circumstance' forms on-line by visiting our website at – www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Housing-benefits/Tell-us-about-changes. Alternatively call **01443 866567** or email: benefits@caerphilly.gov.uk for help.

