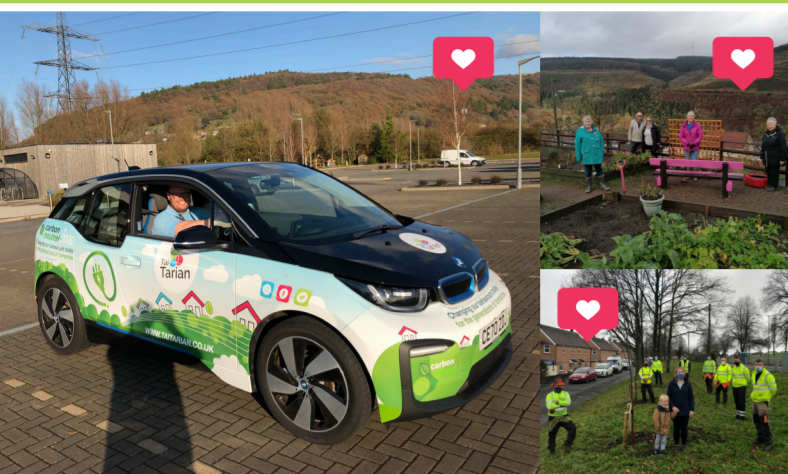


FOLLOW US



- Phone numbers:
0300 777 0000 (General enquiries)
0300 777 3000 (Report a repair)
ask@tairarian.co.uk
www.tairarian.co.uk

Christmas Opening hours:
We will be taking a break for Christmas from noon on Thursday 24th December and will be back on Monday 4th January. If you need to report an emergency repair during this time please call us on **0300 777 3000**

Welcome

TO THE CHRISTMAS EDITION OF THE GRAPEVINE

A message from Tai Tarian Chief Executive, Linda Whittaker

2020 has been a remarkable year for us all. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted all our lives in one way or another. Some of us may have caught the virus or know someone who did, and sadly some may have lost friends or relatives. We send our sympathies to anyone affected in this way.

The pandemic had many consequences and we were forced to adapt the way we worked as a result.

We had to stop all non-emergency repairs, put on hold many projects and adapt our work to respond to the crisis, all whilst asking our staff to vacate the

office and work from their homes. We want to thank you for your patience and understanding whilst we adapted to our new way of working.

The pandemic also saw us get in touch with you all via our Safe and Well project – a huge undertaking to make sure you had everything you needed and were coping during the height of the crisis. The positive aspect of these calls was that we got to know you better than ever and it was heart-warming to hear how much our calls helped so many of you.

Slowly but surely we were able to re-introduce many services and move forward with many exciting projects, including the building of new homes, working to enhance our communities and continuing with several environmental projects.

Doubtless there will be more challenges to be faced during the coming year, but you can be assured that we will do all we can to keep to our commitment of providing you with sustainable homes in sustainable communities all whilst doing our bit for a sustainable planet.

Keep safe,

Linda



Did you know?



Our social media pages are the places to go for all the latest news and important updates from Tai Tarian.

Every day, we update our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts so you can see what we're up to. Not only do we publish our own news, we also share information from organisations we think you'll find useful.

This year especially, it has been important to follow us so we can update you on our latest news and changes to services as the coronavirus pandemic unfolds. We've also

been sharing the latest guidelines and advice from organisations such as Welsh Government and Public Health Wales, ensuring you can keep yourself well informed during these uncertain times.

Across our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts we have almost 10,000 followers, but we have plenty of space for you too.

Just search these websites for @TaiTarian, follow us and then drop us a message to say hello.

We'd love to see you there.



New DEVELOPMENTS

Despite coronavirus bringing work on our new developments to a halt, things are now getting back on track. Creating new, quality and energy efficient homes is one of our highest priorities.

So far this year we've completed three developments, meaning a further 21 homes became available in Neath Port Talbot. We're not stopping there. Work is progressing well at Parc Newydd in Briton Ferry, where 31 new homes are being built, in what is our biggest development to date. We've also demolished the Melin Close flats in Melin and

in their place, we'll be building 20 new homes. Both the Parc Newydd and Melin Close developments are due to be completed towards the end of 2021.

Elsewhere, work will start in early 2021 on three other developments. We'll be building five bungalows at Llys Wern in Caewern, 10 new homes at Cae Nant Terrace in Skewen, whilst we'll also be re-developing the Big Cam pub on Windsor Road in Neath, converting it into 10 new flats. Work will continue at these locations throughout the year, with the work currently scheduled to be completed in early 2022.



COMMUNITY BENEFITS

During the year, our Community Benefits programme has benefited many groups and organisations within our communities.

The scheme requires our contractors to give something back to the communities in which they work. In 2020, the scheme saw over £9000 worth

of goods and services provided to local groups. Amongst the beneficiaries were junior sports clubs, schools and local volunteer groups.

We also donated food and other essential items to 11 different food banks to help them cope with the unprecedented demand caused by the pandemic.

We have also had contractors help us with several community projects, whilst others have donated plants and trees that have been used to enhance our local areas.

During 2020, we completed 16 biodiversity programmes, which has included planting over 2000 trees in locations such as Pontardawe, Caewern and Glyncoirwng.



Our tree-planting programme will continue in 2021, helping us ensure we are doing our bit for a sustainable planet and also contributing to our goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.



COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

Unfortunately, we were unable to progress with our Community Challenge this year, due to the pandemic.

Our contractors were committed to playing a huge role in making it happen but sadly we couldn't continue in a safe manner. However,

we'll be back next year, and are planning for our biggest and best Community Challenge yet.

Your community group can apply to take part by going to www.tairarian.co.uk/communitychallenge

Hurry, the deadline is Monday 4th January.

Our Plan

'Our Plan' is our new corporate plan that will guide our work through until 2025. So, what does this mean for you?

Amongst our priorities will be providing sustainable homes which are affordable and where you can thrive.

We're also committed to providing services to support you in your lives. Sustainable homes need to be located in sustainable communities, so we'll also be delivering services that matter to you and provide

you with opportunities to become involved in the community.

Our third priority will be about doing our bit to create a sustainable planet. We want to change behaviours today for the generations of tomorrow and that's why we have committed to becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030.

We want to have a positive impact on our communities and the people who live in them and we believe we can do this by providing high quality homes, building great communities and working to preserve the planet.

To read Our Plan in full, visit www.tairarian.co.uk/OurPlan

TENANT CHARTER

Our Tenant Charter was launched recently after a lot of work by staff and tenants.

The charter is our commitment to you to keep you up to date with what we're doing and why we're doing it, as well as giving you plenty of opportunities to feedback your views. It also commits us to listen to you and find out what's important to you. We'll try to make sure we can do what you want us to, or to explain why if we can't.

The charter will give you a real voice and will ensure we utilise your knowledge and experience to help us make the right decisions.



Find out more at www.tairarian.co.uk/Charter



CHRISTMAS 2020 GRAPEVINE

WITH YOU DURING THE PANDEMIC

We have been with you throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and are here to support you during this difficult time.

We have adapted our services to cope with the situation, with most of our office staff now working from home.

Both our general enquiries and repairs line are operating as normal and staff in all our teams are ready to help you with your queries.

Our repairs service is also continuing, albeit with enhanced safety procedures to keep you and our staff as safe as possible.

That's why if a member of our team needs to visit your home to carry out some work you'll be asked if you or anyone living with you have coronavirus symptoms or if you are self-isolating.

You will be asked these questions when a visit is booked and again immediately before one

of our team enters your home. Please answer these questions honestly, so that we can keep each other safe.

Any staff working in your home will be wearing appropriate PPE and we ask that you maintain social distancing from them too.



The services we offer are subject to Welsh Government regulations and may be adjusted as those guidelines change.

However, we are here to support you through these difficult times and providing you with the high level of service and commitment you have come to expect from us, whatever the circumstances.

SAFE AND WELL

When the pandemic struck back in March, many people's lives were thrown into turmoil with people having to stay at home and suddenly cut off from friends, family and support networks.

We were so concerned about the welfare of our tenants that we set about the mammoth task of calling every single one to make sure they were coping, to see if they had everything they needed and to offer help. The most vulnerable tenants and those who were shielding were contacted first to make sure they were okay. Calls continued with attempts made to contact every one of our tenants.

Staff came across people who were worried as they didn't have any way of getting to the shops or picking up medication from their pharmacy.

For others, simply having a chat on the phone with one of our staff was a welcomed distraction from the world's events. In total, between March and July, we made almost 10,000 phone calls to check on tenants' welfare and to offer our help.



127 Staff from **11** different departments worked on Safe and Well

98% of tenants contacted

3274 Texts sent to tenants to let them know we'd be calling

10,000 (Approximately) Phone calls made

786 Households required assistance with shopping

381 Tenants required assistance to collect medication

18 Tenants asked for assistance to walk their dogs

27 Food parcels delivered on behalf of local foodbanks

72 Referrals to our Financial Inclusion team

186 Door knocks of tenants we couldn't get hold of on the phone

SAFE AND WELL STORIES

Some of our staff involved in the safe and well project told us about some of the tenants they helped.

Bev's story:



When I first phoned the tenant, he sounded really anxious. He told me he had severe underlying health problems, as did two of his children.

He said he was supposed to be isolating but had to go to the local school to collect meals for his children.



He was also worried about being able to pay his rent and also collecting the medication he told me he needed to stay alive.

He had no friends or family who could help and was really worried about looking after his family. He told me his medication was in the pharmacy awaiting collection but due to the volume of prescriptions they were dealing with they could not deliver.

I assured him we would try to help. I asked a colleague to contact him to help him with his rent and that immediately took a weight off his mind.



I then spoke to a local volunteer who was fantastic. With the tenant's permission, I gave the details of the pharmacy to the volunteer, who collected his prescription and delivered it to him later that day.

I phoned the tenant back to make sure it had arrived safely. He was very grateful and sounded emotional and said we had saved his life. A great team effort that alleviated the tenant's anxiety.



Lynsey's story:

The tenant said she had no friends or family living nearby who could help her. She initially told me she was coping fine and did not need any extra help.

However, during a follow up call, she told me she wasn't feeling well and couldn't get to the pharmacy to pick up her medication. I told her that I would ask a colleague to collect her medication and deliver it to her. During this call, the tenant became upset telling me the whole situation had now hit her and she was feeling lonely and worried. I spent an hour talking to her on the phone and

told her I would contact other organisations who could also help her with shopping and support.

I then contacted the tenant every day for over a week to see how she was and if she needed anything. After a few calls, she told me now she was feeling better and she would go back to do her own shopping. I told her that if she needed anything at all, even if it was just a chat to give me a call.



Alex's story:

I spoke to a tenant who was so anxious and worried because she realised that she'd fallen behind with her rent payments. She admitted she'd been panic buying, fearing she would not be able to feed her children.

She said she has been having awful nightmares about it, lying awake at night and worrying about losing her home. We had a long chat and I reassured her we could help. We set up a new payment plan that meant she could keep up to date with her payments whilst still having money available for other necessities.



I also put her in touch with our Financial Inclusion team for further help.

I told her that I was here for her anytime she was worried or needed a chat. She said being able to talk to someone who listened and understood made a big difference. She said she felt much better now that a weight had been lifted from her shoulders and was finally looking forward to a good night's sleep.

Being able to help people like this makes me feel so privileged to do the job I do and I can see how it makes a difference to people's lives.

HAVEN'S LOCKDOWN HEROES

One of the most striking things about this year's lockdown was how communities rallied around each other and supported people during this time.

Nowhere was this more apparent than at our Haven schemes, as some of our tenants did their best to look out for each other and make sure everyone got through the time as safely as possible.

Here are some of our Haven lockdown heroes' stories.

Haven

Robert, Gwyn Court, Port Talbot



During lockdown, Robert, a keen gardener, set about transforming the Gwyn Court garden whilst also encouraging other residents to get involved and lend him a hand.

Robert's efforts and those of his fellow residents saw plenty of colourful plants flowering whilst they also tried their hand at growing beans, carrots, radish, peppers and corn.

There is no doubt that getting involved in activities at the schemes made a massive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of tenants and has had a positive impact on their lives.



Robert said: "Gardening has been a lifeline during the lockdown. I found being able get out into the garden very therapeutic and relaxing. It gave me something else to focus on and really brought people together during this tough time."

Brian and Roy, Llwynon, Crynant



Throughout lockdown, Brian and Roy from our Llwynon Haven scheme in Crynant have been the epitome of good neighbours.

If needed, they've helped their neighbours get to hospital or doctors appointments, cooked meals if necessary and just generally checking on their wellbeing and being there for a socially distanced chat.

They've also helped keep the scheme neat and tidy, through picking up any litter and keeping the bin area clean. They've also been putting the neighbours' bins out for collection if they've been unable to do it themselves before returning them the next day.

Brian and Roy are definitely Llwynon's lockdown heroes.

Rachel's story:



After spending some time helping a tenant, I received a phone call from her telling me she had just registered as a volunteer with a local group.

She was so grateful for the help she had received from us that she felt she needed to give something back.

Even though she was unable to leave the house herself she was going to start ringing people in the community who were lonely or isolated to cheer them up.

