



Cartref



Win a £50 voucher –
More on page 8.



Tenant Cookstars

We caught up with the tenants who have cooked up a storm and learnt new life skills thanks to our partnership with the Fed Line project. More on [page 3](#).



Access to your home

There could be many reasons why we need to call to see you - to service your boiler, carry out repairs or survey your home, it all helps keep things in good condition. More on [page 6](#).



How our rent compares

With new rent and service charges in place from this month we look at how we compare to private rents. More on [page 7](#).

Copper creates new opportunities

Our Copper Foundation started in 2017 with the aim of giving people with little or no work experience the opportunity to work locally.

Seven years on we have made a difference to the lives of many people who had given up hope of finding work or with little experience on their CV. It's been the

confidence boost they needed, and we caught up with members of the latest intake to see what they think of the programme.

More on [page 4](#).

Protecting what's yours

Last year several tenants were affected by fire or flood at their homes, with devastating consequences.

Our housing team worked with impacted tenants to ensure that they were rehoused whilst the necessary repairs were made to their home. Unfortunately, in most cases prized possessions were lost with tenants unable to afford to replace them because they didn't have contents insurance.

As your landlord, we are responsible for the building insurance of your home. This covers the structure of the building and items such as your kitchen and bathroom. However, it does not cover any of your personal belongings or things like carpets, furniture, curtains, kitchen appliances and other valuables which could be lost in the event of a fire, flood, theft, vandalism or burst pipes.

You need contents insurance to cover these items. Without contents insurance the price of replacing all these things at once can be eye-watering.

After a flat caught fire in Sandfields last year, it wasn't just the tenants who were badly affected, but neighbours too.

Andrew and his family were away on holiday when they took a call to say the flat below them was ablaze.

Whilst the fire didn't spread, the smoke damage meant their possessions were badly damaged.

"Coming back from a holiday and being moved into the Aberavon Beach Hotel instead of going home was a surreal experience. Meeting outside our flat the next day to be told it wasn't safe to return was heart-breaking.

"Until something like this happens and you need to pick up the pieces and replace, everything you don't realise that the cost is crazy.

"We didn't have contents insurance and it was like starting again, a friend set up a GoFundMe page which really helped get us back on our feet, but we will have contents insurance moving forward, definitely, 100%."

Why do I need contents insurance?

We cover the buildings insurance for your home but you're responsible for insuring your contents.

It's always a good idea to shop around for a policy that'll give you the cover you need.

Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or even stolen, so home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind should the worst happen.

It is up to you who you choose based on your own personal needs, however we have teamed up with Aviva, who provide insurance especially for our tenants.



Reasons to join

- ✓ No excess if you need to make a claim
- ✓ New for old cover**
- ✓ Continuous "pay as you go" cover with no annual renewal
- ✓ Premiums will not go up if you need to make a claim
- ✓ Accidental damage cover option available***
- ✓ Payment included with your rent

For quotes, get in touch with our Insurance team on **01639 506091** or email insurance@taitarian.co.uk

Always shop around for the best quote, price comparison websites can help.

Terms and conditions apply, contact above.

*Price includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) charged at the appropriate rate.

** Except clothing and linen (which are subject to a deduction for wear and tear) There is no cover for electrical or mechanical breakdown, or gradual deterioration.

*** For an additional premium

The policy is underwritten by Aviva Insurance Limited and arranged by Aon UK Ltd who are both authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Aviva Insurance Limited, Registered in Scotland Number 2116. Registered Office: Pitheavlis, Perth PH2 0NH. Authorised and regulated by the Prudential Regulation Authority.FP.ENT.731.RR

Air Show rescue earns recognition

Our apprentice Simon headed to London last month, after an act of bravery by himself and his Army reservist colleagues gained them recognition by the UK Government.



As a volunteer last year, Simon and his colleagues were on an overnight watch at Swansea Bay to coincide with the Swansea Air Show. After realising someone was in difficulty at sea they pulled the gentleman to safety, keeping him warm until help arrived.

You can hear more about it here: ▶



Save time, do it online

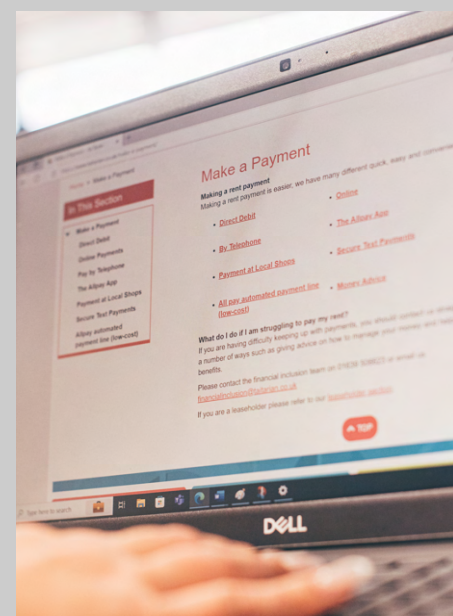
With over 12,000 tenants, our phone lines can get busy, but did you know there are other ways to get in touch?

If you have access to the internet, you can bid for a property, make a payment, or report a non-emergency repair at a time that is convenient to you. Just visit www.taitarian.co.uk

All non-emergency repairs can also be reported via email to repairs@taitarian.co.uk.

Paying rent over the phone is one of the main reasons tenants ring us, but you can make rent payments faster through the AllPay automated payment line

(0330 041 6497) or via the AllPay app or website at a time convenient to you. All you need is your AllPay rent card and a debit or credit card details to skip the queue and make immediate payments. It's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Welcome from Linda



Recently, our community has been hit with the devastating news of the closure of the blast furnaces at Tata Steel, leading to significant job losses.

I have been part of business briefings with the council, and talks with Welsh Government and our MPs to see how we can support those affected. We know there is a shortage of construction operatives in the area so could there be an opportunity for us to help this skilled workforce into the construction sector? I will keep you updated.

In this edition of Cartref it was great to catch up with members of our Copper Foundation, an initiative we started in 2017 to give people struggling to find work employment opportunities. It's been hugely successful, and you can find out more about the current intake on page 4.

You can also see the progress made on our new developments, with residents at Pant Celydd in Margam already forming a lovely community. More on page 6.

Following our sessions last summer around affordability of our rent and service charges, we have included details

of how we compare to the private sector, but please if you are finding the cost of living challenging, please get in touch. More on page 7.

Linda
Chief Executive

Don't forget to scan the QR codes for more details.

If you see a QR code in Cartref, grab your smart phone, open your camera and hover over the code. This will bring up the website page you need. Just tap to open. If you don't have a smart phone, you can visit our website and use the search bar to find info on the topic. www.taitarian.co.uk

Tenant Cookstars!



At the start of the year, we partnered with the Fed Line Project to offer the first four-week cookery course to tenants.

The Fed Line Project is a charity which aims to build confidence around cooking healthy, nutritious and family friendly meals. They also help with meal planning, shopping and making the most of food budgets.

Over four weeks, our tenants got to grips with some basic kitchen techniques before going on to cook some delicious family meals. Participants learnt how to make breakfasts, lunches and main

meals, including pizzas, soups, chilli and spaghetti bolognese.

Among those taking part was Natalie from Neath, here's what she had to say:

"It's been amazing to learn lots of new skills and make meals I wouldn't normally make. I've got a large family so it's great to be able to rustle up healthy and nutritious food for them.

"The kids can't wait for me to get home every week and taste test what I've made. I'm glad to say they usually give a big thumbs up!

"I've now got them involved too and we make at home what I've learned on the course – the pizzas were a big hit." Kate from Sandfields added:

"I'm really enjoying the course, I wish it could be longer.

"As well as making new meals it's also given me ideas of what else I could make, so a real confidence boost. It really has been worthwhile."

Kath led the course of behalf of the Fed Line Project: "It's been great to see the fun everyone has had on this course. I've also enjoyed it too, seeing them picking up these new skills so quickly and discovering how easy it is to make healthy and nutritious meals for all the family.

"It's not just about the food though. The social aspect is really important too. People who didn't know each at the

start have become friends and now help each other out. It's great to see everyone getting along so well.

"For me though, the greatest satisfaction comes when I hear that they've been putting their new skills into practice at home and cooking meals with their children. That's what it's all about really."

The Fed Line Project have supplied the recipe for this edition of Cartref, check it out on the back page.

AGM date

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) takes place on Tuesday 23rd July and is an opportunity for our members to find out more about our progress, and vote on key decisions.

Attendance at the AGM is only open to Tai Tarian members. Being a member offers a variety of opportunities to have your say and shape services and costs just £1.

To sign up please ring **01639 505258** or email corporateservices@taitarian.co.uk



Tenants in action

Copper makes the difference

Continued from page 1



All smiles for Maelgwyn and David

Our Copper Foundation started giving recruits 12-month contracts back in 2017, working on improving the outside spaces of tenants homes.

Since it's early beginnings with just seven recruits, the initiative has given opportunities to 86 people. Now, seven years on and with the programme going from strength to strength, we've been to catch up with the current crop to see how the programme is helping them.

What's noticeable about the current intake of Copper Foundation recruits is the variety of backgrounds they all come from. There's Dylan, aged just 16 and in his first job since leaving school last summer; Sarah, who lost her previous job during the pandemic and wanted something that would fit around her family life; Mike who left a job as a glass cutter in a factory to go back to his first love of construction, and Dave, who having been deaf since birth, wanted a job where he wouldn't be held back by his disability. "It's fabulous seeing people from all sorts of backgrounds coming to work on the

Copper Foundation" said Maelgwyn, the team's supervisor. "There's no typical recruit, we take on anyone who just needs a little help getting into work, whether that's someone straight out of school with no experience, someone looking for a career change, or someone for whatever reason, just couldn't get a break. As long as they come with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn then they'll be a great addition to the team. Oh, and an ability to withstand the cold and wet helps too!" "We don't just train them in the practical work, we also help them gain qualifications, teach them about the importance of health and safety or even help them write a CV. Our ultimate aim is to get them to a place where they can successfully apply for other jobs once their year with us comes to an end." One person to do this was Ian, who joined in 2021 and is currently working as a caretaker with us: "Being part of the Copper Foundation was an amazing experience. I learned so much and gained practical skills, even being supported to learn to drive. Not only that, I was also helped by the team when

I was having some difficulties in my personal life. I'm extremely grateful to them for that. "After my year on the project, I went on to gain work with the facilities team, initially helping to look after our main office building, but now I'm out and about in the community, looking after our blocks of flats. It's a great job, my mental health has never been better, and I genuinely love coming into work every day. None of this would have been possible without the opportunities the Copper Foundation gave me in the first place." The next recruit is David, he joined the foundation

after moving to the area and struggling to find work: "I've really enjoyed being part of the team, everyone has been really supportive. I'm deaf, but things have been put in place to help me succeed, such as providing a telephone interpreter. I can lip read and am also lucky that my colleague Sarah has a good understanding of sign language so I can communicate with her. "I've gained a lot of confidence during my time with the foundation. So much so, that I recently applied for a role with our grounds maintenance team, and I'll be starting with them in a couple of weeks.



Dylan learns his trade

I can't wait to get going and learning new skills, especially around biodiversity. For Mike, his Copper Foundation experience is slightly different:

"I previously worked in the building trade before going to work in a glass factory. When my time there came to an end, I wanted to get back to doing what I enjoyed most, construction. The Copper Foundation was a great opportunity to do this. However, when my year on the project was coming to an end, instead of looking for a new job, they asked me to stay on and use what I'd learned, together with my previous experience, to help train the newcomers. That was five years ago, and I'm still here helping the youngsters to learn and progress."

Sarah's background is varied. Having been a carpenter, publican and manager, she lost her previous job as a result of the pandemic. Looking for a new role and new challenge, she joined the Copper Foundation, and hasn't looked back: "After losing my last job, I was looking around for something a bit different. I saw an advert for the Copper Foundation on Facebook, so I applied, thinking 'what's the worst that could happen?' "I love the hands-on nature of the job and that it's less stressful than my previous managerial job. The fact it fits

around my family life so I can take my children to school in the morning is also a big plus." Dylan, just 16 and in his first job is on something of a learning curve:

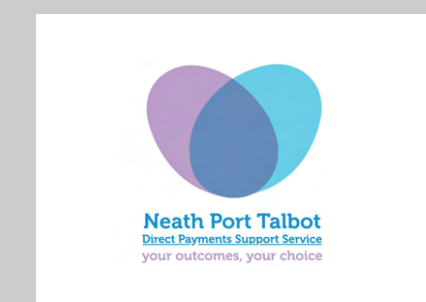
"I left school last summer and when I saw the job advertised, I jumped at the chance. It's a chance for me to gain lots of experience. I've already learned about concreting, a bit of carpentry and bricklaying. Being out in all weathers takes a bit of getting used to, I hate the rain, but apart from that it's all been good fun." Final word goes to Maelgwyn, who is justifiably proud of his team and of previous recruits: "The Copper Foundation is a lifeline for many people. "I'm very proud of the work it does and the people on it – the fact that 90% of the people who complete their year with us go on to find other jobs is a great testament to everyone's hard work and determination. "I'm still in touch with past recruits and really enjoy hearing about how they're progressing in their new roles.

"It's a great feeling seeing people develop over the course of the year, learning new skills and also growing in confidence. For me, that's one of the best things about this job." **The Copper Foundation will be recruiting again later in the year. Keep an eye on our social media channels for more details.**

Looking for flexible work?

Do you want a job where you can make a difference to people's lives while fitting around other commitments? Why not take a look at some of the Personal Assistant vacancies available throughout Neath Port Talbot? Each role varies depending on the person you will be supporting, but the difference you will make

to their independence and quality of life will be huge. All jobs are advertised here: www.npt.gov.uk/pa



More of the same for our grass this year

Over the last few years we have adopted a new way of managing land to encourage biodiversity.

By cutting our grass less, we have seen native wildflower and plants thrive, creating a better habitat for not only bees and butterflies but invertebrates, birds, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles.

Over the winter months our Neighbourhood team have been busy preparing land and planting flowers and shrubs ahead of the grass cutting season.

Our approach to cutting

Our grass cutting programme started in March and our land has been placed into three broad categories:

- 1 Grassed areas that are enjoyed by the community for recreation or socialising, or that can potentially restrict visibility if left uncut, will be cut regularly during spring and summer.
- 2 Other areas will be partially maintained with border cuts and made accessible with walkways, but with parts still being left for nature.
- 3 Finally, some areas will continue to be maintained as wildflower meadows.

Thinking differently about wildflowers

As we've already been doing this for a couple of years, in some areas we are starting to see lots of beautiful flowers, long grass, and trees. We expect to see even more year-on-year, but it can take up to five years for native wildflower meadows to really take hold, so it might not look neat straight away.

Why do we care?

- ✔ We are living in a climate and biodiversity emergency and as an organisation we want to do all we can to protect the planet. That's why we have a Sustainable Planet strategy.
- ✔ Our wildlife is decreasing, and biodiversity is declining globally at rapid rates.
- ✔ 1 in 6 species assessed in Wales are at risk of extinction.
- ✔ We have seen a 97% decrease in natural meadows including grassed areas.
- ✔ Welsh Government is encouraging all of us to let it grow, and reduced grass cutting on our land is creating a better habitat for nature.
- ✔ With lots of land throughout Neath Port Talbot, changing our approach will make a big difference.

The latest on our new homes



Pant Celydd



County Flats



Eagle House



Eaglesbush

Development work has continued at sites in Neath and Port Talbot as we do our bit to address the demand for affordable housing.

More tenants have moved in at Pant Celydd, Margam and already a lovely sense of community is being felt. Chloe is delighted with her new home.

“Having a place to call your own is something you really can’t underestimate. Things have been tough at times, moving between hotels and emergency accommodation so getting the keys to a brand-new home feels like a dream come true.”

At Port Talbot town centre, on the site of the old Eagle House, things are taking shape as we build 18 apartments, which are expected to be ready for let during spring/summer 2025.

At phase 2 of County Flats, Sandfields there has been great progress with 24 homes being redeveloped and an additional 15 new ones built. Tenants will start moving in over the coming weeks.

At Eaglesbush, Neath the building of 52 homes, a mix of apartments, bungalows and family homes is in progress, with the first few ready for tenants to move in next month.

We have also just started work at Heol Crwys, Cwmavon demolishing 30 homes and creating 43 new ones. This development is expected to be complete by the end of 2025, early 2026.

Follow us on social media for regular videos on our progress.

You can find out more about it here ▶



Access to your home

There are lots of reasons why we may need access to your home. It could be to carry out essential work that we’ve identified or that you’ve reported to us, carry out annual gas safety checks, surveys which helps inform future work and understand your property, or just for us to check how you are.

We appreciate that life is busy but letting us in is important to ensure your property is kept in a good safe condition.

We can be flexible, so if suggested times for appointments don’t suit, please let us know and we can look at other

options. Same if something crops up at last minute, just let us know so we can rearrange things and save us a wasted journey.

With over 9000 properties, it’s really important that we keep as many appointments as possible so that our staff are able to operate in an effective manner, whilst keeping your home in good working order and you and your family safe.



Steph’s top tips: Energy price cap drop

The energy price cap has just dropped to the lowest rate since the start of the energy crisis. The rate of £1,928 per year has just reduced to £1,690, saving the average household around £20 per month.

A new price cap is introduced every three months, and current predictions are that we can expect another drop in July, and a small increase in October.

These figures only apply to those who pay their bills by direct debit, but you are

also covered by the energy price cap if you pay your gas and electricity by:

- ✔ Standard credit (payment when you get your electricity and gas bill)
- ✔ Pre-payment meter
- ✔ Economy 7 (E7) meter

For homes with a pre-payment meter, the cap is slightly lower, at £1,643, while those who pay their bills on receipt will pay more – with the cap set at £1,796. It’s important to note that this is based on the

average bill for a household and the amount you pay will vary depending on usage.

We know bills are still too high for many people, but the reduction of around £20 a month is welcome – particularly as the cost of living is still high and a lot of people have energy debt from the elevated costs over the past two years.

If you find yourself in debt or are struggling to pay your energy bills, there is help available.

A good place to start is to speak to your energy supplier. They may be able to help you with a grant to clear debt on your account and can talk to you about any other support available.



Rent Charges – how do we compare?

Back in January, we sent you a booklet outlining your rent and, where applicable, service charges from April onwards.

If you claim Universal Credit you should have updated your journal with your new rent amount, please get in touch if you need help.

As a community landlord, we receive guidance from Welsh Government every year on how much we can charge you, while still ensuring we are able to spend on maintaining your home, providing services and improving our communities. We then calculate what this would mean in pounds and pence for all tenants to ensure what you pay is still affordable.

Speaking to tenants about this has been key, with a roadshow of summer workshops, face to face sessions and over 1000 responses from our survey on rent, we have had important conversations with the people that matter.

How do we compare to the private sector?

When speaking to tenants, they were unaware how our weekly rents compare to the private sector here in Neath Port Talbot, this table gives the detail.

Worried about rent?

If you’re worried about paying your rent or your household budget being squeezed by bills



Property type	Beds	Our rent	Private sector average	Difference per week
Flat	1	£85.65	£126.92	£41.27
Flat	2	£93.14	£131.31	£38.17
House	2	£104.06	£168.00	£63.94
House	3	£112.54	£224.77	£112.23
House	4	£115.26	£276.92	£161.66

budget being squeezed by bills and everyday costs, please get in touch with us as soon as possible. Whether you’re in work or claiming benefits there may be help available. Contact details for your designated Rent Officer and Housing Officer were included on page 3 of your rent booklet

or you can call us on **0300 777 0000** for further advice.



Keeping you gas safe

A gas safety engineer needs to check your boiler every year, it’s the law.

It makes sure that it’s working correctly and keeps you safe.

Our contractor Westwood Energy Services will contact you when your boiler needs a service and all you have to do is agree a time which is convenient for you. If you keep your arranged appointment, you will not only know the home is safe, but you will also be placed into a monthly draw to win a £50 shopping voucher. The smile on the face of our most recent winner says it all!



Did you know?

It is your responsibility to deal with pest or vermin infestations in your home or garden. This could include rats, mice, wasps, fleas, flies or even ants.

Once you have dealt with the issue if any repairs are advised by pest control, please contact us.



Breakfast Burrito

After our cookery course, tenants were armed with a raft of gorgeous recipes to enjoy at home, so they wanted to share this one with you! Thanks to the Fed Line Project for the details.

Ingredients

- 2 cherry tomatoes
- 1/6th of an onion
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tsp lime juice
- 1 tsp oil
- 1 sausage
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tbsp oil
- 2 eggs
- Pinch of salt and pepper
- 1 tortilla wrap
- 45g cheddar cheese (grated)

Substitutes

Use any fillings you have, chopped ham, cooked bacon or chicken.

Fried mushrooms, onions and peppers make a great vegetarian alternative.

You do not need to use lime juice or paprika if you don't have them.

Method

1. Firstly, make the salsa by chopping the tomatoes and onion. Add these to a bowl along with a pinch of salt and lime juice. Stir and leave to the side.
2. Remove the skin from the sausage and cook the sausage meat with the oil and paprika in a frying pan. Place to the side. Wipe the pan when it has cooled sufficiently.
3. Using a fork, whisk the egg along with a pinch of salt and pepper.
4. In the frying pan, add a little oil and add the whisked egg. Stir once or twice and cook until it's just cooked.
5. When the egg is cooked, assemble the burrito. Place the wrap flat and add the sausage meat followed by the egg with the cheese and salsa on top. Fold up and place in the frying pan to brown on both sides. Do this over a low heat for just a few minutes to allow the cheese to melt.

For a tutorial on the recipe scan the QR code here.



Struggling with the cost of food?

Our Financial Inclusion team can issue food bank vouchers. Get in touch with them on **01639 315000**.



Tea break challenge

How to play?

Within the rows and columns are 9 "squares" (made up of 3 x 3 spaces). Each row, column and square needs to be filled out with the numbers 1-9, but these can only be used once. and columns are 9 "squares" (made up of 3 x 3 spaces).

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		4	7		2	5		3
	6	5			1		8	4
	7		4		3	9	6	5
	5			1		3		
	8		6		9	1		
6	2			3				7
5	3		9					1
		7					3	

Give it a go!

Win £50 by going green

If you fancy receiving future editions of Cartref via e-mail instead of post, please let us know by emailing media@taitarian.co.uk All those who get in touch before 1st May will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 shopping voucher. Congratulations to Catherine from Skewen, the winner from our winter edition.



Bank holiday reminder

Two bank holidays fall next month, Monday 6th and Monday 27th May. On these days our offices will be closed but emergency repairs will be in operation.

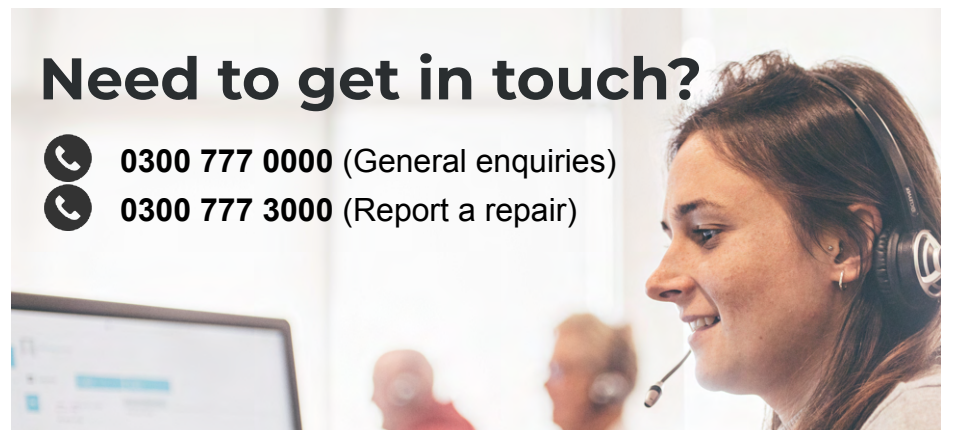
On **Wednesday 8th May** we will be closed for an all-staff training day. However emergency repairs will still be in operation.

For more on what we class as an emergency scan here ▶



Need to get in touch?

- ☎ 0300 777 0000 (General enquiries)
- ☎ 0300 777 3000 (Report a repair)



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