



# CARTREEF



## “TEN OUT OF TEN” FOR NEW FLATS

18 months on, the first phase of our County Flats development in Sandfields is now complete.

Two of the original blocks have been totally renovated with a light, modern feel

and features, making them some of the most energy efficient homes in Wales. As new tenants were busy unpacking, we caught up with them to see how they were feeling about their new and improved homes. “I’m really over the moon

with my new flat, it really is excellent – ten out of ten.” said Mr Thomas. “I love it here. It’s nice and quiet” added Mr Doyle.

More from the tenants on page...3



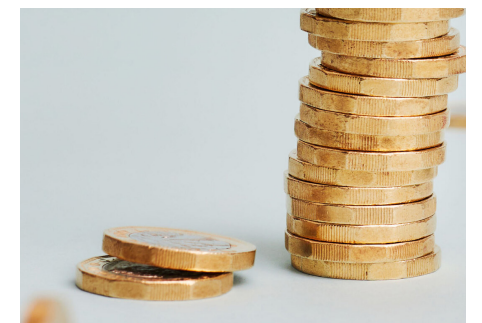
### DID YOU KNOW WE HAD OUR OWN FACTORY IN SEVEN SISTERS?

More on what it’s for on Pg.6



### OUR APPROACH TO GRASS CUTTING THIS YEAR

More on Pg.4



### “MY MONEY JUST ISN’T GOING FAR ENOUGH”.

Our Financial Inclusion team are here to help More on Pg.7

### CHANCE TO WIN £50 JUST BY GOING GREEN

More on the back page.





# HIDDEN HISTORY

**Have you ever driven past this unusual building in Neath and wondered about its history?**

The Llewellyn Almshouse is a registered charity, managed by Tai Tarian on behalf of a board of trustees.

The property is a Grade II listed building with incredible features inside and out. The building is made up of eight cottages and two flats. It features original stained-glass windows, sweeping beams across the ceilings, beautiful stone framed windows and original ironmongery.

It was constructed in memory of Griffith Llewellyn, by his widow Madeline in 1897, for single and widowed ladies of the church.

The Llewellyn family have historical links across South Wales, as land and property owners, but they were also land agents of the Margam estate for over a century.

The family owned Baglan Hall (demolished in 1952 to create an open space, now Baglan Park) and also the Court Colman Manor in Bridgend, a historic Tudor building.

The family were known as the "Llewellyns of Baglan and Court Colman".

Leah Manna is part of the team at Tai Tarian who help manage the building:

"The Almshouse is a listed building so we always have to be mindful of the restrictions in place to preserve it. It has so much character and unique features it never fails to take my breath away, made extra



The Llewellyn Almshouse, Neath

special by the lovely ladies that live there."

Resident Sheila said: "I love it here, the place has so much character and there's a lovely sense of community with the ladies who live here, we all look out for each other."

**YOU CAN SEE A VIDEO OF OUR GUIDED TOUR HERE:**



## DID YOU KNOW WE HAVE A TENANT CHARTER?

We say, 'our tenants are at the heart of what we do' and our charter is our commitment to you to let you know what we are doing and why.

It also pledges that we will work in partnership with you whenever we can, making decisions together and building trusting relationships.

If you have some time to spare then please get involved. This is your chance to make your voice heard and improve our services, interested? Give us a call on 0300 777 0000.

To find out more about the charter scan here:



# ACADEMY ASSEMBLED!

**Following a call to tenants in our last edition of Cartref, our Academy has been bolstered by 10 new members!**

The Academy is critical to making sure we put our tenants at the heart of our business. The group evaluate how we are performing, hear what progress we've made and share ideas on how we can improve.

New members joined an induction session in February and came back two weeks later to find out more about progress made on Sustainable Homes.

Members heard from staff from across the business on things like our major works programme, housing services and community initiatives.

The Academy gave feedback on the work that is going on and asked for a series of actions to be made.

Next the storyboard will be shared with our board and made available on our website soon after.

After recent sessions new member Gaenor said:

"Before I joined the Academy I didn't realise how focused Tai Tarian were on supporting the community and supporting people to sustain their tenancies. I think the Academy is valuable as it's so important to keep a dialogue going with tenants and discussing any planned policy changes with the people that it will actually affect. I'm looking forward to future sessions!"



**In the meantime,**

you can view previous storyboards here: ▶



# WELCOME FROM LINDA

In this edition we've caught up with our window and door manufacturing team to find out more about the work they do. Tenants have started moving into our new and improved County Flats, whilst we find out about more new homes we will start building soon.

The new contracts that we have been telling you about for many months have now been sent. Please familiarise yourself with the document and keep it in a safe place.

As I say in every edition, we recognise how tough things are

at the moment, so we have more money tips from Steph, but if you are struggling, please get in touch. We have dedicated teams that are on hand to help you whatever your circumstances, so please reach out and help us spread the word with friends, family or neighbours if you know they are finding things tough.

Our prize draw this edition is an easy one, just sign up to receive an e-version of Cartref to be in with the chance of winning £50, details on the back page.

*Linda*  
Chief Executive



# A PLACE TO CALL HOME



New County Flats at Aberavon.

*Continued from page 1...*  
**Set in a prime location overlooking the three mile stretch of Aberavon Beach, our tenants Mr Doyle and Mr Thomas couldn't be happier in their new homes at County Flats:**

"I love going for walks along the beach, so I couldn't have asked for a better location really. I have been taking photographs as the construction work progressed, so it's been really exciting seeing how the blocks have developed over the last 18 months. The change is remarkable," said Mr Doyle

"The flat feels much warmer too, with the double glazing and insulation. There are lots of other little features which

may not seem much on the face of it, but really do make a big difference – things like the flower beds, electric scooter storage and a bin store which stops the seagulls getting at the rubbish and making a mess."

"There's also a strong sense of community here. The neighbours are always looking out for each other and willing to lend a hand, so that's nice to see."

Also settling into his new flat was Mr Thomas, who has lived in the area all his life:

"I remember playing football outside these flats when I was a young lad. They looked quite different back then. I can't get over the transformation.

"The old flats were so dark, you had to leave the lights on all day, but there are no such worries now as there's so much daylight flooding in.

"I'm really excited at the prospect of getting my energy supplied by the solar panels on the roof. I don't use that much energy myself, so hopefully the panels should generate enough electricity to cover what I use on a normal day – assuming the sun shines!

"I'm really over the moon with my new flat, it really is excellent – ten out of ten."

With work on the first two blocks coming to an end, attention now turns to the re-development of Brecon House and Gwent House in the next phase of the project.

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](http://www.taitarian.co.uk)

## A-RATED HOME THANKS TO ENERGY MEASURES

We went back to our property in Neath last month to check how things had gone in making it more energy efficient.

Check out the difference here: ▶







## FREE SEEDS FOR SPRING!

Keen to grow your own veg? We are giving away free seeds to get you started thanks to a donation from our contractors Joyners.

Pick from the following options and get in touch with us by 30th May so we can post them out to you.

- Cherry Tomatoes
- Cucumber
- Mixed Lettuce
- Coriander
- Parsley

Email [community@taitarian.co.uk](mailto:community@taitarian.co.uk) or call 01639 505918 with your name and address.

## STAFF DO THEIR BIT FOR LOCAL FOOD BANKS

The demand for local food banks is at an all-time high which is why at the start of the year, we decided to set up a collection point at our HQ in Baglan for staff to drop off much needed food supplies throughout the month.

We had a fantastic response and from January to March we collected hundreds of items which were donated locally to food banks.

In response to the Welsh Government's 'Period Proud' campaign, we also donated sanitary products and will continue to do this throughout the year.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE GRASS THIS YEAR?



We are in a climate emergency and are committed to preserving as much nature as possible

Last year we left lots of our open spaces rewild for nature. By doing so we had lots of native wildflowers pop up along with 100s of trees which had self-seeded.

In recent months we have assessed our land and looked at how it is used by the community.

As a result, we will do things differently this year with areas roughly falling into three categories.

**1** Grassed areas that are enjoyed by the community for recreation, socialising, or that can potentially restrict visibility if left uncut. These will be cut regularly from April to September.

We will be using something called a cut-and-collect machine to carry out this work in some areas, allowing us to take grass cuttings away and use them to create a habitat for wildlife in suitable areas.

**2** Other areas will be kept tidy with border cuts and made accessible with walkways, but parts will still be left for nature.

**3** With guidance from our local ecologist, several areas have been identified as prime spots to be turned into wildflower meadows.

### Think about wildflowers

When you think of wildflowers, brightly coloured flowers spring to mind. However, the traditional wildflower mix you can pick up in lots of shops tend to be 'non-native'. This means the seeds originate abroad, so our own bugs, bees and other pollinators tend not to like them, no matter how pretty they look!

By letting nature do its thing, everything that pops up is native, but it does take longer and won't look neat straight away. When we did this last year we started to see lots of beautiful flowers, long grass, and trees. We expect to see

even more this year, but it can take up to five years for native wildflower meadows to really take hold.

### FACT:

A typical meadow can support more than 1,400 species of invertebrates and many other plants and animals. Look out for our signs on our meadow land.



## WHY DO WE CARE?

- 1** We are living in a climate and biodiversity emergency and we want to do all we can to protect the planet.
- 2** Our wildlife is decreasing, and biodiversity is declining globally at rapid rates. 1 in 6 species in Wales are at risk of extinction.
- 3** Even if you feel like you are surrounded by lots of greenery, we have seen a 97% decrease in natural meadows, including grassed areas.

- 4** Welsh Government is encouraging all of us to let it grow, and reduced grass cutting on our land is allowing wildflowers to grow, creating a better habitat for bees, butterflies, invertebrates, birds, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles.
- 5** With many hectares of land throughout Neath Port Talbot, changing our approach to managing our land will make a big difference.

## DID YOU KNOW?



Connecting with wildlife benefits our health and mental wellbeing, making us feel calmer, happier and more focused. Creating more meadow-like areas allows us to experience nature day by day.

For more info visit:



# CONTRACTS LANDING

The Renting Homes (Wales) Act became law on the 1st December and we have just sent new contracts to all tenants who have been living in our homes since before that date.

Your contract replaces your existing tenancy agreement. It's a large, formal document that we legally must send, and within it you will notice that you will now be called a contract holder, a new legal term used for tenants.

We expect that posting 9000 contracts over the space of a few days will see a rise in questions to our staff and calls to our contact centre.

You don't need to tell us you have received your contract, or sign and return it to us, but we do ask that you take time to read it, so you understand your rights and responsibilities and

keep it in a safe place for future reference.

We appreciate that it's a lot to get through so have produced short videos and an easy read guide which summarises what the changes mean for you without the legal jargon!

You can find those here:



It's important to note that the personal details on your contract are what we hold about you on our system, so if anything needs changing, for example a name, or removing someone from your contract, you'll need to tell us.

You can email us at [mycontract@taitarian.co.uk](mailto:mycontract@taitarian.co.uk) or send us a query via our website: [www.taitarian.co.uk/contact-us/contact-us-online](http://www.taitarian.co.uk/contact-us/contact-us-online)







Fund raising cake sale

## ACTS OF KINDNESS FUND MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Our Acts of Kindness fund was set up two years ago thanks to a commitment from our staff to make monthly payments to support good causes locally. Almost £14,000 has been given to a wide range of worthwhile causes including local charities, food banks and young carers.

The fund has also been used to support tenants who have fallen on hard times or may be struggling to cover everyday costs such as food, clothing, or other essential items.

# A DAY AT OUR UPVC FACTORY

Hidden at the top of the Dulais Valley, near the village of Seven Sisters is an unassuming factory which is at the heart of our operations, producing windows and doors for our homes around Neath Port Talbot.

We caught up with factory manager, Steve to have a look around and find out more about what they do:

"It's a very busy factory. We're producing 3200 units a year, whether that's windows or doors, enough for around 320 homes. Most of them go on our planned works, where we replace the windows and doors on our properties every 25 years. On top of that, we replace the windows and doors in our properties if they break and can't be repaired and in our vacant homes if they're needed.

"We also produce specialist doors for tenants who may struggle to open and close conventional ones, through equipping them with features such as remote sensors.

"Most of our new build properties also get fitted with our windows and doors, so it's pretty non-stop here!"

As one of the only housing providers to produce our own windows and doors,



All systems go at Seven Sisters

Steve explains why we do this:

"It's about quality. By doing it ourselves in-house we can ensure they are manufactured to the highest specification. We also make sure our products conform to the 'Secure by Design' standard, so what we produce can withstand the weather, is mechanically sound and is attack proof. We're one of only 13 companies in Wales to have this seal of approval.

"We are also committed to sustainability, making sure that our products can last 25 years, whilst the old windows and doors we replace are always sent for recycling. We also ensure they are good for insulation but also allow sufficient ventilation – that's a very tricky balance to achieve."

As well as producing high quality windows and doors, the

factory also plays an important part in the local community: "We've been here for around 30 years, creating highly skilled manufacturing jobs in an area where those types of roles are few and far between.

"We currently have 11 people working here. Staff generally come to us with some basic manufacturing experience, but we train them up and make sure they gain skills in all aspects of making our windows and doors. We are at the heart of the community, with most of the staff coming from Seven Sisters or the surrounding villages."

And with that, it's back to work for Steve, to oversee the next batch of windows and doors leaving the factory, destined for one of our homes.

# PRETTY AS A PICTURE

In our winter edition of Cartref, one entry to our photograph competition really caught our eye.

It was sent in by Adrian and was of the River Tawe running through the village of Ystalyfera.

However, Adrian hadn't actually emailed us a photograph, but a picture of his own canvas painting, and wow, we were impressed!

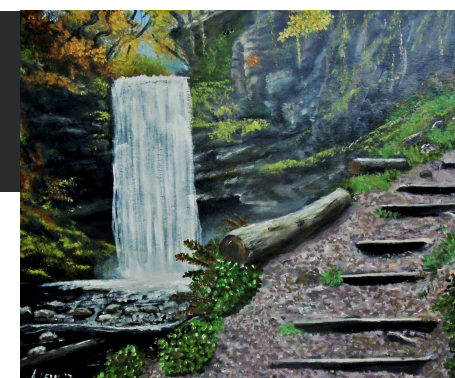
So, we caught up with him to find out more about his talent:

"I enjoyed painting from a very young age, probably from around three or four. It wasn't something anyone else in my family was any good at but always something I really loved. In recent years, I've been doing more and more free-hand stuff, painting on canvases." So where does the inspiration to paint come from?

"It's often local scenery close to home, and if I'm fancying a change, I look up landscape shots from across the world and replicate those."

Painting has always been about enjoyment for Adrian, but his artwork is also on display in Craig y Nos Castle.

Looking ahead to the future he hopes selling some of his paintings will help support him during retirement.



### To check out Adrian's artwork

Visit his Facebook:



# MAKING DAMP, MOULD AND CONDENSATION A PRIORITY

The weather may finally be starting to improve but keeping control of any damp or condensation issues in your homes will always be a priority for us.

Both damp and condensation can sometimes cause patches of mould to appear. This is normally easily dealt with and managed by residents working in partnership with us where necessary, but we know the rising cost of energy can make damp or condensation more difficult to manage.

In our last issue we shared some hints and tips about how to prevent damp and mould

as well as how to report any concerns.

Since then, our in-house teams have continued to carry out inspections where tenants have concerns in their home. Something else we have done is to create a DMC (Damp, Mould and Condensation) Task Force.

This group's role is to ensure we continue to manage damp, mould and condensation effectively and proactively. Our operations manager, Esther said work was going on across all departments all the time to ensure our homes had the best management of and

support for DMC concerns: "We are also looking at new technology such as remote monitoring devices that can identify any issues in advance and ventilation products which are being developed and improved all the time.

"Just remember if you have any concerns or questions about damp, mould and condensation within your home you need to tell us, so we can help."

Please get in touch with our contact centre on **0300 777 3000**. Our staff will ask a series of questions to help diagnose and assess the issue being reported. An appointment can



be arranged during the call, and the inspection duration will be based on the severity of the reported issue. We are aiming to carry out inspections as soon as we possibly can.

## TOP TIPS FROM STEPH



Wondering what cost of living help is available from the government? Steph has all the details...

Back in the autumn the government announced that cost-of-living payments will continue for another year. You may be entitled to up to three payments of £301, £300 and £299 if you claim any of the following benefits or tax credits:

- ▶ Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- ▶ Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- ▶ Income Support
- ▶ Pension Credit
- ▶ Universal Credit
- ▶ Child Tax Credit
- ▶ Working Tax Credit

The payment will be made separately from your benefit payments.

You will not get a payment if you are only getting new style ESA, contributory ESA, or new style JSA.

### When you'll be paid

- ▶ £301 paid between 25 April 2023 and 17 May 2023 for most people on DWP benefits
- ▶ £300 paid during autumn 2023
- ▶ £299 paid during spring 2024

If you get tax credits, and no other low-income benefits, you'll get your cost of living payment from HMRC shortly after DWP payments begin.

### Disabled cost of living payment

Pensioners and people on disability benefits are also due

to receive further cost of living support. This is expected to be paid in the summer.

### The Winter Fuel Payment

From November, if you're entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment you will get an additional £150 or £300 paid with your normal payment.

The full amount of Winter Fuel Payment (including the pensioner cost of living payment) you will get depends on when you were born (before 24th September 1957) and your circumstances during the qualifying dates.

## "MY MONEY JUST ISN'T GOING FAR ENOUGH"

The cost-of-living crisis is having a real impact on lots of our tenants at the moment. Whether you are claiming benefits, working, or doing both, lots of people are telling us they just aren't coping.

Our Financial Inclusion team is helping tenants with food bank vouchers, applying for energy grants, accessing benefits and other money. In fact, in the last year the team have accessed £4 million in additional benefits for tenants.

In the majority of cases people tell us "I didn't think you would be able to help" but we most definitely can, and the impact on people's wellbeing and quality of life is staggering.

The biggest step for lots is getting in touch. Some may feel embarrassed or too proud and just battle on without help.

Our team are here with no judgement. Support is available, and we want tenants to access it. Even if you aren't struggling yourself but know a tenant who is, please encourage them to get in touch.

Call: **01639 315000**  
Email [financialinclusion@taitarian.co.uk](mailto:financialinclusion@taitarian.co.uk)  
or contact us on social media





# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

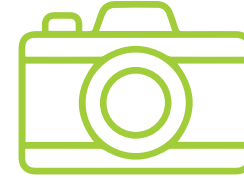
In the next few months, we will be out and about in our communities taking pictures of our places and properties. We love where we live and are proud of our homes, but it's our people that make us tick, so we really want passionate tenants to be part of our photos.

So, whether you live alone, with a partner or your family we would love to hear from you. We would want to photograph you in or around your home, on the doorstep or in your community.

As a thank you for taking part, anyone who gives us their smiles will be given a £20 shopping voucher.

The photographs will be used to promote Tai Tarian on our website, social media and publications.

Interested? Get in touch with [media@taitarian.co.uk](mailto:media@taitarian.co.uk) by 30th May or call us on **01639 505860**



## EASY PEASY PITTA PIZZAS

**Preparation time: less than 30 minutes**

**Cooking time: 10 to 30 minutes**

**Serves: Makes 12 mini pizzas**

**Ingredients:**

**For the tomato sauce:**

- 120g of passata
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 1/2 tsp mixed herbs
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

**For the pizzas:**

- 12 white or wholemeal pitta breads
- 200g/7oz chopped ham or pepperoni
- 250g/9oz grated cheese

**Method:**

1. Mix the tomato sauce ingredients together.

2. Preheat the grill to its hottest setting.
3. Place the pitta breads onto baking trays and spread some of the tomato sauce over each. Sprinkle over the ham/pepperoni and grated cheese. (At this point, the pizzas can be frozen on baking trays, then packed into freezer bags, ready for another day.)
4. Grill the pizzas for 2-3 minutes, or until the bread is piping hot and the cheese has melted and turned golden-brown. Serve immediately.

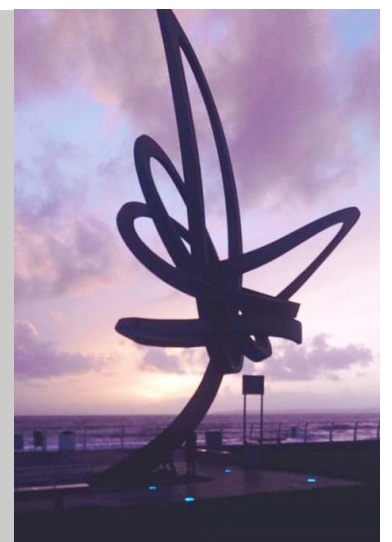
## CHANCE TO WIN £50 BY GOING GREEN

If you fancy receiving future editions of Cartref via e-mail instead of post, please let us know by emailing [media@taitarian.co.uk](mailto:media@taitarian.co.uk)

All those who get in touch before 30th May will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 shopping voucher.

## COMPETITION WINNER

Our competition winner in the last edition was Mrs Williams from Port Talbot, with this great picture of Aberavon.



## 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).

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

*Give it a go!*

## Need to get in touch?

- ☎ 0300 777 0000 (General enquiries 8.30am-5pm Monday to Friday)
- ☎ 0300 777 3000 (Report a repair) Emergency line available 24/7.



Follow us on social!  
[@taitarian](https://www.instagram.com/taitarian)

