



Our Year

Annual Review

April 2022 – March 2023

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Welcome

From Jonathon & Linda




In the last year, things have returned to some sort of normality following the pandemic. However, the cost-of-living crisis has had a huge impact on many of our tenants with their money just not going far enough to cover bills and other essentials. Our teams have worked diligently to support them, raising over £4 million in additional benefits, including helping them with food bank and energy vouchers too.

The biggest change to housing law in decades happened in December giving tenants in both social and private rented

homes more security, however this has led to more private landlords selling up, which has created an increased demand on the need for more social housing here in Wales.

Building new homes has continued to be a big priority for us with more developments completed in the last year, including phase 1 of our landmark County Flats development.

We also continued retrofitting our properties with new and innovative technology, making them more energy efficient for our tenants and environmentally friendly.



This is very much part of our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030 which links closely to the introduction of electric vans to our fleet, trialling battery operated machinery and managing our land differently to allow nature to thrive.

Following a successful recruitment exercise, we have welcomed new tenant members to both our Board and our Academy, hugely important to ensure that tenants voices are a part of key decision making here at Tai Tarian.

We have created many job opportunities across all of our service delivery areas, while our Copper Foundation welcomed its 10th group of recruits, whilst some new apprentices joined our repairs team. Our contractors also did their bit by giving employment opportunities to local people through our targeted recruitment and training scheme.

As always, we have played a huge part in supporting our communities with donations to good causes, as well as carrying out makeovers at community facilities.

In the year ahead we will continue in the same vein to provide sustainable homes, in sustainable communities for a sustainable planet.

We hope you enjoy this brief look back at some of the things we've achieved during this past year.

Jonathon and Linda

Jonathon Davies, Chair of Board
Linda Whittaker, Chief Executive

Our Highlights

Keeping our new homes promise

We have continued with our commitment to build sustainable homes with several ambitious construction projects.

At the heart of our programme is the re-development of the County Flats estate in Sandfields, Port Talbot.

The first two blocks, Pembroke House and Radnor House, have now been renovated, with elements of the project being built off site at the Sevenoaks Modular factory in Neath, before being transported the short distance to site.

Natural materials including wood pulp and wool form a major part of the insulation along with the latest technology, this means these homes are some of the most environmentally friendly in Wales. Attention now turns to the re-development of Brecon House and Gwent House in the next phase of the project.





The 'Big Cam', a well-known pub in central Neath has been transformed into 10 modern, energy efficient apartments. Now known as Tŷ Cam it consists of seven one-bedroom flats and three two-bedroom flats and was made possible thanks to Welsh Government homelessness grant funding.

Work has continued to build 25 new homes at Pant Celydd in Margam with a further 52 also under construction just off Meadow Road in Neath.

Elsewhere, work is due to start on the re-development of the Eagle House site in Port Talbot town centre. This will involve the demolition of the existing building and the construction of 18 energy-efficient apartments with a commercial space on the ground floor.

Andrew Hall, Head of Development said:

“Building new, sustainable homes is a big part of what we do. Over the past few years, we have built over 130 new homes across Neath Port Talbot. When these projects have been completed that total will stand at over 300.

“There is a huge demand for affordable, energy efficient homes and by building a variety of houses, flats and bungalows we can try to ensure that the needs of the people in our communities are met.”

Changing lives with job opportunities

We have continued to provide employment opportunities across the business with our apprenticeship programme recruiting four individuals. The two-year programme has seen Simon, Anastasia, Jodie and Michael working alongside our experienced tradespeople, whilst also spending time in college studying for their formal qualifications.

The four recruits are working towards qualifying in several trades, including plumbing, bricklaying, carpentry and plastering.

Anastasia said:

“I’m really enjoying the experience so far. I’ve had tremendous support from my new colleagues and have already learnt a great deal, just from working alongside them day in, day out.

“I’m passionate about my role and plumbing is something I really enjoy. I’m determined to work hard over the next two years to complete my apprenticeship and become fully qualified.”

Elsewhere we have marked a milestone with our Copper Foundation, with our 10th intake of recruits.

Launched in 2016, the programme aims to give people struggling to find work a route back into employment, by offering them a 12-month contract as well as support to complete training courses and obtain qualifications.

Our contractors have also created job and training opportunities for local youngsters, with apprenticeships in trades such as scaffolding, site management and quantity surveying being offered as part of their commitment to us.



New faces for Board and Academy



All tenants were given the opportunity to take part in a 'Board Ready' training programme to enhance their knowledge of the housing sector and how we do things here at Tai Tarian, so they were ready to apply for positions on our Board.

Following a recruitment exercise Huw Freeman from Sandfields and Ananda Woodley from Skewen joined Sam Jones and Daniel Smith who are Board members and also tenants. We also appointed tenant Ceri Wiggins from Pontardawe to our Operations Committee initially, with a view to joining the Board during 2023.

Our new Board members are already playing an integral part in the decision making of the organisation ensuring we are accountable to tenants and other stakeholders.

Our Academy has also been bolstered by 10 new members.

They are critical in 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.

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 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 affect. I'm looking forward to future sessions!"

Continuing to make homes greener

Green energy has made a big difference to tenants following the installation of solar panels and battery storage at 96 homes.

The panels will help reduce electricity bills but tenants will make bigger savings if they adapt their electricity use to make the most out of them, something our designated Tenant Liaison Officer, Olivia, has been advising on:

“When our tenants use the electricity as it’s being generated it’s free, but the panels will only generate a certain amount of electricity, so it’s about being smart on usage, not using too many appliances at once as if they use more than the panels are producing, they will have to pay for it.

“The homes have also been fitted with battery storage units, so electricity not used can be stored for use after dark when the panels will not be generating electricity.”

Solar panels on just one of these homes can reduce carbon emissions by 1.3 tonnes per year. In simple terms, that’s the equivalent of the amount of CO2 emissions that comes from using 536 gallons of petrol or charging 607,904 smartphones.



We have also been retrofitting empty homes to make them more energy efficient for new tenants.

Our team look at homes on an individual basis before energy efficiency measures such as external and internal wall insulation, new windows, solar panels, battery storage, increased ventilation or insulated floors are introduced.

The aim is to get these homes from on average an EPC D rating to an EPC A rating. That means not just a more comfortable home for tenants but a reduction in real terms energy usage which is great for the planet too.

We have continued with our External Wall Insulation (EWI) programme which has been ongoing for several years. Its purpose is to keep homes cosy during cold weather and cool in warm weather. This means tenants enjoy a more comfortable home, plus lower energy usage. Thanks to its decorative outer layer, homes also look refreshed and the high-quality finishes we use are designed to be low maintenance over a long period of time.



Support for tenants

The cost-of-living crisis is being felt keenly by tenants, so our Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit teams have supported them with money worries, budgeting help and claiming or appealing benefits.

With energy costs higher than ever the team has worked tirelessly to ensure we have accessed as much income and funding as possible, to help support those most in need.

The fuel bank support scheme demand has been very high, with 87 vouchers being issued on average each month. Tenants have been limited to three vouchers in 6 months and multiple vouchers have been issued to some individuals.

Our in-house Universal Credit team has also seen referrals up by 20 per month. Successful benefit claims are up 27% on last year and over £4 million in additional benefits has been raised for tenants.

Demand for food bank vouchers has also doubled in recent years, we are now issuing 44 per month on average.

The team have also shared their knowledge through 'Steph's column' in Cartref, providing lots of useful information about reducing bills, government support and even awareness of scams, they have also created videos for social media to help share this information wider than just our tenants. *More about our support on page 20.

Tenant Feedback:

"I very much appreciated all the help you gave me with my benefits. For your patience and understanding, not to mention all the hard work. It really made a very stressful and complicated process so much easier. Big thanks and best wishes."





money and goods to community groups and charities and giving employment opportunities to local people.

Amongst the organisations to benefit were the NPT Pass Fit and Fed programme, where 135 packed lunches were provided for children taking part in school holiday sports camps, whilst the Giant's Grave Boys and Girls Club in Briton Ferry and the NSA Centre in Port Talbot were among the facilities to receive free improvement work thanks to our staff and contractors.

Schools also benefited from the investment, with Ysgol Trebannws being treated to nature themed donations for their communal garden, whilst fruit trees were donated to the Riverside Court independent living complex in Pontardawe to create a sustainable orchard.

£44,000 for local communities

We have continued to support our local communities, this year by investing over £44,000 worth of goods and services.

The amount is a combination of grant funding, donations from staff and contributions from contractors as part of our community benefits programme. It has seen us upgrading community facilities, introducing biodiversity projects, donating



Amongst the biggest projects of the year, was £10,000 worth of improvements made to Canolfan Maerdy in Tairgwaith. Utilising a grant from the Welsh Procurement Alliance, our neighbourhood team cleared the grounds and installed a variety of trees and shrubs to encourage wildlife and installed a communal garden for the community to use.

There have also been dozens of donations to local food banks as well as Christmas gifts to young carers and disadvantaged groups throughout Neath Port Talbot.

Rebecca Thomas from the team said:

“We are committed to working with our communities and helping them to thrive and becoming sustainable. We’re proud that our investment this year can help to achieve this and it’s great that so many people have benefitted.”



Platinum Recognition

Our continued commitment to making lasting positive changes in our local communities and our environment has been recognised with a prestigious accolade.

Assessors from Healthy Working Wales have awarded us the Platinum Status Check for the work we have done to improve the health and wellbeing of our staff and the local community.

The award, which is the highest accolade given, is presented to exemplar organisations. The assessors were impressed by our commitment to biodiversity and engagement with local schools and communities, our Acts of Kindness Fund (donations made by Tai Tarian staff) and regular donations to food banks and support given to tenants struggling with the cost of living.

The Copper Foundation initiative and apprenticeship opportunities were also commended along with our sustainable planet commitment, especially our energy efficient homes.

In his feedback report, Assessor Peter Rimmer said:

“A strong and demonstrable commitment to sustainability has led to wide-ranging initiatives including a strong focus on activities to support the community, to improve the local environment, and to provide new opportunities for young people.”



Being bold for biodiversity

Last year we left many 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.

It was a bold step which demonstrated our commitment to doing our bit for biodiversity, backed by Welsh Government's encouragement to let it grow.

Reduced grass cutting on our land also allowed wildflowers to grow, creating a better habitat not just for bees and butterflies but invertebrates, birds, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles.

With many hectares of land throughout Neath Port Talbot, changing our approach to managing our land will make a big difference. Our passionate neighbourhood team are driving the change and we are also sharing our knowledge with young people in the Borough through schools' visits.



Renting Homes Wales

The Renting Homes Wales Act became law on 1st December. The Act improves how people rent, manage and live in rented homes, which is good news for all tenants across Wales.

From December all new tenants have been signed up to new style contracts, with everyone else receiving theirs in the Spring.

The contracts are large documents which legally have to be sent. To make things easier we included a letter explaining key areas, created an easy read guide, video series and included lots of frequently asked questions on our website.

Scan here
for more info



Let's be bold, fair and kind

With involvement from our staff and tenants we have a new set of values to reflect who we are and what people can expect of us. Staff were heavily involved in lots of positive discussions about what new values would mean to them and how they would live them in their day-to-day work.

Three shortlisted options were shared with both our Board and Academy for their input, before the final decision was made by staff during a week-long voting exercise.

The values chosen were Be Bold, Be Fair, Be Kind with work to embed them into our organisation a priority in the next year.



Meeting Regulatory Requirements

Welsh Government are satisfied that we continue to meet the standards expected in terms of financial viability, governance and tenant services. Our latest assessment confirmed that our status of 'standard' (the highest level of compliance) would continue.



This provides assurance that we:

- ✓ Are a well governed organisation
- ✓ Are financially sound
- ✓ Manage risks facing the business
- ✓ Have good levels of tenant involvement
- ✓ Have robust processes in place to assess our own performance
- ✓ Continually strive to improve the services we deliver to our tenants

Our Performance

Community Reinvestment

Using the Welsh Government's Value Wales Community Benefits toolkit, we have been able to demonstrate that:



For every, **£1 spent** on our major works programmes, **£1.99** is reinvested in our local community out of a maximum **£2** achievable.

Procurement

Through our procurement process we have awarded 28 contracts, to the value of circa **£4,900,000.**

All tenders must maximise value for money and sign up to our community benefits scheme, which this year has seen a **£44,000** donation to local groups and good causes.

Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit

Our Financial Inclusion Team provides help and advice to customers experiencing financial difficulties, which helps our tenants sustain their tenancies.

Working jointly with our income team they provide support on benefit changes, budgeting and digital support. Tenants are also supported to claim and manage their Universal Credit claims



£4,706,962 Raised in unclaimed benefits



1,145 Financial Inclusion referrals for benefit advice



1,285 Universal Credit referrals for claimant support



2,132 Successful benefit claims



34 Tenants supported with benefit appeals



85% Benefits appeal success rate



75 Tenants received digital support



605 Food bank vouchers issued

Staff

As a large employer within the Borough, we create and sustain employment for many people within our community.

517 Staff

386 all live and work within Neath and Port Talbot

75% of staff live locally

70% of the wage bill received by staff

84% of staff stayed with us during the year

Training

We are passionate about developing our employees and are committed to ensuring staff have the training they need to be able to carry out their jobs effectively:

2,471 Total training days (Face to Face and eLearning)

11,201 Health and Safety Training days - spending over £106,688

We have supported over 70 members of staff in higher or further education over the past 2 years.

We have been a pioneering organisation in the delivery of biodiversity & retrofit training and have saved over £50,000 in accessing funding for “green/environmental” courses.

Complaints and Compliments

In the last year we received 49 complaints and 211 compliments. Here are some of our compliments.

“Everyone I speak to in Tai Tarian is always lovely, polite and very helpful. Well done on always doing a great job with good manners and excellent customer service.”

“I’ve been struggling with ill health and have had to claim Universal Credit. Ben has been a massive help, giving reassurance and being understanding of my situation.”

“Chris the plumber was so helpful when he came to my home. I reported a leak, and he came today to fix it. He was very kind and cleaned up after himself.”

“Very professional job, the trades were tidy when doing the work also thanks to the team in the contact centre for always being professional and helpful on calls.”

“We cannot thank you enough and appreciate your efforts immensely. You really are the person to speak to, and I will be forever thankful for your excellent support.”



Repairs

We want our tenants to feel proud of their homes and our dedicated staff and contractors are committed to delivering a high-quality repairs service.

During this year we completed:

	21 New heating systems
	88 External wall insulations
	328 Windows
	328 Doors
	122 New roofs
	271 Rewires
	73 New kitchens
	121 New bathrooms
	140 Properties have benefitted from improvement works to their external areas
	5 Communal refurbishments



2,394 Emergency repairs



100% of emergency repairs were completed on time



16,156 Non-emergency repairs 92% were completed on time



86% of tenants were satisfied with how we deal with repairs and maintenance
(1,031 tenants surveyed during 2022/23)



99.99% Gas safe homes *



99.83% Electrical testing completed *



100% Fire Safety checks completed on our communal areas and Haven schemes *



100% Asbestos checks completed on our communal areas and Haven schemes *

* (as at 31st March 2023)

Customer Satisfaction



95% would recommend us to family and friends

91% overall service satisfaction

93% satisfaction with the overall quality of their home

93% neighbourhood satisfaction

90% say our rent provides value for money

63% say we listen and act on tenant views

92% trust us

93% say we provide a safe and secure home

1,031 tenants were surveyed during 2022-23

Involving our customers

Our Academy, which is comprised of our tenants, assisted in assessing how we've performed. By working jointly with our staff and reviewing performance information, they helped us to develop a set of improvement actions, all of which are set out in our Making a Difference Storyboards which are reviewed by the Board for approval and published on our website.

This work is an important element of our self-evaluation and we hugely value the work undertaken by the Academy, as this helps us to continually improve services to our tenants.



Scan to
view our
Storyboards



Corporate Plan

Our 5 year Corporate Plan was launched in 2020 and focuses on three key themes, Sustainable Homes, Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Planet.

Our teams have been very busy delivering our plans and some notable outcomes include building new energy efficient homes, creating community plans and partnerships and developing our Sustainable Planet Strategy. Plus lots more!

Sustainable Homes



We are committed to creating homes where people can thrive so will strive to provide affordable homes and tailor our services to support our tenants.

Sustainable Planet



We want to change our behaviours today for the generations of tomorrow so will be carbon neutral (net zero) by 2030.

Sustainable Communities



We want to see our communities achieving their full potential so will form community partnerships to deliver services that matter to our customers.

We will support tenants to be healthy and active within their communities, through involvement and learning opportunities.

A very ambitious plan, but one we are confident we can deliver.



Sustainable Homes

Creating homes where people can thrive

- Affordable homes for our tenants
- Tailored services to support tenants in their homes



Sustainable Communities

Communities achieving their full potential

- Community partnerships delivering services that matter to our customers
- Tenants supported to be healthy and active within their communities through focused and targeted involvement and learning opportunities



Sustainable Planet

Changing our behaviours today for the generations of tomorrow

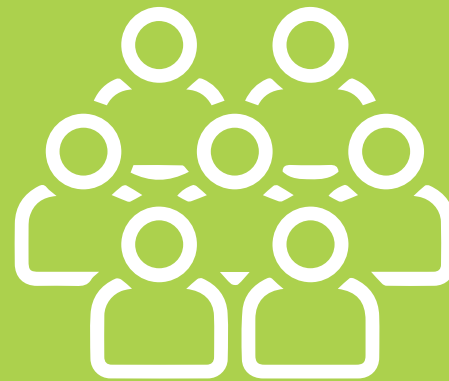
- To be carbon neutral (net zero) by 2030
- Implement the principles of the circular economy and maximise any potential to invest and contribute to the foundational economy.

Who are the Board and Senior Management Team?

We are governed by a Board of Non-Executive Board members made up of tenants and independent members.

The Board provides strategic leadership and has overall responsibility for:

- ✔ Setting the direction of the association and ensuring the organisation is accountable to tenants and stakeholders
- ✔ Monitoring performance and ensuring the organisation is delivering the outcomes set out in our Corporate Plan
- ✔ Ensuring the organisation is meeting all required performance standards to maintain high levels of governance, ongoing financial viability and services to tenants



Non-Executive Board Members

(up to March 2023)



Jonathon Davies
Chair of Board



Shelley Bosson
Vice-Chair of Board; Chair of Remuneration and Nominations Committee; Chair of Operations Committee



Andrew Lycett
Chair of Audit and Risk Committee



Mike Jones
Chair of Asset Management Committee



Jonathan Hughes
Chair of Tirnod (subsidiary)



Samantha Jones



Daniel Smith



Samantha Taylor



Lisa Murray



Rachel Rees



Phineas Brooks



Ananda Woodley



Huw Freeman

Our senior management team (up to March 2023)



Linda Whittaker
Chief Executive



Claire Maimone
Deputy Chief Executive and
Company Secretary



Andrew Carey
Director of Assets



Clare Way
Director of Housing

Sian Ross- Director of Finance (Resigned)

Our Figures

	£M
On 1st April 2023 we had total cash of	31.2
We had money coming in from:	
Rents	45.0
Service Charges	2.5
Grants from Welsh Government and Local Authority utilised within one year	6.2
Property sales - Right to Buy and other	0.2
Other income	1.6
Total	55.5
We spent it on:	
Improving and repairing your homes and communities	26.3
Buying and building more homes for rent	13.3
Service costs	3.6
Tenancy management and support	12.0
Interest payments and finance costs	7.4
Total	62.6
We recieved deferred development grant funding:	7.8
This left us with total cash of	31.9



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our highlights
of our annual
review ▶



www.taitarian.co.uk

