



CARTREEF



KNOWING OUR HOMES

A year ago, we set out on an ambitious programme to visit all of our properties to carry out surveys that look at our homes and

help us plan what work might be needed in the future.

Called the Stock Condition Survey, our own in-house

surveyors are doing the work and we caught up with the team to find out more about what's involved and why it's important. **More on page 4...**



MORE SPACE AND MOD CONS

We catch up with Carl who recently moved into one of our energy efficient homes in Caewern. More on **page.2**



NEW DEVELOPMENTS TAKE SHAPE

As well as our County Flats re-development, we are building more homes across the borough, find out how they are progressing on **page.6**



BIODIVERSITY BINGO

Share what you see on our land left for nature and win prizes, more on **page.7**

CHANCE TO WIN £50 JUST BY SHARING YOUR THOUGHTS ON CARTREF AND OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

More on the back page.





COMMUNITY DONATIONS CONTINUE

We have continued to make lots of donations to good causes in the community including girls football team, CPD Merched Bro Dur Port Talbot.

The players were presented with £250 thanks to our contractors Jefferies as they came towards the end of a very successful first season.

Thanks to donations from our staff and our supplier, Insight we have also provided toiletries, bedding sets and shoes to Hope Church in Skewen, for those in need of extra help. Monthly drop offs to local food banks have also continued.

Could we support your community or local charity with a donation?

Get in touch, email community@taitarian.co.uk

MORE SPACE AND MOD CONS

In the last few editions of Cartref, we shared progress with you on one of our empty properties in Caewern as we made it more energy efficient. We've been back and caught up with Carl at his new home.

"Me and the family had been living in a 2-bedroom flat in Port Talbot for many years.

I'd been looking for something bigger for a while, but it helped that we were willing to relocate.

We are still back and forth to Port Talbot until my youngest finishes school, but I was happy to do that, if it meant we had a room each for the first time, and more space.

You can see a lot has been done here, like solar panels, with battery storage for the



Carl and his daughter Sophie at their new home

excess energy created and insulation so its got all the mod cons, which should save us on our electric which can only be a good thing with teenagers!

Now it's all about making it home, boxes are unpacked, our new carpets are down, next on the list is picking our sofa, it's just deciding what colour to go for!"



WHAT IS EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION ALL ABOUT?

We want to make our homes greener as part of our journey to be carbon neutral.

For several years we have been carrying out improvements to make homes warmer, more comfortable and more energy efficient with external wall insulation, often shortened to EWI.

Since 2012 we have installed EWI at over 4000 of our homes, but what is it?

It's a layer of insulation that is added to the outside wall of a home in boards before being covered in a durable render finish to help protect the insulation and make your home look great.

As it minimises heat loss in cold weather and heat gain

in warm weather, you'll enjoy a more comfortable home throughout the year, plus smaller heating bills. In fact The Energy Saving Trust estimates that heating costs can be reduced by up to 40%.

Thanks to its decorative outer layer, your home will look refreshed and the finishes we use are high quality and designed to be low maintenance over a long period of time.

Recently we caught up with our tenant liaison officer Laura, who has been part of the programme since 2017 and involved in over 400 EWIs across the borough. She talks us through the process:

"Our surveyors identify homes that could benefit from EWI and I visit the tenants with our

contractor to talk about the work.

"I'm their main point of contact throughout, which is important so they know what is happening, how they can prepare for the work, by moving things like items in the garden to accommodate the scaffolding and being aware that it can be noisy.

"How long the work takes depends on the type of home and weather. If it's very cold, rainy or unusually hot this can cause delay, but my job is to keep tenants updated on the progress made.

"The good news is we don't need to access the inside of your homes as everything is carried out outside. The work makes a huge difference not just to how the home looks



EWI Underway

but how comfortable it is for the tenant to live in, so it's really rewarding being involved in this work."

Mrs Davies who had work carried out recently said:

"My home looks brand new and the work has made a big difference to the damp problems I've had in my house. Very happy so thank you all."

WELCOME FROM LINDA

Welcome to our summer edition of Cartref, the year is flying by!

In this edition we have caught up with our surveying team, finding out more about their role in carrying out a programme for us to check the condition of all our homes. More on page 4 and 5.

We have our usual gardening competition, so if you've got a garden that you're proud of or if you know a neighbour who is green fingered why not encourage them to enter? We have some lovely prizes and of course the kudos of being named one of our winners. Page 6 for the details.

We are also keen to hear your views on Cartref and our social media for a chance to win a £50 voucher.

With lots of improvement work going on it was great to hear from Mrs Davies who has benefitted from external wall insulation and from Carl who has just moved into our energy efficient home in Caewern.

New homes are progressing nicely across the borough, the latest pictures on page 6.

As always Steph from our financial inclusion team has lots of great advice for you, read more on page 7.

Linda
Chief Executive



ON BOARD

Did you know we have our own Board?

Members meet regularly throughout the year and also sit on committees to ensure we perform well. We caught up with one of our newest members, Ananda to tell us more:

“As a Board we set the direction that Tai Tarian takes, making sure that all decisions are made with tenants at the heart.

Our job is to make sure things are managed effectively, providing oversight, direction, and constructive challenge to the senior leaders of the business.

We are made up of 12 individuals with a wide skill set in key areas such as finance, property development, risk management, regulation, and customer experience.

A member's term on the Board is three years and they can remain on the Board up to a maximum of three terms, so nine years in total. When tenant vacancies arise like they have recently, we offer training and support, and all tenants are able to apply for the position. Independent vacancies are also advertised on our website and within business circles to encourage people with a specific set of skills to apply.

As a Board we meet nine times a year, for formal Board meetings and development days, however, we do attend additional ad hoc training sessions from time to time. We also sit on committees which focus on key areas such as audit and risk, day to day operations, development, and assets.

Prior to meetings we consider detailed reports so that we have a definitive understanding of things. To allow us to do this we need to be strategic thinkers and be able to analyse what is sometimes complex information to ensure decisions made are well founded.

The governance of the organisation is assessed on a yearly basis by Welsh Government as part of their



Board member Ananda

regulatory judgement. Since we were formed, we have received the highest rating awarded.

Our next assessment is due shortly, the results of which will be published on our website. Tenants are welcome to observe board meetings, if this is something you would like to find out more about, please contact our governance team on 01639 505258.”



Ananda and fellow Board members at a recent meeting

AGM THIS MONTH

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) takes place on the 25th July for our members to have the opportunity to vote on key business decisions, have the opportunity to meet our staff and hear about progress.

If you aren't already a member but would like to be invited to our event next year you can sign up by getting in touch with our governance team – corporategovernance@taitarian.co.uk 01639 505258.

Keep an eye on our website in the coming weeks for our annual review and highlights video which will be posted after the AGM.

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



MEET THE SURVEYORS



INSPECTION TIME

As well as surveying our homes we may also carry out inspections. This can be because you have reported a repair and we need to check it out before the work is booked in or you may want to move so we need to look at property condition making a note of any work that needs doing beforehand.

Whatever the reason for the inspection, please don't be concerned by it. If you have any questions, then feel free to ask your inspector or give us a call on **0300 777 3000**.

BIN DAY CHECKER TOOL

Missing your bin day makes things stressful, especially in the summer months when rubbish can attract flies and rodents.

The council have a handy bin day finder tool on their website where you can check your bin day.

Don't forget to recycle as much as you can and store your rubbish in bins and bags provided. If you need replacement items, the council can help.

Check your bin collection day here ►



Junior, Kristian and Carwyn, three of our surveyors

Our stock condition surveys are underway, and we caught up with Craig who heads up the team to find out more:

“There are two main reasons for carrying out our surveys – to look at previous work carried out and also to help us decide what work might be needed in the future.

“As an example, we installed new kitchens and bathrooms in most of our properties several years ago, so we need to see how they're doing and to estimate how long they've got left before we need to consider possible replacements.

“We're also looking at things like the outside of the building, how is the roof looking or the render on the walls. We'll also check the loft to look at what the insulation is like. It simply means there's less guesswork when it comes to maintaining people's homes and be more focussed on what work is needed.”

With surveys at over half our homes now completed, attention turns to the remainder. Craig explains how surveys are set up:

“When we start surveying in a particular area, each tenant is sent a letter explaining what we're doing and asking them to give us a call to arrange a suitable time and date for a visit. We sometimes follow that up with a phone call or one of the team popping around – it's important we survey every

home, so I would urge everyone to contact us as soon as they get a letter so we can get an appointment booked in.

“We need to access every room in the house, including the attic, but the work isn't intrusive. We don't need you to move any furniture – we'll just take a few photos and make a few notes. Depending on the size of the property, we'll be in and out in less than an hour. It really is important that we carry out these surveys.”



YORS



Carwyn, Junior and Kristian are just three of the team carrying out the surveys, so we caught up with them to find out a little bit more:

Carwyn has been with the team for eight years, while Kristian and Junior are just starting out on their surveying careers, as trainees.

All three have come into the building surveying field through a trade route, and Junior says that while this is not absolutely necessary for the role, the

MORE ON THE TEAM

previous experience certainly has its advantages when surveying a home.

“It’s important to know how a building is constructed and the sequence of how things are built. Although I’m new to the surveying team, I previously spent six years with the repairs team, so I’ve visited these properties many times to complete various jobs, so I know how they’re constructed and what to look out for. I also know many of the tenants well, so it’s nice to go back and say hello again.”

For Kristian, it’s the teamwork that is helping him find his feet:

“Even though I started out as a carpenter, I was always more interested in the technical aspect of buildings. Even though I’ve only been here a

couple of months I feel totally at home and the job just feels ‘right’ to me. The support I get from the team is incredible. Carwyn and the other building surveyors have a wealth of knowledge that I can tap into, I’ve learned so much from them already.”

There’s more to the job than just surveying the property. Carwyn says you have to be ready for everything:

“Even though we’re there mainly to complete the survey, we may have to deal with any other issue the tenant raises – whether that’s helping them to report a repair or to refer them on to our specialist teams if they mention they’re having money troubles or need a little extra support to manage their home. So it’s not just about technical skills but about helping our tenants too.”

ARE WE GETTING THINGS RIGHT?

We always try to do our best but recognise that we don’t get things right every time.

When the level of service we have provided has fallen short we want you to let us know so that we can make every effort to resolve things.

If we have got something wrong, we will:

- ▶ Listen, and ask what outcome you want from your feedback
- ▶ Identify the problem
- ▶ Aim to put it right
- ▶ Apologise if we got it wrong
- ▶ Learn from the feedback so we don’t make the same mistake again.

When you first contact us, we will use an informal way

of resolving any complaint, through our customer liaison officer and the team/individual involved.

This stage offers the opportunity for us to resolve the complaint quickly, providing an explanation or other appropriate action to resolve the issue for you.

Following this we have two formal complaint stages:

1 Stage 1
This stage involves a manager fully investigating the complaint and reporting back their findings to the customer liaison officers so the complaint can be resolved.

2 Stage 2
If you are not satisfied with the outcome from stage one, you can request that the decision is reviewed by a member of our senior management team.

Where any element of the complaint is upheld (proven) either in part or in full, the response will include a full apology and details of action taken.

If you need to complain or have positive feedback for us here are our contact details:



GET IN TOUCH

If you’ve had great service from us, or one of our colleagues has gone over and above for you or your community we would love to hear from you. Get in touch on the details below.

Phone:
01639 505856

Email:
feedback@taitarian.co.uk

Write to us at:
Feedback, Tai Tarian, Tŷ Gwyn, Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park, Neath, SA11 2FP



NEW DEVELOPMENTS TAKE SHAPE

MORE WAYS TO PAY

Our lovely contact centre team are always happy to take payment over the phone, but did you know that there are other ways to pay that may be easier for you?

Direct debit is the simplest and most secure way to pay and you can choose your payment date and whether you want to pay weekly, fortnightly or monthly. This can be set up by calling us on **0300 777 0000** or emailing **DDTeam@taitarian.co.uk**

Allpay is another flexible way to pay, it's a secure service allowing you to pay at any time, online, via their automated phone line, at the post office, anywhere you see the Paypoint logo or with the mobile app.

To pay this way we need to send you your own Allpay card, just give us a call on **0300 777 0000** or email **income@taitarian.co.uk**



New homes in Port Talbot and Neath

As well as our County Flats re-development, work is also underway at three other sites across Neath Port Talbot.

25 new homes at Pant Celydd, Margam are now really starting to take shape, whilst in Port Talbot town centre the old Eagle House has been

demolished ready for 18 new flats to be built.

At Eaglesbush, just off Meadow Road in Neath, the first of 52 homes have started to spring up, with the foundations for the rest being prepared.

As the site is close to the Roman fortress and Neath

Abbey we brought in archaeologists to carry out a dig of the site which unveiled 100s of artefacts, some from as far back as the 17th century.

You can find out more here: ▶



ENTER OUR GARDEN COMPETITION!

Do you have a glorious garden? Then you need to enter this year's garden competition to be in with the chance of winning a £50 Zoar's Ark garden centre voucher.

We have three categories:

- ▶ Best grow your own
- ▶ Best wildlife garden
- ▶ Best overall garden
- ▶ Plus a special award for the best 'Haven Housing' garden.

No matter how big your outdoor space is, if you are proud of it, please enter.

Rebecca Thomas, Economic and Social Regeneration Manager will have the tough job of picking the winners:

"We had a great response to our garden competition last year, and we were so impressed with the way people had transformed their outdoor spaces.

We know that with food prices still high, more tenants are trying to 'grow their own' this year so we expect that to be a popular category.

If you are not green fingered yourself but know a neighbour who is, please nominate them or encourage them to enter.

To take part just email community@taitarian.co.uk with pictures of your garden by 18th August."



GOODIES UP FOR GRABS BY SPOTTING OUR FLOWERS

We're letting the grass and flowers grow on parts of our land, but it's not just for the bees! We can all benefit as more interaction with nature boosts mental health and physical wellbeing.

There's more on what we are doing below, but we have launched a giveaway to highlight the importance of giving a boost to biodiversity.

"Biodiversity Bingo"

Well, it's not really bingo, but we know more and more people are finding it beneficial being out and about in nature, even if it's just across the road! Our biodiversity boosting meadows are easy to spot by our 'Let it Bee' signs.

So, we have created a spotter guide on our website. Please share what you see with us, tag us in posts on social media or just email us at media@taitarian.co.uk

All pictures will be entered into a prize draw to win a hamper of plants for your garden and any children who take part will also be given a small gift.

To download your spotter and for more info about why we care about biodiversity visit www.taitarian.co.uk/bees

Our 1-2-3 approach is in full swing with our neighbourhood team out maintaining our land. Here's a reminder what each category means:

1 Grassed areas that are communal or enjoyed by the community for recreation or socialising, or that can potentially restrict visibility if left uncut, will be cut regularly from April to September. This is usually on an 6-8 week cycle.

2 Other areas will be partly maintained with border cuts and made accessible with walkways, this is deliberate so that parts can still be left for nature.

3 Several areas of land have been identified as prime spots for nature to thrive and will be turned into wildflower meadows. Most of this land has our bee signage on it, with more to come in the coming months.



COST OF LIVING TIPS FROM STEPH

The cost-of-living crisis isn't just about food and fuel but it has a knock on effect on allowing us to live a healthy and happy life.

So what help is out there?

Sanitary products provided

Hygiene poverty is affecting people across Wales. The Welsh Government Period Proud Wales initiative places products in schools, local food banks and public toilets. As an organisation we are supporting this by donating items to food banks every month.

Help to get back into work

The cost of transport or not having the right clothes has made it difficult for people to attend job interviews. The Discretionary Assistance Fund's Emergency Assistance Payment (EAP) is a grant to help pay for clothing or emergency travel if you:

- ▶ are experiencing extreme financial hardship
- ▶ have lost your job
- ▶ have applied for benefits and are waiting for your first payment

Summer holiday activities
Free swimming sessions

The Welsh Government's free swim initiative allows one free swimming session per week for under 16s, increasing to two over the summer holidays. Contact your local leisure centre to find out when your sessions are.

Over 60s are also entitled to free swims, with discounts for those claiming benefits.

Museums are free!

Entry to all national museums in Wales are free, with each venue offering brilliant family days out.

Take a look at Visit Wales to plan your summer activities. www.visitwales.com



Free debt advice

Research shows that people in debt are more likely to experience mental health problems and this figure has increased because of the cost of living crisis.

The following debt advice charities provide free, impartial advice:

Step Change - Online debt advice service available 24 hours a day, 0800 138 1111

Christians Against Poverty – 0800 328 0006

Citizens Advice Bureau - 0808 278 7926

Mental health support

People across Wales can now access free online therapy without needing to go through their GP. Anyone over 16 experiencing mild to moderate anxiety, depression or stress can sign-up for a 12-week course of SilverCloud via their smartphone, tablet or laptop.

More here:





CARROT, CUMIN & KIDNEY BEAN BURGER

By Jack Monroe

If you're a meat eater who wants to eat less meat, a vegetarian or vegan looking for a tasty burger for summer BBQs or someone who's looking for a low budget, healthy tea, this carrot, cumin and kidney bean burger ticks all the boxes.

Ingredients (Makes 4 burgers) :

For the tomato sauce:

- 1 x 400g tin of kidney beans
- 1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 carrot, grated
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- a handful of fresh coriander, finely chopped
- a splash of oil, plus 2 tablespoons to fry the burgers
- 1 heaped teaspoon of flour, plus extra to shape the burgers

Method:

1. Drain the kidney beans and rinse in cold water to wash away the 'tinned' taste. Put into a saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 10 minutes to soften.
2. Put the onion, carrot, cumin and coriander into a medium saucepan. Add the splash of oil and cook on a low heat to soften.
3. When the kidney beans have softened, drain and add to the carrots and onions. Take off the heat and mash together until you have a smoothish purée (like mashed potato consistency). Stir in the flour.

4. Heat the 2 tablespoons of oil in a frying pan on a medium heat. With floured hands, take a quarter of the burger mixture and roll it into a ball, about the size of a golf ball.
5. Make three more balls with the remaining mixture. Place one in the oil and flatten gently with a fork to make the burger shape. Depending on the size of your pan, you may be able to cook all the burgers at once or need to do them in batches – unless you're freezing some of the uncooked patties.
6. Cook for a few minutes on one side, before turning. The burgers need to be handled with care as they can be quite fragile!
7. When cooked on both sides, remove from the pan and serve hot either on their own or in a bun.

For more budget recipes visit <https://cookingonabootstrap.com/>

Struggling with rising cost of food at the moment?

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



CHANCE TO WIN £50 BY SHARING VIEWS ON CARTREF

When we spoke to tenants about Cartref when we launched it last year, feedback was positive. However, it's important to get your thoughts on a regular basis to check if we are getting it right, and if not, what we can change. We also want feedback on how you think we are doing on social media too.

We have a quick two minute survey which we would love you take part in, just visit www.taitarian.co.uk/survey

The survey will close on August 10th, with everyone who takes part being entered into a prize draw to win a £50 voucher.

FANCY LEARNING WELSH?



A free course open to all tenants starts this September. Visit www.taitarian.co.uk/welsh to find out more.

GO GREEN WINNER

Our winner from last month's go green competition was Mr Geil. If you want to 'Go Green' and receive your Cartref via email get it touch with our team media@taitarian.co.uk



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

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!

We regularly update all our social media channels with community news, need to know info, the latest jobs and lots more. Why not give us a follow, just search Tai Tarian.

