



Taror'Post

CYMDEITHAS TAI ERYRI TENANTS' NEWSLETTER

January 2010

ALL STEAMED UP

In the middle of Winter one of the problems tenants face is coping with condensation. There are some things you can do, and some things which the Association can do to help you.

The golden rule is to produce less moisture. The easiest ways to do this are:

- Put lids on saucepans
- Dry clothes outside
- Ensure that the vent from the tumble dryer goes outside
- Avoid paraffin or bottled gas heaters

The Association will, as part of its improvements programme, ensure that your loft and walls have been insulated, and that you have double glazing. Also, tenants surveys over the past two years have noted drafts as a big problem. To answer this, the Association now has a draft-proofing programme.



Alan Williams on 01286 889208.

The scheme is successful, making homes more comfortable, and cutting energy bills. One of the tenants who has benefited is Mrs Brazier, from Llys Madryn, Pwllheli.

"I spoke to Caren Jones from Cymdeithas Tai Eryri about the drafts which come in through the front door," said Mrs Brazier. "The draft-proofing by Gwynfor will now stop them."

She also received guidance on how to use the storage heaters more effectively. "I hadn't realised how to set the switches properly to release the heat from the storage heaters," she said. "The hope is that it will help us to have more heat during the day, and to manage the heat for when we need it."

For more information about the draft-proofing programme, contact

CHANGING TO IMPROVE SERVICE

In the new year there will be two new area teams. At the same time, the Association will create a Customer Service team. Why the changes? Several surveys have shown there was room for the Association to work more effectively. In discussions with tenants, they have suggested ways to improve, especially through trying to answer more quickly telephone calls with questions and concerns.

The Customer Service team will be your first contact point for our low cost phone number. It will deal with tenants' inquiries, applications and the public. We are also creating two area teams, one in the North (in Llangefni), and one in the South (in Penygroes). In each team there will be officers to deal with lettings, empty property, nuisance cases, rent arrears, estate visits and estate services e.g. service charges. In addition the officers and craftspersons will deal with daily maintenance work and the work before re-letting.

Some of the services will stay central. The essential repairs, improvements, cyclical painting and service agreements will remain as they are. Also staying put is the work of the anti-social behaviour officers and the tenants participation and community development officers. The Tenant Support Team will also remain centrally based.

The Association will send a leaflet to every tenant with the changes.

PRAISE FOR EITHINOG

The Eithinog Eco Homes have been praised again. This time by the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability and Housing, Jane Davidson.

The Minister visited Eithinog in Bangor in May. She had the chance to meet with tenants, and discuss what it's like living in a green home.

During the visit Jane Davidson said: "The built environment is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gases in Wales. The way we go about planning and using homes and other buildings count for 40% of total carbon emissions. It's vitally important that every one of our new buildings use energy effectively and are as green as possible.

"It's great to see Cymdeithas Tai Eryri putting sustainability at the top



Alun Ffred Jones AM, Claire Meredith & Jane Davidson AM.

of its agenda going much further than the current energy efficiency standards," she said.

"Recently I announced new national green standards for buildings," said the Minister. "The intention of these

is to reduce buildings' carbon emissions and to make them more sustainable. Wales is the first part of the UK to set a national standard for sustainable buildings."



Providing homes and services for the benefit of local residents and communities

Main Office: Cymdeithas Tai Eryri, Tŷ Silyn, Y Sgwâr, Penygroes, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL54 6LY

Anglesey Office: 33-35 High Street, Llangefni, Ynys Môn/Anglesey LL77 7NA

An Industrial and Provident Society and Exempt Charity No. 22234R

HANDY PHONE NUMBERS

Cymdeithas Tai Eryri Emergency Phone Number 0800 216 947

Cymdeithas Tai Eryri Offices
Penygroes **01286 881 588**
Llangefni **01248 750 359**
Llys Seion, Pwllheli **01758 703 087**
Penucheldre, Caergybi **01407 761 742**

Anglesey Domestic Violence Services 01248 750 903

Website: www.taieryri.co.uk

Housing Benefits
Isle of Anglesey County Council
01248 752 658

Gwynedd County Council:
Caernarfon **01286 682 698**
Pwllheli **01758 704 001**
Dolgellau **01341 424 349**

Re-cycling
Gwynedd Council **01286 679 872**
OR ailgylchu@gwynedd.gov.uk
Anglesey **01248 752 860**

Shelter 0808 888 4444
NHS Direct 0845 4647

CAB
Anglesey **08451 203 708**
Gwynedd **08707 502 350**

Care and Repair
Anglesey **01248 750 625**
Gwynedd **01766 510160**
Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 801 0800

If you would like a copy of this newsletter in a different format eg large print please contact Debbie Toplis 01286 889213 debbie@taieryri.co.uk

NEW HOMES



The Association has been busy building new houses in Gwynedd and Anglesey. Recently there have been five developments worth over £5 million. This investment will create 49 new homes, including some for rent or sale as affordable homes to local people.

Over the five sites there are a mix of different homes. There are eight new flats in Cefn y Felin, Porthmadog, whilst there are 6 bungalows in Cae Rhos, Holyhead. Also in Holyhead – in Yr Hen Iard Coed – there is the biggest development, with 25 homes, including flats and three and four bedroom houses.

The final two are in Meirionnydd. There are four affordable homes in Llanfrothen, with the option for tenants to buy. In Gellilydan there are six 3-bedroom homes.

CHILDREN CELEBRATE

Children from Trem y Moelwyn, Penrhyndeudraeth celebrating at the official opening of their new playground



Look what's growing in the back garden



Tenants in a block of flats in Bangor successfully grew some of their own vegetables over the summer months despite not having much garden space.

The garden project has been going for three years. The first year the tenants built a flower bed and hung baskets. Each year they have added to the garden. One year they built a brick BBQ and planted a selection of herbs. It was last summer when the vegetable bed

was added which proved to be a great success. They grew lettuce, tomatoes, spring onions, potatoes and runner beans. Also, they froze some runner beans to add to their Christmas dinner.

This photo was taken back in July when the runner beans trained to grow up the wall had reached up to seven foot. It just goes to show that you don't need a large allotment to make a start!

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Menna

The Association has two new Tenant Board members. The two were elected in June. Menna Roberts is from Pwllheli, and Delyth Roberts from Caernarfon. Menna and Delyth are very enthusiastic about contributing to the work of the Board.

"I want to join the Board because I am young with much to offer and perhaps I can be a voice for young tenants within the Association," said Menna.



Delyth

"I feel that by now I have the potential and ability to develop skills and move on to a management level," said Delyth. "Also the

contribution I can give is helping tenants with any problems.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

During 2008-09 we have received satisfaction questionnaires from you on planned and day to day works. The information is used to report back to contractors on their performance. We do not disclose any personal information to the contractors but instead provide a general report on their work.

The percentage that were satisfied with the work on day to day repairs, such as emergency, urgent and routine repairs for 2008-09 was 97.6%. From April to June this year it rose a little to 97.8%.

The percentage of that was satisfied with planned maintenance, work such as new windows or installing a new kitchen, for 2008-09 was 96%. Between April to June 2009 it was 100%!

WOMEN - HELP FOR YOU

Have you been threatened, humiliated or insulted? South Gwynedd Women's Aid can help. They can offer support through, in the first place, organising to meet in a safe place, and providing the chance to talk and discuss. Afterwards, if there's a need, they can offer information about housing and benefits, legal matters and support with children's needs. They can come with you when you need support, and help you make choices for a better future.

The service is confidential and free. Phone 01766 830 878 – 24 hours a day.



ANNE WINS!

Mrs Anne Roberts from Felinheli was the winner of £100 in shopping vouchers. She won the vouchers after completing the Arfon Tenants questionnaire. Mrs Roberts was very happy to have won and believes it is a good idea for tenants to give their opinions about things that matter to them.

PAYING RENT DIFFERENT WAYS TO SUIT YOU

FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT ADVICE AND SUPPORT, CONTACT THE RENT OFFICER ON 01286 889 225.

Come to one of our offices

Penygroes or Llangefni



Pay through direct debit



On line
www.allpay.net



Over the phone with a bank card
0870 243 6040
for an automatic system, or phone the office



Pay Point

At the Post Office, or anywhere which uses the Paypoint system

YOU'RE NOT ON YOUR OWN

INSURANCE

Have you got adequate home contents insurance? What happens if your house is flooded or furniture is damaged? Cymdeithas Tai Eryri insures the building but we don't insure your contents.

We have teamed up with Jardine Lloyd Thompson through Community Housing Cymru to provide low cost home contents insurance, My Home Cymru. Please contact JLT directly if you are interested in their offer or have a word with one of our officers who will make sure you get the details.

'My Home Cymru' can offer:

- Affordable premiums.
- Flexibility – to help make insurance cover easy to purchase and accessible, you can pay your premiums with cash as well as the usual monthly direct debit.
- Lower minimum sums insured.
- No excess - unlike standard insurance offerings we do not ask you to pay the first part of any claim.
- All postcodes are included - no exceptions.
- Excellent basic cover on a new for old basis with the option to upgrade cover.

INCOME - PENSION/ TAKE UP UNIT

As we have reported several times in Taro'r Post, there is a Gwynedd Benefits Take Up Unit to help people claim benefits. It supports individuals and families, including pensioners, the unemployed, families and children with disabilities, and carers, to make a claim for benefits. One other thing that the Unit can do is check your pension.

There is also a local Pensions Service team which offers help to complete forms, to ensure you are receiving the correct benefit. They have information points in Caernarfon, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Pwllheli in Gwynedd. Or you can phone the number below, to someone will come to your home to do an assessment.

For more details: Gwynedd Benefit Take-Up Unit 0800 169 9729
Pension Service: 0845 6060 265

SUPPORTING TENANTS

Cymdeithas Tai Eryri has two officers who can help if you have financial problems. Carol Jones and Verity Smith are the Tenants Support Officers

Carol and Verity can help with general problems in a number of areas. But they can help particularly with financial problems, including:

- Claiming benefits
- Managing money, paying bills and talking with creditors
- Dealing with Rent Arrears
- Helping with budgeting

For more details contact Verity on verity@taieryri.co.uk - 01286 889205, or Carol on carol@taieryri.co.uk - 01286 889265.



LEAFLET - BUDGETING

Do you know what your weekly income is? How much you spend? If you know where your money goes, this is a big step in managing it.

The Association has a leaflet which can help you make an income and spending plan. It includes where to turn to for local help.

The name of the leaflet is "Paying Rent". Why pay the rent? Well, the most important for many people is the roof above their heads. And with any debt problem, the experts say that paying your rent or your mortgage should be the priority.

If you want more help or advice, contact Ffion, Lola or Bethan.

MY HOME - MAKING EVERY PENNY COUNT

Every new tenant with Cymdeithas Tai Eryri will receive a brand new handbook, to help manage money. My Home – Making Every Penny Count gives practical ideas on where to make savings – and avoid getting into debt.

The handbook has been produced by the North Wales Financial Inclusion Partnership, which includes Cymdeithas Tai Eryri.



TARIFFS

One of the easiest ways to save money is through changing your electricity or gas supplier. The experts say you can save up to £220 a year. Usually it's cheaper to get your gas and electricity from the same company, instead of separately.

It makes sense to search around, because the companies change their prices frequently. The dearest way to pay is pre-payment – Direct Debit is always cheaper, and can help you plan your payments monthly. For people on a low income, there



are several 'social tariffs', which offer a price comparable with the best price to other customers.

It can be hard to know what's the best thing to do. To make a comparison, websites like www.uswitch.com can help. For more information contact Caren Jones, Community Officer, on 01286 889215, or caren@taieryri.co.uk.

Housing Debt Helpline Wales



With the financial crisis deepening, there is lots of information and advice available – to tell the truth, enough to confuse people. A new way to get advice is Helpline Wales. It has been funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, with the support of the Wales Co-operative Centre.

The aim of the Line is to offer help to people who rent and own homes. Specialist advice is available, to make an instant assessment. If there's a need, you can make an appointment with a counsellor. They will carry out a full review of your situation, and make recommendations.

The important phone number is 0800 107 1340. And there is a lot of useful information on their web-site: www.llinell-gymorth-dyledion-tai-cymru.org.

Y Llechen - Credit Union

For the 8% of the Welsh population without a bank account, Credit Unions can help people access financial services the rest of us take for granted.

A Credit Union is an organisation which can help you save and borrow money. In a lot of cases it's cheaper to borrow money from a Credit Union than from a bank or building society. It's definitely a lot, lot cheaper than from door step lenders.

There is a Credit Union for Gwynedd and Ynys Môn, y Llechen. It's there to:

- Encourage members to save regularly
- Provide cheap loans for members
- Encourage its members to manage their money carefully
- Develop a sense of working co-operatively

At the moment y Llechen has collection points in Holyhead (3) and Llangefni in Anglesey, and Maesgeirchen in Bangor, Caernarfon, Barmouth and Blaenau Ffestiniog in Gwynedd.

