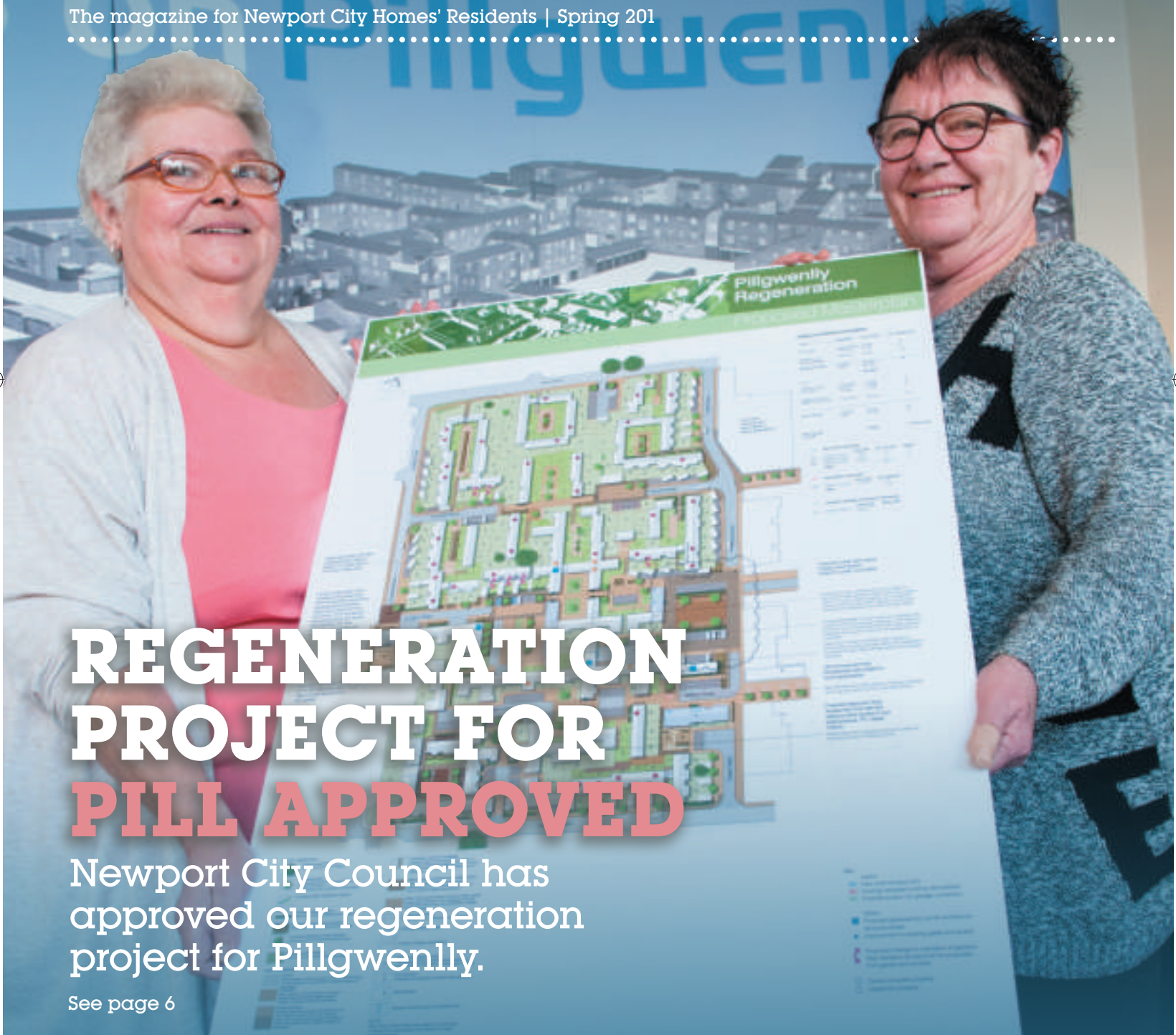


Bridge Brief

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The magazine for Newport City Homes' Residents | Spring 201
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REGENERATION PROJECT FOR PILL APPROVED

Newport City Council has approved our regeneration project for Pillgwenlly.

See page 6

.....
News > Local Events > Interviews > Money Matters
.....

2020 VISION IS OUR FOCUS

Newport is changing and so is Newport City Homes.

We have never been just a housing association. Our residents are Newport and we're proud of that. We have delivered on the promises we made at stock transfer and now, working with our partners, it's time to realise the full potential of the city.

2020 Vision sets out our ambitions for the next five years and there is a lot to be excited about.

We are the largest social landlord in Newport, with 71% of the city's social housing. We are ambitious and ready to be the partner of choice in building Newport's future.

Over the next few years, our focus will be:

- Putting residents at the heart of what we do
- Continuing to invest in our homes and neighbourhoods
- Providing new homes
- Making a difference in our communities

Throughout the magazine you will find the 2020 Vision 'stamp' against some of the stories. This is so you can see exactly what progress we're making against each of the four areas.

We would love to hear your thoughts. You can contact us via:

enquires@newportcityhomes.com

01633 381111

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Follow [@NewportCityH](https://twitter.com/NewportCityH) on Twitter

www.newportcityhomes.com



01 PUTTING RESIDENTS AT THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO



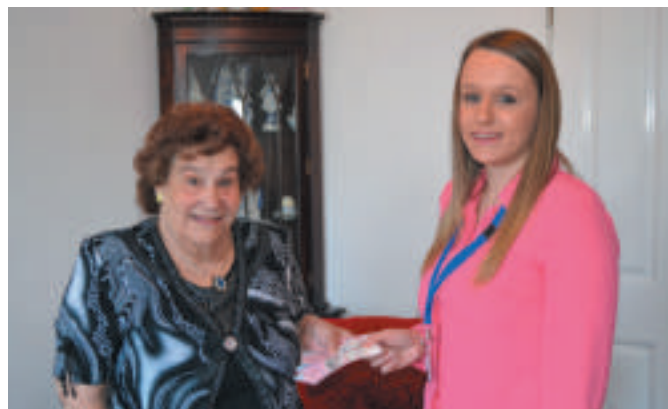
02 WE WILL CONTINUE TO INVEST IN OUR HOMES & NEIGHBOURHOODS



03 WE WILL PROVIDE NEW HOMES



04 WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES



Prize draw winner

Congratulations to Mrs Pingel, the lucky winner of our home contents insurance scheme prize draw.

Mrs Pingel said: "I am so happy with the vouchers and the insurance scheme. They'll come in handy."

Aon Limited donated the gift vouchers.

For more information on our home contents insurance scheme, call **01633 381111** or go to page four.



Enterprise Troopers target national competition success

We have helped a group of young entrepreneurs in their bid to win a national competition.

Four pupils from Ringland Primary School are competing in Big Ideas Wales' Enterprise Troopers competition, which aims to develop the attitude, creativity, relationship and organisational skills of children.

The team had to start and grow their own business, covering all aspects from financial planning to selling their products.

Teacher Rachel West has been supporting the entrepreneurs and has been impressed with their attitude and business sense: "The pupils have to really work together to make their business succeed. They have embraced the concept and I have seen them develop so much. They have been working well as a team and risen to the challenge."

When they began to plan the business, the pupils contacted Newport City Homes and asked us for support. We were so impressed with their business plan and commitment that we gave them £590 to buy stock for the shop and a trolley from which to sell the merchandise.

"This was a massive help to the pupils," said Rachel. "It allowed them to get the business up and running and they haven't looked back."

The pupils will be attending the regional finals in Newport, where they will need to show the judges that they understand how and why their business performed as it did. We'll let you know how they get on.

"It helps us learn the way of business. I am really looking forward to presenting our case to the judges. It's really exciting."

Megan,
year-6 pupil



"It's been really fun and I like selling things on the yard. We get to meet people and it has helped my maths. I have to add prices up and give the correct change."

Brandon,
year-4 pupil



"We are buying products on Amazon that we think customers will find interesting. We put the money back into the business to buy more stock. Eventually we will use it to buy something for the school."

Charlie, year-4 pupil



"Every day we take the shop out onto the yard and we sell the things to the other pupils. We are raising money for the school. It's fun."

Iestyn, year-5 pupil



CAMPAIGN TO MAKE HOUSING AN ELECTIONS PRIORITY

Newport City Homes is backing the Homes for Wales campaign.

The campaign has been set up to ensure that housing is a key political issue in the National Assembly for Wales elections and asks Welsh residents to help end the housing crisis in Wales. Since 2008, house prices have risen 16%, more than six times the average person's income, and nearly 8,600 families have been on the housing waiting list since before the last election.

We have joined the campaign and we are reminding our residents of the campaign's key message that the

housing crisis isn't just about homes, it's about people. Our top priorities are our residents, ensuring we invest in homes and neighbourhoods, providing new homes and making a difference in our communities. In order for us to continue carrying out our ambitious 2020 vision, the housing crisis needs to end.

One of our tenants, Abbie Mahon (pictured), agrees: "My concerns for the future are that my children won't be able to afford their own homes. This is why we need more affordable homes in Wales."

The campaign is being led by a coalition of seven organisations: Community Housing Cymru Group, Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru, Shelter Cymru, Welsh Tenants, Home Builders Federation, Residential Landlords Association, and the Royal Town Planning Institute.

If you'd like to find out more about the campaign and help end the housing crisis, visit www.homesfor.wales



Make sure you're covered!

While we manage and maintain your home, we don't insure your personal belongings.

This is each resident's responsibility. Without it, personal belongings, furniture or internal decorations are not covered against theft, fire, vandalism or burst pipes.

As a resident you may also be responsible if your home gets damaged because of something you have done (even if it was an accident) or because you have been negligent.

We have joined up with Aviva to develop a low cost home contents insurance package.

You can pay on a weekly basis, giving you peace of mind that, if the unexpected happens, you won't have to find the money to replace your essential belongings.

For more information, contact **01633 381111**.



EXCITING

NEW PROJECT FOR TEENAGE GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

An exciting and inspiring project for girls and young women has arrived in Newport.

Go Girls was created by Charter and Bron Afon housing associations to help build confidence and self-esteem at an important time of life.

We have now joined forces with Charter and Bron Afon to bring the project to Newport for girls aged 14-25 years old. It encourages young women to develop self-respect, nurture healthy relationships and value their own qualities and abilities.

Our youth worker Chelsea Crook said: "Go Girls is such a great opportunity for young women of all backgrounds and I'm delighted we are embracing it in Newport. It is a great way for girls to increase their confidence, try new things and make more friends.

"The taster sessions have started and you can see a positive effect already. The girls decide what they want to achieve and work with youth workers to make that happen."

Participant Britney Higgs has enjoyed the experience so far: "We've been doing it for the last three weeks, after one of the youth workers suggested we try it. We talk about different subjects and interact with other people."

Abbie Naylor said: "Go Girls lets us have our say, it gives us a voice. We get to meet new friends and I hope to get some new training and skills to help me get a job eventually."

Ffion Williams agreed: "We've watched videos of what other Go Girls groups have done and talked about them. It's good fun. We talk about lots of different things. I hope it will increase my self esteem, help me learn new skills and increase my chances of getting a job."

Sessions are held on Tuesday nights at the Hub, on Roman Way in Caerleon, at 5pm-7pm. All the sessions are free, with food, refreshments and travel all provided.

Contact chelsea.crook@newportcityhomes.com, kate.aspinwall@newportcityhomes.com or **01633 227710** for more information.



REGENERATION PROJECT FOR PILL APPROVED

Newport City Council has approved our regeneration project for Pillgwenlly.

The current design and layout in the area has contributed to an increase in deprivation and crime, and has caused access issues for emergency service vehicles. This project is expected to prevent anti-social behaviour

and improve the area overall.

Newport City Council's planning committee voted unanimously to approve the redevelopment plans in January.

"We are very pleased with the outcome of what is being done. The results will benefit 99 per cent of the people around here. Anti-social behaviour will be knocked on the head, as there won't be any alleyways for them to hide in."

Gill Healey, Resident of 34 years





"I think it'll be much better. It'll open it all out and help stop gangs. I really hope it makes a big difference."

*Marian Barnett,
Resident of 49 years*



The project will see the community hub in Raglan Court demolished along with garages in Knight Close, Coulson Close, Francis Street and Alma Street.

We will build a new community hub where the Knight Street garages currently reside, and a new three-story block in Williams Close and Charlotte Drive containing one-bedroom flats and three-bedroom houses.

Regeneration manager Marc Fury said: "We are absolutely thrilled that planning permission has been granted.

"We are confident this project will make a real difference to those living in Pill.

"We have a real opportunity here to create a legacy that will bring benefits to residents, businesses and visitors alike for many years to come."

The project also involves recladding the outside surfaces of a number of the existing buildings to improve their appearance, and removing a basketball court in Francis Drive, which is often the target of anti-social behaviour. In its place two new areas of open space and parking will be set up.

To view the full application visit newport.gov.uk and search for application 15/0314.



A brief history of Pill

Pillgwenlly was built during the early 1900s, before undergoing a substantial transformation during the 1960s and 70s.

A contemporary estate was created to replace the existing traditional housing. However, the layout in the Francis Street/Coulson Close area has seen an increase in deprivation and crime in recent years, as well as causing access issues for emergency service vehicles.

We own a small proportion of the total properties in Pillgwenlly, most being flats and terraced homes in the Coulson Close area. We also manage Raglan Court - a sheltered housing scheme.

Get involved

The Pillgwenlly resident engagement forum has helped to shape the plans.

This a group of committed residents who meet on a monthly basis to identify solutions to the issues experienced by the community.

The group meets on the second Wednesday of every month at Raglan Court (10am-12pm). It's an open meeting and residents from Pill are invited to come along and get involved.



'Youf Gang' tackle anti-social behaviour

Ten pioneering Shaftesbury youngsters are helping to improve their local environment.

Police community support officer Janet Woodward started the Shaftesbury 'Youf Gang' last year and so far has 10 enthusiastic local children aged 9-13.

Youf Gang secretary Charlie Young said: "We have an interest in the local neighbourhood and have a motto of 'making Shaftesbury a nicer place to live'.

"We hold monthly meetings and have already carried out several litter picks in the area.

"We hope to tackle other projects in 2016 to enhance the local community and be role models for local young people. We want more to join us!"

Our resident engagement officer Kate Aspinwall said: "The Youf Gang are just fantastic. They are really leading the way in Shaftesbury and showing everyone else just how important it is to look after your community and take pride in the place you live."

Contact kate.aspinwall@newportcityhomes.com or **01633 227710** to find out more. Alternatively, email Richy.Davies@gwent.pnn.police.uk or **07404 653018**.

DON'T STAND FOR FLY-TIPPING



You're being asked to help take a stand against fly-tipping and report any incidents you witness confidentially to Newport City Council.

We want Newport to be a place we are all proud to live. Fly-tipping is an eyesore that spoils green spaces and beauty spots across the city.

Anyone found fly-tipping could face a £20,000 fine and up to six months in prison.

Businesses must dispose of waste correctly too - through an authorised waste carrier. All waste produced must be correctly presented for collection, disposed of through a registered waste

carrier, and the correct documentation - a waste transfer note - must be kept for a minimum of two years

If you have your rubbish removed and it ends up being fly-tipped, you could be held responsible and fined.

If you witness fly-tipping, you can report it confidentially to the council by calling 01633 656656.



SAFER COMMUNITIES

We recently helped to make one of our communities safer by removing someone convicted of a serious offence from one of our properties.

This was made possible by a new power brought in by the Anti-Social Crime and Policing Act 2014. We can take possession of a home if one of the following five conditions is met:

- If a tenant, member of the household or visitor has been convicted of a serious offence.
- If a tenant, member of the household or visitor has breached an injunction.
- If a tenant, member of the household or visitor has been convicted of a breach of a criminal behaviour order.
- Where the property has been closed as a result of anti-social behaviour in or near the property and the closure is for more than 48 hours.
- If a tenant, member of the household or visitor has been convicted for a breach of a notice or order to abate noise in relation to the tenant's property under the Environmental Protection Act.

In this case the person had been convicted of a serious offence in the area that they lived.

Our tenancy management team will continue to work with partner agencies to deal with anti-social behaviour in our communities and improve safety for our residents. You can contact the team on **01633 381111** for help and advice.

NEW BOILER SYSTEM FOR DUFFRYN

Our biomass boiler is nearing completion.



Construction of the new energy centre started in April 2015 as planned, and we are pleased to say that the recent bad weather hasn't beaten us and the project is on target.

A biomass boiler is an environmentally-friendly carbon efficient boiler that runs on woodchip and we are delivering the project in partnership with British Gas.

The old chimney stack has been replaced with a slimmer chimney and two large oil storage tanks dating back to the 1970s have been removed.

As part of these works, we visited homes affected to see how energy efficient they are.

For more information on the new Duffryn heating system, call **01633 381111** or email **Duffryn.HeatingSystem@newportcityhomes.com**.



Resident satisfaction

Pauline Woods is a Newport City Homes resident from Kingfisher Place in Duffryn.

Pauline had always paid her bills by standing order and recently rang Newport City Homes to ask for a rebate.

During the phone call, Pauline was told that she would have to have a Switch2 energy smart meter fitted.

Pauline admitted that initially she thought she would hate the new meter: "My main concern was that if I became ill, I would not be able to go out and put money on my meter," she said.

However, Pauline was assured that she could top up her money online or over the phone.

Now Pauline loves her new meter!

Pauline can see how much money she has left on the meter, and has found that it is not costing her any more money.

Pauline said: "I'm a fan of it! I like the fact that I can be in control. I can put money in it when I want to and see how much I've spent."

ALMOST COMPLETE



Community heating system provides local employment

Jack Moore is a former apprentice for Newport City Homes.

As part of Jack's apprenticeship, he carried out heating installation work and heating maintenance. He also completed a lot of installation work during his apprenticeship for a company called Ivor Cook.

Thanks to Jack's two-year apprenticeship with us, he was able to gain employment with Ivor Cook working on the Duffryn community heating system.

Jack, whose current job involves completing maintenance on the whole of the Duffryn estate, said: "I learnt a lot from my apprenticeship. I wouldn't be where I am now, running a whole estate, if I hadn't completed my apprenticeship with Newport City Homes."

Following in Jack's footsteps is Oliver Watkins, who is currently completing his final year of a four-year apprenticeship with Newport City Homes.

The first two years of Oliver's apprenticeship focused on plumbing, while the final two years focused on gas engineering. Oliver is currently working with heating fitter John Brunnock on the Duffryn community heating system.

Oliver said: "I like the project. The apprenticeship is really good, I've learnt a lot of skills."

The project has also supported the local supply chain with contractors and specialist suppliers from south Wales carrying out work and providing materials during construction.



Working in partnership

Dan Thompson is a project manager at British Gas and is currently managing the Duffryn community heating system project.

He makes sure it runs on schedule, carries out site safety inductions, liaises with contractors, and updates us on the progress of the project.

Dan said: "We have had a few issues with the gas main which slowed us down at the start, but we are now making good progress. Newport City Homes have been very helpful, they have made things a lot easier. It has been a great project to work on."

Smart meters

We have installed more than 400 energy smart meters in residents' homes in Duffryn, allowing you to have more control over the costs of your heating/hot water system.

Energy metering is important for monitoring and reducing energy consumption. Accurate metering can help you manage what you use, save money and reduce your carbon footprint.

Check out the resident portal at www.switch2.co.uk or call 0333 3122010.



SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR COUPLE AFTER LAUNCHPAD SUCCESS

A Maesglas couple have praised the support they have received to help them find employment.

Andrew Collins and his partner Kelly Morgan were both long-term unemployed. Their confidence and motivation was low, which was holding them back in their search for work.

Thanks to our free training courses, they have now taken their first steps on the road to employment.

Andrew explained: "Community investment officer Lisa Ash told us about the Launchpad scheme and suggested we try it. The training was held at Bettws Community Centre, which was near our home and easily accessible. The support we have received over the last six months from the community centre has been excellent.

"We had talks from people who had set up their own businesses, as well as sessions on general things, such as cooking skills, help to write job applications and interview advice."

The job application element was particularly useful to the couple, as Kelly explained: "They went through our applications and highlighted key words in them and how we should emphasise our skills."

Andrew had been out of work for a long period of time, due to illness and family issues, while Kelly had suffered from depression for many years and lacked confidence.

Andrew said: "The courses gave us the confidence and motivation

to start voluntary work and we haven't looked back."

As a result of attending the Launchpad course, both Andrew and Kelly now volunteer one day a week at Newport Credit Union.

"We are putting some of the skills we have learnt into practice and, hopefully, this experience will help us find permanent employment somewhere," said Kelly.

Of the recent Launchpad participants, 75% of attendees are now in full time work.

For more information on training opportunities available to you, contact Lisa Ash on **01633 227764** or lisa.ash@newportcityhomes.com



Ambitious project is a huge success

In April 2015, we began a refurbishment of three empty properties on Temple Street in Pillgwenlly.

Numbers 25-27 were terraced flats that needed major refurbishment. An ambitious project was undertaken, overseen by project surveyor Paula Gannon-Lewis, to transform the flats into modern houses.

We worked with Eros Architects to create a new vision for these properties, and hired P&P Buildings, a small business from Blaenavon, to turn this vision into a reality.

Before starting the work, Janhanora Bagum, who lives at number 28 had to be contacted about the work, as her property is connected to number 27.

All surrounding

neighbours were also notified, and then it was time for the revamp to get under way.

Right from the start P&P Buildings were faced with numerous challenges: Japanese Knotweed, rot, damp and infestations. The major shock was to be found in number 27, where a tree was found growing into the home, with its roots heading towards the boiler.

Working on our behalf, P&P Buildings took time to speak with people who lived locally, keeping in regular contact to let them know what was happening.

Shane Roynon, P&P Buildings' site manager, said: "We worked well as a team and when we encountered challenging aspects we overcame them as a team. I've since met with the tenants and I am pleased to see them enjoying their new homes. I am proud that I was part of the team which carried out the work."

The work took six months to complete and we came in under budget.

All three properties have been let and are providing much-needed quality housing in our communities.



Rent free weeks

We offer residents two rent free weeks a year, if you maintain credit on your account.

For 2016, these will take place on:

- Week beginning 4th April
- Week beginning 26th December

You will receive written notification in advance of the rent-free week if you are expected to make a payment. For more information, contact your income officer, email income.services@newportcityhomes.com or call 01633 381111.



MONUMENTAL MOVE MADE EASY THANKS TO TENANCY SUPPORT



We helped one of our tenants move home so she could be nearer her daughter.

Antoinette Helmich decided to move from her house in Old Barn where she had lived for 31 years, to a new home in Victoria Court.

She was struggling with the upkeep of a three-bedroomed house and garden on her own. Antoinette also found it difficult to pay bills for a large property and was hit by the bedroom tax, as she had a spare room for five years.

"The council did help with a DHP [discretionary housing payment] for a while, but it was all getting too much," she said.

Despite her fear of moving from a home and area that she had lived in for so long, Antoinette realised she had to do it and started to bid on properties.

Lettings officer Claire Evans showed Miss Helmich a one-bedroomed flat in Victoria Court, and she fell in love with the property at first sight.

Antoinette said: "It's a lovely quiet place to live, the neighbours are lovely and my daughter lives exactly six and half minutes away in the car!"

We were able to help Antoinette with her moving costs because she was moving to a smaller home because she was affected by the bedroom tax. Claire put her in touch with tenancy support officer Francesca Bellandi, who visited Antoinette to work out exactly what help she needed.

"Fran was marvellous!" Antoinette said. "She arranged everything for my move. She went out of her way to support me."

If you have been affected by the bedroom tax and want to move to a smaller home, call **01633 381111**, email enquiries@newportcityhomes.com or call into one of our offices.

Tenancy support is available

We have a specialist team in place dedicated to providing advice and support to residents on a range of issues.

Our tenancy support team can help you with:

- Managing debt
- Opening a bank account
- Managing on a budget
- Accessing training and employment
- Furnishing your home
- Reducing household bills
- Accessing affordable credit

To contact the team, call **01633 227788** or email tenancysupport@newportcityhomes.com





JAMIE'S A RISING STAR

A Newport City Homes employee is a finalist in the Rising Stars Cymru 2016 competition.

Asset management technician Jamie Roberts is competing in the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Cymru competition, which is open to anyone working or studying in Welsh housing for less than three years. The competition is an opportunity for staff, students and residents at an early stage in their career to expand their networks and contribute to neighbourhoods and communities in Wales.

Jamie (25), from Bettws, said: "It is an honour to have been nominated and selected as a finalist. I am very excited for the next stages of the competition and to meet influential people on the way."



During the competition, Jamie will have to take part in a number of challenges, including writing two 500 word blogs, taking over the CIH's Twitter newsfeed for an hour, and holding a presentation at Wales' premier housing conference and exhibition, TAI 2016.

The winner of the competition will receive a range of prizes including an invite to launch the Rising Stars Cymru 2017 competition and a year's mentoring from an influential housing professional.

Good luck Jamie!


Welsh Housing Quality Standard

In his day job, Jamie Roberts has been letting new tenants know about the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and how their property meets the standard.

The WHQS requires all social landlords to improve their housing stock to the governments required standard.

The standard ensures that properties are of good quality and suitable for the needs of existing and future residents.

We have started providing all new residents with a certificate that lets them know that their home meets the standard.

There may be cases where we still need to carry out work in order to bring properties up to standard. If this is the case, the certificate shows  when we are expecting to carry out the work.

The WHQS certificate of conformity will be a legal requirement from April. If you have any questions please contact the assets team on **01633 381111**.



COULD YOU BE A CHALLENGE PANEL MEMBER?

Are you passionate about your community?

Can you think of ways in which we can develop and improve our services?

If so, join our challenge panel. This is a group of residents who review our services and make improvement recommendations. As a panel member, you will help make a difference to our community, making sure residents are put first. You will be provided with full support from our team and you will be fully trained in scrutiny techniques.

One of the challenge panel's recent tasks was to review our main customer phone number (01633 381111).

Some of its recommendations included:

- Making the welcome message more user friendly and cost effective
- Reference numbers should be given automatically (to residents and contractors) for all calls to avoid caller repetition

- Raising awareness for Newport City Homes' staff on how they can report repairs or contact other teams without using the main customer phone number

- All call handlers have an A-Z information guide.

The panel has also completed its final overview of the voids and lettings recommendations. It found that 99% of recommendations were able to be completed and it has requested a performance update in six months' time. The next review is due to look at our website.

One of our top priorities is putting residents at the heart of what we do. We have reviewed all 20 of the recommendations and made agreements on how to move forward to improve our service. These recommendations help us to continually learn and improve the services we offer.

If you're a committed, motivated individual with a passion for improvement and time on your hands, then we need you!

To apply to be a panel member, contact kelsie.cantelo@newportcityhomes.com or call 01633 381111.

TENANT HELPS TO IMPROVE SERVICES

Wayne Hodgson is an ex-serviceman living in Ringland.

In June 2015, he had issues with his garden fence, so he contacted Newport City Homes.

Although our customer services team were polite and helpful, there were concerns about contractors arriving unannounced or not turning up on specific dates. A lack of communication between contractors caused the garden repairs to be delayed until August 2015, which left Wayne unhappy. However, when it was completed, he was pleased with

the high standard of work carried out by B&H Clearance.

We met with Wayne and were impressed by his passion to ensure all our residents received positive results. Wayne also spoke highly of our customer service team, as he was impressed with the way in which complaints are dealt with. We suggested Wayne become a member of one of our resident panels, and he leapt at the chance. Wayne said: "I didn't want other people to be put in the same situation. I wanted to improve the work being done in people's homes."

Wayne is now a part of the Quality Improvement Panel, (QIP) undertaking site visits and helping to create satisfaction surveys to encourage customer conversation.

Wayne's experience has given him with the opportunity to turn something negative into something positive; working with employees to ensure that work undertaken

in homes and neighbourhoods is monitored, reviewed and improved.

If Wayne hadn't informed us of his experience, we wouldn't have had the opportunity to resolve issues and make improvements.

To find out more about QIP contact the resident engagement on **01633 381111**.



Contact us at the push of a button!



Don't forget you can contact us on Facebook and Twitter if you'd prefer.

You can post enquiries on our social media pages at any time of day, rather than having to wait until the morning to call. The accounts are not monitored 24/7, but we'll respond as soon as we can.

Twitter is an online social networking service that lets users send and read short 140-character messages called tweets. Facebook lets users connect with friends and share photos, videos and lots more. Both are quick and easy ways of getting messages out fast.

Our Twitter account has more than 1,700 followers, while our Facebook account has almost 700 likes. More and more people are contacting us in this way. If you'd like to you can find us on:

Facebook: [/NewportCityH](#)

Twitter: [@NewportCityH](#)

ACADEMY STARS ARE A QUALIFIED SUCCESS



"A great experience"

Customer services assistant Kylie Cassar (22) also graduated from the NCH Academy.

Kylie said: "I have always been interested in customer services. I applied for the academy and the interview process was like speed dating. We had to speak to lots of different people. It was my first ever interview and it was a great way of doing it. I didn't feel as nervous because it was fun."

Kylie has spent the last two years working on reception at our main office in Nexus House, Newport, and she has thoroughly enjoyed her time here: "It has been great. I have a very supportive line manager and I've received loads of help.

"I have improved my computer skills – I can now use software such as Excel and CRM – and I've studied and passed the Chartered Institute of Housing customer services qualification and NVQ level 2 in housing. It's been a great experience. I wouldn't be where I am today without the academy scheme."

Meet Kristian Barratt.

He is just one of our many NCH Academy success stories.

Launched in 2012, the academy offers paid, office-based work placements to unemployed people and school leavers who are finding it hard to get a job. It provides training and work experience to enhance people's employability and nurture potential.

Kristian (26) successfully took part in the academy programme and is now employed full-time as a compliance works planner. He explained: "My mother is a tenant of Newport City Homes. We had an engineer visit the house for a repair and he mentioned the academy programme. I was looking for a job at the time and decided I would give it a go.

"I applied during the first group of admissions to the scheme, so I was part of the original batch of workers. The process was really easy."

Kristian's role saw him dealing with tenants, engineers and contractors.

He says the experience was essential in helping him develop his work skills: "Prior to starting here, I wasn't very good at communicating with people," he said.

"I hated talking to people I didn't know on the phone or in person. I wasn't confident and I was very nervous. However, I had to do this as part of my job and now it's not an issue. I've become a lot more confident and learnt new skills. It's been a great experience."

When Kristian's mentor left his post for another role last year, Kristian applied for the vacant job and he hasn't looked back.

"The academy is a great programme if you want to put the effort in, but you need to want to work," said Kristian. "It's perfect for people who want to progress, get experience and skills. You can learn new skills, while earning money. I would definitely recommend it as a great way to launch your career."

For more information about the academy, email recruitment@newportcityhomes.com, call **01633 227701**, visit www.newportcityhomes.com.



TRAINING HELPS BETTYANN SLEEP AT NIGHT

Everyone needs a good night's sleep, although it's easier for some than others.

Bettws resident Bettyann Sheppard had long-standing sleeping problems and this was having a negative impact on her life.

"I was fed-up with not sleeping and feeling tired all the time," she said.

"I have had sleeping problems for many years; decades, in fact. I suffer from both issues – not being able to fall asleep and waking up repeatedly during the night and not being able to fall back asleep."

"I used to lie in bed and go through the alphabet trying to list as many six-letter words as I could. I tried to bore myself to sleep, but it didn't work."

"One of the reasons I gave up work at 61 was because of my sleeping problems."

Bettyann went on a Sleep Wales course in January and has found it incredibly helpful. The three-hour

course, which was held at the University of South Wales' city centre campus, was run to improve people's sleep and well-being.

"The tutors were great," she Bettyann. "It was incredibly calming. They taught us techniques to help us get to sleep and we shared our experiences with people who have similar issues. I'm using the techniques regularly now and they have really helped."

"I used to lie in bed and go through the alphabet trying to list as many six-letter words as I could. I tried to bore myself to sleep, but it didn't work"

WORK PROGRAMME

Contractor Glendale will carry out grounds maintenance, including grass cutting, hedge cutting, flowerbeds and leaf collection.

Operatives will be on site from 8am until 6pm, but noisy equipment will not be used before 9am. Litter picks will be carried out before cutting and any obstructions will be reported to our estates team.



The following work will take place:

Aneurin Bevan Court	4 April, 18 April	Raglan Court	4 April, 18 April
Avalon Court	11 April, 25 April	Shaftesbury	4 April, 18 April
Church Court	11 April, 25 April	Stelvio	4 April, 18 April
Eschol Court	11 April, 25 April	Westgate Court	11 April, 25 April
Isca Court	11 April, 25 April	Whittle	4 April, 18 April
Longmeadow Court	11 April, 25 April		
Milton Court	4 April, 18 April		
Nightingale Court	4 April, 18 April		
Oak Road	4 April, 18 April		



Contractor Superclean Services will clean external windows on the following dates:

Aneurin Bevan Court	2 May	Raglan Court	4 April
Avalon Court	2 May	Shaftesbury	4 April
Church Court	4 April	Stelvio	4 April
Eschol Court	2 May	Westgate Court	2 May
Isca Court	2 May	Whittle	4 April
Longmeadow Court	2 May		
Milton Court	4 April		
Nightingale Court	2 May		
Oak Road	N/A		

