

Bridge Brief



Summer 2018

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The magazine for Newport City Homes' residents
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New city centre office officially opened

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OUR 2020 VISION

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. 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. Throughout Bridge Brief, 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 five areas.

**2020
VISION**

We're focusing on:



Putting residents at the heart of what we do



Investing in our homes and neighbourhoods



Providing new homes



Making a difference in our communities



Strong and effective organisation

New office location and Nexus House

Our Nexus House office is no longer open to residents.

If you want to see us face-to-face, you'll need to visit the new office at 195 Upper Dock Street, Newport, NP20 1DA. It's easy to find and a stone's throw from the main bus station.

All our offices will be shut for one day in August. This is for the August bank holiday Monday.

All offices will close at 4.30pm on Friday 24 August and will return to normal opening hours on Tuesday 28 August.

In case of emergency, call 01633 381111.

Get in touch with us

We need your help to make us even better!

Let us know how we've done, whether you've had a great experience or there's some way you think we could deliver a service better.

We would love to hear your thoughts:

- enquiries@newportcityhomes.com
- 01633 381111
- NewportCityH on Facebook
- @NewportCityH on Twitter
- 195 Upper Dock Street, NP20 1DA
- 8–11 Ringland Centre, NP19 9HG
- 8–11 Bettws Centre, NP20 7TN
- www.newportcityhomes.com

Resident health scheme launched



A new scheme is helping to increase physical activity and quality of life for 200 residents who are isolated, inactive and in need of support.

We have partnered with Newport Live and Sport Wales to offer residents six-month memberships at Newport Live venues.

The scheme also identifies and upskills 'community champions' so they can deliver physical activities across their communities.

"Increasing participation in physical activity can provide huge benefits to physical and mental health and reduce serious health conditions such as coronary heart

disease and diabetes," said Leigh Williams, sport and physical activity development officer at Newport Live.

"So many eligible members are people who would love to be more healthy and active, but are limited by finances or health circumstances and may not know where to start.

"This scheme will help them get on track safely, empowering and inspiring them to become happier and healthier."

Newport City Homes' sustaining communities team leader Sam Reed said: "At Newport City Homes, we always put the resident at the heart of what we do and this is the latest scheme to help encourage residents to live happier, healthier lives.

"It is an excellent example of partnership working in the city to improve the quality of life of our residents."

To find out more, contact 01633 227887.



**NEWPORT LIVE
CASNEWYDD FYW**

Inspiring people to be happier and healthier

AWARD WINNERS!

July was an award-winning month!

At the TPAS Cymru Participation Awards, we won the top prize in the 'improving services' category. This is for the work of the 'customer and digital services task and finish group', which was set up to help us develop customer-focused service standards that ensure residents are at the heart of our services and activities. Meanwhile, apprentice David Kerr took home the gold award in the plastering category at the Welsh Skills Build competition.



Support services available

Residents are being reminded that help and support is available to them.

For example, one resident, a single parent with two children, was recently referred to our sustaining tenancies team for support. She had rent arrears due to her non-dependent child not claiming benefit or working. Therefore she was charged at the higher amount of the non-dependent charge.

To help, we applied for a discretionary housing payment and she received £961.17 to clear the arrears. Her non-dependent child was advised to claim a benefit or look for work.

The resident was also put onto the HelpU water scheme, which has saved her £405.68 yearly. Her water charges are now only £3.65 a week.

New privacy notice

Your privacy is important to us.

Because of this, we have a revised privacy notice on our website that explains what personal data we collect from you and how we use it.

We process your personal information, including any special categories of personal information, in connection with managing your tenancy.

We only do this, though, when we're confident that you would reasonably

expect us to do so. For example, when you help us with surveys that we're undertaking in order for us to improve the service that we give to you.

In some instances we may require your consent in order to process your personal information.

If we do, we will make this clear to you and will not process your information unless you consent to us doing so.



A full version of the privacy notice is available at www.newportcityhomes.com

For more information, contact 01633 227694 or paul.boobyer@newportcityhomes.com

Summer start for cladding work



We will start work to remove and replace the cladding on our three tower blocks during the summer.



Following the tragic event at Grenfell, we quickly responded by installing sprinklers in each of the towers.

With the sprinkler works complete and extensive fire safety measures in place, we are now starting work to remove the existing cladding and replace it with a product that has passed government tests.

The safety of our residents has always, and will continue to be, a priority for us.

We have appointed contractors R&M Williams to replace the existing cladding.

Cladding removal at Hillview will begin in late summer, before work moves to Greenwood and Milton Court.

Welcoming the news, Newport City Homes board chair Nicola Somerville said: "This is a major milestone and highlights our commitment to always put the resident at the heart of what we do."

"We have worked intensely with residents over the last year and have echoed both their and our concerns to Welsh Government. Our work with Welsh Government, South Wales Fire and Rescue, Newport City Council and wider partners is an excellent example of partnership working and agile public services in action.

"I'm delighted that this proactive, reassuring work will start as early as it is."

Community clear-up operation in Duffryn

More than 25 bags of rubbish were collected during a community litter pick in Duffryn.

We took part in the event with Gwent Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Newport City Council and Melin Homes.

Pupils from local schools also offered a helping hand.



Dog breeding rules

The Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014 requires anyone breeding three or more litters of puppies in a 12 month period to have a licence.

Anyone found guilty of an offence under this regulation is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months in prison, a fine up to £5,000, or both.

No-one may keep a breeding establishment without first obtaining a licence.

You need to contact Newport City Council before

applying for a licence, so that you can talk about the conditions you would need to meet.

Licences are valid for 12 months and must be renewed before the expiry date.

In addition, our tenancy agreement states: "Subject to our written approval, you may keep... up to two dogs..." and "The breeding of animals and or birds for profit is not allowed without our prior written permission."

For more information, contact Newport City Council on 01633 656656.



New homes complete



We have built our first ever new homes.

Our Glen Court development was officially completed in May, with 11 new family homes and a bungalow equipped for people with disabilities now let to residents.

Board chair Nicola Somerville said: “These 12 homes are our first new builds and are a little taste of what we want to achieve. They are the start of our ambitious development plans.

“Our core purpose at Newport City Homes is to create homes in communities in which people want to live.

“This development here in the heart of Bettws

is evidence of this and highlights our commitment to build affordable homes that are fit for communities now and in the future.

“These plans will complement our commitment of continuing to substantially invest in our existing properties.

“I’m really proud of what we have achieved here and what we can achieve in the future.”

A special ribbon-cutting event (pictured above) marked the completion of our first new build homes, which provide safe, warm and welcoming spaces for Newport families.

Rent free

We offer residents two rent-free weeks a year, if they maintain credit on their account.

The next rent-free weeks are Monday 24 December and Monday 1 April.

If you are in credit and pay your rent by direct debit every fortnight, four weekly or monthly, you don’t need to change your payments. We calculate your rent payment, taking into account the two free weeks that you would be entitled to.

If you owe rent arrears, you will be expected to make your usual payment to give you a chance to catch up.

We will write to you in advance of the rent-free week if you are expected to make a payment.

Contact your income officer or call 01633 381111 for more information.

How are we doing?

Here are some headlines from our latest self evaluation – ‘How are we doing?’.

This is our opportunity to share with you the strides we are making towards meeting our plans to continuously improve. No matter how good our services are, we can always be better.

This is, however, how we think we’re doing.

More important to us is how do you think we’re doing.

By listening to your views we know we can truly make a difference in our communities.

Find out more at www.newportcityhomes.com

We’d love to hear from you.



Talk to us on

 NewportCityH

 @NewportCityH

 enquiries@newportcityhomes.com

 01633 38111

Putting residents at the heart



We launched a brand **new website** that gives people access to **services 24/7**.

77.5%

of our residents are happy with NCH as a landlord.

Up from **70.8%**.

93.3%

of our residents find our colleagues helpful.



During April-Sept 2017, we helped residents save:

£80k

on their water bills



£198k

on their rent debt

Investing in our homes and neighbourhoods



100%

We have completed a **stock condition survey of all our properties**.

This means we have better data so we can spend money in the right places and maintain Welsh Housing Quality Standards.

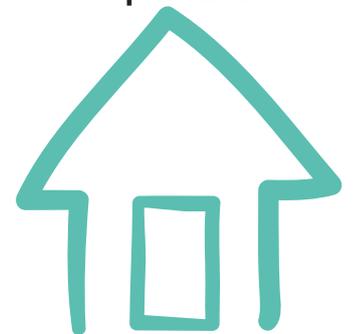
Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance has increased from **66.1%** to **70.2%** in the last 12 months.

99.9%

of our homes are Gas Safe compliant.



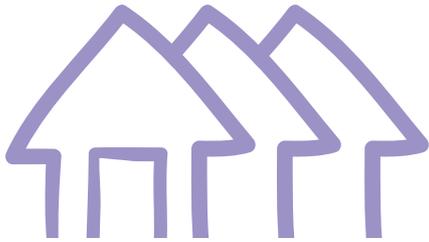
75.7% of our residents are satisfied with the quality of their home. Up from **70%**



Providing new homes

Completed building our first new homes in Bettws:

11 houses and 1 bungalow.



Established a development programme – we can build

827 homes

on specified sites

over 10 years

within our current budget.



We have made strides in our

£7.9m

Pillgwenlly regeneration scheme

We have:

- Demolished **25** garages and **seven** underpasses to minimise anti-social behaviour
- Built **one** community hub
- Converted **16** bedsits into flats
- Constructed **11** new homes

Making a difference in our communities



We have supported residents experiencing financial hardship to access **£180,000** in grants.

We have supported

60%

of our residents to remain **out of debt** as a result of 'Bedroom Tax'.



We employed

10 people

through our apprenticeship and work-placed academy programme, which offered both trade and office-based opportunities



Strong and effective organisation

We focus on providing **value for money**, and to ensure we have enough resources to support the development of new homes.

Our operating margin is 10.7%

This is the operating surplus as a percentage of income.



We have a **30 year business plan** that enables us to build new homes, regenerate communities and provide resident-focused services.

Our **Equality and Diversity** working group is helping us to promote equality of opportunity for all and ensure we represent the communities we serve.



Our Customer Service Standards

Tell us how well you think we're doing?



New city centre office opens

Olympic medallist Jamie Baulch joined our residents and partners to officially open our new city centre office.

Located a stone's throw away from the bus station, the new office at 195 Upper Dock Street is the new focal point for residents to access face-to-face services.

The decision to locate in the city centre is a direct result of how we're listening and acting on resident feedback.

NCH board chair, Nicola Somerville said: "This demonstrates our

commitment to listen to our residents and make decisions that put them at the heart of what we do. Residents told us they wanted easy access to our offices and to do more online, while partners across the city are keen to work together to regenerate the city centre.

"Relocating right next to the bus station will deliver just that, meeting residents' needs with our resident portal and enabling us to play our part in regenerating this great city of ours."

Newport City Council leader Debbie Wilcox said: "The council shares

NCH's ethos of putting residents at the heart of what we do. The project has not only breathed new life into what has been a long-standing vacant property – supporting the aspirations of the city centre masterplan, it will also make services even more accessible to residents and people who want to become residents."



Opening hours

Monday 8.30am–5pm

Tuesday 8.30am–6pm

Wednesday 8.30am–5pm

Thursday 8.30am–6pm

Friday 8.30am–4.30pm

First patron named



Former board member Cissie Beal has been named our first patron.

The announcement was made at a celebratory event at the opening of our new city centre office.

The honour recognises the constant support and dedication that Cissie has shown to Newport communities.

Board chair Nicola Somerville said: "Fourteen years ago the Newport Housing Commission, of which Cissie was a member, was set up to explore options for housing in the city. It was from here that Newport City Homes was born. The commission recognised that housing is more than just bricks and mortar. It's a catalyst for economic regeneration and community development in the city. Cissie played a fundamental role in our beginnings as a housing association and has been a constant support through our nine year history."

Cissie was delighted to receive her new title: "I'm absolutely thrilled to be Newport City Homes' very first patron. It was lovely to have my children with me as I received the honour. I have always volunteered. I love giving back to the community. Newport has been very good to me and I love living here."

Find out more about our website and online services

We have a new website that gives you access to some of our services, all day, every day.

This makes it easier for you to reach us, however you choose.

Times are changing and that means some residents want to access services in different ways.

Our new website gives you the option to safely and securely access services from your phone, tablet or laptop, any time of the day or night.

Once registered, you'll have your own online account that is unique to you.

You'll be able to access your rent statements, make a request, or make a payment, any time of the day or night.

Over time, we'll add more services so that you can do more online.

There's a short video on the website that explains the online services.

For more information or to set up an online account, simply go to www.newportcityhomes.com



SPORT

in the

PARK

OUTDOOR FAMILY FUN DAYS

DIWRNODAU HWYL YN YR AWYR AGORED I DEULUOEDD

Three outdoor spaces in Newport offering a host of family fun activities and games.

Tri man agored yng Nghasnewydd yn cynnal llu o weithgareddau a gemau hwyl i'r teulu.

Rogerstone Welfare Ground
Maes Llesiant Tŷ-du

August 9 Awst

Beechwood Park
Parc Beechwood

August 16 Awst

Newport International Sports Village
Pentref Chwaraeon Rhyngwladol Casnewydd

August 23 Awst

11am – 4pm

£3 per child, £5 for 2 children (Adults Free)

£3 y plentyn, £5 ar gyfer 2 blentyn (Oedolion Am Ddim)



NEWPORT LIVE
CASNEWYDD FYW

01633 656757

newportlive.co.uk   

RINGLAND REGENERATION CONTRACTOR APPOINTED

We have appointed Lovell as our developer to deliver the £7.5million first phase of a wide-ranging regeneration programme in Ringland.

Lovell will start work this September on the redevelopment at Cot Farm, which will create 56 modern homes and apartments. The scheme will create 26 two- and three-bedroom homes and 30 one- and two-bedroom apartments on land at Hendre Farm Drive. A number of existing maisonettes – which are empty – will be demolished. Due for completion in December 2019, this is the first part of a wider Ringland programme, which follows extensive consultations with the local community.

Board chair Nicola Somerville said: “We want to ensure this is a community in which people want to live. We want to provide more affordable homes, design out areas that allow anti-social behaviour to thrive and improve access to community facilities. To ensure we meet the needs of the community, we are continuing to work with a steering group of local residents and retailers. This is helping us to deliver not only what the community wants, but what it needs.”



Lovell regional managing director Kate Rees added: “We are excited to have been selected to help kickstart this comprehensive regeneration programme and particularly pleased to be working for the first time with Newport City Homes.

“Our team brings a strong record in estate regeneration to this major transformation of the Ringland area. In addition to the new homes and apartments, an important part of the scheme will involve offering a range of job and employment opportunities for people living in the area.”

We are currently consulting on the master plan that includes plans for new shops and homes, and are working to submit the outline planning application in the autumn.



You can keep updated with the project on our Twitter page @NewportCityH and through the hashtag #FutureRingland

Project progresses in Pillgwenlly



Work continues on our £10million Pillgwenlly regeneration scheme.

The new community hub is due to open this spring, while work has started on the new builds in Williams Close.

Meanwhile, following a competition run in partnership with BRC Recruitment, contractor United Living has installed new hoarding at the site that shows



off poster designs made by pupils from Pillgwenlly Primary School. The standard of entry was brilliant and many of the pupils can now see their work as they walk to and from school.

To keep updated on the project, like /NewportCityH on Facebook or follow @NewportCityH on Twitter

Help to save you money on your water bills

We collect water charges from residents who are on unmetered water supplies on behalf of Welsh Water.

We offer support to access these schemes:

HelpU:

This will cap your water and sewerage bill at £187.37 and is available to residents whose total household income is £15,000 a year or less.

Customer Assistance Fund:

This helps you pay off your water arrears. If you commit to a payment plan for six months we will pay off half of your arrears and, if you then pay for a further six months, we will clear the remaining balance.

Water Direct:

This takes away the hassle of paying your water bills. It allows residents who receive certain benefits and who are currently in arrears to pay directly

through their benefits. If you sign up, we will even reduce your bill by £15.

WaterSure Wales:

This is available to our customers who have a water meter fitted. Only certain residents qualify for the scheme and they would have their annual charges capped at £309.95.

Help available:

For more information, contact 01633 381111.

Public transport - early years

Local historian and resident Keith Wood continues his series of historical articles:

Public transport in Newport started on 2 January, 1845, when George Masters operated a horse bus between Pillgwenlly and his wine and spirits vaults business at 2 Baneswell Road. Less than 18,000 people lived in Newport at the time.

On 19 December, 1872, Newport Council gave consent to the building of tramway system, which led to the Newport Tramway Company Limited holding its first shareholder meeting on 30 July, 1873.

The tramway opened on 1 February, 1875 and initially only two horse-drawn tramcars operated on one route between the town centre and the Frederick Street area of Pillgwenlly.

The fare was two pennies, which is equivalent to less

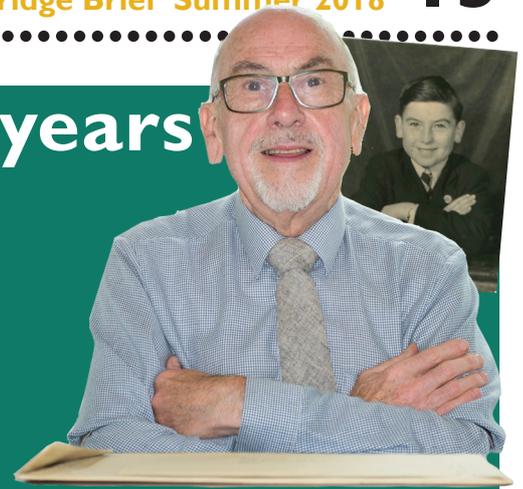
than one pence in our decimal currency.

In 1894, Newport Corporation purchased the tramways and electric-driven tramcars were introduced in April 1903. A few horse-drawn tramcars would continue to run after this date.

Eventually and gradually, the omnibus would replace the tramcar. The first Newport Corporation omnibus service started in April 1924. It operated between Clarence Place and Gibbs Road.

At 10.30pm on Sunday 5 September, 1937, the last tramcar ran on the Pillgwenlly to Corporation Road route. Although there was no official ceremony, three long-serving drivers were given the privilege of sharing the driving duties.

Several hundred people were waiting to meet the



tramcar when it arrived at Westgate Square for the final part of the journey to the depot on Corporation Road. John Cashmore Limited at Blaina Wharf in Pillgwenlly broke up most of the tramcars. Newport is one of only a few locations where a type of electric rail transport has continued until the present day. This is because of the Transporter Bridge.

For many decades after 1937, Newport Borough Council omnibuses would provide public transport, while companies like Red and White, Western Welsh, and Jones of Aberbeeg would take passengers to and from Newport.

Keith Wood

Talking Bridge Brief

What would you like to see in Bridge Brief?

We're looking for creative advisors to offer ideas and suggestions. Join our online group to see your ideas come to life in print. Email communications@newportcityhomes.com, tweet @NewportCityH or like /NewportCityH on Facebook.



UNITY helps the homeless

A 'help the homeless' event in Ringland raised more than £500 for charity.

Organised by UNITY, a youth forum supported by Newport City Homes and Charter Housing, it raised the money for local homelessness charity, Eden Gate.

The event behind Ringland Shopping Centre included a funfair, face-painting, stalls, sports activities and information stands.



Community relationship officer and UNITY leader Wesley Ford said: "This was a great afternoon of family fun that helped to raise money for a local charity."

"UNITY has been working closely with Eden Gate over the last year and it is very close to the members' hearts."

UNITY is a group of young people aged between 14-25 years, helping to give young people a voice and making a difference in housing and their communities across Newport.



Eviction for anti-social behaviour

We have evicted a tenant in Bettws for persistent anti-social behaviour.

First we obtained a six-month injunction on the person due to continued noise, including music, banging and shouting. Shortly after, we received complaints that it was being breached. Community safety wardens attended and used audio body cam equipment that witnessed

the music being played 25 metres from the property. The music was so loud that they could identify the song from outside the building. We used this evidence to take the case back to court for a committal hearing which has resulted in a proven breach of injunction and mandatory grounds for possession. The defendant was advised that if she was brought before the judge again for further breaches a custodial prison sentence would be ordered

without doubt.

Alongside the injunction, NCH also applied for possession of the property. In the hearing the tenant agreed to the breach of injunction and agreed to not contest the possession hearing. An immediate possession order was then obtained.

Caretaking service for flats

We have introduced regular health and safety checks to ensure that the communal areas in residents' homes are safe.

We need to make sure that fire exits are clear in case of emergencies.

We have had some feedback from residents wishing to keep things outside their front doors.

However, the safety of all our residents is paramount. In case of emergencies, it is essential that communal areas are kept clear and free from any obstruction.

We are therefore taking a **zero tolerance** approach to any item, no matter how small or trivial.

Our caretakers are placing stickers on any items that need to be removed.

Before...



After...



If they are not removed within the time-frame stated and the owner isn't identified, the block could be charged £80 for their removal.

We cannot store removed items and we will dispose of them.

The stickering of items gives owners a chance to remove items themselves and save everyone money.

Although we have invested heavily in these communal areas in recent years, their condition and upkeep varies greatly across the

city. They also need regular cleaning and maintenance.

Our new monthly caretaking service also covers general cleaning of the blocks.

In addition, it is providing us with a lot more information about the blocks and any issues affecting

the residents who live there.

We can therefore act quicker to resolve these.

However, we also want you to tell us how the service is working for you, so we can continue to improve where you live.



To ask a question or for more information, contact 01633 381111 or cleaning@newportcityhomes.com

Off-road vehicles – tenancy warning

Residents are being reminded that it is a breach of tenancy to keep off-road vehicles in their homes.

We are getting more reports of illegal quad and off-road bike use in the city, which is causing nuisance and annoyance to residents.

Because of this, we are taking part in a joint operation with Gwent Police to target illegal use of off-road vehicles in the city this summer.

It is illegal to ride any motorbike in public open spaces such as parks, play areas and on pavements. It is a breach of tenancy to keep them in your home.

Tenancy and leasehold service manager Lindsay Murphy said: “Residents and their visitors must not store mopeds, motor bikes, quad bikes or similar vehicles or any fuel for these vehicles in their home or in the communal areas.



“This is a safety issue, which remains one of our key priorities.

“However, aside from this, the illegal use of vehicles such as these causes great frustration for many of our residents. They are dangerous, noisy and disruptive.

“We are working with the police and council to crack down on this anti-social behaviour and would urge anyone with information about illegal off-road vehicles to call 101.

“Should you wish, you can make the call anonymously.”

- To report illegal use of mopeds, off-road bikes and quad bikes, call 101 and quote occurrence number 1800231731.

Tenancy conditions

5.9.6 You agree that we have the right to remove vehicles parked in violation of these terms, with the cost of this being re-charged to you if you are the vehicle’s owner. You must pay any rechargeable amount to us within 14 days of demand.

5.9.7 You, members of your household or visitors should not store mopeds, motor bikes, quad bikes or similar vehicles or any fuel for these vehicles in your home or in the common parts.



Garden blossoms at Isca Court

Residents at Isca Court have expanded and improved the scheme's garden area.

Jim Duke and Sue Kitson have worked hard over the last two years to remove weeds and make the garden a focal point of activity for residents.

Having grown colourful flowers and vegetables last year, they



have also set-up a greenhouse and expanded the growing beds around the garden.

“It’s a beautiful space we have here. It’s a real sun trap,” said Jim. “We are growing all

types of vegetables and fruits, and we hope to expand this even further next year.”

Charity scheme sees Duffryn gardens transformed

Duffryn Community Link has introduced a garden project as part of Woodland Routes to Wellbeing.

Gardens in Duffryn have been transformed as residents embraced the idea of helping each other improve their gardens.

Two resident volunteers Angela Rogers and Sandra Clark shared their skills in gardening and fence-building to help get this project off to a great start.

Project coordinator Brenda Easton said:

“I was impressed with how hard the volunteers worked on behalf of their neighbours. Two days of hard work saw a transformation of the first garden involved in the project.

“I would like to thank Newport City Homes, Wales and West Utilities, and JJ Gardening Services for their support in helping get the project off to a successful start.”

- If you would like your street to be involved in the scheme, contact 01633 816916.

Before...



After...



EVERYBODY NEEDS GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Sometimes people's behaviour can annoy others without them realising.



Often, it's general living noise like walking around, using washing machines or playing music. You may also hear children playing or crying, or hear dogs barking.

While these noises can be annoying at times, your neighbour may not realise that they are disturbing you.

If noise begins to affect your enjoyment of your home simply:

Tell them clearly what the problem is

Avoid bad language

Listen to your neighbour's reply

Keep calm

That way good neighbours can remain good friends!

