

Caredig Connect

A Newsletter for Caredig Residents



WELCOME TO THE SPRING NEWSLETTER EDITION



IN THIS ISSUE:

**GOOD NEWS STORIES
UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS
COMMUNITY EVENTS
COOKING ON A BUDGET**

AND LOTS MORE.....

HELLO FROM MARCIA

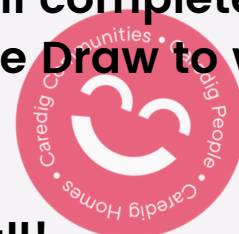
Weclome to Caredig's Spring Newlsetter



The new year is a time to look forward but also to reflect on what has been another challenging 12 months. The cost of living, especially energy costs is still putting huge pressure on households. We continue to work with tenants to provide help and support and look for ways to reduce these costs. We want to support you so please read the articles about our Money Solutions Team and our suggestions for managing energy costs and the impact of condensation in your home. We know these are difficult times, so if you have any worries please get in touch.

We have continued to build, providing much needed new homes, and are looking forward to several more new developments in 2024. We have also made changes to the way we handle telephone calls and our Tenant Involvement team have been busy arranging events and working with tenants to improve services such as repairs and the way we deal with rubbish and fly tipping.

Most importantly we want to know what you think and work with you to improve - although we do not always get things right we want to listen, learn and respond and have set a number of new objectives to deliver our Vision and improve the way we deliver services and achieve value for money. With this in mind, during January you will all receive our latest STAR Satisfaction survey so please let us know what you think. As a thank you, all completed surveys will automatically be entered into a free Prize Draw to win one of 10 prizes of £25 each in vouchers!



Thank you and Happy New Year to you all!

Income & Inclusion

APR – AUG 2023/24

Helping residents start off
on the right foot & sustain
their homes

£554,964

in income
generated for
residents

62

cases

£108,187 Housing Benefit & Universal Credit (UC)

£9,590 Discretionary Housing Payments

£2,419 Homelessness Prevention grants

£22,150 Discretionary Assistance Fund awards for **17** households to access essential furniture to set up a home



Benefits & Grants

Projects and Initiatives

£20,000 *Hardship Grant* available for residents of Caredig

£20,000 *Homes not Houses Grant* available for residents of Caredig

3 Homes fitted with carpets from the *Homes not Houses Grant*

2 New homes set up from the *Furnished Homes Project*

£1,500 Food Poverty Grant won for bare essential food prep bundles

66

Residents
Involvement
events

7

Beat the Bills
(Cost of living
events)

14

Community
Events

2

Co-producing
Services
(Repairs)

1

Get Online
Event

14

Housing
Management
(including 5 skip
days, ASB, etc)

2

Caredig Teams
trained in
Resident
Involvement

26

Consultations
inc. solar panel
& service
charges

832

Residents took
part in resident
involvement
activities



GOOD NEWS STORIES

Tenant of the Year

Jo Ashford



We are delighted that Caredig's tenant Jo took 2nd place at the TPAS awards ceremony in recognition for her dedication to tenant engagement for over 10 years.

Jo Ashford 's commitment to the residents in her building has helped to build a sense of community and belonging. By actively engaging with wider community groups and events, Jo has helped to create a

more cohesive and supportive environment where people feel connected to each other and have an improved quality of life. Jo's continued commitment and support to tenants enables them to do things they wouldn't normally do, and combats social isolation whilst working closely with Caredig on the relevant groups. These groups have helped us to improve our services over the years and the recommendations taken on board.

Jo's commitment to formal tenant involvement has had a considerable impact on improving services for all tenants and communities, from being on recruitment panels for all levels, including the Chief Executive post to holding Caredig accountable through thorough scrutiny and making sure the recommendations are carried through into service improvement.

Jo has also been a big support to new members joining Caredig groups such as our Reviewers group and many more, and is always on hand to offer help and guidance.

Thank you Jo



Update on Developments

We are delighted to have handed over keys to 12 new residents at Trallwn Farm House on the 9th October.

One resident said "I'm delighted. I was contacted in August and signed as soon as I could. I'm so happy to be moving in to my new home with Caredig."

It has been a pleasure working in partnership with Castell Group, Welsh Government and Swansea Council to get this development completed.

Along with providing new homes, Trallwn Farm Close is also a great Environmental development, thanks to funding from Welsh Government we have provided:

- Rain Gardens that grown wild flowers and help with drainage
- Hedgehog openings in the fence panels
- Bat Boxes that give bats a safe place to reside.

As a social housing provider we want to provide safe and secure homes, but we also include the environment and community around any developments.



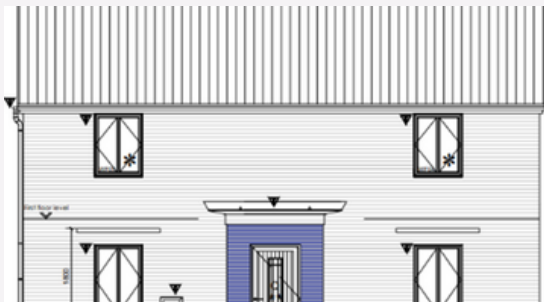
New Homes Built



Parc Mawr, Penllegaer – On 28th July 2023, 4 x 2 bed properties from Bellway's Parc Mawr development were completed and handed over to Caredig. All 4 properties were successfully let. 6 flats and 2 houses will follow in January 2024



Frederick Place, Llansamlet – Our development to provide 15 new flats and we expect them to be ready in June 2024



The first 3 houses of 17 on the Barratt, Llewellyn Road site, not far from Parc Mawr, and we expect them to be ready in June 2024



Victoria Gardens – We are in contract with Celtic Properties in Neath to provide 6 x 1 bedroom flats and we expect them to be ready in June 2024

There's No Place Like Home

We have also been successful with Government funding (Transitional Capital Accommodation Programme) on 5 different projects, which aims to help move people in temporary accommodation into their own secure homes.

Progress update: 1 house and 1 bungalow in Neath are due to finish in January 2024 and Calon Construction are due to finish 3 of these projects by June 2024.

Did you know there are 53 Weeks in 2024-25?

This happens every 5-6 years. This means you will be responsible for an extra week rent this year, and your payments will be changed to reflect this.



EXAMPLE

Alexa needs to pay £100 rent per week, but prefers to pay monthly

We will calculate Alexas rent payments to be £441.67 per month
(53 weeks x £100 = £5,300 divide by 12 months = £441.67)

Please be aware that Universal Credit will only pay for 52 weeks regardless. Using the same example Universal Credit will only pay Alexa a maximum of £433.34 per month

(52 weeks x £100 = £5,200 divide by 12 months = £433.34 per month)

This means for every £100 rent you pay, you will pay an extra £8.34 per month for 12 months.

If you will struggle with this please let us know and we can look at the possibility of reducing the amount and share the extra over a longer time.

Automated 24/7 Telephone Payment Line

- No more long call queues to pay your rent and other charges
- Telephone payments around the clock to suit you
- Be in control of your payments with your phone keypad
- Secure payment line keeping your personal details safe

It's coming to you soon!!!!!!

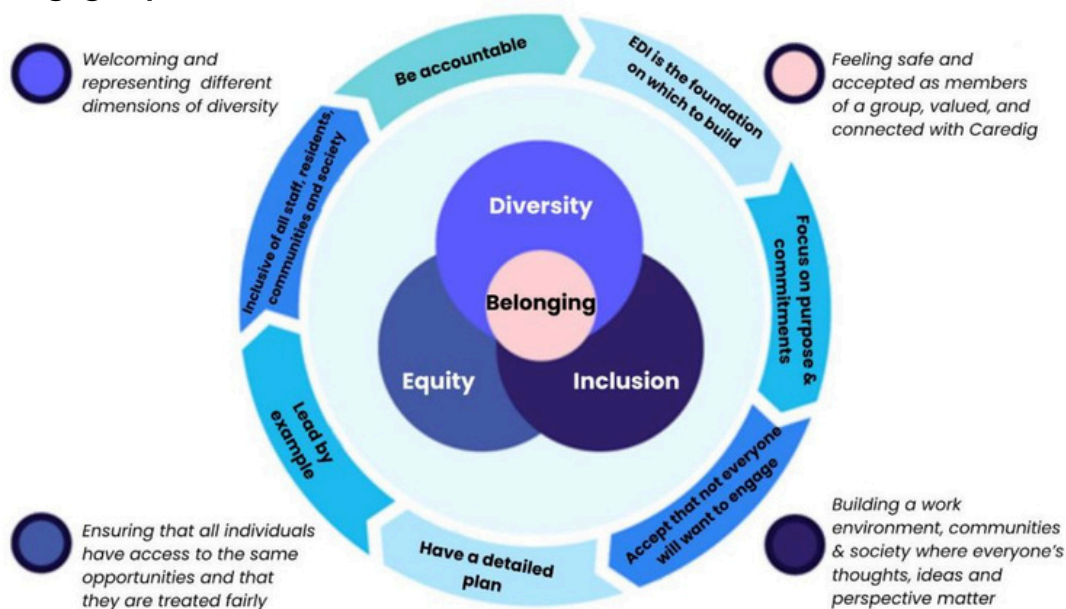


Equality, Diversity & Inclusion



Why Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Matters to Caredig

A sense of belonging is also important as it means that people feel accepted as members of a group and connected with Caredig, the following graphic illustrates the connections



You can read our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and Delivery Plan on our publication page of our website.





Update on Community Engagement Events

It's been a busy few months for our Community Engagement Team with the Rents/Repairs Roadshow, setting up new groups in our communities and lots more. Below is just a snippet of what the team have been up to:

Craft Groups/Social Groups

Whilst out in our communities we see so many tenants with different skills. We have started to help these tenants share their skills with other tenants.

Residents in Hazel Court approached us to help set up a Craft Group. After chatting with the tenants about what they wanted from the group, we were able to purchase equipment for them and get them started.

Doreen who is 95 years old has always wanted to learn to crochet. After help and guidance from fellow tenants, her wish came true.

In the words of Doreen “ It is never to late to learn a new skill”





Community Benefits

We have an exciting project we are working on as part of our new development in Samlet Road, Llansamlet which will be ready for Summer 2024. We will be working in partnership with one of our developers Castell Group and the local school, to ensure the communities we build in are at the heart of everything we do.

Pupils from the school will be involved in naming the scheme, drawing artwork for murals around the site, planting time capsules, providing grow your own packs and lots more. In addition to this we will be giving back to the school and helping them update the school's nature reserve.

Events

We held 10 Rent and Repairs roadshows and engaged with tenants. We visited a number of sites and spoke with tenants about proposed changes we would be making to repairs.

Over 350 surveys were also completed by tenants giving us great feedback.

Congratulations to our winners who won £100 shopping vouchers for replying to the survey.



Caredig Reviewers Update



Our Tenant Reviewers Group supports the work of Caredig by helping to improve services for you, challenging policies, performance and decisions.

It's not all Rubbish

The latest project was about rubbish and flytipping in communities. Tenant Reviewers looked at all the reports, evidence and costs to Caredig and it quickly became apparent that rubbish and recycling was a huge problem and the significant costs are increasing year on year.

How did they do it?

- Gathered tenant feedback from surveys
- Looked at Caredig's way of managing rubbish and flytipping
- Attended Community Events and Tenant Meetings
- Conducted site visits with Housing Officers
- Contacted local authorities for guidance and suggestions

Recommendations we are working on

- Improved and larger signage on estates needed
- Educate tenants about cross contaminated bag usage
- Improved CCTV on our sites
- Employ a person with a van to collect fly tipping
- Information on council collection at a reduced rate if on benefits

We will keep you posted on progress in forthcoming newsletters but you may also receive letters and communication directly to your home.

Caredig Reviewers will be getting their hands dirty with Service Standards next. Get in touch if you'd like to know more!



Who do you think you are?



Knowing where you belong and where you came from holds significance in a person's life. Family is where most of us find our sense of identity and purpose. Confusion about identity can cast a profound shadow on a person's life.

For one of our clients living within Caredig's supported living services (let's call him John), he had faced a persistent inner struggle for many years about who he really was. John was desperate to find out who his birth mother was and why he had been put up for adoption as a baby. As John suffers from treatment resistant Schizophrenia, where he experiences delusions, his psychiatric care team were opposed to support staff helping him find some answers. They believed this would be encouraging his delusional beliefs and for many years, we accepted this.

However, 6 months ago, as a team we discussed how important it was for John to have some answers. I called a meeting with John's care team where I thoughtfully and respectfully challenged their beliefs asking them to consider that although helping John find answers may worsen his mental health, there's also a chance it could lead to an improvement, making it a worthwhile endeavour. After some discussions, it was agreed that they would fully support us in this.

After months of referrals being made to social services, adoption services and even DNA testing, John finally had some answers. He found out who his biological mum and siblings were. Even though the answers were not what John was expecting or what he even wanted, he is now at peace with knowing who he is and where he came from.

In our supported living services, we help tenants to develop daily living skills, budget their money, manage their accommodation etc. All this support is vital. However, we also strive for change and advocate for people. We really do change people's lives for the better and staff are so proud to be a part of that.

Caredigs' approach to handling services complaints

Whether it's a complaint or a compliment, every feedback serves as a valuable resource for us to assess our performance and make necessary changes to way in which we deliver our services

123

**NEW COMPLAINTS
RECEIVED
APRIL-NOVEMBER
2023**

Top 3 Themes

- **POOR COMMUNICATION**
- **THE REPAIRS SERVICE & CONTRACTORS WE USE**
- **RENT ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT**

Our commitment to improving how we look into your complaint

**WHEN ASKED HOW
WE HANDLED YOUR
COMPLAINT, YOU
SCORED US AN
AVERAGE OF**

4.27

OUT OF 10

Tenants have told us the areas we need to improve in and we are committed to the following:

- **Investigating complaints quickly but thoroughly**
- **Keeping in contact with you throughout the investigation**
- **Writing to you by email or letter to summarise the outcome of your complaint**

Our commitment to improving our services

As a result of complaints we have received and investigated, the following changes are now underway:

- **A redesign of the Repairs Services**
- **The creation of the new Housing Services Team**
- **A review of the Community Safety & Anti-Social Behaviour Policy**

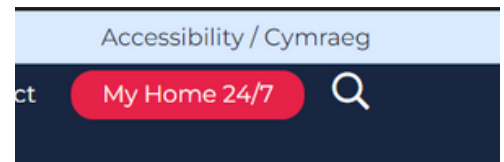
Digital Accessibility User Guide

Did you know that our website is fully digitally accessible?

We've added the Recite Me web accessibility and language toolbar to our website to make it accessible and inclusive for as many people as possible. This toolbar lets visitors view and use our website in a way that works best for them.

How do I access the Recite Me toolbar?

You can open the Recite Me Accessibility Toolbar by clicking on the 'Accessibility / Cymraeg' button in the top right corner of the page.



This button now appears in the top right corner of every page of our website.

Recite Me User Guide

The guide covers how to use each tool and also has frequently asked questions.



Play Audio



Dictionary, Translator and Magnifier

You can find the guide [here](#) or by clicking on the Accessibility link at the bottom of our website.



Text Options



Margins, Plain Text Mode and Download Audio



Colour, Ruler and Mask



Settings

Damp and Condensation Advice

As the weather changes, condensation may become a more common occurrence throughout your home .

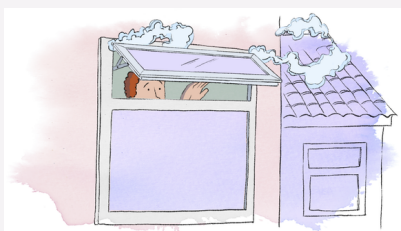
We're committed to ensuring our residents enjoy safe and comfortable living conditions all year-round. With the winter season approaching, we understand the challenges of condensation, dampness, and mould that can affect our residents' homes.

What do we mean by Damp, Mould or Condensation?

Did you know that mould is caused by damp and damp is caused by condensation? All three are linked to how you can keep your home safe, warm and ventilated. Damp refers to the presence of moisture and water in your home. It can easily occur without warning and it can have an effect on the structure of your home, as well as impact on your health if not treated. Condensation occurs when the air and/or your surfaces are cold and when moisture in the air is high – like when you have a hot shower and don't open a window, you get steamy wet windows.

Where there is a lack of air movement, like in corners, on or near windows or behind furniture and cupboards, this can cause condensation which leads to damp patches and can eventually lead to mould.

Quick Tips to prevent Condensation and Mould



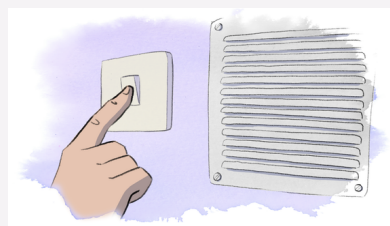
Shower time! Keep that window open to let the steam escape.



Grab a cloth and wipe down any moisture on your windows and sills each morning.



Keep lids on any pots and pans while cooking.



Turn on any extractor fans to remove water vapor.

You can read our booklet [here](#) for further advice or take a look at our website



People • Homes • Communities



Annual Garden Competition

We have a number of categories you can enter

- Front/Back Garden
- Hanging Baskets
- Best Vegetable patch
- Sunflowers
- Pots
- Communal areas
- Best Recycled Eco Garden



To enter send your name /address and which category your entering to:

Communityengagement@caredig.co.uk

or Text/Whatsapp 07543 368645



Closing date for entries
will be 10 June 2024

Judging will take place
on 16th July 2024

People • Homes • Communities

Green Scheme

Our scheme to make our properties more environmentally friendly (called the Optimised Retrofit Programme) is progressing well. At Hazel Court our Principle Contractor, LCB Group, is installing approximately 1000 solar panels, battery storage, and individual meters in all of the flats. The system is now operational while we monitor the solar generation performance and personal usage. In April, all residents will be moved to individual billing based on personal usage.

Bro Preseli is the next scheme to be completed, and it is currently halfway through. It consists of the same work: solar panels, batteries, and individual metres. If everything goes according to plan, the project is anticipated to be finished by mid-February.

Caredig's bid for further green funds was also successful. We have been awarded approximately £1.2 million in funding from the Welsh Government and will contribute £400,000 of our own funds to the next phase of work, which will involve approaching the remaining extra care schemes, Maes Mwldan, Cartref Cynnes, and Ty Dyffryn.

These initiatives mark a significant step forward in our journey towards a more sustainable future, and not only do they help reduce our carbon footprint but also allow us to pass on significant savings to residents.



TIPS TO REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Looking for ways to save energy and money at home?
Check out these 8 tips



Switch off lights
not in use



Replace with
energy saving
bulbs where
possible



Avoid leaving
items on
standby mode



Turn down your
thermostat by 1
degree



Close doors to
keep heat in



Don't leave taps
dripping,
especially hot
water taps



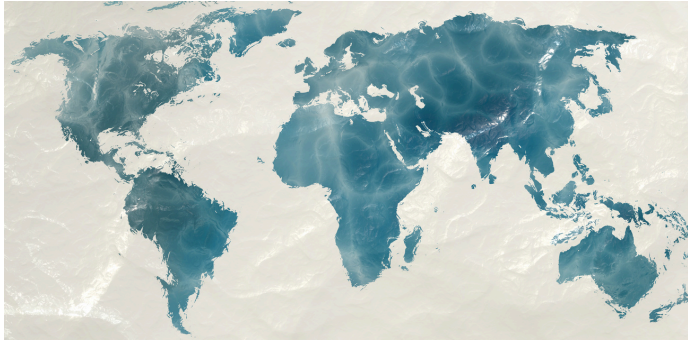
Unplug inactive
devices



Wash full loads
of laundry
unless you have
a half load
setting



www.caredig.co.uk



Cook around the world with us

The floating support service have began a cook around the world tour to celebrate and learn about different cultures through food.

The first stop was a pasta making lesson from staff member Laura who was born in Italy. It was amazing to see tenants learning a new skill.

We would love to hear from you, whether that be suggestions of where you think we should stop next on our food tour, sharing recipes from your culture or even coming to cook with us to share dishes from home. Please contact Paige.Howard@caredig.co.uk for more info or our Community Engagement Officers Emma and Carol on 07543 368645

"Without diversity, life would be boring"



COOKING ON A BUDGET

Lasagne Ingredients

500g Beef mince
1 Brown onion
1 Tbs Garlic
2 Tbs Tomato paste
1 Tbs White sugar
1 Tsp Oregano
400g Canned tomatoes
1 tsp Basil
250g Lasagne sheets
CHEAP CHEESE SAUCE
1 Tbs Unsalted butter
2 Cup Full cream milk
1 Tbs Plain flour
1/2 Cup cheese (grated)



Method

1

Place your slow cooker on the low setting and spray it well with canola spray.

2

In a bowl mix together all the first part of the ingredients except for the lasagna sheets. Mix well.

3

Cover the bottom of the slow cooker with the mince mixture, then place the lasagna sheets over the top (without overlapping - you might have to break them a bit to fit).

4

Next spoon enough cheese sauce over the noodles to cover (not too thick), and repeat until all the mixtures are used up. Sprinkle some extra cheese on top.

5

Cook on LOW for 6 hours (or HIGH for 4 hours).

6

Use a large serving spoon to 'scoop' out the lasagna to serve. Serve with a salad and crusty bread.

COOKING ON A BUDGET

Microwave jacket potatoes make a great quick dinner or after school snack. They're filling, tasty and cheap too! Use whatever you have in your fridge to make a tasty topping or simply sprinkle with cheese and enjoy.

Ingredients

1 potato
(large, scrubbed)

TOPPING IDEAS

Canned baked beans
Butter
Bolognese sauce
Cheese
Salsa
Sour cream
Chives



Method

1

Pierce the potato all over with a large fork.

2

Cook in the microwave on high for 5 minutes.

3

Turn the potato over and cook for a further 5 minutes.

4

Remove from the microwave and leave to stand for 5 minutes.

5

Cut a large cross on the face of the potato and squeeze the base upwards.

6

Add toppings of your choice.

HELP AND ADVICE

Live Fear Free Domestic Abuse provide help and advice about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Free service | 24/7 support

Call or text: 08088 010800

Young Minds has a dedicated parent helpline which is available to offer advice to parents and carers worried about a child or young person under 25.

Free service | 24/7 support

Text YM to: 85258

Wales Dementia Helpline provide support and advice for people with dementia or their families.

Free service | 24/7 support

Call: 0808 808 2235 or text 'help' to: 81066

Childline – If you're under 19 you can confidentially call, chat online or email about any problem big or small.

Free service | 24/7 support

Call: 0800 11 11

C.A.L.L Helpline is a community advice and listening line for Mental Health.

Free service | 24/7 support

Call: 0808 132 737 or text 'help' to: 81066

Dan 24/7 Wales provides confidential drugs and alcohol helpline. Dan 24/7 will not appear on your home itemised bill.

Free service | 24/7 support

Call: 0808 808 2234

Samaritans is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

Free service | 24/7 support

Call: 116 123

The Silver Line offers a telephone befriending service that connects older people with volunteers who can chat and provide information and advice.

Free service | 24/7 support

Call: 0800 470 80 90

Dewis Cymru is a one-stop-shop for well-being advice and information, plus related community resources to help you and your loved ones.

Free service

Contact via the form on their website

Age Connect works across Wales to provide assistance, support and services to older people to help them live a healthier, more active and independent life.

Free service

Call: 02920 683600

PAPYRUS Hopeline UK works with young people to give hope and prevent young suicide. Anyone up to the age of 35 is welcome to make contact.

Free service | 9am-midnight

Call: 0800 068 4141 or email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

GET IN TOUCH

Head Office: 43 Walter Road, Swansea, SA1 5PN

Reception Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 9.30am-4.30pm

Main Office Number: 01792 460192

Main Office Email: info@caredig.co.uk

Social Media:



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Please feel free to let us know what you thought of this newsletter - your feedback is always welcome!

