



Tai Calon Community Housing

News

Summer 2010 Issue 1

A brand new start

Welcome to Tai Calon Community Housing

Put me on your fridge

If your Tai Calon
fridge magnet is
missing, please call
0300 303 1717.

Name this newsletter and win £50 of shopping vouchers

Our vision is to deliver excellent homes and services to make our communities proud



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What's it like to live in a WHQS home? We meet tenants who know

When Jayne Powell was offered a home by Blaenau Gwent Council, she never imagined it would be one of those brought up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for use as a show home during the transfer consultation.

Jayne lives at Cripps Avenue, Cefn Golau, with her 14-year-old son and is delighted with the quality of her home.

"It's a lovely house and finished to really high standards. I've got a great kitchen which is one of my favourite parts of the house, and the bathroom fittings are really good.

"The quality of the fittings through the house is exceptional.

"It's not only the inside of the property that I love, it's the outside too. I knew I wanted to move into the house as soon as I saw the outside – I didn't have any reservations.

"My son loves the house. He has a much bigger bedroom than he had before."

Delighted couple Wayne Jefferies and his wife Melanie, moved into their property at Glanstruth, Blaina, last September.

The couple have always lived in the area. Melanie's parents used to live on Glanstruth and her brother now lives there.

The couple moved to the two bed property from their home in Lakeside after Mr Jefferies had been forced to give up work due to ill health.

Mr Jefferies said: "To say we were delighted with the house would be an understatement. It is shockingly good.

"It's hard to say what our favourite part of the house is because it's all finished to such a high standard. All of the fittings are fantastic and the plastering on the walls and ceiling is perfect.

"This house is better than the house we came from. We could not find a fault.

"The heating system is fantastic compared to our old house – even in the freezing winter."

A BRAND NEW START Welcome to Tai Calon Community Housing

A message from Philip Crozier, Chair of the Board and Jen Barfoot, Chief Executive

"Welcome to Tai Calon and a new beginning for our homes across Blaenau Gwent.

The transfer of the Council's 6,200 homes makes Tai Calon officially your new landlord.

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to our tenants for placing their trust in us

and voting in favour of the transfer. We will not let you down.

We are already starting to deliver on the promises we made to you and proving that your trust was well placed. Work starts on improving your homes from today and we always ensure that your tenant representatives are involved in the important decisions that affect your homes and services.

We want to thank our staff and the Tai Calon Board for their



commitment, as they have worked tirelessly to get everything in place to ensure a smooth transition to Tai Calon.

Transfer marks the start of a new era for our housing, both for tenants and staff, as Tai Calon invests in its homes, its communities and its services.

Tai Calon is not just about your homes and services – we care about the community and are committed to supporting the regeneration of Blaenau Gwent through the use of local suppliers wherever possible and creating jobs and apprenticeships.

These are exciting times. We can assure you that Tai Calon is ready to take on the challenge of delivering a brighter future."



Tai Calon is the name

The name for Tai Calon Community Housing was chosen by tenants and Council representatives working together.

Tai Calon means 'hearts homes' and was drawn from the well known phrase: 'home is where the heart is'.

Tai Calon is committed to putting its heart into delivering affordable homes and strong services to the communities it serves.

Funders in place for transfer

Tai Calon has chosen Barclays and RBS as its preferred funding partners for the transfer.

The banks were selected following an interview process when several banks and building societies were interviewed by the Board and its financial advisors.

Barclays and RBS will be providing up to £125 million funding to Tai Calon for its ongoing programme of repairs, improvements and services.

Chair of the Board, Philip Crozier, said: "Barclays and RBS offered the flexibility we were looking for from our lenders. We believe we have secured a really good deal for Tai Calon and our tenants."



New start – new look

Now that Tai Calon Community Housing manages your homes, you will start to see some changes – part of creating a new look for our new organisation.

Offices

Our offices at the Rising Sun Industrial Estate have new Tai Calon signs up and a range of information about Tai Calon is available inside.



Your new tenancy agreement

In the next few weeks, you will receive your copy of your new Assured Tenancy Agreement. This sets out Tai Calon Community Housing's obligations, your obligations, your security of tenure and your rights. All tenants at the property will need to sign both copies of the new agreement and you will keep a copy and Tai Calon will keep a copy. There will be a freepost envelope to return a copy back to us. Full instructions will be included in the pack.

We're registered with WAG

We are pleased to announce that we are now fully registered with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

WAG will ensure that Tai Calon will keep its promises to tenants, leaseholders and staff alike. It will receive regular performance information from us and visit us regularly to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Tai Calon finds a home!

Tai Calon Community Housing's headquarters will be at Solis One, Rising Sun Industrial Estate, Blaina.

The whole Tai Calon team will be based here, although many of the team will be out and about most of the time.



Repairs Team

The Repairs Teams have been issued with new uniforms. Their new T-shirts are black and they carry the Tai Calon logo, again an important part of creating a smart, new image for Tai Calon. You will see them around the area, in their new vans.



ID cards

All our staff now carry a new Tai Calon identification card, including their photograph. Remember, if you are ever unsure, please call us on **0300 303 1717** and we will check the identity of the staff member before you let them into your home.

Who is responsible for what?

Now that transfer has officially taken place, Tai Calon is now your new landlord.

Tai Calon now owns and manages 6,200 homes and is responsible for:

- Rent collection.
- Allocation of homes through a Common Housing Register shared with the Council and other Housing Associations.
- Day-to-day repairs.
- Improvements to the homes and estates.
- Estate management.
- Tenant Involvement.

Although Tai Calon owns and manages tenants' homes – Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will still have a role and certain responsibilities for housing.

The Council will work in partnership with Tai Calon and will hold regular meetings to talk about how the promises made to you by the Council on behalf of Tai Calon are being kept.

The Council will still be involved in the way Tai Calon is run through the five Council nominees on the Board of Tai Calon.

The Council will:

- Be responsible for the housing register and will work with Tai Calon and other Registered Social Landlord partners and others to develop housing policy.
- Keep responsibility for securing accommodation for homeless people.
- Be responsible for Housing Benefit.
- Be responsible for the housing strategy for the area, working with Registered Social Landlords and private developers on new developments and regeneration schemes.



Paying your rent

You can still make rent payments by cash to a rent collector if you currently have this service or by cheque or postal order sent to Tai Calon's offices at Solis One, Rising Sun Industrial Estate, Blaina.

You can also pay by:

- direct debit from your bank or building society
- standing order
- automated telephone payment by debit or credit card
- pay via cashier at Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale
- Paypoint payment at any Paypoint outlet or Post Office
- deduction from your salary if you are employed by Tai Calon.



Have we got news for you!

Name this newsletter and win £50 of shopping vouchers

Over the past 18 months you have been kept fully up to date about transfer to Tai Calon Community Housing in issues of our newsletter, 'Your Home in Your Hands'.

Now that transfer has taken place, we need a new name for our tenants' newsletter – and we want you to help us name it.

Simply send your suggestion for a name, together with your name, address and phone number to: Hayley Selway at Solis One, Rising Sun Industrial Estate, Blaina NP13 3JW.

A panel made up of tenants and staff will pick the winning name. The winner will see their proposed name adopted as the masthead for the Tai Calon tenants' newsletter and will also receive £50 of shopping vouchers.



Here's to a successful future

A message from Councillor John Mason



"I am pleased that from today, Tai Calon will begin to deliver all the promises the Council made to tenants, to bring homes up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, improve services, create jobs and apprenticeships and, very importantly, support the regeneration of Blaenau Gwent.

"Transfer has been a long road. The Council, faced with difficult decisions, felt it was time to let tenants decide what they wanted for the future of their homes and they decided that Tai Calon would provide the homes and services they want to see.

"The Council is looking forward to working in partnership with Tai Calon to continue to make Blaenau a place people want to live and work and will work to develop the opportunities to make that happen.

"I wish Tai Calon all the very best for a successful future."

Do you have a story to tell?

Here at Tai Calon, we are keen to get to know our tenants and to recognise your community events, achievements, or interesting stories about your life and experiences as a council tenant when you were younger and how times have changed!

Or perhaps you, your neighbour or a family member has achieved something extraordinary during their time as a tenant and has a story to tell that we can feature in this newsletter.

If so, we want to hear from you!

Call us on 0300 303 1717 and speak to Natasha Jones.



You can contact Tai Calon on our brand new number 0300 303 1717.

We chose to use a 0300 number so our mobile phone users do not get charged as much as it they call an 0800 number.

Or you can:

Write to or visit us at:

Solis One, Rising Sun Industrial Estate, Blaina NP13 3JW

Email us:

info@taicalon.org

Log onto:

www.taicalon.org

Reporting a Repair

You can report a repair by calling 0300 303 1717 or by visiting or writing to our office.

Speak to a member of Tai Calon's team.

Please keep this newsletter so you have Tai Calon's contact details easily available. In the coming months you will receive a Tenants' Handbook which will have all the information you need about Tai Calon, but in the meantime please keep this as a handy reference.