**Partnership**

**Name of your organisation.**

RCT Homes

**Your name and contact details:**

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**In no more than three or four sentences, describe the size and scope of your organisation and those responsible for marketing and communications. If an external individual or agency was responsible for the work, describe them as well.**

RCT Homes owns and manages more than 10,000 rented homes but its Marketing Communications Team comprises only two people who are responsible for all copywriting, photography, press relations, marketing, advertising and internal communications.

Tylacelyn Road in Penygraig is a small shopping street near a housing estate that is home to 270 RCT Homes tenants. Most of the shops are independent, family-run businesses.

**In no more than 300 words, describe how you have fostered partnership working either within your organisation or with an external partner and the outcomes you achieved. Attach two pieces of evidence (e.g. pdf of a publication, photograph of an event, screenshot of a web page etc) in support of your entry.**

**RCT Homes and Penygraig shopkeepers**

An RCT Homes project worker brought together 17 shopkeepers from the Rhondda community of Penygraig to discuss the possibility of painting and flower-planting to brighten what had become a somewhat run-down shopping street.

The RCT Homes marketing communications team was invited to talk to the group briefly about marketing. It soon became apparent that reviving the shopping street would need to go much further than a few hanging baskets – there was no clear agreement among the traders as to who their clientele was (let alone how they should market themselves) and they had virtually no marketing budget.

The marketing communications team offered to hold free workshops with the traders. At the first workshop, the team used examples from shopping areas around the UK to explore the meaning of ‘brand’ and helped the traders to decide on shared brand values. At subsequent meetings, the team developed the values into a straightforward brand proposition that the traders would be able to use on a day-to-day basis, drew up a simple branding device and helped the traders to develop low-cost marketing ideas.

In essence, the team helped the traders to agree that they were not in direct competition with out-of-town supermarkets for customers from all over the valley – instead, their clientele was very local. They needed to re-establish the shopping street as the heart of the local community. To reinforce the customer service values of their local, family-run businesses, they were encouraged to adopt simple techniques such as wearing traditional shopkeepers’ aprons.

The agreed brand proposition included an undertaking by the traders to engage in local community events centred on their shopping street. The RCT Homes marketing communications team helped them to develop this idea into a street festival where the traders laid out their wares outside their shops and, in addition, offered free stalls to local groups and societies.

The event turned into one of busiest shopping days the street had seen for decades – so much so that the local butcher even ran out of meat!